Position Announcement: Assistant Curator of Rare Books & Manuscripts

The Position
Reporting to the Vice President for Special Collections and a member of the collections team, the Assistant Curator plays an integral role in describing, managing, and promoting one of the world’s most important science focused rare book collections. The incumbent will work to inspire broad and creative use of the Library’s unparalleled rare book and manuscript collections and will perform a range of activities in collaboration with colleagues. The Library strongly encourages applications from early career professionals for this position.

The Library
Linda Hall Library is the largest privately funded research library devoted to science, engineering, and technology. A member of the Independent Research Libraries Association, the Library’s collections as a whole include over half a million monograph volumes, more than 48,000 journal titles, conference proceedings, reference works, government publications, and technical reports, as well as 200,000 industrial standards and conference papers.

The core of the Library’s holdings come from a series of major acquisitions, starting with the purchase of the 62,358-item collection of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1946. A second significant acquisition occurred in 1985 when the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia transferred nearly six hundred serial titles to the Linda Hall Library, increasing or completing runs of serials titles, and adding new titles. In 1995, the United Engineering Foundation, the successor organization to the United Engineering Society founded in 1904 with the generous support of Andrew Carnegie, similarly transferred the Engineering Societies Library (ESL). The ESL collection added depth to both the journal and monograph collections, especially with m

The Collection
The Library holds one of the best collections of rare printed science, technology, and engineering works in the world. The Library holds 9 of every 10 works listed in Harrison Horblit’s One Hundred Books Famous in Science and Bern Dibner’s Heralds of Science. It also houses early scientific periodicals, including all issues of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, beginning in 1665, and the Acta Eruditorum, beginning in 1682. The collection has particularly strong holdings in astronomy, geology and paleontology, natural history, engineering, mathematics, and the physical sciences. Star atlases and encyclopedic works of early natural history are also well represented.

This position opening comes at an exciting moment in the Library’s evolution. The Board of Trustees has enthusiastically embraced a strategic plan that will build upon the Library’s current reputation for excellence. Regarded as a national and international destination for research in the history of science and technology and a leading contributor to the economic development of Kansas City, the Linda Hall Library has helped to bring intellectual and cultural distinction to the community. Going forward, the Library will open itself up to the greater Kansas City community as a public venue where issues pertaining to and arising from the intersection of science, engineering, and technology with contemporary life will be explored, investigated, examined, and discussed. By creating a space for pre-college students interested in STEM-related subjects to express and explore their interests, the Library will also stimulate future generations to embrace scientific inquiry.
Responsibilities

- Outreach and Instruction
  - Provide instruction and presentations for groups and classes using material from the collections.
  - Coordinate and provide on-site and remote expert reference assistance to readers, and through weekly shifts at the reference desk in the Rare Book Room.

- Cataloging
  - Create original and copy catalog records for new acquisitions and backlog titles using MARC, AACR2, and DCRM(B) and following cataloging procedures of the Library.
  - Track rare book acquisitions in integrated library system.

- Archival Description
  - As needed, arrange and describe manuscript collections already held by the Library, acquisitions of archival collections, and the Library’s archives.

- Other Duties
  - Collaborate as requested with the Vice President for Special Collections on the selection of new items for acquisition.
  - Assist in preservation and conservation review of objects.
  - Assist in the review and preparation of external loan requests.
  - Contribute to digitization projects and setting digitization priorities for rare books.
  - Assist in disaster planning and response.
  - Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Essential Skills

- Required
  - MLS from an ALA-accredited academic program conferred on or before May 31, 2020.
  - Experience working in a library environment.
  - Experience cataloging monographs in MARC using AACR2.

- Preferred
  - Experience working in a special collections environment.
  - Knowledge of special collections best practices in book handling and pedagogy.
  - Familiarity utilizing RBMS-SAA Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy.
  - Familiarity with ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections.
  - Experience processing and arranging archival collections.
  - Reading knowledge of languages other than English.
  - Familiarity with DCRM(B) and best practices for rare book cataloging.
  - Familiarity with library services platforms, such as ExLibris Alma.

Review of applications will begin February 28, 2020 and continue until the position is filled.

To apply, please send cover letter, resume, and references to personnel@lindahall.org.

Linda Hall Library is an “Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D/V”