

# LIS Leadership: Opportunities and Barriers for People of Color

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## ABSTRACT

Responding to the conference theme of “Go Back and Get It – From One Narrative to Many” this panel provides an opportunity for LIS faculty of color to voice their narratives about leadership opportunities in LIS. Through this panel, we will bring together people of color from different levels of LIS faculty (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor) to discuss their expectations and experiences of opportunities and barriers in leadership positions in LIS. According to the latest ALISE Statistical report, 2021 (ALISE Statistical Report, 2021) – out of a total of 55 heads of schools in LIS, there are 34 white, 11 Asian, 2 Black, and 1 Native American and Hispanic. The representation of marginalized groups in LIS leadership remains minimal.

The panelists will discuss their experiences of being in leadership or administrative positions and the availability or lack of training and guidance for faculty of color. Panelists who have not been in leadership/administrative positions will discuss the hesitation and perceived barriers for this work. This panel will also create a platform for the faculty of color to assert their narrative, their interest, their ambitions, and their competence in leadership positions in LIS. Their stories with their reflections and illustrative examples will provide space for alternative narratives. Each panelist will give a 10 minute presentation and pose questions for audience engagement. Additionally, we will engage the audience to develop an agenda for future faculty leaders from marginalized groups. There will be a brainstorming and experience sharing session with the attending colleagues to discuss the following questions – What kind of barriers exist for POCs? How can we address these barriers? What are the systemic barriers that need to be removed by current leaders? What is the type of support that POC faculty needs to receive and succeed in leadership positions in LIS?

The panelists will solicit POC faculty to create a collaboration for developing leadership and administration training modules/toolkits for LIS faculty and doctoral students of color. This discussion will also explicate how this approach will be complementary to the current ALISE Leadership Academy. The goal is to spark dialogue between faculty and doctoral students of color

to facilitate an equitable vision for the future. For the wider audience of the conference focused on the metaphorical meaning of Sankofa (ALISE 22 website), we hope that this discussion will provide a direction to “see” and “hear” the marginalized voices of people of color in LIS.

**Panel structure** – Each of the five panelists will contribute a 10 minute session on a theme of their experience and expectation as a faculty of color in LIS. A collaborative session with the audience will create more voices with more narratives being brought to the front. Overall, the panelists hope that this panel will lead to the creation of collaboration for developing future leaders of LIS from the marginalized groups and making LIS a more equitable discipline.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Social justice

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Faculty of Color; LIS Leadership

### **Panelists**

**Dr. Vandana Singh** is a Professor in the School of Information Sciences, and the Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the College of Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Dr. Singh graduated from the doctoral program University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign in 2008 and she has held multiple leadership positions in her time at the University of Tennessee. She has been the Coordinator for the minor in Information Science and Technology (2008-2011), the Acting Interim Director for SIS (2013), and the Director of the Undergraduate Studies (2017-2019). Her research focused on social justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Gender and Information Technology, and Open Source Software. She has received multiple grants from federal agencies including IMLS, NSF, USGS, and Google Award for Inclusion.

**Dr. Nicole A. Cooke** is the Augusta Baker Endowed Chair and an associate professor at the School of Library and Information Science, at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Cooke is a 2012 graduate from Rutgers University with a Ph.D. in communication, information, and library studies, where she was one of the first 12 American Library Association Spectrum Doctoral Fellows. Dr. Cooke was awarded the 2017 ALA Achievement in Library Diversity Research Award, presented by the Office for Diversity and Literacy Outreach Services, and the 2016 ALA Equality Award. She has also been honored as the University of Illinois YWCA’s 2015 Leadership Award in Education winner in recognition of her work in social justice and higher education, and she was selected as the University’s 2016 Larine Y. Cowan Make a Difference Award for Teaching and Mentoring in Diversity. She was the 2013 Recipient of the Norman Horrocks Leadership Award given by ALISE, and Library Journal named her a Mover & Shaker in 2007.

**Dr. Africa S. Hands** is an assistant professor of library science at University of Buffalo. Dr. Hands graduated from the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. Dr. Hands' current research agenda examines public libraries as an information resource to college-bound patrons based on her experiences working in both higher education (admissions and academic advising) and public libraries. She is interested in doctoral student experiences, motivation, and self-determination theory, and has an interest in the cultural and social capital and experiences of first-generation students.

**Dr. Emliy Knox** is an associate professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her book, *Book Banning in 21st Century America* (Rowman & Littlefield) is the first monograph in the Beta Phi Mu Scholars Series. She also recently edited *Trigger Warnings: History, Theory Context* (Rowman & Littlefield) and co-edited *Foundations of Information Ethics* (ALA). Her next book, *Foundations of Intellectual Freedom* (ALA), will be released in Fall 2022. Her research interests include information access, intellectual freedom and censorship, information ethics, information policy, and the intersection of print culture and reading practices. She is also a member of the Mapping Information Access research team.

**Dr. Abebe Rorissa**, is a professor and Director in the School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Dr. Rorissa's research interests focus on multimedia information organization and retrieval, scaling of information needs, use/acceptance/adoption and impact of ICTs, and data analytics. He is published extensively in leading international journals such as the Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, Information Processing & Management, and Government Information Quarterly and served on program committees of international conferences. In 2021, he was elected to be president of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), where he has held many leadership positions in the past. As a Professor at SUNY Albany, he led efforts to recruit and retain a diverse faculty, initiated a strategic planning effort for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and developed academic initiatives to attract and mentor a diverse student body.

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