



Head, Department of Distinctive Collections – MIT Libraries

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Libraries, located in Cambridge, MA on the [traditional unceded territory of the Wampanoag Nation](#), seeks a dynamic and thoughtful leader for the position of Head, [Department of Distinctive Collections](#) (DDC). Reporting to the Associate Director for Collections, Erin Stalberg, the DDC Head will be an integral part of the Collections Directorate. Leading and developing a team of sixteen staff, the DDC Head will work across the Libraries to share MIT's distinctive collections with the world. Success in the role will be characterized by the building of a strong, collaborative team; by the use of collections and technology to implement strategies of equity, diversity, and openness; and by realizing DDC's potential to be a partner and a platform that catalyzes discoveries in, and new approaches to, research and community.

Executing MIT's motto of *mens et manus* ("mind and hand"), the incoming Head will bring innovation, creative experimentation, nuanced management, and systems thinking to guide the work of an experienced and evolving team. The successful candidate will employ an engineering mindset to lead staff and services in transforming the use of MIT's archival and unique collections; collections that reflect the ethos of MIT as an institution that values human beings and their work process in the act of furthering science and innovation. Emerging from these last months of disruption, this focus on people as the center of change is vital.

As is made clear through the work and [communications](#) of the MIT Libraries, there is a drive to increase the demographic representation within the staff of the Libraries in addition to its initiatives to broaden information collection and access. The MIT Libraries seek professionals who enthusiastically embrace the empathy, courage, self-reflection, and respect of a multi-cultural, diverse and inclusive workplace, and have a track record of incorporating those values into their work and interactions.

With a focus on the expansive history of science and technology, art and architecture, and materials that are unique to MIT, the collections highlight the research, people, and activities that encapsulate and make possible MIT's commitment "to generating, disseminating, and preserving knowledge ... to bring this knowledge to bear on the world's great challenges." Within the last years, DDC has prioritized collection building and services for communities traditionally marginalized at MIT through the [MIT and](#)

[Slavery Project](#), [Women@MIT](#), initiatives to acquire, preserve, and make accessible the stories of gender non-binary and non-conforming individuals at MIT, and a new curricular collaboration on the [Indigenous History of MIT](#).

The [MIT Libraries](#) are on an [exciting journey of transformation](#), prioritizing a digital-first, open scholarship agenda that accelerates the progress of science, promotes equity and inclusion across disciplines, and reduces the marginalization of scholars and scholarship from disadvantaged communities. MIT Libraries has a strong history of questioning existing paradigms and strives to exercise bold leadership in defining models for research libraries in an unpredictable future. The work of the Libraries is taking place in the context of broader reflection and action at MIT, including the first Institute-wide [strategic action plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) and a wide variety of initiatives that further [open and equitable scholarship](#).

DEPARTMENT OF DISTINCTIVE COLLECTIONS

At MIT, DDC coordinates overall collection management and service strategy for the Libraries' combined rare and unique collections – the [Institute Archives](#), the [Aga Khan Documentation Center](#), the [Wunsch Conservation Laboratory](#), [visual collections](#), [personal papers](#) and [rare books](#).

DDC is a dynamic and forward-looking department serving students, staff, and researchers at MIT and globally – fully integrated and aligned with the work and vision of the MIT Libraries. As part of the Collections Directorate, DDC benefits from and informs the Libraries' comprehensive collections strategies, including the commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in the collections, and to vigorously promoting an open scholarship agenda and sharing MIT research with the world.

THE MIT LIBRARIES

To further MIT's mission to build a better world, the MIT Libraries are working to make the Institute's distinct body of knowledge more open, equitable, accessible, and durable. [Strategic initiatives](#) focused on open access, redesign of physical library space, digital preservation, and understanding and addressing barriers to participating in scholarship have been articulated through campus-wide processes, with support and leadership from the Director of Libraries, Chris Bourg, as well as the Office of the Provost.

Organized in four directorates and a research center – Collections, Research and Learning, Digital Library Services, Administrative Services, and the Center for Research on Equitable and Open Scholarship (CREOS) – the MIT Libraries leadership team is well positioned to address the [interdisciplinary priorities](#) identified by the MIT community. Recent developments within the Libraries include two new Associate Directors joining the senior leadership team in 2020 and a major renovation of the Hayden Library.

THE ROLE

The incoming Head will put into practice the goals outlined in the Libraries' [New Urgency vision](#) within DDC: accelerating the “transformation of our library into a platform for the creation, discovery, use, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge that is fully open and equitably accessible”.

To guide the DDC in accomplishing these goals, the incoming Head will lead and manage a team of sixteen staff, including the Collection Strategist, the Processing Team, the Institute Archivist, the Heads of the Wunsch Conservation Lab, the Aga Khan Documentation Center, and Public Services for Distinctive Collections, as well as librarians, archivists, and support staff (represented by AFSCME Council 93) working in these areas. The DDC Head oversees all department activities, including reference, instruction, outreach and exhibits, collection development and management, records management, digital initiatives and digital archives, MIT theses policies, and donor relations.

As a member of the Collections Directorate leadership group, the DDC Head works in concert with peers to ensure tight integration across the Directorate in building efficient and effective workflows and participates in budget planning.

Working across the MIT Libraries, the DDC Head is active in delivering an integrated portfolio of services to the MIT community, through internal partnerships, participating in Libraries-wide planning and prioritization, etc. For example, the Head will partner with colleagues in Research and Learning to develop teaching and outreach initiatives that evidence impact and ensure coordination across the Libraries of reference and user services aspects of the portfolio, and support curricular integration.

The DDC Head has responsibility for leading emergency management planning and preservation activities for all of the Libraries' physical collections, collaborating with the Director of [Digital Preservation](#) and with Digital Library Services on ensuring long term sustainability of digital collections, and with the Libraries' Facilities Administrator and MIT's department of Environmental Health and Safety for physical spaces.

Outside of the Libraries, the DDC Head is a key point of contact with MIT's other cultural heritage repositories, including the [MIT Museum](#), the [MIT List Visual Arts Center](#), and the [Archive of the Program in Art, Culture and Technology](#) and works to connect MIT's collections across campus. The DDC Head will have the opportunity to play a role nationally and internationally in collaborative strategy discussions and partnerships around discovery, access, and teaching with distinctive collections.

In advancing the goals outlined in the Libraries' “digital-first” New Urgency vision, specific opportunities and challenges will include:

- increasing the impact and reach of primary source collections;

- accelerating digital-first collection building and increasing capacity to acquire born-digital distinctive content, in the contexts of rare and unique collections and the Institute's records management program;
- building and incorporating a more diverse and inclusive lens for investigating the cultural and scientific heritage in the archival and rare collections;
- developing new collection strategies to support data-intensive and computational research and learning with rare and unique materials;
- developing an appropriately scoped and resourced strategy for the essential physical core of collections, services, and spaces that cannot be meaningfully replicated in the digital context;
- advancing the role of Distinctive Collections in promoting an open, equitable, and sustainable scholarly communications landscape;
- collaborating on technological platforms for born-digital collections and tools that scale access and support comprehensive discovery;
- prioritizing operational efficiency; and
- building user- and community-centered space and services, including working with faculty and colleagues to expand curricular integration across disciplines.

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate for the Department of Distinctive Collections Head will be an experienced leader (with at least 7 years of progressively responsible experience and 5+ years of managerial experience) with interest in creating a collaborative, team-focused environment; someone who has experience advancing equity, diversity and inclusion and sees responsible stewardship of shared cultural heritage and broad discovery of unique and rare materials as equity and social justice imperatives; an individual with an understanding of and love for technology, and who brings together an appreciation of tinkering and process with a drive to complete projects in a timely manner.

An MLS or other advanced degree in a related field, or equivalent combination of education and experience is required. Knowledge and/or experience in fields such as archives/special collections, digital archives and records management theory and practice including issues related to intellectual property, content management, access, and preservation is also expected.

The next Head will have excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to influence and collaborate effectively within and across organizational boundaries, to work successfully with a diverse population, and to build and sustain healthy, long-term, multi-project relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders. The ability to be flexible, tolerate ambiguity, set priorities effectively, and resolve competing demands in an atmosphere of fast-paced change will serve the next DDC Head well. Experience in all phases of change management, including people-centered implementation, assessment, and iteration is sought.

Project management experience and/or training, familiarity with facilities management, experience writing grants, and work with prospective and existing donors are desired.

The position is pay Grade 11 with the following range: \$106,495 - \$141,140 - \$175,760. Actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience.

MIT Libraries is an environment that welcomes any body, any mind — including all genders — and particularly encourages applications from underrepresented minorities, women, disabled applicants, and veterans. EDDA partners is [committed](#) to working openly with all and to recognizing our nation's histories of prejudicial exclusion. The Institute promotes the principle that every person brings unique qualities and talents to the community and that every individual should be treated in a respectful manner. All members of the MIT community are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, personal integrity, and respect for the rights, differences and dignity of others ([MIT Personal Conduct policy](#)).

CONTACT

Expressions of interest and nominations should be directed to Kristine O'Brien, PhD at EDDA partners via email kobrien@eddapartners.com. A CV and a letter of interest that includes a description of the candidate's particular interest in this role at MIT and highlights work related to social justice, equity, and access are requested.