National Library of Medicine report for EAHIL

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Implementing the NLM Strategic Plan – Making NLM More Efficient and Effective through Organizational Change and Data Science Training

In the last issue, I wrote about the changes we implemented to make NLM's products and services more aligned with the FAIR principles of making data and information Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Re-usable. I want to continue upating you on changes at NLM related to our most important resource – our staff. You may have already heard about the first phase of NLM's reorganization plans being implemented this year. I'll explain those changes and share news about an exciting data science development program for our staff.

Let's first take a look at the new structure of NLM in its revised organization chart:
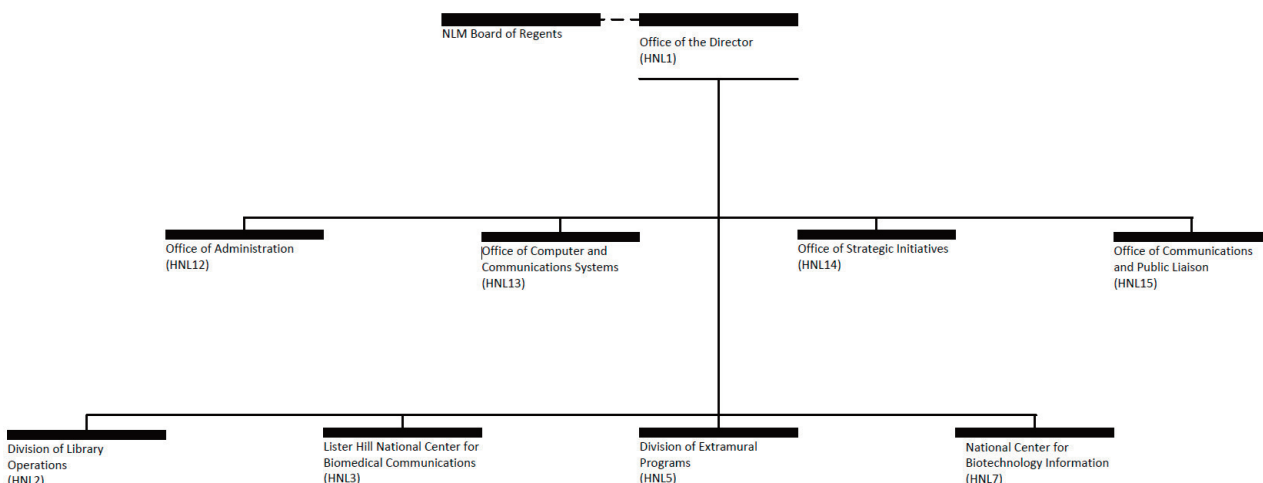
The most significant change is that the Division of Specialized Information Services (SIS) was removed. For over 50 years, SIS provided information resources for special populations covering toxicology, environmental health, outreach to the underserved, HIV/AIDS, drugs and household products, and disaster/emergency preparedness and response. Some SIS resources will continue while other resources will have information incorporated into existing NLM resources to increase findability and improve the

user experience. Other SIS resources will be retired. SIS staff will be integrated into areas of the Library where they may continue projects or take on new roles with NLM products.

Two areas within the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications were reorganized. The Office of High Performance Computing and Communications was closed and staff were reassigned to other parts of Lister Hill. The Audiovisual Programs Development Branch will be integrated into the Office of Communications and Public Liaison to more effectively promote our health information services and research advances.

The Office of Health Information Programs Development was renamed the Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI). This Office will be key in advancing NLM in data and open science, program evaluation, and tracking the implementation of the goals and objectives in NLM's 2017-27 Strategic Plan.

While planning for the implementation of these changes, our NLM Director, Dr. Brennan, has been open to staff comments, suggestions, and concerns about the new direction and vision for the Library. She held numerous town halls, attended staff and team meetings, created a dedicated email account, developed an implementation dash board that allows staff to follow what is going on, and even deployed "not so techy" paper suggestion boxes throughout staff work areas to provide everyone an opportunity to be heard, regardless of fomat. A recurring theme emerged: "How do I fit into this new data science vision and how will I gain the skills to support NLM as the epicenter of data science?"

To address these concerns, we began developing and launching a Data Science @NLM Training Program to strengthen and empower our diverse and data-centric workforce. This extensive training program, developed in partnership with Booz Allen Hamilton, will provide opportunities for all staff to particpate in a variety of data science training events throughout the year.

Events range from all-hands training sessions that dispel myths and develop a common data science vocabulary, to an intensive, 120-hour fundamentals course designed to bring a group of NLM staff together for comprehensive training combined with group projects that will use data to answer questions. Staff can participate in survey instruments that will asses their understanding across several data science competencies followed by a chance to select an aspirational persona. Combined, the resuts of these tools will provide each staff member with customized training plans to refine or build new skills. To celebrate the conclusion of this initiative, we are planning a data science open house where staff can share their data science work, group projects from the fundamentals course, and continue the dialogue across buildings, divisions, and products. The final objective of the program is to provide a detailed staff skills assessment and "roadmap" for leadership to use for short- and long-term planning to develop staff or recruit effectively to fill known skill gaps.

This Data Science @NLM Training Program initiative serves as a critical stepping-stone to provide pathways for data science learning for all NLM staff and aligns with the third goal of our strategic plan, which is to "build a data-ready workforce for the future." For some of our staff, data science is already a part of their day-to-day activities; for others, data science may not be more than a concept – and that's okay. Not everyone needs to be a data scientist, but we can all learn from one another and become more data savvy.