

Museum Leadership Institute Awarded \$484,000 Grant to Launch Leading-Edge Museum Mentoring Platform

September 26, 2019. Claremont, CA. The Museum Leadership Institute at Claremont Graduate University (MLI@CGU) has received a prestigious grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The federal grant ([MG-70-19-0055-19](#)) will fund “**POLARIS: The Museum Mentor Network**,” an innovative online mentoring platform for museum professionals.

MLI@CGU will develop, launch, and manage this project over a three-year period beginning October 2019. The new initiative will leverage MLI@CGU’s expertise in developing museum leadership programs for mid-level managers and senior-level executives. MLI@CGU has a 40-year history and has provided training to 1,800 museum professionals in over 40 countries across the globe. With an estimated 726,000 jobs in American museums, **POLARIS** aims to have broad impact on this sector of the workforce. **POLARIS** will draw on MLI@CGU’s alumni network across the United States in developing its mentor base.

POLARIS is one of 15 projects selected from a highly competitive pool of 70 applications in the IMLS “National Leadership Grants for Museums” program. The grant of \$483,764 is among the top five largest amounts awarded in this category. This is a first-time award for the Museum Leadership Institute from IMLS.

“POLARIS invests in the talents of people who work in museums,” said Toni Guglielmo, Associate Director of MLI@CGU, and Project Director for **POLARIS**. “Museums are specialized organizations, changing with the economy, and grappling with complex cultural issues. POLARIS taps areas of unrealized potential for life-long learning, leadership development, and building capacity as the mentoring pairs work together on a goal. Through the network, museum professionals can create new pathways for themselves by being mentored or mentoring others that can lead to personal and organizational growth.”

Among the robust offerings, **POLARIS** will provide active recruitment of mentors/mentees, mentor training modules, quarterly newsletters, leadership development resources, and year-end evaluations and action plans. A premier feature, the annual program cycle allows emerging and mid-level staff to connect online with peer or senior-level executives for a year-long mentoring program. In the second and third years, the project will also include two in-person regional summits to explore best practices around inclusion, diversity, equity, and access, as well as new thought leadership around mentoring and professional development. Museum professionals can join **POLARIS** for free.

“The program will reach across the sector, promoting greater inclusivity, and offering new opportunities for ongoing professional development to those with limited resources,” added Melody Kanschat, Executive Director of MLI@CGU. “In this way, it extends and complements MLI@CGU’s executive education program offerings.”

MLI@CGU is excited to partner with LeAD Labs and Graduway to implement **POLARIS**. [LeAD Labs](#) at Claremont Graduate University will support the development of mentoring curriculum.

POLARIS: THE MUSEUM MENTOR NETWORK

Graduway, an industry leader in alumni networking platforms, will work on developing a new platform and mentor matching algorithms tailored for museum professionals.

About the Museum Leadership Institute at Claremont Graduate University

Now celebrating its 40th year of empowering museum leaders, the Museum Leadership Institute at Claremont Graduate University (MLI@CGU) provides educational opportunities designed to enhance the leadership of experienced museum professionals and strengthen institutional capabilities. MLI's offerings— including transformational educational programs; convening policy makers, academics, and practitioners; and collaborations with international partners—support the museum community by helping current and future museum leaders navigate the field's most pressing challenges and opportunities. MLI@CGU runs two blended-learning programs annually: NextGen for mid-level managers, and MLI for senior-level executives. Generously supported by the Getty Foundation, over 1,800 museum professionals from leading institutions in the United States and over 40 additional countries worldwide have attended the executive education programs since 1979. MLI alumni continue to advance the field as their museums share the world's art, culture, and history with the public. For more information, visit <https://mli.cgu.edu/>.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov (<https://www.ims.gov/>) and follow us on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/USIMLS>) and Twitter (http://www.twitter.com/us_ims).

About Claremont Graduate University

Founded in 1925, Claremont Graduate University is one of a select few American universities devoted solely to graduate-level education, with more than 2,000 students pursuing graduate degrees in more than 20 distinct areas of study. The university belongs to a consortium of schools in Southern California that includes Pomona College, Pitzer College, Claremont McKenna College, Scripps College, Harvey Mudd College, and Keck Graduate Institute. Students are encouraged to look beyond the traditional disciplinary divisions and define their own unique program of study in recognition of the fact that many of the world's complex challenges and problems require solutions that are transdisciplinary in nature. CGU's other distinctions include serving as the home of the Peter F. Drucker & Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management, the Claremont Evaluation Center, and the annual Kingsley and Kate Tufts Poetry Awards. For more information, visit <https://www.cgu.edu/>.