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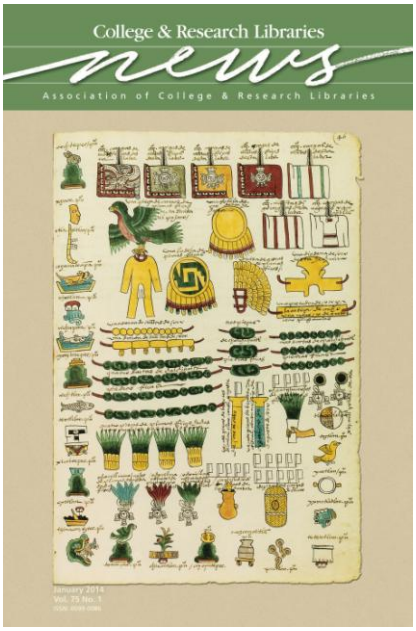
Internationalizing University of Kentucky Libraries: A Work in Progress

By Antoinette Greider

In 2007, the Provost of the University of Kentucky (UK) renewed the University's focus on international activities and formed the UK Task Force on Internationalization, a group comprising representatives from a number of areas on campus, including UK Libraries. The task force assessed the opportunities and challenges of the University's international mission and produced a white paper on internationalization. The white paper articulated the vision, "The University of Kentucky will expand the use of its significant resources to enhance interdisciplinary and inter-professional training and research on global issues, and to foster greater international exposure for students, faculty, staff and the community." Out of this white paper the International Advisory Council (IAC) was formed in 2009 with representation from each college and other supporting units on campus. The Council



***C&RL News* cover illustration from University of Kentucky**

was charged with guiding the implementation of the 2009 *Strategic Plan for Internationalization*.

In August of 2010, the Dean of Libraries established the position of Director for International Programs. The position reports to the Dean and represents campus libraries on the IAC. The first step was to meet with the Associate Provost for International Affairs to discuss how the Libraries could best support internationalization. At this meeting, five areas emerged that have shaped the programming for the past four years. The areas are:

- Support for externally focused projects
- Support for campus activities
- Visibility of existing international library collections
- Library initiated projects
- Intercultural workshops for the public service staff

A working group of interested library faculty and staff was formed and planning for internationalization began in earnest. Support for campus activities emerged as the first area of concentration. In 2010 academic year, the College of Arts and Sciences began its

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Passport to the World program, in which the college focuses on one country or region for the academic year.

The program offered programs and other educational and cultural activities. The first stamp in the "passport" was the Republic of South Africa. Library support that year was modest because most of the planning was completed by the time the library working group began its work. Library support for the Passport Program has grown each year and the library has moved from minor player to major contributor. The activities vary each year according to the country or region studied. Campus librarians have written pertinent research guides, hosted presentations, and promoted all Passport events. Collaborations were formed with student groups to organize events, such as a reception featuring an authentic Russian tea hosted by the Russian Club.

Faculty collaboration has played an important role in promoting the library's international collections. One example is the Aztec and Mayan Codex display. The library has the facsimile codices and a faculty member in the Anthropology Department chose the images and worked with a graduate student to provide scholarly descriptions of the images. The physical display was available from September 2012 to February 2013, but a virtual exhibit continues to be available at UKnowledge, the institutional repository, and will remain available indefinitely.

This exhibit received national exposure when one of its images was chosen as the cover of the January 2014 issue of *C&RL News*. The Director of International Programs went from an observer and minor player to a member of the Arts and Sciences Steering Committee sought by program chairs. Link here for a chronicle of library support for the Passport to the World Program.

The Director of International Programs also serves on the campus committee to highlight International Education Week (IEW). In 2011 and 2012, for example, the Director of International Programs developed a vexillology contest based on the flags on display in the Young Library atrium. The UK International Center advertised the contest and awarded a prize to the winner. With Mexico the focus in 2013, the working group developed a game of Mexican Jeopardy with answers based on the various displays of Mexico. During IEW, the Libraries projected slides depicting UK students studying abroad on the walls of the Information Commons. The slides were provided by the Education Abroad and Exchanges Office, a unit of the University's International Center.

The other areas initially identified have not been neglected. Library participation in externally focused projects is dependent on the scope of the project and the willingness of faculty

Flags representing Eurasian nations hang in the Young Library atrium.

members to involve the librarians. Campus librarians played a significant role in the Iraq University Linkages Program. The University hosted three groups of faculty from Kufa University in Iraq in 2011, 2012, and 2013 for training, workshops, and classroom visits. UK librarians presented lectures and provided workshops for the Iraqi participants.

The visibility of library collections has generally been tied to the Passport Program. Research guides are written to highlight the selected country or region. Additional guides are written as necessary, such as one aiding access to non-English language materials in the library. Another supports the Society of Historians for Foreign Affairs, which is holding its annual conference this month in Lexington at the invitation of the UK History Department. Link here for a complete list of research guides.

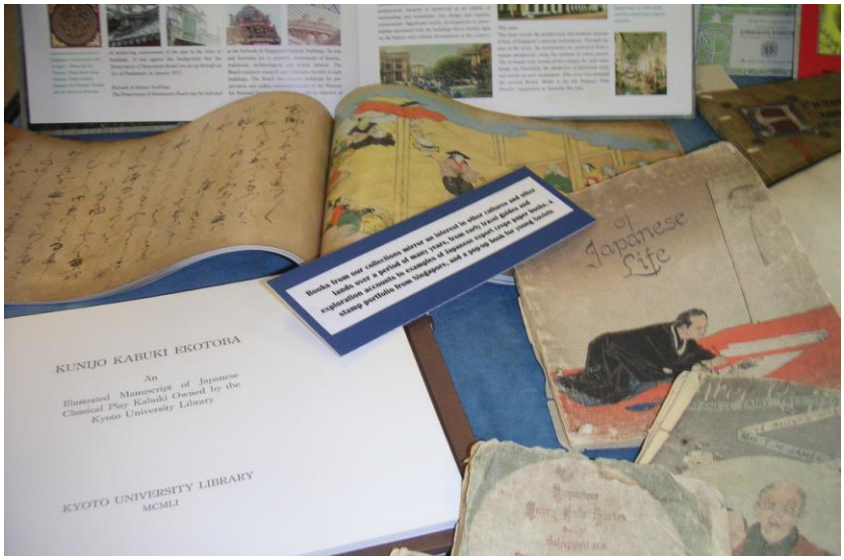
The library working group also focuses on library initiated projects. In April of 2011, two scholars from the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences took a short course on public services at the UK campus. UK librarians also worked with the College of Education to assess the impact of a Memorandum of Understanding on library services at Shanghai Normal University. In addition, each year the library staff offers support to faculty teaching abroad.

In February of 2012, in coordination with the University of Illinois' Mortenson Center, the library provided assistance to South African research libraries and hosted a South African intern who spent seven weeks on campus acquiring knowledge about the operations of American libraries. This activity was made possible through the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

In addition, UK librarians helped launch a new undergraduate curriculum with a Nation of Nations exhibit and partnered with Latin American Studies faculty and the College of Communications in hosting a video documentary about the lost grandchildren of Argentina, which included a live Skype session with the documentary director.

Through these efforts the library now plays an integral role in campus international activity. The Director of International Programs has chaired the campus-wide Education Abroad Committee for the past three years, building working relationships with faculty active in international work. The Director of International Programs also serves on the International Scholarship Committee, which awards scholarships to international students and to UK students going abroad. In the spring of 2013, collaboration between a library science graduate student and an academic advisor in the Education Abroad (EA) Office produced a library module for the EA orientation packet.

Work continues on the internationalizing of UK libraries. The working group and the Library Staff



The Young Library hosted exhibits and workshops in 2013 in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Asia Center.

Development Committee offered an intercultural workshop to staff and part-time student workers. More than 70 library staff members engaged with the Chinese Scholars and the South African intern, becoming more knowledgeable about libraries in those countries.

UK librarians increasingly are encouraged to present internationally. One will present at this year's IFLA conference and at the European Conference on Information Literacy in Croatia. It is a culture shift for library staff, but one that they increasingly are embracing.

2014 Rovelstad Scholar Selected

Janetta Pegues, a library science student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been selected to receive this year's Rovelstad Scholarship in International Librarianship. The Council on Library and Information Resources awards the scholarship.

Janetta Pegues

Pegues received a bachelor's degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago. She became interested in international librarianship while volunteering at a school in Gonaives, Haiti. "When I think about international librarianship, I think about international librarianship, I think of library professionals who are concerned about making sure the poorest people in the world have access to materials that will help them improve their lives holistically," says Pegues.

The Rovelstad Scholarship provides travel funds for a student of library and information science to attend the annual meeting of the World Library and Information Congress, which this year takes place in Lyon, France, in August.

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the IRRT Executive Board, we hope to see you at the ALA annual conference.

The temperature will be high as will be the excitement around all the events planned by IRRT leaders for the conference. Beginning with the IRRT Pre-Conference on Friday morning and ending with the gala International Librarians Reception on Monday night, you will find an array of enjoyable and informative activities to partake in.

The International Visitors Center will be a place to meet, relax, and get ready for more walking, talking, and interacting with IRRT members and friends from around the world.

This is my final message as 2013-2014 IRRT Chairperson. Thank you to all the member leader volunteers who chaired and served on committees, worked on special task forces, contributed articles to International Leads, sent encouraging messages and, especially, to a hard-working and supportive executive board.

Robin Kear will begin her 2014-2015 term as Chairperson on July 1, ably assisted by John Hickok, the newly elected Chair-Elect of our round table. I know that they will have your support and that they will provide thoughtful and productive leadership to IRRT.

Carol Ritzen Kem, Ph.D.
IRRT Chair, 2013-2014