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From Fürstenwalde to Kyoto: The Internationalization of an Academic Library

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Introduction

In the fall of 2005, Troy University began what would be a robust internationalization effort, in which the University Libraries have ultimately played a significant role. Many of the faculty and the staff at the main campus library were born in Troy, AL and attended college there. Several of the librarians left the town of their birth only briefly to attend the state university for their MLIS, and then quickly returned to the comfort of the town and college they had always known. When Troy University began its process toward internationalization, some viewed it as much more than a paradigm shift; but it was also viewed with apprehension. It would take time for some people to recognize that through this process of internationalization a wealth of cultural knowledge could be exchanged between the international students and the existing Troy community. Today, Troy University's main campus has a student population that is more than 14% international with students representing over 74 nations. Activities take place throughout the year that allow for all cultures to learn from each other. Many of these endeavors are facilitated through The Confucius Institute, which now partners with Troy University. By examining the activities and steps taken by Troy University's librarians, it is possible to demonstrate how their combined initiatives can serve as a case study for other libraries looking to internationalize.

Many universities face challenges that lead to librarians being insecure about a university's internationalization. It is not unusual for people who are from a rural college town to grow up, go to school, and then look for a job back in their hometown at the local college. Such individuals value the social networks these familiar places offer them (Cromartie et al., 2015). A strong international body can do much to increase the diversity of thought at a university, and can potentially keep a campus from becoming too insulated from the outside world (Hegarty, 2014). The library can play the role of leader in the university community by exposing its faculty, staff, and patrons to a variety of ideas outside of their accustomed cultural norms. This role can be achieved by utilizing a number of fellowships and grants that are available to libraries and librarians as well as through the judicious use of travel funds to support librarians participating in conferences and seminars that will improve their knowledge of other cultures. Doing so will have a threefold benefit for academic librarians. First, by placing librarians in foreign cultures, and allowing them to meet people from various international backgrounds, empathy

can be created that will lead to better interactions with international students at home libraries. Such experiences can also lead to librarians searching for opportunities to develop programming based on international topics that can in turn help domestic students at a university better understand other cultures. Finally, following such experiences, librarians may choose to look for opportunities that further develop their institutions' collections on various international topics.

Nearly one-third of Troy University's librarians have participated in an abroad experience in the past five years. Upon their return each was asked to make a presentation to the other librarians. In these presentations, as well as in discussions with their supervisors, all indicated they felt rejuvenated, and most developed library programming related to their trip and what they learned. One librarian ultimately was selected as one of ten librarians nationwide to receive the annual *I Love My Librarian Award*, which is given by the Carnegie Corporation, New York Times, New York Public Library, and the American Library Association. Another librarian was invited to teach an introductory course in Japanese literature as a result of a fellowship with the Freeman Institute.

Literature Review

Over the past several decades, internationalization and globalization have become common terms in the academic world. According to the Institute of International Education (2017), over one million international students were studying in the United States during the 2016-2017 academic year. This number has increased each year for the past decade. Although the number of US students studying abroad is much lower than that, the number has been increasing each year. Over half of the students who came to America for higher education came from Asia – countries such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Vietnam (Institute of International Education, 2017). Studies show that studying abroad has many benefits such as increased intercultural skills, knowledge for future jobs, and more marketability in the workforce. In addition to this, 90% of those who studied abroad were accepted into one of their top two choices for graduate studies, and those who study abroad are “twice as likely to find a job” within a year of graduation (University of California, Merced, 2017). With information and statistics such as this, it is no wonder that people choose to study in other countries and gain that experience.

Universities and the United States economy also feel benefits of this internationalization. According to the NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool, international students contribute a total of \$39 billion to the US economy while creating over 450,000 additional jobs. This tool breaks these numbers down by state and even by institution. Based on the 2017-2018 academic year, the international student population at Troy University benefited the institution and local economy by \$25.9 million and supported 142 jobs (NAFSA, 2019). These numbers show the importance of internationalization not just at the local or state level, but also at the national level.

What does this push toward internationalization mean for academic libraries? How should librarians change their outlook and services to better accommodate this shift in outlook? How do librarians need to prepare for their university to internationalize? Han and Hall (2012) state that “Academic librarians need to constantly survey international students’ information needs and ensure them a welcome experience.” According to Alan Bundy (2003), “...libraries and librarians should be proactive participants in the evolution of the twenty-first century educational paradigm,” but how can librarians assist in this cultural transition? Literature abounds on the topic of academic internationalization, but information specific to libraries is not as plentiful. However, the literature is beginning to increase on this topic. Some sources explored the idea of teaching more about internationalization at the library graduate school level. This would allow upcoming librarians to get the appropriate information and training before entering the field and have a “cross border perspective” (Abdullahi et al., 2007; Click et al., 2017, Kajberg, 2004), but those already in the library workforce may have missed that specialized training.

Several ideas were prominent throughout the literature that shed light on ideas that librarians can use to serve international students. Often, universities host groups of academics, or visiting scholars. This type of sponsorship allows educators from other countries to come to America and visit educational institutions, which also allows the American counterparts to learn about the scholars’ home countries and cultures. Librarians can take this opportunity to meet with these visiting scholars, train them on the library and resources, and take the time to learn about other libraries worldwide. The library is a common thread among universities, but resources and services offered may vary drastically, so it is vital that these scholars learn what is available, based upon the programs offered and the needs of the students and faculty (Ganster, 2011). For example, some libraries in Europe and Asia have historically had closed stacks, while it is common practice for academic libraries in the United States to have open stacks and allow patrons to roam freely throughout in order to find books serendipitously. Explaining the library’s organization and set-up helps alleviate confusion on matters both small and large (Peters, 2010).

An oft-overlooked way that librarians can increase globalization is to reach those students already affiliated

with the university. When students plan to study abroad, the library can provide useful tools for them, such as reminders that they will still have access to their home university’s electronic resources while abroad. Students may not realize that they can use the international site’s resources as well as their home site’s databases and eBooks, plus any online assistance provided such as chat, email, or texting. Libraries can also purchase books or databases to help inform students of the various customs and traditions of those foreign locales. What is acceptable and common practice in the United States may be considered rude or improper in other countries. These resources can provide basic information that will make students’ transitions more seamless (Witt et al., 2015).

Additional ideas mentioned concerning this topic include international exchanges, visiting librarian (or scholar) programs, and working with international libraries to “jointly sponsor conference and research projects” (Hammond, 2009). Sister Library partnerships—through which United States libraries agree to cooperate in a variety of ways—are becoming an increasingly popular way to promote internationalization for the library and the university. These partnerships allow the institutions to communicate, exchange ideas, provide titles or topics for collection development in targeted areas, and, in some cases, international travel to visit the other site. Partnerships of this nature are fostered through the American Library Association’s Sister Libraries Committee. Mattson and Hickok (2018) mentioned Penn State as a prime example of such a partnership. They had such a successful sister library program that “permanent funds are allocated to facilitate the sister library partnerships themselves. There are also university-supported grant and award opportunities for funding in support of the libraries partnerships” (Mattson and Hickok, 2018).

Library programming is another avenue that can inform students of international topics and issues, or expose them to ideas that they may not have had access to while growing up (Bordonaro, 2006). These can educate not only the American students, but also the international students studying at the University. Partnering with international organizations and hosting events can increase library usage, educate students, increase students’ interest in international topics, and make international students feel more welcome and understood (Tobias et al., nd).

Han and Hall (2012) spotlight using LibGuides as a way to reach the international students, and tailoring the guides to meet the specific needs for each university. Using LibGuides to explain library terms and providing greater explanations and details, such as a glossary, may be beneficial to international students since many may not understand library lingo. Providing basic and common words may be more preferable for these students. This attention to language, slowing the speed at which librarians talk, and creating a friendly and inviting environment is critical to library orientation sessions and library tours for

incoming international students (Bordonaro, 2006; Han and Hall, 2012).

Exemplars

The first time a librarian from Troy University participated in an international fellowship was with the Goethe Institute's TransAtlantic Outreach Program (TOP) in 2007. Primarily designed for K-12 social studies teachers, academic librarians who influenced social studies curricula were allowed to participate at that time. Participants visited two concentration camps, spent a week in Berlin and visited the Reichstag, Berlin Wall, Brandenburg Gate, and several sites relating to World War II. Another town that was visited was Gorkitz, a town split in half following World War II along a river. Most of the group walked across a bridge to visit the Polish side of the town, named Zgorzelec. They also visited an apple farm that was using a unique apple hybrid to revitalize the area's economy, and had lunch with the mayor of Furstenwalde, where the recipe for Sapporo Beer was created. At the time, it did not occur to that librarian that ten years later he would be drinking another Sapporo in Japan via another fellowship.

A fellowship such as the TOP Program is irrelevant if it does not impact the librarian's institution, students, and faculty in a positive manner upon the librarian's return home. Out of the TOP program came a robust series of programming by the Troy University Libraries at all three of its locations that were focused on Holocaust history and its lessons. TOP Fellows are expected to make presentations to teachers at the K-12 level about the study abroad trip and lesson plans relating to Germany that the Goethe Institute makes available free of charge, which led to connections being made with area schools. Consequently, with those connections it was possible to facilitate bringing local students to the University for future programming events. Ultimately, this same librarian was appointed by Alabama's governor to serve on the Alabama Holocaust Commission.

Following the TOP program, librarians developed plans to bring Ann Rosenheck, a Holocaust survivor, to Troy University to share her story of survival, hope, and forgiveness. She was ultimately seen by 1,500 students, faculty, and community members. Mrs. Rosenheck's visit was largely funded through a grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF). She spoke at all three Troy University libraries, as well as at a public elementary school and a private high school. Because of the success of Mrs. Rosenheck's visit, the University Libraries and Sponsored Programs department hosted a Year of Holocaust Remembrance the next year. These events included another series of lectures by Mrs. Rosenheck; hosting the founder of the Paper Clips Project, Sandra Roberts, to share her story in which students collected 6 million paper clips in order to more concretely understand the magnitude of the lives lost in the Holocaust; and bringing in a traveling exhibit of photographs and paintings from the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center (BHEC) that was inspired by survivors of the Holocaust who immigrated to Birmingham, Alabama following World War

II. The Libraries also hosted a workshop for K-12 teachers on how to teach about the Holocaust that was led by the BHEC's Ann Moellengarten. Troy University's administration worked with the University Libraries to defray as many costs for teachers as possible. Registration was free, and Troy University paid for substitute teachers for all attendees, which enabled teachers to attend who otherwise might not have been able.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) offers two international-themed programs for librarians, both focused on Asia. A librarian from Troy University's Dothan campus participated in the Japan Studies Institute (JSI) on Incorporating Japanese Studies into the Undergraduate Curriculum in 2008 at San Diego State University. Participants learned about not only Japanese history, culture, and society, but also practical information so that they could return to their own universities and provide educational experiences to their students relating to Japan. JSI participants participated in a wide range of activities over more than two weeks that included in-class lectures, hands-on activities such as flower arranging, learning the basics of writing in kanji, and participating in a tea ceremony.

JSI participants were also provided with information about several grant programs that led to a variety of successful grants on the part of the University Libraries. Among the granting agencies that were discussed was the Association of Asian Studies' (AAS) Northeast Asia Council (NEAC), which offers instructional materials grants for materials relating to both Japan and Korea. Over a period of several years, with the Libraries contributing an equal match in funds, the NEAC provided \$4,000 for book and film purchases on Japanese and Korean topics.

Another institution that was mentioned at JSI was the Nippon Foundation. The Nippon Foundation had a donation program that has since become inactive, named "Read Japan." The Foundation developed a list of books they labeled "100 Books for Understanding Contemporary Japan," that libraries around the world could apply to receive free. Two of Troy University's libraries applied for and received these collections, minus titles that were already held in their collections and that were in good condition.

JSI participants were also eligible to be selected to go for a future in-country visit to Japan following the seminar at SDSU. There was no application process, so the Troy University librarian who participated in JSI in 2007 was quite surprised to learn he was invited to participate in such an opportunity in 2017. This trip was focused more on the development of university partnerships and exchanges. Participants met with representatives from 13 different universities. They visited Tokyo, Kyoto, and Beppu, and learned more about Japanese society through excursions to places such as bamboo forests, museums, textile producers, and the museum dedicated to the world's first use of the atomic bomb on a population, Hiroshima.

Stemming from this second JSI experience are two significant planned initiatives. The first is to develop an exchange with another university for Troy University students. This will allow the library to more truly integrate itself into the study abroad phase of the University's internationalization push. Second, plans are being developed to host a series of diverse programming relating to Japanese culture that will include lectures, free films, and events such as demonstrating the Japanese tea ceremony.

Exposure to international opportunities may also lead to academic librarians being more active within their professional organizations. Following his Germany experience with TOP, that librarian discovered the American Library Association's (ALA) Sister Libraries committee and became a member. With information learned through the committee, and thanks to the advantage of having a Ukrainian librarian on his faculty, it was possible for the Libraries to establish a sister library relationship with Kirovohrad State Pedagogical University in Ukraine. A few years after serving two terms as a member of the Sister Libraries Committee, the librarian was elected to a Member-at-Large seat on the ALA's International Relations Roundtable (IRRT). This allowed him to not only expand his knowledge relating to international librarianship, but also further develop connections and ideas that could potentially increase the Troy University Libraries' international initiatives.

Troy University hosts numerous study abroad opportunities each year, and, through one of those, one of our librarians was able to visit China in 2015 through a program with The Confucius Institute. This was completed as part of her International MBA degree and was a prime opportunity for her to learn more about not only the business aspect of Chinese corporations, but also the literary side of the Chinese culture. She was able to visit libraries throughout China and learn more about the culture, literary history, and current library trends within the context of that culture. Because Troy University is such an internationally focused university, and because a large percentage of those international students come from China, this librarian is now able to connect more closely with those Chinese students. She works with the ESL and Chinese scholars who come to Troy, so when they find out she has visited China, they tend to feel like they have something in common, which creates a connection, allowing them to talk more openly with her.

Two of our librarians took advantage of a study abroad opportunity through the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. One visited England, and the other visited the Czech Republic. These trips allowed them to travel across the countries to learn about the library systems, the history, and current usage trends. Each trip had its own focus and varied greatly as far as the historical views of the library and literary freedoms for the different countries. Both countries have a long history of libraries and literature, but the Czech Republic was unique since it had been under Communist rule from 1948-1989, and experienced much

literary suppression. It is a pleasant irony that Czechoslovakia's first elected leader was the author and playwright Vaclav Havel. Posters throughout Prague proclaimed "Havel na Hrad," which translates to Havel to the Castle, which houses the president's office.

Being open to different cultures and wanting to share in those experiences has allowed the Troy University Libraries to take part in numerous grant opportunities over the past decade. Participating in grant-related public outreach activities was viewed positively by university administrators, who recognized they were potential recruiting tools. Furthermore, by working within the context of a grant, it was possible to host events that might not have otherwise been approved, such as a wine and cheese reception on the opening night of a film festival. Two Troy campuses have taken part in the Tournees French Film Festival for a number of years. This grant focuses on showing French Films on campuses nationwide, and helps students learn more about French cinema and culture. As previously mentioned, Troy University is located in a somewhat rural area, so many Troy students have not been afforded the chance to experience films other than American blockbusters. Students were able to watch the movies free of charge, learn a bit about the film, as well as learn about French history and culture at the same time. These grants also allow collaboration between departments on campus, further enriching our campus footprint.

Recommendations

Although each institution may differ, these are a few factors and recommendations to consider when implementing an internationalization program:

- Library administration and faculty should determine in a collaborative manner what their goals are. The goal for the Troy University Library was to provide international experiences to interested librarians in order to better familiarize them with other cultures, which in turn—in theory—would make them more sensitive to international students' needs. However, standards had to be developed for selecting librarians who want to participate in international travel. This insures that the best personnel are selected for such opportunities. For instance, those who have more interactions with international students in their subject areas may benefit more from international travel and exposure than those with fewer international student interactions. In addition to this, Troy University has several sites across Asia, but only specific programs are offered at these sites, so it may make more sense for the subject liaison for those specific areas to travel to those locations. Of course, budgeting and staffing are major considerations in fulfilling this goal.
- The second goal for Troy University's Library was to develop a series of outreach programming in order to teach the overall University

community about a range of international topics. An important factor for this goal was to develop a relationship with the Sponsored Program Office, which sends out information on upcoming fellowships and grants. This goal also allows the Library to collaborate with other departments on campus, and sometimes allows the Library to form partnerships with community organizations.

- Staffing: Regardless of the type of internationalization program that is desired, staffing must be considered. For organizational purposes, it is useful to place one librarian in charge of international initiatives. If a library is interested in some sort of exchanges, leading students on international trips, or in any other endeavor that could cause staffing shortages, there should be reflection as to whether the library can spare the personnel during such periods without impairing the day-to-day business of the library.
- Budget: Before any new initiative is launched, an institution's budget must be considered. Depending on the type of international programs a library is wanting to engage in, only a minimal amount of funding may be needed. For instance, should librarians decide they want to host a film series, screening rights usually cost between \$200 and \$500. However, if the program is going to involve international travel, then it may be necessary to either reallocate funds within the budget, or request increased funding as a result of a new initiative being developed.

Conclusion

The Troy University librarians who have participated in international experiences have discovered a variety of positive and beneficial outcomes that help them perform their roles better. In post-trip presentations to library faculty and administrators, librarians who have participated in trips abroad have indicated that they are more empathetic

to international students' needs and challenges. Because of their in-country visits, they pointed out that they are better able to understand what it is like to be in a place where everyone speaks a different language, and what it is like to be "the other."

The Libraries received positive attention from the University's senior leadership as a result of their internationalization endeavors. Annually, the university's deans make presentations to the institution's leader in what are known as Chancellor's Briefings. Encouraged by the University Libraries' efforts regarding internationalization, the Chancellor was complimentary of the initiative shown by librarians for finding international opportunities, and said he was pleased with the learning opportunities for the student body that were generated as a result. Later, in an email, the Chancellor wrote the dean of libraries, and thanked him for his work in encouraging increased internationalization and programming, and that in so doing he had increased the library's overall relevance to the university's mission. He also requested the University Libraries consider developing a study abroad program that would further increase its role in the overall internationalization effort of the University.

Finally, one good thing often leads to another. Once librarians began creating programming around international topics, they also were often inspired to continue their efforts in other areas, because of the confidence they gained in terms of grants received and audience attendance. As a result, library programming on topics from quilting to African American cowboys in the American West to writing workshops were developed. This programming also led to several collaborations on projects with members of the teaching faculty, which led to better relationships between the various colleges at the university and the library. Although this case study focused on events in an academic library, other libraries can find ways to replicate these ideas or grow upon them to meet the needs of their students, patrons, and institutions.

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