A. M. Salaz, Kayo Chang, Meggan Houlihan, and Sally Birch

The future of U.S. university international branch campus libraries

Challenges and opportunities

Among the trends affecting academic libraries today, one of the fastest growing is the internationalization of higher education. Greater numbers of universities are expanding operations overseas, and universities from the United States lead this trend.[1] The growing number of international interuniversity partnerships, exchanges, degree programs and campuses being established by U.S. universities means that academic librarians are increasingly likely to either be involved in (or know colleagues involved in) the support of international and cross-border programs.

International branch campuses (IBCs) offer full degree programs in an international host location. Of the more than 280 IBCs around the world today,[1] large proportions are concentrated in the Arab Gulf and Southeast Asia, where governments have invested heavily in higher education as a way of meeting economic diversification and human development goals. IBCs generally offer all the services and support you would find at the main campus, including libraries, student services, and more. But the libraries that support these campuses face unique challenges and constraints, some of which have just begun to be explored in recent publications.[2,3] As trends indicate that internationalization is set to continue unabated,[4] it is essential that we continue to explore, communicate about, and support these new roles.

Below, three librarians from libraries in the major IBC hubs of the Arab Gulf and Asia describe challenges and opportunities they have encountered in administration and management, professional competencies and development, and user services and instruction.—*A. M. Salaz, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar*

Administration and management— Kayo Chang, Savannah College of Art and Design (Hong Kong)

SCAD Hong Kong is a U.S. art and design university with locations in Savannah and Atlanta, Georgia; Hong Kong; and Lacoste, Southern France. The Lacoste campus is a study abroad location only, and the library has no permanent library staff. The libraries in Savannah, Atlanta, and Hong Kong are all linked by one integrated library system. Jen Library in Savannah holds approximately 125,000 volumes, ACA Library in Atlanta has 64,000 volumes, and SCAD Hong Kong Library has 15,000 volumes. While SCAD has distinct locations in different parts of the world, it functions as one university. The head librarians

A. M. Salaz is reference and instruction librarian at Carnegie Mellon University-Qatar, email: asalaz@cmu.edu, Kayo Chang is head librarian at Savannah College of Art and Design-Hong Kong, email: kchang@scad.edu, Meggan Houlihan is first-year experience and instruction librarian at New York University-Abu Dhabi, email: meggan.houlihan@nyu.edu, Sally Birch is information services librarian at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, email: sab2019@qatar-med.cornell.edu

in all locations and the library director meet biweekly via videoconference to guarantee that students are obtaining the same library experience system-wide.

SCAD Hong Kong is committed to replicating the U.S.-style education system in order to provide students with a consistent quality experience across all locations. Like many IBC libraries, however, we rely heavily on paraprofessional staff who are local, nonexpatriate hires. As a Canadian-educated head librarian, it can be challenging to manage and train locally hired, Hong Kong-based library staff. Two of the unique management concerns in this context are language and culture.

To simulate the U.S. education system, all SCAD employees are expected to communicate in English to each other and to the students, which is at times challenging when local staff and students find it easier to communicate in Cantonese. I encourage library staff to enhance their English skills by checking out books from the library and attending English-language seminars and courses.

Cultural barriers can prove to be challenging while working on library-wide projects. For instance, during the summer of 2016, we tested a library user experience toolkit developed by a group of SCAD students and faculty in collaboration with the library director. Each head librarian was given a toolkit and tasked with testing the activities inside. Leading my local staff in this initiative gave me the opportunity to problem solve, as the staff were initially hesitant about the toolkit, which was written in English and used many technical terms related to user experience.

Furthermore, this project required staff members' creative thinking and active participation. The local staff were educated in a setting where creative thinking and speaking up were not encouraged. As a result, they found contributing to the project difficult because they are more comfortable receiving direct instruction and following directives, rather than operating independently and taking the initiative to develop their own ideas.

To help local library staff participate effectively, I established creative ways to enable them to reflect on their experiences and share their opinions. For instance, I explained the objectives of each activity multiple times, using relevant examples that demystified English jargon. To alleviate their anxiety about expressing their views, I asked questions about the contexts they were familiar with, while consciously fostering a positive and safe environment. This was a productive team-building experience, as the local staff gained confidence and ultimately believed that their contribution to the project was valuable.

Although language and cultural barriers can be exigent in a work environment, the process of overcoming these challenges and building a strong team is rewarding. Patience and creative thinking are essential in managing and training local staff in an IBC library context.

Professional competencies and development—Meggan Houlihan, New York University (Abu Dhabi)

IBC campuses and library employees represent myriad nationalities and academic backgrounds, and NYUAD is no different. ALA-accredited or equivalent degree-holding librarians fulfill the majority of librarian roles, while paraprofessional staff tend to be local to the branch. This culturally diverse workplace calls for IBC employees to be culturally sensitive.

Some issues that may arise in the workplace are associated with timeliness, dress, and attitudes toward libraries. In Abu Dhabi, for example, one might decide that it's worse to cut short a conversation than to be on time for the next meeting. With regard to dress, depending on location, it might not be socially acceptable to show your elbows, shoulders, or knees. Attitudes toward libraries and librarians can be very different abroad. Some of our patrons have only visited a library that they bribed their way into, and others were never allowed to ask questions of librarians.

Flexibility is essential to a successful work environment at an IBC library. Often, technical support is centralized at the main campus many time zones away, which results in service lags. Catalog records will be corrected, and database links will be restored, it just may take

a bit of time. IBC libraries tend to be smaller, which means that librarians and library staff may need to wear multiple hats. Librarians in this setting can expect to gain valuable on-the-job experience and build up their CVs quickly.

Many IBCs encourage intercampus collaboration through participation in committees and work exchanges. For example, at NYUAD, librarians from Abu Dhabi are encouraged to work in New York every year, and vice versa. Engaging in meaningful professional development (PD) of this kind while employed at an IBC can be both challenging and extremely rewarding.

Local PD participation is important and almost always welcomed, but several factors including language, geographic location, and funding are major sources of concern. For expatriate librarians who do not speak the local language, participation in a national or regional library association can be difficult, which results in lost opportunities for knowledge sharing. IBC librarians can organize webinars, regional workshops, and conferences, using locally sourced expertise to provide free PD opportunities for the local library community. For example, the Information Literacy Network of the Gulf[5] hosts biyearly free workshops in English for library and information practitioners across the Gulf region.

Staying engaged in organizations such as ACRL are important to many IBC librarians, especially those on the tenure or promotion track who need to keep their CVs relevant and updated. Honestly speaking, participation in U.S. library organizations can be difficult. Some committees have standing meetings at 3 p.m. on Fridays, which, if you're in the Middle East, is the equivalent to working at 11 p.m.

There are a number of steps that U.S. professional organizations could take to help include IBC and international librarians in professional development, such as:

• Rotate meeting and webinar times and dates to enable global participation, with special attention to the time zones of major IBC hubs in the Arab Gulf and Southeast Asia.

• Translate important documentation into multiple languages. Currently, the ACRL Framework has been translated, which is a positive step.

• Do not require conference travel for participation on committees, and find alternatives, where possible. Many librarians/libraries cannot afford transoceanic travel.

User services and instruction—Sally Birch, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (Qatar)

The Distributed eLibrary (DeLib) was established by Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) in partnership with the Qatar Foundation in 2001 as a predominantly electronic library. Its mandate was to create a "library without walls" and to use technology to promote information resources within as well as beyond the classroom. This provided opportunities and some interesting challenges, including language (English is the second language of many of our students and faculty), technology, as WCM-Q is primarily an Apple environment in a predominantly PC world and culture. Culturally, all library staff need to be aware that men and women may not shake hands with each other due to their religious beliefs. Instead, the hand is placed over the heart and combined with a short head bow. Even though the classes and student population are coed, there is still a real gender division.

One major difference between DeLib and the Weill Cornell Medicine Samuel J. Wood Library in New York is that we have the WCM-Q Foundation Program and pre-medical programs and they do not, which is reflected in our collection as well as our instruction programs. The Foundation Program is a one-year program intended to be a pathway to entering to the pre-medical program. As of October 2016, DeLib manages a small print book collection (approximately 3,000) as well as more than 24,000 ebooks and nearly 10,000 ejournals, plus a collection of DVDs. DeLib provides 24/7 access to its users. Accordingly, a chat service has been established in collaboration with the New York library to respond to chat queries when the Qatar library is closed, and vice-versa.

Embracing our electronic mandate, librarians have developed short videos on using library resources. They have also used Lib-Guides to create subject and course support guides. A structured approach to information literacy for WCM-Q students was adopted in accordance with DeLib's Strategic Plan. The ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education were mapped to the library sessions. Librarians then drafted Logic Models for the Foundation Program, pre-medical, and medical programs to support the design of an information literacy program. The major challenge facing librarians was the time and availability of access to the students. One-shot library sessions were the norm and totally at the discretion of the faculty in giving up some of their valuable class time.

One solution came in adopting the flipped teaching technique and using the newly acquired learning management system, Canvas. In striving for new, innovative ways to reach our users (students, faculty, and affiliated faculty), librarians have begun to provide Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education and Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners accredited literacy sessions. Although they have been very well received, logistical issues of timing, traffic, parking, and so forth have conspired to derail these sessions as most of our faculty and affiliated faculty spend time at local hospitals and clinics. Librarians are now considering designing webinars to alleviate these problems.

Looking back at where we started in 2001, we have grown tremendously in how we approach metaliteracy, which expands the scope of traditional information skills to include critical thinking and reflection. Challenges continue to be language, time, technology, and culture. DeLib librarians will continue to search out new frontiers in order to provide the best services for all of our users.

Looking ahead—A. M. Salaz

These reflections of practice in IBC settings demonstrate unique constraints and challenges, as well as common ones, which library and information practitioners in domestic settings will immediately recognize. IBC librarians use LibGuides and build instructional programs just like at home. On the other hand, the resources and training for librarians to develop these skills may be more readily available in the United States than they are internationally.

It is our hope that you will recognize how significantly educational transnationalization is affecting the working lives and professional practice of so many of our colleagues. As U.S. higher education institutions take bigger and faster steps to broaden and globalize, it is essential to incorporate this trend into our planning as a profession. In what additional ways can or should our profession broaden and globalize to keep pace?

Librarians practicing in U.S. higher education abroad should not be viewed as in the margins of our professional community, but as representatives of the future. Let's tackle these exciting new frontiers together.

Notes

1. Kevin Kinser and Jason E. Lane, "C-BERT Branch Campus Listing" Cross-Border Education Research Team, http://globalhigh-ered.org/?page_id=34 (accessed November 3, 2016).

2. Harriett Green, "Libraries Across Land and Sea: Academic Library Services on International Branch Campuses," *C&RL* 74, no. 1 (2013): 9-23, http://crl.acrl.orgzz/content/74/1/9.full.pdf+html.

3. Nicole E. Brown and Jill Barr-Walker, "Collaboration and Innovation 'Across Land and Sea': Developing Global Library Orientations," *C&RL News* 74, no. 9 (2013): 484-487, http://crln.acrl.org/content/74/9/484.full.

4. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, "International Branch Campuses: Even More Developments," www.obhe.ac.uk/newsletters/borderless_report_march_2012/international_branch_campuses_even_more_developments (accessed September 24, 2016).

5. Information Literacy Network of the Gulf, http://iln-gulf.org (accessed September 26, 2016). ✄