2017

Beyond Traditional Librarianship: Librarians' Roles in an International Education and Exchange Program

Ping Fu

Beyond Traditional Librarianship:
Librarians' Roles in an International Education and Exchange Program

Elizabeth Brown
Central Washington University
United States
elizabeth.brown@cwu.edu

Ping Fu
Central Washington University
United States
ping.fu@cwu.edu

Ginny Blackson
Central Washington University
United States
Ginny.Blackson@cwu.edu

ABSTRACT: This paper describes a case study of embedded librarianship at the James E. Brooks Library of Central Washington University (CWU). It discusses how librarians engaged teaching and learning through an international exchange and education program with a Chinese university and collaborated with the University English as Second Language (UESL) program at CWU in developing a UESL conditional admission proposal for graduate studies. Through reviewing the five stages of the engagement, milestones, and activities at each stage, using existing embedded librarianship concepts, and examining the embedded librarianship model developed by the librarians at CWU, this paper suggests that librarians develop methods beyond traditional librarianship to build rapport with teaching faculty and academic departments. Although it is an individual case, this brings insight to librarians and libraries to think about strategies and appropriate ways to better engage teaching faculty and academic departments. The librarians' roles in this collaboration have been highly evaluated and appreciated by CWU administration as well as academic colleges and departments. The interactions between the academic departments and the library have been greatly improved through the collaboration. Additionally, the challenges for librarians and libraries to launch such an outreach effort are discussed.

I. Introduction

Central Washington University (CWU) is a public 4-year university located in Ellensburg, a small university town in the middle of Washington State. Nearly all students who attend CWU are in-state residents. In fact, just about 5% of freshmen are from out of state. International students

account for only 1.5-2.0% of the student population. In recent years, there have been significant changes in size and scope of international students. Since 2013, CWU began adopting the Responsibility Center Management (RCM) model, which provides a financial incentive for colleges and departments to generate additional revenue by recruiting more international students. The Office of International Studies and Programs (OISP) is rapidly expanding in size and scope. Currently, OISP serves nearly 600 language learning, undergraduate- and graduate-level international students, many of whom are Chinese, Japanese, and Korea (CJK) students. According to the Institute of International Education (2008), "Few countries have seen such rapid economic and educational change in so short a time period as China" (p. 1). China has become the largest supplier of international students to the United States. Establishing international educational exchange programs with Chinese universities becomes a high priority for OISP and academic departments at CWU.

According to Helms (2014), Joint Dual Degree Programs (JDDPs) are usually "initiated by a variety of parties at both the home institution and the partner institution abroad" (p. 20). Helms' study shows that "at doctoral institutions the most common instigator was a faculty member at the home institutions; at master's institutions, it was a home campus administrator. At baccalaureate institutions, there was a more even split among home campus administrators, home campus faculty, and partner-campus administrators" (p. 20). Librarians and libraries seldom were involved in such programs' start-up and administration. Therefore, this is a new avenue for exploring how traditional embedded librarianship can be adapted to assist in this process.

CWU is a masters offering institution and currently has four colleges: College of Arts and Humanities, College of Business, College of Education and Professional Studies, and College of the Sciences. In February 2014, the then-Provost sent a faculty delegation to China to seek more opportunities in teaching and research collaborations with Chinese universities and government agencies. The delegation consisted of five faculty members from the four colleges and the Library. Each college had a designated faculty representative in the delegation. A Chinese American librarian from Brooks Library was chosen by the Dean of Libraries as the designated faculty representative in the delegation. During the trip, the Chinese American librarian visited several universities in China. One Chinese university, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (NUAA), expressed its interests in establishing certain programs with CWU. NUAA is a national university in China. The College of Arts and the College of Computer Science and Technology at NUAA had particular interest in building a 2+2 program and/or a 3+2 joint master degree program with CWU. This partnership allows qualified students from NUAA in China to be nominated to matriculate in the CWU degree programs to continue receiving advanced education in the United States.

This paper describes a case study of embedded librarianship at the Brooks Library of Central Washington University and its involvement in two academic partnerships to assist international students. In these examples, the librarians collaborated on the development of an international exchange and education program with a Chinese university, and collaborated with the University English as a Second Language (UESL) program in developing a proposal with UESL for a conditional admission for graduate studies program.

II. Literature Review

The term embedded librarianship has come to hold multiple meaning in the academic library field. Schulte's (2012) study of embedded librarianship research noted its "polysemantic nature" (p. 123). Scholarship on the topic can range from co-teaching credit-bearing courses to serving as the subject specialist to assist with faculty and student research (Schulte, 2012; Delaney & Bates, 2015). While these models increase librarians' proactive engagement with the university community, they still heavily depend on traditional library services and student populations. Reaching underrepresented student populations, like international students, still presents a challenge to librarians under the embedded librarianship model.

The embedded librarianship movement has grown out of the need to re-envision the traditional role of libraries in a 21st century. Delaney and Bates (2015) note, "challenges to the traditional role of the academic library mean that staff must strive to rethinking and repurpose what a library is and what a library does" (p. 32). Jacobs (2010) defines embedded librarianship as any service outside the physical library to non-librarians (p. 4). In many academic libraries, the embedded librarianship model is tied to academic disciplines, reflexing the historical model of separate departmental libraries and librarians (Schulte, 2012, p. 124).

This traditional model of department-specific services requires that librarians develop relationships with academic departments. Levels of embedded librarianship differ. Collection development has been the cornerstone of library and teaching faculty collaboration. Librarians are finding success locating their offices in academic departments, co-teaching courses, and offering office hours outside the library (Jacobs, 2010). However, this strategy may not be effective with underrepresented populations. Rutledge and Lemire (2016) argue that while this academic department-based embedded librarianship is successful in building relationships with departments and drawing in users, it is not designed to reach students who are not deeply connected to their major (p. 115).

These limits to department-based embedded librarianship have led to a greater emphasis on outreach activities. Rutledge and Lemire (2016) used demographic data to identify the underrepresented populations and developed targeted outreach activities. They divided outreach activities into two categories: passive and active. They used passive outreach methods like research guides and displays to help underrepresented groups recognize "themselves as potential library patrons" (p. 119). While effective, these passive methods depend on students seeking library services. Serving underrepresented populations requires active outreach that engages students by building broad-based relationships with organizations that serve these populations.

Yet even successful outreach programs "may not reach students who do not already have strong affiliations and campus ties" (Rutledge & Lemire, 2016, p. 115). One such group is the growing number of international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. Datig's (2014) study found that international students lacked an understanding of the role of academic libraries, mainly viewing them as book depositories and quiet study spaces. International students may believe that there are fees associated with library use (Hughes, 2010, p. 83).

Librarians face many of the same challenges reaching international students as they do with the domestic students. A survey of students from 72 countries found that they tended to identify the intrinsic value of libraries and librarians but did not understand the resources and services available (Datig, 2014). Additional challenges include language barriers that are complicated by library specific terminology, access points, and classification systems (Morrissey & Given, 2006, p. 223). Hughs (2010) described the challenges facing international students as "three inter-connected dimensions: environmental, cultural-linguistic and affective" (p. 78).

Chinese students face a very different academic landscape in their home countries, which emphasizes lectures, textbooks, memorization, and limited independent research (Shao, Scherlen, Johnson, Xu, & Hu, 2013, p. 29; Morrissey & Given, 2006, p. 221). Hughes' (2010) study found that students from China had limited prior experience using libraries due to "previously limited information needs, the prevailing pedagogical approaches in their home country, and the differing nature of libraries in the home country and Australia" (p. 80).

Hughs (2010) found that information literacy instruction was insufficient to meet the needs of international students. Language issues will limit even the success of active outreach programs like student orientations and in-class presentations (Morrissey & Given, 2006, p. 236). Morrissey and Given (2006) recommended developing repeated contacts with international students within academic courses as a means to apply information literacy skills based on ACRL standards (p. 230). Successful strategies libraries can use to better serve international students, and Chinese students in particular, include:

- Developing and refining library orientations for international students
- Providing a multicultural service desk or office
- Multilingual signage
- Instructional sessions targeted to courses with international student enrollment
- Copyright and plagiarism education
- Discipline-specific citation method instruction (Shao, 2016)

III. Research Methodology

With an eye to current best practices in the field, the librarians of Brooks Library were interested in developing an embedded librarianship plan that best fit the institutional needs of CWU and created a CWU Embedded Librarianship Best Practice model specific to their library. Founded on best practices hailed at other institutions, *Figure 1* was developed and adopted as the model for Brooks Library. The model was left flexible to allow librarians to fill unique departmental needs for success across the disciplines.

This paper will use the embedded librarianship model (*Figure 1*) developed by Ginny Blackson, a librarian at the CWU Library, and the goals established for the 2015-2016 academic year to illustrate how CWU librarians have used goals to direct and scaffold involvement.

Figure 1. CWU Embedded Librarianship Model

The model concentrates on the four elements of embedded librarianship defined by CWU librarians: 1) Engagement, 2) Promotion, 3) Instruction, and 4) Assessment.

Goals for the 2015-2016 academic year included engaging with academic and student support departments and identifying courses to target for co-teaching.

A survey was designed to collect information and data from key stakeholders.

IV. Objectives of the Study

This paper will demonstrate how CWU librarians have engaged academic departments (e.g., Department of Theater Arts and Department of Computer Science) in a 3+2 dual degree program between CWU and NUAA and the student support department (e.g., UESL) to identify a course to target for co-teaching.

This paper will also explore the best practices for librarians embedded in an international education and exchange program and discuss librarians' roles in the process of establishing a 3+2 dual-degree program between CWU and NUAA. The result of developing such a program and the subsequent partnership between UESL and Brooks Library will be reviewed and evaluated. Both partnerships are the result of library involvement and active participation in developing these relationships. The paper will review activities throughout program development, and examine milestones in program development.

V. Project Development

The project of establishing a 3+2 dual degree program consists of five major stages:

1. March 2014-February 2015: initial stage, including intentions, feasibility, and desirability assessment;
2. February 2015: face-to-face discussions;
3. March-July 2015: general agreement for collaboration;
4. August 2015-March 2016: faculty visit and collaborative teaching and research; and
5. April 2016-March 2017: establishment of specific programs.

At the initial stage, the Chinese American librarian brought NUAA's willingness and intention back to CWU. In-person meetings were arranged with the Provost, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, Dean of the College of the Science, Interim-Director of OISP, and chairs of academic departments of the Art, Theater Arts, Music, and Computer Science to ensure that the message from NUAA was clearly reached to the three levels of chairs, deans, and provost. A NUAA delegation visited CWU when all three levels at CWU were on the same page and decided to move forward with NUAA. During the delegation's visit, face-to-face discussions and a campus visit were arranged. A general agreement for collaboration entitled "International Memorandum of Understanding between Central Washington University and Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics" was reached after the visit and signed later by the then-Provost of CWU and the Vice President for International Relations at NUAA. A real academic exchange took place when a CWU faculty from the Department of Computer Science visited NUAA and taught a short summer course there in 2015.

Through the assessment of courses and credit transfer equivalencies, the Department of Theater Arts started to work on a 3+1+1 agreement, which allow qualified students in the Bachelor's degree program at NUAA to be nominated to matriculate in CWU Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree program. The students who have successfully completed the program requirements will be awarded a BFA degree. This agreement is still under review by both institutions.

Currently, the Department of Computer Science started to work on a 3+2 joint Master's degree program with NUAA and signed officially by both institutions in April 2016. This allows qualified students in the Bachelor's degree program at NUAA to be nominated to matriculate in the CWU Master's degree program. This is the first joint Master's degree program in the CWU history developed with an international academic institution. During the collaborative process, the Chinese American librarian continued serving as a bridge between NUAA and CWU to help communicate and reach mutual understanding on the articles of the agreements.

During the fall of 2016, key individuals who had been academically or administratively involved in the establishment of the program were surveyed on the benefits they perceived of having an embedded librarian involved in the development of the new partnership. Qualtrics software was used for data collection. The participants were asked to answer the following three questions:

1. In what ways do you feel the dual degree benefits your institution?
2. In what ways do you feel the librarian partnership has contributed to developing this program?
3. How do you see this program affecting student admission, retention and/or diversity?

Not all participants chose to respond to all three questions and some deferred a full response.

The second partnership, established with the Office of International Studies and Programs, began with planning discussions during the summer of 2016. Recognizing that some students from NUAA are strong candidates for some CWU graduate programs, such as the Computer Science 3+2 joint Master's degree program, but do not have high enough TOEFL scores, the director of University English as a Second Language (UESL) began developing a conditional admittance track. In an initial meeting between librarians of the Brooks Library and the director of UESL, both groups agreed that there was a great need to offer information literacy and research instruction to the UESL population. The curriculum was conceptualized to encompass academic topics in: reading and vocabulary, research writing, academic research, listening and speaking, and classroom culture. The intention behind building a program that demands applied language learning is to provide students with opportunities to practice their English and prepare them for academic expectations in the United States of America. The Library agreed to develop a two-credit "Academic Research" component as part of the UESL Conditional Admission for Graduate Studies proposal, drawing from the library's existing credit-bearing courses in research fundamentals and adapting them to meet the needs of international students.

Implementation of this program requires approval of the curriculum by all university bodies involved and coordination between establishing curriculum goals and drafting proposals. While this program is still in the approval process at the time this article is being published, for the success of this partnership, the library will need to be fully embedded in the curriculum of the UESL program for conditional admittance. This program has the potential to help students pursuing a dual degree program to develop the necessary English skills to stay on course to complete their degree.

Table 1. Learning Outcomes for Academic Research Course

Outcome	Assessment
Compare and contrast international and American academic standards for scholarship.	Students will participate in a graded discussion.
Choose from various information databases and formulate search strategies.	Students will demonstrate knowledge through a graded assignment.
Evaluate resources and select material following best practices of academic honesty, digital citizenship, and plagiarism in American academics.	Students will complete a graded quiz.
Employ effective research strategies.	Students will demonstrate knowledge through a graded assignment.
Compose and write elements of a research paper.	Students will produce a written assignment assessed using a rubric.

"Academic Research" was conceptualized to cover material that would help international students prepare for graduate level research. Proposed learning outcomes and assessments are presented in *Table 1*. Although this course has not been offered, the partnership is founded on a mutual best practices that coursework should be built around the needs of graduate studies programs that will be receiving these students, courses within the program should build on each other and create opportunities for students to apply their learning across courses, and coursework must include

opportunities for practice and hands-on learning. Although this curriculum has not yet been implemented, communicating a shared mission and program goals has helped clarify what a successful end product will look like to both parties.

VI. Implications and Discussions

Establishing a 3+2 program between NUAA and CWU has academic, fiscal, multicultural, and complementary benefits for both institutions. Such a program is highly attractive to NUAA students planning to pursue a Master's degree in Computer Science because of the time and fiscal savings, in addition to the opportunity to study in the United States of America. Students pursing this track can complete it in five years, taking three years to complete their undergraduate degree at NUAA and two years to gain a Master's degree from CWU. In China, these students would need to complete four years of work to fulfill undergraduate requirements and an additional two and half years to complete a Master's degree. However, if they take the 3+2 track, they will only need three years toward their undergraduate degree before moving on to fulfill Master's degree and program requirements. This partnership has the potential to shorten their time in school by one to one and a half years, reduce fiscal burden, and provide an opportunity to travel and study abroad.

CWU benefits from this partnership through the diversity of culture and perspective that international students provide, in addition to new cohorts of graduate students. Attracting a small percentage of international students, CWU is interested in growing their reach and diversity. Partnering with NUAA provides an opportunity to do so without requiring the time investment of scattershot marketing. New cohorts of graduate students support CWU financially and allow for a growing cultural exchange.

The librarians' role in the project has been valued by the administration and academic colleges. The interim director of OISP expressed her appreciation many times in her emails and messages to the deans and provost. In a newsletter distributed to CWU administrators and academic colleges in March 2015, the interim director wrote:

> "…[I] worked with librarian professor Dr. Ping Fu to bring a delegation from Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics to Central Washington University. They visited with the departments of Music, Art, Communications, Computer Science, Geography and Theater. The visit went really well, and the NUAA group came with visitation opportunities for CWU faculty that are compensated. Some faculty are already following up with plans to go to Nanjing this summer. No doubt they will enjoy themselves immensely."

The interactions between academic faculty and librarians has greatly increased. The Chinese American librarian holds M.Sc. and B.Sc. in Computer Science and serves as library faculty liaison to the Department of Computer Science. Through this project, the librarian has built a strong professional relationship with faculty in the Department of Computer Science. He was invited to attend Skype recruitment conversations held by the department faculty with Chinese graduate students at NUAA.

Responses from the Qualtrics survey provided limited feedback. Given how recently the Dual Degree program was officially available, participants either responded positively to the partnership

or felt that they did not have enough results to comment on. One remarked with "I do not know yet" when asked about the impact of the program on the University. However, Dr. Levine, the then-Provost who was a CWU partner in establishing the program relationships, commented that the program "allows [students] to optimize their course work and to have clear pathways to degree attainment." With regards to furthering campus diversity and international perspectives, Dr. Levine stated that the "very nature of this program helps promote international and intercultural diversity". Stacey Robertson, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, echoed that sentiment, saying "it also benefits our students through increased global opportunities." The Dean of Libraries predicted that the partnership "will have not only a financial impact on CWU in tuition revenue but will also increase the diversity on campus."

When asked about how they felt the librarian contributed to developing the program, some participants began to see alternate capacities of the librarian. One interviewee commented that this "is a tremendous use of the new style librarian", acknowledging that this type of partnership is outside what one might expect from traditional librarian roles. Another interviewee remarked that "[the partnership] has been a welcome conduit. . . No better ambassador for us [than] a native speaker on staff at CWU." While limited in their scope, these comments attest a new role of librarians outside the library.

It was a challenge when the Chinese American librarian brought NUAA's intent back to CWU in early 2014. The College of Business at CWU put a lot of effort into establishing a 2+2 dual degree program with a Chinese university in 2012 through a broker agent in China. However, the result was unsatisfactory. Due to that unpleasant experience, when the Chinese American librarian first contacted OISP on behalf NUAA, OISP was not so interested in NUAA's proposal. The Chinese American librarian was asked by OISP to talk to academic departments first to get their endorsement before OISP would like to help move forward. The Chinese American librarian visited departments of Art, Theater Arts, Music, Communications, and Computer Science one by one. He scheduled meetings with the chairs and their deans to sell NUAA's proposal. Finally the Department of Theater Arts and the department of Computer Science decided to move forward.

Persistent communication and knowledge about the home institution and the partner institution abroad was critical in the initial process. More importantly, the spokesperson must have passion, enthusiasm, and is invested in overcoming challenges in order to launch such outreach efforts at their own institutions.

Partnerships and programs for international students will be less successful without supportive programs. The UESL partnership with Brooks Library is an effort to provide students with an opportunity for extra assistance. With experience and training on the instruction of academic research and information literacy, the library is a natural fit for teaching such a course. While the UESL Conditional Admission for Graduate Studies track is still within the proposal stage, the relationship between UESL and the Brooks Library has already provided insight for both sides on the role librarians can play in helping international students be successful in a university environment.

VII. Conclusion

This individual case has demonstrated that librarians can play roles beyond traditional library responsibilities to support institutional stakeholders. Successful embedded librarianship involves broad partnership with other entities and departments on campus. Not all academic departments provide a natural fit for discussing research methods or information literacy topics. However, reaching out to our international programs as a partnership allowed us to reach a new population as they begin to engage with academia in another country. While this case study represents strategies for developing international programs, a similar approach to partnership building could be applied to other programs. As universities develop new programs and partnerships, librarians can be involved in bridging partnerships, crafting curriculum, and aligning campus interests.

References

Datig, Iika. (2014). What is a library?: International college students' perceptions of libraries. *Journal of Academic Librarianship, 40*(3/4), 350-356. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.05.001

Delaney, Geraldine; & Bates, Jessica. (2015). Envisioning the academic library: A reflection on roles, relevancy and relationships. *New Review of Academic Librarianship*, *21*(1), 30-51. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2014.911194

Helms, R. M. (2014). Mapping international joint and dual degrees: U.S. program profiles and perspectives. Retrieved from http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Mapping-International-Joint-and-Dual-Degrees.pdf

Hughes, Hilary. (2010). International students' experiences of university libraries and librarians. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, *41*(2), 77-89.

Institute of International Education. (2008). *Educational Exchange between the United States and China*. Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Publications/Educational-Exchange-between-US-and-China

Jacobs, Warren N. (2010). Embedded librarianship is a winning proposition. *Education Libraries*, *33*(2), 3-10.

Morrissey, Renee; & Given, Lisa M. (2006). International students and the academic library: A case study. *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Sciences*, *30*(3), 221-239.

Rutledge, Lorelei; & LeMire, Sarah. (2016). Beyond disciplines: Providing outreach to underserved groups by demographic. *Public Services Quarterly*, *12*(2), 113-124.

Schulte, Stephanie J. (2012). Embedded academic librarianship: A review of the literature. *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice*, *7*(4), 122-138.

Searing, Susan E.; & Greenlee, Alison M. (2011). Faculty responses to library service innovations: A case study. *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science*, *52*(4), 279-294.

Shao, Xiaorong; Scherlen, Allan; Johnson, Megan; Xu, Xuan; & Hu, Yuan. (2013). Chinese students in American academic libraries: A survey of Chinese user satisfaction with U.S. library experience. *International Information & Library Review*, *45*(1/2), 28-36.

Authors:
Elizabeth Brown, Assistant Professor and the Instruction Coordinator, Brooks Library, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926, United States. Email: elizabeth.brown@cwu.edu

Ping Fu, Professor and Head of Library Technology Services, Brooks Library, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926, United States. Email: ping.fu@cwu.edu

Ginny Blackson, Associate Professor and Collection Development Librarian, Brooks Library, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926, United States. Email: Ginny.Blackson@cwu.edu

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Elizabeth Brown or Ping Fu, Brooks Library, Central Washington University, 400 E. University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Contact: elizabeth.brown@cwu.edu or ping.fu@cwu.edu

Brown, Elizabeth; Fu, Ping; & Blackson, Ginny. (2017). Beyond traditional librarianship: Librarians' roles in an international education and exchange program. *Chinese Librarianship: an International Electronic Journal, 43*, 18-28. URL: http://www.iclc.us/cliej/cl43BFB.pdf