

The World Without: Crossing Borders and Seizing New Territory

Over the past two days here in Bloomington we have had rich and thoughtful discussions ranging widely across the important themes of this conference: Collaboration, Advocacy, and Recruitment. A few weeks ago, around the same time I was pondering what I might say today that would be even remotely original and of help in indicating a path forward, I participated in a meeting with the vice president/vice provost of Duke University's Office of Global Strategy and Programs and the Libraries' International and Area Studies Department, to discuss the university's new *Global Vision* document. That conversation suggested my focus today.

First, using the Duke example, which likely has much in common with what is occurring on many other campuses, I want to talk about the dynamics that are affecting area studies librarianship in the present and into the future. I believe we are at a turning point: our position, the nature of our interactions with students and faculty within the university, are changing as scholarly attention shifts, and unless we adapt to the new models, make a strong case for the roles of librarians and collections, and seize new opportunities for engagement, new opportunities for advocacy, we run the risk of being left out.

Second, I want to draw on the response to the December 2012 event held at Duke and co-sponsored by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), *The Global Dimensions of Scholarship and Research Libraries* (aka the *Global Forum*) and to the recommendations that emerged from that event. The Forum itself was instructive, but the reactions to the report/recommendations have been valuable as well. For example, collaboration among area studies specialists and technologists, digital and web services librarians can work to the benefit of all.

Third, in the catch-all final part of my talk I will conclude with thoughts on various themes that have emerged from the provocations, responses, and responses to responses, and venture some ideas about "Next Steps." I hope my comments have a little bit of freshness to them, after our extensive discussions thus far. I will try hard to avoid those proverbial dead horses.

THE LIBRARY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

A Global Vision for Duke University was issued in September 2013 by the Global Priorities Committee, a faculty advisory committee comprised of senior faculty members, including six from professional schools. The report identifies the features of a "global Duke," emphasizes the opportunities for leadership, and promotes a three-campus vision:

- "The World at Home: The Durham Campus,"
- "At Home in the World: The World Campus,"
- "Duke Worldwide: The Global Digital Campus."

You probably have an idea of what each of these entails. The first seeks to "throw the world open for appreciation and discovery," through the recruitment of the best faculty and students from around the world, and honoring the university's long-standing curricular and research commitments to "understanding the global richness and variety of history, culture, politics, and society that have made the world we inhabit and shape the futures we face." The second, distributed across sites and partnerships around the globe, encompasses overseas academic and service experiences for undergraduates, more research abroad for graduate and professional students, expanded opportunities in developing regions, experimentation with innovative curricula, and networks of scholars and institutions with a focus on research and teaching partnerships. The "Global Digital Campus" will cultivate geographically dispersed interdisciplinary, digitally facilitated research collaborations, expand online pedagogy to students and life-long-learners across the globe, and fund technologies and data resources to support these initiatives.

What prompted the creation of the *Global Vision*?

- The decline in funding from the Department of Education for Title VI National Resource Centers
- A growing university focus on interdisciplinarity and cross-regional international collaborations
- Duke's programs in China and Singapore, and more than 300 other research and teaching partnerships that reach beyond the US
- New initiatives, on Africa and Brazil
- Business school global and cross-continent MBA programs
- DukeEngage, a community service program for undergraduate students, and an increase in students participating in study abroad
- The rise of the seven "signature [interdisciplinary] institutes," most with a global orientation: the Kenan Center for Ethics, the Duke Institute for Brain Sciences, the Franklin Humanities Institute, the Institute for Genome Science and Policy, the Global Health Institute, the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, and the Social Science Research Institute
- The creation of the Bass Connections program for undergraduates, and its associated themes: Brain & Society; Information, Society and Culture; Global Health; Energy; and Education & Human Development.
- The expansion of MOOCs and other digital education programs with global reach
- Finally, the perception that area studies centers represent an outdated approach to scholarship.

I give you these specifics as an illustration of what is occurring on my campus, and I am sure you can substitute initiatives from your own. The immediate question is: Where do libraries, librarians, and area studies collections fit into this changing environment? Not surprisingly, among those of us who have been so connected to the area studies programs, Title VI National Resource Centers or not, there is an immediate reaction to defend those centers, partly out of loyalty, partly out of alliance with their mission, and partly out of fear of the erosion of support we and our collections have received from them. Like many of you, I have taken a good part of my identity as a librarian from the NRCs on my campus. I served as director and associate director of our Latin American consortium with the University of North Carolina over six years in the 1990s. I was trained as an area studies scholar and as a librarian. I believe in the essential value of studying the languages and cultures of a particular world region, and I always will. I believe that to be a "global citizen," the type of individual our universities claim to want to produce, one needs to be able to read and write and converse and conduct research in a language other than English.

And yet the conversation I cited at the start of my talk, with the leader of OGSP (a physician who has worked in public health in Bangladesh, at the World Health Organization, and has led training missions on HIV/AIDS prevention in Russia, China, India and South Africa), who is also the Vice-Chancellor for the Duke National (Medical) University of Singapore, gave me insights into how research libraries and librarians can and must adapt to a changing environment without losing or abandoning our "purer" area studies tendencies. This direction, toward "globalization" and "internationalization" of scholarship and teaching, while appearing to threaten our earlier way of life or to disregard or dilute our longstanding focus on regions and culture, in fact offers other ways to advocate for the value of foreign language collections and the work of the associated librarians. The phrase "if you can't beat 'em, join em," comes to mind. We have our work cut out for us, but area studies librarians and collections have compelling reasons and an excellent opportunity to move to the center in the newly configured global university context.

At that meeting, after each area librarian introduced him/herself, the first question my colleague asked was why they are organized by region. Of course he understands the specialized language expertise required to build collections and dig into research questions, to network internationally and to create connections among librarians, scholars, and information sources from abroad. He is supportive of buying trips to capture ephemera and materials that elude the book trade. What he sees when he considers the panorama of research at Duke, however, is work that is cross-regional, thematic, multi-disciplinary and multilingual. This is what "global Duke" (or Global your-institution) means to many administrators now. What does it mean for libraries, and how can we take advantage of it?

In terms of advocacy, I believe it is incumbent on us to remind administrators, through words and deeds, of the essential value of the collections we have assembled, and also to demonstrate that we are capable of making a transition to an increasingly inter-

regional and digital global future. In many cases, we are supporting the same faculty, but in a different configuration. There are no doubt new faculty who may not be acquainted with the collections and services we provide. While print is still the medium of scholarship in many countries, and will persist as such, our area studies library community has already achieved a great deal in the digital realm, through projects and partnerships and the remarkable networking of individuals. I don't need to tell this accomplished and dedicated group that conveying to administrators – library or university – the complexity of our worlds and our work is not easy; but it is essential to communicate, not only by telling but by showing, that 1) area studies collections and expertise in the Libraries should be a source of institutional pride, and 2) we have more to offer "global" education than they may initially think, especially as they focus more and more on digital resources.

We have the chance to demonstrate that in this reconfigured context and an environment in which the value of area studies may be coming into question, we and our collections are not insular and peripheral, but central to the success of students and researchers no matter what their regional or thematic or global focus. One challenge is that some of the new research is being spearheaded by faculty in the professional schools, or in collaboration among professional school and Arts & Sciences faculty – and we have not traditionally worked very closely with the professional schools. And while we have focused on humanities and social science materials, these new overarching themes such as global health and environmental studies call for connections to the sciences.

My global health colleague came away from his meeting with IAS with deep respect for the many ways in which the knowledge, expertise and networking talents of the area librarians are advancing the scholarship of individual faculty, the learning of students, and the global goals of Duke. He learned about specific examples. He was simply unaware of the extent of their engagement in academic life and to the potential for more contributions, beyond collection building. He is probably fairly typical. It's a start.

LESSONS FROM THE GLOBAL FORUM

The December 2012 Forum on "The Global Dimensions of Scholarship and Research Libraries," held at Duke and co-sponsored by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), was intended to highlight the importance of area studies library collections and librarians to the success of the growing number of global programs, and to bring together librarians, researchers, administrators, and representatives of scholarly societies to address questions of what "global studies" and "globalization" and "internationalization" mean for traditional area studies collecting, collectors, and collections – and how we should change focus and strategy. The Forum considered "the future of research libraries and their role in advancing international scholarship and the globalization of the universities of which they are a part." Of course it is not either/or, and the document does not mean to cast it as such, with the replacement of area studies by "globalization," although it does suggest a strategic realignment. To quote from the first section of the recommendations:

We have not yet reached a post-area studies world. Nonetheless, our traditional area centers—many with a long history of funding support from the now-waning U. S. Department of Education Title VI program—are increasingly viewed as the way of the past. Research library assumptions and practices are changing as well. Older models of “comprehensive” collecting are dead; multi-institutional collaboration within North America needs to be expanded or supplemented with broader, systematic global partnerships; most students and many faculty rely primarily on digital resources....[I]t is time to worry less about the size and scope of our print collections and instead to emphasize digital means of discovery and access. By looking forward rather than to the past, and by capitalizing on new technological capabilities and global relationships, we can construct an innovative and robust network of libraries, scholars, publishers, and vendors that will bring digitally accessible foreign information resources to bear on all areas of research and learning.

On behalf of the steering group of the Global Forum, I wish to express gratitude for the comments we have received on the document, particularly to the Africana Librarians Council for their thoughtful feedback. Overall, the responses have run the gamut from “why wasn’t I invited” and “we are already doing these things” to very constructive criticisms of the recommendations and concrete proposals for projects to test and advance them, including one that will be considered by the board of the Mellon Foundation in early December. The recommendations document seems to have hit a few nerves, but that’s a sign that people care deeply about these issues. Since the Forum, several of us have gone on the road to scholarly meetings and to universities to solicit feedback in person. Two meetings in which Dan Hazen and I took part, at Stanford and at UC Berkeley, were especially helpful because they included, in addition to area studies librarians, other librarians, archivists and technologists with responsibility for web services, digital projects, data and web archiving, as well as staff from the California Digital Library.

The time will never come when these recommendations are fully implemented. The document was intended to be a framework into which we could incorporate more detail about projects underway or being planned, inventories of best practices, a framework in which a variety of groups and associations would see themselves reflected. The input has come from within and beyond our area studies librarian communities, and I take that as a good sign that we are making progress in shining a light on the achievements and potential contributions of our colleagues both in the US and in other countries. We need to hold up examples such as IU’s Liberian collaboration and UT’s Guatemalan police archive and so many other carefully forged partnerships whose goal is to expand and preserve access to a rich array of global resources. AS we do so, a much larger image will come into focus of the range and effectiveness of our shared efforts to advance access to scholarship and sources produced beyond the US.

RANDOM THOUGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

My suggestions here on the three main themes of the conference – advocacy, collaboration, and recruitment – will no doubt echo the provocations, responses, and reactions to the responses as well as the large discussions. I hope they are useful.

Advocacy

Having a distinct and visible identity as a department for area studies/global librarians in the organizational structure of the library is important in promoting their role within the university. But we have work to do to counteract the image that we do what we do for a very limited number of specialized faculty. We should emphasize similarities, not differences, and seek opportunities to collaborate with other librarians and staff.

Take every opportunity to demonstrate breadth and depth of engagement of area studies librarians and their value to building international partnerships, whether individual or institutional, and regardless of language.

Steer away from defensiveness regarding perceived or real threats to area studies centers; emphasize the positive and the potential for continued contributions to the prestige of the institution. Show how we contribute value; don't assume that administrators already know.

Area studies collections should be considered special collections, distinctive, difficult to acquire, and a destination for visiting scholars and other serious researchers. Like traditional special collections, they distinguish research libraries from one another.

Collaboration

Examine the ways we are organized within the library to support research and teaching that is thematic and trans-regional. Energy, environmental change, urban studies, human rights, water – these themes offer the chance to work as a team with subject librarians, data librarians, and others.

Think of new roles for area librarians, within the library and the university. Support for MOOCs? Find common ground and projects/partnerships with other staff.

Highlight existing international partnerships among librarians and the many projects in which we are involved that create access to global scholarly resources for faculty and students.

Recruitment

At the time Duke was sponsoring the Mellon Latin Americanist post-doc program (of which Luís González is a fine example), the reaction to the model of "apprenticing" a PhD to a practicing area studies librarian received mixed responses. Some said the

post-docs should earn the MLS degree, that hands-on training was not enough. Some said they would never get jobs, because most institutions required the MLS, and did not trust a program that did not give a certificate or a degree. Some expressed concern that librarian jobs would be increasingly taken by a wave of PhDs. Some still say these things. During one year's competition, at dinner with the search committee the night before the formal interview had even begun, one of the candidates, who had been teaching history at a very good liberal arts college, commented offhandedly, "I detest undergraduates." This was living proof that not every PhD can be a librarian, and it is true. Over the six years I ran the program I encountered numerous candidates who clearly did not understand the real role of the librarian, and pursued the program because "I love books and research," because tenure was elusive, or he or she was out other options.

And yet there were at least as many candidates who truly wanted to be librarians, for the right reasons. I believe that a Master's or PhD can be of great value to a librarian who works with collection development and with faculty. I wish we could put aside widespread ambivalence and even conflict about MLS vs. PhD. Given the changing nature of research libraries, there are more and more people joining our ranks who have taken a different path into library work, whether through instructional technology, web design, digital programs, or area studies or subject scholarship. There is much more diversity of background, given the changing nature of the work. There isn't a single "right" way into this career. Anyone with an interest in area studies work these days should also be technologically savvy and aware of the changing role of the research library. And they should like undergraduates.

Next Steps

Last week I attended the Ithaka Sustaining Scholarship conference. The keynoter was David Pakman, a venture capitalist who focuses on internet and digital media companies. He is a musician and a songwriter, and has been the CEO of eMusic, as well as the leader of other firms, including N2K Entertainment, which created the first digital music download service, and he also co-created the music group for Apple. In his captivating keynote he reminded us that the Web is inherently global, and that English is becoming a minority language there. This message – the importance of the global – came through in numerous other ways during the meetings, through presentations of digital humanities projects and programs, for example. It is irrefutable that regions, cultures and languages other than the US and English are essential to commerce, communication, teaching, learning and research.

The provocations and responses that were shared for this conference already identify some of the essential elements of next steps. I believe that the breadth of engagement and scope of operation of area studies librarians – and their potential for larger roles -- are not fully understood or acknowledged in many libraries and universities. Among the reasons are the close relationship of librarians to their respective area studies centers, the perception that they are overwhelmingly print-based and thus somehow old-fashioned, and that the number of library users who benefit from their services is limited,

e.g., to the number of people (faculty, students) who can read the languages he or she collects. Next steps should include the development of strategies, within the changing shape of the university, for "insinuating" (as David Ferriero used to say) these librarians into differently configured academic programs. What is needed as a next step might be called mainstreaming.

This will not be easy. It will require a new look at the traditional roles of area studies librarians, and possibly a new range of duties, a more collaborative role, more teamwork, and functioning in a broader world outside the classically defined "area studies" model. It will also require advocacy – through department heads, AULs, directly with faculty and administrators – to demonstrate, through concrete examples, the potential for an expanded role.

The integration needed – or the "realignment" of librarians who are responsible for working with information and scholarly resources about or from different regions of the world – can also be furthered by actions on the regional or national level. The December 2012 Global Forum was one such step, attempting to highlight, as it did, the role of collections and individuals in global scholarship and teaching. I would encourage participation in events and programs that have broader reach, not focused regionally but instead, for example, on technology or instruction or preservation or a broader cross-disciplinary theme. Presentations on an international digital partnership, for example, that is expanding access to materials that would otherwise be difficult to find. Our field offers so many such lessons and best practices which should be shared more broadly.

I have been known to say that area studies librarians were "the first interdisciplinarians," way ahead of universities' turn toward interdisciplinarity. They are also, in many cases, the most engaged with print *and* digital, with grey literature, special collections, and at the same time, books, journals, and the most current media, such as websites. They work closely with researchers at home and abroad, with students at all levels. Their mission has always been to discover, collect, connect, preserve, and often to enhance. It's time to apply these talents to new territories.