Charleston Library Conference

East Meets West: The Japan Association of National University Libraries (JANUL) and the University of Central Florida (UCF) Exchange Librarians and Learning Commons Information

Barbara G. Tierney
University of Central Florida Libraries, barbara.tierney@ucf.edu

Yuka Taniguchi
Kobe University Library, yuka.taniguchi1204@topaz.kobe-u.ac.jp

East Meets West: The Japan Association of National University Libraries (JANUL) and the University of Central Florida (UCF) Exchange Librarians and Learning Commons Information

Barbara G. Tierney, Head of Research & Information Services, University of Central Florida Libraries, Barbara.Tierney@ucf.edu

Yuka Taniguchi, Librarian, Kobe University Library, General Library, Library for Intercultural Studies, yuka.taniguchi1204@topaz.kobe-u.ac.jp

Abstract

Is your library contemplating an international librarian exchange? Such exchanges not only increase participants' understanding of other cultures, they also challenge participants to look at their own cultures from a new perspective.

Two academic librarians, Yuka Taniguchi from Kobe University[1] (Japan) and Barbara Tierney from the University of Central Florida[2] discuss their visits to each other's libraries in 2016–2017 to share information about their respective learning commons and outreach programs.

This article focuses on the lessons learned for each librarian and practical tips on how to accomplish a successful academic library foreign exchange.

Figure 1. On Jan. 29, 2016, Barbara Tierney walked through University of Tokyo's Red Gate to present "The Learning Commons Service Model in North America" at the JANUL Symposium, University of Tokyo.

How Did All of This Begin?

On October 15, 2015, Barbara opened her e-mail account to find the following message from Kobe University (T. Nakayama, personal communication, October 15, 2015):

> Please forgive me for contacting you without previous notice.

Figure 2. On Sept. 24, 2017, Yuka began her internship at University of Central Florida Libraries by making a presentation titled "An Overview of Japanese University Libraries."

I am sending this on behalf of the Kobe University Library Director.

We are going to have a symposium about Learning Commons in January that will be hosted by the Japan Assoc. of National Univ. Libraries (JANUL).

We would be very grateful if we could invite you as a Guest Speaker.

The aim of this symposium is to compare the concepts of the Learning Commons between the US and Japan . . . and to explore how JANUL can organize the learning spaces in our country. Expected audience will be JANUL members and librarians from universities all around Japan.

We hope that this has not caused you any inconvenience.

Waiting for your reply.

Barbara's First Question: What Is JANUL?

The Japan Association of National University Libraries (JANUL)[3] is similar to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). It is a membership organization of the 92 national university libraries in Japan, and its mission is to support the advancement of library functions and services by providing a forum to promote coordination and cooperation.

In 2003, Japan's National University Corporation Law initiated several changes for the national university libraries. One of the important changes was to encourage national university libraries to focus on service to their academic communities in addition to building collections.

This change in the mission of Japan's national university libraries led to a need for staff training in customer service and models of service delivery. One service model that JANUL was especially interested in was the learning commons model. Some of the libraries affiliated with JANUL already were beginning to create various forms of learning commons, and JANUL was interested in learning more about the North American service model.

Since most of Barbara's academic library career, publications, and presentations had been involved with the learning commons service model (both at the University of Central Florida and the University

of North Carolina, Charlotte) she was a likely guest speaker for JANUL's January 29, 2016 program "Learning Commons: What Is the Difference Between the USA and Japan?" to be held at the University of Tokyo.

Why UCF Encouraged Barbara to Accept This Invitation

When Barbara requested leave from UCF to participate in the JANUL symposium, her library director was very supportive. One of UCF's main goals is to promote international outreach for UCF programs. What better way to meet that goal than to send UCF Libraries' head of Research Services to Japan to discuss their learning commons model.

How Best to Prepare a Presentation for a Non-English-Speaking Audience

JANUL estimated that 100 Japanese librarians would be attending Barbara's presentation and these librarians only had a basic knowledge of English, and advised that there would be language translators working with her during her presentation and before.

The first thing Barbara learned was that everything takes longer than you expect when you're preparing a presentation that needs to be translated. Also, it's important to get started on such a presentation immediately, so that it can be sent to translators well ahead of the event. In addition, it's advisable to prepare a couple of short documents as soon as possible, before preparing the main presentation, so that the short documents can be translated and posted on the symposium website as soon as possible.

Barbara's short documents included a libguide that would provide photos of outstanding North American learning commons, an outline of the detailed presentation that she planned to give, and a bibliography of the latest books and articles about North American learning commons. Her reasoning for a libguide: it would be quick and easy to create, it would be available 24/7 anywhere in the world, and she could update it easily from her UCF office.

As soon as she created the English content of her libguide, she emailed its URL to JANUL and asked their translators to create a Japanese-language version for each page; then, to e-mail these Japanese translations back to her so that she could copy and paste them into the libguide, side by side with their English versions. She also created a two-page handout

and e-mailed this document to JANUL so that their translators could create a Japanese version, post it on their website, and also print copies as giveaways for the event.

Her long document titled "Learning Commons Service Model in North America"[4] included a 100-slide PowerPoint for her hour-long presentation. To make her PowerPoint available to JANUL, she established a Dropbox account so that she could upload her presentation and JANUL could have immediate access. She also had to repeatedly remind herself that while giving an oral presentation with a simultaneous interpreter, she must strive to make her comments simple and short, and pause often to allow the interpreter and audience to catch up with her.

Lessons Learned About Some Differences Between Japanese and American Academic Libraries

The Japanese university system is a mixture of national universities, local public universities, and private universities. Book collections of national university libraries usually number several million volumes, with over a third of these volumes in non-Japanese languages, and some libraries have been selected to collect foreign journals in specialty areas.

Academic library directors are usually not librarians, but instead, senior academic faculty members who hold distinguished positions within the university and are focused on external relations as well as securing income. Academic deputy directors are usually librarians who manage the day-to-day operations of the library and its staff.

It's common for Japanese libraries to have generalist staff who share in covering many services such as acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, reference, and interlibrary loan and are reassigned every three years so that they obtain experience in different library functions. Emphasis is placed on in-house training as staff move from department to department. While the majority of library staff are university graduates, only about 50% hold a librarian certificate.

Service delivery is managed differently in Japanese academic libraries than in North American libraries. Most universities do not have student support services, such as writing or tutoring centers, and there usually are no student support stations within the library; currently there is no subject librarian service model prevalent in Japan. Budget cuts and reduced staffing have led to a greater use of outsourcing than is common in Western countries, and there is less consortia purchasing in Japan than in North America.

Selected Learning Commons Examples in Japan

The University of Tokyo General Library, established in 1877, is the oldest and most prestigious of the national university libraries. Currently it is engaged in a project to modernize and improve its services and facilities. A new building is being constructed beneath the front entrance of the General Library to house an automated storage system that can hold 3 million volumes. A "Creative Bazaar" area on the lowest floor of the new building will provide a space for active learning (workshops, presentations, and collaborative activities).

Doshisha University, a private university in Kyoto, has created the largest learning commons of all Japan's universities. It provides a multimedia lab for video and audio editing, a "Global Village" that offers international broadcasts, and an academic support area for tutoring and writing assistance.

Kobe University is working to create several learning commons on its various campuses.

Yuka and Barbara Meet at Barbara's Farewell Dinner in Kobe

On February 2, 2016, Barbara gave two presentations to Kobe library staff, one on the North American learning commons model and another on the subject librarian service model. After Barbara's Kobe presentations, there was a farewell dinner in her honor. Barbara was seated at the dinner with the young librarians so that they could practice their English with her and ask questions. During the final toast, one of the library administrators proposed that they cement their newly formed friendship by arranging for one of the young Kobe librarians to intern with Barbara at the University of Central Florida.

Kobe University Selects Yuka Taniguchi to Apply for a 2017 JANUL Overseas Training Scholarship to Intern at UCF; Barbara Works with UCF Global to Help Yuka Obtain a J-1 Short-Term Scholar Visa

After Barbara returned to UCF, she asked her library director if he would be willing to host a Kobe University librarian for a short-term internship in 2017. He

Figure 3. Kobe University Library staff, Feb. 2, 2016.

Dr. Masatoshi Noumi (front row, kneeling, light beige coat), director of Kobe Univ. Library and professor of mathematics at Kobe Univ.

Takahiro Nakayama (front row, kneeling next to Dr. Noumi, black jacket), deputy head of Information Services Division, Kobe Univ. Library; coordinator of Barbara's JANUL visit.

Hideki Uchijima (second row, black coat, standing behind Dr. Noumi), manager, Kobe Univ. Library; library administrator who proposed sending a Kobe Univ. librarian to intern at UCF.

Yuka Taniguchi (back row, 3rd from the left), Kobe Univ. librarian selected to be the UCF Libraries intern.

Barbara Tierney (second row center, standing, turquoise coat), head of Research Services, UCF Libraries.

instructed Barbara to contact the UCF Global office to research the details of such a visit and report back to him.

When Barbara contacted UCF Global, she was assigned an immigration advisor who gave her a list of documents to request from Yuka (passport photocopies, English language certification, medical insurance statement, financial assurance statement, internship mission statement) and said that they would need to complete the online application to obtain the DS-2019 document needed to invite

Yuka to UCF in 2017. By researching this process in spring 2016 and then actually beginning the process in spring 2017, there was ample time for Yuka to successfully apply for the JANUL Overseas Training Scholarship and for Barbara to complete the paperwork.

At the end of June 2017, after UCF Global had completed Yuka's admission packet (that included the finished DS-2019 form), Barbara sent the admission packet to Yuka and Yuka used the DS-2019 form to apply for her J-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy in Japan. In July 2017, Barbara received an e-mail from Yuka saying that she had been granted her visa and was purchasing airline tickets for a September 17–30, 2017 stay at UCF.

What Could Go Wrong?

On September 10, Hurricane Irma hit Florida! E-mails shot back and forth from Orlando to Kobe advising Yuka of the developing situation. Despite wind and flood damage in Orlando, the Orlando Airport closing for a period, and UCF closing for one week, Yuka's trip still was a go! But there was one more unexpected hurdle.

In transit to Orlando, Yuka was briefly detained in the Dallas International Airport Customs office because she did not have her DS-2019 form with her since her understanding was that the DS-2019 was only needed to secure her J-1 visa and not necessary at Customs. A worried Yuka phoned Barbara from Dallas; Barbara affirmed Yuka's UCF internship to the Dallas Customs immigration officer; and Yuka was allowed to continue her trip to Orlando, with the understanding that she would mail Customs a copy of her DS-2019 form immediately upon arrival at UCF.

It was a joyous experience for Barbara to greet Yuka at the Orlando Airport, take her on a short tour of UCF, and then check her into a nearby hotel.

Yuka's Experiences at UCF

While at UCF, Yuka shared Barbara's office and followed a busy day-to-day schedule that Barbara devised for her. At the beginning of her internship, Yuka made a presentation titled "An Overview of Japanese University Libraries"[5] for UCF library staff. During her stay, Yuka learned about UCF's learning commons, subject librarians, and outreach service model. She attended library instruction classes,

workshops, research consultations, and observed at the Reference Desk and at the Ask-A-Librarian virtual reference office.

Yuka also met with all of the subject librarians to learn about their job duties, outreach activities, collection development, committee assignments, and scholarly activities. In addition, she met with each department head for a tour of the department, and attended meetings with Research Services, Collection Development, Scholarly Communication, and Management Council. During the evenings and weekends, Yuka went sightseeing with Barbara and her husband in Daytona Beach and St. Augustine.

Yuka's Lessons Learned from Her UCF Experience in Question/Answer Format

What did JANUL wish you to accomplish by your visit to University of Central Florida Libraries?

> JANUL supported me for 2 reasons:
>
> First, "outreach services" in UCF Libraries were refreshing for them. It is because this phrase shows only public library services in Japan. Japanese university libraries tend to be isolated from academic departments and other organizations. Librarians have difficulty in going outside the library and getting along with academic faculty, administrative staff and students.
>
> Second, they were interested in the way subject librarians are trained. Japanese librarians have worried about the lack of their professional knowledge and skills as Barbara explained, but this still hasn't reached a basic resolution.

Do you think that your exchange visit to UCF was valuable to your professional self-development? If so, in what way?

> It was one of the most valuable experiences for me. Before my departure, I learned a lot about academic libraries and subject librarians in the USA. I had to study also about Japanese academic libraries in order to make a presentation. In the UCF Libraries, all I learned and experienced were refreshing not only for me, but also for lots of Japanese librarians. I enriched my understanding by explaining what I learned to them.

What do you think are the most important things that you learned during your visit to UCF?

There are lots of differences between Japan and the USA, but librarians are struggling with similar issues and working toward the same goal, users' success. Hence, Japanese librarians have to make an effort as much or more than colleagues in the USA. Subject librarians are often idealized in Japan. It means that Japanese librarians tend to be unconfident in their skills and services. Indeed many of us don't have master's degree and faculty position, but it is not an excuse.

What do you think were the most valuable activities/ experiences that you had at UCF?

It was the training on reference counter. I was able to observe library users there. Students talked to librarians and made questions without any sense of hesitation. Academic faculties are also relying on librarians. Users are hungry for knowledge, and librarians are enough equipped to satisfy them.

Are there any particular things that you learned about UCF that surprised you?

"What users need" should be centered, instead of "what librarians can provide." Subject librarians are in charge of various subjects, even if they don't have academic background of the area.

Librarians have similar concerns and troubles in the USA and Japan. UCF librarians told me that they may be easily forgotten if they don't reach out. Other librarians were worried about their budget.

Library services are not always strictly related to library materials. Popcorn hours, therapy dogs, and chess sets are also provided and welcomed.

The topic of money is not avoided. Librarians think students must be generously supported in return for tuition, and they do not hesitate to talk about their salary.

What were the main points you made to the Japanese librarians during each of your presentations/ publications?

I have done 6 activities in Japan:

1. Librarian staff training: "Overseas study report" (Dec. 11, 2017) presented at

Kobe—Kobe University Library. Audience: Kobe University librarians

Main point: Overview of my experience

2. Faculty development /staff development seminar: "Teaching method reform supported by university libraries—through case studies at Toyama University and North America" (Feb. 23, 2018) presented at Toyama—Toyama University Library. Audience: Toyama University librarians/ faculties, librarians at other universities, citizens.

Main point: Relationship and cooperation with academic faculty

3. Librarian staff training: "Study on the cooperation between university libraries and other organizations: referring to the case of the United States" (Mar. 15, 2018) presented at Osaka— Osaka University Library Audience: Osaka University and other university librarians/faculties.

Main point: Relationship and cooperation with other organizations in UCF

4. 65th JANUL General Assembly: "Survey on outreach service in university libraries in North America: report of JANUL Overseas Training Project" (June 14, 2018) presented at Hokkaido—Keio Plaza Hotel Sapporo. Audience: JANUL members (from Japanese national university libraries).

Main point: ROI of Library as evaluation criteria

5. The NII short term training program: "University library seen from overseas training experience" (Oct. 17, 2018) presented at Kyoto—Kyoto Univ. Library. Audience: New Librarians at Japanese universities.

Main point: The process and preparation for my visit

6. A journal article: Taniguchi, Yuka. (2018). The report of recent progress of outreach services in American university libraries: Active programs by subject librarians. *Journal of College and University Libraries* (Online ISSN: 2186-103X), https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jcul/109/0 /109_2006/_article/-char/en

Main point: The way Japanese academic librarians reach out

Do you think that any of your presentations/publications on what you learned at UCF have led to any changes in how JANUL Libraries are conducting their service models, projects, activities?

Lots of Japanese librarians were interested in my message, "Japanese librarians should learn about outside library and reach out." Some of them consider changing their services.

At Kobe University Libraries, I started to help making online materials and translated them into English. It is because I knew that online resources enable small number of librarians to support a multitude of users.

Final lesson learned?

We're more alike than different!

Notes

1. Kobe University (Kobe, Japan) (website), http://www.kobe-u.ac.jp/en/index.html. Kobe University is a leading national university that serves more than 16,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs at four campuses. It supports 11 faculties and 9 libraries. Since 2014, Kobe University has been working to create 9 learning commons, two large and the rest smaller. Kobe University was established in 1949.

2. University of Central Florida (Orlando, FL) (website), https://www.ucf.edu. UCF is a research university that serves more than 68,000 students, making it one of the largest universities in the nation. UCF is home to 13 colleges that offer over 200 majors. It offers 95 bachelor's, 86 master's, and 31 doctoral degree programs, and ranks first among public universities in the nation for the annual number of baccalaureate degrees awarded and for the number of overall degrees conferred. UCF was established in 1963.

3. Japan Association of National University Libraries (JANUL) (website), https://www.janul.jp/en. JANUL is a membership organization of Japan's 92 national universities whose mission is to support the advancement of library functions through close coordination and cooperation of its member libraries.

4. Tierney, B. (2016, January 29). The Learning Commons service model in North America. Presented at the *JANUL Symposium*, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan.

5. Taniguchi, Y. (2017, September 24). An overview of Japanese university libraries. Presented at University of Central Florida Libraries, Research Services Dept. staff meeting, John C. Hitt Library, Orlando, FL.