

Report on the CALA 21st Century Librarian Seminar Project at Shanxi Agricultural University held from July 9-11, 2007, Taigu City, Shanxi Province  
August 7, 2007

CALA Participants/Presenters:

Haipeng Li, Oberlin College, Team Leader  
Judy Jeng, New Jersey City University  
Xiaoli Li, University of California at Davis  
Junlin Pan, Northern Illinois University  
Dajin Sun, Yale University

Hosting institution: Shanxi Agricultural University

Sponsors: Chinese American Librarians Association  
Shanxi Agricultural University Libraries  
Shanxi Provincial Higher Education Library Commission

The CALA 21st Century Librarian Seminar Project at Shanxi Agricultural University was held for a three day period from July 9-11, 2007 on the Shanxi Agricultural University campus in the city of Taigu, Shanxi Province. The campus was beautiful but the weather was hot, typical north China summer weather. About 65 librarians and information professionals mostly from Shanxi Province participated in the conference, with representatives from two other institutions outside the Shanxi Province: Northwest Agricultural University in Shaanxi, and Qingdao Agricultural University in Shandong. The conference theme was “Chinese and American Libraries: Practical Issues of Academic Librarianship.”

Nine broad topics were discussed at the conference in about 20 sessions. 6 hourly discussions were held following presentations on each topic, which seemed to be the most likable format and highlights of the conference. The lively discussions involved many participants and many interesting and challenging questions.

The topics are as follows:

1. Academic Library Management
2. Evaluating Digital Libraries
3. Information Literacy
4. Library Consortia: Overview and Case Studies
5. Outsourcing and Electronic Cataloging
6. Professional Development
7. Reference Services
8. Technological Challenges in the Digital Environment
9. Virtual Reference Services

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, particularly showing their appreciation that the seminar focus was on the practical aspects of librarianship. They would like to know how academic libraries function on a daily basis. Case studies were

very much appreciated. Comments also reflected participants' appreciation to the fact that they were very much impressed by how thoroughly and seriously these presentations were prepared and conducted by CALA members/presenters. They also commented that the format of the conference was new and fresh, with much time spent on discussions and Q&As (a new term called Hu Dong, 互动), a wonderful way of interacting between presenters and participants. A skit that was put on to demonstrate the interactive reference interview process was much appreciated, who showed the flexibility of the format and liveliness of the conference.

All five CALA presenters worked very hard to make the conference successful. Each had put in much time preparing multiple presentations, rich in both content and format. Presentations were lively and engaging. As I mentioned, the most striking and impressive portion of the conference was the lively discussions, a format that we should continue in future seminars.)

Informal discussions were held between CALA representatives and some library directors present to explore possibilities for further collaboration. Ms. Li Jialin, library director at Shanxi University, and the General Secretary of Shanxi Provincial Higher Education Library Commission expressed strong interest in continuing the project, if not next year, the year after (2009). Further discussion is needed to move forward.

See attached:

1. Conference Schedule
2. Conference photo

Submitted by

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