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From the President

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From the President

The February issue of the *Journal of East Asian Libraries* is a highlight of my year. In addition to reading the excellent articles and reports that always expand my knowledge of our field and the collections we steward, reviewing the statistical data featured every February is something I consider an important annual ritual. I believe the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL) is the only group of area studies librarians in North America that has consistently collected and reported such detailed statistics on an annual basis.

The Statistics Database made available on CEAL's website (<http://ceal.lib.ku.edu/ceal/>) and the statistical information presented in the journal every February are the end result of much painstaking effort on the part of the CEAL membership: we know that December is the month for submitting our statistics and the deadline always looms large! The CEAL statistics are also the result of the leadership and hard work of Vickie Fu Doll, Chair of the CEAL Statistics Committee, and those who have worked with her over time to compile and present the data. Encountering the statistical report in the February issue is therefore a reminder of the vibrancy of CEAL and the commitment of its members. It is much more, however. The CEAL statistics reveal key trends and changes in the world of East Asian collections, whether the growing weight of e-book titles in our collections or the sobering reality of declining budgets, reference transactions, and circulation. The data allows comparison with peers, which, if handled carefully, provides necessary context as we explain our operations to administrators in our parent organizations. The statistics provide crucial information for CEAL in grant-writing efforts. Perhaps most important, CEAL statistics provide us with historical data on our local collections, data many of us would not gather in such a rigorous way without that December deadline. For all of these reasons, I would like to dedicate the President's Message in this issue to all those who participate in the many activities involved in the compilation and presentation of the CEAL statistics.

Major news for CEAL since the last issue of the journal was the announcement that The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded funds to CEAL to establish a grant program, *The Mellon Foundation - Council on East Asian Libraries Innovation Grants for East Asian Librarians*. The new program will enable East Asian studies librarians to undertake projects addressing current and long-term challenges in collection development with the goal of strengthening the foundation for scholarly research in East Asian studies in North America. The Mellon Foundation award of \$288,000 will be used for two rounds of grants over the period 2015-2017. The grant awards will fund proposals that break new ground in research library East Asian collection development, encouraging new approaches to the acquisition of print, digital, or multi-media materials from East Asia and improvements in the ability to discover and access these materials. CEAL members are

invited to consult the grant program website (<http://www.eastasianlib.org/MellonGrants.htm>) for more information. This is an exciting opportunity for the CEAL membership and I hope everyone will consider a project proposal!

Finally, the CEAL Annual Meeting is coming up soon. Scheduled for the week of March 23, 2015 in Chicago, CEAL-related activities will begin at the University of Chicago where workshops and tours will take place for those who register on Monday (3/23) and Tuesday (3/24). CEAL is experimenting with a new format this year, in which the Committees on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Materials will also sponsor special meetings on Tuesday evening at our main venue, the Association for Asian Studies conference hotel (Sheraton Hotel & Towers). These will allow librarians in each East Asian area specialty to converse with colleagues, vendor, and publishers on matters of mutual concern, as well as allow additional presentations. On Wednesday (3/25), the plenary session, *Beyond the Local (East Asian) Collection: Re-Thinking Boundaries in the 21st Century Library*, will feature library speakers from outside the world of East Asian collections, as well as scholars and CEAL colleagues. Once again, funding from the Henry Luce Foundation has allowed CEAL to invite a number of distinguished guests. The meeting will conclude on Thursday (3/26) with sessions sponsored by CEAL committees.

One highlight of the Annual Meeting is the announcement of CEAL election results. I would like to thank all those who agreed to run in the 2015 elections for the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-at-Large. I hope all CEAL members will cast a ballot!

Ellen H. Hammond
President