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Building a “One-hour Library Circle” in China’s Pearl River Delta Region

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In early June 2017, the University of Macau, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong signed an agreement on the establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau University Library Alliance (粵港澳高校圖書館聯盟), officially ushering in the birth of a “One-hour Library Circle” in Pearl River Delta Region in Southern China. Dr. Paul W.T. Poon, former University Librarian of City University of Hong Kong, and currently University of Macau Librarian since 2005, was elected the Founding President of the Alliance. The University Librarians in Sun Yat-sen University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong were named Vice Presidents. The libraries of these three universities are, therefore, the founding members of the Alliance, and they will then invite other university libraries in their region to join as members.

Inspired by the win-win situation created by the establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau University Alliance (粵港澳高校聯盟) in late 2016, with 26 universities from the three regions as participating members, the University of Macau Library initiated the process of forming a library alliance under its parent alliance. This proposal was agreed with by SYS and CUHK libraries. The mission of the Library Alliance is to engage the major university libraries in the Pearl River Delta region and optimize the use of academic resources through deep collaboration, thus rendering support to teaching, learning, and research – the three important tasks being carried out in the universities.

Member libraries will work together to implement resource building and sharing, promote scholarly communication, and make the most of existing and emerging technologies to enhance library efficiency and further the cooperation among the major universities in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau. The primary tasks of the Library Alliance will be focused on interlibrary loan, document delivery, exchange of publications, exchange and training of library personnel and holding professional seminars and conferences.

Looking forward to future activities, the University of Macau Library, on behalf of the Library Alliance, will organize and host an international symposium on the best practice of library consortium along with the first Library Directors’ Forum at the end of 2017. Experts from countries such as Portugal, the United States and Australia will be invited as guest speakers to share their experiences and insights on library regional collaborations and opportunities. This activity will be fully supported by the Tertiary Education Services Office of the Macao SAR Government. Other future tasks that the Alliance will undertake include producing its website and tackling other housekeeping chores. The long-term goal of the Library Alliance is to reach out to other similar alliances in the nation, such as the Yangtze

River Delta University Library Alliance (長三角高校圖書館聯盟), the Pearl River Delta Digital Library Alliance (珠江三角洲數字圖書館聯盟) and the Alliance of Provincial Public Libraries in Western Areas (西部省級公共圖書館聯盟) so as to create a win-win scenario for all parties concerned.

Finally, as the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau municipal governments are now developing a **Greater** Bay Area (大灣區) to foster regional integration in southern China, it is hoped that the Library Alliance shall seize this opportunity to make contribution to the success of the **Greater** Bay Area by providing support to high-level research work and creative innovation.

For more details of the Library Alliance, please contact Dr. Poon at wtpoon@umac.mo.

Photo caption: The three founding libraries signed an agreement and celebrated the establishment of the Library Alliance on 6 June 2017.