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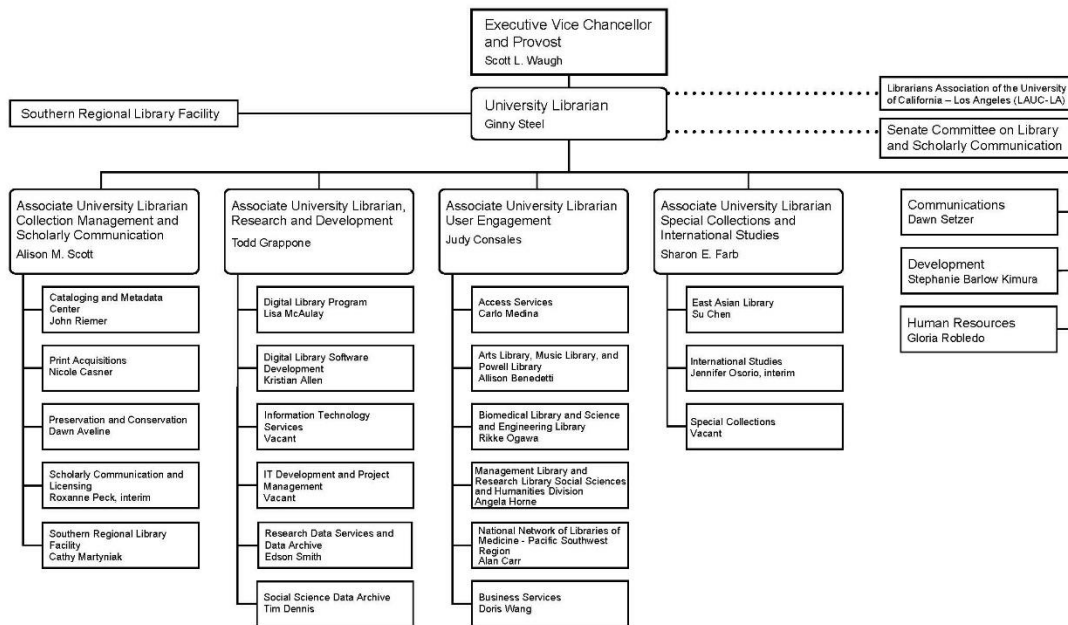
## The Model that Works for the UCLA East Asian Library

Su Chen<sup>1</sup>

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### Overview of the UCLA EAL

Within the UCLA Library system, the Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library (EAL) is part of a new division of distinctive collections which began to operate in January 2017 as a result of implementation of the UCLA Library Strategic Plan 2016-19.<sup>2</sup> The division consists of three independent units: Library Special Collections (LSC), the EAL, and the International Studies Program (ISP). The division is comprised of 53 librarians and staff—33 FTE in LSC, 8 in EAL and 7 in ISP. The division reports to an Associate University Librarian (AUL), a new position created upon implementation of the Strategic Plan. Below is the UCLA Library Organization Chart as of December 2017



**UCLA Library**  
Senior Administrative Reporting Structure  
December 2017

*Note: Chart indicates reporting relationships. It does not reflect the organization's matrixed environment.*

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Zhijia Shen and Gail King for the invitation to write about the UCLA EAL and also for all the generous help and support that they kindly provided during the process.

<sup>2</sup> UCLA Library Strategic Plan 2016-19. <http://www.library.ucla.edu/about/administration-organization/strategic-plan-2015/missionvision> . Accessed December 28, 2017.

### **The current model**

The EAL has eight full-time staff: Chinese studies librarian, Japanese studies librarian, Korean studies librarian and East Asian studies librarian/Head of the EAL, Technical Service Coordinator/Chinese cataloging/acquisitions specialist, Chinese cataloging specialist, Japanese cataloging/acquisitions specialist, and Korean cataloging/acquisitions specialist.<sup>3</sup> Staff of both public and technical services report to the Head of the EAL.

The EAL collections and staff offices are located on the second floor of the Charles E. Young Research Library (YRL), one of the two major library facilities on campus. The EAL occupies roughly 14,400 square feet, about 36% of the total 40,000 square footage of the second floor. Ninety per cent of the space is devoted to public service, including books shelves, a reading room, a consultation space, a public service desk, a microfilm reader, and three public terminals. The staff and student working area occupy the remaining ten percent, about 1,500 square feet.

Compared to the East Asian studies program and the EAL collection size, the EAL staff is small. The UCLA East Asian studies program, which was begun in 1947 with the Department of Oriental Languages, has grown into one of the largest programs in North America. It consists of 113 faculty members and instructors across 17 departments and schools<sup>4</sup> and seven academic centers and institutes.<sup>5</sup> There are 160 graduate students in the East Asian studies program. For the academic year 2016-2017, 2,334 graduate students and 10,533 undergraduate students were enrolled in UCLA East Asian studies related courses. The five undergraduate majors are Asian Humanities, Asian Religions, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures; Asian Studies and East Asian Studies are International & Area Studies capstone majors.<sup>6</sup>

The EAL provides a wide range of services including reference, consultation, instruction, collaboration in collecting and projects, co-teaching classes to support teaching and research of faculty, and service to students and the general public.

Reflecting on the administrative environment that the EAL operates in, I am convinced that having a physical space devoted to the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean collections is absolutely essential. This organization creates a clear identity for the EAL, promotes its visibility, and gives users as well as staff a sense of belonging. It provides an excellent venue

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<sup>3</sup> EAL staff directory <http://www.library.ucla.edu/eastasian/staff-directory> Accessed January 26, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Art History, Anthropology, Archaeology, Asian Languages and Cultures, Education, Geography, History, Law, Management, Music, Nursing, Political Sciences, Public Affairs, Public Health, Religion, Sociology, Theater, Film and Television, and World Arts and Cultures

<sup>5</sup> The Asia Pacific Center, Center for Buddhist studies, Center for Chinese studies, East-West Medicine Center, Center for Japanese Studies, Center for Korean Studies, and International Institute

<sup>6</sup> Asia Pacific Center. 2016-2017 statistics of East Asian studies program and enrollment at UCLA. Provided by the Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Leicester, September 25, 2017.

for collaboration between the campus East Asian studies community and the EAL and encourages the public to use the EAL. In my view it is also essential that EAL staff with core functionalities in both public and technical services work in the same office and report to the EAL Head.

The current administrative setup of the EAL, the result of hard-won compromise with the Library administration, helps build teams and creates a collegial environment for EAL staff to work together to maximize their strengths and talents. It helps the EAL undertake new initiatives that need the expertise of both public and technical services and helps to address quickly problems or issues related to public and technical services. Simply put, the setup helps the EAL to achieve more with limited manpower, space and resources.

### **The model works for both public and technical services**

The EAL, like any other library, faces the challenge of relevance: for example, the number of walk-in users, circulated materials and reference questions are all declining. What should we do to respond to the challenge of relevance? The mission of the EAL is to support the teaching, learning, and research of faculty and students. Hence, we asked ourselves whether the EAL has fulfilled its mission and served all the users it is supposed to serve. And we further asked, if not, where are the gaps?

We first did an environment scan to identify gaps in our service to the core campus user groups of faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students. The EAL's strength lies in serving faculty and graduate students. However, we wondered, how well do we serve undergraduate Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) language students and instructors?

Traditionally, EALs in North America (NA) as a whole mainly serve faculty and graduate students because the materials are mainly scholarly publications in CJK languages. Because of this, generally EALs do not collect language teaching textbooks or materials. Every year, about 3,000 undergraduate students at UCLA enroll in CJK language courses under 18 language instructors. We talked with CJK lead instructors, who were excited and supportive about the idea of providing services to language learners and instructors. We then did a campus environment scan and found that there are no language centers or labs that support teaching and learning of CJK as a second language. We saw an opportunity for the EAL to explore a new service territory by developing both collection and service model to support CJK language teaching. Because a new teaching pedagogy is currently being developed by the Japanese Language Teacher Association, we decided to start with the Japanese language.

With the support of a Title VI grant, the EAL launched an initiative to develop CJK extensive reading collections and services. The Japanese studies librarian collaborated with the Japanese language lead instructor and developed a Japanese Extensive Reading Collection

and Service. The results of a survey of students who used the collection were overwhelmingly positive. In the following quarter, three other Japanese language instructors enthusiastically joined the initiative by assigning students to read the books in the EAL Japanese extensive reading collection.

Under the leadership of the Japanese Studies Librarian, the initiative was successfully implemented. It required close collaboration among the Japanese studies librarian, Japanese Technical Services Specialist and Student Assistants in the EAL and staff from the other functional units like Access Services and the Preservation Center. EAL functioning as a standalone and comprehensive administrative unit was critical to the implementation of this initiative. It allowed the EAL to explore the best way to serve the underserved undergraduates and the best way for undergraduate students, the majority of whom have never set foot in the EAL, to interact with the space, the collection, the technology, the librarian and the instructor. An article published in 2015 by the UCLA Newsroom, "*Mad for manga: UCLA's new East Asian Library collection inspires students learning Japanese to read*" (<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/mad-for-manga>) featured EAL's effort. The impact of the collection and service to Japanese language teaching and learning has been recognized by the instructors and welcomed by the students. This initiative gave the EAL a new dimension and a new perspective in terms of serving undergraduates. I am convinced the effort is one of the best ways to respond to the relevance challenge.

Supporting faculty members who teach large undergraduate survey classes is another area we determined to explore. We first talked with faculty members and listened to their concerns and then identified a needed service.

The EAL holds a group of 44 Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Chinese paintings and calligraphy in original facsimiles reproduced by Nigensha (二玄社) in the 1980s-90s. These paintings are crucial teaching materials for Chinese Art History, which often has an enrollment of 250 undergraduate students. Every winter quarter, when the course is offered, the faculty member needs to display the paintings and assign students to read them. However, there was never any location in the EAL to display them, and the faculty member had to check a few out to show in class. After two years of negotiation and persistent attempts to make room for the paintings, the EAL finally succeeded in relocating seven card catalog cases and transformed a wall into an exhibit space. The space is used to display paintings for the course every winter. Other times, it is used to showcase unique EAL holdings. The EAL's leadership in advocating for faculty needs was vital to accomplishing this endeavor.

Giving limited funding and manpower, the EAL staff embrace collaborations within and **beyond** the library. Within the library, we work together on circulation, shelving, preservation, and bindings. Beyond the library, we also actively seek opportunities to

collaborate with academic centers like Asia Pacific, Buddhist Studies, Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies, Korean Studies and the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures on collection development projects, co-teaching courses, and co-sponsoring events. Since 2011 the CJK librarians have used the YRL conference rooms to organize or co-sponsor over 148 events ranging from orientation, lectures, roundtable discussions, and workshops to international conferences.

Another area that the EAL explored is to be relevant to the local CJK communities. One successful collaboration that resulted was collecting the Archive of Buddhism in Los Angeles. This initiative involved the Center for Buddhist Studies, Library Special Collections and the Center for Oral History and launched the Archive of Buddhism in Los Angeles. The initiative was enthusiastically supported by organizations like the Zen Center of Los Angeles and The Buddhist Church of America as well as individuals like Don Farber, a Fulbright Scholar and Photographer, who has documented Buddhist activities in Los Angeles since 1977 with his camera and recorder, and who pledged to donate all his photographs and video recordings for the past 40 years to support the initiative. The initiative also interviewed and recorded the oral histories of ten leading Buddhist figures in various organizations in LA. In addition the EAL also received a donation from Dr. David Wu, a senior Chinese reporter who worked for the *International Daily News* for over 20 years, of his journalist archives. This led to another initiative, collecting the Archives of Chinese American reporters in Southern California.

International cooperation helped the UCLA EAL to develop its collection when the acquisitions budget was insufficient. Through our librarians' efforts, the Shanghai Library donated 8,000 volumes of Chinese materials, and Waseda University donated 9,000 volumes of books on Japanese Theater studies to the EAL.

Our efforts to make hidden collections known to faculty, students and the general public have been welcomed by donors and academic centers. Donated funds have been used to digitize materials or to invite scholars to study our holdings. As a result of this effort, over 1,000 uncatalogued maps of East Asia published by United States, Great Britain, Japan, Manchuria, and China from the 1800s through the 1960s were digitized and metadata supplied. In addition, about 95 Japanese Edo maps were digitized via funds from the Global Mapping Macau project of Macao University of Sciences and Technology Library. The examination papers in the largest Qing Dynasty examination paper collection, donated to UCLA by the late Professor Yu-Shan Han in 1984, were studied and sorted by an invited scholar, and currently a seminar made up of graduate and undergraduate students is using the collection extensively as teaching and research materials.

In the Technical Services arena, EAL staff are the recognized experts across the entire library system. The cataloging/acquisitions team is known for their high productivity and efficiency. The turnaround time for rush cataloging is a matter of hours when staff are in the office, or a maximum 24 hours. Rush acquisitions of materials from China, Japan or Korea are handled with comparable swiftness. For non-CJK materials, a rush acquisition request for a class can take an entire quarter.

In comparison with the rest of area studies in the ISP, which includes librarians for African Studies, Central Asian Studies, East European Studies, Latin American Studies, Southeast Asian studies and South Asian Studies, the EAL model is significantly more effective. During the time when cost efficiency was emphasized, the ISP Technical Service staff were relocated and merged into Central Technical Services. Because the physical distance between the area studies librarians and Technical Service staff made in-person communication inconvenient, email became the default way to communicate, which greatly increased difficulties in addressing issues. When Technical Services lost a sense of team and service to users, rush requests received no priority in handling. Although centralizing the EAL's Technical Service has been brought up a couple of times since 2011, data showing the excellent turnaround in handling rush requests, high productivity in CJK acquisitions and cataloging—in particular how the Technical Service staff participated in serving the users, helping with ILL requests, and the whole team working together when needed—were persuasive. With this compelling evidence, gradually, the idea of merging the EAL Technical Services with Central Technical Services has been silenced.

As a central place, the EAL provides a venue for intellectual, social, and informational exchanges of the East Asian studies community on campus and a central place for East Asian studies communities in Southern California. Through programs and activities, the EAL has increased its visibility, and its invaluable collections and services have been recognized and appreciated.

In collaboration with the Library Development Office, the EAL has been quite successful in fundraising for projects, collections, and positions. Through hard work, a gift of \$2 million to endow the position of Head of the Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library was received and named the Su Chen Endowed Head of Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library. This is the first endowment for a position in the field of East Asian Librarianship in the United States, and it is an honor to both the librarian and UCLA.

Since 2011, three collection endowments have been established by local Chinese communities. The most recent endowment was established to acknowledge the enormous effort made by the EAL and its student assistants in helping with the English translation of *Legacy Magnified: A Generation of Chinese Americans in Southern California: 1980s-2010s*. In

addition, the local Chinese communities are collaborating with the EAL, the UCLA Center for Oral History and the Library Special Collections in the ongoing project to preserve the Chinese history and literature of Southern California, Oral Histories of Chinese Americans in Southern California.

### **Summary**

There is no doubt that the library world is in transition, and the challenges are severe and real. Challenges, though, are always accompanied by opportunities. The UCLA EAL has benefited from exploring and advancing into serving undergraduate students. Through this endeavor librarians have gained new capacities and important experience. With the increasing presence of East Asian countries in the world political and economic arena, interest in exploring and studying East Asian languages and cultures will continue to increase in the foreseeable future. The organizational model of the EAL at UCLA has proven to be the most efficient to enable the library to explore new frontiers in serving different users both nationally and internationally.