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Farewell, Kristina Troost, and Thanks for a Job Well Done!

On June 30, 2020, Kristina Kade Troost, Ph.D. will retire from the [Duke University Libraries](#) (DUL), after a diverse and distinguished career spanning 30 years.

Kris will be remembered as much for the qualities of her character as for her innovative collection building, teaching, mentoring, and contributions to professional organizations. Margaret McKean, Duke Professor Emerita of Political Science, who first met Kris in 1977 and helped to recruit her to Duke, described her this way: “Kris is a gifted colleague-builder and a colleague-keeper; a friend-builder and a friend-keeper. She’s also an institution-builder who thinks big and thinks ahead.” Deborah Jakubs, Rita DiGiallonardo Holloway University Librarian & Vice Provost for Library Affairs, who has known Kris for many years, agrees with this characterization, saying: “It is remarkable how one person can create a climate that produces outstanding results. Kris has done that with IAS [DUL’s [International & Area Studies Department](#), which Deborah created and which Kris headed for over two decades] and as a mentor to students in the [Asian/Pacific Studies Institute](#) [where Kris served as graduate advisor from 2008 to 2020].”

Unlike many of her peers, Kris began her distinguished library career as a professional historian, rather than as a library school graduate. The topic of the doctoral dissertation that she defended at Harvard University (1990)—the link between common property and community formation in self-governing villages of late medieval Japan—seemed to be about as far as one could get from the world of library science. And yet Kris could not hide her obvious love of all things related to Japanese Studies. From 1977-1990, while starting her family and completing her dissertation, she participated actively in the community of Japanese Studies scholars in the Research Triangle. Andrew Gordon, then a Duke Professor of History, noticed her interest in Japanese Studies and urged her to consider a career in librarianship. Thus began her transition to the field of library science.

In 1990, DUL hired Kris to serve, on a half time basis, as Duke’s first Japanese Studies Bibliographer. Two years later, she received a promotion to the position of full-time East Asian Librarian, with the responsibility for building collections in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. That experience taught Kris a valuable lesson about the need for language-specific subject expertise and the value of not spreading oneself too thin. In 1998, after she became the head of IAS, Kris worked tirelessly to increase DUL’s capacity to provide support by subject area specialists who knew the language and culture of the world areas that they curated. Under her leadership, the staff of IAS doubled in size and now includes specialists covering Africa, China, Russia & Eastern Europe, Japan, Jewish Studies, Korea, Latin America, the Middle East, South & Southeast Asia, and Western Europe.

Kris’ accomplishments are too many and varied to list in a blog post. Instead, I have decided to focus on four key areas where she has made a difference: collections, teaching/mentoring/managing, service to the Libraries, and service to the profession.

Creation of DUL's East Asia Collection

In 1991, Kris personally went through the Perkins stacks, pulling every book written in Japanese, Korean, and Chinese – a total of 20,000 titles – in order to form one, consolidated, easy-to-use [East Asia Collection](#). Today that collection contains 200,000 volumes and is the single largest separately organized and -maintained East Asia Collection in the Southeastern United States. Commenting on the value of that work, Amy V. Heinrich, the former Director of Columbia University's C. V. Starr East Asian Library, points out: "Kris was a voice in national organizations advocating for libraries with small collections. She saw to it that they were included in discussions, obtained funding, and could grow."

Teaching/Mentoring/Managing

Kris established and regularly taught a popular course on "Research Methods in Japanese Studies," which was cross-listed not only in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, but also in Cultural Anthropology, History, Political Science, Religion, and Art History. She later adapted the course to cover multiple world areas, making it possible to co-teach it with her IAS colleagues. Kris helped draft the proposal for an MA in East Asian Studies and served as the Director of Graduate Studies for the program from 2008 until her retirement. Speaking of her role as a manager and supervisor, former Librarian for South Asian Studies, Avinash Maheshwary says: "She was an ideal manager who constantly moved you and your program forward without looking over your shoulder. She was a vital participant in creating a joint TRLN librarian position for South and Southeast Asian Studies – the only one of its kind in the U.S." Luo Zhou, DUL's current Chinese Studies Librarian, echoes these thoughts: "She has given me a broad space to grow, supported my initiatives with advice and suggestions, and often gave me a pat on the back when I was frustrated and tired."

Serving DUL as a whole

As President of the Librarians Assembly, Kris worked with the leaders of DUL and the professional school libraries to obtain a regular budget for Librarians Assembly, in order to establish and help maintain a speakers program, thereby expanding the substantive possibilities on offer to the group as a whole. As a member of the Perkins Relocation Group, Kris helped to establish workflows for moving books to the Library Service Center and for initially identifying exactly what materials would need to be moved off-site. In 1997, her multiple contributions were recognized with the Florence Blakely Award—the highest staff honor conferred by the Duke University Libraries—which rewards extraordinary performance that far exceeds individual goals or expectations.

Serving the Profession

Kris has served as the President of both of the main organizations in her field, The Council of East Asian Libraries (CEAL) and the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources (NCC). As Amy Heinrich points out: "She always came with a vision." For example, when she chaired the NCC (1998-2000), Kris organized an annual conference that set the agenda for the first decade of NCC collaboration in the 21st century by agreeing on

joint priorities for collection development, serials access, technical services workflows, and recruitment of new librarians. Kris' contributions to East Asian libraries/East Asian Studies and to CEAL were recognized in 2020, when she became the inaugural recipient of the [Council of East Asian Libraries \(CEAL\) Distinguished Service Award](#).

No summary of Kris' career would be complete without mentioning the potluck parties that she hosted in her lovely home, continuing an IAS tradition established by Deborah Jakubs. Deborah says, "Kris and I were lucky to come up in International and Area Studies at a time when it was communal and had deep engagement by faculty and librarians working so closely. We had a lot of fun together as well as many professional accomplishments as a group."

Best wishes on your next chapter, Kris! And thank you for leaving us with a strong foundation.

Holly Ackerman, Ph.D., with assistance from Ernest Zitser, Ph.D.

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