



2-28-2023

From the President

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BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Cheng, Hong (2023) "From the President," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2023: No. 176, Article 1.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2023/iss176/1>

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From the President

2023 has arrived with a sense of hope and yearning. The first in-person annual meeting of the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL) in three years is right at the doorstep. We cheer. We applaud. We are celebrating the return of normal life, but it will never be the same again.

I wish to highlight some sessions that are new to the CEAL members, starting with the Presidential Plenary Session. For the first time, we are having two keynote speakers interactively talk and discuss under a single presentation title, *Increasing the Value of East Asian Library Collections: Differences are a Strength*. Elaine Westbrooks, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian of Cornell University, touches on the issue of how the collective East Asian library community can contribute to the research library's goal to become more diverse and equitable directly. As a university librarian of a major research library, Westbrooks will talk about ways to minimize the barriers to the adoption of more inclusive practices so that we can further increase the value these distinctive collections bring to our pluralistic society. In contrast to Westbrooks' prospect of the library, Anthony Smith, Associate Deputy Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, observes more from a perspective outside of the library. Smith emphasizes that, although East Asian collections in the United States bring a great deal of value to the research, teaching, and learning mission of research universities, there needs to be a bigger conversation about how these collections can become more inclusive. With decades-long careers in academic libraries, both keynote speakers have experience from entry-level to leadership in various universities, and they are ready to answer questions from the audience, as well as open the opportunities to U.S. government-funded initiatives that align with CEAL priorities.

The plenary session also includes a pre-conference online panel, which invites four speakers, Virginia Steel, University Librarian of the UCLA Library; Jerome Offord, Associate University Librarian of Harvard University Library; Peter Zhou, Assistant University Librarian and Director of the East Asian Library at the University of California, Berkeley; and Zhijia Shen, Director of the East Asia Library at the University of Washington. The program promotes the understanding and improving the practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and discusses some challenging issues such as how to translate this long-standing tradition and commitment into DEI efforts and how to play a substantive role in advancing social justice. The panel will discuss the continuity and changes in East Asian library practices through the lens of DEI and explore the contributions that East Asian libraries can make to the DEI mission in terms of collections, space, and workforce.

The committee programs of the annual meeting are spectacular, as always. In addition to the variety of presentations in eight committee programs, the Membership Forum is a creative trial for the first time. The forum is organized in a casual format, providing a relaxing social atmosphere for CEAL members to communicate and exchange ideas over particular topics, i.e., membership, mentorship, project collaboration, publishing, managing digital collections, collections and DEI, technical and public services, and DEI, and CEAL statistics data. Among the other committee programs, the newly established Committee on Electronic

Resource Metadata Standards and Best Practices (ERMB) will have its first regular session on Open Scholarship in East Asian Studies, and the speakers will include Dr. Mattias Kaun, Director of the East Asian Department of Berlin State Library. The Committee on Public Services (CPS) is trying its new format of lightning talks in the poster session. Within a short time of 50 minutes, 13 presenters will demonstrate five different areas of the library services, covering various topics related to DEI in East Asian libraries.

Besides the annual meeting, CEAL is having an election voting for eight Executive Board members, including the Committee Chairs on Chinese, Japanese or Korean Materials, Public Services, Technical Processing, and Electronic Resource Metadata Standards and Best Practices, as well as two Members-at-Large. The election will enhance the leadership of the Council and inject fresh energy into the profession.

2023 is the lunar year of the rabbit. It is said the rabbit is the luckiest out of all the twelve animals. It symbolizes mercy, elegance, beauty, longevity, peace, and prosperity, predicting 2023 is a year of hope. After experiencing the difficult years of the pandemic, we have a reason to hope, imagine, and expect. The 2023 CEAL annual meeting will be a good start for us to achieve a brighter future for the East Asian library field.

Hong Cheng, Ph.D.
President, Council on East Asian Libraries