

Freeman Fellow Partner Initiatives Application

The Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies (EAPS)
Freeman Fellows Program

***Information Access and Library Resources in the Social Sciences
and Humanities in China – A Proposal for Development of a
Graduate Course for Librarians and Researcher***

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1. Abstract

The project proposed is to fund the development of a course in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on *Information Access and Library Resources in the Social Sciences and Humanities in China*. This will provide librarians and scholars an opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of information access protocols and library operational procedures in China. The project will include two Freeman partner universities in China and on completion will provide access to the course to students and scholars in librarianship and researchers in the social sciences and humanities through a web-based course delivery system.

2. Project Description

Background

Librarians are essential partners with researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities. The University of Illinois' Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) is listed as one of the top schools of Library and Information Science (LIS) in the United States and is in an excellent position to provide training of future librarians and academic researchers in the information resources and organizational structure found in libraries in China. Although the University of Illinois' Graduate School of Library and Information Science has a long tradition of educating international students that return to their countries to become leaders and innovators in librarianship (See Figure 1), it has not provided a course specifically focusing on libraries and information resources in China. In fact, it appears that none of the nearly 50 American Library Association accredited library schools in the U.S. offer such a course in their professional graduate programs. While students from China represent the largest cohort, over half, of all the international students in GSLIS, they and other students learn about American and European library and information resources, but have little opportunity to gain access to education about information resources and libraries in China.

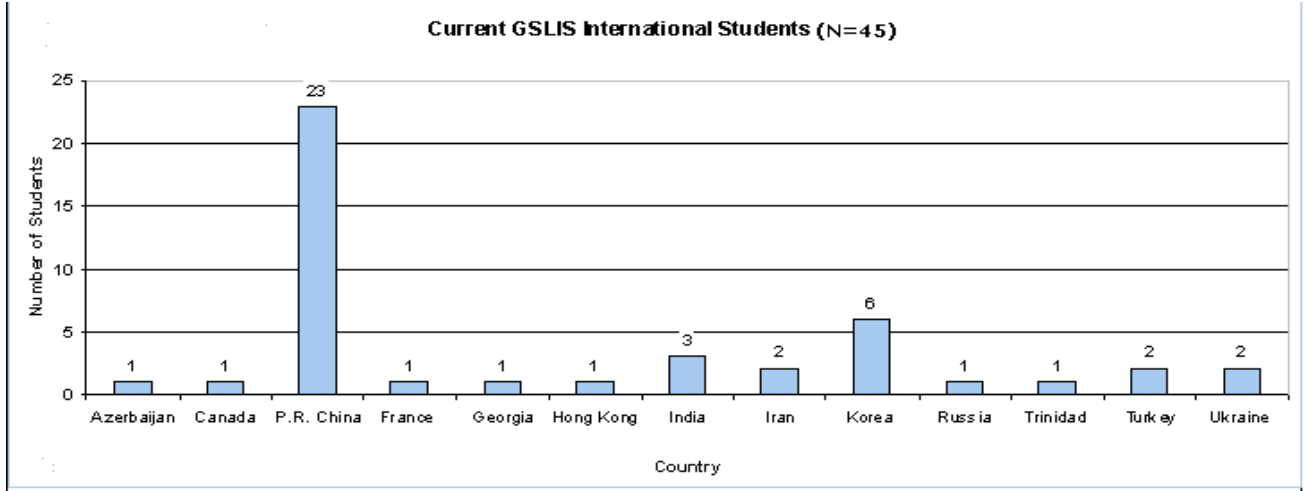


Figure 1. Current GSLIS International Students

Project Goals

To meet the need to provide education of librarians and researchers about information resources in the Social Sciences and Humanities in China, the proposed project will work with two Freeman partner universities in China - Peking University and Wuhan University to develop a new GSLIS course on *Information Access and Library Resources in the Social Sciences and Humanities in China* in a global setting to increase students' understanding and knowledge of the role of China as a dominant player in the world of globalization that has led to its rapid economic growth in recent years. Both partner universities have the most prestigious library schools in China with rich history and traditions and thus can contribute appropriate LIS scholars and educators to work with the faculty and students at the University of Illinois and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science on delivering the course on information and library resources in China. The teaching/research objectives of the project include a discussion of the social, economic, and cultural factors that have influenced the perspectives of

China's LIS scholars and educators. The project also aims to increase cross-cultural awareness, knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to the problems and opportunities of both domestic and international demographic changes that result from globalization.

The international nature of this course will provide students an opportunity to explore problems specific to professional and academic areas other than their own while also investigating the commonality of cross cultural challenges in all professions.

The proposed project will help further the goals of the Freeman Fellows Program, EAPS, and the university at large. Specifically, the new course focusing on information and research resources in the social sciences and humanities will help the University of Illinois enhance partnerships in research and teaching with the Freeman partner universities.

The Course

Topics covered in this course will include the history and philosophy of developing and maintaining collections of information resources in the Social Sciences and Humanities in China, including, but not limited to cooperation among libraries, digital libraries, professional training, leadership, management and facilities issues. A variety of case studies will be presented. Virtual library tours to key Chinese libraries in academic, public, special and school will be presented by utilizing electronic access on the web. The team teaching course format is proposed with the Freeman partner universities participating through guest lectures via Internet/teleconferencing and videoconferencing. Students will conduct research projects on comparative studies among Chinese and American libraries. The course will not require students to have

Chinese language/culture class, although some background is preferred. The course will have 2-hour and 4-hour graduate credit option.

The proposed project will fill the missing gap in current LIS education on China information and library resources in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. It will be one of the first courses in its kind taught in the United States. The course will be taught via LEEP and through iSchool/WISE program (<http://www.wiseeducation.org>) so it will be made available to students in other key library schools in the United States. The course will also be open to graduate students in other disciplines in the Social Science and Humanities who are interested in researching library and information resources in China. Knowledge on teaching and research experience from this proposed project can be shared and used for future teaching and research on China and international LIS studies. There is a need to enhance the library education to add this international dimension.

The proposed project has received enthusiastic support from the partner organizations. They will provide local contribution of their staff/faculty time to assist research directors' research in China and provide access to materials and people (see attached letters of support).

Work Plan

We intend to offer the proposed course in spring 2009 as resident course on campus and online course through LEEP and iSchool after the GSLIS Curriculum Committee reviews it.

Since the major focus of this project is to develop a new course in the LIS curriculum, the majority of the budget will be devoted to the personnel needed to assist in the preparation of the course, i.e., the search of the literature and gathering and analyzing

resources on the information resources, the coordination with Chinese partners and for travel to complete the curriculum development. The major project tasks and milestones with a proposed implementation schedule within the time frame are as follows:

Phase I: Preliminary Research and Preparation (Months 1-2, August 2007-September 2007). Main activities for research directors are to 1) hire and train the Research Assistant; 2) confirm partners and work with specific faculty/staff and ensure access; 3) conduct preliminary research using the UIUC Asian Library and LIS Library, Peking University Library and Wuhan University Library, and other relevant online sources; 4) Identify and translate key information; 5) Start bibliography and lecture notes.

Phase II: Field Research Data Analysis and Curriculum Draft Completed. (Months 3-12, October 2007 – July 2008). Working with the research directors, the Research Assistant's main duties are to: 1) Coordinate research directors' field research and site visits; 2) Continue translations; 3) work with partners to prepare virtual tour presentations; 4) Help compile and translate bibliography and lecture notes. Research directors make 10-day travel to partner universities; access library materials and archives; and meet and discuss with relevant faculty and staff. Research directors complete the full curriculum development, including syllabus, bibliography, and lecture notes. One research director will do a follow-up 7-day trip to China if necessary to complete the final coordinating arrangements.

Sustaining the project activities and reaching the goals is feasible since it will rely on the quality of the project teamwork, partnership from Peking University and Wuhan University, and the internal support from GSLIS and Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI). All involved parties will be committed to the project development. The course should

become self-sustaining through the enrollment of students at UIUC-GSLIS as well as students from other disciplines and other LIS schools participating in the cooperative curriculum on the web.

The plan for knowledge sharing is an essential element of the project by presenting the course in the cooperative course offerings of the WISE program. The project researchers will also submit a report on the project for publication in the professional literature of library and information science for global distribution.