

Summit between West Chester University, Pennsylvania, USA and Universidad Nacional, Heredia Costa Rica. Global Library Literacy Initiative: An Intercultural Learning Experience¹

**Encuentro entre la Universidad de West Chester, Pennsylvania,
EE.UU. y la Universidad Nacional, Heredia Costa Rica.
Iniciativa global de alfabetización bibliotecológica:
una experiencia de aprendizaje intercultural**

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Abstract

This document describes the experience of academic cooperation between professionals in the field of library science, both from West Chester University (WCU), and the National University (UNA) of Costa Rica. The event took place at West Chester University during the week May 4th to May 8th, 2009. The objectives of this revolved around the exchange of ideas and interests in the academic and cultural relations between the two universities. In addition, it unveiled several services and procedures in the handling of information and highlighted the importance of promoting the exchange of students from both institutions. Finally, this article highlights the schedule of activities to integrate international and intercultural perspective in various areas related to the teaching-learning process, the contribution of university libraries on student success and techniques of information dissemination.

Keywords

Intercultural learning experience, Academic cooperation, Library.

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Resumen

Este documento presenta la experiencia de cooperación académica entre profesionales en el área de la Bibliotecología, tanto de la Universidad de West Chester como de la Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. La actividad se llevó a cabo en la Universidad de West Chester entre el 4 y el 8 de mayo de 2009. Los objetivos de esta giraron en torno al intercambio de ideas e intereses en los ámbitos académicos y culturales. Además, se dieron a conocer diversos servicios y procedimientos en el manejo de la información y se destacó la importancia de promover el intercambio de estudiantes entre ambas instituciones. Por último, este artículo destaca el cronograma de actividades destinadas a integrar la perspectiva internacional e intercultural en diversas áreas relacionadas con el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, la contribución de las bibliotecas universitarias en el éxito estudiantil y las técnicas de diseminación de la información.

Palabras clave

Experiencia de aprendizaje intercultural, Cooperación académica, Bibliotecología.

West Chester University funded an opportunity to share experiences, ideas and information with library professors from the Library, Documentation, and Information School of Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica. The project was the result of academic cooperation between faculty of West Chester University and Universidad Nacional. The summit had the following objectives:

- To share ideas and interests in the academic and cultural fields. Attention given to specific training programs offered by various types of libraries including public (Chester County Library and West Chester Public Library, corporate (QVC), and specialized libraries (Longwood Gardens).
- To promote dialogue and to establish communication channels. Multiple presentations on procedures for processing, access, services and instruction were shared through tours and presentations.
- To enhance the education/learning process and to open doors to the exchange of knowledge in various fields of study. Other special topics were presented by Longwood Garden, QVC, Chester County Library on topics such as marketing, special processing, instructional services, social networking disaster prevention, multimedia services, and government and maps.

- To promote student exchanges between the two universities, and collaborate to public scientific and academic materials of interest to both institutions. Workshops on instructional services, LibQual and assessment services, instructional support services, strategic planning and global development.

This collaboration and the academic exchanges should be integrated in an institutional strategic vision to have better conditions in the social and cultural context of the academic internationalization.

West Chester University of Pennsylvania has a General Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with Universidad Nacional (UNA).

One of its purposes is "To establish a formal institutional relationship and appropriate linkages thereby creating the solid foundation for mutual cooperation and collaboration among the academic disciplines, student services, cultural groups, community partnerships, among other issues WCU and UNA have in common".

This formal institutional relationship has provided opportunities for students and faculty members to collaborate and participate in various cultural and academic programs. Some of the collaborations have taken place since the MOU was signed in May 2007:

- Students go to UNA in order to take courses to improve their linguistic and cultural skills. The Department of Languages and Cultures from WCU has taken students to UNA during the second summer session for the past two years. For example, a group of students went to UNA during the second summer session in 2009, along with Dr. Shorten, from Health Sciences.
- UNA sponsored the International Congress in Applied Linguistics (CILAP), with WCU participation.
- WCU faculty and UNA faculty provide workshops to benefit development of library consortia in Guatemala and Costa Rica. This has been funded by the International Federation of Library Associations. One of this workshops took place last September, 2009.

This summit " Global Library Literacy Initiative: an Intercultural Learning Experience between WCU and UNA represented a great example of collaboration to benefit not only faculty, staff and administrators but also students. The project provided a week of cultural events intended to infuse an international - intercultural perspective to the following areas among others:

- Teaching and learning activities
- Ways in which libraries in both universities contribute to students' success
- Ways in which departments and libraries can collaborate with each other in both institutions

- Various techniques to make information available to students, faculty, staff, administrators and community members

Globalization has broken distance among institutions by sharing similar objectives, resources, services and users. The university identity has adjusted so the society of knowledge impacts the region and the world. Consequently, the university model should re-conceptualize its processes, such as: information, knowledge, and learning access.

Nowadays, the information and communication technologies permit institutions like libraries to use new tools and new additional elements to communicate through information sources from any place in the world and at any moment in time. Libraries and Library Science Schools face the challenge to be present in any places because technologies are the instruments helping universities to promote and carry out tasks, and to enhance the ethic principle of solidarity.

In this context, the principles of cooperation include: flexibility, collaboration, interactivity and strategic alliances. In the library science area, the collaboration is an old theme because the interlibrary loan was the first action to share bibliographical resources. Currently, the collaboration allows sharing human resources, documental material, and research projects, among others.

One of the strong holds of the Universidad Nacional lies in the area of `humanities` which is present in its academic work.

In this technocratic and automated world, the humanism maintains its importance every day because the ethics and human quality of people supersede material things.

The Global Library Literacy Project offered the West Chester University population and the community the opportunity to appreciate the artistic richness of our multicultural society while enhancing the global awareness of our students, staff, and the community at large.

Goals and Objectives:

The following events led to the achievement of the aforementioned goals:

Accomplishment of the Goals and Assessment

Cooperation between the departments of Languages and Culture and the Libraries developed the Global Library Literacy Initiative: An Intercultural Learning Experience between West Chester University (WCU), West Chester, PA, and Universidad Nacional (UNA), Heredia, Costa Rica. The focus of this intercultural learning experience was Library Sciences, and included discussions, round tables and sharing sessions on diverse topics such as methodology, instructional materials, assessment, teaching techniques, and technology, among others. Administrators and staff from Longwood Horticultural library, QVC library, West Chester Public Library

and the Chester County Library as well as other institutions in the community collaborated in this project. During the week of Monday, May 4th, 2009 to Friday, May 8th, 2009, the UNA delegation and faculty, staff, administrators from WCU participated in a series of cultural events intended to integrate international and intercultural perspectives to the following areas: (a) teaching and learning activities, (b) ways in which the libraries in both universities contribute to students' success, (c) ways in which departments and libraries can collaborate with each other in both institutions and (d) various techniques to make information available to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members. To record the events, we developed a blog <http://ramble.wcupa.edu/UNA> for speeches and images. In addition, photos of the event are posted on the West Chester University Library Services Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/West-Chester-University-Library-Services/64097284671?ref=ts>.

We plan a follow-up meeting in March 2010 in Costa Rica. As part of the project, the IFLA ARL Section is looking into ways to develop mentoring tools perhaps applying social networking sites to further the goals as a supplement to the activity. Key investigators from West Chester University are Awilda Reyes and Stephen Marvin, both members of the IFLA ARL Section and the university's library services, and Ana Sánchez from the Department of Languages and Culture. Biographies of the participants from Costa Rica are posted on the <http://ramble.wcupa.edu/UNA> blog.

The "Global Library Literacy Initiative: An intercultural learning experience between West Chester University and Universidad Nacional", which took place in May, 2009, was published in the Information Literacy Newsletter, June 2009, Volume 7, Issue 2, page 6. We would like to invite you to read it at the following site: <http://www.ifla.org/files/information-literacy/publications/il-newsletter200906.pdf>.

This is just one example of local and International collaboration among WCU departments, faculty, staff, administrators, community organizations and universities.

Planning and Implementation

To plan the event, the committee held various organizational meetings, planned the logistics, and checked their progress. The committee also communicated via e-mail and met in smaller groups to complete the various tasks involved.

Itinerary - An Intercultural Learning Experience between West Chester University (WCU), and Universidad Nacional (UNA), Heredia, Costa Rica.

MONDAY, May 4, 2009

Welcome Reception - Philips Autograph Library

Welcome:

Dr. Greg Weisenstein, President, West Chester University

Mr. Richard Swain, Director of Libraries, West Chester University

Dr. M. Ehi Ayewoh, Associate Vice President, Sponsored Research & Faculty Development

Introduction and Welcome

Awilda Reyes, FH Green Library, Coordinator, Assistant Professor, Government and Maps Librarian, West Chester University

Lucía Chacón, Decana, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica

Keynote speaker:

Lucía Chacón, Universidad Nacional

Overview of the Library and Library School at the Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica

Adele Bane, Associate Director of Library Services, West Chester University

Overview of the Library Services at West Chester University

Quick tour of the library

Lunch

Chester County Library System

M.Bube, Director of the Library - description of services

Literacy Program - Cindy DeMoss Workplace training

West Chester Public Library

Victoria Dow, Director of the Library - description of services

Literacy Program Services to Spanish Speaking

Campus Tour

Dinner

TUESDAY, May 5, 2009

Introduction:

Awilda Reyes, FH Green Library, Coordinator, Assistant Professor, Government and Maps Librarian, WCU

Lucía Chacón, Decana, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica

With

Karla Rodríguez, Judith Benavides, Aracelly Ugalde and Nydia Rojas

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS - Library Services (Room 409)

Reference Services - Stephen Marvin,
Collection Development - Mame Purce
Access Services - Clayton Garthwait
Judith Benavides, UNA

Jane Hutton, Electronic Resources Librarian (Room 309)

Website

Databases

Discovery Search - WebFeat federated search

Journals" search - Serials Solutions & Link resolver

Jamie Kohler, Special Collections

Archives

Digitization

Lunch – May 5th Celebration - Library staff brought in special home prepared meals (Room 613)

Awilda Reyes, U. S. Government Documents

Michele Dotson - Demonstration of GIS services

Chris McCawley (Serials Section)

Serials

Acquisitions

Venice Bayrd, Longwood Gardens, Collection Development and Guidelines for digital images.

Dinner

WEDNESDAY, May 6, 2009

Morning Tour and Visit to QVC

Patti Insetta-Roth provided a tour of the library facilities and invited many of her staff to sit with us during the morning to explain the instructional services of QVC Library. One of the early founders of QVC was a librarian and the company has embraced information services as an essential component of their operation. Unfortunately, due to the proprietary nature

of their business, photos were not allowed. Cindy Crawford was visiting that day. All programs are presented with live broadcasts from QVC.

Lunch - Roger's Bistro

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS - Instructional Media Center

Patricia Lenkowski, Amanda Brooks, Instructional Media Center

UNA - Nydia Rojas
Curriculum Collection
Media support
Media resources

Stephen Marvin, Reference Coordinator
Social Network Services
Library Instruction tools

THURSDAY, May 7, 2009

Morning tour - Horticultural Library of Longwood Gardens, Venice Bayrd

The library prepared a special exhibit of plants of Costa Rica from their collection. In addition, during the formal presentation in the conference room, the talent of the Gardens displayed the national flower of Costa Rica in full bloom. The library provided details of the area of their collection and services.

Above, John Testdorf (husband of Helga Testdorf) shows how he cares for the special plants at Longwood Gardens.

Tour of Archives - included detail handout of the general overview of the collection.

Doug Needham - Meeting with instructional programs provided by Longwood Gardens for k-12, academic and research internship programs
Don Sutton - Garden tour of Children's garden, Tree houses and traditional botanical instructional resources.

Fabulous lunch at the renovated 1906 Room Restaurant as guests of Longwood Gardens

Afternoon - Tour Presser Music Library

Guillermo Gómez - Art, music, dance, theater, plays

Nydia Rojas - Multimedia programs at UNA

FRIDAY, May 7, 2009

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Instructional Methods

Ana Sánchez

Rachel McMullin

Dr. Idna Corbett, interim dean of Academic and Program Services

Resume program and wrap up summary

Agreement on proceedings

Future plans for 2010

Evaluations completed and returned