

SCAMeL Librarian Exchange Professional Development Program
Final Report

VISITING LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

VISITOR

Tim Nutt, C.A., MLIS
Director of Historical Research Center
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

INSTITUTION VISITED

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center--New Orleans, Ische Library
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center--New Orleans, School of Dentistry Library
Tulane University—Matas Library

DATE OF VISIT: July 12, 2016

GOALS FOR VISIT

The goals for the visit were to review the LSUHSC collecting and promotional activities for their rare and archival materials in the History of Medicine collection and to discuss potential collaborative opportunities, such as digitization projects, workshops, or conferences.

PLANNED ITINERARY

July 11, 2016: Arrival in New Orleans

July 12, 2016

8:45 am Picked up from hotel

9:00-9:45 am Tour of LSUHSC Ische Library Special Collections/Visit with Employees

9:45-10:30 am Presentation/discussion of UAMS with Ische Library Employees

10:30 am-12:00 pm Tour of LSUHSC Dental Library

12:00 pm-1:30 pm Lunch with Ische Library Staff

2:00 pm-4:00 pm Tour of Tulane University -Matas Library/Visit with Staff

July 13, 2016: Departure from New Orleans

GOALS ACHIEVED

All of my goals and expectations were met during my visit to the LSU-Health Sciences Center. During the discussions, possible collaborative digitization projects were discussed, such as one documenting the yellow fever epidemic of 1878-79. At LSUHSC, I also discussed their approach to collecting materials and how they promoted the collection, which was an objective of the visit. In both instances, neither institution was actively collecting---as in many archives, materials were donated randomly. The visit, though brief, also provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about the institutions' respective history of medicine collections, including acquisition procedures, reference policies and practices, and future plans.

The librarians at LSUHSC facilitated my visit to Tulane University's Matas Library. There, I observed their impressive exhibit highlighting several facets of New Orleans' medical history. I also had the opportunity to tour their collection and to learn more about their digitization efforts.

LESSONS LEARNED

It was interesting to learn about the evolution of the collections, the support of campus administrations, and the current usage of materials at both institutions, as well as acquisition practices. It was evident that both LSUHSC and Tulane have strong History of Medicine collections, and I was especially pleased to see a wealth of materials at the Dental Library at LSUHSC. That was an unexpected, but pleasant, surprise. It was also apparent that the employees were supportive of their respective collections and wanted the materials to be used more frequently. In all of my discussions, the enthusiasm for the history of medicine collections was apparent. I also discovered that while UAMS has employees specifically assigned to its archives (Historical Research Center), the oversight, reference, and collection of archival materials at the other institutions are farmed out with other library responsibilities. This approach differs from my experiences and background at other institutions, and, one that presents challenges, but also opportunities in that the archives do not function as "silos".

Tulane University's exhibit space was well-placed and had interesting content. They also regularly digitize materials from their collections, but, like similar institutions, other duties and responsibilities infringe on those projects. Still, the amount of materials that Matas Library has digitized is impressive. In addition to the collection at the LSUHSC-Dental Library, I was amazed at Ische Library's history of medicine collection. I was aware that they had a collection of materials, but I was impressed with the strength and depth of the collection.

All-in-all the visit was useful as it allowed me to compare the state of the Historical Research Center against other institutions. It also provided an opportunity to meet others in the medical library field. Although I have had a long career in archives, I am new to the medical library field so meeting new colleagues and learning about medical libraries in general was just as important to me as learning about their history of medicine collections.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

I have no suggestions for improvement. The travel and visit went exceedingly well. I appreciated the opportunity to visit other libraries during my visit, even though it was not included in my proposal.

SITE REPORT

HOST SITE COORDINATOR

Tim Nutt, CA, MLIS
Director of the Historical Research Center
UAMS Library

VISITING LIBRARIAN

Wesley Lucas, MLIS
Reference Librarian
LSUHSC-NO School of Dentistry Library

DATE OF VISIT: June 1, 2016

PREPARATION TIME

Preparation began in January 2016 with an exchange of emails to schedule the dates of the visit. Approximately 2 hours were dedicated to communicating with UAMS colleagues, and Wes, to draft and finalize the schedule. Subsequent emails with Wes addressed parking and lodging, and other last minute details. A total of approximately 5 hours were spent preparing Mr. Lucas' visit to the UAMS Library.

HOST LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE

The UAMS Library very much appreciated the opportunity to host Wesley Lucas from the Dental Library at LSU-Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. In addition to his pleasant personality, he actively participated in our management team meeting and led a discussion about the LSUHSC library. He was eager to learn about our practices and procedures. His interest in archives was evident, as he asked numerous questions about our history of medicine collection. As he is relatively new to the medical library field, it was interesting to get his perspective on daily responsibilities and also library trends. Also interesting was his take on the financial situation in Louisiana, which we discussed during our weekly Management Team meeting, in which Wesley participated. Nadia Lalla, the Associate Provost for Library and Student Services at UAMS, led that meeting and provided the following comments:

“I always enjoy learning how other libraries manage ongoing daily activities and unique challenges. Wes provided knowledge to me about the impact of Louisiana state legislative actions on the current funding situation. Since I am still new to the south, this was valuable contextual information and helped me understand the plight of libraries located in that state. While Wes shared this information in the formal and informal sections of his visit, he conveyed the seriousness of the situation with a depth of knowledge and gravitas that underscored the harsh realities.”

From the UAMS Library's perspective, this exchange was highly beneficial in introducing Wesley to our operations at the UAMS Library, and, in particular, showcasing our newly revamped Historical Research Center. His positive reaction to the Center confirmed that the UAMS Library is on the right track in making our collections and holdings more visible. Overall, Wesley's visit was enlightening for both parties.

HOST ANOTHER?

Yes, the experience was both rewarding and informative. The UAMS Library would welcome the opportunity to host another visiting librarian.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There are no suggestions for improvement.