

# COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES NEWS

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September 1983

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*Liang Kai Chou, history graduate student from Taiwan, explains in Mandarin the use of library facilities and services to his countrymen.*

## Chinese Spoken Here: Foreign Language Library Orientation Tours

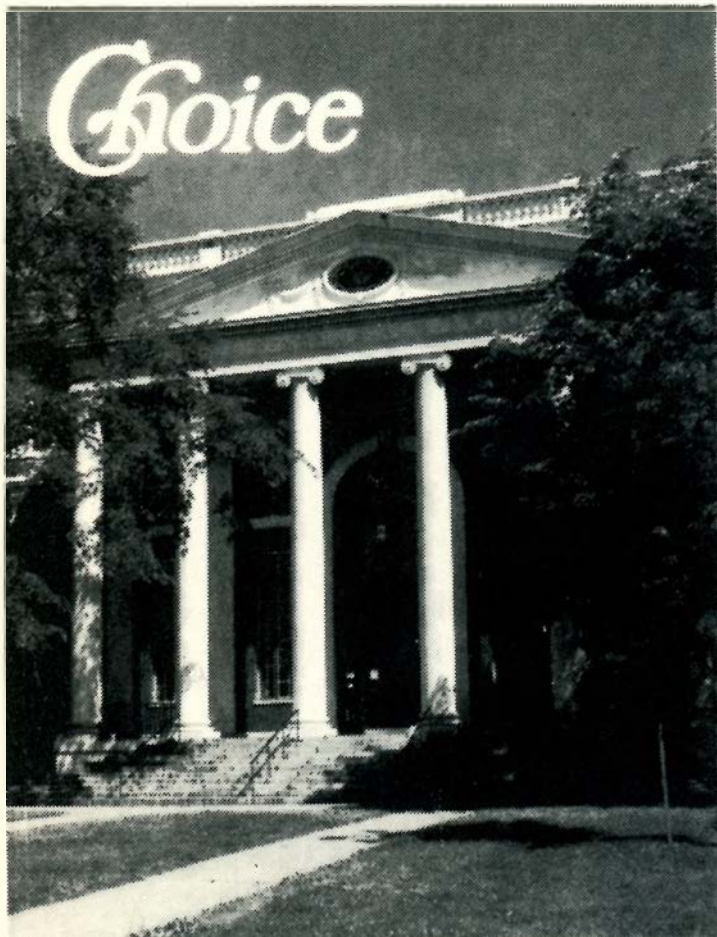
*Manuel D. Lopez  
Lockwood Memorial Library  
SUNY at Buffalo*

Of the 27,000 students enrolled in the State University of New York at Buffalo, almost 2,000 are foreign students representing some 39 countries. Such students and visiting scholars represent the best of their country's educational system, and while they read and write English very well, unfortunately

(continued on p. 268)

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## Chinese Spoken, cont'd

they often have had only little practice in hearing English and generally they are completely unfamiliar with American library systems and the terminology involved. Consequently, even if they are part of a class that includes a library orientation program, they remain at a disadvantage. As a result of this, such students remain shy, diffident and reluctant to ask for help in the use of libraries. Yet given the opportunity, they become exceedingly heavy library users.

Lockwood Memorial Library is the graduate social sciences and humanities library in the University Libraries system at SUNY-Buffalo. For the purposes of aiding the foreign student in becoming a self-sufficient and effective library patron, language seemed to be the key. The use of student native language speakers as tour leaders in a special library orientation program was considered as a possible solution.

Each foreign student association and club on campus was sent a letter explaining the project with a request to submit the names of interested volunteers. This approach was somewhat less than successful as such organizations are not functional during the summer and usually are in a period of administrative transition at the beginning of the fall semester. The most productive approach utilized was personal contact with foreign students who spoke excellent English. Generally, when the project was explained to such students, they readily agreed to volunteer for one or more tours.

Each tour leader received a script of a basic introduction to library facilities and services, i.e., reference desk, reserve desk, computer searching, interlibrary loan, use of the card catalog, use of indexes and abstracts, location of periodicals and serials within the library system, and circulation policies. This was supplemented by an itinerary keyed to the script. Later all the volunteers were given a sample library orientation tour and at this time questions generated by the script were answered. When the students had completed their own academic schedules, they were asked to indicate on the relevant tour sign-up sheets which days and at what hour they would be willing to give tours. As I was to accompany them at the session, obviously only one tour could be scheduled at a time. The presence of a librarian who could act as a resource person for the tour leader seemed to be crucial in terms of the volunteers' willingness to accept the task and their comfort and enjoyment of the presentation. Last year the foreign language library orientation program was given in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Farsi, French, Japanese, Spanish, and Thai.

Public relations for the project included flyers and posters in the relevant languages informing the foreign students that if they wanted to learn to use the library effectively in the preparation of term papers, class presentations, and seminars, they

then could attend a session in the use of the library, presented by a native speaker of that language, by coming to the library and reserving a place in one or more sessions.

Similar information was sent to campus publications, student newspapers, and the student radio station. Relevant flyers were sent to the appropriate student organizations and clubs, posted on bulletin boards around campus, and sent to the dormitories with a high concentration of foreign students. The Foreign Student Affairs Office received notice of the program and flyers were included in the Foreign Student Orientation Program. Many national groups which have their own programs for assisting their newly arrived fellow citizens in registering, finding housing, etc., were also informed of the project.

While a number of volunteers in each language were sought in order to give the student a variety of possible times to take the orientation tour, there was no minimum number of students required for a tour to be given. Even if only one person signed up for a particular hour, the tour was conducted. In contrast, library tour standard policy had required a minimum of three students.

The foreign students were eager participants, so while the tours were only scheduled for one hour, questions and explanations sometimes required more time. Scheduling should allow for this. And foreign students are appreciative! Given the opportunity they become heavy library users, grateful for the special effort made to soften cultural shock. They are delighted at being somewhat self-

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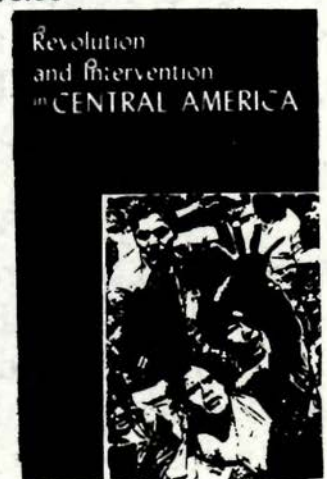
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sufficient and become less bashful and more comfortable in their attitude toward librarians and the library, once it has been overtly demonstrated that the library is actively seeking to help them in their studies. Such a program relieves some recurring problems in public service departments, enhances the library's image on campus, and the staff involved has the satisfaction of introducing a number

of foreign students to a very American aspect of their education, as well as contributing to their adjustment in a new and sometimes confusing environment.

Letters of appreciation from the head of Lockwood and the Director of the University Libraries are sent to all the volunteers. ■■

## Financial Restrictions in Academic Libraries

*Kay F. Jones*  
*Head of Reference Department*  
*Zimmerman Library*  
*University of New Mexico*

Spring is budget time in academic libraries. All around us can be heard mutterings about cuts in book budgets, frozen positions, and other financial restrictions imposed on us by the university, the state legislatures, or other budget authorities. It is fair to assume that many librarians wonder how widespread the cuts are in other academic institutions. Are we the only ones who have been hurt?

A survey was sent to 28 directors of libraries in the western third of the United States and sixteen responses (57%) were returned. Eleven of the responding libraries were ARL libraries; the other five were one of the three largest university libraries in their states. The survey was designed to find out how widespread financial restrictions were in the West, the nature of these restrictions, and what creative solutions had been invented. Only three of the respondents reported no financial restrictions at all; thirteen libraries (81%) had been cut in some way.

Seventy-five per cent of the university librarians or their representatives whose libraries have experienced financial restrictions in the past four years expressed the opinion that the cuts in book budget, reductions in staff, and other restrictions imposed were temporary in nature, although some defined "temporary" as four to six years or longer! One less optimistic librarian commented that unless the financial situation improved in his state, libraries would experience long and permanent financial restrictions such as have not been seen in the state for more than forty years.

Ten of the libraries surveyed (62.5%) have had their book budgets cut or have had book funds taken back by the university administration during the fiscal year. Six of the responding libraries experienced no book budget cuts; three others were cut by less than one per cent. Cuts at the other libraries ranged from 2% to 25% of the total book budget. Four libraries were cut by 2% to 8%, making this range the most common. Three libraries were cut

by more than 20%. In dollar amounts, the cuts ranged from around \$5,000 to \$750,000.

All of the libraries experiencing financial restrictions had some sort of staffing restrictions. The most common form of restriction was frozen positions or a temporary prohibition against filling positions open through attrition. Eight of the libraries responding (half the respondents) had frozen positions. Some of the affected positions were faculty or professional librarian positions; some were staff. Some libraries had a freeze on both classifications. Four libraries had positions permanently reduced. Counting these two areas together, the cuts ranged from one position cut or frozen to one library which had experienced more than thirty lost positions since 1979/80. Two libraries had one affected position; three had two; only two libraries had reductions of more than ten positions. One library said staff had been affected but did not specify a number. For cuts expressed in percentages of the total staff, see Table 1.

Several libraries experienced the double whammy of cuts in both the book budget and in the staff. Eight libraries, or half of the sample, had financial restrictions in both areas.

What has been the result of these cuts on the academic libraries surveyed? Many have responded by cutting services in some way. The most common method employed was a reduction of hours of service; six libraries, 37.5% of the respondents, used this way to lighten the load on a reduced staff. One library postponed the construction of a new library addition, another postponed the occupation of a new branch, and a third closed two branches and reabsorbed the collections into the main library. Reference services have been reduced, bibliographic instruction has been curtailed or eliminated, and areas such as Special Collections or Audiovisual Services have been reduced or eliminated. One librarian commented that no growth in grossly underfunded areas could be considered a cut.

The question was asked of these librarians, "Have you considered or conducted a systemwide review of operations to identify areas in which to economize?" Two libraries include this as part of