

# Working Together! Experiences from an Academic Library Exchange Between China and the United States

Drs. Xiaorong Shao & Margaret Gregor, Appalachian State University, Boone NC, USA

## Introduction

Appalachian State University Library in the U.S. and Fudan University Library in China had a successful exchange and collaboration program between 2008 and 2018. The program provided great opportunities for exchange librarians to learn about library operations, share their expertise with colleagues in the host country, and experience another culture. The program brought librarians together to seek solutions to problems and challenges they faced in their profession and in society. The program also provided opportunities for librarians to share materials, meet the resource needs of users in new ways, and collaborate on scholarly projects of a variety of topics.



## Outcomes

**Academic exchanges:** Exchange librarians worked with colleagues in the host library on projects such as collection development and acquisitions, digitalization, and library instruction. They also gave presentations on their areas of expertise. The topics included library instructional programs, demand driven acquisitions, user experience, research data management, and Chinese excavated documents digitization projects. The exchange librarians had opportunities to visit other libraries in the area and attend academic conferences.

**Scholarly products:** Six articles co-authored by the exchange librarians at both institutions have been published during recent years. Exchange librarians also presented together at library conferences about the exchange program and their experiences.



**Cultural understanding:** Librarians who participated in the exchange learned many new things directly related to library operations, but equally important, they all learned about cultural differences. They returned to their home institutions with a deeper understanding of the other country's culture, language and people, which enabled them to serve patrons with enriched social sensitivity and a more global perspective.

**Internship for Fudan's MILS students:** Exchange librarians from App State worked closely with Fudan's MILS program students during their visit at Fudan. They taught in their classes and had cultural and social activities with them. In addition, the collaboration brought two interns from Fudan's MILS program to App State in summer 2016. They participated in various professional and cultural activities. They took one online library science course with the MLS professor at App State. The students also worked on their research projects and conducted literature reviews for their thesis research. The experience was life changing for them.



Scan me for more information

