



**CALA - Chinese American Librarians Association**  
**華人圖書館員協會**

**Library Services to the Underserved Community:  
 Cases on Diversity, Information Literacy & Outreach**

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**1<sup>st</sup> Achievement by Qi Chen,  
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Known as the most diverse college in Midwest of United States, Calumet College of St. Joseph serves a student body representing underserved and underprivileged population. The college also has an open admission policy encouraging anyone interested in learning to attend classes and enroll in academic programs. As a result, many underprepared students were also admitted into the college.

**Solutions**

For the past a few years, due to lack of professional librarians, the library did not do any information literacy education. As a result, students and some faculty lack of knowledge and skills in information literacy (IL). Some of the evidence includes improper or not using sources and citations, lack of critical thinking skills, unable to tell scholarly and popular information, etc. The new library director and new reference librarian saw this as an information literacy crises that required immediate action.

Starting late 2015, the library launched a series of workshops promoting IL on campus. At very beginning, there was lots of pushback from the faculty and administration which resulted in low attendance in workshops.

The library used different methods to reach out to faculty and students.

- Talk to individual faculties tailoring the library instruction to particular classrooms
- Asked to be invited to some classrooms to observe how students do to find the gaps to fill.
- Attend debate and presentation sessions to observe how students present and debate to provide feedback.
- Launched a library week during the National Library week, creating activities and inviting students and faculty to the library.

**Results**

These activities have given the librarians the first hand information what students need and what they could contribute. During the Humanities Week, the librarians made comments and gave various examples how using scholarly resources could help students better support their topics. These comments and examples opened eye of both students and faculty. As a result, more students and more faculty came to the librarians afterwards to schedule meetings and appointments.

This summer, the library staff are working on more outreach projects to build an information literacy awareness and environment through the curriculum and learning activities. Hopefully eventually, both faculty and students will embrace and benefit from it.



Photo taken by Calumet College of St. Joseph

**2<sup>nd</sup> Achievement by Sheau-yueh J. Chao, Baruch College, CUNY**

**Diversity and Outreach to the Incarcerated people and Ex-offenders**

Major findings showed that many prisons do have a room with a collection of books but do not have materials in any other languages besides English. This is specifically crucial for the foreign prisoners who found themselves as strangers in a strange land in order to cope with imprisonment as racial or ethnic foreign national inmates. The author would like to explore how collection development policies currently support the role and purpose of prison libraries, the source and accessibility of foreign language materials, i.e. Spanish and Chinese, for the incarcerated people, and the needs assessments in these areas.

Survey of Chinese inmates at Shawangunk Correctional Facility (SCF) in New York State. With detailed survey results from the participants, we found that SCF has a library with 13,000 books in its collection, 78 % in English, 21% in Spanish, but only 13 titles or less than 0.1% in Chinese. These Chinese Books were totally came from donations. Currently, the library does not have any budget allocated to purchasing Chinese books. Books in the collection are generally divided into fictions and non-fictions. The library had no formal collection development policy. The library provides some educational programs such as classes for GED (General Educational Development), ESL (English as a Second Language) and ABE (Adult Basic Education).



Photo taken by Sheau-yueh Janey Chao

**Recommendations**

- Providing special instruction in a particular subject discipline such as tutoring and teaching classes in Art, Photography, Math or History.
- Serving as member of facility's Community Resource Council.
- Serving as member of your institution involving with prison programs or neighborhood library.
- Serving as resource person on various areas such as college re-entry or re-education program or employment preparation, many facilities provide scheduled Resource Fairs that you may join
- Participating with an organized group already active at facility such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Prison Fellowship.
- Becoming active as members of online blogs, Listservs, and webinars such as Librarians Behind Bars (<https://librarianbehindbars.wordpress.com>) Exploring Prison Librarianship (<https://exploringprisonlibrarianship.wordpress.com>), and ASCLA Library Services to Prisoners Forum (<http://www.ala.org/ascla/asclaurassoc/asclasections/Issps/Ispl/Isplf>)
- Participating workshops, conferences, and readings in awareness of prison issues, initiatives, and programs
- Donating reading and educational materials via gifts to prison libraries