



International Leads

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Sister libraries collaborate across borders

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At the 2005 ALA Annual Conference, the Association of College Research Libraries (ACRL) Board of Directors endorsed a declaration encouraging institutions to explore sister library partnerships and to build relationships with libraries in other cultures that can help us learn how to understand and better serve our own communities. Camila Aire, then ACRL president, made sister libraries one of the special projects of her tenure. The board charged the ACRL International Relations Committee (IRC) with raising awareness within the ACRL community of the benefits of working with sister libraries.

To further the cross-border agreement ACRL signed with the National Council of Higher Education Libraries of Mexico (CONPAB-IES) in 2003. The initial focus of the agreement was to find U.S. libraries to partner with Mexican libraries.

The partnership and collaboration with the Tecnológico de Monterrey began when a group of UM librarians decided to use their own professional development funds to develop a mini-conference in Monterrey in April 2005. Two days were well spent meeting the Tec counterparts and presenting papers on user education topics.

Librarians at the University of Maryland have embraced the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues in Mexico, thus taking advantage of the ACRL seed grant



Librarians from both the University of Maryland and the Tecnológico de Monterrey introduce their partnership at Maryland's McKeldin Library in April 2006.

awarded in 2006 to the University of Maryland and Tecnológico of Monterrey to continue building the partnership and exchanging ideas and personnel.

In April 2006, the UM Libraries hosted an important conference on library user education, LOEX (Library Orientation Exchange), and the UM librarians invited the librarians from the Tec to travel to Maryland to attend the conference, visit the campus and its libraries, and formally introduce the partnership to the library faculty at

Maryland. Two of the librarians from the Tec received funding and were able to make the trip: Cecilia Barragán, who was then coordinator of user education at the library of the main campus of the Tecnológico de Monterrey, and Eloísa Puente, who is a business information specialist and the manager of the EGADE Library. (EGADE is the Tec's Graduate Business School.)

The Tec librarians and the Sister Libraries program were introduced at a

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Sister Libraries

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luncheon at McKeldin Library. Eloisa and Cecilia made presentations in which they described their university (<http://www-cib.mty.itesm.mx/>), their libraries, and the services they offer. They spoke of their interest and excitement at participating in the Sister Libraries Program and proposed ideas for moving the partnership forward.

During the week of May 14-19, the UM librarians hosted two Mexican sister librarians from the Tec. Merari Sifuentes (Head of Interlibrary Loan) and Teresa (Tere) Solis Adame (Head of Access Services) spent the week at the UM Libraries meeting and exchanging information with the interlibrary loan and access services librarians. They also met with the facilities staff, the head of user education, and the communications officer.

They had a full program, but everyone enjoyed their presentation at a luncheon staff meeting and the sister librarians left Maryland with many new ideas.

The Sister Libraries partnership at the University of Maryland and Tec of Monterrey is an example of how this collaboration endeavor can be profitable for both sides to share knowledge, experience, and skills.

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