

**SCAMeL Librarian Exchange Professional Development Program
Final Report**

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Institution Visited

UT Southwestern Medical Center Library
June 3-4, 2008

Goals of Visit

My goals for the visit were to learn more about specific issues in the areas of staff development, assessment & evaluation, and leadership/management. These issues include:

Staff Development – Learning how another library trains new employees and integrates them into existing library activities; developing and managing project work involving both professional and paraprofessional staff.

Assessment & Evaluation – Creating and developing an Assessment Librarian position in an academic health sciences library; exploring the role of an Assessment Librarian position within the larger library; incorporating evaluation and assessment into existing library programs; educating staff about evaluation and assessment.

Leadership & Management – Developing leadership skills in non-management staff; addressing generational issues/differences in a library.

Planned Itinerary

Tuesday June 3

Rachel arrives at: 4:35pm (Radisson Hotel Dallas Love Field)
Dinner (Barb Nunn, Laurie Thompson, Kelly Gonzalez, Emily Patridge)

Wednesday June 4

8:30-9:30	Meet with Brian Bunnett to discuss management and leadership
9:30-10:30	Meet with Laurie T. to discuss management and leadership
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-11:30	Campus tour with Barb N.
11:30-1	Lunch (Bill Maina, Joseph Tan, Richard Wayne, Emily P.)
1-2	Meet with Bill M. for Disaster Management
2-3:30	Meet with Kay Chapa to discuss assessment
3:30	Leave to catch plane (4:55)

Description of how goals were met or not met by visit

All of my goals were met during this visit. After submitting the proposal, I learned that I would be working on my library's disaster plan. Instead of focusing on staff development, I asked to have a meeting with one of the library staff members at UT Southwestern who had been involved in developing their disaster plan. I appreciated the UT Southwestern Library team's willingness to be flexible with my schedule, and the meeting I had with the librarian who worked on the Disaster Recovery Plan was very useful. My learning goals for the areas of leadership & management and assessment were also met. I met with Brian Bunnett and Laurie Thompson early in the day, and this helped me get a "big picture" view of their library that put the rest of the day's meetings in context.

Lessons Learned

I came away from my visit to UT Southwestern with a better understanding of how an Assessment Librarian position can be developed in an academic health sciences library, along with an actual job description which could serve as a model should my library decide to create such a position in the future. Kay Chapa shared documents she developed to outline the library's assessment program as well as their multi-year assessment plan for specific target groups on campus. The biggest "takeaway" from my meeting with Kay is that the role of an Assessment Librarian is to serve as a consultant – one who provides the tools, education, and raises awareness about assessment and evaluation. However, the library staff must have a personal investment in assessment and evaluation in order for such a program to be successful.

I also learned about a group put into place by the Library Director and other managers which seems like a great tool to promote transparency in library organizations. The group is called the Organizational Efficacy group, and membership (which changes yearly) consists of elected representatives from each "interest" group in the library. The group provides the director with feedback and suggestions from staff at all levels in the library. I don't know if such a group could work in every library, but the idea intrigued me and reinforced in my mind the importance of trying different ways to facilitate better communication in an organization.

Suggestions for Improvement

I have no suggestions for improving the program – I found the application process to be relatively easy, and there has already been discussion about posting the proposals online so that next year's applicants will have examples to follow. The funding amount was more than enough to cover travel costs; my home institution did not have to fund any expenses for this visit.

I would offer a couple of points that may be useful for next year's applicants and potential host institutions – first, be flexible on the length of time needed for a visit. This will likely vary depending on the applicant's goals, and availability of personnel at the host institution. While my single-day visit (and dinner the evening before) went by quickly, I do think it turned out to be the right amount of time for my visit.

Second, a couple of small details made my visit more enjoyable: the host site coordinator at UT Southwestern handled my transportation needs, and this was much appreciated. I am doing the same

for her when she visits UAMS. Also, when planning lunch or dinner activities it is better to keep the group size small so that it is easier for the visiting librarian to get to know those from the host institution. It also ensures that the meal doesn't start to feel like a job interview!

Thank you to the SCAMeL Board of Directors for offering this program. I find site visits to be a great learning experience as well as a way to develop relationships with colleagues in other regions. I hope funding will continue to be available for this program in the future. The three of us who received the award this year (myself, Emily Patridge, Jennifer Lloyd) hope to present a poster at the 2008 SCC meeting in Dallas as a way to promote the program.