

Final Report on the NCC's first Faculty Forum
How can we use new Japanese digital resources more effectively?

In January 2009 the NCC presented the first Faculty Forum (FF) for faculty and advanced graduate students. Held at Princeton University on January 15th, the Faculty Forum was cosponsored by the Japan Foundation, Japan-US Friendship Commission, Northeast Asian Council of the AAS, Princeton University's East Asian Studies Program, and the Gest Library of Princeton University.

Forum Objectives: Library and information resources, particularly those in electronic formats, are proliferating at an exceptional rate. It is a challenge for scholars and graduate students to keep abreast of new and changing resources and to learn to productively use them in their teaching and research. Facilitating access to Japanese information resources for faculty and students is one of the NCC's top priorities. The Faculty Forum provided an opportunity for faculty to meet with members of the NCC's Council to learn about the newest materials available, and to discuss new classroom strategies, emerging areas of research, and student interests with a specific focus on new digital resources available from Japan.

The goals for Faculty Forum Series are:

- To increase the knowledge of participants on Japanese resources and their classroom applications;
- To provide advanced graduate students and new faculty with strategies for working with librarians;
- To help develop course syllabi that incorporate digital resources into the curriculum;
- To establish collaborative models for use of Japanese digital resources between librarians and faculty throughout the field of Japanese studies; and
- To advise NCC about emerging faculty research and teaching needs to guide future programming.

Participants: Thirty-eight participants attended the NCC's January 2009 Faculty Forum: 31 faculty, advanced graduate students, and librarians, and 7 observers. The registered faculty and grad students came from 12 states and the District of Columbia (Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) plus one NCC faculty participant came from Illinois. A critically important component of being able to have such a large and geographically diverse group was the availability of partial travel grants provided by the Northeast Asia Council of the AAS.

Evaluations: Participants completed a written evaluation, which will provide guidance to the NCC in developing programs for future Faculty Forums. Participants were uniformly positive about the benefits of the program to them individually and for their teaching. Participants strongly recommended that future Faculty Forum are held. Additional recommendations were that longer programs be developed to include a hands-on component to give participants the chance to use digital resources introduced during the program and that a variant of the program might bring in teams from an individual institutions including faculty, undergraduates, graduate students and librarians.

Discussion in the breakout was especially spirited and people learned a lot from other members of their discussion group. More provision for breakout sessions should be considered for future FF.

The vast majority of FF participants were trained at major institutions with large Japanese studies libraries and professional Japanese studies librarians. Despite those resources virtually all the participants reported that during the final years of their graduate training, just before they entered the job market, most of their interactions with librarians and resources were focused on dissertation completion. In the pressures to complete dissertations and search for jobs many junior faculty had not previously thought about how they would manage information issues once they were on the job and teaching at a different sort of institution (generally one smaller and with fewer library resources than the institution in which they were trained).

Participants uniformly reported that they wished there had been professional training seminars that would have helped them better understand the Japanese studies resources available, would have developed strategies for working with librarians, and presented ways of integrating digital resources into their classroom and syllabus. Given the severe economic situation that prevails competition for academic jobs will become increasingly tight in coming years. It will be all the more important for job candidates to be able to demonstrate their readiness to enter the classroom and to productively teach and work closely with colleagues. Programs like the Faculty Forum offered to advance graduate students could well be the edge that students need to win the few plum jobs that will be available.

While most of the participants currently teach in smaller institutions with fewer Japanese resources and Asian library specialists, there was a clear need among young faculty who come from all kinds of institutions for more such training. Participants also strongly expressed the need for more E-Resources workshops at their institution or in their region and several of the NCC Council members who took part were approached by participants to consider offering such sessions locally.

Participants also uniformly expressed concerns about the impact of the economy on their future ability to travel to professional meetings, to Japan for research, and to take part in important training programs such as the Faculty Forum and E-Resources Workshops. Attendees strongly urged the NCC to offer partial travel grants in conjunction with any future programs presented.

Recommendations For Possible Faculty Forum themes and formats:

- Team programs including a faculty member, librarian, graduate and undergraduate students (4 per institution), possibly part of the work done as teams and part with teams broken up into groups from different institutions
- Knowledge creation by students (teaching the professor)
- How to train your librarian
- Offer programs focused on specific disciplines
- Look at examples of UCLA's information literacy courses and those of ACRL
- Treasure hunt tasks to strengthen online searching skills
- Hold debates on the merits of resources and search strategies
- Focus on outputs not outcomes
- Transforming the nature of service
- Focus groups may help define future programs.

Potential for Collaborations in offering Faculty Forums: As NCC continue to plan future components in this series it will explore groups with which these programs may be collaboratively offered. Especially useful are likely to be regional and national faculty groups that focus on different aspects of East Asian Studies. These may include AsiaNetwork, the regional conference of the Association for Asian Studies, and others. At the NCC meeting it was also suggested that NCC talk to Charles Lowry the new head of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to offer forum that could be marketed to ARL's approximately 120 member-libraries. Working with ACRL (the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of ALA) may also be a useful strategy as would be working with regional library organizations. Major resource centers at large institutions may also be willing to cosponsor such a program for affiliated faculty in their region.

Feedback from Japan Foundation Staff: Two members of the Japan Foundation New York staff attended the first Faculty Forum, Director General Isao Tsujimoto and Staff Associate Grant Tompkins. Following the Forum a number of NCC Council members met with them to review the program and discuss future strategies. Their feedback was very detailed and NCC Council members incorporated it into subsequent evaluative discussions of the program, which took place at the working meeting.

Further Dissemination: Reports on the Faculty Forum Series and announcements of future programs will be made at the NCC Open Meeting, at the AAS Annual Meeting, in published reports in the AAS Newsletter, the Journal of East Asian Libraries (JEAL), the NCC Newsletter and other venues in the fields of Japanese studies and library and information resources.

Plans for Future Faculty Forum Programs: The unanimous recommendation of participants was for more programs in the series, which NCC plans to include in its broad menu of workshops and seminars. The next Faculty Forum will be offered in Tucson Arizona on October 22, 2009 directly prior to the Western Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (WCAAS). It will be offered in co-sponsorship with WCAAS, University of Arizona, and the University of Arizona Libraries.

In Conclusion: Faculty Forums educate users about the range of available materials and how to make use of those resources. Faculty Forum make users more aware of what NCC in particular has to offer and how their home institution can directly benefit from those services. At the NCC Meeting, which took place on the two days after the Princeton Faculty Forum, considerable discussion focused on evaluating the first program. Council members and

observers strongly supported offering more Faculty Forum in various regions of the country and in a range of formats.

It was also suggested that the Faculty Forum series and other user-training initiatives that are highly in demand be incorporated into future NCC proposals to Japan Foundation for their Institutional Project Grants Program. The broad participation of faculty members for as far away as Vermont, Texas, and Wisconsin would not have been possible without the travel support provided by NEAC and such funding should be incorporated into future funding plans.