

# International Visitor Program

-- a report by Venia Mak, Hong Kong Institute of Education Library

Last December, I was surprised when I received a letter from the American Consulate General, inviting me to visit the U.S. for four weeks under the International Visitor Program. The International Visitor Program brings annually 5,000 participants to the United States from all over the world to meet with their professional counterparts and to experience the U.S. firsthand. The visitors, who are current or potential leaders in government, politics, the media, education, and other fields, are selected by American Officials overseas. Individuals cannot apply to participate in the program, instead they are chosen from a pool of nominations. The program includes *individual* and *group* projects. Besides, there are two types of visitors in the International Visitor Program - *Grant Visitors* and *Voluntary Visitors*. For more information about the program, please visit: <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/ivp/>

Fortunately, I was selected to join the Individual Grant Projects. In this regard, I received full funding from the Department of State for my U.S. visit which covered round-trip transportation, domestic flights, lodging and daily expenses. Individual Project is tailored for the visitor's professional interests and is designed with the participant's involvement. My suggestions were sent to Washington D.C. via the American Consulate General before I left Hong Kong. These suggestions were discussed among those responsible for developing my program, and a preliminary plan was then developed. After I arrived at Washington D.C., the U.S. Department of State and Institute of International Education (IIE) Program staff discussed the plan with me to finalize the program details,

In order to gain an appreciation not only of the geographic size of the U.S., but also its ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic diversity, my itinerary covers 8 cities, from east to west of the U.S. Professional meetings and visits were scheduled from Monday through Friday. I had the invaluable opportunities to converse with professional colleagues in the academic, public and private sectors and obtain firsthand knowledge about the U.S. library development. Below is the national itinerary:

July 12 (Sat)	Washington, D.C.	Arrival
July 13		Free time
July 14		IIE Program Session
		Mary Riley Styles Public Library (N. Virginia)
		U.S. Senate Library
July 15		National Library of Education (U.S. Department of Education)

		Overview of U.S. Society, Politics and Culture (Washington Tour)
July 16		American Library Association
		Library of Congress (including Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division; General tour; Education Libraries Discussion; National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIPP) presentation and Cataloging Policy and Support Office)
July 17		Council on Library and Information Resources
		Digital Library Federation
	New York	Depart by train to New York
July 18		The Queens Borough Public Library
		New York Public Library
July 19 (Sat)		Free time
July 20	Boston	Departure by train to Boston
July 21		ExLibris
		Harvard University (Digital Library Initiative)
		Harvard-MIT Data Centre
July 22		University of Massachusetts at Boston (Healey Library)
		Boston Public Library
July 23	Pittsburg	Depart by air to Pittsburg
July 24		Digital Research Library, University of Pittsburgh
		Hunt Library, Carnegie Mellon University
		Andrew Carnegie Free Library
		Home hospitality
July 25		Department of Library and Information Science, University of Pittsburgh
		East Asian Library, University of Pittsburgh
		School of Education, University of Pittsburgh
		Farm stay (dairy farm)
July 26 (Sat)		Farm stay
July 27	Columbus	Depart by car to Columbus
July 28		OCLC (Online Computer Library Center)
		OPLIN (Ohio Public Library Information Network)
		Ohio State University Main Library
July 29		Columbus Metropolitan Library
		OhioLINK

		State Library of Ohio
July 30	Austin	Depart by air to Austin (via Chicago)
July 31		Texas State Library and Archives Commission
		Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum
Aug 1		Booher Library, Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southeast
		Austin Public Library
		School of Information, University of Texas at Austin
Aug 2 (Sat)	Seattle	Depart by air to Seattle
Aug 3		Mt. Rainier (Country Park)
Aug 4		Digital initiatives, University of Washington libraries
		Seattle Public Library
Aug 5		City University
	San Francisco	Depart by air to San Francisco
Aug 6		East Asia Library, Standard University
		Digital Library Program, Standard University
Aug 7		Innovative Interfaces, Inc.
		San Francisco Public Library
Aug 8		University of San Francisco
	San Jose	Free time in the afternoon
Aug 9 (Sat)		Depart San Francisco

The visit to the U.S. gave me the precious chance to talk to the professional colleagues there and to pick up new ideas, experiences and the latest developments in the field; digital initiatives of various libraries, virtual references, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), and electronic resources management. It also helped me to strengthen international bonds through professional interactions.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Lance Sung (Cultural Specialist, American Consulate General), who coordinated with the Department of State and Institute of International Education and Ms. Jeanne Thum (Program Manager, IIE), who scheduled the national itinerary. Without them, I could not have such a fruitful and unforgettable visit to the U.S.



Dr. Barbara Tillett and me  
(Washington, D.C.)



Queen Borough Public Library (New  
York)



Farm study in Evans City  
(Pennsylvania)



Stanford University (San Francisco)