

Fostering East Asian Librarianship (FEAL) - MLIS Scholarships Available

The School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (SOIS) was awarded a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21) grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for the Fostering East Asian Librarianship (FEAL) diversity initiative.

FEAL will award 12 Masters of Library Science (MLIS) scholarships to paraprofessionals currently working within domestic East Asian libraries to pursue the 36 credit MLIS program at SOIS, specializing in Chinese, Japanese, or Korean studies. SOIS will partner with the library of each participating paraprofessional to coordinate an individualized strategy for each student. This will include the identification and assignment of a professional mentor within the host library, and a commitment to active career guidance, occupational placement assistance, and other wrap-around services to support the paraprofessional(s). Students will also receive financial support in the form of tuition, and travel support to attend informational meetings and national conferences.

Students will be admitted to the program in a cohort for the Spring 2014 academic semester. The ideal configuration will consist of 4 students from each of the 3 targeted areas of study (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean), although alternative distributions of students will be considered if necessary. The entirety of SOIS' MLIS degree can be completed within our online environment, onsite at UWM, or any combination therein. Students are expected to complete all coursework within the period of IMLS' support.

FEAL Admission Requirements:

Students must meet the standard criteria for SOIS' MLIS program, including an English Proficiency exam. In addition to these standard entry requirements, students must be currently employed within an East Asian library as non-professional staff, and will demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking in one of the targeted languages – Chinese, Japanese, or Korean. Preferred entry criteria will include an undergraduate degree in East Asian humanities (history, anthropology, literature, communication, etc.). In anticipation of a large pool of applicants, priority status will be given to students meeting the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of Asian.

Application Requirements:

In addition to SOIS' admission requirements for the MLIS program, FEAL applicants must provide the following:

- **Mentor Letter of Commitment:** A professional at the host library that will provide the FEAL participant with professional mentoring, career guidance, and occupational placement assistance throughout the project.
- **References:** Three letters of recommendation from persons familiar with the applicant's academic experience and/or potential for graduate work in Information

Studies.

- Proof of Employment within a Library containing significant East Asian collections.

Applications are due by **September 1st, 2013**

FEAL provides students with a unique combination of wrap-around services and support: **Coursework and Academic Support:** The purpose of the MLIS program is to prepare librarians and information professionals who are able to manage change in an urbanized, technologically oriented, and knowledge-based society. The MLIS program provides a systematic course of study which enables individuals with a strong service orientation to apply principles of library and information science, use current methods and tools, and recognize the value of research.

Academic Mentoring: Depending on area of expertise, SOIS faculty members will be the academic advisors, offering students advice on selection of courses and career development. SOIS Student Advisor Twyla McGhee will offer logistic and administrative support to guide students through the FEAL program.

Professional Mentoring, Occupational Development, and Career Guidance:

Each partner library will designate and assign an Information Professional to serve as a mentor and guide for each student. This professional mentor will be instrumental in the development of new skills, and the refinement of existing talents within the paraprofessionals, and the installation of those qualities required to become an agent of change.

Another critical form of mentoring that they will provide is targeted professional development and occupational placement assistance. The assigned professional mentors will also take an active role in assisting FEAL students to develop a career strategy, build crucial professional relationships with colleagues and potential employers; and to have the professional skills and abilities which lead to gainful employment.

Cohort Development

Community encourages teamwork, encourages the individuals to see themselves as part of something greater, and fosters an environment of success. Each year will begin with a FEAL summit on the campus at UWM. This event will include a mix of informational meetings, discussions of timely issues, visits from professionals, visits to local libraries and other information venues, and social events. Students will get the opportunity to meet each other, SOIS faculty members and staff, and the chance to build interpersonal relationships.

SOIS has a distinguished history in actively promoting diversity within the field of librarianship. Through the “**Diversity in the Organization of Information and its Technology (DOIT) Project**” funded by an IMLS Librarians for the 21st Century grant from 2005-2009, SOIS supported 21 master’s students from diverse populations to achieve professional standing within librarianship. The IMLS-funded “**Overcoming**

Barriers to Access (B2A)” recruitment program currently supports 6 full-time doctoral students with research interests that address barriers to information access.

More information regarding the program and application process is available at <http://www4.uwm.edu/sois/>. Specific questions regarding the scholarship grant should be directed to Interim Dean Wooseob Jeong, wjj8612@uwm.edu .