

Xi Chen

CHINESE STUDIES LIBRARIAN &
EAST ASIA COLLECTION STRATEGIST

Led by the LAUC-SD Mentoring Committee, Librarian Profiles offer background information and career-related advice from UC San Diego librarians to MLIS students and graduates.

Which institution did you earn your MLIS or other graduate degree?

University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

Do you currently or did you ever hold a professional library position related to the focus you pursued in graduate school?

Yes

Did you have work experience at any level in a library of any type prior to attending library school?

No

Do you have another advanced degree(s) in addition to any MLIS?

Yes, MA in Education

Did you focus on a particular area of librarianship while earning your MLIS?

Yes, Area Studies Librarianship and Cataloging

Beyond the MLIS, do you feel that any additional advanced degree is essential to success in your current position?

Yes

What are some of your current tasks and responsibilities?

- Acquiring materials related to Chinese studies
- Coordinating acquisition of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean studies materials at the local and regional level (UC)
- Providing research and instructional support to scholars and students
- Promoting scholarship and culture through organizing public events
- Developing digital collection on Chinese studies

What are some skills or core competencies you feel are essential to success in your current position?

- Subject knowledge/research skills
- Outreach and liaising
- Teaching
- Communication
- Collaboration

What do you like best about being a librarian or about your current role or responsibilities?

The most satisfying aspect of my job is providing users access to a variety of library resources and connecting them with research materials that they may not know about.

What do you like best about working in an academic or university setting?

Colleagues are very collaborative, supportive, and user-oriented.

What is something that you think contributed to you getting your first professional job following graduate school for your MLIS?

I worked as a graduate student assistant in an academic library while working on my MLS. After I graduated, I worked as an intern and an interim librarian at another academic library. The skills that I acquired during my MLS and transition years were highly relevant to what was required at my first professional job.

What is your advice to MLIS students seeking or entering their first professional library position?

Find opportunities to get real-world experience during or post-MLIS. Those opportunities could be volunteering, internship, short-term job, etc.

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Please contact me to further discuss my work or background.

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