

# Report on EASTICA's Archival Education Program in Hong Kong : July 12 – 31, 2004

## Background

Arising from a feasibility study in March 1998 by a working group within EASTICA, it was recognized that formal training in modern archival administration was not common and widespread in many of the East Asian countries. To address the problems, EASTICA proposed to enhance professional knowledge and skills of **in-service Asian Archivists** and improve their professional identity and status through organizing a practical and custom-made training program on archival theories and practices adaptable to Asian environment leading to some professionally and academically recognized qualifications.

The proposal had received strong support from national archivists of the East Asian region and subsequently in **January 2003**, the first course was launched in Hong Kong. Encouraged by the success of the program and the enthusiastic support from archivists of the region, EASTICA organized the same program of studies again in July this year.

## Organizers

The Program was jointly organized by the **School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE) of the University of Hong Kong** and the **International Council on Archives East Asian Regional Branch (EASTICA)**.

## Mission of the Program

The program prepares serving archivists in the region to exercise leadership in planning, implementing and promoting the preservation, organization, effective dissemination and use of society's documentary heritage.

## Admission Requirement

To be admitted to the program, applicants must

- i) hold at least a bachelor's degree from a university recognized by the Hong Kong University, and
- ii) be in the employ of an archival institution or agency,  
or
- iii) have archives or records related experience, preferably of at least two years duration.

## The Program

The program was custom-made for archivists and records managers who wished to update their professional knowledge and skills, widen their international exposure and obtain a recognized academic qualification for the archival profession.

This was a 3-week full time program comprising over 100 hours of lecturing, seminar, and workshop.

The program provided students with concepts and skills for:

- i) selecting, acquiring, and preserving archival materials,
- ii) identifying the social and legal context of archives,
- iii) managing paper and electronic records throughout their life-cycle,
- iv) using computers to search databases and retrieve information.

## The Curriculum

### Week 1

- i) **The nature of archival materials:** the characteristics of archival documents, their genesis, forms, aggregations, and their relationships with the facts, acts, and events embedded in them.
- ii) **Archival systems and the profession:** A comparative analysis of the statutory basis, organization, policies, and traditions of contemporary archival institution and programs.
- iii) **History of Archival Concepts:** origins and development of archival concepts, principles, and methods.
- iv) **Archival Public Access:** organization and provision of reference service, user needs and types of use of archives, legal and security concern, methods of increasing accessibility of archival materials.

### Week 2

- i) **Records in Office Systems:** structure and characteristics of integrated office systems, design and implementation of records classification and scheduling, legal, security, and access issues.
- ii) **Selection and Acquisition of Archival Documents:** the concept of selection and acquisition, acquisition policies, principles of evaluation.
- iii) **Arrangement and Description of Archival Materials:** the methods of identification of archival fonds, principles and methods of arrangements and description, standards of description.

### **Week 3**

- i) **Management of Electronic Records:** information capture, processing, storage, and communication technologies in record keeping, methods for the maintenance and disposition of electronic records.
- ii) **Archives Conservation and Preservation:** conservation strategy, daily care and protection of records.
- iii) **Conservation Workshop:** demonstration of conservation techniques
- iv) **Visits of Archives:** Visit of the Public Records Office of Hong Kong, design of the building, environmental control, special workshops, the integrated automation systems.
- v) **Examination**

### **Class Size**

With the intensity of the work to be accomplished within a short time, the class was not larger than 25 students.

### **Assessment**

The certificate would require successful completion of a battery of course especially designed for Asian archivists and written examinations (Multiple Choice) held at the end of each module (week). Candidates were also required to present a research report within two months after the completion of class.

### **The Lecturers**

All lectures, seminars and workshops were conducted by members of the academics and archivists specialized in the fields they teach. This year we had the honour of inviting Trudy Peterson, Jim Suderman, Heather McNeil, Michael Hoyle, as well as Barbara Reed to Hong Kong. We are very much grateful for their generous support.

### **Conclusion**

Apart from knowing that the Hong Kong program was well received and that participants really had fun during the whole course of studies, EASTICA still hasn't made any attempt to evaluate the success or the "effectiveness" of such a course of studies, nor do we have any plan yet to assess the usefulness of the curriculum. Notwithstanding this, EASTICA is planning to make this opportunity of professional development a regular event for the young and aspiring archivists in our region.