



EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS: Tennessee Library Staff on the Road

Since 1981, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries has sponsored visits to other large academic libraries in order to give staff an opportunity for the kind of exchange of ideas and concerns that professional librarians find at association meetings and conferences. Participants take tours of the host library and meet with their counterpart staff members. A maximum of 30 employees may participate including the dean and associate whose presence is mandatory. Travel is by van, providing extended opportunity for staff from a cross-section of departments to learn more about each other and the departments they represent. The length of the trip depends on the place visited, but most do not exceed four days total. All costs except food are at library expense. After returning, participants are required to submit individual reports on their experiences for publication in an in-house newsletter. Both staff and administrators view the program as informative and enriching as well as a builder of staff morale.

Program objectives are to:

- stimulate new ideas and perspectives by providing an opportunity for staff to view and evaluate the operation of another academic library;
- allow participants to observe firsthand the differences and similarities in the way academic libraries perform identical functions and to disseminate this information to colleagues through internal reports;
- foster improved communication between administrators and staff;
- promote the exchange of information among staff from various departments and divisions;
- improve staff morale by providing the opportunity to feel part of the team.

Cost: Approximately \$3,000 for 3 nights, 4 days, depending upon location. Cost of van transportation and lodging paid by the library; participants are responsible for meals and miscellaneous expenses.