Library Exhibitions Are a ‘Home-Grown’ Affair

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What does the ‘Great War’ and creatures of coral and kelp beds have in common?

Current exhibits at Cal State Fullerton’s Pollak Library have a lot to say to library patrons about both subjects.

Active exhibits such as these use artifacts, books, documents and photographs to inform the campus community and the public about a myriad of topics.

Scheduling and mounting these exhibits is the work of the library’s exhibition committee, that is charged with evaluating applications, choosing the exhibits and working with the curators.

The committee is currently accepting applications for its next season, which begins in July and may feature as many as 10 exhibits. The exhibit program is part of the library’s mission to provide a collaborative environment and promote student success. The program also embraces the strategic plan to transform CSU libraries for the 21st century through improved library collections and services.

The library developed a reputation for the quality of its exhibits during Veronica Chiang’s three decade tenure as exhibit curator. Following her retirement, the exhibit committee was formed in 2012 to continue that legacy, and make the exhibit spaces an opportunity for the local community to showcase their collections and tell stories of the region.

Stephanie George, a librarian archivist and committee board member, stresses the committee’s conviction “that the topics should be of interest to the local community and that the exhibits come from our students, faculty, staff and community members.”

Under Trish Campbell, the exhibit program chair, the committee has refined its selection process over the past two seasons and learns from each new exhibit.
*Weird and Wonderful: Creatures of Coral and Kelp (http://www.library.fullerton.edu/visiting/exhibits/exhibit-2014-weird-wonderful.php)* is a narrative exhibit of Diane F. Witmer’s scuba diving experiences over the past 10 years. Witmer, professor emeritus of communications, offers the exhibit as a tribute to her son, David, a gifted photographer who was killed last year.

Witmer said working with the committee and Campbell has been an outstanding experience.

“I am very impressed with the exhibition program at the library, and I would definitely recommend that others use this resource,” she said.

Campbell says “the biggest kick for me is watching a student curator pull together an exhibit and actually seeing it come to fruition,” she said. “That’s what this is all about.”

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