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Annie Donahue, Associate Professor in Library & Media Services travels to the UK

Annie Donahue

Associate Professor/Chairperson—Humanities Division, UNH Manchester Library & Media Services

Professor Donahue traveled to England and Scotland in summer 2011 to present a paper at a conference at the University of York in England and to explore the Celtic connections on the Isle of Iona in Scotland.



Annie Donahue at University of York, England

With funding support from a Center for International Education grant, I was able to travel to England and Scotland in August 2011. My primary purpose was to present a paper, entitled Evaluating Peer Research Mentors: campus collaboration for effective student learning at the 9th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services held at the University of York, England. This paper reported preliminary findings and lessons learned from a pilot study conducted during spring semester 2011, the initial phase of a formal, ongoing evaluation of the UNH Manchester Peer Research Mentor Program. Through a variety of assessment measures, this study was designed to identify program effectiveness and areas for improvement. The Mentor Program is a partnership between the UNH Manchester Library and the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) utilizing peer writing tutors trained in basic library research skills to assist first-year college students as they navigate the research and writing components of their introductory composition courses. Throughout the semester, peer research mentors work with students one-on-one on research/writing projects, while librarians work with these same students, utilizing active learning techniques and exercises to teach advanced research and evaluation strategies.

The Northumbria Conference attracts librarian-scholars from across the world to discuss performance measurement from a myriad of perspectives and across the span of academic librarianship, from specific departmental functions to the global need to demonstrate institutional value. Participants at this year's conference explored the results of assessment studies in information literacy outcomes, service and delivery methods, collection development policies, physical space utilization, and the value of academic libraries. Methodologies ranged from surveys and interviews to complex data mining systems; while ROI, Balanced Scorecard and LibQUAL+® were some of the measurement approaches noted. This was an excellent opportunity to share my research and get feedback from my peers. I met colleagues from every continent, broadening my perspective and knowledge about the library profession through this cultural and academic exchange.



York Minister Spires at University of York



Iona Nunnery ruins, Iona Abbey on Isle of Iona, Scotland

Iona, of all the sacred places in Scotland, is an enduring symbol of Christianity. St Columba arrived on the island with twelve companions in AD 563 and founded a monastery that was to become the heart of the Scottish Church during its early years. One of the most important monasteries in early medieval Europe, it was a renowned center of learning and artistic excellence with extensive international contact (Official Souvenir Guide of the Abbey).

A second purpose for this summer's adventure was to explore the Celtic connections on the Isle of Iona in Scotland as I continue to develop an inquiry course tentatively entitled Celtic Crosses and Illuminated Manuscripts. In summer 2010, I vacationed in Ireland visiting Trinity College to see the Book of Kells, and then spent some time ambling throughout the northeastern countryside in pursuit of early Celtic Christian sites. The Isle of Iona's connection to St. Columba and the Book of Kells made the site particularly exciting and relevant. I am grateful for the support from CIE and although I only had two full days on the island, I toured the Abbey and its environs, experiencing the peaceful contentedness of community that continues to permeate the island hundreds of years after the original monastic community was founded.



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