



INTRODUCTION

The Globalized Library:

American Academic Libraries and International Students, Collections, and Practices

Perspectives on Globalization of American Libraries

When reflecting on libraries in the United States, we almost never think of them as being international in nature. We view them as “American” institutions, serving our “American” patrons and our “American” organizations. But academic libraries, like institutions of higher education at large, are key players in the effort to educate a diverse student body to be globally conscious members of our communities. In this volume, practitioners from America and Canada reflect on how their work is globalized, addressing themes including collection practices, professional development opportunities, outreach efforts, instructional strategies, and international partnerships.

From their inception, private and public, American academic and special libraries and archives have been in the forefront of building general and special collections in a multitude of languages, produced and acquired from all over the world. For some countries of the world, materials held in US libraries surpass what might be available to their citizens in their own libraries due to hostile governments, censorship, wars, economic hardships, or natural disasters. The federal government and many state governments have directly or indirectly supported acquisitions of foreign materials at colleges and universities, particularly after the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Title VI), which transformed academic institutions by allowing international studies to grow. Several papers in this volume talk in more detail about Title VI and its effects on libraries’ collections, including chapters by Browndorf and Pappas (chapter 14), Celik (chapter 15), and Díaz and Espinosa de los Monteros (chapter 17). Collections were also put together through acquisitions of important private collections, monetary gift giving and endowments, and donations in-kind from libraries of scholars working in the field, private individuals, and local emigre communities. For example, the University of Maryland’s impressive Judaica collection was acquired through a combination of these means, with only relatively modest support from the state. Chapters from Vargas-Betancourt, Hawley,

and Jefferson (chapter 18), Des Jardin and Williams (chapter 16), Tatsumi (chapter 21), Necas (chapter 20), and Margolis and Zeter (chapter 19) address these approaches to collection development, illustrating how unexpected discoveries and partnerships can result in fascinating collections.

Establishing strong working relationships with vendors in and outside the country who could supply foreign-published materials was one of the most important tasks of librarians who worked with these collections. Whether through firm orders or approval plans, these were very labor-intensive tasks, which required a lot of skill from those who worked in the libraries. These professionals had to have mastery of the languages, cultural literacy, and sensitivity of the area studies they worked in to perform these duties as each country or region has its own political, historical, and cultural norms that are not readily apparent to outsiders even with good language skills. Working in these environments, it is easy to misunderstand, make a costly mistake, offend without realization, and sometimes even create an unintended international incident. Even seemingly simple tasks, like paying an invoice to a foreign business, can quickly become rather difficult and frustrating. Thus, librarians in these positions had to be very creative and adaptive, thinking outside the box. When available—and especially when libraries do not offer appropriate skills—vendors based in the United States specializing in foreign acquisitions have been often favored over those that are overseas. And there has been a big proliferation of those vendors, covering Europe, Latin America, Russia and the former Soviet states, and, more recently, the Middle East. In addition, some libraries that could afford it, like Harvard, were able to have scouts in the countries of their specific interest to select and purchase materials directly, particularly during times of an unstable publishing industry—for example, Russia during perestroika.

Materials published overseas were often printed on highly acidic paper of inferior properties and over time became a preservation nightmare for libraries. Progressively, preservation, and now digital preservation, have become a critical part of collection development and management of international materials. If nothing is done about the physical state of these items, quite quickly they simply will be unusable. But as libraries have been losing funding for all operations, including materials budgets, it has become more and more difficult to care for these collections. In this effort, the archival materials often fare better than general collections; their unstable properties make them more likely to be taken care of. Government- and non-government-sponsored organizations, private individuals, and corporations have provided additional resources via grants and donations to manage and preserve these treasures. Libraries get grants from big players such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, as well as from smaller foundations, organizations, businesses, and even private donors with very specific interests in mind. International governments have also, at times, supported American collections of interest to them. (See articles by Necas and Yukako.) This, of course, requires a lot of development work of which librarians and curators of these collections are an integral part and play an active role.

There have been many commercial companies, groups, and individuals who have been trying to save general collections for the future as well. At first they microfilmed them, and as technology has evolved, these materials are now being digitized. K. G. Saur Verlag (which no longer exists), with its massive microform collections, such as *Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library* (1989), the Yiddish Book Center, and best-known to everyone, Google, are just a few such companies and organizations. The

creation of these massive microform or online resources has led to other issues for the libraries, including prohibitive costs of some of these products, dealing with unfriendly and outdated technology like microforms (which in turn pose serious preservation issues), the rights to access, the poor quality of mass digitization, and sometimes even some questionable practices that librarians have been debating about and struggling with. In response, large academic libraries collaborate with their own large-scale cooperative repositories, like the HathiTrust digital library, but unfortunately these too have many issues to overcome. On a smaller scale, despite all the difficulties and costs, many American libraries have also been trying to digitize for preservation some of their general collections of special interest materials, especially if outside funding is available. For example, the University of Maryland Jewish Studies department is currently supporting the library's project to digitize the backlog of unprocessed, highly brittle Judaica that has not yet been digitized elsewhere to ensure preservation and access to these materials, and which will only be available online.

With the changes in libraries from collection to service models, the instability of budgets, the need for student spaces, the lack and cost of storage, technology pressures, changes in how research is being conducted, shortages of positions, devaluation of humanities including the lack of support for language learning, and other important and difficult issues, in recent years foreign acquisitions as we know them have been threatened as well. Chapters of this book allude to this phenomenon. This situation is further exacerbated due to the fact that ebook publishing is in its infancy at best in many other countries, contributing to space issues, especially when the circulation of physical materials is declining, as evidenced by circulation statistics collected by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).¹ The bright light here is the development of foreign digital collections, detailed in chapters by Browndorf and Pappas (chapter 14), Des Jardin and Williams (chapter 16), Necas (chapter 20), Vargas-Betancourt, Hawley, and Jefferson (chapter 18), and others. Thus, academic libraries seem to be moving away from general to either special or highly specialized collections in area studies.

Although collections might be the most obvious area initially where people think of libraries as international in nature, it is not the only area by any means. All types of libraries and archives in the United States (public, academic, school, special, etc.) hire staff for whom English is a second language for all sorts of jobs and responsibilities. Academic, museum, and government libraries have traditionally hired specialists with appropriate credentials, both heritage and non-heritage speakers, to select, acquire, manage, and preserve area studies collections at huge costs to institutions and American taxpayers. For these types of jobs, an MLS degree is often overlooked in favor of much-needed foreign language and related skills. And it does make sense. We can teach and train in "librarianship" but do not have the resources for teaching foreign-language skills.

Those who speak English as a second language find the library environment very welcoming, reassuring, and safe. In turn, they influence the dynamics of their organizations, internationalizing them from within and making our libraries even more accessible for non-English speakers. This phenomenon will only continue to grow as the world is becoming more and more globalized.

In recent years, many academic institutions count globalization or internationalization among their most important strategic goals and priorities. The realization that in order for America to be globally competitive we need to produce globally conscious graduates has pushed campuses—and thus libraries—in several new directions. In addition

to their hiring practices and the traditional role of libraries collecting foreign acquisitions, new trends are emerging. This volume is full of such examples. These chapters address many acute needs in international student education and highlight library initiatives that can make a huge difference. Reflective of our daily environments, these chapters talk about information literacy for international students on US campuses, efforts to make these students feel welcome and included, programs to develop satellite campuses overseas, initiatives for participation in education abroad, and development and growth of library professionals to support these efforts. These cases are very creative and inspiring. They give hope.

American higher education is experiencing a global boom. It is well known and highly prized around the world for its academic rigor, diversity of majors, use of emerging technology, flexibility, independent thinking, problem-solving, and the abundance of schools and programs to choose from in different geographic locations and with a range of tuition levels.² According to the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, in 2017, 903,127 international (nonimmigrant) students were enrolled in American colleges and universities.³

Librarians are responding to these students' academic needs by investigating a range of pedagogical techniques. Chapters from Hodge (chapter 4) and Avery and Feist (chapter 2) offer best practices for teaching English-language learners and international students. Alwan, Doan, and Garcia (chapter 1) and Riley and Davis (chapter 6) present methods for addressing American academic values with international students, with a particular emphasis on conversations about expectations for the ethical use of information. Chen and Mastel (chapter 7) and Fu and Duque (chapter 3) highlight strategies for engaging with international students outside of traditional one-shot sessions, with approaches ranging from library orientations and materials offered in students' native languages to the creation of peer tutoring programs. Interestingly, many of the authors found that these practices are also beneficial for domestic students as well, suggesting that attention to international students' needs has broader benefits for the entire student population.

In addition to providing academic support, librarians are also leading initiatives to warmly welcome international students to the campus community. Chapters from Bordonaro (chapter 9) and Bohuski (chapter 8) offer case studies of successful outreach initiatives implemented at their institutions. Contributions from Gant, Amsberry, Su, Munip, and Borrelli (chapter 10), Stewart and Haggerty (chapter 11), Wu (chapter 13), and Wu and Hoffman (chapter 12) represent original research in international students' perceptions of libraries. These studies are especially welcome since recent literature on international students suffers from a lack of original research.⁴ It is interesting to note that it was difficult to organize these chapters into purely "academic" and "non-academic" initiatives; this suggests to us that academic librarians are approaching their international students as whole people with a host of emotional, social, and intellectual concerns that intersect to inform students' experiences on American campuses.

At the same time, our academic institutions are investing in global programs, such as education abroad, which can be academic or non-academic in nature, student exchange programs, and international research opportunities. According to the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, in 2014, 304,467 American students were studying abroad.⁵ These impressive numbers are steadily growing. Although this has been an uncharted area for librarians, they have responded with enthusiasm and ingenuity, finding ways to address the new needs in line with their institutional goals. Some things are simply a given, including providing uninterrupted

access to the institution's online materials and online research support through a general online information service such as CHAT or AskUs. Others are as varied and creative as they come—for example, providing students with direct contact with their subject librarian remotely, developing the online teaching tools for specific study-abroad classes, providing an information literacy class before the students' departure, having a librarian accompany a class on their international trip in a supporting role, and even developing and teaching study-abroad classes themselves. (See Kutner, chapter 24, and Luckert and Inge Carpenter, chapter 25.)

Global education goes far beyond education-abroad programs and libraries are following in step. Enabled by the development of technology and the open educational resources movement, and in competition with for-profit higher education among other things, colleges and universities have been developing platforms for online courses and programs that are accessible all over the world. Massive open online courses (MOOC) is one such example in which many colleges and universities in the United States have invested and are participating. Although we do not have an example in this book, libraries and librarians are looking into and figuring out the ways they can contribute to their campuses' efforts in this area. For example, at the University of Maryland, subject librarians are informed when faculty from their assigned departments are offering a MOOC so they can provide support for that course. Although often nothing comes of it, sometimes the librarians end up helping in the development of materials for the course or they participate in the interactive user forums, answering reference questions as the course's librarian.

Another major development in American higher education has been the growth of satellite campuses and programs in other countries. Many of these campuses are being developed in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and East Asia, where universities believe that they will be profitable in terms of recruitment, research opportunities, and academic influence. To support these programs and their faculty and students, libraries of these institutions must build satellite libraries, programs, collections, and services, often from scratch and in environments very different from their home institutions. There are many obstacles in such efforts, including language and cultural differences, issues of accessing, purchasing and processing materials, information literacy needs, freedom of information, and many others. However, there are many wonderful examples of successes, as seen in chapters from Daniel (chapter 22), Martin and Parrott (chapter 27), McGivney, Costello, and Clarke (chapter 5), and Oberlies (chapter 26). Finally, there are other very creative and unique programs that allow American librarians to share their expertise with international colleagues, such as an African poetry program developed by Dawes and Maxey-Harris (chapter 23).

One of the most cherished qualities of American academic librarianship is the strong commitment to the profession at large and personal growth within it. Sharing of practices, materials and services, and mentoring of personnel have always been a part of this ideal. Libraries developed and perfected many different ways of cooperation and working together. Just think of the InterLibrary Loan systems, consortial agreements, large and small library-centered organizations and their many committees (for example, ALA), internships, and more. As we are working diligently on furthering these relationships, we also find ourselves looking outward, sharing our experience and knowledge with our international colleagues and at the same time learning from them. As in all other areas of librarianship, there is an amazing variety of unique and meaningful programs set up by ordinary librarians responding to local requests and needs.

This book provides several such examples, including a personnel exchange program (Pfander, Humphreys, and Joshipura, chapter 32), visiting librarian programs (Kuchi, chapter 30, and Law, chapter 31), virtual peer mentoring program (Corlett-Rivera and Kangas, chapter 29), contributions to international digital projects and the development of new cadres (Barczyk, Britz, and Ponelis, chapter 33), and some helpful hints for those who are interested in doing international work (Boyd and Cramer, chapter 28). It is important to note that everyone who participates in these programs sees them as quite valuable and rewarding for everyone involved and hopes to continue them in the future.

As we can see in this book, American academic libraries are deeply involved in all aspects of the globalization of our institutions and community at large, whether it is apparent or not to those outside our walls. We continue to build international collections in many formats so our users are always connected with the bigger world. Through campus partnerships, we create specially designed programs and learning opportunities for international students, such as training in academic integrity and information literacy. We provide support to our education-abroad students by providing them access to our online resources, creating online teaching tools, and, in some cases, leading or accompanying classes on their trips. In a number of cases, librarians are involved in setting up satellite campuses, including establishing American-type libraries with American-type collections and services, often in countries where access to information is highly restricted.

Throughout these chapters, several common themes emerge. First, patience is a necessity when embarking on any project; this is true of almost all projects in academia but is especially true when initiatives require navigating complex legal and cultural considerations. Second, none of these projects can be undertaken alone. All of the authors emphasized the importance of partnerships, whether they are sustained, multi-year collaborations or short-term exchanges. Third, the role of both intensive planning and serendipity in the success of these projects is noted. Finally, the authors in this volume urge us to call upon the expertise of our local communities. Contacting international services units for statistics about the local international student body, asking legal offices for assistance in navigating tricky visa questions, and, most important, consulting with international staff and students themselves. All of these strategies are essential in contributing to the success of this type of work.

Globalization affects all aspects of our lives and everyone in our communities. As new immigrants come and settle, local public libraries respond to new populations by providing vernacular collections and services to newcomers centered on technology, citizenship, economic integration, and language acquisition. School media centers and their librarians, challenged by students who often do not speak English and might not have had much of formal education prior to their arrival, are creating programs and services that help these youngsters succeed.

Thus, it is not just about international or “foreign” students. The fabric of American society is changing with the largest immigration ever from all over the world. “Dreamers,” immigrants, and refugees from war- or natural disaster-stricken countries all hope for better lives and see education as the key. American colleges and universities are brimming with individuals for whom English is a second language, who might be completely unfamiliar with the American educational system and cultural norms, feeling somewhat disenfranchised, displaced, and maybe even homesick for their own cultures, just as international students do.

Academic institutions have an obligation to these individuals, foreign or domestic, in helping them succeed academically and in helping them integrate into the overall American society. This starts with making them feel welcome and wanted on campuses. As the center of campus life, academic libraries carry this responsibility and are deeply involved in developing new and innovative approaches to shoulder it, from teaching information literacy to a variety of outreach programs so well detailed in this book. In short, academic libraries are finding their unique place in the education of students in a holistic sense, becoming a true campus partner in this enterprise.

Our world is getting smaller. Technology, migrations, and political and economic realities bind us in ways we never knew were possible. For libraries, it translates into always scarce and competing resources, both human and budgetary. Yet, American libraries and librarians are in a unique position to positively affect these changes. Our traditional roles as equalizers, providers of secure and non-threatening environments, and disseminators of knowledge and information provide us with a unique opportunity to bring all these threads together and act as unifiers and valuable partners, be it on our campuses, in our local communities, or in the world at large.

The involved and labor-intensive work described in this book often happens under the radar of our administrators, benefactors, and constituencies. Yet it is another opportunity for us to demonstrate our value to our communities at a time when some openly debate the need for the very existence of the library in the future. We need to be proactive not only by doing but also by putting our accomplishments front and center for everyone to see. We need to create a vocabulary of value which others outside the library field can easily understand and relate to.

So here is the purpose of this book: to take the pulse of what has been done recently in the area of international librarianship, put it together in one volume for easy access, inspire and share ideas to more libraries and librarians, and hopefully start developing the vocabulary that we can present to our administrators, politicians, and communities at large to communicate our value, and to elevate the image, need, and importance of libraries and those who work in them.

Notes

1. "Initial Circulation," ARL Statistics, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.arlstatistics.org/analytics>.
2. Partially from "International Students Choose American Colleges for Higher Education," <https://www.campusexplorer.com/college-advice-tips/D2EA2098/International-Students-Choose-American-Colleges-for-Higher-Education/>.
3. *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, Institute of International Education, 2017, <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Publications/Open-Doors-2017>.
4. Amanda B. Click, Claire Walker Wiley, and Megan Houlihan, "The Internationalization of the Academic Library: A Systematic Review of 25 Years of Literature on International Students," *College & Research Libraries* 78, no. 3 (March 2017): 328–58. Of the 147 publications the authors reviewed, they considered only 48 percent representative of original research, which they defined as articles including a clear methods or methodology section (337).
5. *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, Institute of International Education.

Bibliography

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- Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, New York: Institute of International Education, 2017. <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Publications/Open-Doors-2017>.