

University of Idaho

From the Selected Works of Rick A Stoddart

2012

Book Review: International Students and Academic Libraries: Initiatives for Success

Richard A Stoddart, *Oregon State University*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/richard_stoddart/32/

Review of *International Students and Academic Libraries: Initiatives for Academic Success*

Rick Stoddart (rick.stoddart@gmail.com)
Oregon State University Libraries & Press

Jackson, Pamela A. and Sullivan, Patrick. *International Students and Academic Libraries: Initiatives for Academic Success*. Chicago: Association of Academic Libraries, 2011. 234p. ISBN: 978-0-8389-8593-9

Embracing collaboration in librarianship calls not only for librarians to partner with institutional stakeholders but also with patrons in order to make the library a valued and contributing community member. Pamela A. Jackson and Patrick Sullivan's compilation of case studies, *International Students and Academic Libraries: Initiatives for Academic Success*, focuses on one particular patron population, international students, which may offer many opportunities for unique collaboration and partnerships. On average, international students make up 3.5% of the overall college student population in the United States, although some college campuses can see higher concentrations of these students. For example, one case study featured in the book claimed international students made up 40% of its campus population (p. v). With potentially significant populations like these making up our campus communities, it is important for libraries to leverage appropriate and effective partnerships when they present themselves. This book provides 13 chapters detailing different strategies academic libraries have taken to address the unique concerns of international students. The authors state, "International students bring with them special skills and insights, but they also present unique challenges for our educational systems. Libraries play a critical role in connecting these foreign students, not only to our universities and colleges, but also to the information literacy skills they need to succeed (p. vii)."

These case studies highlight librarian collaborations with foreign language departments, student clubs, international libraries, campus international centers, teaching faculty, and interna-

tional students themselves. These collaborations offer libraries the potential to better support student learning, reduce library anxiety, and to help ease these students into a new and often unfamiliar learning environment. The chapters provide many examples that suggest opportunities for engagement such as creating student research ambassadors, developing programs for outreach to international students before classes start, teaching research ethics, providing assistance in foreign language instruction, and creating social media initiatives. The book is presented in a logical manner starting with gaining background information, then moving to engaging students before the term, engaging with students directly, developing customized instructional and outreach strategies, and finally culminating in integrated and campus-wide approaches. This approach makes it easy for readers to step in at the appropriate stage in their own campus outreach to international students or to brush up and polish existing programs that support this unique patron population.

For my purposes as an assessment librarian, this book suggested various potential collaborators to assist with gauging the library's impact on international student success such as the campus international office, language institute, and graduate school. I was particularly inspired by Bosch and Molteni's chapter, "Connecting to International Students in Their Languages: Innovative Bilingual Library Instruction in Academic Libraries" (pp. 135-150). Bosch and Molteni's case study showcases programs at California State Universities Dominguez Hills and Long Beach that conduct library instruction sessions in Spanish. These unique instruction sessions provide not only an opportunity for Spanish speaking international students to become familiar with the library, but also offers a venue for students learning Spanish to practice their skills. The collaboration between the languages departments at these universities and the

librarians produced a robust conceptual framework that may be expanded to other library instructional sessions that include languages other than Spanish. Collaborative programs like these serve not only to build bridges from the library to other campus departments and faculty, but also to create enhanced learning opportunities for students.

One minor critique of this book, and perhaps of many works of compiled chapters in general, is the lack of an index. There is definite value added by including in one volume these contributed chapters on a particular topic, but this value can be greatly enhanced by providing a useful index to key concepts, terms, researchers, and subjects found within its pages. Such an index would save the time of the reader from having to skim every chapter looking for a particular research topic. Besides this minor quibble, the book is well put together and provides useful information applicable to many academic libraries. *International Students and Academic Libraries: Initiatives for Academic Success* is a welcome resource for those libraries whose campus populations contain a significant number of international students by providing practical strategies and nuggets of inspiration about how better to serve international students in meaningful and impactful ways.