Around the World in 180 Minutes:
An International Library Adventure

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Introduction
This study discusses how a library at a Midwestern university developed and hosted a multicultural event which brought over 1,200 attendees to their library. In celebration of International Education Week, the library partnered with colleges and departments from across campus for the second consecutive year to host a multicultural event that was both fun and educational. This diversity event was sponsored by fifteen campus departments. The Outreach Services Librarian raised $7,000 from co-sponsors and over $2,000 in the form of gift cards and giveaway prizes from local businesses. The number of attendees and fundraising approximately tripled from the previous year. This event became a positive memory for many of the participants, especially for the international students who got involved.

At the event, international students, faculty, and community members showcased and shared information about their countries' cultures, languages, religions, etc. Many of these presenters dressed in their countries' native attire, which helped serve as a topic of conversation. Additionally, the presenters' native attire gave them a sense of pride in their respective country. This contributed to a more cheerful, upbeat, and dynamic experience. This diverse event helped attendees gain a better understanding of what diversity encompasses in a fun, safe, and welcoming environment. A mock passport was given to all of the event attendees. This passport added to the excitement of this event as attendees could win prizes based on how many countries they visited. In addition, this passport encourages future exploration into multiple cultures.

A survey was given to attendees when they visited the prize table; it was voluntarily completed by over 100 attendees. An analysis of the surveys will be presented. Furthermore, ideas and suggestions will be shared regarding how to make future programs more successful. Moreover, this paper will highlight how this library's outreach event helped raise students' awareness of various library services and resources. These outreach efforts also targeted the surrounding community to help showcase the newly renovated library and demonstrate its relevance and value to those outside of the university. With events like this one, academic libraries are able to support their university's mission and help spread multiculturalism.

Examples of Diversity Programing in Other Academic Libraries
In academia, diversity is often discussed in terms of the hiring of diverse staff and attracting and retaining diverse students. These goals are absolutely essential: there is no diversity on campus without diverse people. However, as Yang and White state “Appreciation for diversity and tolerance of differences do not happen automatically, but require active engagement in thinking and learning” (2007, 1). Both Texas A&M University Libraries and the Auraria Library have programs aimed at increasing library staff appreciation and understanding of intra-office
and campus diversity (Yang & White 2007, Redd 2003). These programs aim to foster tolerant attitudes among staff and make the library a friendlier place for students from diverse backgrounds.

The Texas A&M University Libraries formed a Diversity Program Coordinating Committee in 2003 (Yang & White, 2007). The committee organizes diversity events based on yearly themes for library faculty and staff. It also communicates information about outside events to staff. Popular events include an annual Taste of Diversity potluck luncheon featuring diverse dishes prepared by library staff and panel discussions for library staff by international students. A new program based on staff feedback features movie screenings with free popcorn with selections relating to diversity with an initial choice of *The Long Search*, an exploration of religions across the world.

Auraria Library serves three independent postsecondary institutions in downtown Denver, Colorado (Redd, 2003). Like Texas A&M University Libraries, the Auraria Library Diversity Committee has also found it prudent to “emphasize the diversity among library employees” through programming aimed at library staff. Much of the programming is provided by volunteers within the staff, including for instance Chinese Calligraphy lessons, traditional Russian food to celebrate Maslenitsa, and lessons on history and contemporary life of the Menominee people. A common thread with Texas A&M, diversity programming at Auraria often incorporates food. Film screenings are also a common activity with films covering Japanese-American baseball teams during WWII, Cesar Chavez, Navajo Code Talkers, and Native Hawaiians. In addition to programming on racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, Auraria diversity programming included LGBT and Women’s History themed programming. Auraria Libraries also invited students to present to staff, including presentations from the Muslim Students Association following September 11th 2001, LGBT Student Services, Turkish Student Association, and the University of Colorado Denver’s Latino and Research Policy Center, among others. An additional talk was given by a member of an urban community displaced by the Auraria Campus during its construction. Redd states of the community presentations: “Not only do library personnel benefit from their knowledge and expertise, but our visitors also are able to personally connect with library faculty and staff who might be able to help them in their studies or work duties” (Redd 2001, 28). Thus while primarily targeting staff, some of Auraria’s diversity programming can be said to serve students directly.

Ball and Deeds describe the activities of the Multicultural Issues Committee (MIC) at the University of Virginia Library, active since its inception in 1990 (2006). The MIC has a hand in hiring, training, and publicity. It is also actively involved in events and cultural programming. The article highlights a selection of lecture events from speakers of diverse backgrounds, including Black and Latino guest scholars and speakers, LGBT speakers, and a panel of Muslim graduate students discussing their campus experiences. Several of the other events also mentioned embodied diversity and outreach. For instance, a Japanese Tea Ceremony to offset stress levels during finals week.

A notable example of a large scale diversity event involving an academic library, Miami University (MU) Libraries in Ohio hosted a Japanese cultural festival called Ohanashi which featured numerous activities where 600 attendees visited the facility (Brinkman and Yates 2008). This event took place over four hours and featured traditional food as well as culturally educational activities like card theater renditions of a Japanese folktale and Japanese calligraphy demonstrations. Brinkman and Yates (2008, 147–149) list six benefits of holding diversity programming like Ohanashi at their libraries, including: 1) opportunities to partner with faculty and staff 2) opportunities to partner with administrative units and organizations 3) the chance to connect with students, especially members of culture clubs 4) multilevel community outreach 5) the possibility for libraries to directly contribute to university wide diversity and multiculturalism goals and 6) collection development – MU Libraries acquired over 150 books related to the festival theme as a benefit of this event. Brinkman & Yates also share a few other ideas for diversity programming and indicate their libraries intention to continue their efforts.
Event Information

_Around the World in 180 Minutes_ is a multicultural diversity fair hosted annually at the Rod Library. Conceived with a nod to Jules Verne’s novel _Around the World in 80 days_ and the eponymous film adaptations, the event allows guests to ‘travel the world’ in only three hours. The guests visit booths constructed and operated primarily by University of Northern Iowa (UNI) international students, as well as international faculty and community members. Guests are provided with a mock passport upon entry to the event and receive stamps for each booth that they visit. Guests who fill their passports are eligible to receive prizes. The event provides international entertainment, including live music and dance, as well as international cuisine provided by UNI Catering. The event also featured games, crafts, photo booth, henna tattoos, and appearances from the university mascots T.C. and T.K. The event is held yearly in celebration of International Education Week.

The first iteration of the event, _Around the World in 120 Minutes_ in 2014 was a huge success, bringing 400 guests to the library to learn about the diverse cultures represented on campus. The second annual event expanded to the current 180-minute format and tripled attendance to over 1,200 visitors. Attendees included university students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, community members who heard about the event through our advertising efforts came. Families brought children who enjoyed the spectacle of the event, and met people from countries they had likely never heard about before. While other events on campus highlight diversity, to our knowledge _Around the World in 180 Minutes_ is one of a kind at UNI in terms of its scale and its focus on our own international students.

Organizing the event has involved the Outreach Services Librarian working with the Culture and Intensive English Program (CIEP), International Students and Scholars Office, International Programs, and the Study Abroad Center to recruit international students to operate our booths. Fundraising for _Around the World in 180 Minutes_ is an intensive process. The fundraising process typically consumes a considerable amount of time and energy. An email with a report from the year before was sent to the deans and directors in different programs across the university. Some of the departments showed an interest and indicated that diversity initiatives are part of their college mission; however, they would only be able to help out minimally financially due to their limited budget, but they would love to be involved with this important event. Fourteen departments and colleges, in addition to the library itself, showed an interest and contributed financially for a grand total of $6,000. The list of 2015 university co-sponsors who contributed financially were: Academic Learning Center; College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences; CIEP; Department of Physics; International Programs; Northern Iowa Student Government; Rod Library; University Honors Program; Center for Multicultural Education; College of Social and Behavioral Sciences; Department of Languages and Literature; Graduate College; International Students and Scholars Office; Office of Research and Sponsored Programs; and Study Abroad Center. In addition, the Outreach Services Librarian applied for a $1,000 Diversity Mini-Grant which was available through the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In addition to $7,000 raised for food, entertainment, and decorations, over $2,000 worth of giveaways was raised by the members of the Around the World in 180 Minutes diversity event committee. Our largest expense was food and refreshments. We were required to order food through our university catering services which tends to be a bit on the pricey side. We provided recipes gathered from international students to catering and they provided the pricing and whether they could make the requested food in an acceptable format (similar to the country that represented that particular food).

The core of our event has proven effective; however, there are a few areas we need to expand on and improve in. Through our survey feedback, guests indicated that they would like to see more diverse entertainment. We largely rely on volunteers for entertainment and are usually thankful for whatever comes together. We adver-
tised this event on the library’s homepage, Twitter, and on the Facebook pages of the Rod Library, CIEP, Study Abroad Center, and International Services. In addition, we placed an ad in the local newspaper, on our university webpage, and in the student and staff electronic weekly e-news. We also printed some flyers and placed them in different locations around campus. Furthermore, the university newspaper interviewed the chair of this event and featured a story advertising this unique event.

We recruited students, faculty, and staff members through advertising on Facebook and other library social media, CIEP, International Programs, and Study Abroad Center. We had participants from thirty-five countries. We asked these participants to wear their traditional clothing and bring objects, handcrafts, slideshows, pictures, etc. representing their own country. In addition, we had representatives staff booths from the Department of Philosophy and World Religions, Study Abroad Center, and the Rod Library. The Department of Philosophy and World Religions introduced students to different religions and also made students aware of different majors and minors in religion. The Study Abroad Center advertised available exchange programs to students interested in travelling overseas and studying abroad for a semester or more. The Rod Library booth showcased a variety of services and materials that we had on hand for attendees who were interested in increasing their knowledge about specific countries. In addition, each country booth showcased two library books along with a DVD about that country. If we did not have a DVD for a country represented at this diversity event, we substituted a popular movie made in that country instead. Countries featured at the 2015 Around the World in 180 Minutes event included: Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo-Brazzaville, Czech Republic, El Salvador, England, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Tibet, USA, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

*Around the World in 180 Minutes* aligns excellently with multiple areas of the UNI academic master plan. It also promotes retention of a marginal group of students; international students, who financially contribute to UNI and the Cedar Valley community. As stated in our university’s vision statement, “UNI will achieve national prominence as a premier comprehensive university for an engaged …fulfilling life in a diverse and dynamic world.” In an increasingly diverse and global professional world, events like *Around the World in 180 Minutes* help expose our Midwestern students to new countries and cultures. In alignment with our university’s mission statement, *Around the World in 180 Minutes* is an example of “experiential learning that educates the whole person,” through real life interactions with foreign cultures, art, and cuisine. Those interactions “advance inter-cultural literacy and a global perspective,” and present a perfect opportunity for “faculty, staff, and students to promote and respect diversity.” More specifically, in alignment with Core Principle 1 “Foster an Engaged and Integrative Learning Environment“, Goal Area 1.1 “Student Learning Outcomes” *Around the World in 180 Minutes* reflects university wide core values of diversity. In alignment with Goal Area 3 “Elevate Engaged Learning”, *Around the World in 180 Minutes* is an extra-curricular (and co-curricular, some professors offer credit) activity that gives students an opportunity to use classroom skills and knowledge in a real world setting. For instance, students taking foreign language classes or students in our non-western cultures courses can apply skills and knowledge gained from this event in their interactions with international students. Conversely, international students, particularly those studying English, have an intensive opportunity to practice their skills with a wide variety of native English speakers.

Core Principle 2 “Advance Student Engagement and Success” Goal Area 3 “Enrollment Management” is clearly aligned with *Around the World in 180 Minutes*. As stated “[UNI will increase enrollment] including an increase in the percentage of minority students to 20%”. Increases in enrollment imply retention of existing student populations. An important and often overlooked minority population on campus is international students. The
Around the World in 180 Minutes event provides a very unique opportunity for international students to share their culture and experiences with American students and community members. Also, it is a way for us to show, not tell international students that we value what they bring to our campus. Moreover, Around the World in 180 Minutes is a social experience for international students who often experience isolation or alienation on campus. It offers attendees a chance to meet people and make friends in a celebratory, positive environment. Integration into our local community encourages international students to stay at UNI and makes their time in Cedar Falls a better experience in general. This year’s representative from the Pakistan booth put it excellently: “We were so excited that we didn’t even take a one-minute break and kept on informing guests about our country. I personally encourage these kinds of events as they serve as icebreakers between nations.”

Goal Area 3.1 also mentions outreach to K–12 audiences and an intention to “elevate our interaction with these groups”. Around the World in 180 Minutes attracted numerous families who brought their children to learn about world cultures. The event is a great way to convey to community members that UNI is a diverse and friendly option for post-secondary education.

Finally, Around the World in 180 Minutes clearly aligns Core Principle 4 “Elevate Diversity, Sustainability, and Community Engagement”, as a singularly successful diverse and multicultural event that engages both the campus and the wider community. A faculty member who participated in this event in both 2014 and 2015 stated that “This was the single most successful diversity event in which we have ever participated…. [the event] modeled the intellectual engagement, global awareness, and community building to which we should aspire every day on this campus.”
Images from “Elevate Diversity, Sustainability, and Community Engagement” Event

Picture 5: Photo booth

Picture 6: Kraft Korner

Picture 7: T.C. & President Ruud visiting Japan’s booth

Picture 8: Bagpipes musician

Picture 9: Origami table

Picture 10: Kenya’s booth

Picture 11: Bangladesh’s booth

Picture 12: Pakistan’s booth
Images from “Elevate Diversity, Sustainability, and Community Engagement” Event

Picture 13: Brazil’s booth

Picture 14: Canada’s booth

Picture 15: Prairie Rose Middle Eastern Dance Troupe

Picture 16: UNI International Dance Theatre

More photos from this event can be viewed at Rod Library’s Flickr Page: https://www.flickr.com/photos/unirodlibrary/albums/72157660628921448

Passport page examples from the 2015 Around the World in 180 Minutes diversity event

Picture 17: Cover page passport sample
Passport page examples from the 2015 Around the World in 180 Minutes diversity event

**Picture 18: Inside passport page sample**

Passport page examples from the 2015 Around the World in 180 Minutes diversity event

**Picture 19: Inside passport page sample with countries’ stamps**
Methodology and Survey Results

A nine item survey was created and placed near the prize tables. Attendees voluntarily filled out the survey after registering for prize giveaways. Unfortunately, the majority of attendees did not fill out a survey as they were unaware that there was one. We planned to distribute the surveys, however the person in charge of this got pulled away to help at the prize tables and this task fell through the cracks. One hundred fifty attendees voluntarily completed the survey.

The first survey question asked about basic demographic information as we wanted to determine who our attendees were. 51.7% of the attendees who completed a survey were students, 20% university staff, 18.3% community members, and 10% were faculty members. (Note: All of the numbers in the graphs are percentages.)

The next question asked attendees “How did you hear about this event?” Respondents could select multiple responses. 31.6% of the attendees indicated that they learned about this event through Inside UNI—the university’s electronic weekly news; 29.8% through flyers placed around campus, 12.3% through a feature story in The Northern Iowan—university’s newspaper, 12.3% through the library’s website, 8.8% from the library Facebook page, 7% through the university website, 3.5% from The Courier—local newspaper, 1.8% from our library Twitter, and 43.9% indicated other venues (the majority was from word of mouth.)

We asked attendees if they learned anything new about a culture. 94.6% indicated yes they learned something new about a culture, while 5.4% indicated no. One reason that some indicated “no” was due to the fact that some of the survey takers staffed a booth and they did not get a chance to walk around and learn about what other booths had to showcase.

For those who indicated yes, we asked them “What did you learn?” This question was an open-ended question, but due to receiving similar responses, the responses were grouped together. The respondents mentioned that they learned about the following items: 28% culture, 14% geography, 13% religion, 12% food, 8% a different language, 7% art from other countries, and 18% other/several things.
The next survey question asked attendees “What did you enjoy about this event? This question was also an open-ended question; however, the responses were grouped together due to the similarity of answers received. Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that they enjoyed the food, 16% culture, 16% passport, 16% diversity, 16% mentioned they enjoyed everything, 10% entertainment, and 8% said other. We also received comments such as “Great diversity event;” “The diversity of various levels including country representatives and visitors/guests;” “Whole families being present with their children—various ages (from little children to elderly people, all interested in learning about the world);” “The food, the passports, the variety of countries, the opportunity for community members to connect with international students and vice versa;” “The positive atmosphere;” “Everything—lots of countries represented, colorful, educational, lots of entertainment, good food, well-organized;” “Kids enjoyed seeing the university mascots, T.C. and T.K;” “Presence of different countries and cultures at this time of political tension;” “The way that it was done and the presentation of all the tables in the library, for example the idea of having a passport was a great idea;” “The dancing troupe and watching the young children in the audience dance along;” and “There is so much going on all over and everywhere you look there is something new!”
Another survey question asked respondents “What did you dislike about the event?” This was an open-ended question as well. The responses were grouped together. Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they loved everything and it was well done. Twenty-three percent of the respondents mentioned that it was crowded and we needed to provide more space between tables, and 34% indicated other such as more food, too loud, and bring more country representatives.

Another survey question asked respondents “What would you like to see more of? This was also an open-ended question and similar responses were grouped together. Twenty-six percent of the respondents said provide more food, 18% indicated that the event was well-done, 4% mentioned more spacing for the event, and 52% indicated other such as entertainment, more American students, more cultures and countries, etc.

One survey question asked “What would you like to see less of?” This question was an open-ended question. One hundred percent of the respondents indicated they do not want to see less of anything and that the event was well-done.

The final survey question asked respondents an open-ended question “What would you like to see at next year’s event?” Similar responses were grouped together. Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to see more entertainment and food, 10% more space, 34% said the event was perfect, and 38% indicated other such as more country booths, DVDs and books, advertising, etc.

We also provided a section for comments. Some of the respondents provided these comments to us “This was such a great event and I’m so happy that UNI knows how important it is to embrace and learn about other cultures. Great job!” “The event was well attended. Every attendee seemed to be enjoying themselves and I daresay a few of them learned something new. Beyond knowledge provided in the form of facts about other countries, I think this event is an excellent opportunity for people from our small central US town to get a more human picture of the international community than is ever offered on the news. I also
noticed international students and international members of the Cedar Valley community enjoying the chance to open up about things near and dear to their hearts and heritage;” “Well organized—kudos to the event chair, blew all expectations I had, I’ve told many people about the great diversity event I attended at the library;” “It was really crowded at certain points/areas, so maybe spreading out some of the table more? This was SUCH a great event and I was happy to be a part of it. Great job!!,” “Congratulations!!!!!!!!!!!! The UNI campus and Cedar Valley community needed an event like this. Hoping for various cultural activities and traditional foods to be shared :) Thank you, organizers! Looking forward to next year!;” “I enjoy all of the people that I see and some I have seen after the event!!! “It was a fantastic event that I hope to see again next year! Perfect organization and resources;” “It was great seeing international students but it would have been nice to see more American students showing support and interest. UNI has to work more on creating interest within the classrooms for these diversity events.”

Conclusion
In conclusion, Around the World in 180 Minutes helped promote diversity and educate the student population, faculty, staff, as well as community members about our international students. It brought awareness about different cultures through an entertaining atmosphere where people could have fun while learning at the same time. People of all ages came together to experience different cultures of the world through cuisine, art, music, entertainment, library resources, and fun facts for each of the countries represented. The event had exceedingly positive feedback and was appreciated by local community members, faculty, staff, and students. It helped international students feel more involved and appreciated. They also felt more accepted and part of the community and the university than before. Libraries should embrace and promote diversity; events such as this will help your institution better attain university wide diversity goals.

Bibliography

