

## *World-Class Library Services at a World-Grant University*

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Globalization of higher education has increased the number of international students in the United States. Besides college-age students, mid-career professionals also come to this country for short-term programs to enhance their knowledge. Globalization also creates a diversity of academic staff and faculty in higher education institutions. Although international students and faculty bring diversity to the campus population and enrich the educational experience of all students, their diverse backgrounds and experiences pose many challenges to library services in academic libraries.

Since its establishment as the nation's first land-grant university in 1855, Michigan State University (MSU) has shared knowledge and its practical application with communities throughout the world. Today, international students at MSU comprise about 7.5% of the total student population. In terms of international student enrollment, MSU currently ranks 20<sup>th</sup> nationally. Although participation in the global environment is not a new phenomenon to the campus, MSU is currently expanding upon its traditional land-grant philosophy, striving to achieve recognition as a world-grant university. The catalyst for this movement is the Boldness by Design Initiative (BBDI), launched in 2005, MSU's sesquicentennial year. In particular, the BBDI Internationalization Task Force recognizes the important contributions of an international community to dissolve boundaries in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. One of the key targets of the BBDI is to diversify and increase the international student and scholar population at MSU (Hudzik et al., 2007)

The report of the BBDI Internationalization Task Force includes three priority recommendations for action: 1) recruit and integrate international students and scholars into campus living; and 2) increase internationalization of faculty in instructional, research, and outreach roles; and 3) strategically focus and prioritize MSU's international engagement. Furthermore, since international students enrich campus-based instruction, provide skills for research and outreach, and connect the university to the world, the task force recognizes that it is MSU's responsibility to provide international students and scholars with the most positive opportunities and experiences while at the university. Through this initiative, a core set of values, quality, inclusiveness, and connectivity, are set forth to guide MSU's recognition as the leading land-grant university worldwide (Hudzik et al., 2007).

Although the international population has been steadily increasing in recent years (see Table 1), the implementation of the BBDI has triggered a

significant increase in the international population at MSU and in the university's global outreach. In 2007-2008, MSU enrolled nearly 4,000 international students. In the fall of 2008, MSU enrolled more than 4,500 international students, the highest number in history according to the statistical report of the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS). Furthermore, enrollment of freshman international students increased by 45%, placing MSU as one of only four public universities in the nation that ranks in the top ten for study abroad participation and international student enrollment (Sipperley, 2008).

Table 1: International Student Enrollment at MSU (2003-2009)

Semester/Year	International Students (number of students)
Fall 2003	3,277
Spring 2004	3,111
Fall 2004	3,315
Spring 2005	3,126
Fall 2005	3,295
Spring 2006	3,080
Fall 2006	3,527
Spring 2007	3,298
Fall 2007	3,869
Spring 2008	3,540
Fall 2008	4,509
Spring 2009	4,215

Source: Michigan State University - Office of the Registrar

The surge in the international population at MSU brings several challenges that are not unique to academic libraries. Library literature suggests that the international population on campus experiences culture shock, “a common psychological response to an unfamiliar culture [which] is characterized by disorientation, heightened anxiety, and more rarely by depressed or paranoid behavior” (Hunter & Whitten, 1976, p.112), as well as difficulties in adapting to new life away from their home countries. To put this definition into context, research suggests that international students may be generally disoriented by American culture, and particularly by classroom culture, technology, and procedures.

Also international students are under stress because of difficulties in understanding and being understood in English, both written and spoken (Baron & Strout-Dapaz, 2001; Tao, 2005). Some researchers have observed that concepts of open stacks, self-service, and reference service are foreign to international students (Liu, 1993). Oral communication between library staff and international students is specifically difficult since international students “often pronounce English words in nonstandard ways” (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1992, p. 214). Chau (2002/2003) even provides an example in which the library had to rely on a volunteering translator in resolving the language barrier between a non-

English speaking patron and the library staff. However, communication problems do not originate only from the English proficiencies of international students. Library lingo, such as Boolean searching, is another barrier in accommodating and servicing the academic needs of international students (Evans, 2006).

While negative experiences may have a detrimental effect on both international students' perceptions of the library and retention of the very same group of students (Chau, 2002/2003; Switzer, 2008), many libraries are trying to overcome the cultural and language barriers through various approaches. Downing (2000) suggests that by emphasizing affectivity and building relations with international students, it is possible to overcome these barriers. Instead of waiting for international students to come to the library, librarians at Long Island University reached out and participated in its Global College orientation process (Wang & Tremblay, 2009). The outreach librarian at Oakland University also partnered with the International Student and Scholars Office (ISSO) to offer workshops specifically for international students as well as to ask ISSO to refer students and scholars to the library for research consultation (Switzer, 2008).

To achieve recognition as a world-class library at a world-grant university, the MSU Libraries must remain a center of learning for students and faculty, locally and globally. As a hub of learning, the MSU Libraries are prepared to address the academic needs of the international community. However, as library literature suggests, international students, scholars, visiting professionals, and their families may not be familiar with the services, resources, and organization of American libraries, and may be further impeded by language and cultural barriers. These challenges of outreach and inclusion prompt the MSU Libraries to evaluate what should be offered to the international community as well as how library services should be centrally positioned in a community setting that extends beyond the main campus. Thus, the MSU Libraries, the central hub of scholarly and research activities for the University, are charged to reach out and extend the provision of library services to the international community on a global scale.

In order to offer world-class library services as MSU pursues world-grant university status, the core values of quality, inclusiveness, and connectivity, as recommended by the BBDI and suggested in library literature, need to be essential components of the library services offered. The increase of international student enrollment triggered by the BBDI prompts the MSU Libraries to step up, enhance, and customize its library services. The MSU Libraries are successfully breaking through language and cultural barriers by offering various library services tailored specifically to reach out and include the expanding international population. In the past few years, especially since the implementation of the BBDI, the number and types of library instruction sessions offered by the MSU Libraries to the international community has significantly increased.

Similar to other universities with international students, the MSU Libraries is successful in reaching out to the international students beyond the wall of the library building. Prior to the implementation of the BBDI in 2005, statistics of the Library Instruction unit indicate that library instruction for international students was rather limited. However, once the surge of international student enrollment

began in 2006, the MSU Libraries became an active participant in events hosted by OISS and has experienced great success in introducing the library and its services to hundreds of new international students in an informal, fun, and friendly environment. By hosting the first OISS International Student Coffee Hour held each year, and by participating in the annual OISS International Student Resource Fair, the MSU Libraries reaches out to more than 1,000 international students in just a matter of hours.

Besides a surge in international student enrollment, MSU's overseas recruitment effort also results in the expansion of the Visiting International Professionals Program (VIPP). Traditionally, VIPP participants have been limited to mid-career international professionals who want to enhance their knowledge through enrolling in short programs at MSU. However, the program has broadened its coverage recently to include overseas university students as well. As in the past, MSU Libraries support the VIPP program by providing library instruction sessions to those participants. Each semester, two sessions of library instruction are offered to an average of 48 visiting international professionals, including Humphrey Scholars.

In 2008, the MSU Libraries held several library instruction sessions for mid-career professionals from China, as well as university students from Korea and China. While planning for the session for university students from China, the Library Instruction Coordinator suggested using Mandarin, instead of English, as the medium of instruction. This was a completely innovative approach for the MSU Libraries since English is the University's official medium of instruction. Due to the uncertainty of the level of English proficiency of the visiting Chinese students, the Library Instruction Coordinator felt using the students' native language as the instruction medium was the best way to increase the comfort levels of the students. Thus, the Library Instruction Coordinator invited three Mandarin-speaking librarians to lead the session. The session was structured similarly to the library instruction sessions for the first-year undergraduate writing class students and included a library tour and a demonstration of the library catalog and databases. The library tour was customized to provide a tour of Special Collections and the internationally renowned Turfgrass Information Center. The students were quite excited to see the rare books in Special Collections and asked many questions of the Special Collections Librarian, who does not speak Mandarin. The Mandarin-speaking "tour guides" served as translators between the Special Collections Librarian and the curious visitors. Overall, the session was full of excitement and well received by the visitors from China.

It is not unusual to have international students and scholars, especially graduate students and faculty members, come to this country together with their families. Although providing academic and research support is the core mission of academic libraries, supporting non-academic needs of this extended campus community is not a service totally at odds with this mission. Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (1999) emphasizes the need for the university to become an "engaged institution" by increasing involvement in local communities. Moreover, the sense of alienation experienced by the family

members of international students will negatively affect the retention of international students and faculty who are important contributors to a diverse campus environment. Therefore, library's outreach to the extended campus community is indeed in line with the mission of its parent institution. However, this extended campus community seems to be forgotten in library research since very little literature on providing services to spouses and children of international students and faculty exists.

While students and faculty members need help in overcoming difficulties in their academic pursuits, their family members need assistance in adapting to daily life away from their home country. Since immigrants also face similar challenges in adapting to life in a different country, literature on services to immigrant population by public libraries provides some valuable guidelines. For example, Schaumburg Township District Library (STDL) in Illinois partnered with local school districts to provide a Read to Learn program and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes (Arist, 2007). Libraries in Quebec also provided workshops and courses that help immigrants learn French and French literature, find information on neighborhood services, and facilitate job searching (Paola Picco, 2008). St. Paul Public Library System in Minnesota partnered with a Catholic liberal arts college to promote family literacy as well as awareness of community services available to a predominantly Somali and Hmong immigrant population (Johnson, Brodeen, Humeson, and McGee, 2001).

Helping immigrants assimilate does not preclude libraries from facilitating the retention of cultural identities. It is well documented that public libraries have been building multilingual collections to meet the growing demand from immigrant population (Arist, 2007; Eitner, 2006; Hammond-Todd, 2008; Winkel, 2007). Besides applying to collection development, multilingualism also has taken root in other aspects in public library services. For example, Queens (N.Y.) Borough Public Library has translated its library web pages into five non-English languages and created WorldLinQ, a website which provides links to scholarly and popular web resources in fifteen different languages. Some libraries also provide reference service, bibliographic instructions, classes and workshops, and even computer keyboards in immigrants' native languages (Hammond-Todd, 2008; Miranda-Murillo, 2006; Nedlina, 2007).

In the past few years, the number of visiting international scholars at MSU has increased significantly (see Table 2). Some of these scholars bring their families to reside with them as they study and the presence of these family members is significant to the MSU Libraries. Not only should the library reach out and connect to the visiting international scholar to support individual academic and research needs, but also should include the surrounding international community in its library services. In the spring of 2008, the MSU Libraries held a session titled, "Reading Around the World": Family Literacy for 50 participants, mostly family members of the visiting international scholars.

Table 2: Visiting International Scholars at Michigan State University

Year	Number of Visiting Scholars
2003	766
2004	1,435
2005	1,221
2006	1,052
2007	957
2008	1,019

Source: Michigan State University - Office of International Students and Scholars

To promote inclusiveness and connectivity to international families on campus, the MSU Libraries has successfully collaborated with the East Lansing Public Library (ELPL), a local public library located approximately 2 miles north of the MSU campus. ELPL offers “Coffee and Conversation” sessions to provide opportunities for non-English speakers to practice their conversational skills. ELPL also collects popular fiction and bestsellers in various languages in their “Community Languages Collection.” Furthermore, the ELPL librarians will refer members of the international community to the MSU Libraries for in-depth research assistance. Since international students, scholars, and their family members are considered residents of the city, these resources are freely available to this segment of the population.

Besides reaching out through collaboration with academic departments and relevant campus and community agencies, some libraries have translated library materials into languages spoken by international students. Chau (2002/2003) suggests that the provision of multilingual library service guides displays a sense of inclusiveness. University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa has created library web pages that provide information on basic library services and services targeted to its international community. The library subsequently hired student translators and partnered with faculty members to translate the English version into Chinese and Spanish (McClure & Krishnamurthy, 2007). Library of Baruch College, City University of New York, offered self-paced virtual tours in nine different languages (Downing & Klein, 2001). Bluegrass Community & Technical College also invited international students to translate library brochure into their own native languages (Buckner & French, 2007). Although providing translated information on library resources reaffirms library’s commitment to international students, availability of language expertise within the library, time and funds spent on translation, as well as maintenance and updates down the road remain concerns of many (Buckner & French, 2007; Chau, 2002/2003; McClure & Krishnamurthy, 2007; Valentine, 2008).

To enhance quality, inclusiveness, and connectivity, the MSU Libraries also utilize the multilingual skills of library staff, customizing library instruction and services for specific groups in the international community. Since the international community may not be familiar with the organization of academic libraries in the U.S., it is pertinent to understand that world-class library services must address cultural and language barriers. To help break barriers and increase

inclusiveness and connectivity, the Library Diversity Advisory Committee of the MSU Libraries recommended the creation of audio tours in the native languages of the larger segments of the international campus community. Since Chinese students are currently the largest group of international students at MSU, followed by Korean students, it was decided that the audio tour would be produced first in Chinese, followed by audio tours in Korean and Spanish.

The MSU Main Library had previously created an audio tour in English, so creating multilingual versions was a matter of translating the script and recording by native speakers. The MSU Libraries are fortunate to have three native speakers of Chinese-Mandarin on staff, two of which currently serve on the Library Diversity Advisory Committee. These three librarians worked together to translate the script into Chinese and record the audio tour. The Chinese script is available in simplified and traditional characters. To further enhance inclusiveness, a PDF version of the Chinese script accompanies the audio tour on the Library Tours web page

([http://guides.lib.msu.edu/page.phtml?page\\_id=1010](http://guides.lib.msu.edu/page.phtml?page_id=1010)). The audio tour was recorded and produced in the Digital and Multimedia Center of the MSU Libraries. From October 2008 through February 2009, the Chinese audio tour has been accessed approximately 130 times. The PDF versions of the accompanying scripts have been accessed approximately 180 times.

The translation and production of the Korean version of the library audio tour was trickier than the process of creating the Chinese version. The MSU Libraries do not have any native Korean speakers on staff, so an international student employed by the Main Library was offered the opportunity to translate and record the tour for the Library Diversity Advisory Committee. Production of the audio tour also took place in the Digital and Multimedia Center of the MSU Libraries and the audio tour was placed on the Library Tours page in May 2009. Currently, a Spanish version of the audio tour is being translated by an Area Studies librarian and will be recorded and produced in the near future.

Although audio tours in various languages as a library instruction tool may not be a new idea for academic libraries, the MSU Libraries has promoted quality, inclusiveness, and connectivity in this project by utilizing the expertise and language skills of library staff, including international student employees, and producing the audio tours in-house with the assistance of library staff. The audio tours are an essential and successful medium for overcoming language barriers in teaching international students and scholars about the library and its services.

Becoming a world-grant university does not mean merely bringing in students from overseas. It also requires exporting education to foreign soil through online programs as well as overseas satellite campuses to create a global presence. In September 2007, the MSU Board of Trustees unanimously agreed to pursue degree and research programs in Dubai International Academic City. In August 2008, MSU's position for becoming a world-grant university was enhanced with the opening of MSU in Dubai, the first American university established in Dubai International Academic City in the United Arab Emirates. The MSU Libraries offer 24/7 chat reference service through the OCLC QuestionPoint Academic Cooperative to meet the information and learning needs

not only of the local night owls, but also the students and faculty across all time zones, either studying abroad or enrolled at MSU in Dubai.

As charged by the BBDI, MSU continues to pursue world-grant status and the MSU Libraries are successfully meeting the increased demand for library services and resources from a growing international community. As a center of learning, the MSU Libraries customize library services to promote quality, inclusion, and connectivity, the core values of the BBDI. Through collaboration with campus departments and innovation and dedication of the library staff, the MSU Libraries have enhanced library services to break through cultural and language barriers and have expanded outreach efforts to share knowledge and promote lifelong learning throughout the world.

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