Background

To enhance CU Boulder Libraries’ role in a dynamic and global environment, the Libraries is expanding outreach services through strategic partnerships to embrace an evolving culture and a changing demographic.

Total enrollment
31,861 students

International student enrollment
3,079 from 100 countries
1,000 + international students since 1991
2,000 + international students since 2014

Study abroad students
1,397 students (+13% change over 5 years)

Literature Review

Friendship
“24% of [international student] participants indicated that they have no American friends at all” (Gareis, Merkin, & Goldman, 2011)

“More than a third of the [international student] respondents (38.11 percent) had no close American friends…” (Gareis, 2012)

Belonging
“The lack of leisure and relaxation…inadvertently exacerbates an international student’s sense of loneliness, depression, or stress” (Glass, & Westmont, 2014)

Acculturation
“…pioneers of acculturation research…have defined acculturation as ‘the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members’” (Smith, & Khawaja, 2011)

“…relationships between host and international students are on a continuum of social and psychological distance; the greater the distance the lower the chances of integrating into the new culture” (Rienties, Heliot, & Jindal-Snape, 2013)

Discussion

Do we view the library as a social environment? Should we?

• “Contemporary models of acculturation emphasize the social environment…” (Rasmi, Saltar, & Lewis 2009)

How can the library move beyond being a point of referral for international students to being a resource for social well-being?

• “…those who reported a high level of psychosocial resources (a combination of perceived out-group social support, psychological well-being, and cultural competence) initially exhibited significantly less psychological distress…” (Rasmi, et al. 2009)

Is social capital an important arena for academic libraries?

• “…it is in the best interest of academic libraries to consider social capital development as a component of their outreach” (Ramsey 2016)