

# Academic Libraries Supporting Intercultural Dialogue through Partnership: The Case of Penn State University Libraries\*

Mark Mattson, Penn State University Libraries  
mam1196@psu.edu | 1-814-863-2480 | Twitter: @\_MarkMattson

## Introduction

The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) has prioritized global engagement experiences and competencies as a key part of the institution's strategic plan. The Penn State Libraries, as a central unit of the university, has worked through inter-departmental collaboration to deliver innovative programming and opportunities in support of campus-wide internationalization. This poster showcases select strategic collaborations between the academic library, a globally-focused housing program, an Intensive English program, and a student organization.

## Description of Collaborating Units

### PSU Libraries Global Engagement Initiatives

This department partners with other Libraries and University colleagues to foster initiatives that contribute to the global engagement goals of both the Penn State Libraries and the University. Initiatives include a variety of global citizenship and intercultural communication events, organizing cooperative efforts in support of faculty, staff, and students working and studying abroad, addressing the library/information needs of international populations at the University, and developing international library partnerships with partner institutions.

### The Global Engagement Community (GEC)

The mission of this living-learning community is to engage a diverse group of globally-minded students (both international and domestic), supported by faculty and staff mentors, around the shared goals of peer-based intercultural exchange, and the development of global competency and citizenship.

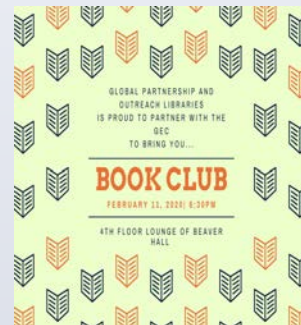
### The Intensive Communication Program (IECP)

In teaching and service, the mission of the Intensive English Communication Program is to provide outstanding instruction in academic English communication to English language learners so that they can successfully participate in a variety of academic, professional, and personal contexts. The IECP is committed to working in conjunction with other campus units to provide opportunities for curricular development, mentorship, research, and collaboration in order to best respond to the needs of the community.

### Iranian Student Association

The goals of the Penn State Iranian Student Association is to "provide an interactive environment for students of Iranian heritage ... and to offer social and cultural programs intended to familiarize the University community with Iranian traditions." (ISA website: <https://sites.psu.edu/isapsu/>)

\*This poster was adapted for the IFLA 2021 World Congress audience from a poster presentation by Mattson & Mattson entitled "Working Toward Campus Internationalization through Inter-Departmental Collaboration" which was prepared for an international educator audience at the 2021 NAFLA: Association of International Educators Conference. Descriptions of the PSU Libraries collaboration with the Iranian Student Association in the DocuNight Program were also presented at an American audience at the 2018 ALA Annual Conference in by Mattson entitled "Supporting University Global Engagement Through Library-Student Collaboration".



## Join us for a film and discussion.



Image Credits:  
• Photos and DocuNight promotional materials provided by PSU Libraries  
• Paper Lantern, Book Club, and "Finding Farideh" discussion flyers provided by Penn State Global Engagement Community

## Select Collaborative Programming

### The Many Faces of Intercultural Dialogue

- A collaborative event held within, and marketed by, the PSU Libraries to celebrate intercultural conversation programs at the university
- Students present on their experiences in the intercultural programs and campus organizations are able promote their intercultural resources and services

### International Reading Programs

- A program in which PSU Libraries supports GEC global engagement programming by providing the GEC with:
  - Books and facilitated discussions for an "International Book Club"
  - International newspapers for common areas throughout the academic year and an information literacy instructional session focused on international media
- International Film Screenings
  - The PSU Libraries worked with the ISA to host and sponsor a film series entitled "DocuNight: Iran via Documentaries"
  - Funding for public performance rights, marketing support, and screening space was provided by the PSU Libraries
  - Screening setup and post-film discussions were provided by the ISA

## Reflections

While often overlooked by international educators as partners in this work, academic libraries are well positioned to significantly contribute to higher education's internationalization efforts through the creative use of their spaces and resources. As a central unit within the institution, the library has a unique opportunity to foster collaboration across the university and create an environment where innovative intercultural programming and global engagement opportunities for students, employees, and the community can be realized.