

International Students in Academic Libraries: Designing User Services for the Global Campus

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Abstract

In the past, diversity on college campuses referred to the need for a balanced student population from around the United States. In today's global society, diversity means having a student population from around the world and despite the desire to educate an international student body, non-native students are frequently overlooked when programs are designed. The session will also explore means by which some institutions are trying to address the needs of the international students.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

DESIGNING USER SERVICES FOR THE GLOBAL CAMPUS

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Areas to Address

- Understanding our international students
- Understanding host communities
- Identifying the obstacles
- Recommendations
- What others are doing



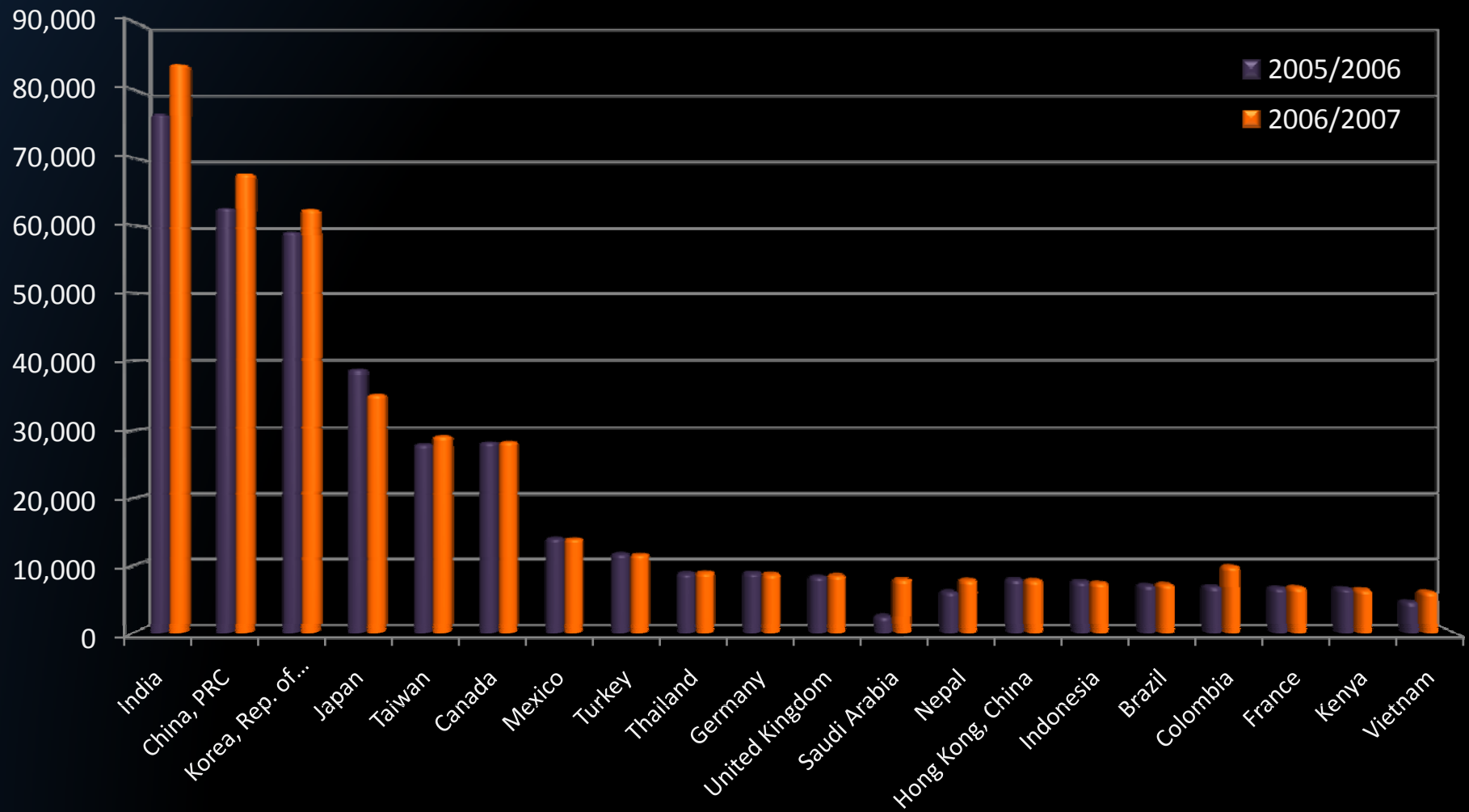


Understanding our International Students

- In 2006/2007, there were 15,023,346 students enrolled in college in the United States
- 3.9% are international students
- 50 years ago international students represented 1.4%

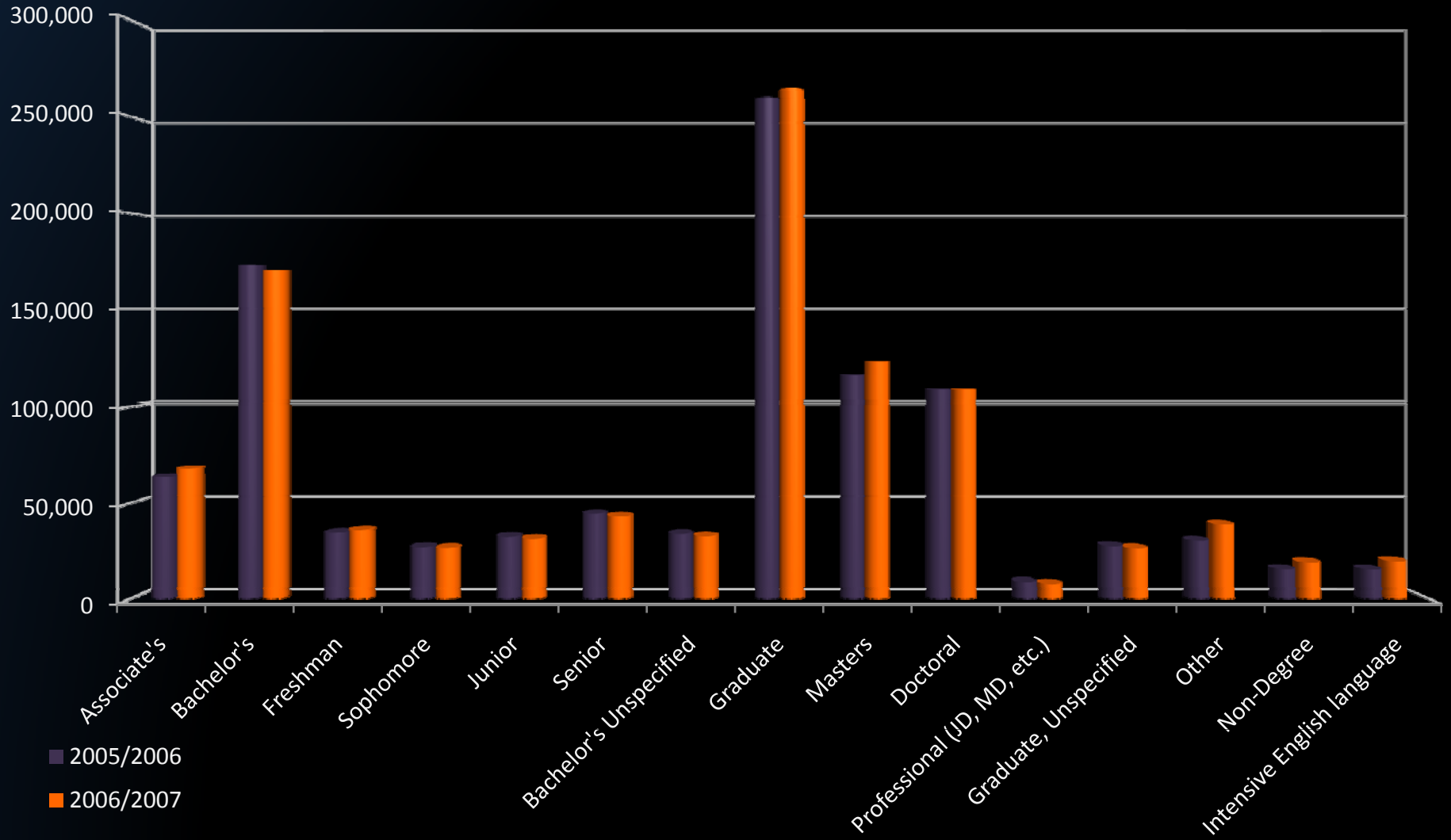


Top 20 Countries Represented



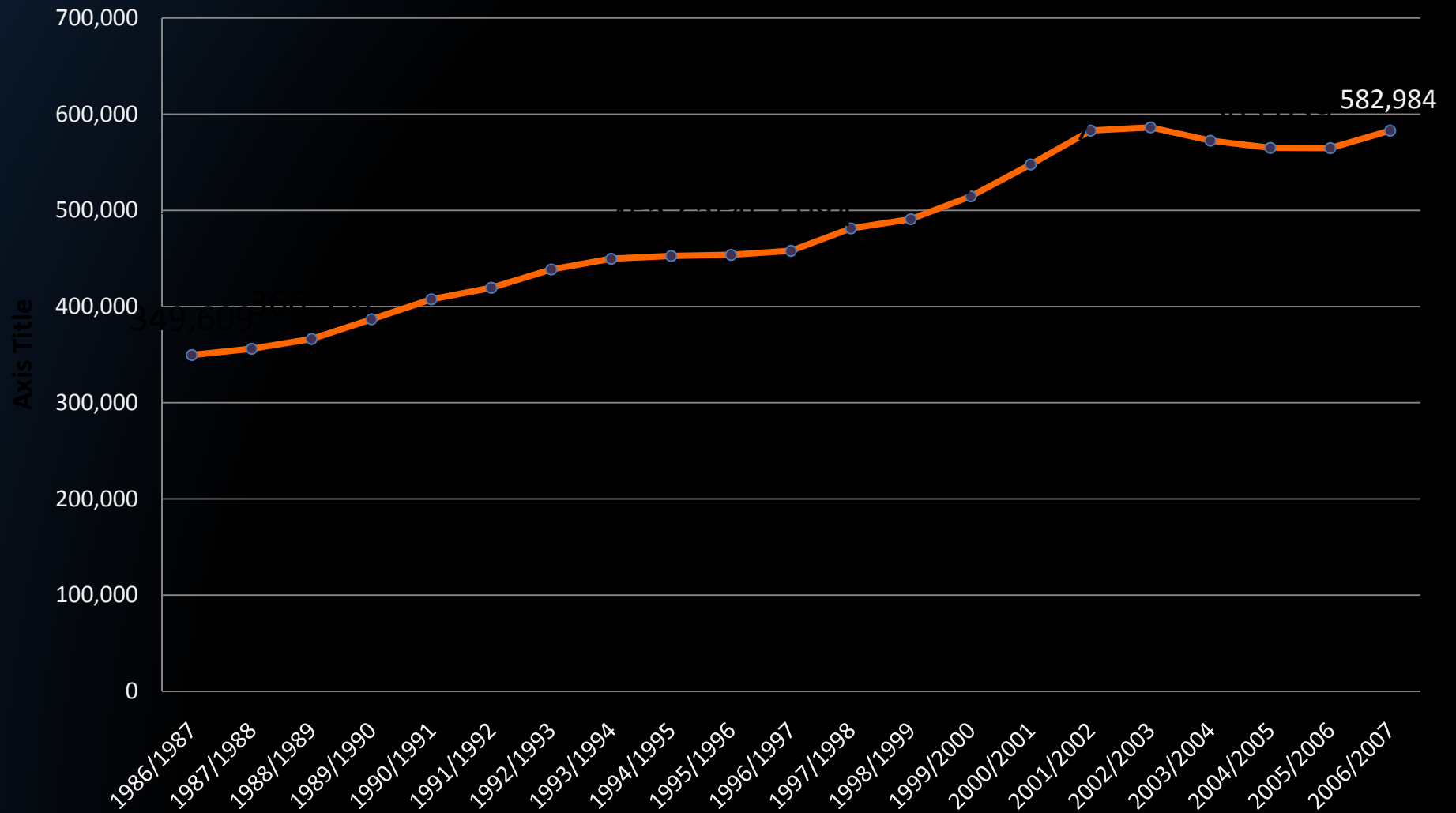


Level of Education





International Student Enrollment 1986-2007





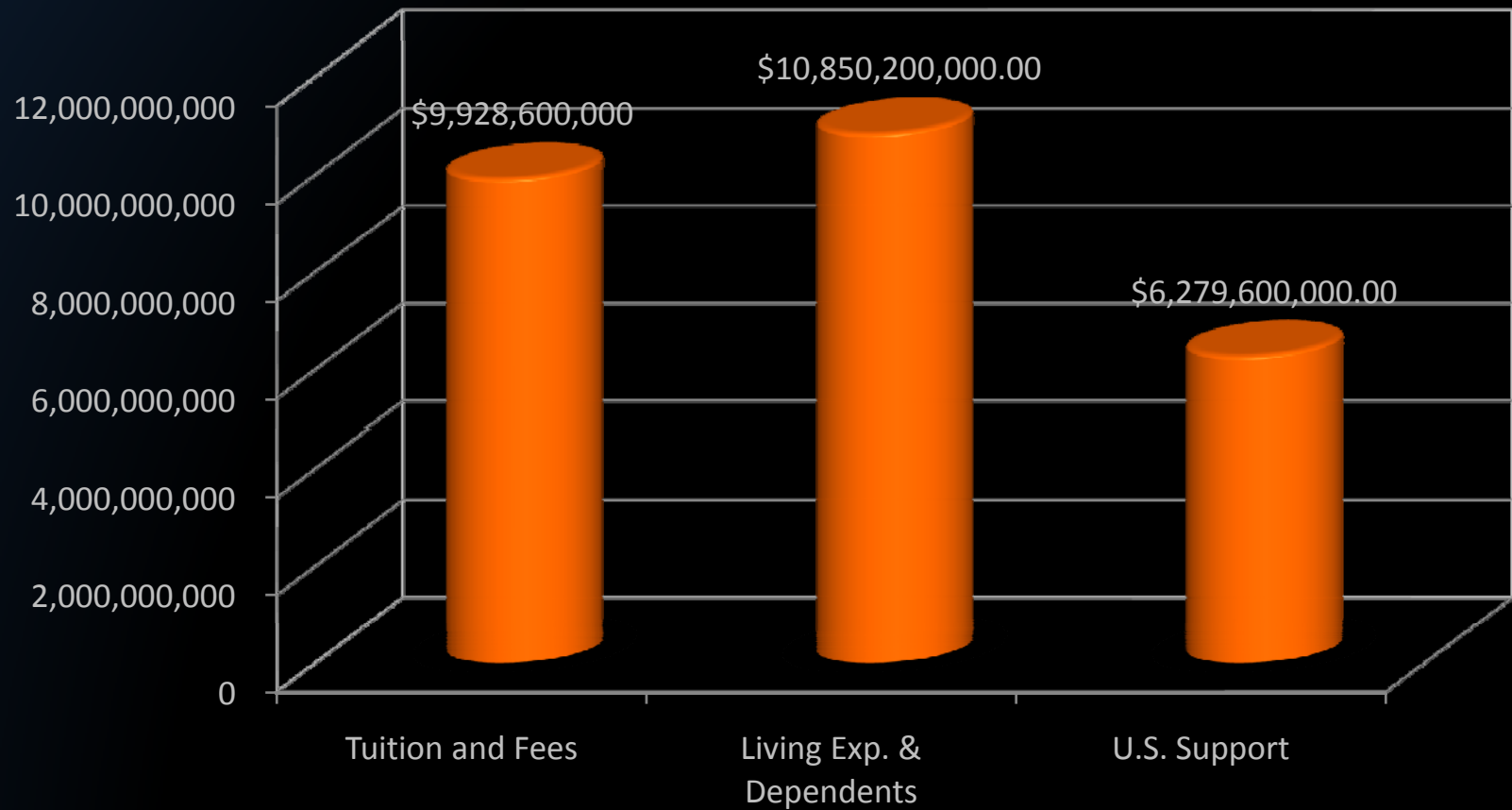
Impact on the Universities

- Elevate academic reputation
- Contribute to on-campus diversity
- Bring new skills to campus
- Increase international cooperation





2006-2007 Financial Impact of International Students*



* Figures for 2006-2007 International Students Enrollment which was 582,984



Language Barriers



- Pronunciation
- General English language skills
- Slang
- Library terminology



Cultural Barriers

- Customs
- Social norms
- Education Methods
- Library services offered





Library Differences

- Open vs. closed stacks
- Self service vs. full service
- Classification systems
- Request systems





Best Practices

- Train staff to communicate more effectively
- Assign a library liaison
- Collaborate with on-campus groups
- Provide multiple information literacy workshops
- Design handouts for their orientation



Staff Development

- Offer diversity and communication skills training
- Learn education methods for non-native speakers
- Learn about other cultures
- Expect the unexpected



Reference desk

Good Reference Service

- Complete reference desk interviews
- Inclusion in search process
- Explanation of library services
- Follow-up questions

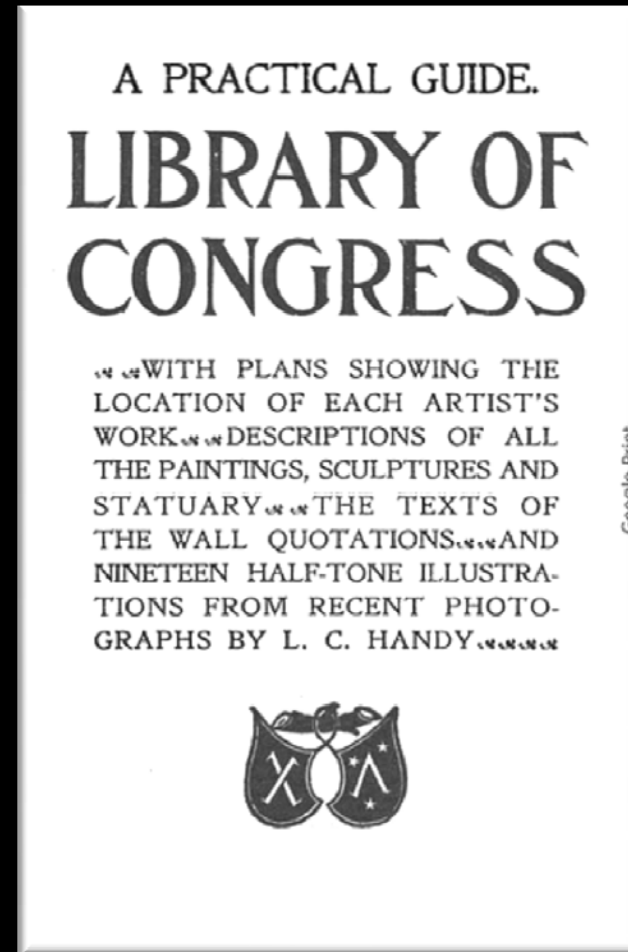
Poor Reference Service

- Excluded from search
- Library services unexplained
- No follow up questions
- Hurried interviews



Information Skills Instruction

- Offer a series of workshops that use
 - Techniques used in second language classes
 - Handouts and assignments to increase retention
 - Explanation of terminology

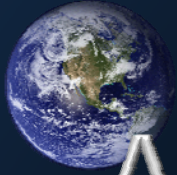




An Example: Cornell University

- Partnerships with on-campus departments
- Classes for students based on academic programs
- Training workshops for staff





Another Example: University of Exeter



- Redesigned web pages
- Orientation handouts
- Drop-in sessions
- Multi-language collection development



Summary

- International students' presence in US higher education continues to grow
- Access to and success in higher education can be inhibited by
 - Language
 - Cultural Customs
 - Library Organization



Summary continued

Best practices include

- Offering a series of special classes
- Assigning library liaisons for international students
- Providing specific handouts and websites to introduce them
- Including multiple languages in collection development
- Providing diversity training for all library staff
- Building partnerships with campus departments



Selected Readings

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