

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demand and Supply: The Critical Role of Research Libraries in International Education

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Academic libraries are essential to the success of international education in the United States. Strong and deep collections in dozens of languages, and professional librarians with extensive subject and language knowledge have been central to teaching and research in area and global studies. Collections and services have changed significantly, as digital resources have proliferated and the means of access to foreign information have diversified. This paper explores those changes and highlights the challenges and especially the opportunities they present to libraries, scholars, and universities. It also issues a call for action.

Department of Education programs have provided important support to libraries. As global scholarship has turned in new directions, and technology has facilitated collaborative access to non-traditional formats, the measure of our libraries' worth is no longer their ability to store more and more of the world's publishing output in our collective stacks in United States, but instead their broad engagement with faculty and colleagues throughout the world in building a strong and lasting digital scholarly infrastructure. While internal institutional reallocations of funds will be needed to support more ambitious digital projects and partnerships, external funding will also be required to sustain these new models, and to make a difference in the speed with which global information is made available.

The paper proposes actions under three broad recommendations: Aggressively pursue broad digital access to international information resources; internationalize research library services and perspectives; and broaden and internationalize library collaborations.