

The Library as an Incubator of Multicultural Awareness & Engagement

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Introduction

- Students expressed concern about the lack of opportunity to engage with diverse individuals.
- Higher education institutions around the world have acknowledged that multicultural education and research is crucial to national development and cultural pluralism.
- The University Libraries understand and acknowledge that diversity shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity.

Objectives

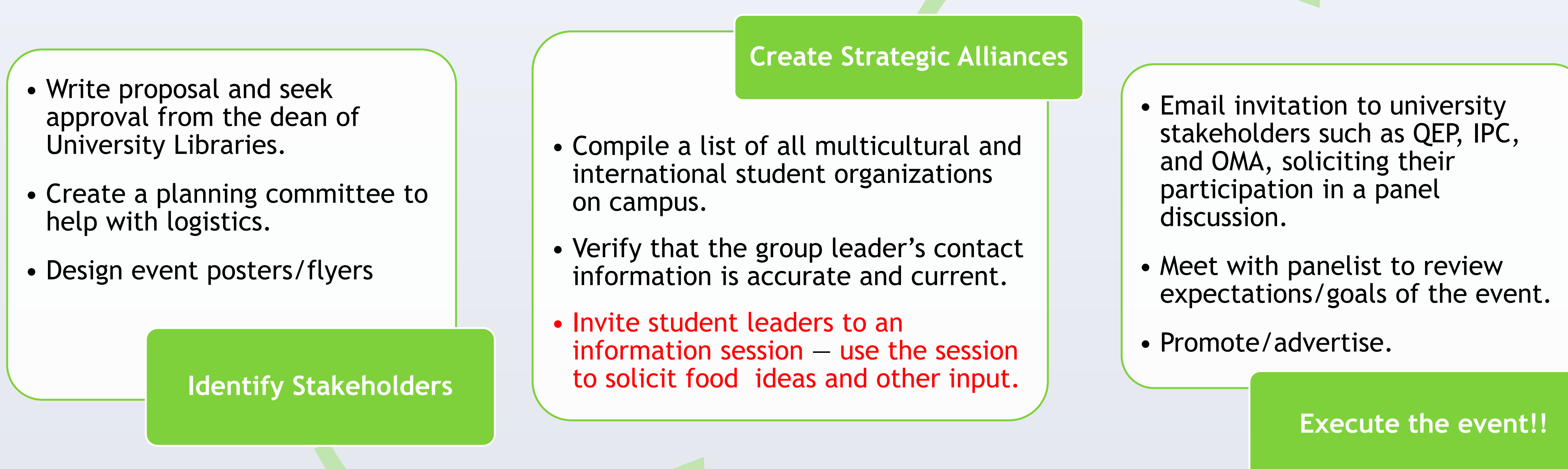
- Increase multicultural awareness.
- Create a bridge between the libraries and student organizations.
- Create a strategic alliance with university stakeholders that focuses on diversity and inclusiveness.
- Aids the psychological adjustment process by cultivating shared experiences.
- Create an opportunity to promote the Libraries' collections and services as well as identify ways to improve them.
- Create a dialogue between faculty, staff and students on a variety of topics relating to diversity. This dialogue was facilitated during a panel discussion.



Materials & Methods

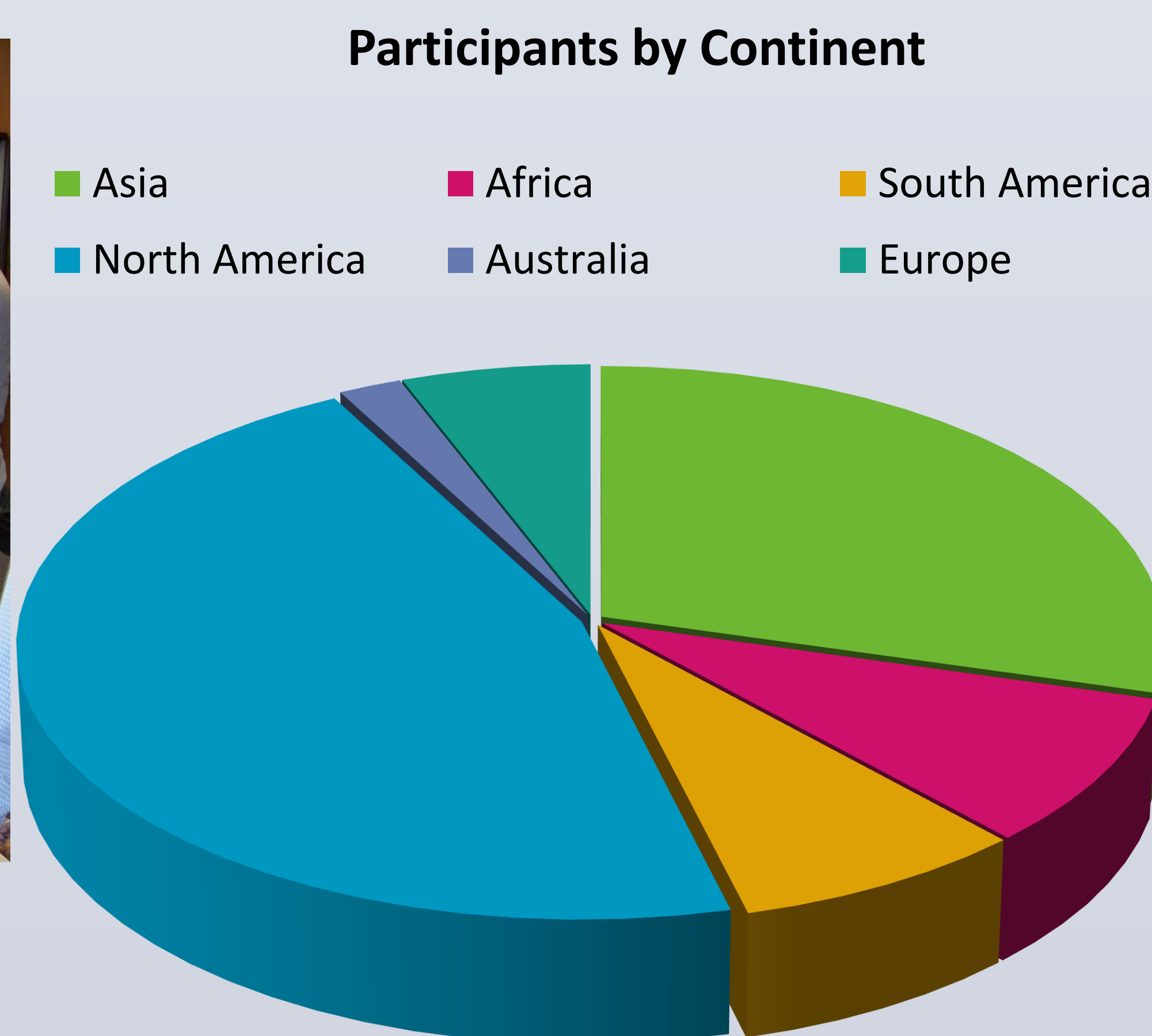
- To gather data for the event, survey methodology was used.
- The event took about 2 hours per day to plan and organize (approximately 140 hours total).
 - Roughly the same amount of time it takes to organize and execute a mega book swap.

Steps:



Results

- The event gave freshman and transfer students a chance to get to know about student organizations and engage in the diversity on campus.
 - Students connected while sharing information about their culture and food.
 - **Major finding:** the needs of nonimmigrants and new Americans are psychological and socially rooted; aesthetics such as multilingual signs, cultural events, flags and other artifacts that represent multiculturalism will improve the friendliness of the sometimes intimidating library domain.



- The event increased visibility for multicultural student groups.
 - Group leaders indicated that this expo yield more prospective membership than any other event.

3% international students

93% in-state students

Conclusions

- Increased multicultural awareness on campus.
- Increased the general awareness of library resources available to support our diverse communities.
- 60% of participants indicated that they learned something new about another culture.
- 53% of survey respondents indicated that they are a native of a country other than the US.
- Reduced anxiety levels of new students – cultivated shared experiences – allowed participants to gain comfort with differences.

What should follow this work?

- Libraries should adopt a similar event because it helps to create global advocates & alliances on campus.
- Introduce more sensory cues and realign our products and services with the communities we serve.
- Expand the expo to include the surrounding communities:
 - Include local businesses and non-profit organizations – create a network of products and services to support diversity – International grocery stores and restaurants.

Contacts & References

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 Visit our diversity page @:
<http://library.uncg.edu/info/diversity/>

References

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Sandhu, D. S. (1994). An examination of the psychological needs of the international students: Implications for counselling and psychotherapy. *International Journal For The Advancement Of Counselling*, 17(4).