Global engagement is part of Indiana University’s DNA.

The world changes over time but IU continues to build on its rich legacy of supporting international education and ambassadorship. The Stephen L. and Connie J. Ferguson International Center will uphold IU’s tradition of global excellence.

IU has been a leader among institutions of higher learning in promoting international education. From creating overseas study opportunities to hosting students from around the globe to collaborating with leading foreign universities, IU has been globally involved for nearly two centuries. Today, IU sends more than 4,000 students abroad and welcomes over 8,000 students from 140 countries each year.

You are part of IU’s rich history of intentional international engagement. Now, you have the opportunity to join IU Global in establishing a physical building that serves as the international cultural heart of IU—a tangible symbol of IU’s commitment to all things global. A building that allows all services and support for study abroad and international students to exist in one unified space, for the first time. A building that houses all global engagement offices at IU under a single roof and invites students home.

With you—our extraordinary community of friends and alumni—we can maintain our place as a leading force enabling worldwide academic mobility. Now is the time to cement IU’s ongoing legacy as a leader in global engagement.
“Connie and I have traveled the globe, meeting many wonderful people and developing meaningful friendships. We believe the world would be a better place if everyone had those opportunities. This center will enable students to become truly global citizens: it will serve as a home-away-from-home for our international students and be a one-stop central resource of services for IU students as they consider venturing abroad and developing their own deep international relationships. We are honored and proud that it carries our name.”

—Stephen Ferguson, JD’76, DHL’18
Chairman of the Board, Cook Group Incorporated
1836: First modern foreign language offered. French was taught for the first time in 1836, German in 1854, and Spanish in 1864.

1842: First foreign-born IU graduate. Henry Tanner was born and educated in London before matriculating at IU.

1879: First study abroad program. IU staff led a “Summer Tramps” walking tour of Europe.

1891: First foreign student to earn a graduate degree from IU. Takekuma Okada returned to Japan with a Master of Arts degree.
SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1820, INDIANA UNIVERSITY CULTIVATED INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS.

IU’s first foreign student, Henry Tanner, graduated in 1842. In 1879, IU students ventured to Europe as part of IU’s first faculty-led study abroad program.

But no single Indiana University figure more fully represents the breadth and depth of IU’s commitment to global engagement than President Herman B Wells. He built on over one hundred years of tradition by promoting foreign language institutes and expanding IU’s commitments overseas in countries ranging from Thailand to Brazil to Pakistan. Wells established IU’s first-ever center for international students on the Bloomington campus in 1951.

To better facilitate both study abroad and international student experiences, decades of leaders continued to invest in IU’s international community involvement, creating programs like the International Center and commissioning research on the impact of foreign student enrollment. A groundbreaking three-year, IU-led study published in 1966 concluded that hosting students from around the world improved the IU student experience. American-born students said that knowing foreign students broadened their interests, changed their attitudes about foreign and domestic issues, and led to 73% expressing a desire to travel or study abroad.

Now, the Ferguson International Center takes the next step in ensuring IU’s long-standing legacy of global engagement. Integrating the large community of international students who come to IU and the large community of IU students who study abroad in a central campus location enhances IU’s ability to serve all students.

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1916: First campus-wide international club. The Cosmopolitan Club began with 12 international students.

1924: First paid international student advisor. The Board of Trustees approved payment of $100 a year to Flora Anderson, botany professor, partly to manage a new international student loan fund.

1940: First international study grant. The Indiana Federation of Clubs joined with IU to support graduate student research in Latin America.

1945: First IU scholarships for international students approved by the Board of Trustees for “foreign students who are dependent entirely upon private means.”
“I studied in IU’s Nanzan program in Japan, where I was able to learn and live the language and culture. I later worked for the Indiana Department of Commerce, where I helped attract Japanese business to Indiana. I wouldn’t have gotten that job if I didn’t have that international experience at IU.”

—Bob Mason, BS’87
Vice President and International Sales Manager, The Ford Meter Box Company, Inc.

International exposure provides more than a chance to meet new people in new places. Studying in a different country increases innovation and promotes career success. Students become more resilient, more open to different ideas, more able to adapt in a world driven by change.

Navigating streets in a city surrounded by people speaking different languages. Deciphering local public transportation. Ordering a simple lunch with new friends. What is mundane in day-to-day life is exciting and challenging during any time spent abroad.

That is exactly why Indiana University is proud that at least one in every three graduating seniors at IUB has studied abroad. It is equally proud to host 8,000 international students from 140 countries every year.

Like you, IU values engaging with different cultures and learning in new environments. By establishing a vibrant, welcoming, central location for all study abroad and international student-related services, we can ensure an optimal experience for students utilizing IU Global’s services.

1950: First summer language workshop in less commonly taught languages championed by Herman Wells.

1951: First international center.
Herman Wells dedicated a small house on Jordan Avenue (on the site of the Read Hall parking lot) for the social use of international students.

1954: First formal development agreement established between IU’s School of Education, the Prasan Mitr College of Education in Bangkok, and the Thai Ministry of Education, with funding provided by the U.S. Foreign Operations Administration (FOA).

1975: First year of Office of International Programs. George M. Wilson, associate professor of history, appointed dean for international programs, heading the new Office of International Programs.

1986: First IU South Bend international affairs office.

1989: First IUPUI international affairs office.

1998: First award for IU International Networks (IN@IU) funded by NSF’s OAC.
CREATING THE FUTURE

Your support creates the opportunity for future generations of students to continue IU’s tradition of international engagement. Your gift to the Ferguson International Center will:

• Promote a sense of pride and belonging in international students
• Inspire more students to study abroad
• Equip students with the tools and resources they need to maximize the impact of their international experiences
• Amplify IU’s position as a leader in developing world-class student experiences
• Facilitate relationships between IU and international universities, corporations, and other organizations worldwide

This building is more than just a space—it is a commitment to carrying forward IU’s ongoing legacy of global engagement.

1998: First undergraduate minor in international studies through the College of Arts and Sciences.

1999: First overseas international alumni reunion in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

2002: First international homecoming brought 50 alumni from 17 countries to Bloomington for a four-day celebration.

2003: First international studies degree became available to students in the new Program in International Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences, Bloomington.
IU must remain competitive to attract the best and brightest students—worldwide—so we can equip them to succeed in the modern, global economy. And we must continue our outreach to international organizations and institutional partners. The center and its programming demonstrate how important both our international students and international activity are to our mission.

2007: First vice president for international affairs Patrick O’Meara appointed by President Michael McRobbie.

2011: First Patrick O’Meara Lecture Series brings distinguished guests to address timely topics in international affairs.

2012: Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies was established in Bloomington.

2020: Groundbreaking ceremony for Ferguson International Center.
The Ferguson International Center will be the international cultural heart of Indiana University and the IU Bloomington campus. Located on the corner of 7th and Eagleson, this will be IU’s home for all things international—from current study abroad and international students to over 40 international alumni chapters serving 75,000+ international and 50,000+ study abroad alumni. Supporting IU’s ongoing commitment to global engagement, the building will unite all IU Global work under one roof.