

Rationale for Providing Programs for Spouses/Partners of International Students/Scholars

- The success of an international student, post-doc or visiting scholar is affected by the well-being of his/her partner or family.
- The challenges faced by accompanying spouses and partners often revolve around a disruption in their core sense of identity. At a formative time in their career or education, careers are interrupted, or courses of study may be put on hold. Barriers to being employed or studying part time in the U.S. can be significant. Creating a satisfying life in the new surroundings may require learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture, finding new friends and a developing a sense of belonging to the new community.
- The sense of isolation and the need to create an entirely new identity and life can lead to frustration, depression and loneliness for many spouses. This, in turn, affects the work & life of the student/scholar.
- The awareness that these are situational challenges experienced by most spouses and partners can be helpful in accepting the situation, overcoming the challenges and creating a new and satisfying life.
- Institutions can make a significant difference by
 - including spouses in the international community,
 - acknowledging their challenges and needs,
 - drawing on their talents and skills and
 - facilitating their adaptation.

To learn what some universities and volunteer organizations are doing to help spouses make a positive transition to a fulfilling life in their new community, please explore the list of resources, video and the websites listed on the chart at the end of this handout. We invite your additions to this partial list.