



IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE
AT UC BERKELEY



Our Vision

A world where global understanding and cooperation are the foundations of a peaceful and prosperous society

Our Mission

To foster intercultural respect and understanding, lifelong friendships, and leadership skills for a more just and peaceful world

A Message from Our Executive Director & CEO

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As I reflect on the 2024–2025 academic year, I’m struck by how International House Berkeley has remained true to its mission during a particularly challenging time for higher education. While university campuses across the United States grappled with protests and shifting policies around free speech, I-House continued to serve as a safe home where students could build meaningful connections across cultural differences.

This year tested our community’s resilience, but it also demonstrated the strength of our approach to intercultural understanding. When the world felt increasingly polarized, our residents found common ground in shared meals, late-night conversations, and resident-led programming.

The results speak for themselves. Our mid-year free speech survey revealed that 94% of I-House residents felt comfortable expressing controversial opinions to fellow residents and over half reported discussing challenging topics more frequently since becoming I-House residents.

This success didn’t happen by accident. It’s the result of intentional programming, careful community building, and our commitment to creating an environment where curiosity overcomes judgment.



Thank you for supporting this vital work. Your investment makes it possible for I-House to continue fostering the understanding our world desperately needs.

With gratitude,

Shaun R. Carver, Ed.D., MBA
Executive Director and CEO

Our Impact

Your generous support enables International House Berkeley to develop leaders from every corner of the globe who champion intercultural understanding and work toward a more peaceful world.

778 Residents Living at I-House

Our vibrant global community represented 87 nationalities in academic year 2024–2025, with top representing countries including China, South Korea, France, Germany, and the United States. About 54% of the residents were undergraduates. Economics, computer science, and business administration were the most popular majors.

208 Events for Residents & the Community

Our extensive programming included our popular resident retreats, DiversiTEA & Coffee Hours, Sunday Suppers, and the International Cultural Festival, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and meaningful connections.

Read more about how I-House encourages intercultural respect and understanding on page 5.

22 Graduates of the Global Leadership Program

Through cultural intelligence assessments, intensive weekend workshops, one-on-one coaching sessions, and experiential learning opportunities, participants developed their cross-cultural leadership capabilities and earned certificates in our comprehensive professional development program.

Read more about I-House's leadership development programs on page 13.



88% of I-House Residents Feel Safe to Share Views

A resident survey conducted during the 2024–25 academic year revealed that I-House creates an exceptional environment for open dialogue, with residents expressing comfort in sharing controversial opinions — contrasting sharply with nationwide campus trends where students report feeling unsafe expressing their views.



300+ People Benefited from Projects for Peace

Three I-House residents — **Excellence Joshua (IH 2023–24)**, **Okechukwu Iroegbu (IH 2022–24)** and **Hussein Orekoya (IH 2023–24)** — received \$10,000 Projects for Peace grants for transformative community initiatives focusing on digital empowerment, clean water access, and climate conflict mitigation in Nigeria.

Read more about Excellence Joshua's project on page 14.

250+ Alumni Reconnected at I-House Events

I-House's mission of fostering lifelong friendships comes alive through our thriving alumni community. Whether they're catching up at the Annual Alumni Reunion Brunch, gathering for quarterly happy hours at Edmonds' Café, or connecting at regional events around the world, our alumni keep coming back to each other and their I-House connections.

Read more about how our alumni strengthen their bonds with their I-House friends on page 9.



Creating Intercultural Understanding & Respect

Living alongside residents from 80 different countries transforms everyday moments into opportunities for intercultural learning at International House Berkeley. In academic year 2024–2025, our diverse community turned daily interactions — from shared meals in the Dining Commons to late-night conversations in the Great Hall — into experiences of cultural exchange and understanding. Our structured programming amplifies these organic connections.

Fall and Spring Resident Retreats

We started each semester with a series of overnight retreats — launching the resident experience with intentional, curiosity-driven sessions and activities that promote cross-cultural understanding, personal growth, and leadership development. Held at a retreat center in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, residents had the opportunity to build friendships, practice dialogue across differences, and experience traditional camp experiences, such as hiking and s'mores.

Weekly Intercultural Events

Throughout the year, weekly DiversiTEA & Coffee Hours accompanied by themed dinners in the Dining Commons gave residents the opportunity to share their cultures through food, music, dancing, and games. Each event was hosted and organized by residents who decided how they wished to celebrate and showcase their cultures. Among the 27 DiversiTEA & Coffee Hours this year were special nights dedicated to Diwali and Lunar New Year, which are always favorites with the residents.

International Cultural Festival

The year culminated in our International Cultural Festival, representing 30 countries, entirely planned and executed by resident leaders. Themed "Travel the World Without Leaving Berkeley," this celebration was open to the public and showcased the community's diversity through cultural performances, traditional foods, and interactive exhibits — many in collaboration with local consulates from represented countries.



Impact in Action

These intentional programming efforts create measurable impact on our community's intercultural dialogue. According to our 2024 Free Speech Survey, over half of our residents reported discussing challenging topics more frequently since moving into I-House.

88%

feel safe sharing their views within our community

94%

feel comfortable expressing controversial opinions to fellow residents



Learning to Lead Across Cultures

Victor Pezuela Ortiz (IH 2024–25) served as a program lead at International House Berkeley during his year-long exchange from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Alongside his law and business classes at UC Berkeley, he got involved in I-House leadership because he wanted to craft memorable experiences for residents. “I just underestimated how much the experience would shape me,” he added.

Victor facilitated the planning of several DiversiTEA & Coffee Hours and engaged participants from 30 countries to host booths at our annual International Cultural Festival. Victor consistently fostered inclusivity and positivity, even hand-

delivering 150 roses on Valentine’s Day to I-House residents. “I became adept at creating spaces where residents could proudly share something deeply personal: their culture and traditions,” he shared.

“What I valued the most about serving as a program lead is that it taught me how to lead in a multicultural environment,” Victor reflected. “It pushed me to listen, adapt, and make everyone feel included.”

Victor returns to Madrid with a newfound curiosity and openness. “I carry the lessons I learned at I-House — about collaboration, cultural awareness, and creating inclusive spaces — wherever I go.”

Finding Home at I-House

Before even stepping on campus, **Susanna Atanessian (IH 2024–25)** wanted to live at International House Berkeley. “It felt like the perfect fit with its mission, community, location, dining, and architecture, along with all the opportunities and experiences I imagined having there,” she remembered.

Susanna’s interest grew when, as a first-year student on campus, she visited a fellow Armenian student who lived here. “I saw how she made new connections in the dining hall and how someone was always playing amazing music on the piano,” she said. “I-House brings together talented, loving, and curious people.” Susanna was certain she wanted her own I-House experience.

Her opportunity came when she was awarded the Simone Sciobereti Scholarship, which helped to relieve

some of her fees for room and board. She cherished her experiences at I-House, including a close friendship with her roommate from Japan and the opportunity to share her Armenian culture with the community by organizing the first Armenian DiversiTEA & Coffee Hour. “No one even realized I was the only Armenian at I-House, because of the incredible support of my I-House friends,” she shared.

“It’s unbelievable how every semester the cohort at I-House changes, yet the feeling, unity and vibrancy never do,” Susanna reflected. “It’s truly a once-in-a-lifetime, and for-a-lifetime experience.”



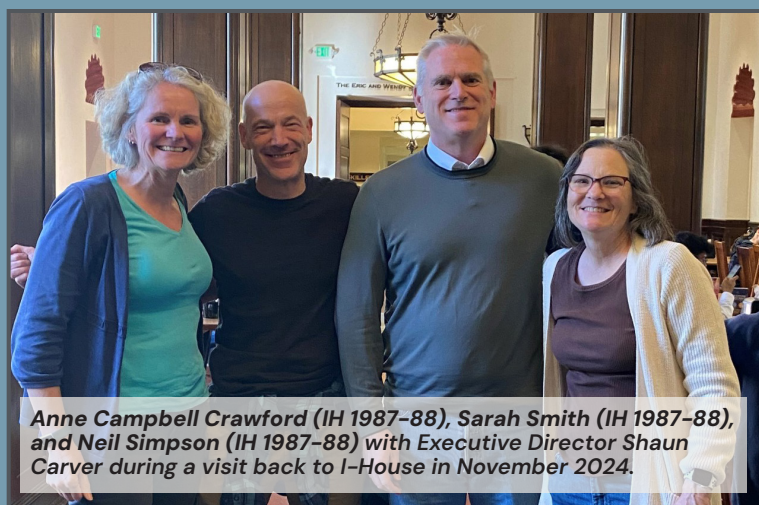
Lifelong Friendships Thrive Worldwide

Ask any recent International House Berkeley graduate or longtime alum what stands out about their I-House experience, and you'll hear the same thing: the friendships. Whether through visits to friends across continents or gatherings back on campus, our alumni community demonstrates the enduring power of cross-cultural friendship.

Some alumni maintain their connections through global adventures — visiting former roommates in their home countries or coordinating international travel with their I-House family. Others find their anchor in Berkeley, returning regularly for our Alumni Reunion Brunch or gathering quarterly at Edmonds' Café to share updates and reminisce. Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, we hosted more than 250 alumni at I-House events and visits, representing residents from every decade of our history.

Recognizing that our global community deserves global support, we're working together with I-House Berkeley alumni ambassadors in England, Japan, New York, Spain, Washington DC, and beyond to create regional alumni groups. These ambassadors are planning gatherings in their cities ensuring that the I-House spirit thrives wherever our alumni call home. Stay tuned to the monthly I-House Connection email newsletter for information about upcoming alumni events.





Anne Campbell Crawford (IH 1987–88), Sarah Smith (IH 1987–88), and Neil Simpson (IH 1987–88) with Executive Director Shaun Carver during a visit back to I-House in November 2024.

The self-described “Brit Pack” first met at I-House in 1987 and have remained close friends ever since. Over the years, they have crossed continents to celebrate life’s milestones — weddings, births, and even to support one another through times of distress. Just as often, they’ve gathered simply to enjoy each other’s company and explore the world together. From the Bay Area to England and beyond, their friendship reflects the lifelong connections and global community that begin under the I-House dome.

Sherri Pierce Sawaya (IH 1964–66) and Peter Sawaya came back to I-House in spring 2024 for a short stay in the I-House Ambassador Suite. During their visit they met and got to know residents **Nelly Endres (IH 2025)** from Germany and **Håvard Fossdal (IH 2025)** from Norway and thoroughly enjoyed comparing notes about I-House through the generations. A couple of months later Sherri and Peter hosted their new friends for three days at their home in Southern California.



Peter, Håvard, Nelly, and Sherri taking in the California sunshine on Santa Monica Beach.



I-House Berkeley alumni Steve Shen (IH 2021–22), Tien-Shuo Chang, (IH 2021–22), and Grace Hong, (IH 2016–18) together with family, friends, and alumni from I-House NY.

I-House Berkeley alumni came together with family, friends, and fellow alumni from I-House New York for a winter holiday gathering in Taiwan. The event was a chance to celebrate common experiences, reflect on the shared mission of I-House, and discover meaningful connections across generations and campuses. By linking with I-House New York alumni, the Berkeley community is helping to grow and strengthen the global I-House network.

5 Ways to Stay Connected to I-House

Whether you're an alumnus or a supporter who believes in our mission, you're part of the I-House family. Here's how to deepen your connection:

1

Support Today's Residents

Your gift ensures future generations can experience the transformative community that makes I-House special. Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at ihouse.berkeley.edu/support to provide scholarships, maintain our historic building, and support the programming that creates lifelong friendships and global leaders.



2

Stay Informed

Subscribe to our monthly I-House Connection newsletter for updates on current residents, program developments, and alumni stories that showcase the impact of your support. Sign up at ihouse.berkeley.edu/subscribe.

3

Connect with Fellow Alumni

Join alumni at our quarterly happy hours at Edmonds' Café, the annual Alumni Reunion Brunch, or regional gatherings in cities around the globe. Can't find an alumni event near you but want to help organize one? Contact alumni@ihouseberkeley.org for help to get started.

4

Experience I-House Programming

Join our broader community at signature events like the Resident Benefit Concert and International Cultural Festival, or attend our virtual speaker series from anywhere in the world to engage with today's global issues and solutions.

5

Become a Host Family

If you live in the Bay Area, share your local knowledge and hospitality with current residents through our I-House Host Family Program. It's a wonderful way to experience today's I-House community while making a direct impact on student lives. Learn more at ihouse.berkeley.edu/hostfamily



Ready to Join Us?

Every connection you make strengthens the bonds that have sustained our community for nearly a century, ensuring I-House continues fostering intercultural understanding for generations to come.

Visit ihouse.berkeley.edu or contact alumni@ihouseberkeley.org to get involved.



Developing Tomorrow's Global Leaders

International House Berkeley's commitment to nurturing leadership extends beyond traditional programming, offering residents transformative opportunities to develop the skills and cultural intelligence needed to create positive change in their home communities and beyond.

Global Leadership Program

The Global Leadership Program is I-House's signature leadership development experience, combining assessment, intensive training, and real-world application. Last year's 22 participants began with cultural intelligence assessments, then explored cross-cultural communication and collaborative problem-solving through three weekend intensives and personalized coaching sessions. They applied their newly-learned skills by helping plan signature I-House programs, including the Resident Benefit Concert and International Cultural Festival.

Lodestar Speaker Series

The 2024-2025 Lodestar Speaker Series exposed I-House residents to global leadership in action through two dynamic sessions: "After The Vote: Insights from Women Leaders Post-U.S. Elections" featuring elected officials and policy leaders, and "Geopolitics of AI and International Cooperation" with technology strategists, AI researchers, and policy experts. In addition to exposure to global leadership perspectives, resident leaders also gained valuable experience by helping to organize these events and engaging directly with prominent leaders.

Transforming Communities Through Projects for Peace

I-House partners with the Projects for Peace program to empower residents to put their global leadership skills into action in their home countries, providing funding to conduct peace-building initiatives during the summer. Backed by \$10,000 grants, **Excellence Joshua (IH 2023–24)**, **Okechukwu Iroegbu (IH 2022–24)** and **Hussein Orekoya (IH 2023–24)** led projects focused on digital empowerment, clean water access, and climate conflict mitigation.

Digital Empowerment in Nigeria

As the founder of a technology incubator in Nigeria, Excellence had empowered women economically through technology. However, in her mother's homeland of Anambra State, Excellence saw the need for a training program to help young men overcome poverty-driven crime. "With technology, opportunities are democratized," she explains. "You don't need to know somebody to make something good out of your life."

While studying for her master's degree in development engineering and living at I-House, Excellence won a Projects for Peace grant to launch her Yatara Rucha training program.

Last summer, 133 men participated in her four-week curriculum, which introduced digital skills and explored career pathways. Participants also engaged in life-enhancement sessions on personal branding, conflict mediation, and civic responsibility.

This project was transformative for Excellence, who reflected, "True peace is achieved not just by removing conflict, but by empowering individuals with the skills and opportunities to build better futures. When we invest in people, we lay the foundation for lasting societal change and harmony."



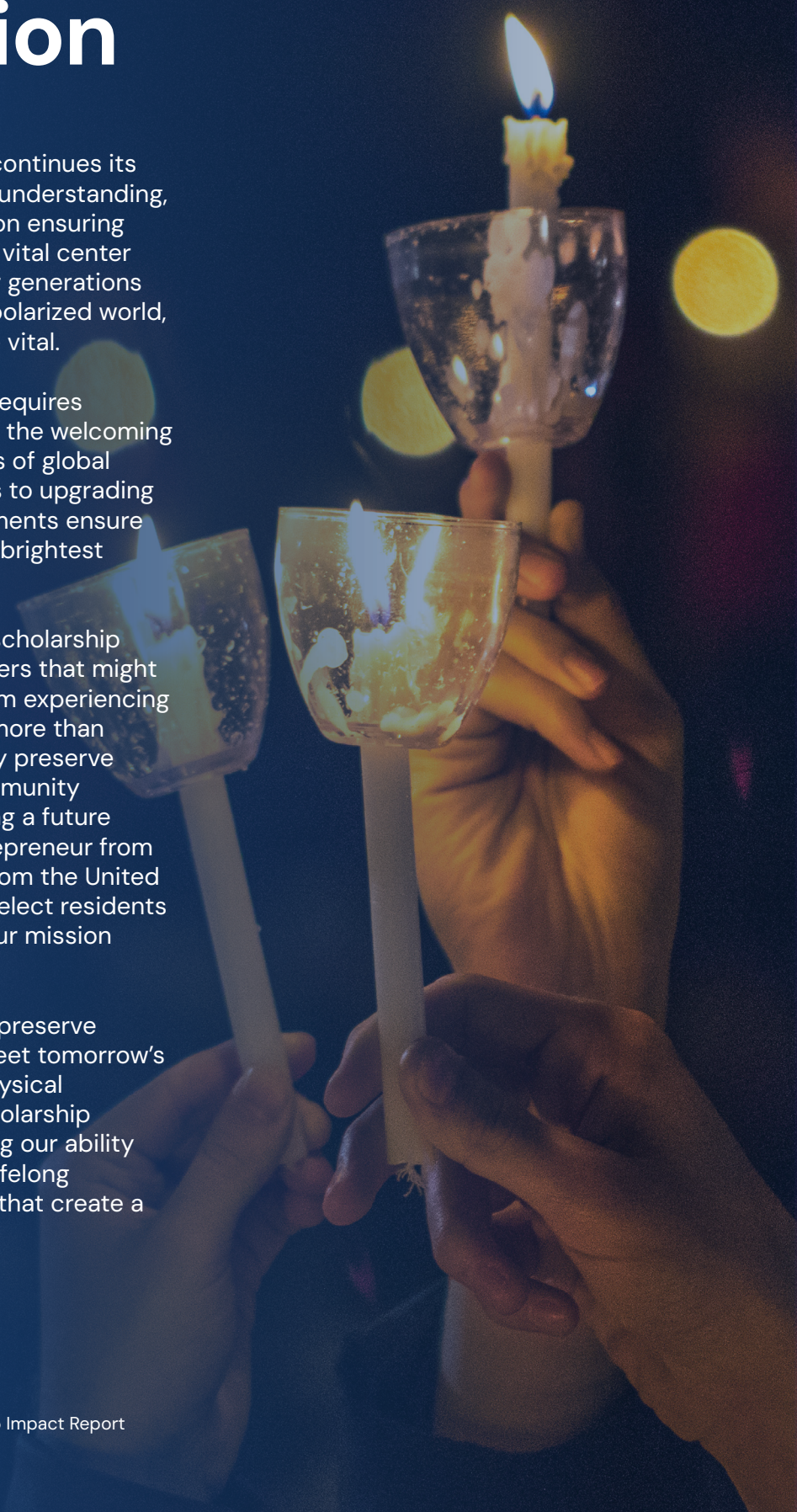
Preserving Our Mission

As International House Berkeley continues its mission of fostering intercultural understanding, our vision for the future centers on ensuring this historic institution remains a vital center for global community building for generations to come. In today's increasingly polarized world, our mission has never been more vital.

Our nearly century-old building requires continuous investment to remain the welcoming home that has shaped thousands of global leaders. From modernizing rooms to upgrading common spaces, these improvements ensure I-House continues to attract the brightest minds from around the world.

Equally critical is expanding our scholarship support to remove financial barriers that might prevent exceptional students from experiencing I-House. These scholarships do more than support individual dreams — they preserve the diversity that makes our community extraordinary. Whether supporting a future diplomat from Asia, a social entrepreneur from South America, or an innovator from the United States, scholarships allow us to select residents based on their commitment to our mission rather than their ability to pay.

With your support, our goal is to preserve I-House's legacy and adapt to meet tomorrow's challenges. By investing in our physical infrastructure and expanding scholarship opportunities, we're strengthening our ability to nurture intercultural respect, lifelong friendships, and leadership skills that create a more just and peaceful world.



Paying Forward

The Gift of Global Perspective

Harry Mynick's (IH 1972–76) path to the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab took an important detour through International House Berkeley, where living among students from around the world broadened his perspective and deepened his interest in global affairs.

Encouraged by his engineer father, Harry pursued math and physics at Yale University, then earned his PhD in physics at UC Berkeley — launching a career in controlled fusion energy. The global collaborations he enjoyed as a scientist echoed the vibrant community and cross-cultural exchanges he first experienced during his years at I-House.

"At every meal, I could sit down with smart people from all over and exchange views and experiences with them," he remembered. "Sometimes we shared similar perspectives. Sometimes their views were very different from mine, but it was usually enlightening."

Harry feels profoundly fortunate for the path he has been able to follow, and that gratitude has inspired him to pay it forward by supporting young people pursuing technical fields. That's why he established a scholarship fund at I-House, using a qualified charitable donation from his IRA. "In this simple way, I've been able to contribute to helping to make the future a better one," he said.



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