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Akm Momin checks out a book at the S.E. Wimberly Library on the main campus of Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton with the help of Ninoska Worrell. The sharing program is the first collaboration in the state that directly connects academic resources and popular literature.

IN THE CARDS

Library program allows public to borrow books from 5 systems

By **Stephanie Wang**
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Five local libraries have launched a new lending program, the first of its kind in the state, to make their books and other resources available to each other's card holders.

If you're a patron of any of the libraries — Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach and those at Palm Beach County public schools, Palm Beach Community College and Florida Atlantic University — the Sunshine Library Card will let you check out items from all five systems.

"It really complements the types of materials available and gives the library user access to this full range of materials," said Tom Sloan, executive director of the Southeast Florida Library Information Network, which coordinated the agreement.

The sharing service lifts previous borrowing restrictions for unaffiliated visitors.

It's the first collaboration in the state that directly connects academic resources and popular literature — distinct from the existing Interlibrary Loan, which links the contents of all of Florida's public libraries.

In the few months since the program's spring debut, about 300 people have signed up for the yellow-and-blue card.

Libraries expect the card to benefit high school students taking Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes. Retirees, business people and people pursuing degrees may also show interest in checking out academic volumes,



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while education students may enjoy the ready availability of children's books, Sloan said.

With so many items available in each library's collection, there is little concern about overlapping demand for any one source. Academic texts tend to elaborate on very specific topics, and public libraries order multiple copies of popular books.

"If people came in and denuded our collections like a plague of locusts, we'd really have to rethink it," said Bill Miller, dean of libraries at FAU.

A \$10,000 state grant paid start-up costs and continuing costs will be small, Sloan said.

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