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CONNECTIONS

IssueTopic:

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Community Colleges In the USA



In This Issue:

Community Colleges
in the USA

Note from the Editor:

What do Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tom Hanks, and NASA space shuttle commander Eileen Collins have in common? They all attended community college.

Community colleges currently enroll 46 percent of undergraduates in the United States. According to *Open Doors* data, almost fifteen percent of international students studying in U.S. colleges and universities in 2005/06 were studying at community colleges. In fact, community colleges are the fastest growing institutional type. There are now more than 1,200 public and independent community colleges in the U.S.

In this issue, you will find information on the role of community colleges in U.S. higher education, including fast facts, online resources, and a special *Open Doors* community college data analysis, as well as insight from high-level community college leaders. Paul McVeigh, Associate Vice President for Global Studies and Programs at Northern Virginia Community College, shares three decades of teaching and administrative experience and discusses the changing role of community colleges in hosting international students. In an interview with *Connections*, Community College of Philadelphia President Stephen M. Curtis explains his perspective on how senior administrators at community colleges view internationalization. Special thanks also to Judy Irwin, Director of International Programs and Services at the American Association of Community Colleges, whose expertise helped shape this issue.

Each issue of *Connections* features a ready-made advising resource, designed to be shared directly with your students. In this issue, you will find "Crucial Questions About Community Colleges", a list of questions that students can use when speaking to or corresponding with recruiters, to learn whether particular community colleges are right for them.

I enjoyed meeting many EducationUSA advisers at NAFSA, and hope to meet others in the coming year. In the meantime, please contact me with your suggestions for upcoming issues.

– Shannon Bishop, Managing Editor, *Connections*
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sbishop@iie.org

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Community College: A World of Opportunities

By Paul McVeigh

Feature

This spring, Jean-Blaise Ognong, an F-1 student from Cameroon studying Economics at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), received the prestigious Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Award from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. It offered \$30,000 per year toward completion of his undergraduate degree, with the possibility of continued support for graduate school. The year before, Dan Nechita, an F-1 student from Romania studying Political Science at NVCC, received the same Cooke Award in its inaugural year and chose to continue his studies at Columbia University. Other community-college recipients of the award from overseas include: Tracy-Zhing Yang from Highline Community College (Seattle) who now studies at MIT; Quang Phung from Vietnam now at UC San Diego; Yeshey Pelzom from Bhutan at Agnes Scott and Anna DeGolier from Belarus at the University of Minnesota. While these students are exceptional by any standard, their stories are indicative of the opportunities thousands of international students have had at community colleges.

I have been a teacher and administrator at NVCC over three decades. My first classes in the '70's had substantial numbers of African students. In the late '70's and '80's, my students included Vietnamese "boat people" and in the '80's and '90's, I worked and taught with students from the Middle East and Central America. More recently, I have taught students from the former Soviet Union, North Africa, and South America. Today, students from more than 150 different countries attend NVCC, a common trend at community colleges nationwide. This international diversity is no surprise as community colleges have opened their doors to both immigrants and international students for many years. Community colleges have consistently served as gateways to international students' dreams and aspirations, whether achieved in the U.S. or in their home countries.

Relatively low tuition is an obvious reason international students are attracted to community colleges. Students and their parents can save substantially on the overall cost of a bachelor's degree by attending the first two years at the community college, then transferring. Cost, however, is not the only draw.



NVCC's soccer team draws students from many countries and participates in the Northern Virginia Soccer League.

Community colleges are also known for the individual attention they give their students. Classes are usually small (20-25 students) and students get to know their teachers well, or as much as they want to, and receive a lot of one-on-one attention. This emphasis on personal achievement, regardless of the end goal, distinguishes community colleges and gives them a personalized feel. Whether students attend community colleges to eventually transfer to a university for bachelor's degree, to gain the skills necessary for employment, or to find direction in their life, they will find their niche and someone to help them achieve their goal.

Charged with the responsibility of "introducing" students to higher education, teachers at community colleges teach students how to think critically, write effectively, and express themselves clearly. They emphasize "principles of good practice" that enhance learning, regardless of students' personal background and educational history. Years of experience with classes of diverse students make community college teachers sensitive to international students' needs. The ability to successfully negotiate cultural differences, for example understanding that some Asian students do not speak up in class or express a genuinely individual viewpoint in a paper because of their respect for authority, is characteristic of community college teachers.

In addition, community colleges have increasingly taken steps to adjust their curricula and services, diversify their faculty, and broaden the cultural mix of students to ensure their graduates emerge as "global citizens." Community colleges and first-rank American uni-

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10 Community College Facts

1. There are more than 1,200 public and independent community colleges in the U.S.
2. Community colleges enroll 11.6 million students.
3. Eight percent of community college students are non-U.S. citizens.
4. Almost fifteen percent of international students studying in U.S. colleges and universities in 2005/06 were enrolled in community colleges.
5. Community college students constitute 46 percent of undergraduates in the U.S., and 45 percent of first-time freshmen.
6. The number of international students enrolled at community colleges has increased eighteen percent since 1999/2000.
7. Fifty percent of new nurses and the majority of other new health-care workers in the U.S. are educated at community colleges.
8. Ninety-five percent of businesses and organizations that employ community college graduates recommend community college workforce education and training programs.
9. The five most popular community college programs are: registered nursing, law enforcement, licensed practical nursing, radiology, and computer technologies.
10. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, NASA space shuttle commander Eileen Collins, Star Wars movie series producer/director George Lucas, film actors Tom Hanks and Clint Eastwood, fashion designer Calvin Klein, and human genome scientist Craig Venter all attended community college.

This fact sheet was developed in cooperation with AACC. Data are derived from the most current information available as of January 2007.

versities, for example, have worked together to design programs that benefit low-income, high-achieving students regardless of background or origin (as in the case of the Cooke Awards). NVCC has created such programs with the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary.

Community colleges offer international students the opportunity to adjust to cultural differences and American educational expectations. The small class sizes and supportive environment provided by community colleges give students time to “check out” their new environs and think about



International students at NVCC.

what they want their next step to be in the U.S. Beyond the individual attention provided in the classroom, international students can typically count on a variety of support services offered at community colleges including writing centers, student advisers and international student counselors. In addition, Intensive English Programs, located at many community colleges, enable students to practice and improve their English skills before entering a degree program. Clubs and associations at community colleges, such as the Turkish Student Association, China Club, Muslim Student Association, All African Student Union, and Spanish American Latin Student Association at NVCC, also help ease the transition to the U.S., providing a social network for international students to get involved in outside of classes.

Community colleges have moved to the center of higher education in the U.S. by responding to a wide range of student needs and by specializing in workforce development. Recognizing the practicality and utility of the community college system, representatives of governments and education ministries from a variety of nations have shown increased interest in adopting something similar in their countries. International students who attend community college in the U.S. receive individual attention, obtain fine academic and practical training, and have a unique opportunity to adjust to American culture. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to facilitate their experiences over the past three decades and hope that more students from around the world will join us.

Paul McVeigh, Ph.D., is Associate Vice President for Global Studies and Programs at Northern Virginia Community College, www.nvcc.edu.

The Top Ten Benefits of Attending A U.S. Community College

By Judith Irwin

Feature

An increasing number of international students have discovered that community colleges are the stepping stones to prestigious 4-year colleges and universities. Many people who began their higher education in the United States at a community college have continued their education at universities and gone on to make significant contributions and to achieve recognition. Community colleges are the gateway to higher education in the United States for the following reasons:

1. Lower Cost

Community college tuition and fees average \$6,500 per year, which is significantly lower than at 4-year colleges and universities. Students can lower the overall cost of a bachelor's degree by taking the first 2 years of course credits at a community college.

2. Excellent Transfer Opportunities

Most community colleges have agreements with 4-year colleges and universities (called articulation or "2 + 2" transfer agreements) which allow students to transfer their community college credits toward a university degree. Thus, students first go to a community college for 2 years of study, obtain an associate degree, and then complete 2 years at a university to obtain a bachelor's degree. Many state universities give preference to qualified students who transfer from a community college in that state.

3. Flexible English Proficiency Requirements

Because community colleges provide their own assessment and offer Intensive English Programs (IEPs) to students who require additional English proficiency, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores are not always critical to the admissions process. As community colleges offer excellent IEPs and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, many can offer more flexible TOEFL requirements. Some community colleges will accept an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score in place of the TOEFL score.

4. Focus on Teaching and Student Success

Although community college faculty do conduct research and publish articles and books, their main focus is on teaching. Community college students therefore enjoy a great deal of personal attention from their professors. Additionally, community colleges seek out faculty with work experience in their subject area, adding a real-world perspective to students' studies.

5. Small Class Sizes

The average community college class size is between 15 and 20 students which allows professors to devote more time to individual students and for students to interact with each other. Small classes are highly beneficial for international students who may need to adjust to the pace of U.S. academic life and practice their English-language skills.

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SPOTLIGHT

EducationUSA Advisers in the Netherlands Develop Unique CC Program

The EducationUSA advisers of the Fulbright Center in the Netherlands (Amsterdam) have developed an exciting new program for Dutch high school graduates to study at a community college in the United States. These 17-year-old graduates have studied at the 'HAVO', a general secondary education lasting five years.

To begin, the advisers selected twelve community colleges for the program that have ample experience with international students, offer a broad range academic programs and generally provide on-campus housing. After organizing several information sessions, the Center saw its first students enroll at Lincoln College in Illinois and Tompkins Cortland Community College in upstate New York this year.

For more information about this program, please contact: Fabienne van den Bor and Erik van den Berg, Ph.D., Educational Advisers, Fulbright Center, The Netherlands. f.vandenbor@fulbright.nl and e.vandenberg@fulbright.nl

6. Additional Practical Training Opportunity

International students with F-1 status are eligible to do one year of Optional Practical Training (OPT) in their field of study immediately following completion of an associate degree, and a second year of OPT immediately following completion of a bachelor's degree.

7. Use of the Latest Technologies

Because of their strong ties with business and industry, most community colleges are equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, classrooms, and facilities. Community colleges lead the nation in educating students in cutting-edge fields such as biomedical engineering, biotechnology, robotics, laser optics, Internet and computer technologies, and geographic information systems.

8. Hundreds of Programs to Choose From

Community colleges offer programs in all major fields of study which can transfer to 4-year colleges and universities. Majors range from art to political science to zoology. Programs especially popular among international students currently include business, engineering, computer science, computer graphics, Internet technology, multimedia, hotel management, restaurant management, psychology, accounting, early childhood education, and environmental conservation.

9. Opportunities to Experience U.S. Culture

Because community colleges have strong ties to their surrounding communities, they offer international students both a rich academic environment and a unique opportunity to experience many aspects of life in the United States—both on and off campus.

10. Excellent Student Support Services

Community colleges are committed to attracting a diverse student population and ensuring that all students succeed. The colleges offer a variety of support services and cross-cultural programs, including tutoring, advising, career planning, study skills and counseling—many of which are designed specifically for international students.

Judith Irwin is Director of International Programs and Services at the American Association of Community Colleges.

Online Resources: Community Colleges in the USA

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

Offers fast facts, resources, historical information, statistics and trends, enrollment information, and more.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>. Use the AACC online College Finder:
<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Template.cfm?Section=CommunityCollegeFinder>

Community College Baccalaureate Association

Strives to promote better access to the baccalaureate degree on community college campuses, and to serve as a resource for information on various models for accomplishing this purpose.

<http://www.accbd.org>

Community College Resource Center (CCRC)

CCRC's mission is to conduct research on the major issues affecting community colleges in the U.S. and to contribute to the development of practice and policy that expands access to higher education and promotes success for all students.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>

Community Colleges in the USA

A student guide to community colleges in the U.S.

<http://www.communitycollegeusa.com>

Open Doors Report: Community College Data Resource

Offers a special data analysis on the number of international students studying at community colleges, and community college students studying abroad.

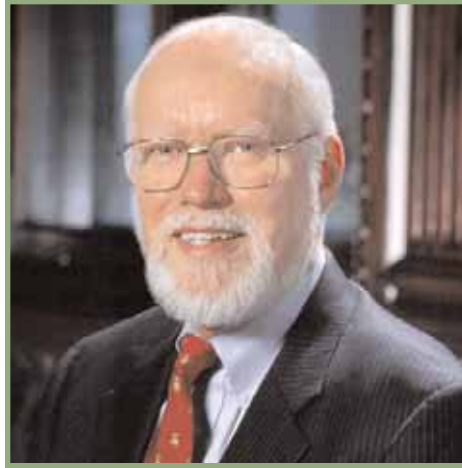
<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=CommunityCollegeData>

50states.com

50states.com provides a list of community colleges by state and information for teachers.

<http://www.50states.com/cc>

Connections interviewed Community College of Philadelphia President Stephen M. Curtis to provide readers with a perspective on how senior administrators at community colleges interpret the importance of internationalization and the role of the university in promoting it. Dr. Curtis has led the Community College of Philadelphia since 1999. He participated in the delegation of 12 university presidents that visited China, Japan, and Korea in November 2006, led by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Dina Habib Powell.



Community College of Philadelphia
President, Stephen M. Curtis.

Connections: You recently participated in Secretary Spellings' Delegation to Promote U.S. Higher Education in Asia. What was your motivation to participate and what were your impressions of the trip?

President Curtis: The faculty at my institution have been leaders in international education at community colleges. Their efforts have led to the expansion of the international studies curriculum, the growth of global education values across curricula, the development of an international focus on professional development activities, and a commitment to international student recruitment, as well as a strong study abroad program. I have sought to support the efforts of my faculty, not only within our college community, but nationally and abroad. I was pleased, therefore, to join other president colleagues in Secretary Spellings' delegation to East Asia.

At each of our Asian stops, it was clear that a U.S. education was highly valued by students abroad. Our academic counterparts in China, Korea, and Japan have a strong reciprocal interest in bringing U.S. students into their educational settings. I was struck by the intense commitment to education. (For Korea's national high school exams, air traffic is rerouted around test sites, vehicular traffic is reduced, and shops may even close!) I noted a devotion to English language acquisition that is not matched by the United States' efforts for the attainment of a second language. My final

observation settled on the multiple paths that exist in the United States higher education system. We design multiple pathways for students of all ages and experiences that are less rigid than those we encountered in many countries abroad.

Connections: As a community college president, what do you see as the value of community colleges for international students?

President Curtis: Community colleges offer a supportive environment, lower tuition than four-year institutions and programs to help students transfer to baccalaureate institutions. Often, community colleges feature smaller class sizes than our sister four-year institutions, allowing students the opportunity for more personalized attention from faculty.

Many international students come to the Community College of Philadelphia because of the benefits of Philadelphia's culture, history, and diversity, as well as its rich educational opportunities. The College promotes several benefits and advantages: proximity to New York City and Washington, D.C.; dual admission agreements with area institutions (Cabrini College, Chestnut Hill College, Cheyney University, Drexel University, Eastern University, La Salle University, Peirce College, Temple University); affordability of

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International students at Community College of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia compared to other major East Coast cities; and the diversity of our student population.

Community colleges increase the opportunity for both international students and Philadelphia residents to learn about other cultures and promote tolerance. The College also provides international students with the opportunity to learn about the United States firsthand and to attend college with individuals from all over the world.

Connections: What steps does your university take to support international students?

President Curtis: Our International Student Services (ISS) office provides many resources for international students who are in F-1 nonimmigrant status. For our more than 200 students from more than 35 countries, we offer individual advising and services in the following areas:

- Immigration matters, such as obtaining F-1 student visas, maintaining full-time enrollment, transferring administration of SEVIS I-20 records between schools and traveling outside of the United States.
- Filing annual tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.
- Employment restrictions and options and obtaining work authorization.
- Information about medical insurance coverage.
- Adjustment to Community College of Philadelphia and to life in Philadelphia and the United States
- Letters for verification of your F-1 status for various purposes, such as obtaining a Pennsylvania state driver's license or identification cards.
- Counselor assistance for ESL and international students with course and program planning.

ISS also offers the following programs, activities and resources:

- Group arrival and orientation meetings to introduce students to the College and ISS.
- Assistance with initial arrival steps, such as opening bank accounts, obtaining a driver's license or state identification card, registering for classes and any other necessary information.

- Social activities, such as dinner conversation outings, International Student Organization activities and trips to sights of interest.

Experienced instructors, tutors and academic advisors in the College's ESL program will help students improve their ability to speak, read and write English and assist with everyday tasks, as well as prepare them for academic opportunities. This program enhances language skills through listening and speaking courses. While working on their English skills, students can take credit courses based on their academic needs and English proficiency.

Connections: What do you see as the main challenges in the internationalization of community colleges?

President Curtis: The transition of international students into the college and community is a challenge. It can be overcome, but it is something that students face. The ability of a commuter institution to deal with logistical issues, such as transportation and housing, can also be difficult for community colleges. The difficulty international students have obtaining student visas to the United States, whether this is true or just a misconception, has probably hindered the growth of international student populations. There is also increasing competition from other countries who also wish to attract international students. Lastly, many community colleges are not able to fund large recruitment efforts.

Connections: How have any international/cultural experiences shaped your career?

President Curtis: As a college administrator, I have always been associated with study abroad programs and international studies. I have valued the experiences of students and faculty, and I have seen the significant effect of those experiences on our students and how it has helped prepare them for their role in the global world. More recently in my career, my visit to East Asia reinforced the value of differences that exist among nations, but also revealed the many common interests of students across the world: a focused commitment on the part of students to access education; a keen interest in experiencing the languages and cultures of other countries; and the multiple paths and opportunities through which individuals can achieve potential through education. ■

Trends in International Student Enrollment at Community Colleges

By Patricia Chow

Research

Associate's Institutions attract substantial numbers of international students. Almost fifteen percent of the 564,766 international students studying in U.S. colleges and universities in 2005/06 were studying at Associate's Institutions (see Figure 1). The number of international students enrolled at community colleges has increased by eighteen percent since 1999/2000 to 83,160 (see Figure 2). New international student enrollments increased seven percent over last year, to 18,306 students (see Figure 3). New enrollments constituted 24 percent of all international student enrollments at community colleges in 2005/06.

Associate's Institutions hosted the third largest percentage of international students, after Doctoral/Research Institutions and Master's Institutions. Thirteen community colleges hosted over 1,000 international students in 2005/06 (see Figure 4), with the Houston Community College System hosting over 3,000 international students. Of these top institutions, ten are located in California, New York and Texas.

Japan and South Korea are the top two leading places of origin of international students at community colleges (see Figure 5). Students from these two places of origin constitute more than one quarter of total international student enrollments at community colleges. Compared to other institutional types, a smaller percentage of students at community colleges comes from India (3 percent vs. 14

Almost fifteen percent of the 564,766 international students studying in U.S. colleges and universities in 2005/06 were studying at Associate's Institutions.

Figure 1: International Student Enrollment by Institutional Type, 2005/06

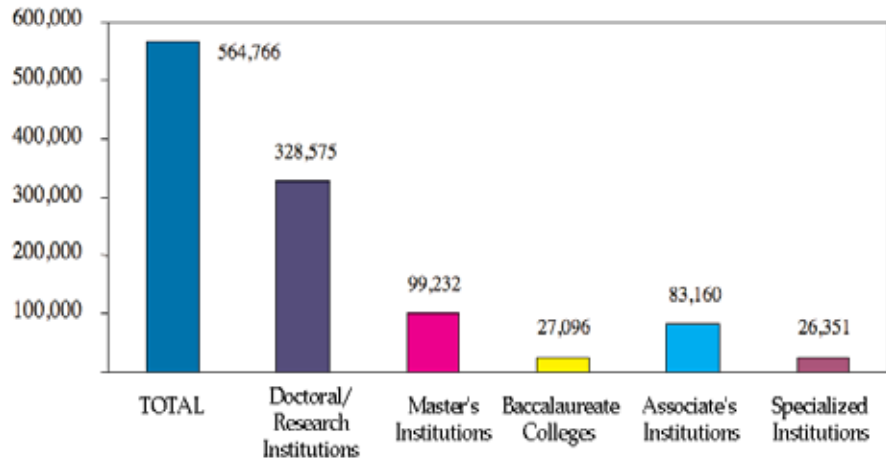
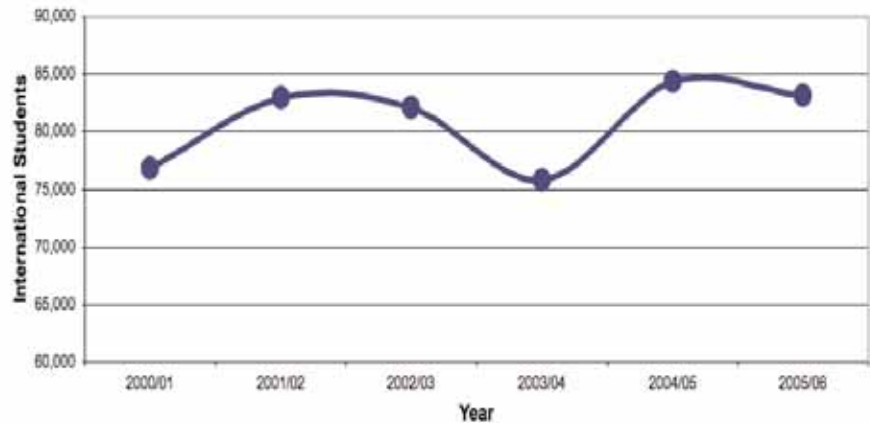


Figure 2: International Student Enrollment at Community Colleges, 1999-2005



percent) and China (3 percent vs. 11 percent), the top two leading places of origin of international students at all institutional types.

Seven of the top ten leading places of origin of international students at community colleges are in Asia. Students from Asia account for 52 percent of international students enrollments at community colleges. Other regions with significant numbers of international students at community colleges are: Latin America (17 percent), Europe (13 percent) and Africa (12 percent). Relatively

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Figure 3: New International Student Enrollments, 2004/05 and 2005/06

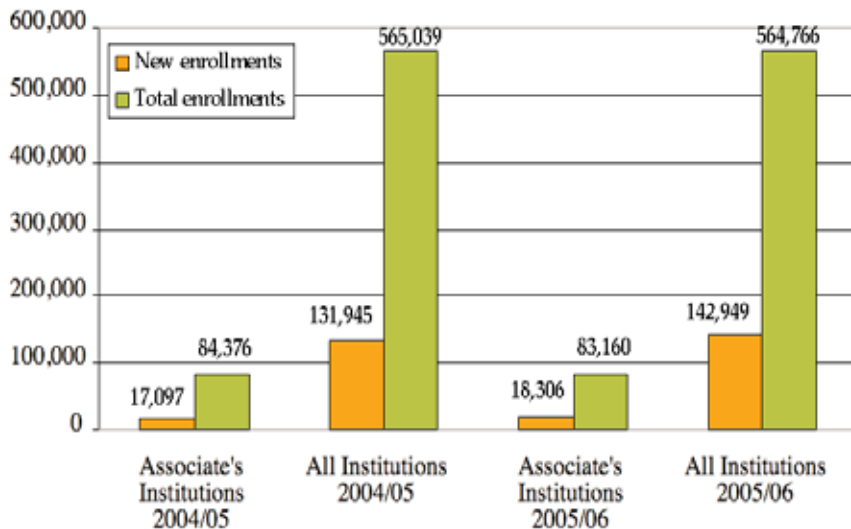


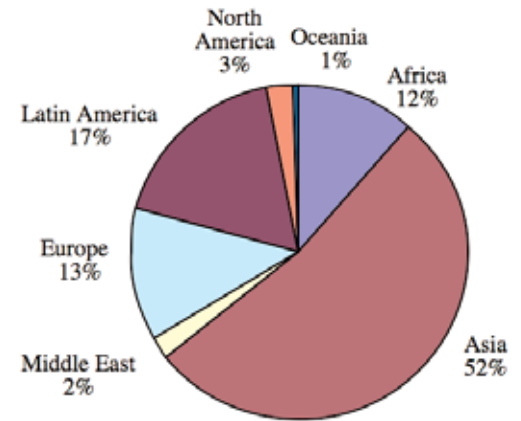
Figure 4: Associate's Institutions Hosting Over 1,000 International Students

Rank	Institution	City	State	# of Int'l Students
1	Houston Community College System	Houston	TX	3,227
2	Santa Monica College	Santa Monica	CA	2,658
3	Montgomery College	Rockville	MD	2,179
4	De Anza College	Cupertino	CA	2,112
5	CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College	New York	NY	1,679
6	N. Harris Montgomery Community College District	The Woodlands	TX	1,617
7	CUNY Queensborough Community College	Bayside	NY	1,397
8	City College of San Francisco	San Francisco	CA	1,380
9	Nassau Community College	Garden City	NY	1,253
10	Austin Community College	Austin	TX	1,190
11	Foothill College	Los Altos Hills	CA	1,168
12	Northern Virginia Community College	Annandale	VA	1,113
13	Miami-Dade College	Miami	FL	1,109

Figure 5: Top 20 Places of Origin of International Students at Community Colleges

Rank	Place of Origin	% of Enrollment
1	Japan	15.0
2	Korea, Republic of	11.3
3	Mexico	4.0
4	China, PRC	3.4
5	Taiwan	3.3
6	Hong Kong, China	3.2
7	India	2.8
8	Kenya	2.6
9	Indonesia	2.4
10	Canada	2.4
TOTAL STUDENTS (All Places)		83,160

Figure 6: Regions of Origin of International Students at Community Colleges, 2005



few students from North America, the Middle East and Oceania study at community colleges (see Figure 6).

In comparison with other institutional types, community colleges have a higher percentage of students from Latin America (17 percent vs. 12 percent) and Africa (12 percent vs. 6 percent), and a slightly smaller percentage from Asia (52 percent vs. 58 percent).

The leading field of study of international students at community colleges is Business & Management (20 percent), followed by Health Professions (10 percent). In addition, many students are enrolled in fields that fall within the "other" category, which includes Liberal Arts, General Studies, Communication, Journalism, Legal Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, Family Sciences, Library Sciences, Vocational Home Economics and Military Technologies.

For more information, visit the Community College Data Resource data tables at:

<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=25122>

or the general Open Doors Data Tables at:

<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/>.

Patricia Chow is a Research Officer in the Research and Evaluation Department at the Institute of International Education.

Crucial Questions About Community Colleges

By Elena Garate

Advising Resource



Representative from UCLA recruits students at Santa Monica Community College.

International students are some of the most sophisticated consumers today. They and their parents are part of a vast network of friends and acquaintances seeking higher education at the most prestigious colleges and universities in the world. However, to many of them, the American community college remains an unknown and misunderstood option.

Here are some basic questions, in the order most often heard, that prospective international students should ask about community colleges.

1. Is the community college accredited?

A recognized accrediting body should accredit community colleges in order to meet academic standards set by the state and the Federal Government. The accreditation process for community colleges follows the same standards as a four-year institution, as set by the U.S. Department of Education and the state. For more information, visit: <http://www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>.

2. What is the transfer rate to selective four-year universities?

Many community colleges are a part of a statewide system that allows transfer to junior standing to four-year colleges and universities. Some community colleges focus on delivering high academic programs for this purpose, while others focus on short-term certificate and vocational programs.

3. How successful are the graduates from the community college?

Transfer and employment data about alumni are available from community college counseling and international centers as well as alumni offices.

4. What is the average class size?

What is the teacher/student ratio?

Community colleges, which focus on teaching rather than research, often have smaller classes, especially in the introductory courses in the sciences and math, taught by faculty rather than by graduate teaching assistants.

5. What is the course selection?

Can I study my major at your school?

Community colleges provide a comprehensive curriculum that covers the first two years of university study: General Studies or General Education. The concept of studying these foundation courses the first two years is new to many prospects who are more familiar with other educational systems.

6. What will be the cost of my education?

Community colleges charge additional tuition and fees for international students. A bank statement to guarantee the first year's total costs is usually required for admission. Some schools require a cash deposit for the first semester or year of study.

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7. Do I have to take English? Do you require a TOEFL score?

Most community colleges require a TOEFL score primarily for admission purposes. Not all community colleges offer ESL courses. Those that do have ESL programs may offer ESL classes for credit.

8. Where will I live? Do you have housing on campus?

Few community colleges have dormitories. Most have housing referrals for home stays, off campus apartments, and sharing with current students. Some have lists of temporary housing options on their website.

9. Do you have scholarships?

Some community colleges offer incentives such as a reduction in in-state tuition or may be willing to waive an application fee. Others offer scholarship cash awards based on academic achievement to prospects or only after the first year of study.

10. Can I work on campus? Can I get a social security card?

Depending upon the institution, international students can work on campus for limited hours. They are required to obtain a social security card in order to be employed on campus. Each school has its own way to assist in this process.

11. Can I get a job off campus?

International students on F-1 visas can work off campus in special circumstances only with the permission of the U.S. Government. During their course of studies they may file for economic hardship. After completing a full course of study, they may file for Practical Training and work full time in a field related to their major.

12. Can I attend before I turn 18? Can I attend without finishing high school?

Community colleges vary in their requirements for admission. Many, however, require the students to be high school (or equivalent) graduates and be 18 years of age. There are some programs that work with local high schools to assist the student in completing the high school graduation requirements.

13. Is there an International Students Office on campus?

Most community colleges provide support services for international students. These may include orientation sessions and courses, immigration status support, academic counseling, and student clubs. The staffing and hours of operation vary by school.

14. Can I apply online?

Many community colleges offer online applications for domestic students, yet not for international students due to the number of original documents required for admission. Students should refer to the prospective school's website for specific information about applying and meeting the deadlines for application and admission.

15. Can I transfer my credits from my current school?

Community colleges have academic relationships with other accredited colleges and universities. Many community colleges will accept some credits from other U.S. schools. Few community colleges accept course work from foreign schools unless there is a formal agreement between these two institutions. Prospective students should explore these possibilities with the community college academic counselor prior to applying.

16. Do I need an SAT?

Community colleges admit students in an Open Enrollment System, based on high school graduation and age. This open system allows prospects to forego taking placement exams such as the SAT and Advanced Placement tests. However, the community college or the four-year school where the student will transfer may accept some AP courses. Again, prospects should contact the community college academic advisor prior to applying.

Elena Garate, Ph.D., is Dean of International Education at Santa Monica College in California.

Intensive English Programs

By Rebecca Price, Tamara Jones, and Carl De Angelis

Field of Study Focus

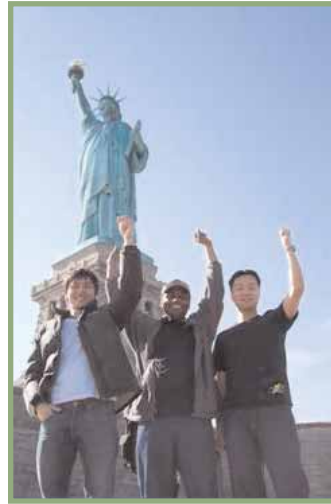
Intensive English Programs (IEPs) offer concentrated English language training to nonnative speakers. IEPs are generally noncredit-bearing entities and do not award degrees. Instead, students may receive certificates or institutional transcripts.

Many international students attend IEPs in the United States to acquire the English skills necessary to gain admission to U.S. undergraduate or graduate programs. Others aim to improve their English to meet professional or personal goals. A Japanese engineer, for example, studied at the English Language Institute (ELI) at Howard Community College to better service English-speaking customers in Japan.

You can find IEPs at commercial locations, but most are housed within colleges or universities. IEPs housed at community colleges, such as ELI, have become increasingly popular due to lower tuition. Also, more and more community colleges are adding dormitories to their campuses or developing homestay programs which appeal to international students.

When advising students about IEPs housed in colleges or universities, consider the following factors:

■ **Affiliation:** A program is not necessarily better or worse because it is affiliated with a university. Instead, consider indicators such as class size, faculty (% with TESOL, ESL or related certification), location, program size, class size, diversity of student population, price, length of study, and levels of study offered.



ELI students go on a field trip to Washington, DC and New York.

■ **Accreditation:** IEPs obtain accreditation through various regional accrediting bodies. IEPs housed within colleges or universities receive accreditation when their college or university is accredited. In addition to or in lieu of this type of accreditation, IEPs may be accredited by independent and nationally recognized accrediting agencies, such as the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET) and Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). Also, IEP membership in consortia that have high standards, such as the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP) and the University Consortium of Intensive English Programs (UCIEP), ensures the program you choose will incorporate those standards.

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ELI students at Howard Community College.

IEPs and Visas

IEPs provide academic instruction for international students who hold F-1 (student) visas. In order to comply with F-1 U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services requirements, students must study a minimum of 18 hours per week. Most study fulltime (18-30 hours per week). In general, IEPs issue I-20s for a period of study ranging from six months to two years. How long a student can expect to study English depends on his or her proficiency in English at the start of the program. Some programs have few or no classes at the pre-beginning and beginning levels, so they may not issue I-20s with the same duration as other schools; in fact, they may not be able to issue an I-20 at all to a student who has lower level English skills. Most students should plan on spending nine months to one year at an IEP.

■ **Conditional Admission:** When helping students select an IEP, consider their goals and whether or not it would benefit them to attend an IEP that guarantees conditional admission into the affiliated academic institution. Investigate whether an IEP offers simplified matriculation into the affiliated institution once a student has successfully completed the IEP. Some also waive admission fees, placement tests, prerequisites, or TOEFL requirements.

■ **Course Schedules:** Some IEPs schedule classes in large blocks. They may offer reading and writing as one class every morning and listening and speaking as a second class every afternoon. Other IEPs offer many courses at a variety of times. At ELI, for example, students can choose 70 different classes, including pronunciation, business English, TOEFL Prep, Conversation Partners, and a service-learning class called Using English in the Community, at six different levels.

■ **Extras:** Some IEPs offer special services such as airport pick-up, housing assistance, academic counseling, visa/tax counseling, conversation partners, field trips, home stays, host families, student parties, and coffee hours.

Rebecca Price is the Director of the ESL and ELI Programs at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland. **Tamara Jones** is the lead instructor at Howard Community College and the Intensive English Program Chair for TESOL. **Carl De Angelis** is Director of Enrichment and Professional Development at the Institute of International Education.

PowerPoint Presentation: Choosing an ESL Program in the U.S.

To download "Choosing an ESL Program in the U.S.", a PowerPoint discussing IEPs by Carl De Angelis, Director of Enrichment and Professional Development at IIE and editor of the *Intensive English USA* directory, visit the *Connections* portal on the IIE Network website:

<http://educationusaconnections.iienetwork.org/>.

IEP Online Resources

American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP)

Membership association of over 300 IEP programs.

<http://www.aaiep.org>

Community Colleges in the USA

Lists IEP programs at community colleges with detailed program information available in six languages.

<http://www.communitycollegeusa.com>

Commission on English Language

Program Accreditation (CEA)

Discusses IEP accreditation standards and FAQ. Also lists accredited CEA IEPs.

<http://www.cea-accredit.org/accredited.php>

Intensive English USA

This directory features over 500 IEPs offered by accredited U.S. higher education institutions and U.S. English language schools. It provides information on IEP proficiency levels taught, dates, costs, instructional facilities and faculty, student services, eligibility and admissions, contact addresses, phone, fax, e-mail, and much more. To access the online version of this directory, please go to:

<http://www.intensiveenglishusa.org>

To order the print directory, please visit:

<http://www.iiebooks.org/inad.html>

Open Doors Report: IEP Statistics

Data about students who studied in IEPs in the U.S. including information on country of origin and on location of study in the U.S.

<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=IEP2006>

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Professional organization providing information to teachers and administrators at all educational levels with an interest in teaching English to speakers of other languages.

<http://www.tesol.org>

University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP)

Online directory of university and college-administered IEPs in the United States.

<http://www.uciep.org>

Featured Advising Center: Guatemala City, Guatemala

Arm Chair Tour

An Interview with an EducationUSA Adviser: A Look at Administrative Practices

	EducationUSA Adviser:	Maritza Rodas
	Territory:	Guatemala
	Number of Advisers:	1
	Years of Operation:	29
	Level of study that advisees pursue:	35% undergraduate; 65% graduates
	Number of Annual Visitors:	Around 5,000
	Website:	www.iga.edu



The EducationUSA sticker on the library door helps visitors find the advising center.

1. Please describe your EducationUSA office.

The EducationUSA Advising Center is on the first floor of the main building of the Instituto Guatemalteco Americano (IGA), a binational center that has been in operation for 62 years. The advising center is located inside IGA's Walt Whitman Library but is separated from the library by a wall with a glass door marked with a large EducationUSA sign.

The advising center consists of one room where both the secretary and the senior adviser work. Reference materials, English language books, promotional materials, and university catalogues are located on the back wall on four shelving units. A computer and scanner, used by clients during their university search, are next to the shelves. We also arranged a group of colorful university pennants on the wall to catch students' eyes. There is a TV on the left wall for visitors wishing to watch videos or DVDs related to U.S. education. We also have a storage closet to keep office supplies and other materials.

2. How do you handle being the only adviser in Guatemala?

Advisers at private high schools help alleviate some of the demand, though they advise only their students and rarely visit the Center. During the busy months, my secretary assists me, giving basic information to our visitors. She is also in charge of arranging my appointments when students request one-to-one advising ses-

sions. Though it varies, we may have 15-25 visitors per day during peak season and about 8-10 per day in other months. Most students just drop-in, but they must make an appointment in advance if they want a one-to-one advising session.

3. How much of your advising is done over email?

I rarely do advising over email. If I get an email asking about educational opportunities abroad, I usually recommend that the student comes to our advising center for more personalized attention. I do answer questions concerning standardized tests over email.



The EducationUSA Center in Guatemala City makes strategic use of its small space.

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4. How does your advising Center work with alumni of State Department exchange programs?

We invite one or two Fulbrighters to join us during the presentation that we do at IGA to promote the scholarships. I do not make any pre-departure orientations, nor does the Embassy. During our visits to the local universities, Carmen, the CAO's assistant, invites a Fulbrighter from the university that we are visiting to share his/her experiences and to motivate the audience to apply to this wonderful scholarship program. They also help with outreach in November at the scholarship fair during International Education Week.

5. You mentioned that the economic situation in Guatemala has affected the student population wishing to study abroad. How have you addressed this reality?

The cost of U.S. higher education is very high for Guatemalans based on the low exchange rate of the Guatemalan Quetzal (Q7.5 = US\$1). While local university options may be less attractive, they



Rina Valenzuela, Secretary at the EducationUSA Center in Guatemala City, welcomes a visitor.

are more affordable than U.S. institutions. We encourage students to search and apply for more scholarships and financial aid at the undergraduate level. Still, it is hard to find good options for them as scholarship money rarely covers the total cost of courses and room and board.

Moving the Guatemala City Advising Center:

Challenges	Solutions
Fitting our materials into a smaller space.	We reviewed the reference collection and kept up-to-date materials only. We gave older editions of annual publications to our satellite advising center in IGA Xela (four hours from Guatemala City). In addition, we threw out all college catalogs more than four years old.
Publicizing the new location of the Center.	I emailed the different departments at IGA, informing them about our move, and also sent a note to my contacts at local high schools and universities. The big stickers with the EducationUSA logo in the main entrance of the library and on the glass door of our office also help visitors find our new location.
The new Center has only one room.	We use two file cabinets as dividers to separate the secretary and senior adviser and to provide a bit of privacy for one-to-one advising sessions.

An Interview with a Student Advised by the EducationUSA Center in Guatemala City.

Name:	Sofia Zamora
Home Country:	Guatemala
EducationUSA Advising Center:	Guatemala City, Guatemala
American Institution:	Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, Massachusetts
Major:	Civil Engineering
Age:	19
Number of visits to the Center:	5

1. How did you find out about the EducationUSA Center?

At a party, my mother was talking about my desire to study in U.S. and about how difficult it seemed to find a place that offered scholarships to international students. One of her friends had a daughter who had received a scholarship with the help of Maritza Rodas and told my mother about the EducationUSA Center.

2. What EducationUSA services did you find most helpful?

The EducationUSA Center taught me about the Common Application which allowed me to write one essay I really believed in, instead of writing multiple essays just to fill separate university requirements. The Center also helped me identify universities that best suited my goals and budget.

5. What was the most useful information you learned from your EducationUSA adviser?

I learned that successful students take calculated risks. Maritza Rodas made me realize that loans were a tool that would help me

achieve my goals, not a heavy burden. The EducationUSA Center made me understand how many different opportunities you get at college. As a high school student, I couldn't imagine it; it's a totally different world!

6. What additional information would have been helpful to know before coming to study in the United States?

- That it is better to come to USA with working and volunteering experience.
- To bring enough of your daily personal products to last until you have time to find American replacements.
- That no matter how much you think you know about American culture from TV or other sources, you always suffer from culture shock.
- Americans get really into what they are doing, so don't be scared to put in the same amount of effort. That's what leads to success!
- Learn some American slang and entertainment culture before going to the U.S. so you don't get lost in conversations.
- Don't underestimate your background, that's exactly what will make you shine!

7. Now that you are studying in the United States, do you keep in contact with your adviser?

I still receive information from Maritza Rodas and visit the Center when I'm in Guatemala. Even though we are not constantly in contact, I know I could come to her if I ever need anything.

Higher Education Fairs

Now is the time to start encouraging students to attend the higher education fairs taking place in your region. CIS and Linden, for example, bring good-sized groups of U.S. admissions officers to regions all over the world and offer the perfect opportunity for fairs set up by advising centers. IIE, in cooperation with the American Embassy Tokyo, the U.S. Educational Foundation (USEFI) in India, and the Indonesian International Education Foundation (IIEF) will run a series of higher education fairs in 11 Asian cities from October 2 - 21, 2007. The American Association of Community Colleges will bring a group of recruiters representing various U.S. community colleges to Asia from October 4-21, 2007. To find higher education fairs taking place near you, please go to the EducationUSA website: <http://educationusa.state.gov/fairs.htm> or the *Connections* portal on IIE Network: <http://educationusaconnections.iienetwork.org/>.

A Note to Advisers on Higher Education Fairs

For advisers in countries off the beaten path, where admissions officers rarely venture, Nancy Keteku, REAC-Africa, suggests holding fairs using local alumni (local nationals, embassy staff, Peace Corps volunteers, the business community). To do this, advertise early, maintain a great alumni database, and arrange for the reps to receive boxes of promotional materials from their colleges. Another option is to join other groups' fairs, such as those organized by Rotary or the Chamber of Commerce. If your only option is a catalogue fair where you exhibit university publications for people to explore, make sure you have knowledgeable advisers on hand to answer questions, and make your advising center available for follow-up.

Discussion Paper: Secondary School Student Exchanges in the United States

While not related to higher education, an interesting new report shows that the number of international students coming to the U.S. at the secondary school level has rebounded to pre-2000 levels. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State recently released a discussion paper entitled *Secondary School Student Exchanges*. This paper provides an overview of the Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Program and presents data describing the 2006-2007 academic year. Peaking at over 30,000 students per year in the late 1990s, the program experienced a decline in 2000. A welcome reversal in this trend has resulted in approximately 29,688 participants for the period coinciding with the most recent academic school year. To read the full paper, please go to:

<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=HighSchoolExchanges>.

Community College Summit Initiative Program

Community Colleges for International Development, Inc. (CCID), a consortium of community colleges, has been awarded a \$3 million grant to administer the Community College Summit Initiative Program on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. The program is an outcome of the Summit on International Education for U.S. college and university presidents held in January of 2006 by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. The funds will provide training pathways for students of many nations to attend U.S. community colleges and take their expertise back to their homelands. For more information about the program, please visit: http://ccid.kirkwood.cc.ia.us/aboutccid/newsrelease_febo7.pdf.

Article on International Students with Disabilities at Community Colleges

A World Awaits You, produced by Mobility International USA (MIUSA), is a journal of success in international exchange for people with disabilities. The most recent issue focuses on community colleges and includes an article entitled "International Students with Disabilities on Community College Campuses". To view this issue, visit: <http://www.miusa.org/publications/freeresources/communitycolleges>.

Community College Scholarship Opportunities

Funding for United States Study Online (www.fundingusstudy.org), an extensive database of scholarships, fellowships and grants organized and maintained by IIE, features funding programs for all levels of post-secondary study, including community colleges. A few of the community college scholarships featured in the directory include:

- Western Wyoming Community College Scholarships
www.wycc.wy.edu
- Glendale Community College President's Scholarship
www.gc.maricopa.edu
- Seattle Central Community College International Student Scholarships www.seattlecentral.org

NAFSA 2008 Conference: Call for Proposals "Shaping the Future of International Education"

May 25-30, 2008
Washington, DC

Submission Deadline: August 1, 2007

As advisers, you have a unique perspective to share with international educators and are invited to submit workshop, session and poster proposals for the NAFSA 60th Annual Conference & Expo. In addition to your regional expertise and experience working with international students, your knowledge of the EducationUSA network and the services it provides is invaluable. The deadline for submitting workshops and sessions is August 1; poster and poster group proposals are due on November 15, 2007. For more details on the conference theme, proposal submission instructions, and guidelines for proposal writers, please go to:
www.nafsa.org/proposals



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please contact:
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Additional advising resources and
past issues of *Connections* can be found at:
<http://educationusaconnections.iienetwork.org>.

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