

review processes and standards and to promote good practices in quality review. Organizations such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education, and the European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies, as well as the CHEA, are attempting to meet this need through meetings, papers, and projects.

Conclusion

In the current environment, U.S. accreditors must have a strong commitment to assist the international community in obtaining information about U.S. accreditation

practices, successes, and limitations. Our long history of accreditation activity should be constructively shared with colleagues in order to meet their needs. We must be good listeners and observers, respecting the diversity of traditions of higher education around the world. We must offer information and ideas in a collegial manner without attempting to influence the judgments of the international community about what is best in various and different countries. Perhaps most important of all, we must be good learners, carefully observing the successes and good practices of our international colleagues. This is an exciting time for international cooperation, and we ought to make the most of it. ■

International Student Mobility at the Millennium: American Patterns

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For the first time in the 51 years since the Institute for International Education has been collecting and publishing data on international students in its *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, the number of international students studying at U.S. institutions of higher education surpassed half a million. The 1999–2000 figure of 514,723 represents a 4.8 percent increase from the previous year and is based on a 92.5 percent response rate of the 2,696 colleges and universities surveyed. (The definition of an international student for the purposes of the Open Doors survey is “anyone enrolled for courses in the United States who is not an immigrant (permanent resident), or a citizen, or a refugee, or resident alien (green card holders).”

Where They Come From

International students come from all over the world, but some regions are more heavily represented in the total number of students studying in the United States. Nine of the 15 leading places of origin are located in Asia, with Asian students comprising more than half of all international students at 54 percent, Europeans, who represent 15 percent of overall international enrollments, follow the Asians. In recent years, there has been an increase in the numbers of students coming from Mexico, Brazil, and Turkey—which have risen by more than 6 percent in the past year.

Where and What They Study

Of the international students studying in this country, 48 percent are located in just 50 U.S. counties, concentrated in the larger metropolitan areas. International students in the United States study at over 2,500 institutions. While the majority of them are at a small handful of the large research universities, they are a presence at every type of institution, from specialized and professional institutions, to associate institutions, to baccalaureate, master’s, doctoral, and research institutions.

Fully 20 percent of international students, or 103,215, are in the United States to study business and management, followed by engineering, which enrolls 15 percent, or 76,748 students. Of particular note are enrollments in math and computer science, which saw a dramatic increase of 18.7 percent from the previous year.

Personal Profile

International students are mainly undergraduates, with male students outnumbering female students, although both the gender and academic level gaps have been closing in recent years. They are overwhelmingly single and are on an *F* visa. International associate degree students numbered 59,830, or 1.2 percent of the total associate degree enrollments in the United States; undergraduate students numbered 177,381, or 2.7 percent of bachelor’s degree enrollments; and graduate students numbered 218,219, or 12.0 percent of total master’s and doctoral degree enrollments.

Financial Support and Contribution

Three-quarters of all international students receive their primary support from non-U.S. sources of funding. Personal and family funds support 67 percent of international students and constitute the largest percentage of the non-U.S. sources of funding. The largest U.S. source of funding is the student's institution, through research grants from federal or other sources, tuition waivers, and assistantships—especially for graduate students. Support by U.S. universities has increased (to 18.9 percent, up from 9.2 percent 20 years ago) and support from foreign governments has declined (to 5.4 percent, down from 13.0 percent 20 years ago).

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It is estimated that international students studying in the United States contribute approximately \$12.3 billion a year to the U.S. economy through tuition, room and board, and cost of living expenses. Expenditures often include costs incurred for a spouse and dependents who have come along with the student.

Asian Students

Since the 1997 Asian economic crisis, Open Doors has been tracking the student flow from the East Asian “tiger” countries to the United States. Some countries appear to have recovered. Most notably, after the effects of the economic downturn, the number of Korean students actually increased by 5 percent and there has been a modest enrollment growth from Japan of 1 percent. On the other hand, there has been a continued slump from many Southeast Asian countries. Numbers are down from the previous year: -6.9 percent from Indonesia, -12.1 percent from Thailand, and -21.5 percent from Malaysia.

Over 41 percent of all international students come from just five places of origin in Asia. The marked increase in the number of Chinese and Indian students has contributed to a rise in the number of international students in the United States. China's 54,466 students made up 10.6 percent of enrollments in 1999–2000—a 6.8 percent change from the previous year. India's 42,337 students represent 8.2 percent of total international enrollments and a 13.0 percent increase from 1998–1999. In 1999–2000, India surpassed Korea as the third-largest sending country or place of origin. Enrollments from India and China grew at twice the overall rate of international enrollments.

Community Colleges

Perhaps the most interesting story this year is the ongoing critical role played by community colleges in the internationalization of U.S. higher education. While large research universities host the most international students in the United States, international enrollments at community colleges have grown at a faster pace than at any other Carnegie institution type. From 1993 to 1999 foreign student enrollments at community colleges grew by over 40 percent, compared to the 14.4 percent enrollment growth across all institutions. Two community colleges in the Washington, D.C. area in the Open Doors' category of the top 25 institutions in terms of international student enrollments are Northern Virginia Community College, which ranks 17th (with 2,984 foreign students), and Montgomery College, which ranks 24th (with 2,748 foreign students), along with Michigan State University.

The large percentage increase and growing international student presence at the community colleges can be attributed to several factors. Certainly, better administrative functions such as coordination among campus offices in reporting student data have contributed to the perceived rise in numbers of international students. Equally important is a growing interest on the part of community colleges in internationalizing. The most relevant and pertinent factor, however, may be that international students are seeking high-quality but low-cost education and have recognized that this is precisely what the community colleges can provide.

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Community colleges offer opportunities for a quality education at a lower cost and provide flexibility, aspects that appeal to the nontraditional student. Just as the variety of institutions in the U.S. higher education system caters to the diverse needs of American students, international students have recognized that it can offer the same for them. Since 67.1 percent of foreign students are self-financed, one can surmise that the cost of community college is a major draw for international students and American students alike. Indeed, community colleges have the highest percentage of self-supported students out of all Carnegie types (87 percent). More international undergraduate students tend to be self-financed than is true of their graduate counterparts, which

further explains their numbers at the community college level.

The presence over the last half century of ever-increasing numbers of international students has influenced the United States in many ways. Among these are the internationalization of higher education, economic growth from international student expenditures, and linkages with the rest of the world created when international students return home with an understanding of and experience with Americans and American culture and values. Global business activity, advances in technology, and an expansion of the worldwide pool of

individuals who can participate will continue to fuel international education enrollments. The challenge will be for our institutions, businesses, and governments to continue the work of strengthening international education as an integral feature of American higher education.

This article is based on the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, which is available for purchase for \$42.95. *50 Years of Open Doors*, a CD-rom containing every issue of the *Open Doors Report* published from 1948 to 1999, is available for \$129.00. For information on ordering on-line, by fax, phone, or email, see <www.wiebooks.org>.

Community College Development in China

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China already has a number of institutions that are referred to as community colleges—such as, Chaoyang Community College, Jinshan Community College, Shanghai Community College, and Luwan Community College. In reality, these hardly resemble a standard community college (if such an institution actually exists). The American community college developed out of a particular set of sociohistorical conditions that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. But as China's higher education system continues its rapid expansion in the coming years, selected aspects of community college models may prove useful in meeting the development needs of diverse communities across China. When this happens, the schools that eventually adopt community college models may include some of the current postsecondary colleges, as well as a number of other types of institution.

Postsecondary Options

China's postsecondary education institutions can generally be divided into two sectors: regular and adult higher education. The regular sector includes four-year university (*benke*) and three-year specialized college (*zhuanke*) programs, leading to a bachelor's degree and diploma, respectively. Some institutions include both programs of study. The adult sector includes two- and four-year diploma programs of study. The regular higher education institutions were administered by the Ministry of Education's department of regular higher education (*gaodeng jiaoyusi*), and the adult higher education institutions were administered by the adult higher education department (*chengren gaodeng jiaoyusi*), but both have recently combined under the former

department. Adults may also choose examination-based self-study higher education, while attending a variety of noncredential programs of study in postsecondary institutions.

China's secondary school graduates who do not score highly enough to gain admission to a four-year, degree-granting university may opt to enter a variety of other postsecondary educational institutions. Among them are upper-level specialized colleges (*dazhuan*) or vocational-technical colleges (*gaodeng zhiye jishu xueyuan* or *gaozhi*). Most have a two- or three-year program designed to be terminal in nature, leading to a diploma (*wenping*). Parents and students generally view vocational-technical colleges as second choices to universities. The practice of transferring (*zhuanxue*) from colleges to universities does not exist in China, although there is discussion about its merits.

The *dazhuan/gaozhi* institutions of higher education might seem to be the natural forerunners of the community college. However, if given the choice, directors of these institutions would choose to upgrade themselves to four-year *benke* universities (which may occur as China moves toward mass higher education), rather than to become two-year colleges.

Community College Models in China

For a number of reasons, it would appear that community college models could be suitably adapted to China's own developmental needs. China's authorities place great value on vocational-technical education. Market forces in China's rapidly expanding economy are creating the need for a new system of postsecondary institutions that can produce skilled technicians to support technological and industrial development. Two-year postsecondary colleges could meet part of that demand.

Major universities in China are expanding their adult and continuing education divisions, and some refer to this sector as a community college. The growth of this sector adds to their status in the eyes of the public, an important factor in their further development and popular acceptance of community colleges as legitimate postsecondary institutions.