

International Students Enrolled at California Community Colleges



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California Community Colleges lead the nation in international student enrollment – both college sponsored students (F1 student visa) and students living in the United States on other visas. Of the top 40 community colleges in the nation that enroll the highest number of international students, 13 are California community colleges. The top six California community colleges in terms international student enrollment are Santa Monica College, De Anza College, Diablo Valley College, Foothill College, City College of San Francisco and Pasadena City College. The top countries of origin for international students in the community colleges are South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, China and Mexico. More than half or 54% of international community college students are female.

In 2007-08, U.S. higher education institutions enrolled 623,805 international students. Of these, 86,683 (14%) attended a community college. International students represent 1.7% of the total community college population nationally and 3.5% at four-year institutions. The international student population at community colleges showed a 3.1% increase from the previous year, compared to a 7% increase at four-year institutions.

International students pay substantially higher tuition. In 2007-08, nonresident tuition totaled \$153 million compared with \$3,400 million in state general fund apportionment, or approximately 4% of the FTES for all California Community Colleges. There were three districts where nonresident FTES was 10% or more of total FTES, with several more districts with 5-10% of their FTES from nonresidents. The economic impact of international students at U.S. community colleges was more than \$2 billion in 2007-08, according to Open Doors 2008 (<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/page/136353/>). The impact for California's economy was the greatest among all the states, at close to \$632 million.

Most community colleges see the benefit of enrolling students from around the world in terms of enhancing the academic environment and increased revenues. These colleges embrace the world as part of the "community" in community college. A simpler admission process, generally lower requirements for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), a wide variety of courses of study, and good transfer opportunities to four-year institutions make the community college an attractive destination for international students.

We live in a closely interconnected world – having a class filled with students from around the globe can help students to recognize their role as local, national, and global citizens. International students enrich the educational experience of all students. In the mean time, it is important that as educational institutions, we recognize the multitude of challenges experienced by international students, such as limited English proficiency and difficulty in obtaining financial aid. Regardless of size or location, colleges across the CCC system need to engage in discussions on how to provide international students with the necessary support in order for them to succeed.