
Concerning This Issue

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Universities pride themselves upon the percentage of international students who are enrolled on their campuses. The greater the percentage, the higher the institution's international image, which translates to higher prestige of the university. As universities have become more aware of the increasing interdependence of cultures and economies among countries throughout the world, they have shown eagerness to prepare their graduates with cross-cultural understanding and competencies.

The testimony by a recent American graduate of an international university places the heightened interest in the international dimension in perspective, "...real education came from the interactions with the multicultural student body." It is no wonder that universities are now giving special attention to an international focus in programs and institutional relations. Greater interest is shown for student exchanges with their counterparts of other countries. New languages and new courses in history, culture and economy of other countries are being added to the curriculum.

There is little doubt that students gain deeper and better understanding of different countries and peoples through first-hand relationships and interactions with colleagues and cultures in other parts of the world. The entire institution benefits from the engagement of each student in international endeavors. The gain in students becomes evident as they demonstrate greater international awareness, deeper knowledge of issues of other nations and higher sensitivity to the diversity among all peoples of the world.

The responsibility of universities for appropriate attention to students is twofold, as we concern ourselves with American students who study in other countries as well as with foreign students who study on our campuses. Although the issues and concerns for both students are significantly different, the care and communication with both are inextricably similar. Services to students befitting our commitment to international understanding are distinctly important.

The commitment toward internationalization by universities is heartening. The prospect of increasing students' global perspective, world view and cultural sensitivity is exciting. The services we provide for students who engage in international pursuits need to reflect our optimism toward increased global perspectives for tomorrow's citizens.



East-West Center students socializing at the Thai Pavilion, a gift from King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand who dedicated the structure in 1967. Photo, East West Center Collection

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