Analysis of Summer and Fall 2004 Foreign Student Statistics
- Visa update, new foreign students, and total enrollment –

By Lisa Krieg, Director, Office of International Education

Carnegie Mellon’s Office of International Education (OIE) serves as the clearinghouse for foreign student visa matters and production and oversight of federally-required documentation for foreign students studying at Carnegie Mellon in F-1 or J-1 status. We annually review and report on visa delays and denials, new foreign student enrollment at Carnegie Mellon, and the total fall enrollment of foreign students at the University. Our analysis includes some information on national trends.

Visa delays and denials

This section summarizes information about visa delays and denials for Carnegie Mellon foreign students entering or re-entering the US for summer and fall 2004 start dates at Carnegie Mellon.

Carnegie Mellon had eight graduate students (from China, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Russia) who were delayed due to the Technology Alert List (TAL) or other security checks; of those eight cases, six cleared in roughly 60 days while two took slightly longer.

In addition, we are aware of seven (7) students who were denied their visas due to 214(b), lack of ties to home country (a.k.a., immigrant intent.) Of those seven, three (3) were subsequently granted student visas, including one Indian student for whom Government Relations intervened.

Fall 2004 new foreign student analysis

In fall 2004, Carnegie Mellon experienced a small increase of new foreign students over the previous fall; 2003, in turn, saw a downturn in new international students for the first time in a decade, or more.

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<tr>
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<th>Fall 2004</th>
<th>Fall 2003</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total New Students</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>+2.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Undergrads</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>-11.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Grads</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>+0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Exchanges</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>+30.2%</td>
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The countries and regional representation remained largely the same from recent years, with a statistically “large” jump in students from Africa, although numbers are still very small. Notably, no new undergraduate students came from the Middle East, and we experienced a
decrease in the new students from North American (Mexico and Canada.) There was a 37.5% decrease in new students from China, a trend which is also reflected in the national statistics.

Countries which were represented this year, but not last are:

♦ Algeria
♦ Cameroon
♦ Eritrea
♦ Finland
♦ Peru
♦ Russia
♦ Saudi Arabia
♦ Serbia
♦ Slovakia
♦ Slovenia
♦ Sweden
♦ Tunisia

In terms of popular academic programs for new, incoming foreign graduate student, information systems management, business, electrical and computer engineering, information networking and information technology top the list. The Heinz School’s information systems management (MISM) program experienced a 63% increase in students. For undergraduate students, there was a jump in the number of undergraduates coming into the business school.

For exchange students, we see a large number of Italian exchange students in computer science, and for the first time a graduate exchange (arts management) make the “top 5” list for new, incoming exchange students (N=4.)

**Fall 2004 Foreign Student Statistics**

Using our internal software, fsaATLAS, we report annually on foreign student enrollment at Carnegie Mellon. This is a very accurate, although somewhat limited, picture of the foreign student enrollment situation at Carnegie Mellon; unscientifically, we guess that our statistics represent *at least* 95% of all non-immigrant foreign students studying full-time on the Carnegie Mellon campus. We provide very accurate statistics on full-time F-1 and J-1 students who are under the sponsorship of the Carnegie Mellon F-1 and J-1 programs, i.e. students who have been issued documentation by OIE in order to maintain their legal student status in the United States. U.S. legal permanent residents (aka “green card” holders) are not included in our statistics and neither are students on other non-immigrant documents (such as A-1, F-2, J-2, H-4, and L-2 dependants.)

Broad 10-year trends in total F-1 and J-International student enrollment at Carnegie Mellon are represented in the table below.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total # Int’l Students</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>1333</td>
<td>1493</td>
<td>1602</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>1784</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>2111</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of overall foreign student enrollment at Carnegie Mellon there is a small increase (N=80) over last year, a number representing a 3% increase due largely to increased number of international student enrollment in masters-level programs (up 16% from fall 2004.)
In terms of countries and regions of origin, there was a 6% decrease in Chinese students, a 35% decrease in students from in Latin America (mostly graduate students), and a 55% decrease in students from the Middle East. At the same time, we experienced a 34% increase in students coming from Europe (primarily graduate students.)

**National trends and Carnegie Mellon compared**

Overall, the slight upward trend in the number of international students enrolling at CMU is a relatively positive trend compared to national trends where numbers are flat or down. National trends in foreign student enrollment in the United States are reported annually by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in their Open Doors Report. ([www.iie.org/opendoors/](http://www.iie.org/opendoors/))

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), another important clearinghouse for foreign student statistics in the US, reports that foreign student applications are down in Fall 2004 by 10% among 15 of the 19 doctoral and research institutions which responded to their annual, 3-part survey. Anecdotally, Carnegie Mellon graduate admission representatives report that international graduate applications are also down, but that the quality remains high, allowing continued stability in foreign admission and enrollment. New student enrollment at Carnegie Mellon also indicates this fact.

A decrease in the number of foreign students enrolling at US universities is of concern to legislators in Washington. Among other things, the higher education sector represents one of the largest service “exports” in the nation representing billions of dollars in tuition and services annually. At an October 6, 2004, Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, the president of Indiana University reported a decrease of Chinese and Indian graduate enrollments in Fall 2004 and a senior-level representative of the University of Maryland, College Park, reported significant decreases in both applications (down 36%) and enrollment (down 21%) of foreign graduate students in last two years. Both leaders cite increased visa problems, competition from other countries, and home countries providing more opportunities as reasons for the significant decreases of foreign students on their campuses.

At Carnegie Mellon, we see a decrease in the number of Chinese students; at the same time, we are experiencing a significant increase in students from India. Nationally, U.S. universities report similar trends for Chinese students.

At the same time that the US is struggling with flagging enrollment of foreign students, foreign student enrollment in Australia is up significantly from 2003 to 2004 with an increase in foreign student enrollment of 13% and an 18% increase in Chinese student enrollment.

*Updated 11/2005*