Analysis of Summer and Fall 2006 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 national trends and compares the Carnegie Mellon situation to the broader national trends.

Visa delays and denials

Following is a summary of visa delays for Carnegie Mellon foreign students entering or re-entering the US for summer and fall 2006 start dates at Carnegie Mellon. In all, it’s the best situation that we’ve witnessed since 9/11 (2001) and represents a relatively “normal” visa picture.

From an advising perspective, it is good that security checks consistently clear in 30 days or less. This helps OIE to provide consistent advice and allows for less interruption for scholars and students (and their CMU supervisors) when these visa delays occur.

In terms of new students, we are aware of four new students who were delayed due to the Technology Alert List (TAL) or other security checks, and five new students who were denied for other reasons. Most new and continuing students and scholars who were checked for security reasons are clearing relatively quickly – in 2 to 4 weeks. That timeframe has been consistent in most cases for more than a year. The small handful of visa denials occurred for typical reasons including insufficient finances and prior violation of legal non-immigrant status in the US.

In the four-month period between May and August 2006, we were aware of fifteen delayed or denied visas for students and scholars. During that same period in 2005, we were aware of fifteen cases and in 2004, we were aware of 27 (!) delays or denials. Perhaps we have reached a “steady state” of sorts.

In other interesting visa “news,” we note that the rush for student (and other) visas this year created significant backlogs for visa appointments at several key consulates in India. However, the busiest consulates provided a “work around” that prioritized time-sensitive student visas, and the Indian students were able to arrive in a timely manner for orientation and classes at CMU.
During the recent war between Lebanon and Israel, the US embassy was closed. Students needing visa appointments were instructed to visit the US consulate in Greece. Several current and new CMU students from Lebanon were able to arrive on time by traveling overland and flying from Syria.

**Fall 2006 admission analysis**

The number of new foreign students at Carnegie Mellon University is up significantly over last year, reflecting the kind of growth that we have not experienced since the late 1990’s, in the pre-9/11 (2001) environment.

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<th>Summer/Fall 2006</th>
<th>Summer/ Fall 2005</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total New Students</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Undergrads</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>20.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Master’s</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Doctorate</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Exchanges</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Summer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</table>

In terms of the regions of origin of our new foreign students, students from Asia proportionally increased, and students from the Middle East doubled (due largely to the government-sponsored Saudi Arabians and students from the CMU-Q campus), and there was a slight increase in students from Latin America.

Top senders of new undergraduate students are Korea, India, Taiwan, Canada and Singapore; the number of new undergraduate students from South Korea was up significantly by 38%. Top senders of new masters-level students are India, Korea, China, Taiwan, Japan and of new PhD students there is a very similar pattern of India, Korea, China, Taiwan, and Turkey. The top five senders of exchange students are Switzerland, Taiwan, Germany, Singapore and Japan.

In terms of major fields of study, we note a significant increase (almost double) in undergraduate enrollment in the College of Fine Art and in Carnegie Institute of Technology (40%). There was a 20% decrease in new graduate students enrolling in the Tepper School and a 26% increase in the number of new foreign graduate students enrolling in Carnegie Institute of Technology.

The top receiving PhD programs are largely the same from year to year with electrical and computer engineering, chemical engineering, Tepper, biological sciences and materials sciences topping the list for fall 2006. In terms of new masters-level graduate students, MISM received 21% more new foreign students than last year and the other top departmental recipients include Information Networking Institute, information technology with two programs in Tepper (MBA and computational finance) rounding out the top 5.
National graduate application trends for Fall 2006

The best information about foreign graduate application and acceptance trends is gathered by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) in an annual 3-part investigation, and can be found on their website at www.cgsnet.org. In short, the CGS findings show the following differences between 2005 and 2006:

- Final international applications increased 12%,
- Offers of admission to international students increased 12%,
- Offers of admission increased for India, China and Korea, and
- Offers of admission to international students increased most for the fields of engineering and business, but decreased for humanities and social sciences.

Because of the decentralized nature of graduate admission at Carnegie Mellon, it is difficult to determine whether (or not) our trends follow the national trends. However, total enrolled student numbers are also tracked and give us a better sense of how the Carnegie Mellon situation ties in with the national trends as reported by the CGS. (See information below.)

Fall 2006 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) although these students do represent an important part of the international scene at Carnegie Mellon.

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

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<tr>
<td>Total # Int’l Students</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>
<td>2071</td>
<td>2185</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Foreign student enrollment in Fall 2006 at CMU is up 5.5% over 2005. This increase does not come as a surprise given the fact that the new student numbers in summer and fall 2006 were up by 10.9%. Primary sources of funding, ratios of F-1s to J-1s, men and women (2/3 to 1/3), and number of married graduate students are all stable from one year to the next and this year is no exception. ¾’s of our students hail from Asia, representing no change from previous years.
Top sending countries at the graduate and undergraduate remain unchanged with India, China, Korea, Japan, Canada and Turkey topping the list for graduate students and Korea, India, Singapore, Taiwan, Canada and Malaysia for undergraduates. However, as recently as six years ago, India and China routinely sent the same number of graduate students to CMU, and there is now no comparison, with India sending significantly more students than China. Numbers of students from India jumped from 472 enrolled last fall to 553 enrolled this fall, an increase of 17%. South Korean enrollment jumped from 329 to 387 (17.6%); with significant increases in the freshman class (N=30)

Each year, students represent about 90 home countries. The following countries are represented this year, but not last: Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Finland, Guatemala, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mongolia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Syria.

National foreign student enrollment trends

For national trends, refer to the Institute of International Education’s Open Doors reports (Fall 2005 numbers just now available) and the Council of Graduate Schools (Fall 2006 international enrollment trends just now available.)

- [http://www.opendoors.iienetwork.org/](http://www.opendoors.iienetwork.org/)
- [http://www.cgsnet.org/](http://www.cgsnet.org/)

Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) – methodology and response rate. The Council of Graduate Schools reports findings from 177 institutions with large foreign student enrollments. About 80% of the 25 institutions with the largest international student enrollment and 70% of the largest 50 participated in the survey for fall 2006 international application and enrollment trends.

From the CGS report, note the following interesting trends:

- Total graduate enrollment (from surveyed schools) grew 1% from 2005 to 2006. Last year, enrollment was down 3% over the previous year.
- India, China, and Korea rank as the top 3 countries of origin for international grad students in the U.S. accounting for 53% of all non-U.S. citizen graduate students.
- Graduate students from India were up 8% between 2005 and 2006.
- The number of first-time international students rose 12% from Fall 2005 to Fall 2006, a substantial increase over prior years. First-time enrollment from India grew the fastest in 2006 at 32%. First time enrollment from China grew 20%, after years of decreases, and from Korea at 5%.

CMU’s increases in new first-time international students, more graduate students from India, and the fact that India, China and Korea also top out our top senders of graduate students are exactly in line with national trends.

Open Doors 2006, compiled and published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) is the most comprehensive survey on foreign student (and scholar and study abroad) participation in the US. Results from Fall 2005 are just in. Relevant findings include:

- Overall international enrollment remained steady.
• There are increases in the number of students from 7 of the 10 leading places of origin with particular increases from Korea (up 10%), Taiwan (up 8%), and Mexico (up 7%).
• Asia remains the largest sending region, representing 58% of the total U.S. enrollments. Compare to CMU’s 75%.
• Nationally, there are notable increases in students from Saudi Arabia (up 14%), due largely to increased funding for scholarships from the Saudi government.
• International students contribute an estimated 13.5 billion dollars to the US economy. According to the US Department of Commerce, US higher education is the 5th largest service sector export.

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