INTRODUCTION

This report presents a profile of students enrolling in College of San Mateo’s International Student Program, 1997/98 – 2002/03. Information is presented regarding international students’ demographic characteristics and course enrollment patterns.

Specialized programs assisting and advising post-secondary international students became formalized shortly after World War II, when more than 25,000 foreign nationals came to study in the United States. Currently, there are nearly 600,000 foreign nationals enrolling at approximately 1,800 colleges and universities throughout the United States. This figure represents approximately 4.3% of all students enrolled in American colleges and universities. In addition, nearly 80,000 international students are enrolled in California postsecondary institutions.

CSM’s International Student Program was established in 1955. It began with the recognition that meeting the learning and living needs of students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds required the college to offer specialized programs and services. Accordingly, CSM is committed to the concept that international education encourages better relations among peoples of different cultures and encourages cross-cultural communication. In addition, international education advances learning and scholarship, makes institutions sensitive to other cultures, builds respect among different peoples, and encourages constructive leadership in a global community.

As this report indicates, international students enrolling at CSM have acclimated very well to the college community—at least as measured by their academic performance. Information regarding the 435 international students completing 9,418 SMCCCD courses, attending CSM within the period of 6 consecutive academic years or 18 terms, 1997/98 - 2002/03, is presented below.

Figure 1

CSM International Students
By Age
1997/98 - 2002/03
[n=435]
DEMOGRAPHIC AND COURSE ENROLLMENT PROFILE

Age. On average, international students are younger than the overall CSM student population. (See Figure 1). Whereas 38.7% of all CSM students are 30 years of age or older, only 13.6% of international students are in the same age range.

- 19 or less: 8.5%
- 20 – 25: 54.7%
- 26 – 30: 23.2%
- 31 – 39: 12.0%
- 40 or older: 1.6%

Ethnicity. Figure 2 displays the ethnicity of CSM international students and reflects the enrollment preferences of foreign nationals from countries located in Asia:

- Asian: 63.6%
- Black: 0.5%
- Filipino: 1.6%
- Hispanic: 6.0%
- Pacific Islander: 2.3%
- White: 18.9%
- Other/Unknown: 7.1%

Gender. Female students comprise the overwhelming majority of CSM international students: 59.3% female vs. 40.7% male. (See Figure 3) In comparison, the overall CSM student population is: 51% female vs. 49% male.

Course Enrollments: Academic Discipline. Figure 4 displays the academic discipline preferences—in terms of 10 broad
discipline categories—of 435 international students enrolling in 9,418 courses. Nearly all enrollments are in transfer-level and core general education courses:

- English: 23.5%
- Arts/Humanities: 15.2%
- Social Sciences: 10.5%
- Business: 10.2%
- Mathematics: 9.2%
- Computer Science/Engineering: 8.5%
- Physical Sciences: 6.3%
- Vocational: 5.9%
- Biological Sciences: 5.5%
- Physical Education: 4.3%
- Skyline/Canada courses: 1.2%

Course Load. Figure 5 displays the average number of units enrolled per term. The data shown below indicate that 100% of international students in the program take 12 units or more per term; nearly 1/3 (31.5%) take more than 15 units per term. In contrast, 75.0% of CSM students enroll in less than 12 units per term.

- 12.0 units: 25.2%
- 12.5 – 13.5 units: 19.5%
- 14.0 – 15.0 units: 23.8%
- 15.5 – 16.5 units: 11.4%
- 17.0 – 18.0 units: 12.3%
- 18.5 – 24.0 units: 7.8%

Academic Outcomes. Figure 6 presents a summary overview of international students’ academic outcomes. During their stay at CSM, the typical international student:

- Enrolls in 21.7 courses
- Enrolls in 62.9 units

In addition, of the 435 international students tracked:

- 72.2% earned an Associate’s Degree or Certificate
- 49.9% transferred to a four-year college or university.

(Note: This transfer rate under-counts the number of students transferring as this information is not systemati-cally reported by transfer institutions.)

CONCLUSION

The data presented in this report indicate that international students make significant contributions to CSM’s campus learning environments and the overall diversity of our college community. Today’s global economies and global challenges require that our students have international competencies. CSM’s international student population contributes to and promotes global learning on our campus. In an increasingly interdependent world, CSM’s international education opportunities help foster global knowledge and international linkages for our students, faculty, and staff.

Beyond the immediate impact of foreign national enrolling at CSM, there is a larger implication for US foreign policy. As U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has observed:

“[International students and scholars] enrich our communities with their academic abilities and cultural diversity, and return home with an increased understanding and often a lasting affection for the United States. I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here.”
Figure 5
CSM International Students
Average # of Units Enrolled Per Term
1997/98 - 2002/03
[n=435]

25.2% 19.5% 23.8% 11.4% 12.3% 7.8%
12.0 12.5-13.5 14.0-15.0 15.5-16.5 17.0-18.0 18.5-24.0

Figure 6
CSM International Students
Enrollment Patterns
1997/98 - 2002/03
[n=435]

21.7 Average Number of Courses Enrolled
62.9 Average Number of Units Enrolled

49.9% Transfer to 4-year Colleges/Universities
72.2% Earn Associate's Degrees and/or Certificates