



Andy Rogers / P-I

International student adviser Andrea Vederoff points out the building that houses most English- language classes to Matt Au Yeung of Hong Kong, left, Chao Fu of China and Quyen Duong of Vietnam during a tour Tuesday of the Seattle Central Community College campus.

## Students traveling far for area community colleges

By [CHRISTINE FREY](#), P-I REPORTER

Walking the halls, Dror Baruch hears Chinese, Arabic, Amharic.

"That's the beauty," he said. "That's exactly what I was looking for."

The 25-year-old left his home in Israel last year and moved to the greater Seattle area to attend college. Not the University of Washington. Not one of the local private schools. But the two-year Seattle Central Community College.

For Baruch and other international students, community college represents an entry to American higher education. Many intend to transfer to a four-year university.

"I knew if I moved here, I could open a new page," said Baruch, who would like to attend the University of Washington someday. "I could start a new life. It's new opportunity."

The number of international students attending community colleges statewide is on the rise after dropping significantly in 2002 and 2003 in the post-9/11 world.

More than 5,200 international students attended Washington community colleges during the 2005-06 academic year, the most recent full year for which data are available. That's still lower than the number who attended in 2001, but it's up nearly 10 percent from the previous year.

Seattle Central taught more international students than any other community college in the state in 2005-06, with more than 740 enrolled. About 370 attended North Seattle, and more than 180 attended South Seattle.

Solomon Kasozi, 21, graduated from Seattle Central earlier this month.

It's been two years since he's been home to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. He enrolled at the recommendation of a family friend. During his two years there, he played on a club soccer team and worked on campus.

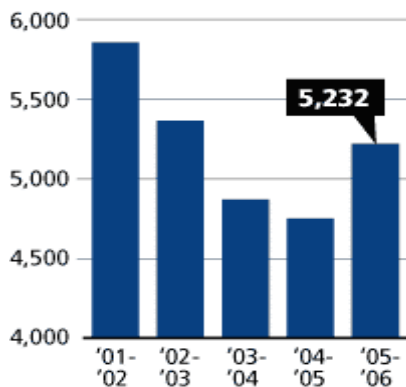
Kasozi eventually plans to return home once he has completed his education -- he's transferring this fall to Portland State University to study business. Finding a job in Uganda will be easier when he returns with his degree from the states, he said.

# INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT

Washington's community colleges teach thousands of international students a year. In Seattle, most of the international students who attend local colleges are from Asia.

## Statewide enrollment

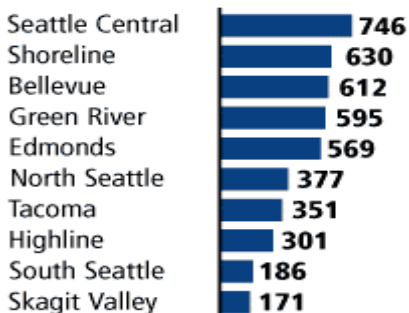
International students at community colleges, by academic year



## Top local school destinations

International students, academic year '05-'06

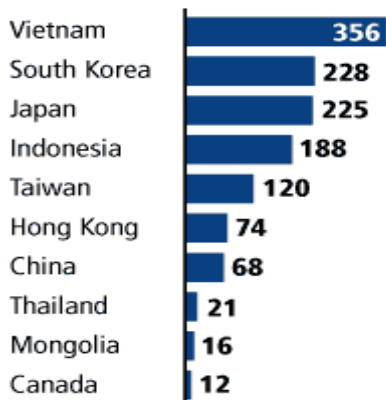
University of Washington\* **2,620**



\*Includes Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma campuses, fall 2005

## Top countries of origin

At Seattle community colleges, Spring '07



Source: Seattle Community Colleges, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, University of Washington

SEATTLE P-I

While four-year universities have had international-exchange programs for years, community colleges are much newer to them. Seattle community colleges are doing much to boost their numbers.

Recruiters regularly travel overseas to market the program. The president of the North Seattle campus visited Indonesia and Vietnam earlier this year, calling on schools in those countries. And Seattle Central is looking at leasing an apartment complex near the Capitol Hill campus for international-student housing.

Educating international students in Seattle can benefit local campuses, college officials say. International students, who do not receive financial support from the state and pay the full cost of education, provide additional income to fund more classes. They also make the campus more diverse and offer a global perspective.

College officials said money spent on overseas recruiting efforts is generated from international-student tuition. International students pay \$2,510.90 a quarter in tuition for 12 credits, compared with \$786.30 for Washington residents.

International student tuition generates some additional funds beyond the college's direct expenses, though the amount varies year to year, said Andrea Insley, district coordinator for Seattle Community Colleges' international programs. That money is used to open new classes, purchase technology or make other improvements to the campus, she said.

Their reasons for attending a two-year community college instead of a four-year university are often similar to those of American students: It costs less, and it allows them to explore various fields of study before settling on a major.

International students, though, face individual adjustments. For some, the pace of life is slower. For others, it's faster. The weather is wetter or dryer. Some challenges, though, are the same. The language is different, and family is far away.

Community colleges try to help with the transition.

Last week, Seattle Central hosted an orientation for new international students, including testing for English-language placement courses. Students, who received walking tours of the campus and city, also learned how to set up a bank account and get services on campus.

Seattle Central draws most of its international students from Asia, with Vietnam, South Korea and Japan among the top countries.

The most popular areas of study among international students are business, computer science and engineering and tourism, Insley said.

International students typically have high grade-point averages, are motivated and, after two years at a community college, have acclimated to the American culture and higher education, Insley said. Many universities visit community colleges specifically to recruit them.



ANDY ROGERS

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Shingo Tokugawa, left, and Masaru Yuasa check out a map of Seattle Central Community College, with Van Truong of Vietnam behind them, while taking a tour of the campus Tuesday with other international students.

Ping-Chun "Michael" Chen, 18, is one student making the transition from community college to a university. The recent Seattle Central student will transfer to Central Washington University this fall to study to become a pilot.

Chen had always dreamed of attending a university in the states, where he said the style of teaching and learning is not as rigid as that in Taiwan. In addition to taking courses, he worked with student clubs and had a job in the college bookstore.

Some international students tend to stick together, but Chen has made a number of friends, both Americans and students from other countries. He's now learning Russian so he can talk with new friends. He plans to visit them someday in St. Petersburg.

"I'm glad I came here," he said. "I love this college because it's so diverse. I got all kinds of friends. People from everywhere."

## **OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES**

In addition to serving international students, Seattle Community Colleges also offer programs for American students to study overseas. A group of students will travel to Belize in August for a health care project. Nursing students will travel to Vietnam in September to offer help to villagers. To learn more about the programs, visit [seattlecolleges.edu/globalimpact](http://seattlecolleges.edu/globalimpact).

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