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## Record Number of Foreign Students at U.S. Colleges and Universities

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### People's Republic of China is Leading Place of Origin

A new high of 386,900 foreign students attended colleges and universities in the United States in the 1989-90 academic year. Asian students are the fastest-growing sector of U.S. foreign student enrollment. Growth from the People's Republic of China (up 15% from last year) continued unabated, despite recent regulation of overseas degree study by the Chinese government. China was again the leading place of origin with 33,400 students, followed by Taiwan with 31,000. The number of students from third-ranked Japan increased 24% to 29,800 in a single year.

The Institute of International Education (IIE) recently published its annual statistics on foreign students at 2,891 accredited U.S. institutions, based on surveys conducted with grant support from the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). The new book, *Open Doors 1989/90*, reports that Asians fueled a 5.6% worldwide growth rate in 1989/90, the first large annual increase in foreign student numbers since the early eighties. Students from all South and East Asian nations numbered 208,100 (54% of the world total). Eight of the top ten places of origin were in Asia.

IIE President Richard M. Krasno commented in announcing the data that, "the United States continues to be a magnet for students from all rapidly-developing nations. The contribution that U.S. higher education can make to

economic development is perhaps better recognized abroad than it is in the U.S."

### Growth from All World Regions Except Africa, Middle East

Although Asian students were the major engine of growth, numbers from Latin America (48,100), Europe (46,000), North America (18,600) and Oceania (4,000) all increased at rates varying from 7 to 11%. Enrollments from the Middle East and Africa continued a steady decline. Both dropped 7% to 37,300 and 24,600 respectively. Middle Eastern students were nearly 30% of the total 10 years ago, and are less than 10% today. African students constituted 12% of foreign students in the United States a decade ago, and only 6% today. Especially sharp declines in numbers from Iran and Nigeria account for much of the decrease.

The number of students from the top five places of origin (China, Taiwan, Japan, India and Korea) almost doubled from 73,000 five years ago to 142,100 in 1989/90. Although numbers from China and Taiwan increased very substantially over that period, the steepest recent percentage increase has come from Japan, up 98% in just 3 years from 15,100 to 29,800.

### Significant Statistics

For the first time in the 40 years IIE has conducted surveys, business (75,600, or 19.5%) edged out engineering (73,400) as the field attracting the most foreign

students. The next most popular fields were math/computer sciences (36,200) and physical/life sciences (32,900).

Foreign graduate students are still outnumbered by undergraduates, but the gap is shrinking. Graduate students numbered 169,800 (44% of total), with doctoral students increasing sharply (11% growth) to 59,700. East Asian students pursue graduate rather than undergraduate education in the U.S. in a 2:1 ratio and are the main source of growth in graduate enrollment.

California leads all other states in the number of foreign students, with 54,200 enrolled, followed by New York (38,400) and Texas (24,200). Two top-ten states, California and Florida, saw their foreign student enrollment expand by 10% in a single year.

Despite this Sunbelt growth, the Northeast still hosts the largest numbers, with 94,500 foreign students. The Northeast led the Midwest (87,100), South (80,800), Pacific Coast (72,000), Southwest (38,300) and Mountain (12,800) regions.

Women foreign students numbered 131,300 (34%), the largest number and percentage ever. The proportional share of women in foreign study traditionally has been low, hovering between 20 and 25% until the seventies, but has grown steadily over the past decade.

Enrollment in pre-academic intensive English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs is up sharply. Foreign student

enrollment in ESL programs is a good indicator of the trend in foreign student flows. These students tend to go on to full-time degree study at U.S. colleges and universities. ESL enrollments grew 18% to 35,000 students, up from 29,700 the prior year. The largest increase was among Japanese ESL students (11,700), up 24% from last year.

### How to Order *Open Doors 1989/90*

The new *Open Doors* is available prepaid at \$34.95 plus \$3 handling from IIE BOOKS, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017-3580. The book is a 200-page statistical report on the annual IIE international student census with extensive explanatory text and over 100 supporting statistical tables and charts.

### Brief Statistical Summary

Total Foreign Students in U.S. Colleges and Universities: 386,851

Total Foreign Students in Intensive English Language Programs: 35,036

### Leading Places of Origin and % Change:

China	33,390	+15.0%
Taiwan	30,960	+7.6%
Japan	29,840	+24.3%
India	26,240	+12.4%
Korea, Rep. of	21,710	+5.3%
Canada	17,870	+11.5%
Malaysia	14,110	-12.7%
Hong Kong	11,230	+6.3%
Indonesia	9,390	+7.7%
Iran	7,440	-16.9%