
Global Leaders: Growing Numbers of International Students Seek a Smith Education

By Carol T. Christ
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Amid record-breaking application totals, international students represent the fastest-growing segment of Smith's applicant pool. Our applications from non-U.S. students nearly doubled over the last 15 years. In this year's entering class, we welcomed 48 international students from 26 countries, led by Korea, China, India, Canada, Greece, and Pakistan. With the need for thoughtful global leadership more urgent than ever, we are seeking to build on Smith's longstanding record of transformative education by expanding our resources for international financial aid and recruitment.

International students aspire to come to Smith for a similarly broad range of reasons as our U.S. applicants. A number come from developing countries, some on scholarships from organizations like the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, which supports first-generation college students from developing countries who are committed to returning home after pursuing studies in critical fields such as engineering and the sciences. Many others come to study economics and to pursue graduate education at U.S. universities. They are attracted by Smith's vibrant and highly diverse student body and by the Five Colleges, a consortium with some of the largest concentrations of international students anywhere in the country.

Ingrid Davalos '10 of Asuncion, Paraguay, came to Smith via secondary school at a United World College in Canada, one of a network of schools that brings together students from around the globe who then go on to study at Smith and other prestigious institutions. Having found a similarly vibrant community at Smith, she is majoring in anthropology and in Latin American studies. Tenzin Dechen '10, who grew up in Dharamsala, India, began her education at a Tibetan Children's Village School with ties to the Dalai Lama. She is majoring in biochemistry. Margaret Mongare '10, a Coulter Foundation Scholar from Nairobi, Kenya, is a premed student who plans to enroll in an M.D.-Ph.D. program after graduating. Last year, she was one of 16 students selected from campuses across the United States as a 2008 U.S. Goldman Sachs Global Leader through the New York-based Institute of International Education. These are just three examples of the experiences and goals that international students, who represent 8 percent of the student body, bring to Smith.

Young women around the world are drawn to Smith because they want to become leaders. They may have access to a range of higher education options in their own and other countries, but they value the tradition at Smith and other leading women's colleges of engendering the capacities and habits of mind essential for leadership. They know they will receive an education of the highest caliber, coupled with support for giving back, making change in the world and pursuing their goals with clarity and ambition.

Smith-educated leaders are visible around the world. April Hoxie Foley '69 is the U.S. ambassador to Hungary. Hoon Eng Khoo '73 is leading the development of the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh. Jennifer Barnes '82 is the newly named president of Murray Edwards College, the women's college of Cambridge University. Sheherbano (Sherry) Rehman '85 is a senior Pakistani politician and that country's minister for information and broadcasting. A student aspiring to contribute to our world's economies, governments, and educational systems could find few better models of thoughtful, engaged leadership.

Each of our students, regardless of her country of origin, benefits from Smith's international legacy. From the 1920s, when Smith opened one of the earliest study abroad programs of any U.S. university or college, and the 1930s, when President William Allan Neilson brought exiled and endangered foreign scholars and students to the college, Smith has had an explicit commitment to

internationalism in its student body, its curriculum, and ethos. Smith holds a distinctive advantage over most of its peers in this realm because of the strength of its study abroad programs and opportunities to learn foreign languages on our campus or within the five colleges. Smith is a national leader among liberal arts and master's institutions in the number of Fulbright Fellowships offered to students and recent graduates.

International and intercultural studies are central to the college's strategic plan. They are compelling intellectual focal points for the best faculty and strongest students. One of our most resonant messages to prospective students is the guarantee of an education that is global in scope, in which every student graduates with a transformative, sustained experience of other cultures and a nuanced perspective on the United States. As our global society encounters stress and opportunity, challenge and growth, it is a good time to be—as Smith's mission affirms—"a college of and for the world."