

Academic Initiatives with Community Colleges



Student Highlights

Community College Initiative

The Community College Initiative Program enables individuals from Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, South Africa, and countries in Central America to study at community colleges in the United States to develop professional skills.

Participants are recruited from historically underserved populations and may not have had opportunities for formal job training or higher education. Most participants are in their early- to mid-twenties and many already have work experience. The program provides academic instruction in selected fields including agriculture, applied engineering, business management and administration, health professions, information technology, media, and tourism and hospitality management. Participants spend one year in the United States and may earn a vocational certificate. After completing the program, participants return home with new skills and knowledge that enable them to contribute to the economic growth and development of their countries and societies.

Since the program's inception in 2007, nearly 400 students have participated in study at host institutions across the United States.

The Community College Initiative Program demonstrates the U.S. commitment to increasing access to higher education for underserved international students in key regions and utilizes the unique resource represented by U.S. community colleges. The program reinforces U.S. community colleges' efforts to become involved in international education and develop international ties.

- In addition to their coursework, program participants serve in student government, and participate in extracurricular and community activities and seminars on U.S. politics and society. Students at Greenville Technical College in South Carolina got a first-hand look at the U.S. voting process when they met with the county election commissioner and visited polling stations during the 2008 presidential elections.

- Participants excel in their coursework. An 18-year-old student from Brazil earned an associate's degree in engineering from Northampton Community College in one year from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, with a high grade point average. He also was elected a student senator.

- Program participants seize opportunities to apply new skills. Two students from Turkey studying media and communications at Parkland Community College in Champaign, Illinois, hosted their own shows on the college radio station, producing music and news broadcasts for the community.

- Participants get involved in their communities. Egyptian students at Tallahassee Community College in Florida taught Arabic language classes on campus. Students at Richland Community College and El Centro Community College in Dallas, Texas, volunteered for a local organization that sends medical supplies to developing countries.



As a special component of the Community College Initiative Program, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, is providing support to young Egyptian men and women to develop professional skills and enhance their leadership abilities at U.S. community colleges. The program also provides Egyptian participants with opportunities to improve their understanding of U.S. culture and society. The first group of 175 Egyptians arrived in the United States in August 2008.

The Community College Initiative Program with Egypt also provides Egyptian vocational school teachers and administrators with a professional development experience in the United States. Participants spend nine months at a U.S. community college, where they focus on curriculum design and pedagogy, academic affairs and administration, and the development of partnerships with business and industry. Participating teachers and administrators return to Egypt to further support educational reforms in Egyptian technical colleges.

