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International EDUCATOR

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Making Adjustments

The United Kingdom,
an iconic powerhouse, faces domestic
and international challenges

2+2=Success for Many International Students

While some international students attend community colleges for a gap year, to study English, or to complete a technical program, a large number intend to transfer to a bachelor's-granting institution after their first two years.

AT THE SAME TIME that many universities are looking at tuition from international students as a strategy to offset state budget crises, international students themselves are exploring ways to decrease the rising costs of their studying in the United States. Although it is by no means a new model, an increasingly popular choice among international students is the 2+2 model, whereby students take their general requirements at a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution to complete their bachelor's degree. According to the International Institute of Education's *Open Doors* report, almost 90,000 international students were enrolled at associate degree-granting institutions in the 2010–2011 academic year. Although there has been some fluctuation in the numbers, the trend line has been upward—there were just 81,869 students at community colleges 2004–2005.

Affordability is one of the factors leading many students to enroll at community colleges before transferring, but other reasons include small class size and open-door admissions policies. While some international students attend community colleges for a gap year, to study English, or to complete a technical program, a large number intend to transfer to a bachelor's-granting institution after their first two years.

Foothill and De Anza Colleges

At Foothill and De Anza Colleges (FHDA) in California's Silicon Valley, for instance, about 90 percent of international students intend to transfer to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor's degree. "The choice for 2+2 is really about leveraging time and money. It's an opportunity for further academic exploration, to refine the choice of major and the transfer institution, to go through acculturation process in the United States, to build up student's leadership profile and resume for transfer to a top institution—all at a very good value," explains Maureen Chenoweth, Foothill's transfer center coordinator.

Chun Yu "Edwin" Lam, a current student from Hong Kong studying economics, concurs. "Attending Foothill College is a great way for me to minimize the

cost of getting a bachelor degree. More importantly, the small class sizes at Foothill College allow more interaction with my instructors," he says, adding that location was also an important factor.

"Foothill is located in Silicon Valley, which is the epicenter of many well-known entrepreneurs, and enrolling in this college exposed me to the high-tech sector of the United States and helped me network with many successful companies and businessmen," explains Lam, who was accepted to both UCLA and UC Berkeley and plans to transfer to UCLA in fall 2012.

Colleges like Foothill and De Anza offer a wide variety of support services to international students planning to transfer including academic advising and degree plans, annual transfer fairs, and visits from university representatives, guaranteed and conditional transfer admission agreements, assistance with personal statements, as well as a range of personal and professional development opportunities on campus.

According to Viktoria Kolesnikova, director of international marketing, FHDA boasts a strong transfer record. In a 2010 study by the California College Chancellor's Office, Foothill and De Anza Colleges were ranked #1 and #2 for transfer success among all community colleges in California.