**Selecting a U.S. Community College**

**Determine Your Higher Education Goals**

Before you begin to explore specific colleges, spend some time thinking about what you want to achieve and make a list of your goals. The following are some questions to consider.

**Have you already decided on a career?**

If you know what career you want to pursue, you should consider a college that has a good reputation in that field. U.S. community colleges offer hundreds of majors from which to choose. They have close ties to a number of industries and are well respected in many fields of study.

**Are you undecided about your future career?**

If you are not sure what career you want to prepare for, consider a college that offers a broad selection of classes or programs. Many U.S. students spend their first 2 years taking many different classes to explore their interests and do not select a major until the end of their second year of study. Community colleges provide a wide variety of courses that can help students investigate their interests and expand their experiences.

**Do you eventually want to earn a bachelor’s degree?**

You can begin your higher education studies at a community college and transfer to a 4-year college or university to earn a bachelor’s degree. In fact, nearly 50% of students in the United States begin their studies at a community college. If you intend to pursue a bachelor’s degree after earning an associate degree, you will want to focus on community colleges that have 2 + 2 transfer (articulation) agreements with 4-year colleges and universities.

**Do you want to improve your English?**

Studying in the United States will give you extensive exposure to the English language. Many community colleges also offer Intensive English

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**Chemeketa offers:**

- Free advising and academic tutoring
- Housing assistance
- Orientation program
- Technical programs for immediate employment
- Transfer to four-year universities
- One-year certificates; two-year associate degrees
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**For more information, contact:**

Teter Kapan, International Programs  
Tel: 1.503.399.5141 • Fax: 1.503.365.4768  
Chemeketa Community College  
PO Box 14007 • Salem, OR 97309  
E-mail: international@chemeketa.edu
Programs, through which you can improve your English skills before beginning your academic studies.

Are you interested in U.S. culture?
U.S. community colleges have strong ties to their local communities that provide extensive opportunities to interact with U.S. residents and to experience their culture.

Where would you prefer to live in the United States?
Would you prefer to live in a city, a small town, or a rural area? Do you want to live in a particular region of the United States? If so, which cities or states are you considering? Community colleges are in each of the 50 states, some in big cities and some in smaller towns and rural areas. If your desired program of study is available at several community colleges, you may decide which institution to attend based on which state or region of the United States you would like to live. Visit college Web sites to get a better sense of where you might want to live and study.

Are you a student athlete?
More than 500 U.S. community colleges have excellent athletic facilities and offer students great access to training, coaching, and a large variety of playing opportunities. The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is an organization of regionally accredited community colleges across the United States that organizes student athletic competitions in 17 sports—baseball, basketball, bowling, cross-country, diving, American football, golf, half marathon, ice hockey,

About Mount Wachusett Community College
- Embraces cultural diversity and social tolerance
- Diverse student body
- Transfer opportunities to private and public colleges nationwide
- Professional expertise on immigration and employment issues

Great Location
Located in North Central Massachusetts, about an hour from Boston; the scenic Berkshires, the Green Mountains of Vermont, and the Monadnock region.

The Right Program For You
Over 40 programs of study in: business, education, liberal arts, healthcare, computers and technology.

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lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling.

Students With Disabilities
Community colleges are a smart choice for students with disabilities because community colleges afford a unique learning environment that typically includes smaller class sizes, more individualized attention, and a supportive atmosphere. Tutoring centers and mentoring programs are often available to teach students with learning disabilities (such as dyslexia) the study strategies needed to succeed in college. Accommodations are often made for sign language interpreters, accessible classrooms, note-takers in classes, Braille materials, and extended time for taking tests. Colleges may also provide adapted software or assistive equipment for people with mobility, vision, learning, or hearing disabilities. For example, a blind student might have the option to use a computer with speech synthesis that can read textbooks out loud. However, personal care attendants, hearing aids, and wheelchairs are not typically provided. To learn more about services available at a particular college, contact the college’s international or disability office.

Estimating Expenses
Before applying to a community college, you should estimate tuition and living expenses for the first 2 years of education. Costs vary depending on where your college is located, but, in general, you should expect to spend between US$10,000 and US$20,000 each year. Contact the college’s international or admissions office for help in estimating your expenses, which should include those listed on the worksheet below.

Estimating Financial Resources
When you apply to a college (and for a student visa), you will be required to show that you have the financial resources to meet your costs.
resources necessary to cover your expenses (tuition, fees, and living costs). See Statement of Financial Support on page 38. Because there are employment restrictions on international students, you cannot rely on working in the United States to help you pay for your education (see Working in the United States on page 64).

Some community colleges provide scholarships to students after their first year of study or upon transfer to a 4-year college or university. Such scholarships are usually based on merit—how well you performed academically.

One notable exception is athletic scholarships. Community colleges in the United States may offer scholarships, called grant-in-aid by the NJCAA, to outstanding student athletes in Division I and Division II sports. Scholarship sports for men are baseball, basketball, cross-country, golf, outdoor track and field, soccer, and tennis. Scholarship sports for women are basketball, cross-country, fast-pitch softball, outdoor track and field, soccer, tennis, and volleyball. To determine whether the colleges to which you are applying award athletic scholarships, check the college Web site for the athletic department or coaches’ contact information. Let the college’s contact person know of your interest and provide them with information about your talents and experience.

**Other Important Considerations**

**Accreditation of the Institution**

The quality of education in the United States is ensured by a process called accreditation. U.S. community colleges and 4-year colleges are accredited by one of nine regional associations. Each of these associations has its own criteria, which may differ from state to state. Some states have added their own state-specific standards. Accreditation ensures that a college provides its students with a quality education.
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No TOEFL required for ESL students!

Whether you’re enrolling in Coastline’s English as a Second Language (ESL) program or jumping right in to our Associate in Arts Degree program, we’re certain that you’ll find success at Coastline. We’re dedicated to creating a positive, enjoyable, and worthwhile learning experience for our international students, and our faculty and staff work together to make our students feel like family. Join the Coastline family and experience life and learning in beautiful Southern California!

For more information, call (714) 241-6184, ext. 17416 or e-mail lmaynard@coastline.edu.

COASTLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE in California!

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1. International students enrolled in Coastline’s fully-accredited A.A. degree program receive dedicated support from Coastline faculty and staff to ensure success.

2. Qualified students enrolled in Coastline’s renowned ESL program can concurrently enroll in non-ESL courses to enhance their American educational experience.

3. All Coastline students have access to computer labs, tutoring, and counseling services to help them succeed!

4. Coastline is located in famous Orange County, California—home to Disneyland, great beaches, and more than 329 days of sunshine a year!

5. International students who enroll only in Coastline’s ESL program do not have to take the TOEFL exam!
Cypress College students say they find lots of opportunity for involvement. The campus has a vibrant arts community and several top-notch athletic programs. Not to mention all the attractions — like Downtown Disney and Knott’s Berry Farm — that are just a stone’s throw from the campus.

Cypress College Programs of Study

- **Transfer program** — Transfer to a California State University campus, the University of California or other top universities
- **Associate Degree Program** — Popular majors include culinary arts, hotel & restaurant management, airline & travel careers, automotive technology and mortuary science. Many more are available.
- **Certificate Program** — Earn a certificate of proficiency in a specific occupational area.

For more information visit: CypressCollege.edu or send e-mail to: international@CypressCollege.edu
colleges and universities are all accredited by the same six regional accreditation agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that institutions meet or exceed the criteria of educational quality. It is very important that the college you are planning to attend is regionally accredited. Universities accept transferred course credits only from other accredited institutions. Furthermore, most ministries of education around the world will recognize a degree only if it is awarded by an accredited higher education institution. You can determine whether the college you are applying to is accredited by checking the Web site of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Note: All community colleges listed in this publication are regionally accredited institutions (see page 95).

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security Certification**

International students are eligible to attend only U.S. colleges and universities that are approved by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Such institutions, commonly referred to as Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)-approved or SEVIS-certified, are required by the U.S. government to supply information about international students to SEVIS—an Internet-based system that tracks and monitors schools and programs, students, and their dependents throughout a student’s stay in the United States. This information is also provided to the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Before applying to a college, determine whether it is approved by SEVP. Note: All community colleges listed in this publication are SEVP-approved institutions (see page 95).

**Consult the Best Sources for Information and Assistance**

Applying to college can initially seem overwhelming, but many resources are available to help you in the process. This section describes some of the most useful resources in detail.

**CommunityCollegeUSA.com**

This Web site provides an overview about community colleges and lists colleges that might be right for you. Many community colleges post their information in English and other major languages, with links to their individual Web sites. CommunityCollegeUSA.com allows you to search for institutions by subject area, geographical preference, or other criteria. You can also request information directly from a
college and, in some cases, apply online. Many colleges have their entire course catalog online so you can see what classes are offered, and some offer virtual tours of their campuses. Here is a sampling of what you can find at CommunityCollegeUSA.com

- Complete resource guide to education in the United States
- List of colleges that welcome international students
- Admissions office contact information for 100 featured colleges

- College fair information
- Information about transfer to 4-year colleges and universities
- Information about specific programs: ESL, summer, vocational–career, computer and technology, and short-term–certificate programs; internships, TOEFL, and test preparation classes

**EducationUSA**

EducationUSA is a worldwide network of more than 450 advising centers that are affiliated with the U.S. Department of State. Its purpose is to help students find and apply to U.S. community colleges as well as to 4-year colleges and universities. Centers are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright commissions, binational centers, nongovernmental organizations, libraries, and universities. See page 83 for a list of EducationUSA coordinators around the world. Centers are staffed by professional advisers, many of whom have studied in the United States or have received U.S. Department of State-approved

continued on page 34
More international students choose Houston Community College than any other community college in the United States.

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training for higher education advising. Information and materials available through the Web site or at the centers include

- College catalogs
- Online tours of colleges
- Schedules for TOEFL, IELTS, and other tests
- College fair information
- Workshops and seminars
- Visa information
- Publications available in PDF format (see the box on the right)

Advisers, who are not agents or recruiters, give students free, accurate, impartial information about the full range of accredited higher education institutions in the United States and help students find the best options to meet their education, financial, and professional goals. An adviser can personally assist you in

- Researching an institution
- Identifying financial aid opportunities
- Understanding the admissions process

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**Free Publications From EducationUSA**

*If You Want to Study in the United States* is a series of four introductory booklets produced by the U.S. Department of State that provide objective and practical advice to prospective international students and scholars about studying in the United States. All four booklets can be downloaded from the EducationUSA Web site. Print copies of only booklets 1, 2, and 3 are available from U.S. Educational Advising/Information Centers worldwide.

The four booklets are

1. *Undergraduate Study*;
2. *Graduate and Professional Study and Research*;
3. *Short-Term Study, English Language Programs, Distance Education, and Accreditation*; and
4. *Getting Ready to Go: Practical Information for Living and Studying in the United States*. Booklet 4 provides invaluable advice on applying for a visa, moving to the United States, and what to expect when you arrive on campus. It is available only at the U.S. Department of State Web site. (Note: A portion of the information in this section is based on Booklet 1.)
Selecting a U.S. Community College

- Applying for a student visa
- Preparing for a visa interview
- Obtaining specialized services offered by some centers (e.g., essay-writing workshops or document verification)

**College Web Sites and E-Mail**

U.S. colleges and universities have Web sites that offer a wide range of information about degree programs, application procedures, academic departments, facilities on campus, and other topics. In many cases, the college catalogs are also included. Some institutions may also give e-mail addresses for current students, including international students, to answer your questions about the college and about living in the United States. Once you have decided which colleges you are interested in, you can e-mail admissions personnel to ask specific questions before you decide where to apply.

**College Fairs**

Representatives of community colleges may come from the United States to your country to participate in college fairs or specially arranged seminars where you can talk face to face with them. Your nearest EducationUSA advising center can tell you about upcoming college fairs in your country. Many fairs take place in the fall or spring; it is important to start your research at least the year before you intend to start your studies.

**Campus Visits**

Be sure to visit a community college campus if you are able to travel to the United States before choosing a college. Many colleges organize campus tours led by current students; check with the undergraduate admissions office for further information and to schedule a visit. We recommend that you visit the academic and housing facilities, student union, and library to get a good sense of the campus. Speaking with current students on campus is another important part of the visit.

**Other Sources of Information**

- Guidance counselors at your current high school can often help. Ask whether there is anyone in the guidance or advising office who works with U.S. college and university applications.
- You may have friends, relatives, or alumni from your current high school who have studied in the United States. Ask them for help. If you do not know anyone personally, ask friends and classmates if they know someone who has studied in the United States.
Your Journey
BEGINS...

...IN A DYNAMIC, WORLD-CLASS CITY
WITH A VASTLY DIVERSE POPULATION.

Lone Star College System is among the largest comprehensive community college systems in Texas, located north of Houston, the fourth largest city in the United States.

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LSC-North Harris    LSC-Tomball
LSC-University Center

Affirmative Action/EEO College District

LoneStar.edu