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## **Campus Newsletter: UTK Guidelines on Foreign Student Enrollment**

Commission for Blacks

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE GUIDELINES ON FOREIGN STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Traditionally, the presence of foreign students on American university campuses has been supported for at least four reasons: learning and knowledge are universal and our society benefits from the fullest interactions with the world's diversity; universities of the world's most developed countries have an obligation to assist in the higher education of students from countries where comparable facilities are not available; students from abroad who attend U. S. colleges and universities acquire a personal understanding of our society, people, and way of life; and, finally, students from abroad provide domestic students with an exposure to, and opportunity to benefit from the diversity of our interdependent world.

Events of the recent past have made all persons more aware than ever before of the sizable number of foreign students in our country and on our campus. While the presence of foreign students is recognized as a concrete testimony to the University of Tennessee's commitment to the interdependence of our world, it is also evident that the most valuable educational experience can be obtained when students from many countries and all regions of the world are enrolled. Likewise, it is beneficial to enroll at least a few foreign students in all departments instead of having concentrated foreign enrollment in only a few disciplines.

The following guidelines are designed to facilitate the attainment of these objectives while at the same time recognizing that unique requirements and opportunities may either exist or develop in individual academic units. Flexibility in the application and interpretation of these guidelines will insure that they are in harmony with and contribute to the overall objectives of the University.

### CURRENT SITUATION

The University of Tennessee has enrolled students from foreign countries for more than 50 years. After enriching the lives and education of the domestic students, many foreign students have returned to positions of leadership in their homelands and others are now valued members of our own society. Recent events, including issuance of the President's Commission Report on Foreign Language and International Studies and the seizing of the U. S. Embassy in Iran, have emphasized the crucial need for the academic community to provide its students with an understanding of the aspirations, cultures, societies, and traditions of peoples of the outside world.

### PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

1. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, wishes to enroll students from foreign countries as wide a range of disciplines as possible.

It is preferable to enroll foreign students from a broad range of countries than to enroll large numbers from a few countries.

It is better to have a modest number of foreign students enrolled in a variety of disciplines than a large number in a few fields of study.

When there are more than about 50 — 100 students enrolled from any one foreign country, such a group is less likely to interact actively with the rest of the student body than do students from countries with smaller representation.

2. In evaluating foreign candidates for admission, attention should be given to factors in addition to academic achievement, English competence, and financial ability, to insure a broad range of nationalities being represented on campus.

3. Measures should be taken to increase the number of foreign students in those disciplines and from those countries from which few are presently enrolled. Suggested ways of doing this are through the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) and other bi-lateral exchange programs being developed by the Division of International Education, as well as sending informational and application materials to bi-national centers and informational libraries in the countries from which greater representation is desired.

4. No steps should be taken to reduce abruptly the number of foreign students enrolled in disciplines in which they may be currently over-represented. Changes should come about through graduation, normal attrition, and selectivity in the admissions process.

5. It is important in establishing any guidelines regarding a target figure for percentages of foreign enrollment to specify the percentage within disciplines apart from the University as a whole. Otherwise, the total University could well meet its desired percentage of foreign enrollment, while in selected disciplines foreign students may be over-represented and in others under-represented.

6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of these guidelines and measurement of attainment of these enrollment objectives should be based on information gathered by the Office of International Student Affairs in conjunction with the Admissions Office and the Graduate School during each Fall Quarter and used in evaluation of applicants for the subsequent Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall Quarters.

7. Exceptions to these guidelines may be justified in special cases, such as University participation in international projects having a heavy component of participant training, or funded research commitments. However, it is expected that such exceptions will be subject to documentation in an established process which shall be developed.

Because at the graduate level admissions decisions are made primarily in the departments, departmental needs must be considered carefully in the monitoring of these guidelines.

#### GUIDELINES

1. Only foreign nationals holding non-immigrant visas shall be considered foreign students. Not included in this definition are American citizens of foreign birth, permanent resident aliens (immigrants), refugees, and domestic ethnic minorities whose first language is other than English.

2. Total foreign student enrollment may increase from present numbers but should not exceed 5 percent of the total head-count enrollment at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (For Fall Quarter 1980, the foreign student enrollment was slightly over 3 percent of the Knoxville day total enrollment.)

3. Total graduate foreign student enrollment may increase but should not exceed 10 percent of the total graduate student head-count enrollment. (Fall 1980, 379 foreign students were enrolled in the Graduate School. These students comprised 6 percent of the total enrollment of 5,857.)

It is recognized that within the total foreign graduate student body, a greater number of foreign students will enroll in some disciplines than others. Yet, through coordinated recruitment efforts it will be possible to enroll qualified foreign students in programs where they are currently under-represented. Reducing enrollment in fields where there are presently large concentrations may be more difficult. However, it is desirable to maintain foreign enrollment at a figure with 20 percent of the graduate student enrollment in each school, department, degree program or interdepartmental program.

4. Total undergraduate foreign student enrollment should approach, but not exceed, 3 percent of the total undergraduate head count. (This compares with the 2 percent which foreign students comprise of the current undergraduate enrollment.)

While it is desirable that total undergraduate foreign enrollment should comprise up to 3 percent of the total undergraduate headcount, foreign undergraduates might comprise up to 15 percent of the undergraduate majors in given departments, or 10 percent of a given college's enrollment.

5. Experience has shown that the international and cross-cultural interpersonal interaction we desire on this campus is most likely to occur when a wide range of nationalities and ethnic groups are enrolled and when no single nationality or geopolitical region predominates.

Accordingly, no more than 5 percent of the total foreign national enrollment should be composed of students from any one country, and no more than 75 students should be enrolled from any single country.

(MORE)

It is recognized that the reduction in representation from some countries should occur gradually through selectivity in the admissions process, normal attrition and graduation of current students. Differentials in admissions standards and attention to the objectives of these guidelines, however, will insure that a truly representative international enrollment will in time be found on our campus.

The preceding guidelines are to be viewed as principles. It is recognized that rigid implementation is undesirable. Yet, through the comprehensive monitoring process mentioned earlier, reports will be made quarterly on attainment of the objectives of this proposal. If agreements can be reached on these principles and objectives, it is assumed that individual academic units will endeavor to be in general compliance. Unless concurrence can be reached on principles governing foreign student enrollment, there can be no effective institutional posture. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is proud of its involvement to date in international education, and it is from this tradition that we are moving to more systematically enroll foreign students and thereby more fully realize the benefits of their presence on our campus.

APPROVED: Graduate Council  
Undergraduate Council  
Faculty Senate

October 22, 1981  
November 12, 1981  
January 18, 1982

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