

# EWC STUDENT PROGRAMS ATTRACT MOST DIVERSE GROUP IN CENTER'S HISTORY



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Coming from 49 countries across the globe and supported by a variety of funding sources, undergraduate through doctoral students are drawn to this “hub for cooperative research, education, and dialogue” to explore the critical issues affecting the rapidly transforming Asia Pacific region.

In 2005, the EWC student community grew to 432 — the largest group of students at the Center in over 30

years. As the number of students has increased, so has the diversity of countries represented, rising from 35 countries five years ago to 49 countries in 2005 — making it the largest international representation in the history of the Center. In past years, the student fellows were primarily from the United States or the Asia Pacific region, whereas

now student fellows come from all parts of the globe including countries such as Ecuador, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe.

Diversity is also reflected in the cultural, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds of the students as well as in the range of degrees sought, from undergraduate through doctoral studies. In 2005, students were supported by a wider array of funding sources, with over 340 students receiving competitive, merit-based scholarships — more than double the number of recipients only five years ago. Another milestone is reflected in the growth in private and

“The EWC is really making a difference in the world by providing opportunities for future world leaders to learn from each other and work together to improve the world that we live in.”

**TONY VAEFANGA  
SIAMOMUA**  
a U.S.-South Pacific  
Scholarship Program  
student from Samoa

“Before, all I knew was my country, Burma; then the East-West Center opened my eyes and now I feel I belong to the whole world.”

**SOE NAING**  
an Asia Pacific  
Leadership Program  
alumna from Burma



public funding support for EWC student programs. Now there are 14 scholarship sources, which also more than doubles the number of funders in 2000.

The Ford Foundation, through its International Fellowships Program (IFP), is continuing its partnership with the EWC in helping to fund exceptional men and women from marginalized populations in rural and remote areas throughout the Asia Pacific region. Gao Song, an award-winning senior reporter and IFP scholar from Guizhou Province, China expressed, “From what I learned at the East-West Center, I believe I will be a better journalist, working to improve understanding between China and the rest of the world.”

The U.S.- East Timor and U.S.- South Pacific Scholarship programs provide support for academically talented undergraduate and graduate students from these island nations to study in the United States. These U.S. State Department funded programs are designed to prepare young leaders to contribute to the political, social, and economic development of their countries. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) scholarships add to the diversity at the Center by attracting students from countries not covered in other EWC scholarships. In 2005 an ADB scholarship enabled the first student from Azerbaijan to join the EWC community. Zarina Chekirbaeva, an ADB scholar from Kyrgyzstan shared her thoughts, “The East-West Center makes you live together with people your country might have conflict with...[and] you end up



*New dean of education, Mary Hammond (right), with EWC students at the annual EWC Foundation dinner.*

thinking of each other, not as nations, but as human beings...that you are just like me.”

The congressionally funded East-West Center Graduate Degree Fellowship continues to draw outstanding students from the United States, Asia, and the Pacific for master’s or doctoral studies. Through generous support from the Freeman Foundation, the Asia Pacific Leadership Program is expanding each year, attracting more young leaders from around the world.

Thinley Choden, an Asia Pacific Leadership Program alumna from Bhutan, returned to study on an East-West Center Graduate Degree Fellowship. Between these programs she worked for the United Nations World Food Program. Reflecting on her experience, Choden expressed, “The East-West Center transforms the way you look at things.”

“The East-West Center has touched my life.... Living and learning in the company of Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Americans caused me to reflect upon my own cultural identity and role as an Asian-American born in Hawai’i.”

**MITSUYO LANI SUZUKI**  
an Asia Pacific  
Leadership Program  
alumna from U.S.A.