

International Students Feel Right at Home

There are 77 students who are studying at NHCC this semester through the U.S. government's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). These international students in F-1 status – or F-1 students, for short – hail from 35 countries with the top four 'countries of origin' being Kenya (10), Vietnam (7), Nigeria (6) and India (6).

Participating F-1 students must pursue full-time study and are ineligible for any government loans or grants to pay their tuition. Despite these academic and financial challenges, many students are highly successful in the classroom and extremely active in extra-curricular activities. Jonghwan Lee from the Republic of South Korea, and Vilma Topuzi from Albania, are two such students.

Jonghwan chose to apply at NHCC because it was affordable. Now he is in his fourth semester. During his tenure, he has taken advantage of the many programs offered at NHCC that have helped him enhance his English. "I have taken ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] classes and used the Writing Center tutors a lot! All of my ESOL instructors have been significant in my success as a student."

Vilma has a sister who lives near NHCC, so for her, the college's location was perfect. She started NHCC last fall. In the past year alone, she too has utilized many student resources. "My ESOL classes helped me improve my English and better understand my other classes. I have also taken part in book clubs and writing programs, and used the Math Resource



Center and physics tutors. Now, I'm in the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa. Scott Johnson, the International Student Advisor, has provided me with invaluable support along the way!"

In addition to school, Jonghwan currently works on campus as a Student Ambassador. "When I was a new student, a student ambassador introduced me to others and made me feel welcome. I strive to help others in the same way." He is the current President of the International Student Club.

Vilma also works on campus in the Recreational Activities Office. "It's a good fit for me since I'm athletic and enjoy sports, especially volleyball. I played on the NHCC Volleyball Team and was also a

member of the Student Running Club." She is the current Vice-President of the International Student Club.

Jonghwan is a 2009 recipient of the NHCC Academic Excellence Award. He is on track to complete his generals at NHCC this coming spring and plans to transfer to a four year institution to pursue a

major in accounting.

Vilma will also complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Her goal is to transfer to the University of Minnesota and complete a Civil Engineering degree with a focus on Structural Engineering, perhaps earn a Masters or even a PhD.

Both Jonghwan and Vilma agree that the diverse and friendly environment, as well as all the opportunities NHCC has to offer, are the things they like best here.

NHCC encourages qualified persons from around the world to apply. For more information, contact Scott Johnson, NHCC International Student Advisor, at scott.johnson@nhcc.edu or 763-424-0703.