

I'll admit it, I'm not a world traveler. I did not have a passport until 2010 when one of the meetings I usually attend as President of NCCC was hosted in Canada. I have only been out of the country for vacation once and that was on a Disney cruise. It's hard to think you are immersing yourself in another culture when Mickey Mouse is your tour guide. In fact, I did not fly on a plane until I was a college graduate (and that was just from Tulsa to Dallas).

I'll bet my experience with foreign cultures is much like many of our students at NCCC. Many have rarely left the State of Kansas (except maybe to the "Missouri side" to see a ballgame), much less have traveled to international destinations.

You have heard, "Travel broadens the mind," but I prefer this quote from Mark Twain:

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

Unfortunately, Mr. Twain, most of our students can't afford to travel the world to have these awesome experiences. So how do we bring the world to our students? Enter the international student.

We love International students at NCCC! They bring such cultural diversity to our college and contribute in so many ways.

International students add a great deal to class discussions bringing a new perspective on just about everything to our Kansas students. They give presentations on their home countries to our students, which provide some excellent out-of-class learning.

Through the Youth for Understanding program, host families in Chanute take in students from around the world. What they get back is a shared cultural experience for both the student and the family that opened their home. If you are interested in being a host family we would LOVE to talk to you about it! My email is at the bottom of this article.

The International Club also helps with community support helping with food drives, Chanute community events and recently put on a WONDERFUL dinner featuring foods from home countries. It's one of my favorite events of the year!

And some are student athletes as well. Our international athletes have performed well both in class and on the field. Much of our recent success in men's soccer, track and field, and men's basketball is due in some part to wonderful on-field international performers. One of our former track and field athletes, John Ampomah from Ghana, even threw Javelin in the Rio Olympics this past summer.

When the students go back to their home countries they go back with a much better understanding of what "real" Americans are like, not the way we are often represented in the media, both foreign and domestic. They take home our culture too, and tell others about what America is really like. That helps spread our ideals of freedom and justice to the world in a peaceful, effective way.

And, international students contribute financially to NCCC.

International students pay twice as much per credit hour than a Kansas resident. They often live in our residence hall as well, bringing in additional revenue. But their economic impact goes well beyond just tuition, fees and housing.

NAFSA, the association of international educators looked at the economic impact for just one year in Kansas. Kansas colleges and universities hosted over 10,000 international students who contributed over \$247 million dollars to the State's economy. NAFSA estimates that this collective impact supports over 2,500 jobs for the institutions. Wow! That's a lot.

Of the 51 private and public colleges and universities in Kansas, NCCC ranked 19th on the NAFSA financial impact list with over \$750,000 brought in from international students in one year when you add both the Chanute and Ottawa campuses. For our size, we outperformed colleges and universities much larger than us!

Currently at NCCC we have 62 students from 22 countries representing 6 continents. That's a great deal of cultural diversity we bring to Eastern Kansas every year. It's easy to see why we are very proud of our international student population!

Thanks to Sarah Cadwallader, our Director of International Student Services, for helping to have this impact! She gets lots of help from Ottawa, too – Kyle Bures, Sally Sudja, Tristan Jones, Paulette Parriott, and Marcy Dix just to name a few.

We will continue to bring in international students from the four corners of the world to bring greater diversity to NCCC, and add financial support, while spreading American values back to those home countries. Travel broadens the mind, but so does inviting new cultures and good people into your home.

If you have any questions or comments on this or anything else, please write me at binbody@neosho.edu.