



# Press Release

Contact:

Columbia College President, Dr. Lena Tran  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Columbia College Approved to Host International Students**

Columbia College is thrilled to announce that they will soon begin hosting international students, starting in the Spring semester of 2023. The international students will be on an F-1 nonimmigrant visa, which will allow them to pursue an AS or AA degree at Columbia College. International students will be required to be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units per semester, while maintaining satisfactory academic progress. If the students wish to work, they will only be approved for on-campus employment their first year. Off-campus employment will be permitted after the students' first year as long as it is related to the students' major and is approved by a Columbia College Designated School Official.

President of Columbia College, Dr. Lena Tran shared her excitement, stating "The opportunity to serve international students at Columbia College will bring deeply expansive, personally enriching experiences to our students through the opportunity to enjoy contact with rich cultures and traditions. It will be an exciting adventure for all involved – an inspiring encounter that will enhance the college through priceless transformative learning experiences that will profoundly impact us individually and as a learning community."

Getting the approval to host international students has been a long process. In 2019, Vice President of Student Services, Dr. Melissa Raby, petitioned for Columbia College to have certification to host F-1 nonimmigrant students through the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP). The site visit took place in 2021 and the college was approved in 2022. "It has been my goal to start an international program at Columbia College since I started here and I am pleased to see it is finally happening," shared Dr. Raby.

"We welcome the opportunity to make international connections and develop new relationships," shared Program Specialist for Career and International Services, Mary Watts. "Our students, faculty, staff and community will benefit from exposure to diverse cultural backgrounds, customs, and traditions as we share with students from around the world."

Columbia College will host an International Information Session on Monday, November 14 from 3pm-4pm in its Manzanita Multipurpose Room to go over the new International Student Programs and Services. There will also be an International Open House on Tuesday, November 15 – Wednesday November 16 in Manzanita 201. Staff, students, and community members are welcome to attend either to learn more about the international program.

For more information, please contact: [ccinternational@yosemite.edu](mailto:ccinternational@yosemite.edu) / 209-588-5234 or review the international website for Columbia College: <https://www.gocolumbia.edu/international/>.