

Hawaii typically comes to mind when you are thinking of a holiday, but it is also a good example of diversity and harmony in the United States — two traits which draw international students besides foreign visitors.

However, a recent survey of 250 institutions of higher education across the US by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers reported a nearly 40 percent decline in overall applications from international students seeking to study in the US.

Yet, despite the setback, Hawaii is still providing a draw for international students.

A survey by the US Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism and the Research and Economic Analysis Division, shows that Japan is the top country of origin for Hawaii's international students, while China comes in at third place.

Xiao Qingsong, a 10th-grade student at the Maui Preparatory Academy loves Hawaii.

Speaking about his experiences in Hawaii, he says: "With a better living environment, relatively clean air, and less pressure from my studies, I am pleased to be studying here."

Xiao, who recalls that he did not get enough time to play piano back home three years ago, says: "Now, I have more time to practice the piano, and I am making a lot of progress."

Moreover, Xiao has more choices when it comes to outdoor sports — like surfing — he says.

Scott Siegfried, the vice-president of External Affairs at the Mid-Pacific Institute, says around 6 percent of their students are international students, and the majority are from Asian countries.

"One reason why international students choose Hawaii is proximity," says Siegfried.

# HAVEN FOR STUDENTS

Safety, the weather, cultural diversity and convenient transportation options are some of the reasons why Hawaii is a big draw for young people. **Palden Nyima and Zhao Ruixue** report.



**Top:** A view of the Pacific from Diamond Head State Park in Hawaii. **PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY** **Left:** Gary Greenberg, a staff member at the Institute for Astronomy, Maui College of the University of Hawaii, shows photos of moon sand samples seen under astronomical microscope. **Right:** Students at the Mid-Pacific Institute work on making parachutes. **PHOTOS BY PALDEN NYIMA AND ZHAO RUIXUE / CHINA DAILY**

"Besides, Hawaii is a very safe place. And I think all this is a very natural fit for students."

Mindu Lham, a Bhutanese undergraduate student at the

University of Hawaii, says Hawaii offers a good environment, especially for Asians.

"Also, as it is relatively near to Asia, it is easy for travel. And

its weather and beautiful environment are some of the other factors why people choose to study here," says Lham.

Hawaii not only lets inter-

national students gain qualifications, but also helps local Hawaiian students gain global exposure.

Dawn Amano-Ige, the first

“One reason why international students choose Hawaii is proximity.”

Scott Siegfried, vice-president of External Affairs at Mid-Pacific Institute

lady of Hawaii and an educator, says international students are important for the development of Hawaiian students.

"When we have students

coming from different parts of the world to Hawaii, they learn about native Hawaiian culture and language. And I think that it helps to make for a better world," she says.

"The more we understand cultures, languages and beliefs, the better we can appreciate each other."

For now, although China ranks third in student numbers with 695 Chinese students in Hawaii, according to an official survey, many of the state's schools are still interested in attracting more Chinese students.

Speaking about the issue, Judy Ensing, the program director of Outreach College, University of Hawaii, says: "The main challenge for us is that people in China don't really know about the kind of programs we have."

"And I think the hard part is to get the word out to them."

Speaking about the push, Hokulani Holt, the director of UH Maui College, says: "Our college provides students with opportunities to use their knowledge, interact with people from all over the world and learn skills that you can use to improve your life and that of the whole family."

According to the Study Hawaii Education Consortium, some of the reasons why Hawaii is sought by international students are safety, the weather, cultural diversity, and convenient transportation options.

According to the 2017 Hawaii International Education Survey by the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism of Hawaii, international students in Hawaii are also a contributor to its economy.

As of 2017, Hawaii had a total of 10,803 international students, and more than \$484 million was added to the state's total economic output over the year, according to DBEDT.

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## International Education Column

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