



International students with an adviser from Whatcom Community College skiing at Mt. Baker Ski Area in Washington State.

Something New

YOU NEVER FORGET THE FIRST TIME YOU SEE SNOW—the taste, the smell—its utter expansiveness. Some even call it a “transcendental experience.” Snow, for students from most of Africa and Central America, is almost mythical in its elusiveness. It is an alien landscape of breathtaking beauty and harshness. Every year we take international students to the legendary Mt. Baker—holder of world-record snowfall. The students are in pure awe as we snake up and up through colossal snow banks. Boots are strapped on, bindings tightened, stocking caps pulled down—foreign gear in a foreign environment. At first they are hesitant, unsure of how to approach this

new challenge. But slowly the magic happens: smiles of such magnitude and brilliance, howling laughter, dark on light. Our fearless students are dedicated to the experience—embracing a culture that is so dear to us Northerners and so strange to them. This is the international experience in its purest form: throwing yourself headfirst into the unknown and emerging braver, more confident, and humbler, with senses heightened, and a burning desire for further exploration of self and place. In the end I’m not sure who is more transformed—us or them. **IE**

IRIS METZGEN-OHLWAGER, international programs manager and student adviser, Whatcom Community College

YOU'RE INVITED! We invite you to submit your photos along with a brief (approximately 200 words) description of why these images are important in your understanding of a person, place, idea, or incident from your experiences in international education. The photos could be of a simple moment on your home campus involving international students, a major event in an exotic location, or anything in between. The editors of *International Educator* will run selections on this page throughout the year. Please contact us for submission details at elainal@nafsa.org.