



Coping With Uncertainty:
**American Colleges &
International Students**

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In 2007, Kaplan International formed a new and innovative partnership with a U.S. university to launch an on-campus pathway program. It was the first partnership of its kind in the United States.

In the years following, dozens of US universities formed similar partnerships with other private companies for on-campus pathways to meet the exponential increase in demand for US higher education from students who required language, academic and cultural support.

While the number of on-campus pathway options proliferated, many other US universities sought to increase their international brand awareness in a variety of ways. These included working with international recruitment agents, lowering their academic entry requirements and waiving standardized tests for international students. What all of these universities had in common, irrespective of the methods they deployed, was a desire to effectively recruit international students, both to enrich campus diversity and experience and to contribute additional funding to the university.

For some universities, their international recruiting efforts have provided the global diversity and the critically important funding they had hoped for. But many have been disappointed by the academic quality and diversity of these students, as well as their ability to integrate successfully into the university. Colleges and universities have realized they face an array of challenges with regards to the recruitment of high-value international students. Some of these challenges are outlined below:

- Not all international students are a good fit for a particular institution, and formulaic approaches have limited ability to solve this problem. Determining the necessary skills, language proficiency and pre-requisites needed for them to succeed can be more difficult than assessing domestic applicants.
- It is difficult both to design the appropriate academic and support systems needed for international students and to build them effectively.
- Helping international students assimilate into the university community is extremely important for both their individual success and to ensure benefits for other students on campus.
- It is important to ensure that the academic needs of international students do not compromise the education experience of domestic students.

It is clear to us that in 2017, due to fierce global competition for international undergraduates and the current perceived geopolitical risk surrounding the United States as a higher education destination for students, universities that wish to recruit better quality and more international students may well require a different, more creative and innovative solution.

Kaplan International is firmly committed to university partnership activities, and it is an area of strategic importance for us. Over the last 10 years, we have developed a world-leading global student recruitment network, along with a number of flexible and creative models that support pathway, transnational education and online delivery activities with university partners. Last year we recruited almost 100,000 international students globally. Kaplan International is part of Kaplan, Inc. – one of the world's most dynamic and innovative private education companies and a subsidiary of the Graham Holdings Company.

We hope these articles and commentaries by a wide range of experts provide a greater understanding of the fast-evolving international higher education landscape. Should you wish to explore ways in which your institution can develop a more flexible international recruitment strategy please do get in touch.

Mary Jane Miller

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Introduction

American higher education has increasingly come to depend on international undergraduates, who diversify student bodies, contribute to the undergraduate experience ... and bring much needed tuition revenue. The election of President Trump, whose rhetoric and actions have angered many around the world, has left American colleges and universities increasingly worried about the flow of international students.

At the same time, American colleges see enrollments from some countries rise and others fall for reasons having nothing to do with the views of whoever lives in the White House. And colleges face pressure to better serve students from all over the world.

The articles in this compilation examine some of these trends and how they are playing out at various colleges and universities – at a time of considerable uncertainty.

Inside Higher Ed will continue to track these issues, and welcomes your comments on this compilation and ideas for future coverage.

--The Editors

editor@insidehighered.com



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Will International Students Stay Away?

BY ELIZABETH REDDEN // MARCH 13, 2017

Four in 10 colleges see drops in applications from international students amid pervasive concerns that the political climate might keep them away.

Nearly 40 percent of U.S. colleges are seeing declines in applications from international students, and international student recruitment professionals report “a great deal of concern” from students and their families about visas and perceptions of a less welcoming climate in the U.S., according to a survey conducted in February by multiple higher education groups.

More than 250 American colleges and universities responded to the survey, which was initiated in response to concerns among international educators “that the political discourse surrounding foreign nationals in the U.S. leading up to the November 2016 U.S. presidential election could be damaging to international student recruitment efforts,” according to a press release about the initial, top-line findings (a full report on the results, with more detail, is scheduled to be released at the end of the month).



Thirty-eight percent of institutions responding to the survey reported a decline in their total number of international applications across both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Another 35 percent reported an increase, and 27 percent reported no change.

While a majority of institutions are not seeing decreases, steady increases in international applications and ensuing enrollments have become the norm for many colleges. And many institutions have based their financial plans in part on

sustained increases in enrollments of full-paying international undergraduates.

The highest reported declines involved applications from the Middle East. Thirty-nine percent of universities reported declines in undergraduate applications from the Middle East, while 31 percent reported declines in graduate applications. Fall enrollment numbers from the region will likely be hard hit by President Trump’s [executive order](#) barring entry by nationals of six countries from the Middle East and Africa --

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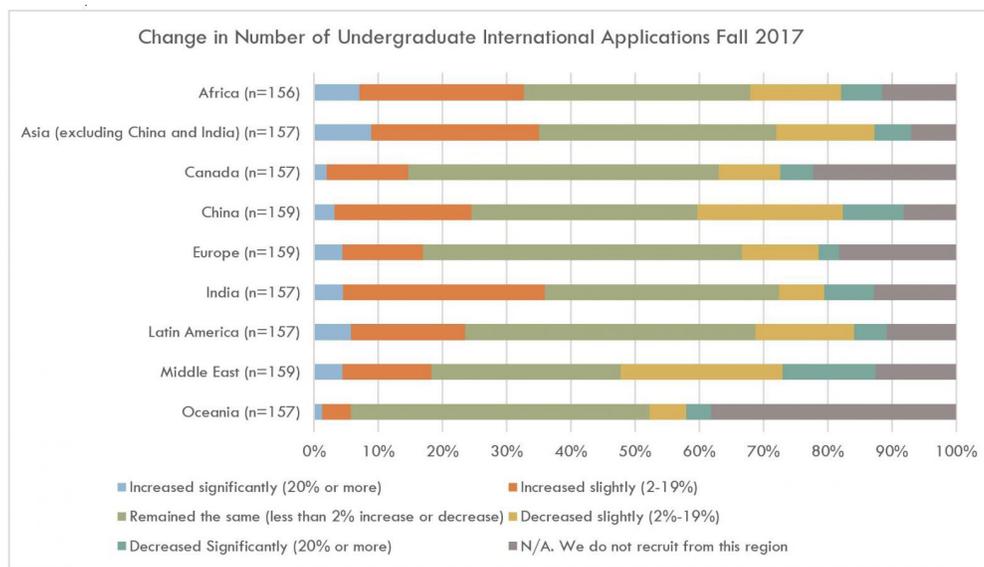
including Iran, the [11th-leading country of origin](#) for international students in the U.S.

But it's also worth noting that the number of students from Saudi Arabia, the third-leading country of origin, had already been dropping prior to the presidential election, a decline many colleges attribut-

ed to changes in the Saudi government's foreign scholarship program. The number of Saudi students in the U.S. [fell by nearly 20 percent in fall 2016](#) compared to the fall before, according to student visa data.

Many universities responding to the survey also reported drops in applications from China and India, respectively the top two countries from which international students in the U.S. hail. The two countries, together, account for nearly half of all international students in the U.S.

A quarter of universities responding to the survey reported declines in undergraduate applications from China, and 32 percent reported declines in Chinese graduate applications. As for India, 26 percent reported declines in undergraduate applications from the country, and 15 percent reported declines in graduate applications.



Data from the joint AACRAO, IACAC, IIE, NACAC and NAFSA survey.

At the same time, universities reported hearing concerns from students and families, particularly those from the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. The press release about the findings notes that the most frequently cited concerns are:

- "Perception of a rise in student visa denials at U.S. embassies and consulates in China, India and Nepal."
- "Perception that the climate in the U.S. is now less welcoming to individuals from other countries."
- "Concerns that benefits and restrictions around visas could change, especially around the ability to travel, re-entry after travel and employment opportunities."
- "Concerns that the executive order travel ban might expand to include additional countries."

The survey was conducted by the

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Institute of International Education, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, and NACAC's internationally focused subgroup, International

ACAC. More than three-quarters of institutions responding to the survey -- 77 percent -- are concerned about yield, that is, how many applicants accept an admissions offer and enroll.

In interviews with *Inside Higher Ed*, enrollment managers and senior international officers said yield is what they're watching. Many international students would have already submitted their applications to U.S. colleges prior to Trump's assumption of the presidency and the imposition of his ban on entry for nationals of six Muslim-majority countries: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Walter Caffey, vice president for enrollment management at the University of New Haven, said the institution is seeing an increase in international undergraduate applications, specifically from Brazil, Chi-

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na, India and Vietnam, an increase he attributes to expanded recruitment efforts. “We are definitely seeing some positive signs in terms of international applications but at the same time we are certainly hearing from prospective students a little bit of concern,” Caffey said. “We’re certainly fielding more questions about safety and security and our campus community.”

“From my perspective, what that says to me is although our applications are a positive, if once the fall comes and we’re not able to enroll the students that we would expect to enroll based on our applications, some of these concerns might be taking hold. We just won’t know until that happens,” Caffey said.

At the graduate level, New Haven is seeing a decrease in applications from India, a decline that Caffey said started a year ago “as we heard about more students having a difficult time obtaining visas to study here in the States.”

Portland State University reports a 27 percent drop in the number of Indian students applying to its graduate programs for the fall. Most of the Indian applicants to the university are looking to attend computer

science or engineering programs.

Wim Wiewel, Portland State’s president, talked with prospective students during a previously scheduled trip to India this month. Throughout most of his meetings in Bangalore, Hyderabad and New Delhi, he didn’t hear much about Trump’s travel ban and the political climate in the U.S. more generally.

“But in a meeting in Hyderabad with about 10 students already admitted to our graduate engineering

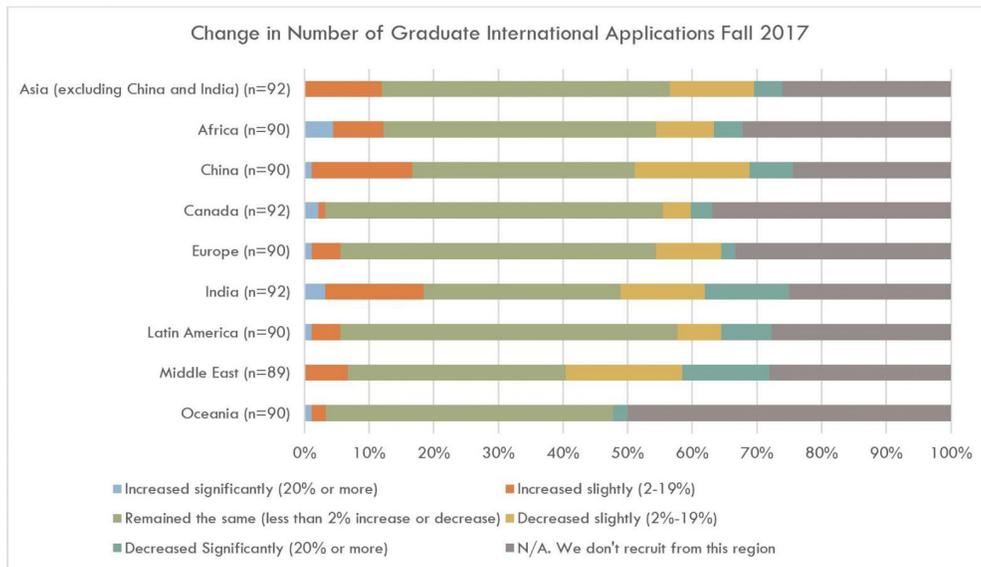
just wanted to be reassured and will in fact come.”

“I’d say the rhetoric and actual executive orders are definitely having a chilling effect on decisions by current applicants/admitted students, and by extension are likely to affect future applicants as well,” Wiewel said. “However, we were struck by how much U.S. higher education is still considered the holy grail, and that especially in the southern half of India almost every middle class

family seems to have a relative in the U.S. ... Thus, if nothing too bad happens in the future we will recover from this, but people are watching.”

There are other factors that could be at play behind application drops from India: Wiewel noted India’s demonetization policy and the

weakness of the value of the rupee against the dollar. And the type of U.S. policy that could affect international student flows need not be as dramatic as a travel ban. During his travels through India, Wiewel heard concerns from students about possible changes to the H-1B skilled worker visa program, which international students see as one of the few pathways to permanent work and residency in the U.S. At the same



Data from the joint AACRAO, IACAC, IIE, NACAC and NAFSA survey.

program it was different,” Wiewel said over email. According to Wiewel, one student, a Muslim, said his father ‘didn’t want him to go now because of America’s anti-Muslim attitude.’ Several of the others said they had ‘some concerns about the Trump effect.’ Once we talked about how welcoming Portland and the U.S. are, and that surely India has its own history of issues, they seemed to feel better. I’m pretty sure they

time, Wiewel said, Trump's address to Congress in which he [called for a "merit-based" immigration system](#) got played up in the press as something that could help Indians.

John J. Wood, the senior associate vice provost for international education, at the State University of New York at Buffalo, said a lot of universities are concerned about declines in master's students from India.

"A lot of the master's students coming from India are ultimately hoping to get on the job market here through OPT and eventually H-1B," Wood said, referring first to the optional practical training program, which allows international students to work for one to three years on their student visas after graduation.

"There's a lot of fear and anxiety about potential changes to H-1B and/or OPT that would limit their opportunities. Making the decision to invest in a master's program when the uncertainty on the other end is there is an issue for a lot of students in India."

Wood added that the recent shooting of Indian nationals at a bar in Olathe, Kans., won't help. The

Federal Bureau of Investigation is investigating the shooting -- which killed Srinivas Kuchibhotla, an Indian national, and wounded a second Indian man and an American -- as a hate crime.

The gunman reportedly yelled "get out of my country" before opening fire, [according to *The Washington Post*](#). A Sikh man originally from India who was wounded in a separate shooting in Kent, Wash., a little more than a week later similarly reported that he was told by the shooter to "go back to your own country," [according to *The Seattle Times*](#).

"Those events affect us, whether we like it or not," said Ahmad Ezzeddine, the associate vice president for educational outreach and international programs, at Wayne State University, where international applications are down, with the steepest drops in engineering.

"The impact is not just going to be on Indian nationals. It could impact other students from other countries who may now be concerned about coming."

"This is the season for us. Acceptance and admission season is underway now, and it'll be interesting

to see what's going to happen when people start accepting their admissions and making plans. This is when I think we're going to see the decline, across the country. That's my fear," Ezzeddine said.

"From what I've been hearing, it's going to be more challenging after this fall cycle," said Nicole Tami, the executive director of global education initiatives at the University of New Mexico. "There are going to be preliminary drops for this fall," she said.

But if what she described as "the tightening of immigration policies and the chilling of the overall attitudes towards international and professional students and immigrants" continues, Tami said, "the real hit is going to be next year."

"If that general kind of blanket attitude toward immigrants and international visitors continues, be they students or scholars, or professionals who come to work, I think people who have other opportunities -- and many do -- will go elsewhere, and there will be other countries that strategically benefit and profit from this current kind of climate," said Tami. ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/03/13/nearly-4-10-universities-report-drops-international-student-applications>

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Canada's Moment

BY ELIZABETH REDDEN // MARCH 20, 2017

A Trump effect? Many Canadian universities are reporting large gains in international applications at the same time some American universities are seeing declines.

Leigh-Ellen Keating, who directs international services for Brock University, in Ontario, just attended a student recruiting fair in Mexico. “The table was flooded with people, which is not historically what I have seen with the Mexican market,” she said. “They just want to go to Canada, and historically I think a lot of them would go to the States.”

“It didn’t hurt,” Keating continued, that the recruitment fair coincided with an anti-Trump rally in front of the hotel where the fair was held. She suspects some of the rally participants might have popped over to check out college options in Canada. President Trump is highly unpopular in Mexico. He kicked off his campaign by [depicting some Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists](#) and has pledged to deport millions of immigrants who are in the country illegally and build a border wall.

“Mr. Trump, he’s not bad for our re-

ruitment strategy,” Keating said.

At a time when many American universities are reporting declines in applications from international students, some universities north of the border are seeing increases on the magnitude of 20 percent or more. At the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, undergraduate international applications are up by 25 percent and graduate international applications have increased by 41 percent. At McMaster University, also in Ontario, international applications have increased by 34.4 percent compared to the same time last year.

At the University of Toronto, applications from international un-



McGill University

dergraduate students increased by slightly more than 20 percent this year over last year. Driving the growth are big increases in applications from the U.S. (up 80 percent), India (up 59 percent), Turkey (up 68 percent) and Mexico (up 63 percent, but from a small base). Richard Levin, Toronto’s executive director of enrollment services and the university registrar, attributed the gains in part to the “generalized effect of global events drawing attention to Canada and Toronto in particular

as a kind of safe, inclusive, stable space.”

“It’s speculative at this point, and we’ll of course have to wait and see what happens in terms of enrollment, but there’s a lot of change in the world, and when there’s a lot of change, people will look for places that they would feel safe in and included,” Levin said.

Meanwhile, 39 percent of U.S. universities that responded to a [recent survey](#) conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and several other higher education groups reported declines in international applications for the fall. Enrollment professionals who responded to the survey reported “a great deal of concern” from prospective students and their families about feared changes to visa rules, the possibility that Trump’s executive order barring entry to nationals of six Muslim-majority countries -- [temporarily blocked by the courts](#) -- could be expanded to include other countries, and the “perception that the climate in the U.S. is now less welcoming to individuals from other countries.”

Canada, as one of the countries that competes with the U.S. for its share of the world’s internationally mobile students, could stand to gain if even a small fraction of U.S.-bound students choose to go elsewhere -- or, in the case of students coming from the six countries affected by the travel ban (Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen), if they’re forced to.

U.S. politics aside, many Canadi-

an universities crack the upper echelons of international rankings, and the country’s prominence as a study destination is increasing -- not least because of the opportunities it provides for former international students [to immigrate](#). In November, Canada amended its points-based [Express Entry immigration system](#) to award extra points to graduates of Canadian universities when they apply for permanent residency.

The application increases Canadian universities are reporting for this coming fall come in the context of years of steady and significant growth in Canadian universities’ international enrollments, which increased by 92 percent from 2008 to 2015, according to data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada published in a report by the Canadian Bureau for International Education. Canada had 353,570 international students in fall 2015, while, for comparison’s sake, American colleges and universities collectively [enrolled more than a million](#).

Some of the more than a dozen Canadian universities contacted by *Inside Higher Ed* for this story stressed the context of recent growth in international enrollments and said the application increases they’re seeing this year are on par with recent growth rates. Others say they are seeing a “surge” or “spike” and suggest there might be evidence of a “Trump effect,” at least when it comes to the increase in applications they’re seeing from certain countries -- including from the U.S.

Especially notable given the numbers of students involved, many Canadian universities are also reporting substantial gains in applications from India, which sends more students to the U.S. and to Canada than any country other than China. A shift in the number of Indian students choosing Canada over the U.S. could put a strain on U.S. universities, many of which have counted on increasing numbers of international students to balance their budgets.

At the University of British Columbia, international undergraduate applications are up by 15 percent this year, but Damara Klaassen, the senior director of the university’s international student initiative, stressed that was on par with prior year increases. “Apart from more and more people talking about it and wondering whether there is an effect, I’m not seeing any trends that I would attribute to political happenings in the U.S.,” Klaassen said. “I don’t want to downplay the importance of anything that happens in any one country by any means, but I do think in general this type of conversation underestimates the thoughtful and multiyear approach that international students put into searching for the best fit for their higher education.”

Ryerson University, in Toronto, is seeing a 25 percent increase in international undergraduate applications compared to this time last year, which comes on top of a 34 percent increase in international applications the year before that. The

university has stepped up its recruitment resources, having “invested considerable resources in 2015 specifically toward increasing our international enrollment in undergraduate programs,” according to Marisa Modeski, Ryerson’s assistant director for student recruitment.

“I think it’s a little bit early to point to a particular influencer in terms of the contribution to application numbers,” Modeski said. “We’re often asked about ‘the Trump effect,’ for example: are we seeing an increase because of that or because of Brexit,” a reference to the United Kingdom’s vote last year to exit the European Union.

“Those can certainly be influencers, but I don’t think you can point to those as exclusive reasons for the increase in applications. I think you have to holistically look at all the positive things that Canadian universities have to offer.”

Some Canadian universities, however, report that the increase in applicants they’re seeing this year stands out even against the recent context of international applicant and student growth. At the University of Alberta, international undergraduate applications are up by 28 percent this year. Some of the increases for particular countries are even more striking: applications are up 118 percent from India, 51 percent from the U.S., 35 percent from

the United Arab Emirates, 22 percent from Nigeria, 96 percent from Bangladesh and 82 percent from Pakistan. Applications from China also increased, but by a smaller percentage (12 percent).

“This is a surge,” said Britta Baron, the vice provost and associate vice president for international at Alberta. Baron cited three possible reasons for the surge, with the caution that this is speculation. “One is the political developments in the United States and in the United Kingdom, and two is the fact that the Canadian dollar is weak.” The Canadian dollar is currently worth 75 cents

“ They think it’s a place where they can get a really great education...the U.S. has always been the number-one choice for that. But I think that this travel ban has made them look just a little bit farther and cast their net a little bit wider. ”

U.S., and the relative weakness of Canada’s currency makes its universities a better bargain for many international students.

“Three,” Baron, said, “is the fact that Canadian universities over time have stepped up their efforts to recruit.”

Alberta has also seen a surge this year in applications from Iran: undergraduate applications from the country increased from 12 last year to 68 this year, while graduate applications rose from 263 last year to 740 this year -- “and counting,” Baron said. Alberta, like a number of

other Canadian universities, [waived application fees](#) for citizens from countries affected by Trump’s original travel ban, including Iran.

Memorial University, in Newfoundland, also [waived application fees](#) for students from the countries affected by the travel ban -- and for applicants from the U.S. “We wanted to show the students in the United States that Canada was an open, inclusive and welcoming place, and that they should think about turning their eyes northward when they were thinking about their educational possibilities,” said Aimée Surprenant, the dean of Memorial’s

School of Graduate Studies. Memorial’s applications from the U.S. have increased by 47 percent, and its applications from Iran -- among the countries affect-

ed by the travel ban, the one that sends the largest numbers of students abroad -- have increased by 80 percent. Other Canadian universities have also posted increases in American and Iranian applicants: Concordia University, in Montreal, for example, reports a 77 percent increase in American applicants to its graduate programs, and a 219 percent increase in Iranian graduate applicants.

“Certainly I think that international students like to come to North America,” said Memorial’s Surprenant. “They think it’s a place where they

can get a really great education and something that has a lot of prestige back where they come from, and the U.S. has always been the number-one choice for that. But I think that this travel ban has made them look just a little bit farther and cast their net a little bit wider.”

As for American students, several Canadian universities reported surges in inquiries and interest from the U.S. after the presidential election -- though, for context, it's worth noting that the number of American students who study in Canada has historically been low and is less than half the number of Canadian students who come to U.S. universities. The University of Saskatchewan reports that traffic from the U.S. to its prospective undergraduate student website increased by 392 percent on Nov. 9, the day after the election, compared to the week prior, while its prospective graduate student website had a 191 percent traffic increase. Lionel Walsh, the assistant vice president for North American recruitment at the University of Windsor, which is located just across the border from Detroit, said the university has nearly doubled its number of applications from the

U.S. Windsor's American students pay a special [“U.S. neighbour” tuition rate](#) -- “we put a ‘u’ in neighbor,” Walsh said -- that is lower than the standard international rate.

At McGill University, in Montreal, which has long attracted large numbers of American students, applications from the U.S. have increased by 22 percent, from 4,409 applications for fall 2016 to 5,397 for fall 2017 (the latter figure is as of Feb. 22). McGill also has experienced a big increase in applications from India (up 54 percent) and a smaller but still healthy 18.5 percent increase in the number of applications from China.

Paul Davidson, the president of Universities Canada, said that he's been hearing of application increases across the country. Davidson said “local circumstances” in the U.S. and the U.K. are “making it a little more compelling to consider Canada.”

“I think it is an opportunity for Canada,” he said. “It's part of a broader context where *The Economist* magazine did a list of the top five cities in the world to live in, and [three of them were in Canada](#). *The New York Times* [identified Canada](#) as the des-

tinuation for 2017; *The Economist* [put Canada on the cover](#) as being a country that is open and dynamic and diverse. Canadian university presidents would take stacks of copies of *The Economist* with Canada on the cover as they traveled through India and to other Asian countries.”

“It's not unrelated,” Davidson added, “to the work of our new prime minister [Justin Trudeau], who's been out talking about diversity as a strength and Canada as a place that's open to investment, open to trade and open to people.”

Trump, by contrast, has spoken against free trade agreements, attempted to restrict entry for citizens of multiple Muslim-majority countries, and generally propagated an “America first” message. The U.K. has also taken an insular turn with its Brexit vote.

“I do think Canada is having a moment,” Keating, of Brock University, said. “Some of it I think we're having on our own, and some of it I think we're having as a result of other people having less cheerful moments. The U.K. and the U.S. are not currently in the best position to be recruiting.” ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/03/20/canadian-universities-post-large-gains-international-applications>



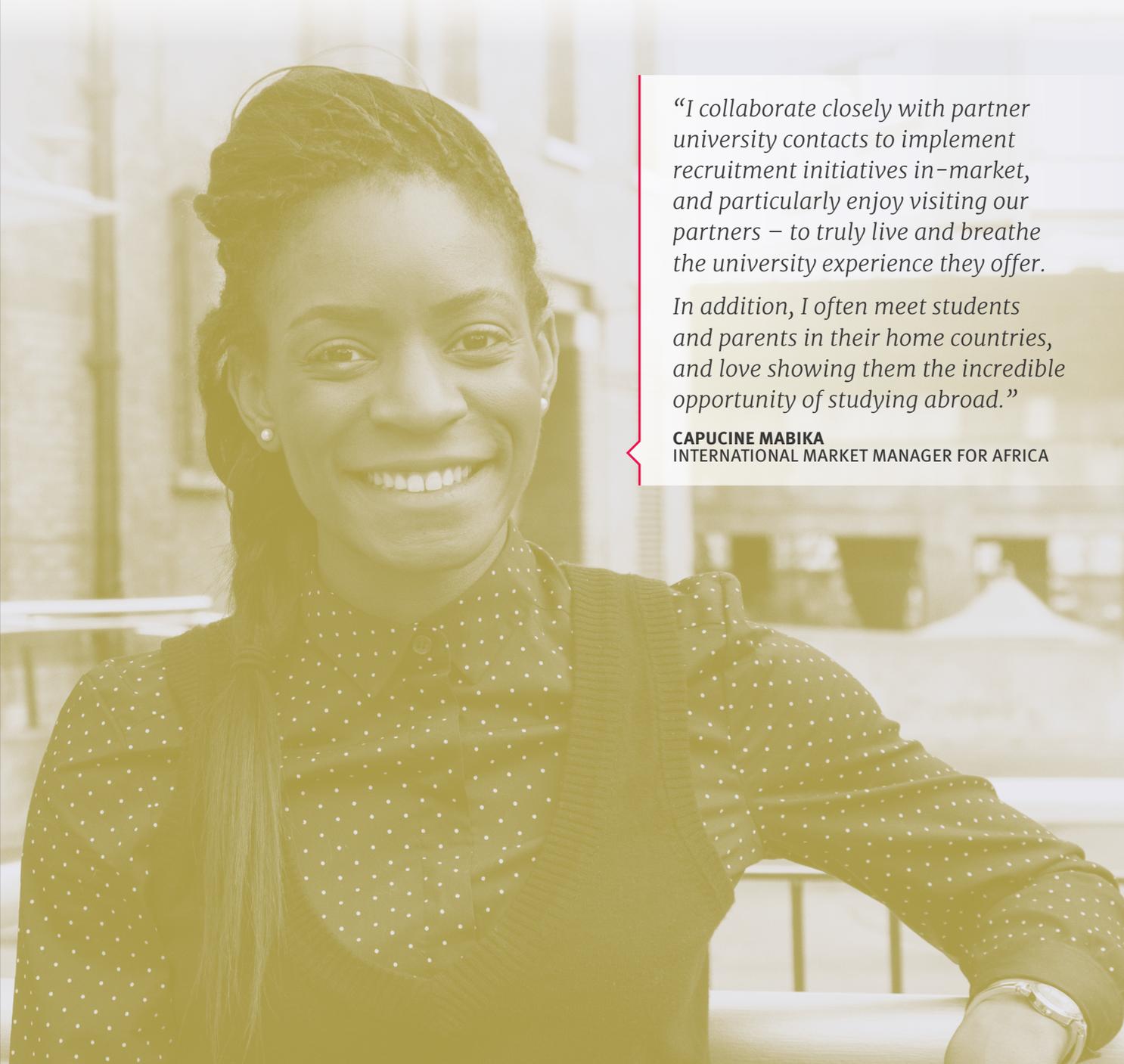
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Saudi Enrollment Declines

By ELIZABETH REDDEN // JULY 18, 2016

Colleges have come to count on tuition from large numbers of Saudi Arabian students. After years of rapid growth, enrollments are declining on many campuses, in some cases precipitously.

The number of Saudi Arabian students enrolled at American universities has skyrocketed since the launch of a massive Saudi government scholarship program in 2005, increasing [more than 17-fold](#). But after more than a decade of growth, many universities with sizable Saudi populations are anticipating significant declines in new Saudi enrollments as the government has retooled the scholarship program.

Steep drops in enrollments at the English language level, the initial landing point for most Saudi students coming to U.S. universities, signal further declines ahead. The enrollment declines will prove challenging to the many public and private universities that have grown to count on the tuition revenue from Saudi students, who number in the hundreds at many campuses.

Ohio's Wright State University, for example, enrolled 480 Saudi students in fall 2015 and has experienced a 51 percent decline in applications from Saudi students from last year to this year. The drop has been greater for undergraduate



An ELS language center in Saudi Arabia

and intensive English applications, which are down 74 percent, than for graduate applications, which declined by 35 percent.

Kent State University, another Ohio institution that enrolls large numbers of Saudi students -- 669 in fall 2015 -- is also seeing declines in Saudi applications at the undergraduate and English as a second language levels.

Cleveland State University has seen its applications from Saudi students fall to a quarter of last year's

level. The university expects to enroll a total of 400 Saudi students this fall, down from 574 a year ago.

Cindy L. Skaruppa, Cleveland State's vice president for enrollment services, said the university is hoping to diversify the international student population through several partnerships in China and by recruiting in places like Bangladesh, Kuwait and Nigeria.

Saudi Arabia "was just kind of a given," Skaruppa said. "Well, it's not a given anymore."

David Anderson, vice president for recruitment and partner support for ELS Educational Services, a Princeton, N.J.-based private English language provider with 69 locations in the U.S., 50 of which are based on college campuses, said that some university partners have asked where they can find Saudi students now. “Some of them were a little bit spoiled for a number of years,” Anderson said. “They didn’t have to work so hard for their Saudi students. Now they’re realizing there aren’t so many of them out there.”

Anderson estimated that the ESL industry as a whole is looking at 60 to 70 percent declines in Saudi students this summer compared to last. “We’re sort of typical of the industry,” he said of ELS. “We’ve experienced the decline and we do not anticipate over the next several years that we’ll have Saudi numbers close to what they had been prior to 2015.”

Changes to the Scholarship

The Saudi government, facing [budget shortfalls](#) caused by declines in oil prices, has [moved in recent months](#) to tighten academic eligibility requirements for its flagship foreign scholarship program and to tie it more closely to economic development needs by linking awards to job offers.

[An article](#) published in the state-run *Saudi Press Agency* in February outlined strict new eligibility requirements for the subset of scholarship recipients who self-fund their initial studies and apply for government scholarship support after they’ve

enrolled at a foreign institution. (This so-called back door route is one of two main ways that students access the scholarship program -- the other is to apply through the “front door” from within Saudi Arabia.) *The Saudi Press Agency* article stated that self-funded students applying to join the scholarship delegation would have to attend a top-100 global university, or a top-50 program in their field, according to lists maintained by the Ministry of Education.

The article also stipulated grade point average requirements for candidates and said that undergraduates seeking to join the scholarship program through this route would need to have completed 30 credits. In the past many students would apply for and receive scholarship funding while still enrolled in ESL programs.

It is not clear how consistently the new rules are being enforced. Officials at the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, which administers the scholarship, did not respond over multiple days to questions about changes in the scholarship and whether there have been reductions in the number of awards.

Not every university outside the global top 100 is seeing declines in Saudi enrollments. At Wichita State University, for example, application and admission numbers for Saudi students appear stable for the fall.

Vince Altum, the executive director of Wichita State’s Office of International Education, estimates that roughly three-quarters of Wichita’s

State’s Saudi students apply for the scholarship through the back door route.

“Because of that I assumed that our numbers would drop precipitously,” Altum said. He still expects the drop will come, but said it hasn’t yet. The university enrolled 318 Saudi students last spring.

“Several months ago I alerted the administration that we were going to start seeing decreases in the population of [Saudi] students, but strangely, for our benefit, that hasn’t materialized,” Altum said. “For fall of this year we currently have 170 applications from Saudi Arabia and we had 178 last year, so we have eight less, but we’ve admitted two more. We admitted 106 as of the same date last year versus 108 this year.”

Other universities that reported steady Saudi enrollments for the fall include Western Illinois University and Robert Morris University, a private institution outside Pittsburgh. Minnesota State University at Mankato is forecasting an increase in Saudi students, in part due to a new partnership with Saudi Arabian Airlines to sponsor aviation students. The Mankato campus is also launching an intensive English program that will allow it to accept students at lower English levels this fall.

Virginia Commonwealth University hopes to bounce back from a big decrease in Saudi students it saw from the fall to spring, when the overall Saudi student population fell from 405 to 351 and the number within the English language pro-

gram fell from 139 to 103. Amber Bennett Hill, the director of VCU's international student and scholar programs and English language program, said the university has 203 applications for degree-seeking students from Saudi Arabia for the fall at this point -- a number that she said will likely rise -- compared to 253 total applications last year.

"At this point I would say for the next three years I think our Saudi numbers are probably going to be stable," Hill said. "The real question is going to be whether we continue to get new students. We're closely tracking applications, both English language and undergraduate, and those numbers appear to be on course with what we've seen in the past several annual cycles, perhaps a little bit smaller, but it's certainly not that big dip we saw in January. I have reason to believe those numbers will continue. If we see a drop-off now, it will be more gradual, and we can recruit to fill those spots."

Nationally the most [recent data available](#) from the Department of Homeland Security on the number of Saudi students on F and M visas show a decline of about 11.5 percent from February 2015 to March 2016.

The Diversification Imperative

The decline in Saudi enrollments at many institutions has underscored the need -- always known but now urgent -- to recruit and admit international students from a broad range of countries, not only for academic- and diversity-related

reasons but also for financial and enrollment management purposes.

At some universities Saudi students are the largest or second-largest international student group, so a sharp decline in their numbers can be a significant enrollment (and tuition) hit. Nationally Saudi Arabia is the [fourth-biggest source country](#) of international students, after China, India and South Korea.

At Northern Kentucky University, the 357 Saudi students enrolled in fall 2014 represented about 65 percent of the total population of 552 international students.

The number of Saudi students fell to 248 the next fall, a decline that François Le Roy, the executive director of the Center for Global Engagement and International Affairs, attributed to the cultural mission's decision to close off new sponsored Saudi enrollments in several programs, including ESL, on the grounds that they were "saturated" with Saudi students. Le Roy said that all NKU programs have since been removed from the "saturated" list, but the decline in Saudi students is continuing. The university expects to enroll just 39 new students from Saudi Arabia this fall, including 28 transfer students, compared to the 75 new Saudi students it enrolled two years ago.

"We were always kind of uneasy about this dependence on Saudi students," said Le Roy. "The goal as soon as we got into a position to conduct effective international student recruitment was to diversify. So starting especially last year we

have focused our attention on other parts of the world. This new class of international students that's coming this fall is going to be much more diverse than previous classes of international students." Northern Kentucky is projecting an international enrollment of around 500 students this fall, including about 200 Saudi students.

The University of Northern Iowa is also having to adjust to a big decrease in its largest group of international students. The university enrolled 187 Saudi students out of a total international population of 567 last spring. Applications from Saudi students for the fall have dropped precipitously.

Scott Ketelsen, Northern Iowa's director of university relations, said that year-over-year comparisons of applications received as of July 11 show that the number of applications from Saudi students declined from 64 last year to 13 this year, while the number of confirmed acceptances fell from 29 to two. Total international applications from students from all countries fell from 537 to 439.

Despite the application drop, Ketelsen said the university actually has a slight increase in the total number of international students who have confirmed plans to come for the fall: 97 last year versus 101 this year. (These numbers differ from ones recently [reported by the Des Moines Register](#), which also documented a dramatic decline in Northern Iowa's Saudi applications but from a different base. Ketelsen

said the application figures provided to the *Des Moines Register* were incorrect and included students who'd been miscounted.)

"It wasn't something that surprised us," Ketelsen said of the decline in Saudi applications. "We knew it was coming down the tracks. It was a change in Saudi policy. We've adjusted to the recruiting situation."

Fluctuations are a given in international recruitment: international enrollments from various countries rise and fall with political and economic fortunes. But the vulnerability of universities to a sudden decline in Saudi enrollments stands out both because of the sheer size of the Saudi student population and because so many are funded through a single source, a government scholarship program.

An analysis from Moody's Investors Service issued in February observed that universities facing a loss of Saudi students "will be hard-pressed to replace these price-inelastic students in an increasingly

competitive market for international students."

The changes to the Saudi scholarship program follow closely on the suspension last fall of another large-scale government scholarship program, Brazil's Science Without Borders program, which is similarly responsible for [rapid increases](#) in the number of Brazilian students at U.S. universities over the past few years.

The combined effect of declines in both Brazilian and Saudi students has contributed to sharp drops in enrollment in the intensive English program at California State University at Long Beach.

Enrollment in the ESL program this summer is down 49 percent compared to last summer. While numbers for the fall haven't been finalized yet, Jeet Joshee, the associate vice president for international education and global engagement, said the year-to-year decrease in fall ESL enrollment could be as high as 80 percent.

"Our recruitment strategy has always been to diversify in terms of different countries and different regions of the world, but in the meantime we did have this influx of Saudi and Brazilian students," he said. "Now we really need to be deliberate in focusing our recruitment efforts in other countries."

David L. Di Maria, the associate provost for international programs at Montana State University, said his main worry as the number of Saudi students shrinks is the lost opportunity for exchange between young Saudis and Americans. Montana State enrolled 137 degree-seeking (non-ESL) Saudi students last fall, out of a total international enrollment of 732.

"As the Saudi enrollment drops, I can't replace that," Di Maria said. "I can replace enrollment, but I can't replace Saudi students -- and particularly with everything that's going on in the world today I think it's very important having those exchanges take place on a college campus." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/07/18/saudi-student-numbers-fall-many-campus>

'Your Next-Door Iranian'

BY ELIZABETH REDDEN // FEBRUARY 8, 2017

Iranian scholars and students in the U.S. reflect on Trump's executive order -- temporarily suspended by federal court -- barring travel from their country.

An executive order barring entry to individuals from seven Muslim-majority countries signed by President Trump -- enforcement of which has been temporarily halted by a federal court -- has directly affected more than 17,000 international students and untold numbers of foreign-born scholars who have made their careers in the U.S., many of them former international students themselves.

The majority of the students directly affected -- more than 12,000 of them -- come from Iran, the 11th-leading country of origin for international students in the U.S., right after Mexico, according to [data from the Institute of International Education](#). Under the executive order, students and scholars with most types of immigrant and nonimmigrant visas from the seven banned countries -- Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen -- were not required to leave the U.S., but those who happened to be outside the country at the time of its signing were not allowed to re-enter and

those who left the U.S. would not be able to return as long as the ban remained in place. The executive order called for a ban of 90 days, but it is not clear if that would be extended.

With the restraining order in place, travel has resumed, but the situation remains changeable and subject to court decisions. Civil rights groups have criticized the ban as a pretext for barring the entry of Muslims, a step Trump called for at one point during the campaign. Trump has justified the executive order as a terrorism-fighting measure. "This is not about religion -- this is about terror and keeping our country safe," he said in a Jan. 29 statement.

"The president said multiple times that 'this is not about religion -- this



YOUR NEXTDOOR IRANIAN

is about terror and keeping our country safe," said Shiva, an Iranian assistant professor of computer science at a Midwestern university who asked that her last name not be used. "It hit me really hard hearing those words. I was thinking about hundreds of Iranians that I know and have met in the U.S. that are all scholars at best universities or are working at the best tech companies. They are doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs How can someone link us to terror? It was unjustified in

my mind.”

Shiva is one of a group of friends who created a Facebook page, “[Your Nextdoor Iranian](#),” which shares personal stories from Iranians in the U.S. Many of the stories shared are from people who report getting their master’s or Ph.D. degrees at U.S. universities. According to data from the Institute of International Education, the majority of Iranian students in the U.S. – [more than three-quarters](#) – study at the graduate level, and the majority, again, [more than three-quarters](#), are enrolled in STEM fields.

“The idea of the page came up instantly as a way to show Americans who Iranian people really are, at least those who are already living among them,” Shiva said. “We wanted to show we are humans with simple concerns of being able to visiting our families, or not being separated from our husbands and wives, being able to study where we deserve to be. We wanted to show how each one of us is contributing to this country and show how this ban is affecting each one of us.”

Shiva, who is in the U.S. on a work visa but has applied for a green card, shared her story of how the ban has affected her. “I came to the U.S. to attend a university for my master’s in computer science in 2009. I finished my master’s and my Ph.D. in July 2015. I then started a tenure-track assistant professor

position in August 2015. As a junior faculty, I already have a lot on my plate, and while I have to focus on my research, this new order has introduced so many concerns for me. I have invested so much time and money in my future during the past seven years, and now I am worried that I have to move somewhere else and I have to start all over again. This is not easy. Staying here with this new immigration ban means not being able to attend any international conferences and not being able to see my family ever again. I had previously been working with



Ali Rostami

Singapore and Finland on different research projects that I will not be able to continue since I am not able to travel.”

Other stories on the Facebook page include that of Samira Asgari, an Iranian national who holds a doctorate from the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland. She was initially barred from entering the U.S. to begin a postdoctoral position at a Harvard Universi-

ty laboratory focused on tuberculosis progression.

Asgari, who filed suit in federal court to contest her denial of entry, was refused permission to board U.S.-bound planes despite having a J-1 exchange visa issued on Jan. 27, the date the executive order was signed. According to the legal complaint, she is an expert in genomics, infectious diseases and computational biology, and her research involves “state-of-the-art sequencing technologies for finding the variants that confer susceptibility to infections, and in particular, pediatric infections.”

She finally made it to Boston on Friday, six days after she first attempted to board a U.S.-bound flight.

Ali Rostami, a fourth-year Ph.D. student in computer engineering at Rutgers University, is also featured on the Facebook page.

“I spent last four years of my life to help developing driving safety systems for American people to get hurt less and American

companies to make more profit. Even thinking about the fact that one out of every two Americans don’t want me here makes me sad. Not nervous, just sad,” he wrote.

“I’m sad because they don’t even know me, and yet they don’t want me here,” Rostami said in an email interview. “It’s called racism. I am getting punished because of something I never did. They don’t know what percentage of these seven

countries' citizens in the U.S. are contributing to the society and what percentage are engaging in unlawful activities.

It's sad, because when I was watching CNN on my flight to LA from NYC, I saw Americans responding to a question if they support the travel ban with 'Yes. I feel much safer now in an airplane.' We don't deserve to be called terrorists. Statistics show zero terrorist incidents (at least after Sept. 11) by citizens of these seven coun-

“ I spent last four years of my life ... developing driving safety systems for American people to get hurt less and American companies to make more profit. Even thinking about the fact that one out of every two Americans don't want me here makes me sad. ”

tries. That's where you find yourself discriminated, getting punished for a crime you (or your people) never committed. That makes you feel lonely. Treated unfair.”

Rostami said he knew when he left Iran he might not be able to visit his family because of the long time it takes to renew visas. But he thought

for a tourist visa, if they could get one. Now, living in the U.S. feels like spending my life in a first-class prison.”

“Frankly, I think if they ever say we don't want you (with continuing the ban), I'd simply say goodbye,” he said. “I'm confident that I'll be fine finding a highly paid job in Europe.”■

his family could at least visit him in the U.S., “even if they have to go to a third country to do the interview at a U.S. embassy and wait for six to eight months

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/02/08/after-trump-entry-ban-iranian-students-and-scholars-share-their-stories>

State Shortfalls and Foreign Students

BY ELIZABETH REDDEN // JANUARY 3, 2017

Analysis finds that a 10 percent reduction in state appropriations is associated with a 12-17 percent increase in international undergraduate enrollment at public research universities.

As state spending for public universities goes down, international student enrollment goes up. A newly published working paper seeks to quantify this relationship, estimating that for the period between 1996 and 2012, a 10 percent reduction in state appropriations was associated with a 12 percent increase in international undergraduate enrollment at public research universities -- and a 17 percent increase at the most research-intensive public universities, the flagships and other institutions that are members of the exclusive Association of American Universities.

The paper, [available for \\$5 from the National Bureau of Economic Research](#) and authored by John Bound, Breno Braga, Gaurav Khanna and Sarah Turner, concludes that expanding foreign undergraduate enrollment "is an important channel through which public research universities buffer changes in state appropriations. While additional revenue from in-state tuition increases

appears [to] recoup a large fraction of the fall in appropriations, research universities would have had to navigate reductions in resources per student or yet larger increases in in-state tuition in the absence of the large pool of foreign students."

The paper, titled "A Passage to America: University Funding and International Students," begins by identifying economic and educational capacity-related reasons for dramatic growth in this pool of international students, particularly from China, over the past decade. The authors cite data from the Institute of International Education's Open Doors survey showing that number of international undergraduates from China has increased from about 8,000 in the academic year 2004-5 to more than 110,000 in 2013-14, with Chinese students ac-



counting for about 90 percent of all growth in foreign undergraduates in the U.S. over this period.

Several factors drove this increase. First, there's been an increase in the number of Chinese families who can afford the costs of American higher education. The authors estimate that the percentage of Chinese families who have incomes higher than the average cost of out-of-state tuition and room and board at an American public university has grown "exponentially" from less than 0.005 percent in 2000 to more than 2 percent in 2013.

Second, high school enrollment has expanded in China, from 63.8

million students to 95 million between 1996 and 2012, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization figures. And third, China's own higher education capacity is comparatively small: the authors note that while China has about four times the population of the U.S., it has fewer than half the number of universities.

At the same time foreign demand for American higher education was growing, state support for public institutions was falling. The authors cite data from the State Higher Education Executive Officers showing a decline in total state appropriations from \$89.7 billion in the 2007-8 academic year to \$74.8 billion in 2011-12. State funding per full-time equivalent student has fallen from about \$12,000 in the mid-1980s to less than \$7,000, and the proportion of university revenues coming from tuition (as opposed to state appropriations) has risen accordingly.

The authors hypothesized that public research universities have turned to the growing pool of out-of-state-tuition-paying foreign undergraduates as a way to offset some of the declines in state funding. While they found this to be broadly the case, they also documented differences among various types of public institutions. They found that the link between foreign enroll-

ment increases and state funding decreases was strongest at those public institutions that haven't historically enrolled large numbers of domestic out-of-state students, and was virtually nonexistent at nonresearch public universities that have limited international appeal.

"While the basic negative relationship [between state appropriations and foreign enrollments] for public universities is clear, there is also a significant amount of heterogeneity," the authors write. "For instance, for the same state-level budgetary shock, Michigan State significantly increased foreign enrollment, while

search colleges and universities ... we continue to estimate essentially no link between changes in state appropriations and foreign student enrollment, which is consistent with the expectation that nonresearch universities tend to be more locally focused than the research universities, and have limited capacity to attract foreign students."

As for the question of whether foreign students are crowding out domestic students, the authors note that this is a complex question and that declines in state appropriations affect in-state tuition rates. "Thus any correlational relationship

“

... When state appropriations decline, public universities are more likely to admit foreign students because the marginal benefit of adding foreign students (and associated tuition revenues) increases.

”

between foreign enrollment and in-state enrollment represents the net effect of changes in tuition charges, institutional resources and other unobserved factors as

the University of Michigan did not. One reason is that the University of Michigan consistently attracts well-qualified domestic out-of-state students (around 30 percent of total freshmen), whereas MSU does not (only 10 percent of total freshmen)."

"Overall, these findings are consistent with our underlying hypothesis and conceptual framework: when state appropriations decline, public universities are more likely to admit foreign students because the marginal benefit of adding foreign students (and associated tuition revenues) increases. For nonre-

well as the direct effect of foreign students," the authors write. "With these limitations in mind ... we show a negative association between the number of foreign students enrolled and the number of in-state students enrolled in research and AAU universities. Two additional foreign students are associated with one less in-state student. While these estimates should not be interpreted as causal, our model suggests that crowd-out effects can occur even when university administrators care only about the quantity and quality of the education in-state residents

obtain.”

“It would be naïve to say that there isn’t a margin on which additional students from one group don’t impact the enrollment of students from another group, particularly when universities face capacity constraints,” said Sarah Turner, one of the authors of the paper and a university professor of economics and education at the University of Virginia.

“That would be naïve, but it would also be incorrect to say that we can interpret any evidence that we have as causal estimates of crowd-out. That is, what is going on is really more complicated in terms of student choices. If you’re in California, you are a student who’s has seen the sticker price at University of California, Berkeley, increase ... we

would expect that that tuition increase also has an impact on student enrollment decisions.”

Over all, the authors found that increases in in-state tuition accounted for about 69 percent of the changes in tuition revenue from 2007 to 2012 at public AAU member institutions, while increased recruitment of foreign undergraduates accounted for 17.4 percent of the change. At a few institutions -- Ohio State and Purdue Universities and the University of Minnesota -- the proportion of the change in tuition revenue attributable to foreign student increases was about 40 percent or higher.

“If you are president of a public institution, when you face these appropriation cuts you have essentially three options,” said Turner. “You can cut resources per student, which is

not something that any university leader wants to do. You can make efforts to raise tuition. There are obvious downsides to that, and for any institution there’s a limit to how much they can raise out-of-state tuition because it’s a function of market forces, so it’s in-state tuition that would increase. Or you can expand the pool of students who are paying the out-of-state price.”

“A very small number of universities have a capacity to draw in sizable numbers of domestic out-of-state students,” Turner said. But for the rest, she said, increasing international enrollment “is one tool that our paper shows they have been able to use to try to reduce the impact of the cuts on state appropriations. You can think of this as potentially benefiting all the students.” ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/03/study-looks-link-between-international-enrollment-increases-and-state-appropriation>

Teaching and Integrating International Students

BY ELIZABETH REDDEN // FEBRUARY 24, 2017

Various surveys look at biggest academic challenges international students face and the availability of professional development opportunities for professors teaching in intercultural classrooms.

WASHINGTON – What would international students in American classrooms most want their professors to do differently?

A survey of 662 international students at 23 colleges and universities commissioned by ELS Educational Services found that many international students want their professors to:

- Provide more feedback (35 percent identified this as a desired improvement from among a given list of choices).
- Seek to understand international students' perspectives (33 percent).
- Make classroom materials available after class (32 percent).
- Provide examples of completed assignments (32 percent).
- Provide non-U.S. examples in course contents (28 percent).

One caveat for the above numbers is that nearly 12 percent of students in the sample were native English

speakers, so their presence in the sample could have skewed some of the overall figures in various ways. For example, 22 percent of all respondents said they'd like their professor to speak more slowly or clearly, while 32 percent of Chinese respondents did.

The sample was nearly evenly split between undergraduates (52 percent) and graduate students (48 percent).

The most common classroom challenges identified by the students who were surveyed were: too many writing assignments (65 percent said this was a challenge), too much reading (cited as a challenge by 63 percent of respondents), writing in English (56 percent), participating in class presentations (56 percent), the perceived preferential treatment of native speakers (56 percent), participating in class discussions (56 percent) and professors' lack of understanding of their culture (50 percent).



More than a third of students -- 35 percent -- said they felt uncomfortable questioning the opinions of their professors, 30 percent said they felt uncomfortable questioning the opinion of their peers, and 29 percent said they felt uncomfortable speaking in class discussions (the latter proportion was higher among Chinese students, 38 percent of whom said they felt uncomfortable). Nearly a quarter of respondents -- 24 percent -- said they felt uncomfortable interacting with American students.

Mark W. Harris, the president emeritus of ELS, presented on the findings of the survey during a ses-

sion Tuesday at the Association of International Education Administrators annual conference focused on how faculty can “bridge divides” and integrate international students in the classroom. The number of international students in the U.S. has nearly doubled in the past 10 years and now exceeds 1 million, representing about 5 percent of the total student population, according to [data](#) from the Institute of International Education.

Recruiting international students was the number one priority for university internationalization identified by institutions who responded to the American Council on Education’s 2016 survey on mapping campuswide internationalization, which the association conducts every five years.

In presenting a preview of some of the 2016 data – a full report on the survey is scheduled to be released this spring – Robin Matross Helms, the director of ACE’s Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, said that one key finding is that there’s been a “backtracking” in terms of support for internationalization-focused faculty develop-

ment opportunities from the 2011 to 2016 surveys.

The percentage of responding colleges and universities that reported offering these kinds of opportunities was lower in 2016 than in 2011.

About a quarter of institutions report offering workshops for faculty on teaching and integrating international students – “my response was, wow, only a quarter?” Helms said.

“If we’re not providing faculty with that professional development support, that’s definitely a worrisome trend,” Helms said.

Darla K. Deardorff, AIEA’s executive director and an adjunct research scholar at Duke University’s education program, described the different forms faculty development can take – retreats, discussion working groups, invited speakers, faculty panel presentations – with common topics being things like: “classroom challenges for international students,” “moving beyond stereotypes and assumptions,” “integrating non-Western perspectives into what is taught,” “communicating with international students,” “creating a supportive classroom environment,” “learning styles in

different cultures,” “understanding classroom behavior,” and “interculturally competent teaching.”

Deardorff also shared recommendations to faculty international students have made in various focus groups she’s conducted with them. Recommendations include:

- to focus on the professor-student relationship
- to understand what students are used to (and not to assume)
- to be very clear on expectations and to provide examples
- to pay attention to underperforming students
- to be intentional about connecting domestic and international students in the classroom
- to not single out international students (by asking, say, “you’re from Australia, what do Australians think of this?”)
- to connect students with various campus resources available, such as the writing center
- to use examples from students’ home countries.

“A lot of this we know, but it’s nice to hear it reaffirmed by the students,” Deardorff said. ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/03/study-looks-link-between-international-enrollment-increases-and-state-appropriation>

An \$828 Million Private Scholarship Program

By ELIZABETH REDDEN // DECEMBER 9, 2016

The MasterCard Foundation's scholarship program funds high school and higher education for thousands of students from Africa.

Irene Kinyanguli, a senior at Arizona State University, comes from Tanzania, where her father works in a gas station and her mother is a teacher. "We did have the basics -- food, shelter, clothing -- we got what we needed," Kinyanguli says. But an international higher education would have been out of reach without a scholarship.

Kinyanguli is one of more than 100 students at Arizona State on full scholarships funded by the MasterCard Foundation, which to date reports having made pledges of about \$828 million for its four-year-old flagship scholarship program. The program, officially launched in 2012, is focused on developing young leaders from disadvantaged backgrounds who come primarily from the African continent.

"If I wake up tomorrow the president of Tanzania," says Kinyanguli, a public policy major who spent the



MasterCard Foundation scholars from various North American universities at a leadership seminar.

summer as an intern to Tanzania's permanent mission to the United Nations, "MasterCard would have played a very big role."

As of August of this year, the Toronto-based MasterCard Foun-

datation -- an independent, private foundation founded with a gift of shares when the credit card company of the same name went public in 2006 -- had awarded scholarships to a total of 19,338 students. The

vast majority of scholarship recipients so far -- 16,677, or about 86 percent -- study at the high school level through one of the foundation's non-governmental organization partners in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Another 2,661 students have earned scholarships for university-level education -- 2,274 for undergraduate study and 387 for graduate programs. About two-thirds of the scholars across all educational levels are women, though the proportion of women is slightly lower at the undergraduate (62 percent) and graduate (57 percent) levels.

At the university level, the foundation has entered into partnerships with universities that handle the recruitment and admission of scholars. The foundation has agreements with 10 well-known colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada, as well as one institution in the Middle East, one in Latin America and one in Europe (see box for a full list of universities). However, the majority of university-level scholars-- 64 percent at the undergraduate level and 70 percent at the graduate level -- study at partner universities in Africa.

"It's one of the largest private scholarship programs that have ever been implemented for African youth," says Kim Kerr, the MasterCard Foundation's deputy director

Partnering Universities and NGOs

Africa

African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (multicountry)
African Leadership Academy (multicountry)
Ashesi University (Ghana)
Campaign for Female Education (Ghana)
Carnegie Mellon University in Rwanda
Forum for African Women Educationalists (Rwanda)
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana)
Makerere University (Uganda)
University of Cape Town (South Africa)
University of Pretoria (South Africa)

U.S. and Canada

Arizona State University
Duke University
McGill University
Michigan State University
Stanford University
University of British Columbia
University of California, Berkeley
University of Toronto
Wellesley College

Other

American University of Beirut (Lebanon)
EARTH University (Costa Rica)
University of Edinburgh (Scotland)

for education and learning. "The purpose of the scholars program is to support both education but also leadership development of bright young people that have a personal commitment to change the world around them and want to improve the lives of others."

At a time when many Western uni-

versities are focused on international strategies that involve recruiting students who can afford to pay for their educations, MasterCard's initiative stands out as a major funding source for students from a less wealthy part of the world. Students from sub-Saharan Africa make up just 3.4 percent of international students at U.S. institutions, according to the [latest Open Doors report](#) from the Institute of International Education.

"It's a big bet for sure and a very high-profile one at that," says Joan Dassin, a professor of international education and development at Brandeis University and formerly the director of the [Ford Foundation's International Fellowships Program](#), which supported graduate-level education for about 4,300 people from developing countries from 2001 through 2013. Dassin is co-editing a forthcoming book on international scholarships in higher education that will include a chapter on the MasterCard Foundation Scholars program.

"One of the very commendable aspects of the program is they invested quite early in an evaluation framework, so they have been collecting data and information and are now even envisioning a longer-term tracking study that would look at the outcomes over the decades," Dassin said. That's very important because of the high investment

in students at early stages of their schooling. The Ford Foundation took a different bet. We focused on graduate-level education because we felt that was the quickest route to providing people with the education and skills they need to make an impact on their home countries.”

“Both approaches are valid,” Das-sin said. “But what I think is interesting is MasterCard has really thought long and hard about what is the appropriate evaluation framework for this kind of program that puts such high stakes on an early level of schooling when in fact the results of that in terms of formation of professionals or capacity-building of governments or social entrepreneurship -- the kind of social change outcomes that funders like to see -- are way off in the future.”

“Tracking our scholars will be a decades-long project,” Barry Burciul, the senior manager for learning and strategy at the MasterCard Foundation, said via email. “In the short term, we’re focusing on understanding scholars’ pathways in terms of educational attainment, postgraduation transitions to further education or work, and their attitudes and intentions with respect to leadership and their place as agents of social change. In the longer term, we’re keen to understand the ways in which scholars are creating growth

and change in their communities and broader societies. What is their impact, what factors help or hinder them along the way, and through what mechanisms are they able to succeed?”

There are relatively few alumni of the program at this point -- 3,450 total, and just 262 at the higher education level (136 at the undergraduate level and 126 at the graduate level). A small-scale survey of 36 of the university-level alumni -- 17 women and 19 men from Africa and the Middle East, all but four of whom studied outside their home country -- found that six to 18 months after

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The purpose of the scholars program is to support both education but also leadership development of bright young people that have a personal commitment to change the world around them and want to improve the lives of others.
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graduation, 14 of the scholars were working, 14 were pursuing further education, six were doing both and two were neither working nor in school. About half of the alumni (47 percent) were living in their home countries. Another 33 percent indicated they planned to return home within the next five years, while 8 percent said they did not know when but planned on returning. Eleven percent said they did not know whether they would return.

There is no contractual requirement that those who study abroad on the MasterCard Foundation’s

scholarships return to their home countries. “The vision for the program was to do as much as we could to encourage return, without enforcing it contractually in one way or another,” says the foundation’s Kerr. “We tried to create as much a pull factor as we can back to Africa for the students who are studying outside of the continent. In part that’s been just by the identification of the young people that we support in the program. We look for people who have a strong interest in doing something to support their communities and their countries.”

The scholarship program provides funding for its university-level scholars to complete internships in Africa, which Kerr described as another “powerful pull factor.”

“And more and more we also recognize the importance of a network for young people, so we’ve done a lot of work in the program in terms of building connections among scholars, having a strong, vibrant network that you tap into and [that] lets you know about opportunities and makes you feel part of something when you’re returning to Ghana or Kenya or Uganda, wherever it may be,” Kerr said.

The scholarships are comprehensive, covering not just tuition and fees, but also room and board, books and supplies, and transportation-related costs. Scholars also

receive a living stipend, the amount of which varies by institution, and there is additional funding for participation in internships and leadership development programs.

The foundation also provides funds to institutions to underwrite salaries of staff associated with the program.

A report on the program published by the foundation in September found that three-quarters of the university-level scholars enrolled in the 2014-15 academic year earned grade point averages of 3.0 or above -- though it notes the data are preliminary, "and based on the first two,

relatively small cohorts of tertiary scholars." The scholarship has three core selection criteria: academic talent, leadership potential and economic disadvantage.

Chinwe A. Effiong, the assistant dean for the MasterCard Foundation Scholars and youth empowerment programs at Michigan State University, said she's been impressed by the quality of students being recruited through the program.

Effiong said Michigan State received 1,200 applications for MasterCard Foundation scholarships last year, short-listed 60 students and selected 20. Just over half of

the scholars -- 53 percent -- are in the university's Honors College.

"These are really the best students," Effiong said. "Then when you sit with them and start listening to their stories, it just blows you away. Some are coming from very underprivileged homes, and you see that the objective of the foundation to find those diamonds in the rough is being met.

They're going out of their way to look for young people who would never have had the opportunity of this kind of education but have so much to offer, just given the right opportunity and exposure." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/12/09/mastercard-foundations-scholarship-program-funds-thousands-students-africa>

Chinese Students vs. Dalai Lama

BY ELIZABETH REDDEN // FEBRUARY 16, 2017

Some at UC San Diego object to their university's choice of commencement speaker.

The choice of the Dalai Lama as this year's commencement speaker at the University of California, San Diego, has outraged some of UCSD's Chinese students.

In announcing the commencement speech by the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, UCSD's chancellor, Pradeep K. Khosla, described the Dalai Lama as "a man of peace" who "promotes global responsibility and service to humanity." In awarding the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership of "nonviolent opposition to China's occupation of Tibet," the Nobel committee praised the Dalai Lama as "a Buddhist advocate for peace and freedom" who "has developed his philosophy of peace from a great reverence for all things living and upon the concept of universal responsibility embracing all mankind as well as nature."

But some Chinese students at the university don't see the Dalai Lama

that way. They have condemned the choice of commencement speaker as culturally disrespectful and describe the Dalai Lama as a separatist leader intent on dividing their home country.

The Chinese Communist Party has long depicted the Dalai Lama in such terms. The Dalai Lama says he seeks autonomy for Tibet, not full independence.

In a statement it posted on WeChat, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at UCSD said it contacted the Chinese consulate in Los Angeles for guidance and engaged in negotiations with "relevant departments" at the university.



The Dalai Lama

"The Dalai Lama is not only a religious personality but also a political exile who has long been carrying out actions to divide the motherland and to destroy national unity," the group said in the statement,

translated from Chinese by Inside Higher Ed. The group went on to say it would be “firm in boycotting any action taking any form, with unclear motives, that denigrate and belittle Chinese history, that recklessly disseminate provocative and extremely politically hostile discourse, in turn affecting the international image of China.”

The statement says “the various actions of the university have doubtlessly violated respect, accommodation, equality and earnestness – the founding spirit of the university. Moreover, these actions have dampened the passion for learning in many Chinese students and scholars.”

Six principal members of the CSSA at UCSD did not respond to an email message from Inside Higher Ed seeking comment on Wednesday. The group

also did not respond to a message to its Facebook page.

The university’s announcement of the Dalai Lama as commencement speaker generated more than 1,600 comments on Facebook, some from individuals who described the Dalai Lama as a separatist or even a terrorist. “It is disrespectful to those Chinese students who fought so hard for these years in UC San Diego and just to find out that their commencement speaker is someone who wants to separate their home country,” wrote one commenter whose profile identified him as a UCSD student.

Writing for the main UCSD student newspaper, *The Guardian*, Ruixuan Wang wrote that the “main reason why many Chinese students are upset is that our university shows little consideration about cultural respect, as he is a politically sensitive person in China.”

Wang wrote, “Commencement is a landmark of our life. Our family members are coming all the way from China, flying for more than 10 hours to celebrate with us. The Dalai Lama, as a political icon, is viewed differently in our country. We want to spend a fantastic time with our family during the commencement, but

respects the rights of individuals to agree or disagree as we consider issues of our complex world,” the university said. “Our 2017 speaker, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, carries a message that promotes global responsibility and service to humanity that is of great interest to the UC San Diego community and to our students as they enter their professional lives. As a public university dedicated to the civil exchange of views, the university believes commencement is one of many events that provide an appropriate opportunity to present to graduates and their families a message of reflection and compassion.”

The International Campaign for Tibet also issued a statement in support of the university, saying that the Chinese government should not be allowed to interfere with U.S.

universities’ academic freedom.

“By objecting to the invitation to the Dalai Lama, the CSSA of UC San Diego is doing the work of the Chinese government,” the organization said. “The University of [California], San Diego’s invitation to the Dalai Lama is a reflection of the tremendous American public interest in and support for his thoughts and vision for the broader world; unfortunately, the CSSA is serving the shortsighted political agenda of the current Chinese leadership.”

Robert Barnett, the director of the modern Tibetan studies program at Columbia University, said there are

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Do we allow the Chinese government’s propaganda to dictate major cultural decisions in other countries?

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his presence will ruin our joy. What we want to say is that objectively, he will be an excellent speaker for the commencement. Nonetheless, culturally speaking, his selection to be a presenter is inappropriate in such a situation, considering how many Chinese students and their families are going to attend this commencement.”

UC San Diego stood by its decision to invite the Dalai Lama in a statement.

“The University of California, San Diego, has always served as a forum for discussion and interaction on important public policy issues and

major principles at stake. “Does the university accept to be bullied by the foreign government in terms of who it selects as a speaker, especially when that subject of that foreign government’s bullying is almost certainly, without any serious question of all, not deserving of that bullying and is certainly being misrepresented and indeed demonized by the Chinese government?” he asked. “Do we allow the Chinese government’s propaganda to dictate major cultural decisions in other countries?”

“What’s interesting is San Diego hasn’t backed down; that’s an im-

portant position,” said Barnett. “But the way to move forward is dialogue, not grandstanding.”

Barnett said the university should immediately open up opportunities for dialogue with Chinese students and suggested it could, for example, try to arrange a private meeting with them and the Dalai Lama.

“We have to be a little careful about demonizing the Chinese students’ response,” he said. “That’s inevitable given the fact that they are acting as an arm of the Chinese embassy or consulate, but nevertheless we have to also recognize that the university has taken a strong position here,

one that many people will sympathize with, but which is a challenge to the position taken by the Chinese government and shared by some Chinese.”

“So the question we have to consider is, in the society which we’re in, do we want to embrace that challenge, enable that conversation, encourage it to come to a resolution and understanding, or do we risk it just becoming a kind of confrontation, a marking of difference and of conflict?”

I think this is the underlying issue here, and I’m not sure this has been dealt with. ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/02/16/some-chinese-students-uc-san-diego-condemn-choice-dalai-lama-commencement-speaker>

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