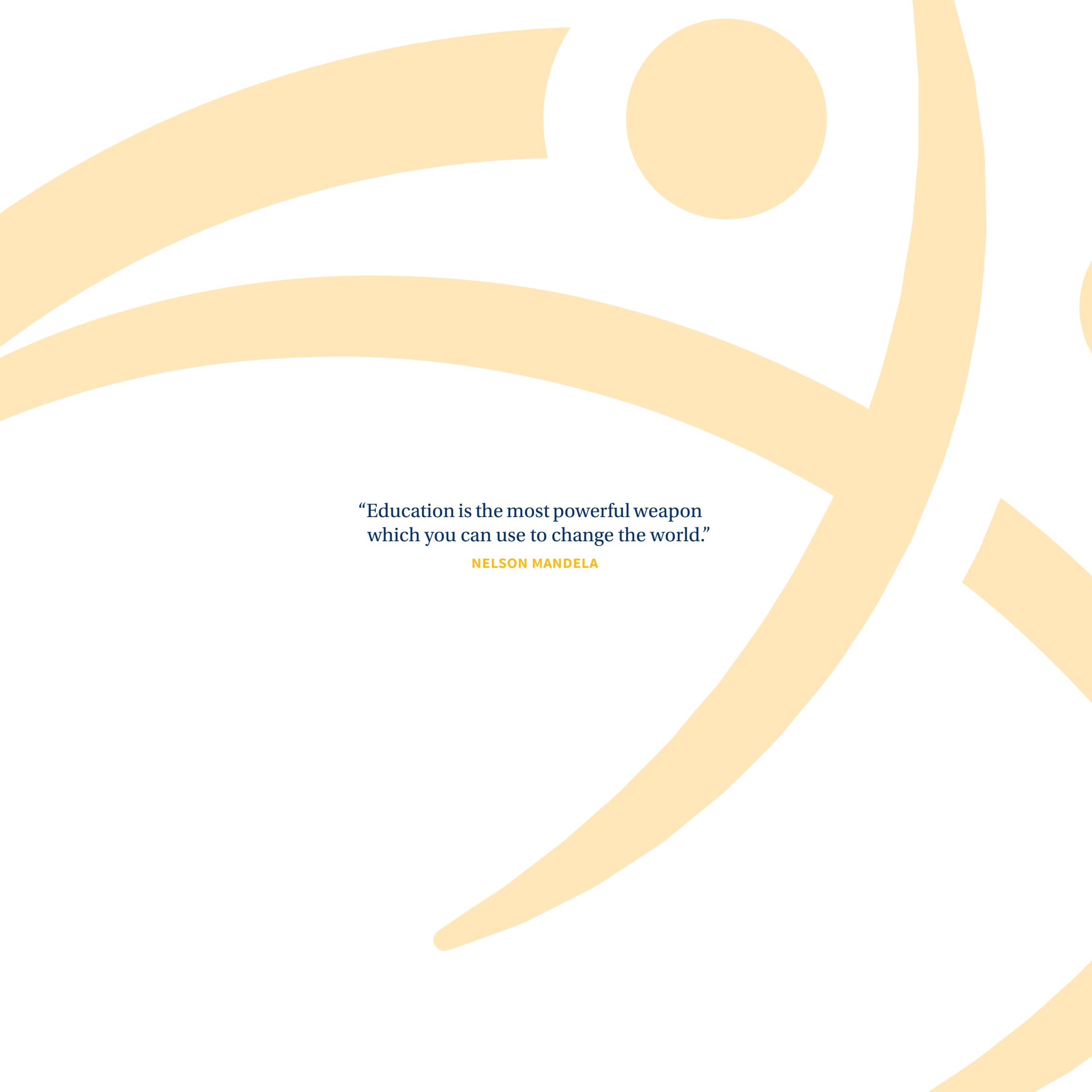




LOSING TALENT 2020

An Economic and Foreign Policy Risk
America Can't Ignore

MARCH 2020

The background features several thick, curved, orange and yellow lines that sweep across the page. A solid orange circle is positioned in the upper right quadrant. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on organic, flowing shapes.

“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world.”

NELSON MANDELA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International students create jobs, drive research, enrich our classrooms, strengthen national security, and become America's greatest foreign policy assets. Yet new international student enrollment is down dramatically across the United States.

- ▶ International students contributed nearly \$41 billion to our economy last year.
- ▶ During the 2018 – 2019 academic year, international students created or supported more than 458,000 jobs. That's three jobs created for every seven international students who chose to study here.
- ▶ International education is the fifth-largest U.S. service sector export.
- ▶ The most recent U.S. Department of State *Open Doors*® report, published by the Institute of International Education, reported a 0.9% decline in new international student enrollments; ***this is the third consecutive year of decline in new international student enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities.***
- ▶ Data show that international students and scholars feel less safe and less welcome in the United States than the previous year surveyed.
- ▶ University and industry leaders acknowledge that anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies contribute to a chilling effect on international study in the United States.
- ▶ Competitors like Canada, China, and Australia are recruiting and attracting more international students and scholars and benefiting at the expense of the United States. For example, in 2014, China surpassed the United Kingdom and the United States as a top destination for international students from Africa — and it continues to draw increasing numbers of students from the African continent.

Part of the American strength has been to be a global recruiter of talent ... There are people like this all over the world whose views have been shaped very positively by their experience here ... That just seems like the strongest form of soft power we've seen and we simply ought to not be giving that up.

Dr. David Leebron

PRESIDENT
RICE UNIVERSITY

SOURCES

tinyurl.com/PoliticoPro-20190702-Leebron

THE LOSS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: AMERICA'S FIFTH-LARGEST SERVICES EXPORT AT RISK

New international student enrollment is down 10.8% since the fall of 2016.

These decreases are in part due to several troubling federal policy changes that have altered the perception of the United States as a welcoming destination for international students, scholars, and researchers.

nyt mag

It's shortsighted to think of this issue solely in terms of revenue: International students and scholars also spur American innovation and growth ... the United States can't afford to close the pipeline of talent and tuition that supports its education system and drives its economic future.

Brook Larmer

CONTRIBUTING WRITER
THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

Bloomberg

Education — particularly higher education — is a major American export.... When we provide a service that leads to foreigners sending money into the U.S., that's an export with exactly the same economic effects as when we sell soybeans or coal abroad.

Dr. Richard Startz

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA BARBARA

Forbes

While new enrollment of international students in the United States has declined for three straight years, at universities in Australia the enrollment of international students in higher education increased by 47% between 2015 and 2018, according to Australian government data.

Stuart Anderson

SENIOR CONTRIBUTOR
FORBES MAGAZINE

**Students are still studying outside their home country.
*They're just studying in other places.***

A Study Portals survey of 1,300+ international and American students gauged students' thoughts after the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

87%

International respondents indicated the main reason for their **decreased desire to study in the United States is that they perceive the United States to be less welcoming toward international students.**

SOURCES

tinyurl.com/nytm-20190103-MostVitalExports

tinyurl.com/forbes-20191119-Anderson

tinyurl.com/blmbrg-20190117-ForeignSour

tinyurl.com/iie-OpenDoors

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LEADERS AGREE THAT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARE AN ASSET TO AMERICA



I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here.

Colin L. Powell

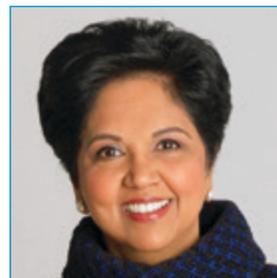
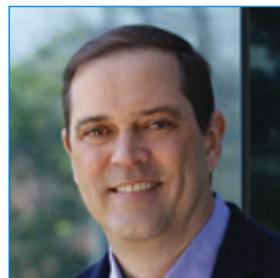
RETIRED
FOUR-STAR GENERAL
UNITED STATES ARMY



International students learn about the best of America by studying side-by-side with our students from cities, towns and rural communities in the Central Valley and throughout California — inspiring global interconnectedness and making international education the perfect incubator for diplomacy. Furthermore, knowledge of American culture and our political and social structures serves a diplomatic as well as educational function.

Dr. Marjorie Zatz

VICE PROVOST AND DEAN OF GRADUATE EDUCATION
AND SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED



Inconsistent government action and uncertainty undermines economic growth and American competitiveness and creates anxiety for employees who follow the law. In many cases, these employees studied here and received degrees from U.S. universities, often in critical STEM fields.

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE CEOS INCLUDING

Tim Cook
CEO, APPLE

Chuck Robbins
CEO, CISCO SYSTEMS

Indra K. Nooyi
FORMER CEO, PEPSICO

SOURCES

tinyurl.com/USDoS-Powell-quote

tinyurl.com/BR-CookRobbinsNooyi-quote

tinyurl.com/diversedu-20181023-Zatz

tinyurl.com/wapo-20181213-Rampell

IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO THE U.S. ECONOMY

The latest analysis by NAFSA: Association of International Educators finds that the more than 1 million *international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$41 billion and supported more than 458,000 jobs to the U.S. economy* during the 2018 – 2019 academic year.

According to a 2019 report from the Niskanen Center, experiential learning opportunities like

Optional Practical Training (OPT) for international students lead to increased innovation and higher average earnings, while not costing U.S. workers their jobs.

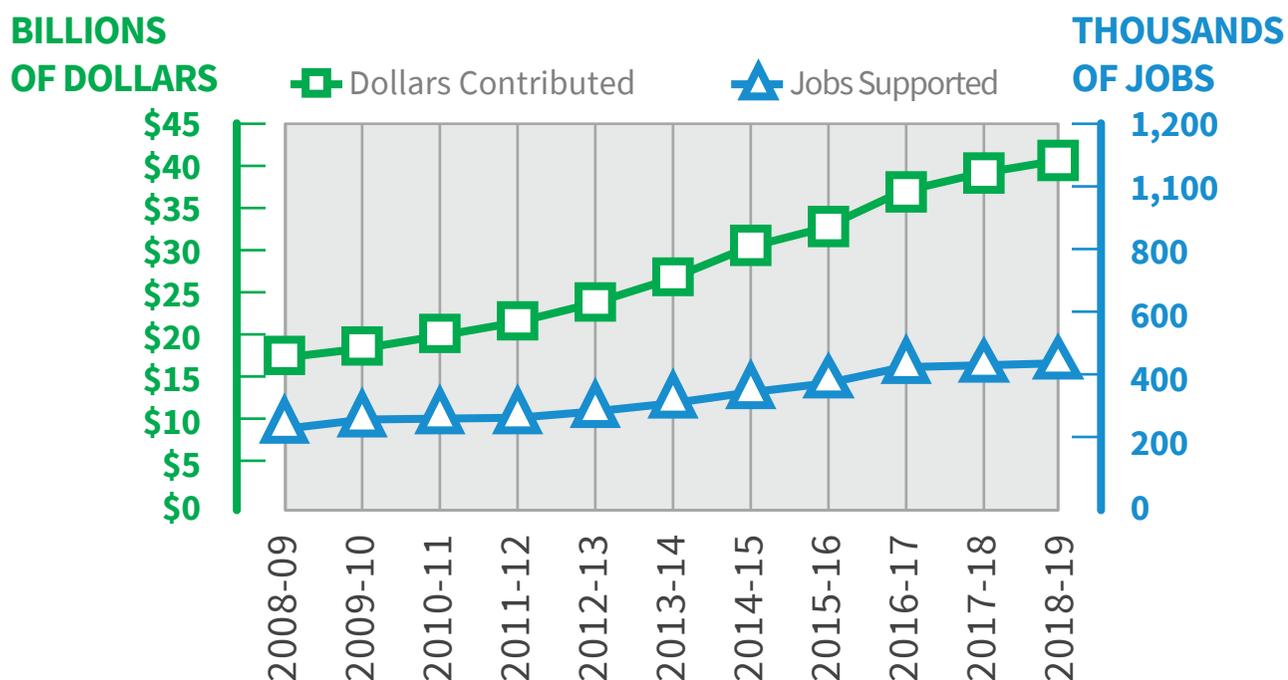
According to a 2019 report from the National Foundation for American Policy, nearly one-quarter of the founders of \$1 billion U.S. start-up companies first came to America as international students.

Higher education has long been one of this nation's greatest economic assets, attracting the brightest and most promising minds from around the world, fueling science and innovation, creating jobs and spreading economic prosperity. Some of the most successful start-up companies in the United States had at least one immigrant founder, including Uber and SpaceX. Two of America's most iconic software companies, Microsoft and Google, are led by [people from India] who came to the United States as graduate students.

Ángel Cabrera

PRESIDENT
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

U.S. International Student Enrollment Contributions



SOURCES

tinyurl.com/NC-OPT-Graduates-201903

tinyurl.com/NAFSA-ISCOEAI

tinyurl.com/NFAP-2019-IEUSI-Policy

tinyurl.com/iie-OpenDoors

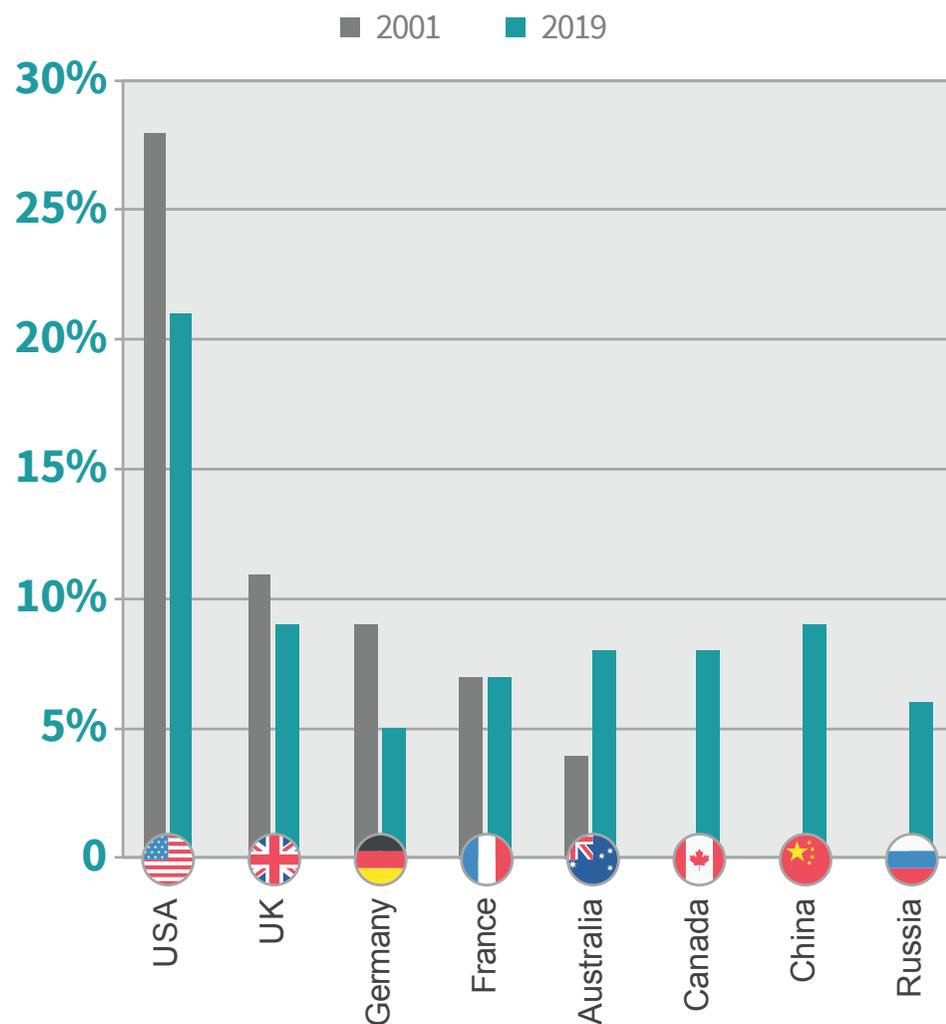
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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IS GROWING—BUT U.S. MARKET SHARE IS DECREASING

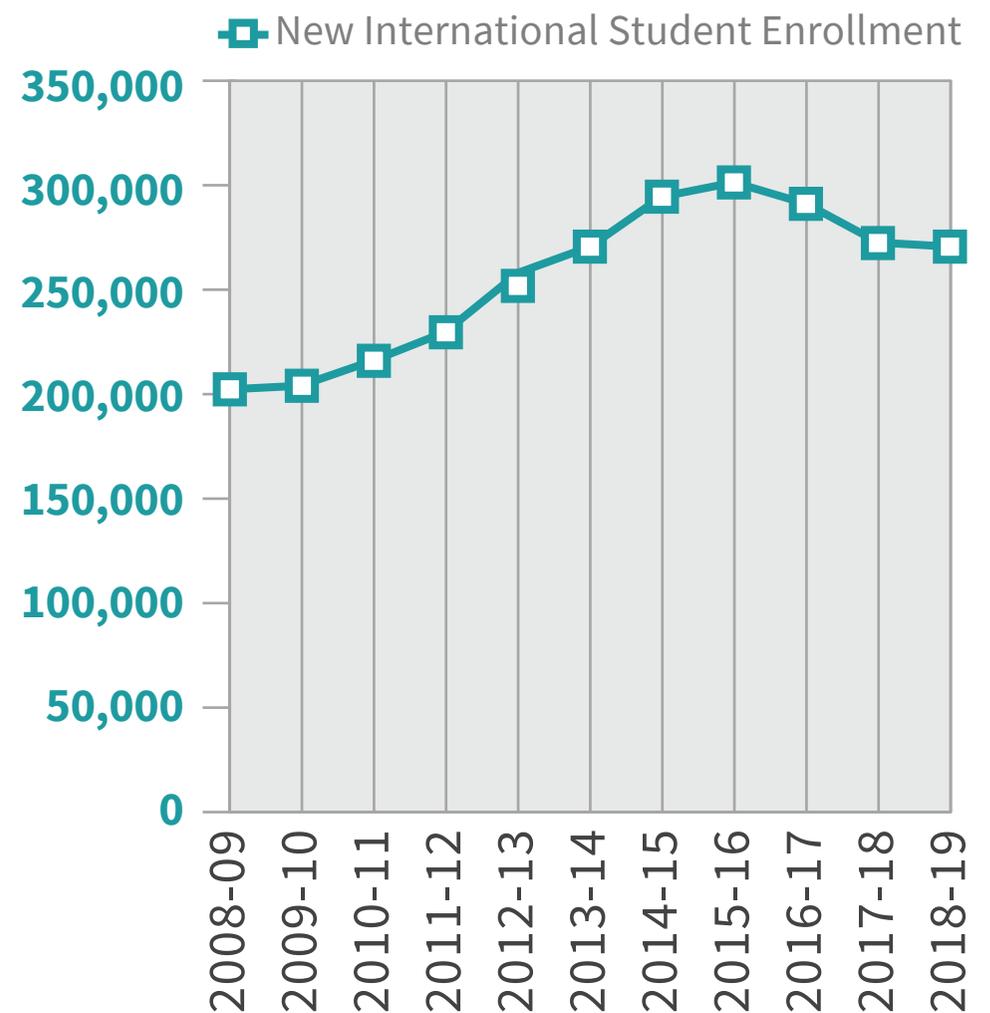
According to Project Atlas data, since 2001, the number of students pursuing education outside of their home country has more than doubled, from **2.1 million to 5.3 million**, while the U.S. share of this globally-mobile

student population dropped, **from 28% in 2001 to 21% in 2019**. NAFSA estimates the continued decline in new international student enrollment since fall 2016 has cost the U.S. economy **\$11.8 billion** and **more than 65,000 jobs**.

International Student Enrollment Competitor Countries Market Share



New International Student Enrollment in the United States



SOURCES

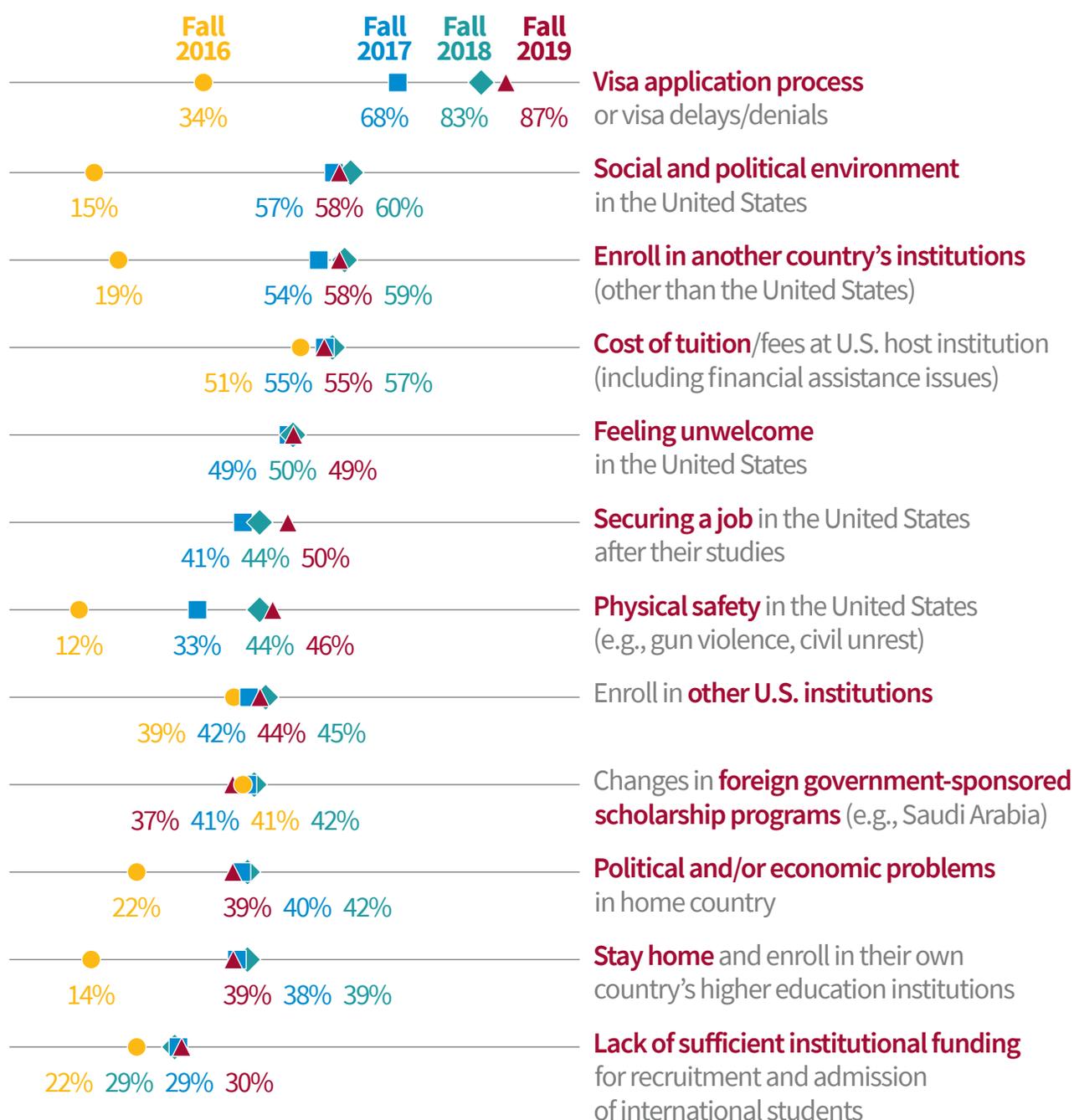
tinyurl.com/iie-CurrentInfographics

tinyurl.com/iie-OpenDoors

WHAT'S CAUSING THIS?

Institutions continue to report that prospective international students and their families are concerned about U.S. federal policies and rhetoric on immigration, along with apprehensions of personal safety and tense race relations.

Top 12 Reasons for Declining International Students Enrollment



Institutions continued to report that the **U.S. social and political environment** (57.9%) and **feeling unwelcome in the United States** (48.6%) were factors contributing to new international student declines. Institutions also reported that concerns about physical safety in the United States remained a factor contributing to declining enrollments (45.8%).



Australia wants them.
Canada wants them.
Europe wants them...
Talent will find the destination.
The question is:
Will it be the USA or not?

Pradeep Khosla

CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

SOURCES

tinyurl.com/CNN-20191119-ForeignStudents

tinyurl.com/LATimes-Kholsa-quote

tinyurl.com/iie-InternEnrollmentsFall

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U.S. AT RISK OF LOSING THE BENEFITS OF TALENTED INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The United States is in a competition for global talent with other countries. In 2018, we experienced a third consecutive year of ***decline*** in new international student enrollment. We are also losing our market share of international students and scholars (down 7% since 2001), while many other countries are proactively establishing national policies and marketing strategies in order to attract these talented individuals.



AUSTRALIA 

Foreign students can work for up to 18 months after graduation. Graduates of certain high-need occupations are able to work longer, for up to four years.

In 2018, Australia saw an ***increase of 15%*** in international student enrollment. In 2019, the government announced students who study and remain in certain regional areas will receive an additional year on their post-study work visa.



CANADA 

Following graduation, foreign students can work for a time period equal to the period they studied in Canada, up to a maximum of three years. Work experience considered “skilled” helps graduates qualify for legal residence in Canada. In 2018, international enrollment ***increased by 16%***.



CHINA 

Foreign students graduating with a master’s degree or above are immediately eligible to apply for work visas within one year of graduation.

In 2008, China set a target of bringing half a million foreign students to its shores by 2020; China is on track to meet this goal, ***hosting 492,000 students in 2018.***

SOURCES

tinyurl.com/AU-PostStudyWorkArrangements

tinyurl.com/AU-PostStudyWork-2019

tinyurl.com/CA-StayPostGraduation

tinyurl.com/CN-PostStudyWorkGraduates

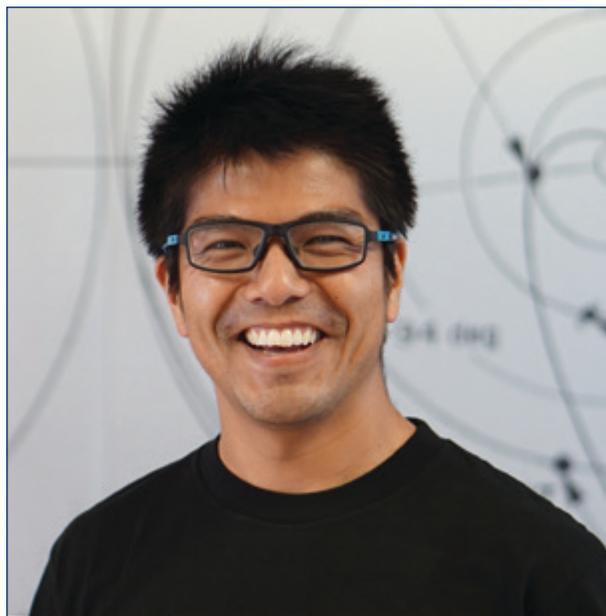
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS ARE GREAT FOR AMERICA



MARZIEH AYATI 🇮🇷 IRAN

Case Western Reserve University

Marzieh Ayati is an award-winning computer scientist who studied at Case Western Reserve University and now researches biological data to develop new medical treatments. She currently teaches computer science at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and works with middle and high school students to foster their development in the STEM fields.



YU TAKAHASHI 🇯🇵 JAPAN

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and University of Colorado Boulder

A key member of NASA's OSIRIS-REx team, Takahashi was inspired by the American Mars rover missions. He studied at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and the University of Colorado Boulder to gain the skills necessary to work at NASA. Now, his job is to safely navigate NASA spacecraft around planets and asteroids.



HIYAM AFEEF 🇲🇻 MALDIVES

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

During her education at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Afeef forged lasting connections with her U.S. peers, strengthening understanding between the United States and the Maldives. After graduating, Captain Afeef became the first female seaplane captain in Maldivian history.

**FARMER TANTOH**  CAMEROON

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

After earning a certificate on Sustainable Organic Farming Practices and Horticulture from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College through a one-year scholarship from the U.S. Department of State, Tantoh founded the *Save Your Future Association*, a nonprofit dedicated to growing sustainable communities in Africa with a current focus on building access to safe drinking water.

**NANSHU LU**  CHINA

Harvard University

Lu is recognized as one of 35 Innovators Under 35 by the *MIT Technology Review*. She used her education from Harvard University to develop a cutting-edge, malleable, electronic tattoo that can monitor a patient's cardiovascular health in the United States. Now, she is a researcher and associate professor of biomedical engineering at The University of Texas at Austin.

**MIRCEA HANDRU**  ROMANIA

Tiffin University

Recruited to play soccer, Handru earned a BA and MBA from Tiffin University and today is executive director of a mental health and recovery services nonprofit in northern Ohio. He is actively working to improve available local mental health services and to combat Ohio's opioid drug epidemic.

CASE STUDY

BECOMING DESTINATIONS OF CHOICE

Canada

Perhaps no country has been taking more advantage of the shifts in international student mobility than Canada, where politicians and university leaders alike have seized on the opportunity to brand the country as a proudly multicultural, welcoming destination. The country hosted 572,415 students in 2018, a 16% increase over 2017. Canada has comparatively friendly international student policies, including expedited visa processing for certain qualifying students. It also offers post-study work visas that can last up to three years and have made it easier for international students to immigrate.

The United Kingdom

Another country reaping the benefits of proactive efforts to attract international students is the United Kingdom. In March 2019, the UK government announced an international education strategy, with the goal of hosting 600,000 international students by the year 2030. In September 2019, the government also moved to reinstate a two-year post-study work visa for graduates starting in the 2020 – 21 academic year. In January 2020, the UK government announced a new, fast-track visa program to attract the world's top scientists, researchers and mathematicians.

International students are being actively recruited to Canada and the United Kingdom, but not the United States.

- ▶ In 2018, international student enrollment in Canada increased by 16%, while U.S. international student enrollment was flat.
- ▶ In the 2018 – 19 academic year, international students studying in the United Kingdom grew 5.9% — with a sizeable 42% increase in new enrollments from India.
- ▶ In comparison, overall international enrollment in the United States was flat, with enrollment from India growing just 2.9%.

SOURCES

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tinyurl.com/PieNews-20190316-StrategyUK

tinyurl.com/PieNews-20190910-WorkRightsUK

tinyurl.com/PieNews-20200117-NumberJumpUK

tinyurl.com/UKgov-20200127-ScienceVisa

CASE STUDY

EXERTING ITS INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD

Chinese investment in Africa is yielding strong results, while the United States continues to miss key opportunities for collaboration.

- ▶ The United States has traditionally viewed China as a “source or sending” country of international students to the United States. However, China is rapidly becoming a major host country. This is a significant shift that has occurred as China has launched its Belt and Road Initiative.
- ▶ Many may be aware of the massive Chinese investment in infrastructure and jobs on the African continent. What is less known is China’s significant investment in educational scholarships and recruitment of African international students.

China

In 2014, China quietly surpassed the United Kingdom and the United States as a top destination for international students from Africa—and it continues to draw increasing numbers of students from the continent.

China’s place as a top destination for African international students is the product of a concerted effort. A multipronged approach actively promotes Chinese culture and language diffusion throughout Africa; supports continent-wide, national higher education efforts; and fosters diverse and dynamic intergovernmental and interinstitutional efforts.

In 2000, a newly formed Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) sought to establish a framework for China to coordinate its multiple diplomatic relationships with African nations. The forum includes China and, since 2017, every African nation.

Simultaneously, the United States’ influence on African students is receding, according to many experts.

SOURCES

tinyurl.com/NAFSA-20190501-Tobenkin

tinyurl.com/wenr-20170307-Gu

WHAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CAN DO TO KEEP AMERICA COMPETITIVE

While trends in international student enrollment are alarming, bipartisan consensus in Congress is growing to reverse this dynamic. Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle agree that America becomes more competitive by attracting the world's best talent. Through legislation, hearings, letters to the administration, and social media, more than 80 congressional leaders have articulated the value that international students and scholars bring to our communities.

Since May 2019, colleges and universities in Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York, and Wisconsin have sent letters to their respective congressional delegations about the policy obstacles they face in their efforts to attract and retain international students, faculty, and scholars.

To change course, policy changes must be enacted. Only then will we have a United States where the best and brightest are truly able to contribute to the economy and innovation.

We urge Congress and the administration to keep America competitive in the following ways:

- ▶ Establish a coordinated U.S. recruitment strategy to proactively attract a diverse pool of talented individuals from around the world. ***Competitor countries have strategies and are yielding the benefits of their investments.***
- ▶ Allow international student visa applicants to express interest in remaining in the United States after graduation. ***Current immigration law requires international students to show no intent to immigrate.***
- ▶ Create a direct path to green card for international graduates of U.S. colleges and universities, eliminate current green cards backlogs, and prevent future backlogs. ***International students should have the opportunity to remain in the United States after graduation.***
- ▶ Ensure national security by protecting sensitive research, not targeting specific nationalities. ***Focus on specific individuals who pose a real threat.***

Preserve duration of status policy and protect practical training programs for international students:

- ▶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Regulatory Agenda includes planned changes to both.
- ▶ Practical training is highly desired by international students to round out their academic study; competitor countries use similar programs to attract students away from the United States.
- ▶ Duration of status is good policy; it provides international students the flexibility necessary to progress through levels of study or pursue practical training after study without requiring an extension application be filed with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, an agency already backlogged with applications.



Learn more about NAFSA's policy recommendations at nafsa.org/welcometosucceed



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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

CREATE JOBS
DRIVE INNOVATION
ENRICH OUR CLASSROOMS
STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SECURITY
BECOME AMERICA'S GREATEST FOREIGN POLICY ASSETS
ARE GREAT FOR AMERICA

For more information, visit nafsa.org/policy

#WelcomeToSucceed 