

issue for them. They rarely encounter corruption in the course of their examinations and reviews of institutions or programs. Why, in light of the absence of even preliminary evidence of corruption, should they apply their limited resources to address this issue? And in the rare instances in which it is encountered, do not other actors—not quality assurance/accreditation—have primary responsibility here? Corruption, even academic corruption, is an issue for government, for law enforcement, or for the courts.

When it comes to academic corruption, it is not enough to articulate common principles at a general level that we can all embrace and that provide an umbrella for variations in quality assurance practice around the world.

The challenge here is to acknowledge that, however strong higher education may be in any given country, corruption can and does occur and that we need to act. Are we actually looking for corruption as part of the peer review or self-study process? Is there a set of indicators or triggers that produces greater scrutiny for the presence of corruption? Is there an “anti-corruption” checklist? What are tell-tale signs that peer reviewers are trained to catch? Yes, this is not the most pleasant of topics, but neither is corruption unearthed by other authorities at the same time that quality assurance/accreditation bodies are asserting that a college or university is meeting its academic integrity expectations.

About cultural variation, what counts as “corruption” differs, sometimes widely, from country to country. Plagiarism, for example, is acceptable in some societies but not others. Nepotism is appropriate within some borders but not others. The selling of degrees or academic credit or college admission is considered corruption in some countries. In others, such practices are viewed as unfortunate but necessary. While quality assurance/accreditation leaders have readily agreed on common practices in many areas—academic leadership role of the university, the importance of scholarship and research, commitment to students throughout higher education—agreement about what counts as corruption is more difficult because of these variations.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

When it comes to academic corruption, it is not enough to articulate common principles at a general level that we can all embrace and that provide an umbrella for variations in quality assurance practice around the world. This typi-

cal practice in addressing quality assurance issues can certainly help, but we need more. Beyond our attention to academic integrity, we can strengthen anti-corruption practices through additional quality assurance/accreditation standards and policies that focus explicitly on corruption. We need additional training to expand effective scrutiny for the presence of corruption in a college or university as part of ongoing quality review. We can map the variability of what counts or does not count as corruption from country to country. The stakes are exceptionally high with corruption, with enormous potential for harm to students, employers, and the public—and the undermining of the legitimacy of higher education.

Academic corruption is an uncomfortable space for quality assurance. It will take time and a willingness to operate with this discomfort to address these issues more fully as part of establishing a needed leadership role. Moving forward, the suggestions in this article can be part of a successful response to the *Advisory Statement* wake-up call.

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The Growth of International Student Mobility Is Faltering

DIRK VAN DAMME

Dirk Van Damme is head of division, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills. E-mail: dirk.vandamme@oecd.org.

Over the past decades, the numbers of international students have steadily grown. According to data collected by OECD and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the total number of internationally mobile students studying in another country than that of their citizenship exploded from 1.7 million in 1995 to 4.5 million in 2012. The rationale for this growth is clear. To some extent, international student mobility can be seen as a consequence of global academic inequality. Students are moving to other parts of the globe in order to find the best possible education their money can buy. International student mobility is one of the ways through which the geographical gap between supply and demand is overcome. Investing resources in their children’s education in order for them to secure high-quality credentials has become a preferred strategy of affluent middle-class families in emerging countries, especially after their purchasing power started to increase. Some countries were quick to tap into this opportunity and developed strategies to market their higher education offer. International student mobility is one of the most visible ways through which

globalization manifests itself in higher education.

Many expected this growth to continue and even to accelerate. But that is not what happened: from 2012 onward, the growth rate fell to almost zero. Between 2012 and 2015, a mere 100,000 students were added to the 4.5 million. Recent figures, published in OECD's *Education at a Glance 2017*, suggest that it is not just a temporary setback, but a more structural phenomenon.

DOMESTIC EXPANSION

What could the reasons be for this change? We probably need to look at developments both on the demand and the supply sides. Regarding demand, the obvious explanation is the improvement of domestic education in the most important countries of origin. China, and to a lesser extent India, have invested huge resources in developing their higher education systems, including a select number of universities that are predestined to achieve world-class status in the next few years. Chinese universities are now aggressively entering global rankings and continue to improve their rankings every single year. The Chinese research output is the most rapidly increasing of the whole world. Changing prospects at home have an impact on the investment strategies of affluent middle-class families in these nations. China also seems to monitor and manage its outgoing student flow more carefully.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, NO LONGER WELCOME

Still, changes on the demand side alone cannot explain the lack of growth. Indeed, the potential reservoir of interested students in many countries around the world remains immense. We also have to look at the supply side, to developments in the main countries of destination. It is evident that in the main countries active in the field of exporting education services, things have fundamentally changed as well. From a very hospitable and welcoming approach to international students, popular and political attitudes have reversed into a much more hostile stance. This has happened in main destination countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, but also in upcoming players such as the Netherlands, Sweden, or Switzerland. The general backlash against migration, aggravated by the refugee crisis and flows of asylum seekers, has also turned the climate upside down for foreign students. Populist and often false accusations that foreign students are only interested in permanent migration, and that they take the future jobs of domestic students, are now in the media every day.

The 2017 *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, published by the Institute of International Education (IIE), points to a decrease of 7 percent in the numbers of new international students enrolling in US higher education institutions. The majority of surveyed in-

stitutions (52 percent) in the IIE survey expressed concern that the country's social and political climate could deter prospective international students. The recently released 2018 Science and Engineering Indicators report from the National Science Foundation's (NSF) governing board, the National Science Board, mentions a 19 percent drop in students coming from India to the United States. The decrease in international students, especially at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels, confronts many research laboratories of US universities with huge staffing shortages.

In the United Kingdom, the share of international students in universities' intake has stalled around 19 percent since 2013. Data published at the end of 2017 by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) points to a slight decline in the numbers of students from EU countries applying to UK universities. For the university sector, it is clear that the Brexit referendum and its aftermath are factors deterring European students from coming to the United Kingdom. A political decision is currently being discussed of removing international students from the govern-

To some extent, international student mobility can be seen as a consequence of global academic inequality.

ment's target of reducing net immigration. Even with a favorable decision for international students, general feelings of uncertainty and a hostile climate against migration to the United Kingdom are probably becoming a deterrent for international students. Vice-chancellors are trying to fight the hostile climate, among others with research reports that demonstrate the beneficial impact of international students on local and regional economies. In a recent study, international students are said to be contributing 10 times more to the UK economy than what they cost the taxpayer.

Similar developments can be seen in other countries of destination. Only a few years ago, countries were engaged in a competition to attract fee-paying international students to their campuses. Nowadays, most destination countries are not trying to grab other countries' lost shares of international students, but seem to align on a generally hostile stance against international students. This is at least the impression one gets from looking at the situation in countries like Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, or Switzerland.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SHAPING THE WORLD IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

What is happening both on the demand and supply sides of international higher education is fundamentally reshaping the size and direction of international student mobility flows. In a strange way, they are reshaping global academic inequalities. At the same time, they are also redefining where and how the future professionals and leaders of the twenty-first century will be educated. Academic education was an important instrument shaping the post-WWII global order. Likewise, the current changes in international education will have a profound impact around the world in the twenty-first century. ■

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Attracting and Retaining Global Talent: International Graduate Students in the United States

RAJIKA BHANDARI

Rajika Bhandari is head of research, policy, and practice, Institute of International Education (IIE), New York, US. E-mail: rbhandari@iie.org.

The Open Doors project is carried out by IIE in partnership with the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (www.iie.org/opendoors).

The new *Open Doors* 2017 data was released in November 2017 during a time of much speculation in the US higher education sector on whether the flows of international students to the United States would decline. But these data, as well as several snapshot surveys conducted in 2017 by IIE and partner higher education associations, ultimately revealed a mixed picture. While there were clear declines in new enrollments, pointing to a flattening of international student numbers at best and a future decline at worst, there were some surprises: whether or not institutions saw declines was based on the type of institution, its geographic location, and its selectivity. Among those that saw declines, there was clearly a mix of factors to which this downturn could be attributed, and the flattening of numbers actually preceded the political and social developments in the United States in 2017.

In the context of this uncertain climate, some populations of international students deserve closer attention.

While the *Open Doors* survey includes international students at all levels of postsecondary education, this article focuses on the status of international graduate students in the United States.

WHAT ATTRACTS INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS TO THE UNITED STATES?

Three key aspects of the US higher education sector have been instrumental in attracting graduate students and top talent from around the world. The first is the quality and diversity of US institutions—over 4,000 of them. Surveys of prospective international students have shown that the United States is ranked the highest for the quality of its institutions and overall academic experience. Second, the significant investments and emphasis on science, technology, and innovation within the higher education sector; campus-based research facilities; and university–industry collaborations are critical components of US graduate education, attracting graduate students from all over who aim to pursue advanced research. Third, and relatedly, is the availability of poststudy opportunities such as Optional Practical Training (OPT), which enables international graduate students to apply their academic knowledge while also serving as a pathway for longer-term employment and retention in the US workforce and talent pool.

CURRENT FINDINGS

Against this backdrop, what does the current evidence tell us about the status of international graduate students at various points of the talent pipeline—from enrollment, to work–study opportunities immediately following their graduation, and to full-time employment in the United States? Looking first at current enrollment, we note that 36 percent (or 391,124) of all international students enrolled in the United States are graduate students. In recent years, the absolute numbers of international graduate students in the United States have continued to rise, and the United States hosts more graduate students than any other competing host country, as indicated by Project Atlas. Nonetheless, findings from the recent *Open Doors* data on new enrollments, based on a Fall 2017 snapshot survey and two recent reports by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), suggest that international graduate student growth might be slowing down. The NSF analysis found a decline of almost 6 percent in international graduate enrollment between 2016 and 2017, and the CGS survey of new international graduate enrollment also found an overall decline of almost 3 percent. The latter declines were at the master's and certificate program levels and at less research-intensive institutions, indicating once again that the current fluctuations in international student enrollments vary by institutional type.