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Quick Facts

- Over 1.1 million international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed $43.8 billion to the American economy during the 2023-2024 academic year.[1] This includes approximately 6,800 international students at Harvard University.[2]
- International students supported over 378,000 jobs in higher education, accommodations, dining, housing, health insurance, and other industries.[3]
- For every three students who come to the US to study, one job is created or supported.[4]
- A study analyzing international enrollment trends from 1995 to 2005 found that foreign students actually increase domestic enrollment in graduate programs, largely due to cross-subsidization.[5]
- Immigrants are twice as likely to start a business compared to the U.S.-born citizens, and around 55% of U.S. startup unicorns were founded or co-founded by immigrants.[6]
- Harvard runs multiple programs and initiatives in states including Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and more.

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[1] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA," November 18, 2024, https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[2] Nik Popli, and Callum Sutherland. "Federal Judge Blocks Trump Administration from barring International Student Enrollment at Harvard." TIME. Time, May 22, 2025. https://time.com/7288058/harvard-international-students-trump-administration/.
[3] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA," November 18, 2024, https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[4] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA," November 18, 2024. https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[5] Kevin Shih, "Do International Students Crowd-out or Cross-Subsidize Americans in Higher Education?," *Journal of Public Economics* 156 (December 2017): 170–84, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.10.003.
[6] Kauffman Foundation. "The New Entrepreneurial Growth Agenda," 2021.

Background

Harvard University traces its origins to 1636 when the board of the Massachusetts Bay Company approved the establishment of a university outside Boston to train members of the Puritan community. Made up of immigrants themselves, the nascent British colonies were populated nearly entirely by transplanted Englishmen.[7]

Universities in the United States have long attracted students from around the world, enabling the flow of ideas and knowledge between nations. This practice has sustained some of the most renowned academic communities in the world and significantly influenced the U.S. economy. Enrollment of foreign students in U.S. postsecondary institutions has more than tripled since 1980, reaching over one million students in 2023.[8] These students generate billions of dollars in tuition revenue, support hundreds of thousands of jobs, and reinforce the United States' position as a leader in higher education and research.[9]

International students constitute a significant yet often under-recognized and overlooked presence on American colleges and university campuses. In recent years, the number of foreign students pursuing higher education in the United States has been rising steadily, with the enrollment increasing from 305,000 to above one million students between 1980 and 2017.[10]

[7] Brendan Wolfe, "Colonial Virginia," Encyclopedia Virginia (blog), accessed July 1, 2025, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/colonial-virginia/.
[8] "Digest of Education Statistics," Ed.gov (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d23/tables/dt23_310.20.asp.
[9] John Bound et al., "The Globalization of Postsecondary Education: The Role of International Students in the US Higher Education System," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 35, no. 1 (February 1, 2021): 163–84, https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.35.1.163.
[10] Ibid.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, international students contributed $43.8 billion and supported 378,175 jobs to the economy of the United States.[11]

[11] "NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool | NAFSA," accessed June 20, 2025, https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2.

Recent Developments

International students currently find themselves at the center of a political and economic battle over higher education as President Donald Trump's administration has taken unprecedented steps to decrease their numbers. In May of 2025, the United States Department of Homeland Security revoked Harvard's certification to host foreign students and temporarily banned entry for new enrollees.[12] These moves, now under preliminary injunction by federal judges,[13] have deterred or completely stopped many students around the world from pursuing higher education in the United States.

On May 22nd, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security revoked Harvard' SEVP certification as part of an ongoing legal battle between the Trump administration and the nation's oldest university.[14] Without SEVP certification, Harvard cannot issue Form I-20s, threatening the legal status of international students studying at the university.[15] The letter demanded that Harvard prevent new international students on F- or J- visas from entering, and alarmingly, current students attending Harvard on international student visas would be forced to transfer to another university that has not yet lost SEVP certification.[16] Although being forced to transfer to another university still allows the student to remain in the United States, there is still a loss when

[12] U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "Harvard University Loses Student and Exchange Visitor Program Certification for Pro-Terrorist Conduct | Homeland Security," 2024. https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/05/22/harvard-university-loses-student-and-exchange-visitor-program-certification-pro.
[13] Raymond, Nate. "US Judge Blocks Trump Plan to Close Harvard's Doors to International Students." *Reuters*, June 24, 2025. https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-judge-blocks-trump-plan-close-harvards-doors-international-students-2025-06-24/.
[14] Kristi Noem, "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY;," n.d.
[15] "Getting Started with SEVP Certification | Study in the States," accessed July 6, 2025, https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/schools/apply/getting-started-with-sevp-certification.
[16] "Harvard University Loses Student and Exchange Visitor Program Certification for Pro-Terrorist Conduct | Homeland Security," accessed July 6, 2025, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/05/22/harvard-university-loses-student-and-exchange-visitor-program-certification-pro.

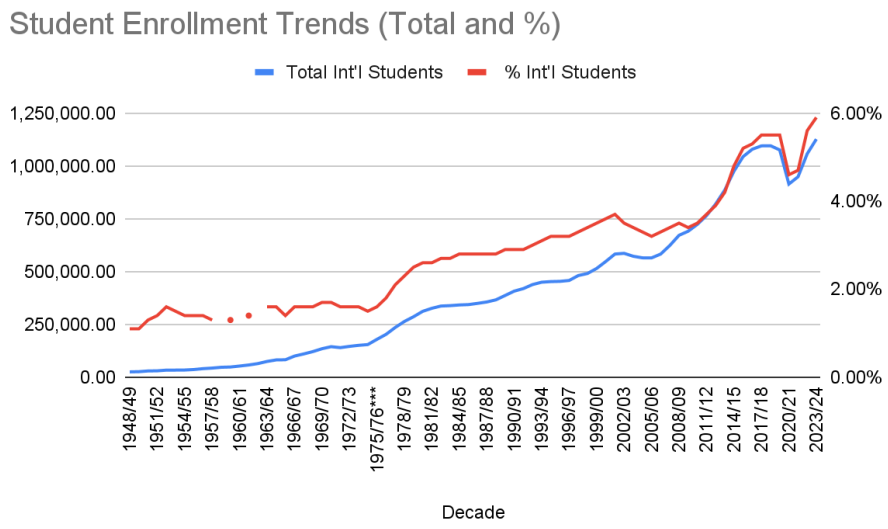
the student is removed from Harvard University. International students stand to lose the institution's abundant resources in academics, research, financial aid, and alumni networking.

Historical Trends Across the United States

For the last several decades, there's been a worldwide increase in the number of students pursuing higher education. Notably, this includes an increase in the number of international students attending colleges and universities in the United States. In 1949, U.S. educational institutions had enrolled approximately 25,000 international students (about 1% of all enrolled students in higher education in the country). In 2024, approximately 1.1 million of the overall 19 million U.S. higher education students are international students.[17] The growing presence of international students is necessarily concomitant with their increasingly significant and socioeconomically multifaceted effect on the U.S. economy.

International students have cemented their role as the cornerstone of the U.S. higher education system. A record 1,126,690 international students were enrolled in American colleges during the 2024-2025 academic year, signifying a 6.6% increase over the previous year.[18] This figure represents a full recovery from pandemic-era losses and now represents 6% of all enrolled students in higher education in the United States.

[17] Institute of International Education, *Open Doors: International Students Enrollment Trends*, last updated November 17, 2024, accessed June 21, 2025, in *Open Doors Data*, IIE, U.S. Department of State, https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/enrollment-trends/.
[18] IIE Open Doors / Enrollment Trends. "IIE Open Doors / Enrollment Trends." https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/enrollment-trends/.



A visual representation of international student enrollment trends.[15]

Year	Total Int'l students	% int'l students	Year	Total Int'l students	% int'l students
1948/49	25,464	1.1	2000/01	547,867	3.6
1960/61	53,107	-	2010/11	723,277	3.5
1970/71	144,708	1.7	2019/20	1,075,496	5.5
1980/81	311,882	2.6	2020/21	914,095	4.6
1990/91	407,529	2.9	2023/24	1,126,690	5.9

Table Representing International Student Enrollment Trends.[19]

Additionally, the geographic makeup of international enrollment has changed. China and India still control the majority of international students in the U.S, accounting for 54% of all international students in the U.S. India emerged as the country sending the most students, with a 23% increase over the previous year, and the majority of this growth came at the graduate level.

[19] IIE Open Doors / Enrollment Trends. "IIE Open Doors / Enrollment Trends." https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/enrollment-trends/.

China, ranking second, sent 227,398 students, a 4% decrease from the previous year. However, China remained the largest source of undergraduate students, with 87,551 students.[20]

The levels and subjects studied by international students also vary. In the 2023–2024 academic year, there were 502,291 international graduate students and 342,875 undergraduates, making graduate students the largest segment of international enrollment [21]. More than half (56%) of international students in the 2023–2024 academic year were enrolled in STEM majors, with math, computer science, and engineering among the most popular majors.[22]

The first wave of international student expansion began after World War II, with the United States declaring its ambition to the world of becoming the global educational leader. In 1948, around 25,464 international students enrolled in U.S. institutions,[2] but as Cold War-era government initiatives such as the Fulbright Program (1946) and Point Four Program (1949) fueled growth in international student numbers, more than 144,000[3] new students enrolled on American campuses. This initiative expanded diplomatic ties and spread American influence in newly decolonized nations, mostly in Africa and Asia.[4] Legislative change also played a major role, specifically the *Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965,* which removed long-standing discriminatory quotas and enabled students from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to enroll in greater numbers.[5] This, in turn, led U.S. universities, which at this point were increasingly reliant on federal and philanthropic funding, to welcome international students as contributors to both research capacity and institutional prestige, continuing to this day.

[20] IIE Open Doors / International Students. "IIE Open Doors / International Students." https://opendoorsdata.org/annual-release/international-students/.
[21] IIE Open Doors / Fast Facts. "IIE Open Doors / Fast Facts." https://opendoorsdata.org/fact_sheets/fast-facts/.
[22] IIE Open Doors / Fields of Study. "IIE Open Doors / Fields of Study." https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/fields-of-study/.

International enrollment has surged ever since the late 20th and early 21st centuries in the United States. By the 2018–2019 academic year, international students in the U.S. reached a peak of 1.09 million, tripling from 305,000 in 1980.[6] Students from China and India (a decolonized country) accounted for over half of the total number.[7] Rising global middle classes (especially in free market societies), the increasing reputation and prestige of U.S. degrees, and favorable visa provisions like the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program contributed to this unchallenged growth. However, two major events disrupted this trajectory. After the September 11 attacks in 2001, the U.S. government introduced stricter visa controls and implemented the SEVIS monitoring system, which led to a short-term drop in new international enrollments.[8] A similar decline came in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, when new enrollments fell by 46% compared to the previous year.[9]

After World War II, federal programs like Fulbright and Cold War-era science diplomacy consciously opened United States universities to global talent.[23] Background information about these initial policies follows. In recent decades, this effort has deepened through initiatives including the expansion of STEM research funding[24] and introduction of the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program,[25] both of which reward institutions for recruiting graduate students from abroad.

Institutional strategy has also played a central role. Elite universities often tie their financial models to maintaining a diverse global student base, increasing their demand for

[23] State.gov. "Fulbright | Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs," 2019. https://eca.state.gov/fulbright.
[24] NSF - National Science Foundation. "NSF Invests $40M to Strengthen STEM Research Capacity and Workforce Development across Five EPSCoR Jurisdictions," January 22, 2025. https://www.nsf.gov/news/nsf-invests-40m-strengthen-stem-research-capacity-workforce.
[25] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students | USCIS." www.uscis.gov, April 22, 2020. https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students.

international students.[26] They then meet this demand through outreach, increased admissions aid, and global partnerships to build up their international applicant pools and reputations.[27] Many such institutions, Harvard included, are need blind for international students: allowing anybody to study abroad regardless of financial background.[28]

Demographic factors further contribute to demand for international students. With domestic high school graduate numbers declining, US universities increasingly rely on foreign enrollment to sustain or grow their total enrollments.[29]

After World War II, the U.S. expanded its educational and cultural relations with other countries. The U.S. was concerned about postwar cultural relations and attempted to reconstruct education for former enemies and wanted to re-educate their citizens. Although there were international students in the U.S. through programs, like the The Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program, the Fulbright Act increased the number of international students, which promoted intercultural exchange. This assisted the U.S. in developing stronger relations with other countries [30]. The Fulbright Act allowed Americans to study, teach, or conduct research abroad. International students also benefited through Fulbright scholarships to study at U.S. institutions. By 1995, over 250,000 scholarships had been awarded to U.S. citizens and international students through the Fulbright Program, and by 2006, the U.S. government financed more than 158,000

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[26] Bound, John, Breno Braga, Gaurav Khanna, and Sarah Turner. "The Globalization of Postsecondary Education: The Role of International Students in the US Higher Education System." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 35, no. 1 (February 1, 2021): 163–84. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.35.1.163.

[27] NAFSA. "Financial Aid for Undergraduate International Students," n.d. https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-international-education/financial-aid-undergraduate-international-students.

[28] Inno. "Applying for Financial Aid as an International Student | Harvard." college.harvard.edu, December 15, 2021. https://college.harvard.edu/student-life/student-stories/applying-financial-aid-international-student.

[29] WICHE. "Knocking at the College Door, 11th Edition," January 13, 2025. https://www.wiche.edu/knocking/.

[30] Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah. "International Students in the U.S.: Trends, Cultural Adjustments, and Solutions for a Better Experience." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 39, no. 3 (1998): 214. https://doi.org/10.2307/40324159.
jstor.org/stable/pdf/40324159.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Af1073093e9347e1924fa6b999fafd7ea&ab_segments=&initiator=&acceptTC=1

international students in the U.S. The Fulbright program has and continues to bring many international students to the U.S.[31]

In 1961, the Foreign Assistance Act was enacted and created the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which gave non-military related aid to foreign countries. The Peace Corps Act was also enacted in 1961 and promoted American culture to countries and promoted American understanding of other countries. Through the Peace Corps program, 220,000 Americans have volunteered to 140 countries. U.S. aid to foreign countries seeks to bring U.S. education to countries, while encouraging international students to study at U.S. institutions. Many schools at this time were encouraging international studies and multicultural or intercultural educational goals.[32]

In 1955, the distribution of international students' home countries was far more spread out than it is today: 26% of international students came from Asia, 23% came from Europe, another 23% came from Latin America, 17% from North America, 7% from the Middle East, and just 1% from Africa.[33] Today, students from India and China alone make up 54% of all international students in the U.S., with students from Asia as a whole accounting for more than 71%. In contrast to 1955, only 8% of students today come from Europe, 7.6% from Latin America, and 3% from North America. Africa and the Middle East now send more students, however, representing 5% and 4.6% of international students respectively.[34]

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[31] Delphine Banjong and Myrna Olson. 2016. "Issues and Trends of International Students in the United States ." https://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Banjong,%20Delphine%20Issues%20and%20Trends%20of%20International%20Students%20in%20the%20United%20States%20IJE%20V4%20N1%202016.pdf

[32] Delphine Banjong and Myrna Olson. "Issues and Trends of International Students in the United States."

[33] Patricia Chow and Julie Chambers, "International Enrollments in the United States: 60 Years of 'Open Doors' Data," *International Higher Education*, no. 59 (March 25, 2015), https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2010.59.8483.

[34] IIE, "IIE Open Doors / All Places of Origin," IIE Open Doors / All Places of Origin, n.d., https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/all-places-of-origin/.

Recent policy changes have negatively affected growth trends in international student enrollment in the United States. Recent moves by President Donald Trump's administration effectively threatened the legal status of approximately 6,800 international students, roughly 27 percent of Harvard's student body, and placed up to $2.2 billion in federal funding at risk.[35] These actions have led to major repercussions in federal international student enrollment. As of late June, 2025, the United States saw an 11 percent national drop in incoming international students since the previous year,[36] rivaling the drop from the COVID-19 era. With the future of international student enrollment in flux, America stands at a crossroads between its President and the very students fueling its growth since World War II.

[35] Nik Popli, and Callum Sutherland. "Federal Judge Blocks Trump Administration from barring International Student Enrollment at Harvard." TIME. Time, May 22, 2025. https://time.com/7288058/harvard-international-students-trump-administration/.
[36] ICEF Monitor - Market intelligence for international student recruitment. "SEVIS Data Reveals Decline in International Enrolments in the US in 2024/25," April 10, 2025. https://monitor.icef.com/2025/04/sevis-data-reveals-decline-in-international-enrolments-in-the-us-in-2024-25/.

Historical Trends at Harvard University

Periods of global conflict consistently redefined international student flows, with elite U.S. institutions like Harvard acting as both academic sanctuaries and instruments of foreign policy. During and after World War I, Harvard hosted displaced European scholars and expanded its international programs through humanitarian and academic relief efforts.[37] Following World War II, the U.S. emerged as a global superpower, and its universities, bolstered by the G.I. Bill and federal research investments, became global education hubs.[38] Harvard capitalized on this shift by welcoming students from war-torn regions, expanding international fellowships, and forming partnerships with U.S. agencies.[39] The launch of the Fulbright Program in 1946 marked a turning point, with Harvard serving as a top destination for scholars sponsored by the U.S. State Department.[40] During the Cold War, Harvard's Kennedy School played a central role in training diplomats and civil servants from strategically important nations, while programs in economics, public health, and governance drew students whose education aligned with U.S. anti-communist development goals.[41] By the 1960s and 1970s, this ideological agenda was embedded in many federally backed academic exchanges, with international students viewed as future allies in the global ideological struggle.

The narrative of international education as a diplomatic tool was sharply complicated by

[37] Benjamin L. Hartley, "Saving Students: European Student Relief in the Aftermath of World War I," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 42, no. 4 (June 20, 2018): 295–315, https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939318782886.
[38] John Bound and Sarah Turner, "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the G.I. Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?," *Journal of Labor Economics* 20, no. 4 (October 2002): 784–815, https://doi.org/10.1086/342012.
[39] Lydialyle Gibson, "To the Rescue | Harvard Magazine," Harvard Magazine, December 6, 2022, https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2022/12/features-to-the-rescue.
[40] Andrew Glass, "Truman Approves Fulbright Scholarships, Aug. 1, 1946," POLITICO, August 1, 2018, https://www.politico.com/story/2018/08/01/truman-approves-fulbright-scholarships-aug-1-1948-745310.
[41] Liping Bu, "Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War," *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 3 (December 1999): 393–415, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021875899006167.

the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks, which redefined global mobility through the lens of national security. Federal policies such as the USA PATRIOT Act and the implementation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) subjected international students to heightened surveillance, visa delays, and background checks.[42] Harvard, which had long benefited from international enrollment and cross-cultural dialogue, publicly criticized restrictive measures that impeded academic exchange and weakened U.S. global leadership.[43] Enrollment of students from key regions such as the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa temporarily declined, even as overall global demand for U.S. education remained high.[44] In response, Harvard and other institutions expanded legal support, visa advising, and funding mechanisms to assist affected students and protect the integrity of academic mobility.[45] Still, the post-9/11 securitization of student visas altered public perception, reframing international students from cultural ambassadors to potential threats, and marked a lasting shift from the Cold War model of education-as-diplomacy to a more cautious, risk-managed paradigm.

While U.S. foreign policy and security posture have shaped access, economic and educational conditions in students' home countries have been equally important drivers of international student migration. Under-resourced or overcrowded higher education systems in many countries pushed students abroad in search of quality, recognition, and opportunity. In China, for example, the post-Mao reform era saw a dramatic liberalization of outbound study,

[42] Alexander W Wiseman, *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2021* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2022).
[43] Olivia Farrar, "A Timeline of Conflicts between Harvard and the Federal Government | Harvard Magazine," Harvard Magazine, June 23, 2025, https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2025/07/harvard-historical-protests-federal-government.
[44] Karin Johnson, "International Student Flows to the U.S. Before and after 9/11," escholarship.org, 2016, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/03c487zh.
[45] Colleen Walsh Harvard Staff Writer, "The Law before and after 9/11," Harvard Gazette, September 14, 2011, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/09/the-law-before-and-after-911/.

with the U.S. becoming the top destination by the 2000s due to its perceived academic prestige and STEM strength.[46] Additionally, political instability at home, from the Iranian Revolution to Latin American authoritarian regimes, also contributed to outbound flows, as students sought safety, academic freedom, and long-term prospects abroad.[47] [48] This interplay between push and pull factors has reinforced the U.S. role not just as a hub of academic excellence, but as an economic and political haven for students navigating uncertainty in their countries of origin.

Harvard's international presence mirrored national trends for most of the mid-20th century. However, importantly, it was driven more by academic partnerships than by federal funding. In 1950, international students made up roughly 6% of total enrollment, a figure that doubled and rose to 11.6% by 1985.[10] The increase was most notable in graduate programs, where fellowships from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations sponsored students from mostly decolonised nations, notably from Asia, Africa, and Latin America (although most Latin American countries were already independent before World War II).[11] By the 1970s, Harvard had established various region-specific centers, including the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and the East Asian Research Center, which facilitated global exchange and attracted foreign applicants from those same places.[12] These initiatives positioned Harvard as a hub of global scholarship during the Cold War era next to other notable universities like Princeton, Yale, and MIT.

[46] Alison Elizabeth Bartel, "The Evolution of Chinese Students' Motivations to Study Abroad in the U.S.," eGrove, 2015, https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis/39/.
[47] Javid Nafari, Alireza Arab, and Sina Ghaffari, "Through the Looking Glass: Analysis of Factors Influencing Iranian Student's Study Abroad Motivations and Destination Choice," *SAGE Open* 7, no. 2 (April 2017): 215824401771671, https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017716711.
[48] Maria De Figueiredo-Cowen, "Latin American Universities, Academic Freedom and Autonomy: A Long-Term Myth?," *Comparative Education* 38, no. 4 (November 2002): 471–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006022000030702.

In the last three decades, Harvard's international enrollment has expanded significantly, particularly at the undergraduate level. As of 2023, 13.5% of undergraduates and 41% of graduate students were international.[13] The university adopted new strategies to recruit globally, including partnerships with international high schools and expanded financial aid for non-citizens.[14] President Drew Faust's 2007–2018 tenure emphasized global engagement, where she launched the "Harvard Worldwide" initiative, encouraging international faculty collaborations, and prioritizing international public service between and among students.[15] These efforts paid off, clearly, given that between 2005 and 2015, the number of international applications to Harvard College rose by more than 80%.[16]

Across decades, Harvard has distinguished itself as one of the most proactive and consistent institutional champions of international students, often pushing back against restrictive federal policy through legal, financial, and academic means. It remains one of the only U.S. universities to offer need-blind admissions and full-need financial aid to international undergraduates, ensuring access irrespective of nationality or income.[49] In moments of national uncertainty, Harvard has taken high-profile legal stands; in 2020, it successfully sued the federal government to block an ICE directive that would have revoked visas for students attending online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2025, Harvard again filed suit after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security revoked its SEVP certification, arguing the move was politically motivated and unconstitutional;[50] the university secured a federal restraining order and formed a contingency partnership with the University of Toronto to protect students' academic

[49] "Understanding Your Financial Aid Award - International Students," Harvard College, 2025, https://college.harvard.edu/guides/understanding-your-financial-aid-award-international-students.
[50] Julian J. Giordano, "Judge Grants Preliminary Injunction Preserving Harvard's Ability to Host International Students | News | The Harvard Crimson," Thecrimson.com, 2025, https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2025/6/21/preliminary-injunction-sevp/.

continuity.[51] These actions have provided international students with not only legal safeguards but also psychological assurance that their place on campus is protected by institutional power. Students have responded with gratitude, citing Harvard's leadership as a source of stability, legitimacy, and validation in times of geopolitical tension.[52] Many international students note that such advocacy influences their decision to enroll, stay, or pursue further research in the U.S.[53] Beyond litigation, Harvard has opposed the Muslim Ban, advocated for DACA recipients, and expanded on-campus immigration legal services. It has also served as a hub for global education diplomacy through initiatives like the Weatherhead Center, international fellowships, and the Kennedy School's training of foreign leaders. At each inflection point, whether during Cold War soft power campaigns, post-9/11 securitization, or 21st-century visa crackdowns, Harvard's actions have not only resisted policy shifts but also reaffirmed to students that their identities, ambitions, and contributions are essential to the university's mission.

While the past few decades suggested that international students were a permanent fixture in America's academic and economic future, recent events challenge that belief. Core pillars of U.S. higher education—academic freedom, global collaboration, and soft power—are increasingly under strain. The mass resignation of the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board in protest of political manipulation, along with ongoing lawsuits from institutions like Harvard,

[51] Leyland Cecco, "University of Toronto Agrees to Host Harvard Students Facing Trump Visa Restrictions," the Guardian (The Guardian, June 27, 2025), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/27/university-toronto-harvard-students-trump.
[52] Peter Eliopoulos, "Harvard Students, Faculty React after Executive Order Targets International Student Enrollment," WCVB, June 5, 2025, https://www.wcvb.com/article/harvard-university-trump-international-students-ban/64982703.
[53] Sarah Nicholls, "Influences on International Student Choice of Study Destination: Evidence from the United States," *Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research)*, May 18, 2018, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1249043.

signal a broader erosion of trust.[54] The question is no longer just whether students can come, but whether they will still want to. What will this country look like when the world's brightest minds grow tired of legal battles, instability, and mixed signals, and instead take their talents elsewhere? As other nations invest in global education, the U.S. risks forfeiting its role as the destination for future scientists, diplomats, and changemakers. At stake is not just enrollment, but America's place in shaping the global future.

[54] Cheyanne Mumphrey, "Fulbright Scholarship Board Resigns and Accuses Trump of Meddling," AP News, June 11, 2025, https://apnews.com/article/fulbright-scholarship-trump-board-resign-29128f9f80f31f2d8249bdfb88aa36a2.

Economic Impacts

Impact of International Students on University Funding

International students indirectly benefit domestic students by supporting the financial model of American universities, both public and private, through higher tuition payments that help fund financial aid for domestic students. A study analyzing international enrollment trends from 1995 to 2005 found that foreign students actually increase domestic enrollment in graduate programs, largely due to cross-subsidization. Data confirms that foreign student enrollment increases domestic enrollment, and standard confidence intervals rule out one-for-one displacement.[55] Between 2005 and 2015, international post-secondary enrollment rose by 122%, fueling debate over its impact on domestic access. As a result, concerns over U.S. overreliance on international tuition grew during the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2023), which exposed financial vulnerabilities. Canadian universities, for instance, used international tuition to offset domestic enrollment declines during the pandemic.[56] Due to a combination of stagnant or declining birth rates since 2008 and fewer domestic students graduating from high school, there are declining numbers of domestic students enrolling in U.S. higher education.[57] As a result, U.S. universities are facing a shortage of college-age Americans to fill their classes. Furthermore, international students are more likely to pay full tuition costs compared to their domestic counterparts. As a result of the shortage of college-age Americans to fill college classes and the

[55] Kevin Shih, "Do International Students Crowd-out or Cross-Subsidize Americans in Higher Education?," *Journal of Public Economics* 156 (December 2017): 170–84, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2017.10.003.
[56] David Firang and Joseph Mensah, "Exploring the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Students and Universities in Canada," *Journal of International Students* 12, no. 1 (July 9, 2021): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v12i1.2881.
[57] "Knocking at the College Door Projections of High School Graduates," n.d. https://news.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ch2.pdf.

higher percentage of international students who pay full tuition, many U.S. colleges now depend on international tuition dollars to survive.[58] The recent drop in international numbers has contributed to budget shortfalls, threatening universities' ability to serve all students effectively. Beyond tuition, international students also fuel local economies. For example, the St. Louis metro area accounts for half of Missouri's total economic contribution from international enrollments, underscoring that without their active participation in the American economy, local communities and residents would be significantly worse off.[59] Thus, fears of international students displacing Americans are largely unfounded.

Distribution of Foreign Students at Public and Non-Profit Universities and Tuition Status, 2015

Degree type	*Institution type*	*Number of degrees*	*Tuition and fee*	*Expected student payment*	*Fully funded*
Panel A. Private, non-profit universities					
BA	Non-Doctorate	16,518	$31,138	$20,355	13%
BA	Other Doctorate	5,930	$37,526	$30,486	5%
BA	Very High Research Doctorate	7,332	$45,266	$38,466	11%
MA	Non-Doctorate	20,452	$20,358	$17,748	3%
MA	Other Doctorate	14,102	$26,564	$24,313	3%
MA	Very High Research Doctorate	30,096	$45,512	$39,858	5%
PhD	Non-Doctorate	348	$27,353	$20,589	20%
PhD	Other Doctorate	908	$25,667	$10,645	51%
PhD	Very High Research Doctorate	4,116	$38,451	$4,394	87%
Panel B. Public universities					
BA	Non-Doctorate	15,435	$15,324	$13,099	6%
BA	Other Doctorate	10,549	$20,313	$18,321	6%
BA	Very High Research Doctorate	26,187	$29,245	$28,249	2%
MA	Non-Doctorate	15,128	$13,899	$12,918	5%
MA	Other Doctorate	21,649	$18,020	$15,517	10%
MA	Very High Research Doctorate	32,423	$27,410	$23,709	11%
PhD	Non-Doctorate	414	$14,613	$4,857	73%
PhD	Other Doctorate	2,936	$16,217	$4,498	72%
PhD	Very High Research Doctorate	9,771	$22,238	$4,504	79%

[58] Schermele, Zachary. "International College Students Bring Billions to the US. Here's Why That May Change." USA TODAY, May 15, 2025. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2025/05/15/international-college-students-billions-economy-immigration/83417546007/.

[59] James Kaemmerer and Matt Foulkes, "International Students in Missouri: Countering Enrollment Declines, Retaining High-Skilled Graduates, and Supporting Local and Regional Economies," *Deleted Journal* 1, no. 12 (February 1, 2023), https://doi.org/10.62608/2330-930x.1056.

Table Representing Distribution of Foreign Students at Public and Non-Profit Universities and Tuition Status.[60]

[60] "The Globalization of Postsecondary Education: The Role of International Students in the US Higher Education System."

Regional Impacts on Housing and Spending

Through spending on housing, food, transportation and other utilities, international students boost local economies in college towns. Retail businesses and restaurants also often rely on hiring foreign students, creating jobs directly and indirectly. For example, Boston's economic gains due to international students account to roughly $3 billion.[61] Furthermore, due to a fall in enrollment in public universities of the United States such as the Western Illinois University, the communities surrounding these universities are also being adversely affected.[62] In addition, international students play a crucial role in the American economy, generating a record $43.8 billion in economic activity and supporting over 378,000 U.S. jobs in the 2023-2024 academic year. For every 3 international students, one U.S. job is created or supported.[63]

The jobs supported by international students are spread across a range of sectors, with the largest beneficiary being higher education (51%), followed by accommodation services (19%), dining (12%), retail (10%), and health insurance (2%).[64] During the 2023-2024 academic year, 12 states each generated over $1 billion in economic activity from international students, which is the most ever recorded. California led this list, generating $6.4 billion and creating/supporting

[61] Barnet Sherman, "International Students Infuse Tens of Millions of Dollars into Local Economies across the U.S. • Ohio Capital Journal," *Ohio Capital Journal* (blog), April 18, 2025, https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2025/04/18/international-students-infuse-tens-of-millions-of-dollars-into-local-economies-across-the-u-s/.

[62] Konrad Putzier WSJ Douglas Belkin and Anthony DeBarros | Photographs by Nick Schnelle for, "America's College Towns Go From Boom to Bust," WSJ, accessed June 20, 2025, https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/college-towns-economy-macomb-illinois-aae84dcc.

[63] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA," November 18, 2024. https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.

[64] "NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool | NAFSA." https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2.

55,114 jobs, followed by New York ($6.3 billion, 51,719 jobs), Massachusetts ($3.9 billion, 35,849 jobs), Texas ($2.5 billion, 22,112 jobs), and Illinois ($2.4 billion, 23,055 jobs).[65]

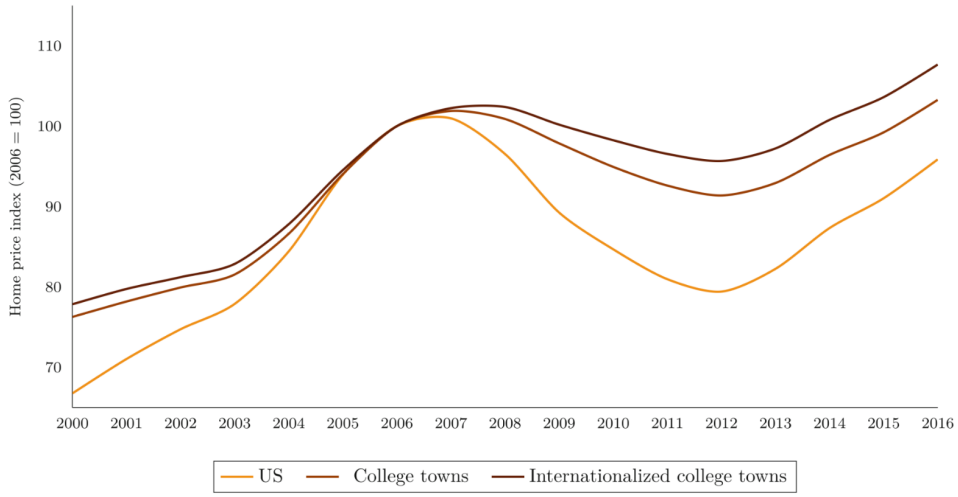
It should be noted that of the aforementioned $43.8 billion dollars that international students contribute, only 51% is spent on education expenses. Of the remaining 49%, 20% is spent on accommodation, 12% on dining, 10% on retail purchases, and 2% each on telecommunications, health insurance, and transportation.[66] By purchasing from such a wide variety of industries, international students drive demand across all of these local economies.

The contribution does not stop at international students themselves. The multiplier effect from their presence should also be taken into account. These effects arise because international students inject significant spending into local economies, through tuition, housing, food, insurance, and discretionary spending, which in turn sustains jobs for faculty, landlords, service workers, healthcare providers, and transit systems. With such multiplier effects in mind, out of every seven international students, three jobs are created or supported in sectors spanning from higher education to real estate, healthcare, and transportation.[67]

In fact, a case study in Hungary found that international students in just three university cities contribute 0.47% of the country's gross domestic product.[68] When international students spend money "on tuition, travel, books, food, housing," they allow local businesses to thrive and economically benefit the college towns they inhabit.[69]

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[65] "NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool | NAFSA.". https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2.
[66] Greenfield, Nathan. "How International Students Benefit the US Economy – Report." University World News, 2024. https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20241120154116779.
[67] Bouchrika, Imed. "Number of Foreign Students Working in the US after Graduation." Research.com, February 21, 2021. https://research.com/education/number-of-foreign-students-working-in-the-us.
[68] Zsuzsa M. Csaszar et al., "The Impact of the Spending Habits of International Students on the Economy of University Cities - Case Study: Hungary," vol. 15 (OSIJEK: Josip Juraj Strossmayer Univ Osijek, 2019), 562–85, hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_webofscience_primary_000474776000032.
[69] "One of America's Most Successful Exports Is in Trouble: Schools Are Taking in Fewer International Students, and It's a Threat to Our Economy," The Washington Post (Online), 2018.



Graph showing the differences between valuation of home prices for the US national average and college towns.[70]

Further, as seen in the graph above, home values in college towns weathered the 2007 economic recession. "Particularly in towns receiving larger inflows of international students," home valuations stayed resilient due to high demand, a telling outcome in the face of national collapse.

As more international students come to the U.S., there is an increased demand for housing, particularly in college towns and urban areas. A higher concentration of international students correlates with more housing needs, which can both increase the community's rent and also cause new housing developments to be constructed. For every 1,000 international students, 150 housing units are built annually to accommodate this increase.[71] Although they do raise rent, the rent collected can facilitate local improvements. Housing demand stimulates the local market, benefiting landlords, developers, and local governments through increased tax revenue.

[70] Tatiana Mocanu, "The Impact of International Students on Housing Markets," May 2023 Canadian Journal of Economics, doi.org/10.1111/caje.12651.
[71] Yichen Wang, "Research on the Impact of International Students on US Housing Markets," *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences* 125 (2024): 21–27.

Job Creation and Founding Companies

Many international students start their own businesses and progress in their respective fields, which contributes massively to American innovation. For example, over 50% of Silicon Valley startups valued over $1 billion had at least one immigrant founder, most of whom were former international students.[67] According to the Kauffman Foundation, immigrants are twice as likely to start a business compared to the U.S.-born citizens, and around 55% of U.S. startup unicorns (a private startup company valued at $1 billion or more) were founded or co-founded by immigrants, according to the National Foundation for American Policy, 2022. Famous examples include Google co-founder Sergey Brin (Russia) and Elon Musk (South Africa), who both began as international students.[72] Harvard's international alumni network includes the founders of several global companies. Roughly 40% of Harvard alumni have set up for-profit and nonprofit organisations: initiating more than 146,000 active ventures, generating $3.9 trillion in annual revenue, and forming 20.4 million jobs around the world.[73] Many foreign graduates have also become policy leaders in India, Singapore, Greece, and other nations, reinforcing the university's global influence and promoting cross-border cooperation.

[72] Kauffman Foundation. "The New Entrepreneurial Growth Agenda," 2021.
[73] "Measuring Impact," Harvard Business School Alumni, March 1, 2016, https://www.alumni.hbs.edu/stories/Pages/story-bulletin.aspx?num=5166.

Labor Supply and Employment

Through the Optional Practical Training (OPT) and H-1B visa programs, international students provide a source of flexible labour to several industries in the United States. In recent years, demand for STEM professionals in the United States has outgrown domestic supply, resulting in many companies shifting towards and relying increasingly on international talent to remain competitive. However, restrictive immigration policies and uncertainty in the H-1B lottery system can discourage students from staying in the United States, damaging high-growth sectors. For instance, estimates show that around 55% of America's startup companies valued at $1 billion or more were started by immigrants.[74] In 2019, 23.1% of all STEM workers in the United States were immigrants: a steep increase from 16.4% in 2000.[75] Also, in 2022, out of 474,301 H-1B petitions filed, up 19.1% from last year, 66% (approximately 291,780) were for computer-related occupations, emphasizing the importance of immigrants in technology and engineering.[76]

American universities attract foreign talent and ingenuity, strengthening the supply of skilled workers in the United States, though limited in scope: around 23% of international undergraduate and masters students transition into a job within the state of their educational institution.[77] Additionally, the H1-B visa program has a separate category of 20,000 visas that

[74] U S Billion-Dollar Companies and Stuart Anderson, "NFAP POLICY BRIEF» JULY 2022," n.d.
[75] "Foreign-Born STEM Workers in the United States," *American Immigration Council* (blog), accessed June 26, 2025, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/foreign-born-stem-workers-united-states/.
[76] Characteristics of H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers.
[77] Michel Beine, Giovanni Peri, and Morgan Raux, "International College Students' Impact on the US Skilled Labor Supply," Journal of Public Economics 223 (2023): 104917-, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2023.104917.

prioritize employment for foreign citizens who received an education in the United States, creating a reliable pipeline of talent and skilled labor.[78]

International students have shown a rising tendency to stay in the United States post-graduation, allowing them to contribute their educated experiences to the labor market, whether as students or workers. In fact, international students make up more than half of those enrolled in science and engineering bachelor's, master's, and PhD programs, as well as among postdoctoral students and workers. Because of this, they are crucial to many U.S. labs, which would shrink or even shut down without their contributions. While many international students have to agree to a pro forma declaration to receive a student visa saying they intend to return to their home countries after earning their degrees, official stay rates are high and/or increasing from nations such as China, India, South Korea, Mexico, Brazil, and others.[79] International students offer U.S. employers and companies another source of educated laborers.

International students drive American advancement and power the U.S. labor market. Through work visa programs like OPT and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), U.S. employers access top-tier global talent trained at American universities, creating a pipeline to long-term visas such as the H-1B or permanent residency. Without these programs, many graduates would be forced to leave, costing the U.S. valuable STEM talent and weakening its R&D competitiveness as rivals like China rapidly increase their innovation spending.[80] Critics argue

[78] John Bound et al., "The Globalization of Postsecondary Education: The Role of International Students in the US Higher Education System," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 35, no. 1 (2021): 178, https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.35.1.163.

[79] Richard B. Freeman, "Immigration, International Collaboration, and Innovation: Science and Technology Policy in the Global Economy," *Innovation Policy and the Economy* 15, no. 1 (2015): 153–75, https://doi.org/10.1086/680062.

[80] Brendon E. M. Davis et al., "International STEM Graduate Students: A Key to Strengthening the American Economy and Building Competitiveness," *Journal of Science Policy & Governance* 25, no. 1 (October 28, 2024), https://doi.org/10.38126/jspg250104.

that OPT creates a parallel system that bypasses H-1B caps and may suppress wages for recent American graduates. However, these concerns overlook the work done as a result of these programs; In 2023, international graduates co-founded 25% of America's billion-dollar startups, creating over $143 billion in value and averaging 860 jobs per founder. These students lead cutting-edge research during their graduate studies and anchor themselves post-grad by launching companies and contributing to national growth, especially via the STEM OPT extension.[81]

In medicine, international graduates enhance diversity and expand access to care in underserved communities. Women and minority physicians, many of them foreign-born, are more likely to enter primary care, serve indigent patients, and improve health outcomes through culturally competent care.[82] In the global AI race, international students are core to research collaboration and talent development, with their participation shaped by U.S. immigration and economic policy.[83] Their decision to stay is influenced by economic opportunity, integration, and visa policy, key levers in solving America's skilled labor shortages.[84] Those who remain act as economic multipliers, bringing family, creating jobs, increasing housing demand, launching businesses, and expanding the tax base.[85] The vast majority of international students do not

[81] Jahani Shiva and Rebecca Soto, "Social and Systemic Influences on International Students' Choice of a STEM Major," *Journal of International Students* 14, no. 3 (April 21, 2024): 61–88, https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v14i3.6093.
[82] Norcini John, van Zanten Marta, and R. Boulet John, "The Contribution of International Medical Graduates to Diversity in the U.S. Physician Workforce: Graduate Medical Education," *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 19, no. 2 (2008): 493–99, https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.0.0015.
[83] Stefka Schmid et al., "Arms Race or Innovation Race? Geopolitical AI Development," *Geopolitics*, January 28, 2025, 1–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2025.2456019.
[84] Yu Han, Daniel Gulanowski, and Greg J. Sears, "International Student Graduates' Workforce Integration: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 86 (January 2022): 163–89, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.11.003.
[85] Fabian Koenings et al., "Coming to Stay or to Go? Stay Intention and Involved Uncertainty of International Students," *Journal of Regional Science*, December 26, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12511.

solely seek an education; They seek to build lives and contribute back, fueling the very economy they learn within.

International Education as Trade and Economic Links

An increase in international students studying in the U.S. allows for a soft cushion in the U.S. economy. Chinese cities have the largest income growth by increased exports in goods to the United States. The United States currently is in a trade deficit with China, which led to past incomes in Chinese households increasing in the past 20 years. Their income was greater than U.S. costs for tuition, room and board, but this extra money to pay for U.S. schools by these families grew from 0.005 percent in the year 2000 to more than 2 percent by 2013.[86] Even with a trade deficit, it indirectly benefits the U.S. economy as there is a higher number of students paying high tuition themselves.

As education serves as a valued commodity internationally, the higher education industry generates a large export revenue from international students. Higher education is the sixth largest U.S. service export, comparable to agriculture or automobiles.[87] Notably, higher education now ranks among the top service exports, rivaling telecommunication and information sectors.[88] In fact, in 2019, international students rose to over a million in enrollment in US universities and colleges, generating $44 billion.[89] Hence, education as an export actively counteracts the large trade deficit the United States finds itself in,[90] with a gap between exports and imports at $61.6 billion in April 2025.[91]

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[86] "The Globalization of Postsecondary Education: The Role of International Students in the US Higher Education System."
[87] U.S. Department of Commerce. "Service Exports Rankings," 2021.
[88] International Trade Administration. "Education Service Exports." www.trade.gov, n.d. https://www.trade.gov/education-service-exports.
[89] John Bound et al., "The Globalization of Postsecondary Education: The Role of International Students in the US Higher Education System," The Journal of Economic Perspectives 35, no. 1 (2021): 176, https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.35.1.163.
[90] Mingyu Chen, "The Impact of International Students on US Colleges: Higher Education as a Service Export," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3859798.
[91] "United States Balance of Trade," accessed June 22, 2025, https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/balance-of-trade.

International students contribute to the U.S. economy through a wide array of often-overlooked channels. Many become philanthropic alumni, fueling endowments and global donor pipelines.[92] Their presence expands American financial markets, opening bank accounts, building credit, and taking out loans, while also shaping consumer demand for niche goods and digital services like WeChat Pay. They support off-season tourism through family visits[93] and strengthen university operations by more frequently serving as teaching and research assistants than domestic students.[94] Additionally, international students participate in American health insurance programs that sustain local healthcare providers.[95]

In general, countries with more migrant networks have more trade deals and other economic ties with each other. Trade activities and migrant networks are highly related because of economic and social factors, with one of them being the international students who return to their respective home countries. For example, the International Migrant Network (IMN) and International Trade Network (ITN) topologies show the U.S. having numerous intercontinental connections in migration and trade.[96] This was especially common in countries with more international students studying in America, such as China, India, South Korea, Germany, and Brazil. Foreign-born students educated in the U.S. have contributed to these relationships by

[92] Susan K Gichoga, "Factors That Influence Graduate Students Participation in Philanthropy: A Case of United States International University-Africa in Kenya," *Usiu.ac.ke*, 2016, http://erepo.usiu.ac.ke/11732/2657.
[93] Tanja Petry et al., "Understanding Students as Hosts: Moving beyond Sightseeing," *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 16, no. 1 (July 10, 2021): 7–19, https://doi.org/10.1108/ijcthr-09-2020-0215.
[94] Comfort Tosin Adebayo and Mike Allen, "Experiences of International Teaching Assistants in the US Classroom," *Journal of International Students* 10, no. 1 (February 15, 2020): 69–83, https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10i1.1086.
[95] Echu Liu et al., "Health Insurance Literacy and Medical Care Avoidance among International Students: A Case Study," *International Journal of Public Health* 68 (October 6, 2023): 1605788, https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2023.1605788.
[96] G. Fagiolo and M. Mastrorillo, "Migration and Trade: A Complex-Network Approach," paper presented at the *2013 International Conference on Signal-Image Technology & Internet-Based Systems*, Kyoto, Japan, December 2013, 538–45, https://doi.org/10.1109/SITIS.2013.90.

continuing scientific, diplomatic, and economic connections in their home countries, thus amplifying U.S. trade and global ties.

In 2019, Chinese students alone contributed $15.9 billion to the U.S. economy,[97] accounting for one in three international students in the U.S.[98] Such overreliance on certain countries (e.g., China, India) creates vulnerability, but also interdependence, leverage, and a need for a stable partnership between the U.S. and these countries to sustain such a mutually beneficial relationship. While this inflow has been economically valuable, diversification is a necessary strategic step to reduce the risk of excessive dependence on any single country.[99]

[97] NAFSA, 2019 Economic Analysis
[98] IIE Open Doors, 2023
[99] NAFSA: Association of International Educators. "Economic Analysis of Chinese Students," 2019.

Economics Recapped

International students play a critical role in the United States economy. They offer corporations and employers a source of labor, as many stay in the U.S. for work. Internationals even assist property owners and universities by paying rent and tuition bills that domestic students typically would not. While international students do affect large economic agents, they also impact individuals and the usual household. As mentioned with their role in the housing market, international students can increase local rent prices as they bring competition, but also cause more housing to be built. Local residents can enjoy the benefits of extra tax contributions as well. Regarding their presence in universities, international students can help fund improvements to the quality of education for everyone, as a good portion are full-paying students. In the classroom, they offer greater diversity, which is often associated with success in future careers. The growing number of international students in the U.S. brings both economic and holistic benefits. All things considered, international students are deeply integrated into many aspects of the American economy, and limitations on their residence, such as the Trump administration's possible restriction on international students, would have detrimental effects.

International students have been proven to beneficial to the U.S. economy. It is strategic for the United States to give more opportunities for international students to pursue higher education in the United States. International students make significant contributions to technological advancements, research, and employment. Efforts in restricting visa access and immigration policies will result in long-term conflicts in the U.S. economy and reduced global competitiveness in the United States. It is also a matter of empathy and compassion as well. Many international students come to the United States to pursue dream careers and futures, which gives them the chance to live a better quality of life.

International students contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy through paying tuition, living expenses, supporting jobs, and contributing to technological and innovative advancements. It is a worthwhile investment for international students to study in the United States, as it benefits institutions financially. International students allow the United States to continue making advancements to support communities globally.

International students are some of the most vital sources of economic growth in the United States. They provide short-term macroeconomic growth through their spending and long-term technological development through their disproportionate research and innovation. International students also offset university losses due to a lack of domestic students and promote U.S. institutions abroad. As a result, international students are vital for the nation's economic well-being, and to remove or alienate them would be a catastrophic mistake in the long term.

Other Contributions

Research and Science

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) career opportunities are believed to grow by 11% in 2031 is double compared to the total for all other occupations.[100] Likewise, the global growth and attractiveness of STEM careers have been a major cause of the rising number of international students. Although not the totality, over half of all international students in the U.S. pursue STEM majors, with engineering alone accounting for around 20% of international enrollments.[1] U.S. policies such as the STEM OPT extension, which guarantees graduates in certain STEM fields work in the U.S. for up to three years after graduation, further increase the incentive.[101] As economies emphasize technological and scientific development, students increasingly seek high-quality STEM education in the United States to remain competitive in the hopefully lucrative job market.

The impact of international students is most evident in STEM fields. Indeed, international workers are the lifeblood of the American tech industry. According to a report by the Educational Testing Service, "in industries such as computer science 72% of graduate students were international in 2019.[102] Fields like petroleum engineering have international student enrollment rates as high as 81%." In a report by the National Science Foundation, foreign-born students are more likely to choose professions in STEM than US-born students.[103] In fact, there

[100] Emily Krutsch and Victoria Roderick, "STEM Day: Explore Growing Careers," *U.S. Department of Labor Blog*, November 4, 2022, https://blog.dol.gov/2022/11/04/stem-day-explore-growing-careers
[101] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "STEM OPT Extension," *Study in the States*, https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/stem-opt-extension-overview.
[102] "More International Students Enrolled in U.S. Grad STEM Programs | ETS.Org," accessed June 22, 2025, https://www.ets.org/grad-school-journey/international-students-stem-programs.html.
[103] "National Science Board - News - New Report Shows the Importance of Foreign-Born Talent to the U.S. STEM Workforce," accessed June 22, 2025, https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=309769.

are over 7 million foreign workers in the US working in STEM fields. As America's tech services industry has been propelled to the largest sector of the economy, the importance of acquiring and maintaining foreign talent cannot be overstated.

International students contribute heavily to research and innovation in the United States. Over 56% of international students pursue degrees in STEM fields, with 25% in computer science and mathematics and 19% in engineering.[104] At the graduate level, the numbers become even more skewed as foreign nationals constitute 70% of full-time enrollees in electrical engineering, 63% of computer science, and 60% of industrial engineering graduate programs.[105]

This disparity later translates into disproportionately larger research participation from foreign-born workers. In fact, there are more foreign-born PhD-level science and engineering workers in the fields of computer and mathematical sciences and engineering than those who are born in the United States. In total, the foreign-born STEM workforce contributes $367-$409 billion in annual labor value.[106]

Nearly half of all doctoral STEM degrees awarded by U.S. institutions in 2023 went to international students, accounting for 45–55% of U.S. STEM PhDs, especially in engineering and computer science.[107] They publish disproportionately high research output, and they are often principal investigators in federally funded research, like the NSF and NIH grants. For

[104] IIE Open Doors / International Students. "IIE Open Doors / International Students," November 13, 2023. https://opendoorsdata.org/annual-release/international-students/.
[105] National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP). "The Importance of International Students to America." nfap.com. National Foundation for American Policy. Accessed June 22, 2025. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.nfap.com/pdf/New%2520NFAP%2520Policy%2520Brief%2520The%2520Importance%2520of%2520International%2520Students%2520to%2520America.
[106] Crane, Keith, Thomas Colvin, Abby Goldman, Emily Grumbling, and Andrew Ware. "Economic Benefits and Losses from Foreign STEM Talent in the United States," 2021. https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/e/ec/economic-benefits-and-losses-from-foreign-stem-talent-in-the-united-states/d-31855.ashx.
[107] National Science Foundation. "Survey of Earned Doctorates," 2023.

example, 60% of U.S. Nobel laureates in science since 2000 were born abroad, again proving the vitality of international students in advancing America in essential STEM fields.[108]

While still in school, those graduate students each contribute between $12,225 and $13,568 to the U.S. GDP annually. Upon graduation, most of these students join the STEM workforce, which, as a whole, contributed $409 billion to the GDP in 2019.[109] It is estimated that between 28 and 30 percent of the U.S. STEM workforce is made up of foreign-born employees, many of whom were once international students themselves. Thus, STEM students are extremely valuable to the U.S. economy, making unquantifiable contributions to the fields of medicine, defense, engineering, and more.[110]

U.S. global competitiveness heavily relies on international students. Many U.S. citizens prefer to pursue business fields and law, while most international students prefer STEM-related fields. Additionally, when it comes to female stereotypes toward STEM fields, they are lessened among international students, so many of them pursue STEM fields.[111] Employers, policymakers, and educators are finding opportunities to retain international students as the U.S. relies on them to sustain technological advancements.[112] Two-thirds of foreign-born PhD graduates from American institutions are working in the United States 10 years later. The immigration of highly educated workers benefits the country's competitive advantage and advancements in technology and innovation. There is also a large U.S. productivity growth and

[108] National Foundation for American Policy. "Foreign-Born Nobel Laureates in Science," 2021.
[109] Keith Crane et al., "Economic Benefits and Losses from Foreign STEM Talent in the United States," 2021, https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/e/ec/economic-benefits-and-losses-from-foreign-stem-talent-in-the-united-states/d-31855.ashx.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Delphine Banjong and Myrna Olson. 2016. "Issues and Trends of International Students in the United States."
[112] "Issues and Trends of International Students in the United States."

rate of innovation due to international graduate students' positive contributions, benefiting the country in the long run.[113]

Cultural Enrichment and the Student Experience

American colleges and universities host students from all over the world. Every nation has its unique heritage and culture. Therefore, international students bring diverse perspectives and cultural identities to their schools that expand the views of all their peers. A more diverse student body, including international students, can foster open-minded thinking and even improve problem-solving skills. A 2015 McKinsey report found that companies with top-quartile ethnic diversity in management were 35% more likely to outperform their industry average, which didn't have an ethnically diverse administration.[114] Having a multicultural student body, including international students, prepares all students for different environments and ultimately helps their future careers in the U.S. economy.

[113] Nick Adnett. 2010. "The Growth of International Students and Economic Development: Friends or Foes?" Journal of Education Policy 25 (5): 625–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680931003782827.
[114] David Rock and Heidi Grant, "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter," *Harvard Business Review*, November 4, 2016, https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter.

Soft Power: Educating Global Leaders

International students carry American values and institutional trust back to their home countries, where many later become business leaders, diplomats, and policymakers, enhancing the soft power of the United States. This promotes long-term trade and cooperation between countries. Alternatively, when students feel unwelcome, they tend to shift their focus and choose other countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, or Australia, shifting the geopolitical balance. This can be seen through the decline in the number of Chinese student enrollments, which led to a diplomatic strain with one of America's largest trading partners.[115] Between the 2019–2020 and 2022-2023 academic years, the number of Chinese students studying in the United states declined by "The number of Chinese students studying in the U.S. has declined by 22%, representing approximately 84,000 fewer students.[116]

International students contribute to the U.S. global image and influence, making higher education a form of "soft power." Over 60 current world leaders have studied in the U.S., including former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (Harvard), King Abdullah II of Jordan (Georgetown), and President Bola Tinubu of Nigeria (Chicago State). This reflects the U.S.'s global influence through education as a form of soft power.[117] Thus, unsurprisingly, a decline in enrollment not only creates budget crises in universities (especially public ones), but also surrenders a critical strategic advantage: shaping future global leaders who are likely to see—and rule—the world through an American lens.

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[115] "Can Studying in the US Survive Geopolitics?," *Brookings* (blog), accessed June 20, 2025, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/can-studying-in-the-us-survive-geopolitics/.
[116] ConsensusDev, "Can International Students Help Colleges Steer Clear of the Enrollment Cliff?," *Getzler Henrich* (blog), June 24, 2024, https://getzlerhenrich.com/can-international-students-help-colleges-steer-clear-of-the-enrollment-cliff/.
[117] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The Soft Power of U.S. Education," 2022.

Higher education is the sixth largest U.S. service export, comparable to agriculture or automobiles, and unlike most other exports, it creates long-term influence: many foreign leaders and elites were educated in the U.S. Its strategic leverage is that education fosters diplomatic goodwill, trade ties, and influence abroad, essential for American soft power.[118]

International alumni of U.S. institutions often rise to leadership positions in their home countries, becoming informal ambassadors for American values and institutions.[119] The loss of this soft power would further isolate the U.S. economically on the global stage, especially in areas where Chinese and European influence is growing.

International students strengthen the global presence of the United States. Typically, international students who have studied at American institutions and become global leaders retain a favorable view of the U.S.[120] Foreign students support U.S. (and broader) university alliances by contributing to the alliances' overarching goals of internationalization and global engagement.

Alumni of U.S. schools often collaborate with American institutions or firms and serve as long-term diplomatic and trade assets. Alliances such as APRU, U21, and WUN seek to leverage the international component, represented by foreign students, as a strategic resource to improve international reputation and establish valuable global connections (see the figure below).[121]

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[118] U.S. Department of Commerce. "Service Exports Rankings," 2021.

[119] Hoppler, Marc, Annika Klingen, Andrew Maloney, Angela Orange, Olivia Pope, Allie Schleifer, and Melinda Yeboah. “Alumni Network Dynamics Creating and Sustaining ECA Alumni Networks,” n.d. https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/alumni_network_dynamics_-_dec_2020.pdf.

[120] Jeffrey W. Steagall et al., “International Double Degree Programs as Accelerators for Internationalization: Lessons from the Trans-Atlantic Business School Alliance,” *Journal of Teaching in International Business* 32, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 7–35, https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2021.1906378.

[121] Andrew Gunn and Michael Mintrom, “Global University Alliances and the Creation of Collaborative Advantage,” *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 35, no. 2 (April 2013): 179–92, https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2013.775926.

Ultimately, international students are a bridge that connects the U.S. to the rest of the world in a generous manner, strengthening American public perception and soft power.

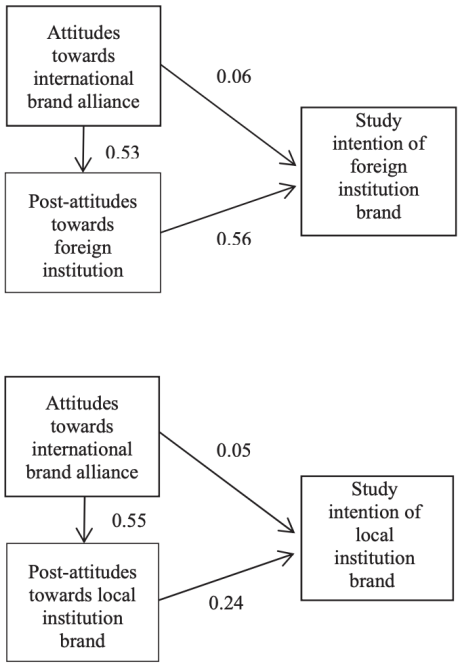


Figure Showing the Impact of International Brand Alliances on Student Attitudes and Study Intentions.[122]

Discussion-based learning at the Law School and Kennedy School fosters active debate on pressing societal issues.[123] For example, when cultivating the Camp David Accords (1978) between Egypt and Israel, Harvard Law School alumni and faculty informed the negotiation process through the Harvard Negotiation Project's pioneering principles of mutual gains and principled bargaining.[124]

[122] Chan Oy Lar Kiki, Yui-yip Lau, and Victor C.W. Chan, "Exploring International Brand Alliances between Local and Foreign Higher Education Institutions: An Empirical Study of Sub-Degree Students," *International Journal of Educational Management* 37 (December 27, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1108/ijem-06-2022-0221.
[123] Susan Hughes, "HKS Focuses on Democracy, Dialogue, and Disagreement," Harvard.edu, 2025, https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/democracy-governance/hks-focuses-democracy-dialogue-and-disagreement.
[124] Martha Minow, "Roger Fisher - Harvard Law Review," Harvard Law Review, February 20, 2013, https://harvardlawreview.org/print/vol-126/in-memoriam-roger-fisher/.

The Unique Capacities of Harvard

Research

Between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2025, Harvard accounted for more academic research output than any other university in the world. During this time period, Harvard's affiliates published 3,842 articles, with research topics ranging from cancer cells to adolescent psychiatry.[125] The research conducted at Harvard is changing lives across the globe. From 2011 to 2019, the FDA approved 114 cancer therapies—Harvard's Dana-Farber Cancer Center played a crucial role in the development of 45 of those therapies.[126] Without the work and support of the Center, many of those therapies may not have been possible.

Harvard University's research infrastructure stands among the most globally extensive and interdisciplinary in the world. With over 45 centers and institutes, the university supports global research that shapes international policy, scientific advancement, and public innovation across public health, climate policy, engineering, medicine, and social sciences.[127] The university's research capacity is defined not just by its scale but by its integration of disciplines and global reach. The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs advances work in nuclear security, cyber policy, and climate diplomacy, guiding global debates through applied policy analysis.[128] The Broad Institute, in collaboration with MIT, is pioneering breakthroughs in genomics and precision medicine, mapping genetic variants tied to cancer, diabetes, and rare

[125]Nature, "Institution Tables | Nature Index," Nature.com (Nature Index, 2024), https://www.nature.com/nature-index/institution-outputs/generate/all/global/academic.
[126]Harvard University, "Optimizing Our Success," Harvard.edu, May 3, 2019, https://hms.harvard.edu/news/optimizing-our-success.
[127] "Centers and Institutes – Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences." https://www.fas.harvard.edu/department-directory/centers-institutes/.
[128] "About Us | The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs," https://www.belfercenter.org/about-us.

diseases.[129] The Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering translates biological design into high-impact technologies, such as organ-on-a-chip systems and next-generation diagnostic tools.[130] These projects are often co-authored by international researchers, highlighting the importance of international talent at Harvard as they lead research with far-reaching effects in the world. Harvard's global footprint extends further through the Harvard Global Institutes, which create research collaborations with partner institutions in São Paulo, Shanghai, and beyond.[131] The Global Health Policy Lab, embedded in the T.H. Chan School of Public Health, has produced global legal databases and digital tools used by the World Health Organization and national governments to benchmark health equity.[132] Similarly, the Salata Institute's Global Climate Policy Project brings together scholars from Harvard, MIT, and around the world to propose finance mechanisms and energy transition strategies at global climate forums.[133]

Harvard research has long been at the forefront of addressing the world's most pressing challenges, driven by an evidence-based approach and unparalleled resources that foster a culture of advancement and impact. Faculty research informed negotiations on the Paris Climate Agreement and helped guide U.S. positions during global climate talks.[134] Harvard-affiliated scientists played a pivotal role in developing CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing, revolutionizing genetic

[129] HBR Store. "The Broad Institute: Applying the Power of Genomics to Medicine ^ 608114." https://store.hbr.org/product/the-broad-institute-applying-the-power-of-genomics-to-medicine/608114.
[130] International Comparative Legal Guides International Business Reports. "International Comparative Legal Guides." Text. Global Legal Group. United Kingdom. https://iclg.com/firms/wyss-institute-for-biologically-inspired-engineering.
[131] "Harvard Global Institute." https://hwpi.harvard.edu/hgi/home.
[132] "Global Health Policy Lab | Our Work | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health," November 22, 2024. https://hsph.harvard.edu/research/health-systems-innovation-lab/work/global-health-policy-lab/.
[133] The Salata Institute. "The Global Climate Policy Project." https://salatainstitute.harvard.edu/research-initiatives/the-global-climate-policy-project/.
[134] Doug Gavel, "Professor Robert Stavins on the Paris Agreement," www.hks.harvard.edu, n.d., https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/environment-energy/professor-robert-stavins-paris-agreement.

medicine.[135] During the COVID-19 pandemic, Harvard researchers collaborated worldwide on vaccine development and public health strategies.[136] Faculty and alumni regularly earn the highest honors in their fields, including Nobel Prizes, MacArthur Fellowships, and Fields Medals – notably, Jennifer Doudna (Ph.D. at Harvard), who co-won the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for her work on CRISPR.[137]

In fiscal 2024, Harvard investigators won $1 billion in external awards, and the University added another $526 million of internal support, fuelling more than 100 research centres.[138] Funding for Harvard enables high-risk, high-reward projects that are otherwise difficult to find support for. This foundation supports over 100 research centers tackling urgent global challenges: the T.H. Chan School of Public Health leads pandemic response efforts; the Berkman Klein Center explores digital rights, AI ethics, and internet governance; the Belfer Center at the Kennedy School shapes nuclear security and diplomacy; and the Harvard Stem Cell Institute pioneers treatments for diseases like ALS and diabetes.[139]

During the Trump administration, proposed federal budget cuts threatened funding for scientific research, public health, and climate initiatives – areas where Harvard researchers lead globally.[140] Despite these challenges, Harvard preserved its research momentum by drawing on its endowment, fostering private partnerships, and advocating for evidence-based policy.

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[135] HMS Communications, "Creating the World's First CRISPR Medicine, for Sickle Cell Disease," Harvard.edu, February 20, 2025, https://hms.harvard.edu/news/creating-worlds-first-crispr-medicine-sickle-cell-disease.
[136] Juan Siliezar, "Global Race to a COVID-19 Vaccine," Harvard Gazette, April 13, 2020, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/04/harvards-coronavirus-vaccine-efforts/.
[137] The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, "The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2020," NobelPrize.org, October 7, 2020, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/chemistry/2020/press-release/.
[138] Office for Sponsored Programs, *FY 2024 Annual Report* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2025).
[139] "Office of the Vice Provost for Research," Harvard.edu, 2021, https://research.harvard.edu/.
[140] Alvin Powell, "Trump Administration Freezes $2.2 Billion in Grants to Harvard | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health," Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH, April 15, 2025), https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/trump-administration-freezes-2-2-billion-in-grants-to-harvard/.

Harvard's impact-driven approach to solving the world's most pressing problems is what defines Harvard's relentless commitment to progress through research.

Harvard is one of the largest university spenders on research and development in the world. In fact, it claims over $1.2 billion in research and development expenditures annually (as of 2023).[141] Harvard's research expenditures in 2002 totaled $522 million, driving innovation nationally. Additionally, the university supports more than 12,000 jobs, contributing $2.2 billion annually to the Massachusetts economy. Research facilities at Harvard attract partnerships with leading corporations, drawing on $165 million in construction and renovation projects. Overall, Harvard's academic and research activities inject nearly $3 billion annually into the broader U.S. economy, highlighting its vital economic role.[142]

Alongside its heavy research investment, Harvard also hosts specific research centers that deeply study an interdisciplinary topic. By bringing together thinkers from different areas of study, many of Harvard's initiatives are better equipped to solve some of humanity's toughest problems. For example, the Harvard Data Science Initiative brings together faculty from computer science, medicine, economics, and public health to address data modeling problems.[143] Similarly, the Center for Brain Science brings together researchers from biology, psychology, and engineering to further understand the brain's functionality and treatment.[144]

Human capital is another critical advantage of Harvard, given that its faculty corps boasts over 2,400 members across the University's thirteen schools, and the university has produced

[141] Gibbons, Michael T. "Higher Education R&D Expenditures Increased 11.2%, Exceeded $108 Billion in FY 2023 | NSF - National Science Foundation." Nsf.gov, 2023. https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf25313.
[142] Alvin Powell, "Harvard's Economic Benefits Include Jobs and Stability," *Harvard Gazette* (blog), December 2, 2004, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2004/12/harvards-economic-benefits-include-jobs-and-stability/.
[143] HDSI. "Home," July 2, 2025. https://datascience.harvard.edu.
[144] Harvard.edu. "Center for Brain Science," 2025. https://cbs.fas.harvard.edu.

161 Nobel laureates, 18 Fields Medalists, and 188 MacArthur Fellows.[145] Harvard University also has over 420,000 alumni across two hundred countries. The alumni network is one of the most unique assets of a Harvard education. It has several presidents, Nobel laureates, Fortune 500 CEOs, outstanding researchers, doctors, Supreme Court justices, and more. In 2024, Harvard got around $1.2 billion from alumni donations, which shows the success alumni accomplish in their futures to be able to give such large amounts and also displays the generosity cultivated in alumni during their time at Harvard.[146]

Alongside teaching, faculty also work on pioneering research, often involving undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs (more specifics on research will be discussed in Section III). The relatively low student-faculty ratio of approximately 7:1 allows many students to pursue personalized mentorship opportunities.[147] The combination of funding, low student-to-faculty ratios, and interdisciplinary breadth allows Harvard to produce capable, specialized, and professionally and academically equipped alumni. Essentially, over 60 percent of Harvard STEM doctoral candidates are international, supplying crucial talent for federally funded projects in quantum science, CRISPR, and artificial intelligence.[148]

Harvard dedicates an enormous amount of its institutional strength to encouraging research on campus. In addition to providing world-class laboratories and facilities such as the 500,000 square foot glass and steel Science and Engineering Complex, Harvard also spends over $500 million on research.[149] Private institutions provide another $300 million to help fund

[145] Office of Institutional Research & Analytics. "Fact Book: Faculty and Staff," 2023. https://oira.harvard.edu/factbook/fact-book-faculty-staff/.
[146] Harvard Alumni Association, "About the HAA," https://alumni.harvard.edu/community.
[147] Harvard College. "About," 2019. https://college.harvard.edu/about.
[148] National Science Foundation, *2023 Survey of Earned Doctorates*, Harvard breakout data.
[149]Federal Lawsuits, "Federal Lawsuits," Federal Lawsuits, June 30, 2025, https://www.harvard.edu/federal-lawsuits/.

research at Harvard. These opportunities are made readily available to all students, including undergraduates. For instance, the Harvard College Research Program (HCRP) offers term-time and summer-time research stipends amounting to thousands of dollars to students with no restrictions on the material to be studied.[150] Students can easily become involved in research of prestigious scholars through the Faculty Aide Program (FAP), which provides "thousands of opportunities for undergraduates from all concentrations to become closely involved in the ongoing research of a Harvard faculty member."[151] Students may also participate in any of the hundreds of funded specialized research programs that study everything from cell biology to forestry to medieval Icelandic folklore. Research conducted at Harvard has been transformative for both the United States and the world. For instance, Harvard has been responsible for the first organ transplant, the first quantum processor ever produced, the development of the fMRI, the smallpox vaccine, anesthesia, the first programmable computer, and more.[152] International students, making up over 27% of the student population, are critical to the continuation of research at Harvard.

[150] "Harvard College Research Program (HCRP)," accessed July 6, 2025, https://uraf.harvard.edu/uraf-opportunities/hcrp.
[151] "Faculty Aide Program | Student Employment Office," accessed July 6, 2025, https://seo.harvard.edu/faculty-aide-program.
[152] Harvard University, "Innovation," Harvard University, accessed July 6, 2025, https://www.harvard.edu/in-focus/innovation/.

Commerical Outputs

The Harvard Innovation Labs have coached over 5,000 ventures that together have raised over $7 billion in capital. In the last five years alone, Grid-enabled hard-science spin-outs (startup companies that emerge or "spin out" from university research labs, especially in STEM fields) have attracted $4.4 billion.[9] These ventures convert campus discoveries into jobs and tax revenues that reinforce U.S. competitiveness.

In 2023, Harvard was awarded 186 U.S. utility patents, ranking 6th among U.S. universities.[153] As of that same year, Harvard holds a total of 5,322 patents—significantly outperforming peer institutions like Yale University and the University of Chicago.[154] On a global scale, Harvard ranked first among single-campus universities for international patent applications filed between 2017 and 2021.[155]

[153]National Academy of Inventors, "INSTITUTION RANKING # of PATENTS," accessed July 7, 2025, https://academyofinventors.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-Top-100-US-Universities.pdf.
[154]Harvard University, "Harvard in the Community - Harvard University," Harvard University, June 17, 2024, https://www.harvard.edu/about/harvard-in-the-community/.
[155]Maike Haag, Enno Kohlisch, and Oliver Koppel, "IW-Kurzbericht 79/2024," 2024, https://www.iwkoeln.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Studien/Kurzberichte/PDF/2024/IW-Kurzbericht_2024-Hochschulpatentanmeldungen_International_Englisch.pdf.

Pedagogy

Among Harvard's many contributions to pedagogy stands the case method. Pioneered in 1921 by Harvard Business School (HBS), the case method relies on simulated scenarios to teach students how to respond to real-life executive tasks, where students debate and decide a managerial course of action on 500 real-world cases over the period of two years.[156] By the 1930s, the method had become HBS's primary teaching approach, and its use even spread to courses within Harvard Law School as well as other schools of law, public health, education, and government, fostering analytical dexterity across disciplines. Since then, HBS's case method has been so successful that Harvard sold over 15 million cases to other institutions in 2020.[157]

Moreover, the Derek Bok Center supports more than 2,000 faculty and teaching fellows annually with workshops, learning-lab studios, and active-learning repositories such as ABLConnect, generating classroom innovations from data-visualisation assignments to flipped-lecture formats.[158] Lastly, regarding student participation in pedagogy at Harvard, the university offers 144 active courses that have enrolled 33 million cumulative learners in 175 countries, validating new modalities that feed back into on-campus instruction.[159] Such digital reach at scale, in which 71% of online learners are outside of the U.S, mirrors the international diversity inside Harvard classrooms and broadens the feedback loop for course design and quality of courses.

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[156] "From Inquiry to Action: Harvard Business School & the Case Method," Baker Library, accessed July 7 2025.
[157] Harvard University, "Expansion of the Case Method | Baker Library," Harvard Business School, 2025, https://www.library.hbs.edu/special-collections-and-archives/exhibits/case-method/expansion-of-the-case-method.
[158] Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, "Faculty Support," accessed July 7 2025.
[159] Harvard Online, "2024 Global Impact Report," April 15 2025.

Academic Resources

Harvard's academic programs are among the best in the world. Harvard offers more than 3,700 courses across 61 undergraduate programs and 13 schools.[160] These courses are taught by some of the most prestigious scholars in the world, including Nobel Laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, National Book Award winners, Rhodes Scholars, and more.[161] Abundant office hours and a culture of close student-professor cooperation enable Harvard students to have unparalleled access to some of the most decorated scholars in the world.[162] Outside class, Harvard students have access to over 400 advisors as well as a fleet of administrators dedicated to helping them succeed in school.[163] Unsurprisingly, the graduation rate at Harvard is 98%, substantially higher than the national average of 61.6%.[164] Additionally, Harvard students boast enormous success after graduation, consistently earning elusive scholarships such as the Rhodes Scholarship, the Fulbright Scholarship, the Marshall Scholarship, and more.[165][166] Harvard also boasts the strongest brand name cache of any university in the world, a distinction that its graduates inherit when they search for jobs, internships, research positions, and fellowships throughout their careers.

[160] Harvard University, "Programs Archive," Harvard University, accessed July 6, 2025, https://www.harvard.edu/programs/.
[161] "Faculty | Harvard," accessed July 6, 2025, https://college.harvard.edu/academics/faculty.
[162] "Faculty | Harvard."
[163] "Faculty | Harvard."
[164] "The NCES Fast Facts Tool Provides Quick Answers to Many Education Questions (National Center for Education Statistics)" (National Center for Education Statistics), accessed July 6, 2025, https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40.
[165] "Harvard Gets More Rhodes Scholars Than Any Other School. Why Do Some of Its Houses Get So Few? | Magazine | The Harvard Crimson," November 9, 2024, https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2024/11/9/harvard-rhodes-scholarship-advising-inequality/.
[166] "Harvard Is a Leader on Fulbrights for 2022-23," Harvard Gazette (blog), February 10, 2023, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/newsplus/harvard-is-a-leader-on-fulbrights-for-2022-23/.

Harvard Library is both the largest academic library and the largest private library in the world, holding 20 million volumes, 400 million manuscripts, and 10 million photographs spread across 28 branches.[167] Such depth lets undergraduates work with primary sources typically reserved for graduate researchers elsewhere, while scholars in every field tap archival collections that accelerate original research (e.g., the Map Collection for climate-risk modelling or Houghton's rare books for digital humanities). International students often act as linguistic or cultural interpreters for non-English materials, expanding the range of feasible projects which, in the long term, sow the seeds for research capacity and progress.

Additionally, Harvard's infrastructure includes research facilities like the Science and Engineering Complex in Allston, one of the most advanced research facilities in the world, enabling students and faculty to engage in impactful work in STEM fields including robotics, AI, and climate science.[168] Moreover, the Office for Technology Development makes it easier to commercialize research. The OTD facilitates over 100 patents and dozens of startups annually,[169] empowering students and faculty to turn their research into world changing products.

Harvard boasts one of the most extensive financial aid programs in the world. All students who attend Harvard and whose parents earn $200,000 or less may attend the college completely free of charge.[170] Students whose parents earn $100,000 or less may further qualify for free health insurance, free travel, stipends amounting to thousands of dollars, and even winter clothes.[171] Around a quarter of all students never end up paying a dime to the university, and all

[167] Harvard Library, "How many books are in the Harvard Library?" Ask a Librarian, updated 2024.
[168] seas.harvard.edu. "Science & Engineering Complex | Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences," n.d. https://seas.harvard.edu/about-us/visit-us/allston/science-engineering-complex.
[169] Harvard Office of Technology Development. "Harvard Office of Technology Development," 2024. https://otd.harvard.edu.
[170] "Financial Aid | Harvard College," accessed July 6, 2025, https://college.harvard.edu/financial-aid.
[171] Ibid.

students are able to graduate completely debt free.[172] Notably, the university's exceedingly generous financial aid program does not discriminate on alienage; international students have the same access to these incredible resources as do domestic students. Beyond the cost of attending, there are numerous pockets of money scattered throughout the university and its alumni base that allow students to do incredible things free of charge. For instance, many of the university's language programs offer scholarships to study abroad in the country of origin for that language, allowing students from modest means to travel thousands of miles around the world on Harvard's funding.

Harvard's unique strengths derive from century-old pedagogical innovations, the world's largest academic library network, billion-dollar research support, and deliberate structures for interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial collaboration. Harvard faculty create a research engine unrivalled in higher education, and although international students constitute around one-quarter of enrollment, they significantly elevate classroom debate and fuel high-impact research teams.

[172] Ibid.

Harvard's Impact in the States

Alaska

As one of the United States' only two non-contiguous states, Alaska is environmentally and socially distinct from other states. The rise of climate change poses numerous threats to the indigenous community and wildlife. As a result, Harvard University has launched various programs to promote medical support in under-resourced areas and to protect Alaska's Native lands. In 1938, Harvard University's Institute of Geographical Exploration and the National Geographic Society sponsored an expedition to the Chugach Range in Alaska, led by Bradford Washburn, focusing on mapping and exploration. The expedition was a breakthrough in charting geography in Alaska that was previously unknown to the United States.[173] However, Harvard-led interactions involving Alaska have drastically changed since then, as modern-day initiatives often (if not always) involve the Native people of Alaska, as their collaboration is key to truly understanding the land without adversely affecting it.

Siamit (pronounced say-mit) is an Iñupiaq word meaning to seed, spread, and scatter. Likewise, Maniilaq Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, and Massachusetts General Hospital decided to seed, spread, and scatter global health equity to Alaska in 2016 by founding Siamit. Siamit is the Health Equity Action Lab at the Harvard Medical School Center for Global Health Delivery located in Kotzebue, Alaska.[174] Siamit's main goals are to provide exceptional healthcare by training physicians, support educational programs involving health, offer career support to local communities, and assist indigenous medical students, residents, fellows, and

[173] Bradford Washburn, "The Ascent of Mt. St. Agnes, Chugach Range, Alaska," *The Alpine Journal* 51 (1939): 207–221.
[174] Siamit, "Story," *Siamit*, Harvard Medical School Center for Global Health Delivery, accessed July 26, 2025, https://www.siamit.org/story.

faculty. During the 2019-2020 academic year, Siamit's responsibilities extended to accounting for COVID-19-related issues, and physicians provided an estimated 1,800 hours of patient care. For many rural tribal health systems that rely on family physicians, having emergency-trained doctors on-site was a significant improvement and alleviated the overworked Maniilaq Social Medicine staff. Siamit also empowered Alaskan youth as the Siamit staff (which included international students) mentored medical students. The monthly Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions, which covered emergency and critical care basics, behavioral health, substance use in primary care, sepsis, PTSD, alcohol use disorder, and airway management, facilitated accessible knowledge for local students. The CME sessions were also made into a podcast ("Siamit Rounds") during the pandemic, reaching approximately 200 tribal health workers nationwide.[175] Siamit has undeniably left an impactful improvement on the healthcare system in its community.

The Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center also features an Arctic Initiative focusing on environmental research, Indigenous knowledge, and policy innovation. The Belfer Center offers many opportunities for international students to take part in the efforts in and for Alaska. The International Workshop on Indigenous Youth Leadership for the Changing Arctic hosts Indigenous youth leaders from Alaska, Greenland, Scandinavia, and more to work with Harvard students in brainstorming solutions to Arctic challenges. Harvard's international students are a vital part of global workshops as they help mediate and foster multicultural dialogue on how to protect permafrost, especially with students who come from the involved countries. Furthermore, students from around the world come together in the Belfer Center's Arctic Innovation Lab at the annual Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavík, where they all present different policy proposals on

[175] L.J. Trout et al., "Siamit: A Novel Academic–Tribal Health Partnership in Northwest Alaska," *Academic Medicine* 96, no. 11 (November 1, 2021): 1560–63, https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000004239.

land co-management, Indigenous education, and sustainable development in Alaska Native communities.[176] International students are a major contributor to various social and global programs for the Belfer Center, as they use it to actively contribute to climate resilience efforts in Alaska.

In Alaska, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH) often starts public health projects directly helping marginalized areas. Harvard Chan students, both international and domestic, pursuing degrees in Global Health, Environmental Health, or Epidemiology often engage in summer field practicums, capstone research, or thesis work that places them in Arctic or Sub-Arctic communities. Their field-based work studies topics key to preserving Alaska, such as melting permafrost solutions, nutrition issues caused by damaged environments, and sanitation systems disrupted by climate-induced problems.[177] Similarly, the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) has sponsored students to pursue projects on infrastructure that can sustain unstable permafrost, withstand Arctic winters, and abide by Indigenous design principles. Recently, students have been involved in site visits or virtual collaborations with planners and community members in Alaska.[178] International students gain firsthand experience designing for extreme environments and integrating Indigenous knowledge, while Native communities facing infrastructure collapse or forced migration receive innovative solutions and climate modeling.

Harvard also has courses on its main campus that educate students on approaching environmental policy and indigenous sovereignty. The Harvard Kennedy School offers

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[176] Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. *Belfer Arctic Initiative: 2022–2023 Year in Review*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School, 2023. https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/Belfer%20Arctic%20Initiative%202022-23%20Year%20in%20Review.pdf.

[177] Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, "Environment & Climate Health," *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*, accessed July 26, 2025, https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/topic/environment-climate-health/.

[178] Mélanie Louterbach, *Insurgent Geology: Mineral Matters in the Arctic* (MLA I project, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2024), winner of the Landscape Architecture Thesis Prize.

coursework such as “Policy and Social Innovation for the Changing Arctic,” which brings students from all backgrounds together to learn from guest lectures held by Arctic Indigenous leaders and collaborative project design. Students get to form proposals on Native displacement and permafrost endangerment. International student can use their original perspectives in the Alaskan context as they can use connections between their home countries and the Arctic. Kennedy School students can even make an actual impact by presenting their solutions to a panel of Arctic experts who could implement their work.[179] The incorporation of lessons on Alaska and Arctic environments emphasizes the importance of taking action in Alaska and empowers students to create community-based solutions.

Harvard’s Alaska-focused initiatives create a two-way learning exchange between Alaska and the international student body, facilitating a cross-cultural global network. Students from countries such as Norway, India, China, Canada, and the Netherlands work with Alaskan students and community leaders in joint fellowships. These connections allow international students to learn from the lived experiences and traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous Alaskans. In addition, local communities benefit from comparative insights and innovative approaches brought in by students trained in global governance, health systems, and environmental design. Furthermore, programs like ARCADE (Arctic Academy for Social and Environmental Leadership) unite international students with Harvard students to address transboundary Arctic challenges.[180] These networks are a crucial part of ongoing collaborations and set the stage for future work. Through shared research and culturally grounded climate action, Alaska’s communities are supported by global future leaders.

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[179] Harvard Kennedy School, *Policy and Social Innovations for the Changing Arctic* (IGA-671M, January term, taught by Halla Hrund Logadóttir), Harvard Kennedy School.
[180] Elizabeth Hanlon, “‘Deeply Enriching’: Kennedy School Students Build Leadership Skills, Connections at Arctic Frontiers,” *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, Harvard Kennedy School, March 24, 2023.

Overall, Harvard has used its extensive resources to study and improve multiple aspects of life in Alaska. Their targeted efforts combine global research and community-centered engagement to learn about the unique climate of Alaska in order to preserve it while also protecting the rightful sovereignty owed to indigenous peoples. It's hard to predict how the accessibility of Alaskan knowledge will be used. While many have used such knowledge to prove the negative effects of climate change, harmful corporations can just as easily utilize information to further exploit the environment. Therefore, it is particularly important to promote and protect the positive work being done by Harvard, and having students from all backgrounds is a key part of understanding and helping Alaska.

Arizona

International students are critical to the academic and economic vitality of American universities, fueling research innovation, financial stability, and regional development. Harvard University's initiatives in states such as Arizona illustrate how the institution's global student body contributes meaningfully to local communities and economies. This brief analyzes Harvard's impact in Arizona, highlighting international student involvement in research at the Harvard-Smithsonian Whipple Observatory, demonstrating the economic and intellectual benefits international students deliver, and underscoring the importance of supportive immigration policies.

Arizona hosts the Harvard-Smithsonian Whipple Observatory (HSWO), a premier astrophysics research facility jointly operated by Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institution. Located on Mount Hopkins, the Observatory specializes in gamma-ray astronomy, cosmological research, and technological advancements in astrophysics instrumentation.[181] Crucially, international students and researchers at Harvard significantly contribute to the Observatory's groundbreaking work, supporting Arizona's position as a leader in global astrophysics. The Observatory attracts talent from diverse international backgrounds, collaborating closely with Harvard's Astrophysics Department, where international students represent nearly 19% of all graduate researchers. Harvard's global recruitment enables this flow of talent, which sustains Arizona's cutting-edge research ecosystem.[182] International researchers at the Whipple Observatory have been central to significant discoveries, including advancements

[181] "Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory - Mt. Hopkins, AZ | Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian." https://www.cfa.harvard.edu/facilities-technology/cfa-facilities/fred-lawrence-whipple-observatory-mt-hopkins-az.
[182] "Department of Astronomy - Harvard University - Graduate Programs and Degrees." Accessed July 29, 2025. https://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/harvard-university-graduate-school-of-arts-and-sciences-department-of-astronomy-000_10031757.aspx

in telescope technology and deep-space imaging techniques.[183] These breakthroughs reinforce Arizona's status as an epicenter of scientific excellence, fostering local innovation and job creation in technical and support sectors.

International students and researchers affiliated with Harvard's programs generate substantial economic benefits in Arizona. According to the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA), each international student contributes an average of $35,000 annually to local economies, a figure inclusive of tuition, housing, healthcare, and other expenses.[184] With Harvard's extensive research activities at the Observatory relying heavily on international graduate student expertise, the economic footprint is significant, supporting local jobs and commerce around Tucson and surrounding communities. The Observatory itself employs numerous Arizona residents in both scientific and operational roles, many of whom are directly sustained by Harvard's global student participation and research funding. Harvard's international student tuition revenue, comprising roughly 27% of its total tuition and fees, is partly reinvested into local research initiatives, creating a self-sustaining economic cycle that benefits Arizona residents.[185]

The ability for international students to participate in Arizona-based Harvard initiatives relies directly on supportive immigration and visa policies. Historically, international student enrollment has proven highly sensitive to changes in U.S. immigration policy. Tightened visa restrictions or heightened immigration scrutiny immediately impact enrollment numbers, as

[183] "Dr. Fred Lawrence Whipple | Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian." Accessed July 29, 2025. https://pweb.cfa.harvard.edu/about/about-smithsonian-astrophysical-observatory/dr-fred-lawrence-whipple.
[184] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA." November 18, 2024. https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[185] International Students at Harvard | One Harvard, One World. n.d. Accessed July 29, 2025. https://oneworld.worldwide.harvard.edu/international-students-at-harvard/.

observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent policy fluctuations.[186] Positive immigration policies not only ensure stable international enrollment but also reinforce Arizona's economic and research infrastructure. Policies enabling practical training and research-related work (such as the Optional Practical Training [OPT] program) are especially vital. Such programs allow international students to remain and contribute their expertise after graduation, ensuring continued innovation and sustained economic benefits for Arizona.[187]

Harvard University's collaboration with the Harvard-Smithsonian Whipple Observatory exemplifies how international students significantly bolster state economies, enrich scientific communities, and sustain local innovation. Arizona benefits economically and intellectually from Harvard's global student body, whose presence and contributions depend fundamentally on supportive immigration policies. Policymakers considering immigration reforms must recognize that maintaining favorable conditions for international student enrollment directly strengthens Arizona's economy and research leadership, benefiting local communities, the state, and the nation as a whole.

[186] "IIE Open Doors / Enrollment Trends." Accessed June 21, 2025. https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/enrollment-trends/.
[187] "The Benefits of F-1 Optional Practical Training | NAFSA." Accessed July 29, 2025. https://www.nafsa.org/OPT.

Florida

Although located more than one thousand miles away from Florida, Harvard University has made significant investments in the state's long-term well-being through strategic research projects and academic partnerships. As the third most populous state in the nation, Florida is home to many diverse communities—from coastal towns and national parks to large cities—each facing its own unique problems. Harvard University, with twelve graduate and professional schools, leverages its institutional resources, academic expertise, and global talent to address the challenges facing Florida's communities.

In 2022, the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) launched the Child and Family Wellbeing Accelerator in five jurisdictions across the country—namely, Broward County, Florida.[188] Just north of Miami-Dade, Broward County is home to roughly 1.94 million people, including approximately 750,000 households.[189] The Accelerator, which partnered directly with the Broward Sheriff's Office, provides the Child Protective Investigations Section (CPIS) with technical assistance—including direct support for staff, exposure to techniques from other departments, and training on fundamental tools designed to keep families safe. This program is aimed at preventing crises before intervention is necessary. By connecting substance-using pregnant individuals with treatment options, expanding preventative resources for overall family wellbeing, and supporting child placement with relative caregivers rather than

[188] Harvard University, "Harvard Kennedy School's Government Performance Lab Launches Initiative Designed to Accelerate Child and Family Wellbeing - Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab," Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, February 25, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/news/harvard-kennedy-schools-government-performance-lab-launches-initiative-designed-to-accelerate-child-and-family-wellbeing/.

[189] United States Census Bureau, "Explore Census Data," data.census.gov, n.d., https://data.census.gov/profile/Broward_County.

foster care, the Accelerator improves family and child wellbeing across the county.[190] The Government Performance Lab, which played a central role in this project, is led in part by international students, underscoring the importance of Harvard's international students to initiatives that uplift American communities.[191]

In the Spring of 2016, Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD) partnered with the City of Miami Beach to conduct a 2.5 year study on the impacts of and potential responses to rising sea levels in South Florida.[192] The study examined the impact of rising sea levels on many parts of Miami Beach, including its economy, ecology, and infrastructure. Building upon their findings, the team of 50 Harvard graduate students developed planning strategies for managing current and future threats to Miami Beach. In their final report, the researchers expanded upon existing practices such as elevated roads and mangroves along the coast, but they also introduced novel concepts: installing large cisterns on roofs to collect water, constructing new buildings with limestone bases to soak up excess water, and deepening a nearby canal.[193] Harvard's investment in Miami Beach through this project provided the community with innovative solutions to its unique challenges. Given the fact that 56% of students in Harvard's Graduate

[190] Broward Sheriff's Office, "BSO CPIS SELECTED to PARTICIPATE in INNOVATIVE HARVARD PROGRAM | Broward County," Sheriff.org, 2025, https://www.sheriff.org/PIO/BSONews/Pages/BSO-CPIS-SELECTED-TO-PARTICIPATE-IN-INNOVATIVE-HARVARD-PROGRAM-.aspx.
[191] Harvard University, "Benjamin Appleton - Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab," Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, April 9, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/people/benjamin-appleton/.
[192] Harvard University, "The Project on South Florida and Sea Level," Harvard Graduate School of Design, April 24, 2017, https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/project/south-florida-and-sea-level-adaptive-strategies-for-green-infrastructure-landscape-ecology-and-cultural-heritage/.
[193] Harvard University, "South Florida and Sea Level: The Case of Miami Beach EDITION 2017 South Florida and Sea Level: The Case of Miami Beach," n.d., https://www.mbrisingabove.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/South-Florida-and-Sea-Level-The-Case-of-Miami-Beach.pdf.

School of Design are foreign-born—much of Harvard's urban adaptation work in Miami Beach was carried out by international students.[194]

In collaboration with The Ring Workspaces and The Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health offers an executive education course for entrepreneurs in the Greater Tampa Bay Area. The 12-week program is designed for entrepreneurs, social innovators, and community leaders seeking to lead ventures with a societal impact. By the end of the course, Strengthening Innovation and Sustainability Ecosystems in Central Florida, participants either create a social or business plan for a new company or remove an existing challenge to local innovation. Additionally, Harvard provides this course at no cost to its Floridian participants.[195]

Harvard Medical School's HMX Online Learning Program offers a total of 25 virtual courses for learners of all backgrounds interested in advancing their knowledge of medicine.[196] First partnering with Harvard Medical School in 2016, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) has employed HMX's online courses to address knowledge gaps in incoming medical students. The students' mean scores on post-course quizzes were nearly double their scores on pre-course quizzes. HMX's courses worked so well that FAU began expanding their use to second and third-year medical students in 2018.[197]

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[194]Nina Pasquini, "What Happens If Harvard Loses Its International Students | Harvard Magazine," Harvard Magazine, June 11, 2025, https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2025/06/harvard-trump-international-students.
[195]Harvard University, "Strengthening Innovation and Sustainability Ecosystems in Central Florida | Programs in Environmental Health | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health," Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH, July 22, 2025), https://hsph.harvard.edu/department/environmental-health/programs-in-environmental-health/strengthening-innovation-and-sustainability-ecosystems-in-central-florida/.
[196]Harvard University, "HMX Online Learning | Harvard Medical School Professional, Corporate, and Continuing Education," Harvard.edu, August 26, 2025, https://learn.hms.harvard.edu/about/program-categories/hmx-online-learning.
[197]Harvard University, "Florida Atlantic University | Harvard Medical School Professional, Corporate, and Continuing Education," Harvard.edu, 2016, https://learn.hms.harvard.edu/organizations/client-stories-and-case-studies/florida-atlantic-university.

Harvard's diverse and sustained initiatives across the State of Florida have made a significant impact on the lives of families and medical students, as well as the environmental sustainability of Miami Beach and the Tampa Bay Area. Each of these initiatives has been aimed at tackling a substantial community challenge—whether it be family crises, rising sea levels, low innovation success rates, or student knowledge gaps. Harvard has invested countless resources into the State of Florida through these projects, which have each spanned years. These programs, and the benefits they brought to Floridians, are themselves the product of international students and scholars. The very assistant director of the Accelerator in Broward County is a former international student at Harvard, and given the large share of international students in the GSD, it is likely that around 56%—or 28—of the 50 students who researched rising sea levels and formulated solutions for Miami Beach are international students as well. These programs clearly highlight the link between global talent at Harvard and the success of projects that directly benefit Floridians.

Georgia

Harvard has partnered with organizations across the United States to create educational opportunities and training programs that empower and uplift populations nationwide. Specifically in the state of Georgia, Harvard has worked with institutions such as the University of Georgia and Clark Atlanta University to empower various communities of students and aspiring leaders.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have faced, and continue to face, many challenges when it comes to providing and supporting education. Studies have found a lack of faculty involvement at HBCUs, with much of the university policy being spearheaded by deans' councils and presidents' cabinets. Furthermore, evidence shows HBCUs as having much smaller endowments as well as lower salaries for their faculty. Specifically, the average salary for the professorial rank at HBCUs was $53,000, while the average was $65,000 at majority-white schools. For instructors, HBCUs have an average salary of $41,000, which is much lower than the average $50,000 at other institutions.[198] To address and foster conversations around these topics, Harvard Graduate School of Education has partnered with the HBCUs Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) at Clark Atlanta University to host an in-person Seminar for New Presidents, which the ELI Presidential Fellows will attend. These fellows are all presidents of HBCUs, who are in the process of furthering their skills and readiness for executive positions. The seminar presents opportunities for new presidents of HBCUs to talk with peers and learn from other institutions across the country, gain insights into the college presidency, better understand the issues that affect their own institutions, and become familiar with the potential

[198] Member, Smiley New. "(Hbcus) 'We're in This Struggle Together.'" HBCU Sports Forums, September 24, 2003. http://hbcusports.com/forums/threads/hbcus-were-in-this-struggle-together.21095/#post-276454.

hazards that can inevitably come with university leadership. This partnership allows Harvard to foster intellectual exchange with HBCUs and leverage the capabilities of the HBCU leaders in driving positive change in their institutions. Furthermore, with the current environment creating a high rate of departure for HBCU presidents, the support this seminar provides paves the way for a more inclusive future in education, where these leaders are better supported and protected in their careers.[199]

Another challenge faced by higher education and research programs is the development of data science expertise. With a growing need for data science skills,[200] providing quality and effective education training for this realm is becoming more important. However, data science is an interdisciplinary field that spans across theoretical computer science, statistics, mathematics, and electrical engineering. Furthermore, it is relevant for domains including economics, education, psychology, medicine, and sports. The variety of domains and fields that data science encapsulates makes it difficult to be fully integrated into a curriculum that can effectively develop the foundation of the realm and capture the importance of these different cultures.[201] Beyond the complexity of this realm, data science is also a relatively young field, and its teachers might not hold bachelor's degrees in data science. Instead, they come from diverse academic and industrial backgrounds, therefore causing data science education to be less structured, with its teaching principles being less formulated. To regulate these challenges and promote effective

[199] Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, and Laurie Rodriguez. "Clark Atlanta University Partners with Harvard to Support Next Generation of HBCU Presidents." Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, February 11, 2025. https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/2024/07/16/clark-atlanta-university-partners-with-harvard-to-support-next-generation-of-hbcu-presidents/.
[200] Gocke, Meghan. "11 Data Science Careers That Are Shaping the Future." Northeastern University Graduate Programs, November 25, 2024. https://graduate.northeastern.edu/knowledge-hub/data-science-careers-shaping-our-future/.
[201] Alley. "Ten Challenges of Data Science Education." Communications of the ACM, April 24, 2024. https://cacm.acm.org/blogcacm/ten-challenges-of-data-science-education/.

data science instruction, Harvard has collaborated with the University of Georgia to develop the Harvard-UGA Collaborations on the Foundations of Data Science (HGCFODAS). This collaboration would support the interdisciplinary research and education surrounding data science, involving the four main research fields previously mentioned, as well as other related fields. It would seek to improve the training efforts, so a higher-quality and sustainable workforce in data science could be developed.[202]

The support that Harvard lends to uplift HBCUs is also relevant to international students. HBCUs often provide more social support for their students. According to Marybeth Gasman, the associate dean for research in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University and the author of "The Power of Black Colleges," HBCUs operate in a familial way, which can be extremely helpful for international students.[203] The welcoming environment HBCUs provide for students who might feel marginalized and/or isolated in predominantly white institutions makes these universities promising choices for international students, who are entering an entirely new country and are directly impacted by isolation and cultural barriers. Therefore, the successful leadership and operation of these universities can become directly relevant to the support systems that international students have, and Harvard's efforts to uplift the leadership structures in these universities can help create resiliency amongst international students as well.

Additionally, with data science emerging as one of the most dynamic fields that transform the operations and decision-making processes of industries, international students worldwide are no exception to entering this field. With the growing need for data scientists

[202] "Teaming for Interdisciplinary Research Pre-Seed Program." University of Georgia Office of Research. Accessed July 31, 2025. https://research.uga.edu/team-pre-seeds/projects/harvard-uga-collaborations-on-foundations-of-data-science/.
[203] Aderibigbe, Adebola. "Q&A: Why Are Hbcus Appealing to International Students?" Open Campus, June 13, 2024. https://www.opencampus.org/2024/06/10/qa-why-are-hbcus-appealing-to-international-students/.

across the globe, ideal study-abroad destinations like the United States are beginning to have more educational and career opportunities, whether at top universities or large tech corporations. The chance for students to enter leading countries and join the race for a higher earning potential, achieve job security, and potentially settle in leading countries is what captures the interest of international students. Therefore, Harvard's efforts to support data science training efforts can have a positive impact on international students aspiring to learn and grow in the United States as well.

Overall, Harvard's efforts to improve the education of various populations in Georgia can have a widespread positive impact on domestic and international students alike. Whether it is supporting the leaders of HBCUs to allow sustainable, long-term development of these universities, or structuring the field of data science to have a higher quality of education and training, initiatives like these would provide international students entering the nation with more supportive, welcoming, and intellectually stimulating environments.

Michigan

Michigan's economic future depends largely on international students. Each year, international students contribute over $1.45 billion to the state's economy, support nearly 12,000 jobs, and power research, innovation, and talent pipelines across top institutions like the University of Michigan and Michigan State.[204] The opposite of transient participants, international students are key drivers of competitiveness and workforce development, particularly in STEM fields, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing. However, their impact is often underestimated in public policy debates. Harvard's work in Michigan, through initiatives like the Government Performance Lab and Poverty Solutions, has helped surface and scale the infrastructure that allows international students to succeed. From outcomes-based reforms in social services to place-based models for housing and economic mobility, these initiatives demonstrate how strategic investment in public systems not only benefits local communities but also takes advantage of the full potential of global talent.[205] The Michigan case demonstrates that policy innovations piloted through Harvard partnerships can serve as a model for improving outcomes for international students—an investment that supports state economies, research institutions, and workforce pipelines.

The Harvard Kennedy School's Government Performance Lab (GPL) has helped Michigan rethink how it delivers social services through outcomes-based contracting and real-time performance management. In partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), GPL supported the creation of 42 operational metrics that enabled

[204] NAFSA, "NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool," NAFSA, 2019, https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2.
[205] Harvard Kennedy School, "Connecting Michigan Families to Community Services after a Child Welfare Hotline Call - Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab," Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, June 24, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/project/connecting-michigan-families-to-community-services-after-a-child-welfare-hotline-call/.

state leaders to track service gaps in child welfare, mental health, and community-based care.[206] These specific reforms reduced the use of institutional placements by over 60% and increased early mental health referrals by 50%. They also directly benefited immigrant and mixed-status families navigating under-resourced public systems.[207]

For international students, many of whom navigate similar challenges like limited access to housing, underutilized mental health care, and weak institutional accountability, GPL's work in Michigan presents a scalable model. Universities can adopt outcomes-based frameworks to assess whether their support services actually reach international students and result in improved retention, wellness, or post-graduation outcomes. In a state where international students fuel Michigan's economy and job market, translating these performance systems to higher education would create more effective, responsive student infrastructure while reinforcing Michigan's competitiveness in global talent recruitment.

Poverty Solutions, a University of Michigan initiative involving Harvard-trained researchers and fellows, focuses on reducing poverty through evidence-based, place-based interventions. Their work includes mapping housing instability in Washtenaw County, designing eviction prevention tools for Detroit courts, and piloting guaranteed income programs.[208] While these efforts are aimed at low-income residents, the barriers they target, including lack of affordable housing, legal aid, reliable transit, and access to food, also affect international

[206] Harvard Kennedy School, "Building Executive Dashboards to Support Child Welfare Leaders in Michigan - Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab," Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, May 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/project/building-executive-dashboards-to-support-child-welfare-leaders-in-michigan/.
[207] Harvard Kennedy School, "Reducing the Number of Michigan Children in Congregate Care - Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab," Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, April 4, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/insight/reducing-michigan-children-in-congregate-care.
[208] University of Michigan, "» Michigan Poverty & Well-Being Map," Poverty Solutions, 2022, https://poverty.umich.edu/research-funding-opportunities/data-tools/michigan-poverty-well-being-map/.

students, which is critical because they are often excluded from federal aid programs and face strict visa-related work limitations.[209]

A 2022 survey by UM's International Center found that close to over half of international graduate students cited housing affordability as a primary barrier to academic success.[210] In metro Detroit, where transit gaps and housing instability are pronounced, international students often face additional stress due to a lack of access to off-campus services.[211] Poverty Solutions' data-sharing agreements with local governments and cross-sector implementation models could have future implications in terms of informing university partnerships with city agencies or legal clinics to extend these protections to non-citizen students.[212] In this way, Michigan's anti-poverty infrastructure, refined through research and implementation partnerships, could become the foundation for more inclusive and resilient support systems on campus.

The Detroit Competitiveness Initiative, informed by Harvard Business School's U.S. Competitiveness Project, aimed to restore Detroit's economic dynamism by investing in workforce pipelines, entrepreneurship ecosystems, and advanced industry clusters.[213] While the early focus was largely on domestic employment and education, the strategy has shifted to emphasize the role of globally trained talent, including international students graduating from

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[209] University of Michigan, "Stronger Together: Scaling Innovations and Lessons Learned in Poverty Alleviation Impact Report for Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan 2024," Umich.edu, 2024, https://poverty.umich.edu/about-us/our-impact/impact-2024/.
[210] Pallavi Singh et al., "International Students: What's Missing and What Matters," *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 10, no. 02 (2022): 381–97, https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2022.102027.
[211] Laura Herberg, "Research Finds Housing Instability in Detroit Hurts Students," WDET 101.9 FM, August 24, 2023, https://wdet.org/2023/08/24/research-finds-housing-instability-in-detroit-hurts-students/.
[212] University of Michigan Ford School, "Chronic Housing Instability Poses Educational Risk for Detroit Students," Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, 2023, https://fordschool.umich.edu/news/2023/chronic-housing-instability-poses-educational-risk-detroit-students.
[213] Harvard Business School, "Harvard Business School to Convene Michigan Leaders to Analyze Paths Forward for Detroit Competitiveness," Harvard Business School, November 14, 2012, https://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/uscompetitivenessdetroit.aspx.

Michigan institutions, in sustaining economic growth.[214] With over 8,000 international students enrolled at the University of Michigan and more than 5,000 at Michigan State University, the state's largest research engines are also major exporters of STEM-focused, globally mobile workers.[215]

However, visa restrictions and lack of post-graduation pathways often prevent these students from contributing to regional economies like Detroit's.[216] The Competitiveness Initiative's emphasis on aligning education with industry needs guides local partnerships that better connect international students to Optional Practical Training opportunities, entrepreneurship visas, or city-backed job pipelines.[217] In a city undergoing demographic recovery and economic transformation, retaining international graduates with advanced degrees in engineering, medicine, and business would provide the high-skill labor base needed to support innovation, attract investment, and stabilize the urban tax base. Harvard's framework for linking education and competitiveness offers Michigan a replicable path to not only train global talent but also to keep it.

The Harvard initiatives implemented across Michigan–through the Government Performance Lab, Poverty Solutions, and the Detroit Competitiveness Initiative–demonstrate the transformative role of evidence-based, locally-embedded innovation in strengthening state systems. These efforts collectively make public services more equitable, accountable, and

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[214] Sabrina Cynova, "Global Detroit Releases Data Showcasing Importance of International Students to Michigan's Workforce, $825M Annual Economic Contribution," Detroit Regional Chamber, October 17, 2022, https://www.detroitchamber.com/global-detroit-releases-data-showcasing-importance-of-international-students/.
[215] International Center at the University of Michigan, "Statistical Report | International Center," Umich.edu, 2024, https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/reports.
[216] Annie Ma, Jocelyn Gecker, and Bianca Vázquez Toness, "International Students See Fewer Pathways to US Careers under Trump," AP News, May 30, 2025, https://apnews.com/article/opt-international-student-visa-f1-h1b-77095c8abefe0e03a4d26673becbd85b.
[217] Annie Ma, Jocelyn Gecker, and Bianca Vazquez Toness, "Global Talent Retention Initiative - Global Detroit," Global Detroit - Thriving Economies and Vibrant Communities Include Immigrants, February 28, 2019, https://globaldetroitmi.org/gtri/.

responsive to complex population needs.[218] Although designed for broader state policy goals, these reforms have built institutional capacity that directly affects international students.[219]

Without these initiatives, many of the systems now in place to assess service outcomes, close equity gaps, or connect education to employment would be less coordinated or nonexistent. For international students who face constraints on work, housing, and legal recourse, this lack of structural alignment can lead to isolation, attrition, or forced departure, resulting in lost talent and economic leakage.[220] Because they rely on the same public and campus systems as domestic students (e.g., mental health care, transit, housing, legal services, etc.), their needs reveal weaknesses in infrastructure that, if left unaddressed, hurt broader student populations as well.

The national implications are clear: in a globally competitive era, underinvesting in the support systems that enable international students to thrive weakens America's leadership in innovation, research, and skilled labor development. Harvard's Michigan-based initiatives provide a replicable framework for other states and institutions seeking to modernize public systems, not only to support vulnerable populations but also to retain global talent that fuels local industries and advances national interests. These are not isolated experiments; rather, they serve as functional models for making U.S. higher education and state economies more resilient, inclusive, and strategically aligned.

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[218] Harvard Kennedy School, "Our Approach - Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab," Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, May 22, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/our-approach/.
[219] Julien Godman and Julien Godman, "International Students Perfect Fit for Northern Michigan Business - Global Detroit," Global Detroit - Thriving Economies and Vibrant Communities Include Immigrants, November 24, 2024, https://globaldetroitmi.org/international-students-perfect-fit-for-northern-mi/.
[220] Phattra Marbang et al., "International Students' Experiences with Changing Policy: A Qualitative Study from Middle Tennessee," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education* 9, no. 2 (2020): 301–29, https://doi.org/10.32674/jise.v9i2.2071.

Nevada

Nevada is one of the nation's largest states and is a top exporter of minerals such as gold, silver, copper, barite, and lithium. Nevada's tourism and real estate market are also considerable contributors to its economy. Although Harvard University lies thousands of miles away from the Silver State, it extends a number of programs into Nevada, supporting its justice system, its mining industry, its real estate market, and more. International students, themselves a core of Harvard as an institution, serve these interests frequently. Their loss at the hands of the Trump administration could carry long-term losses for Nevadans.

Harvard's Kennedy School supports an applied research lab called the Government Performance Lab that "helps governments deliver better outcomes for their constituents."[221] The Government Performance Lab (GPL) studies governments, identifies challenges, and helps design innovative solutions to address the needs of constituents.[222] The GPL has lent support to Nevadans through their Pretrial Justice program.[223] The program organizes a live dashboard that provides judges with realtime data about those charged with crimes: data such as if they've appeared in court, if they've complied with past supervision conditions, and if they've remained arrest-free.[224] The GPL organizes this data for Justice Courts in Nevada to help inform their decision making, allowing for a more streamlined pre-trial pipeline that not only expedites criminal justice but also saves taxpayers money by reducing the load on jails and pretrial

[221] "About Us," *Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab*, n.d., accessed July 26, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/about-us/.
[222] ("About Us," n.d.)
[223] "Incorporating Data into Decision-Making in the North Las Vegas Justice Court," *Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab*, n.d., accessed July 26, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/project/incorporating-data-into-decision-making-in-the-north-las-vegas-justice-court/.
[224] "Advancing Pretrial Justice," *Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab*, n.d., accessed July 26, 2025, https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/focus-area/pretrial-justice/.

government agencies.[225] This program has shown incredible benefits within Nevada. Judge Belina Harris in particular has found considerable success:

> I'm thrilled that the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab will provide court staff with coaching and support to create dashboards and data tools related to pretrial outcomes, such as the court appearance rates of pretrial clients. This live feedback will improve my ability to make informed decisions about pretrial release and supervision conditions.[226]

The removal of international students threatens to rollback this progress. The GPL is an extension of Harvard's Kennedy School, a graduate school where 59% of the student body come from outside the United States.[227] Representing 96 countries, these students come to the United States and lend their talent to support programs including but not limited to the Pretrial Justice program that has so remarkably benefitted Nevadans already.

Mining is a critical component of the Nevadan economy. Although it's known as the Silver State, Nevada is known for its incredible abundance of various mineral resources. In addition to silver, Nevada boasts enormous reserves of copper, clay, lithium, magnesium, molybdenum, silica, barite, diatomite, and especially gold.[228] Gold in particular is one of the state's prime exports, making up over 6% of the state's GDP.[229] Notably, Nevada is one of the

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[225] ("Advancing Pretrial Justice," n.d.)
[226] ("Incorporating Data into Decision-Making in the North Las Vegas Justice Court," n.d.)
[227] "Global Student Community | Harvard Kennedy School," accessed July 26, 2025, https://www.hks.harvard.edu/more/student-life/student-stories/global-student-community.
[228] *Minerals in Nevada - Nevada Mining Association*, December 19, 2017, https://nevadamining.org/education/minerals-in-nevada/.
[229] *Gold In Nevada: History, Statistics & Economics (UPDATED 2023) | Equifund*, August 15, 2023, https://equifund.com/blog/gold-in-nevada/.

world's largest gold producers, accounting for around 80% of the United States' gold production.[230] Nevada's 2nd Congressional district is responsible for most of this gold production.[231]

As the mining industry continues to grow, it's imperative that the US leverage technological innovation to keep mining cost-effective, environmentally conscientious, and conducive to the livelihood of the communities that sustain the mines.[232] International students at Harvard conduct research that helps meet these goals, particularly with respect to environmental sustainability. For instance, in 2019, a group of student researchers at Harvard's Paulson School of Engineering and Science developed a microfluidics-based soil analyzer that helps track mercury concentrations in the soil.[233] Gold processing in Nevada releases large amounts of mercury into the atmosphere, leading to long term health complications for Nevadan voters.[234]

Harvard also develops technologies that can improve mineral yields through advances they've made under the MINER program.[235] Using grant money from the Advanced Research Projects Agency, Harvard scholars have been researching applications of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) technologies to improve the carbonation potential of CO_2 in mining operations.[236] Their work could dramatically improve the cost-effectiveness of carbon-

[230] "Gold mine production," World Gold Council, accessed July 26, 2025, https://www.gold.org/download/file/7593/Gold-Mining-Production-Volumes-Data.xlsx.
[231] "About Nevada's 2nd District | Congressman Mark Amodei," November 6, 2018, http://amodei.house.gov/2nd-district/about-nevadas-2nd-district.
[232] "About Nevada's 2nd District | Congressman Mark Amodei."
[233] "Tackling an Environmental Crisis in Peru," accessed July 26, 2025, https://seas.harvard.edu/news/2019/08/tackling-environmental-crisis-peru.
[234] "Mercury | NDEP," accessed July 26, 2025, https://ndep.nv.gov/land/mercury.
[235] "Developing Advanced NMR Techniques to Predict and Monitor CO2 Storage and Mineralization for Enhanced Mining Exploration and Operation | ARPA-E," accessed July 26, 2025, https://arpa-e.energy.gov/programs-and-initiatives/search-all-projects/developing-advanced-nmr-techniques-predict-and-monitor-co2-storage-and-mineralization-enhanced-mining-exploration-and-operation.
[236] ("Developing Advanced NMR Techniques to Predict and Monitor CO2 Storage and Mineralization for Enhanced Mining Exploration and Operation | ARPA-E," n.d.)

sequestration technologies, making it easier for Nevadan mining operations to comply with federal regulations. This benefits Nevadans by allowing companies to qualify for more green credits,[237] which brings economic benefits, and by reducing environmental damage, which improves constituents health. Harvard's research on this subject has been led by international students.

[237] "Sustainable Mining Finances: Costs and Liabilities," accessed July 26, 2025, https://www.stantec.com/en/ideas/topic/energy-resources/sustainable-mining-finances-exploring-costs-liabilities.

North Carolina

North Carolina is home to approximately 10,975,000 people and is ranked 14th in the nation for population growth.[238] Yet, North Carolina is facing challenges, and 9.3% of bridges are rated structurally deficient.[239] North Carolina's labor force remains the national average of 62.8, and there is a worker shortage as there are only 55 workers for every 100 open jobs.[240] Additionally, North Carolina has warmed about one degree Fahrenheit over the past 120 years as of 2019. North Carolina is expected to warm an additional six to ten degrees by 2100. Over the next 80 years, the state can expect to see disruptive sea level rise, increasingly hot nights, and more days with extreme heat or rainfall unless the global increase in heat-trapping gases is stopped.[241] However, Harvard is positively impacting North Carolina through its worth with infrastructure and the climate.

In 2024, Hurricane Helene impacted the lives of millions of Americans. About 577,000 people living in the 27 counties in North Carolina had high social vulnerability to disasters after Hurricane Helene. Thousands of homes that were not covered by flood insurance were destroyed. 138,000 or one in four homes in North Carolina were in counties under major disaster declaration.[242] Climate change is making the severity of these hurricanes even worse as it

[238] Robert McAllister. 2025. "North Carolina Population 2025 - Key Stats and Insights - North American Community Hub." North American Community Hub. January 6, 2025. https://nchstats.com/north-carolina-population/.
[239] American Society of Civil Engineers. 2016. "North Carolina | ASCE's 2021 Infrastructure Report Card." ASCE's 2021 Infrastructure Report Card |. October 27, 2016. https://infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/north-carolina/.
[240] Lucy, Makinizi Hoover, Stephanie Ferguson, Isabella. 2023. "Understanding North Carolina's Labor Market." Www.uschamber.com. November 3, 2023. https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-north-carolinas-labor-market.
[241] "Climate Change in North Carolina – NC Climate Education." 2020. NC State University. October 2020. https://climate.ncsu.edu/learn/climate-change/.
[242] Marshall, Joey, Chase Sawyer, Heather King, Bethany DeSalvo, and Walter Peacock. 2024. "More than Half a Million North Carolinians under Disaster Declaration after Hurricane Helene Were at High Social Vulnerability to Disasters." United States Census Bureau. October 11, 2024. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/10/hurricane-helene.html.

increases ocean temperatures, which leads to heavier rainfalls. It also drives up sea levels, indicating intensified storm surges.[243] Climate crises like these dangerous hurricanes, increasing heatwaves, or air pollution threaten the ability for community health clinics to support patients. This is an issue that not only North Carolina is facing, but the rest of the world. In the 2019 California wildfires, health clinics were making the tough decision to keep the electronic health system online or keep their refrigerators running to protect temperature-sensitive vaccines.[244]

Biogen, the Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (Harvard Chan C-CHANGE), and Working with Americares are supporting clinics to address these climate-related impacts on healthcare.[245] Health clinics in California, Massachusetts, Texas, and North Carolina are participating in pilot programs to address these climate risks. North Carolina has three clinics participating including the Community Care Clinic of Dare, where the clinic and patients are facing issues from flooding due to rising sea levels and increasing temperatures, which are also severely impacting those working outdoors.[246] Kintegra Health has more than 30 sites and are facing issues of deteriorating infrastructure, and frequent flooding, which washes out the roads, impacting access to healthcare. Lastly, the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NCAFCC), supports 70 free and charitable clinics and pharmacies. They support clinics and provide support for those uninsured in North Carolina, but this is becoming more critical and difficult due to

[243] Jaclyn Diaz. 2025. "By the Numbers: A Look at International Students at Harvard and across the U.S." NPR. May 24, 2025. https://www.npr.org/2025/05/24/nx-s1-5409082/international-students-numbers-harvard-yale-columbia.
[244] "Harvard Chan C-CHANGE Launches Project to Increase Climate Resilience at Community Health Clinics in Four States | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health." 2021. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. HSPH. April 21, 2021. https://hsph.harvard.edu/climate-health-c-change/news/harvard-chan-c-change-launches-project-to-increase-climate-resilience-at-community-health-clinics-in-four-states/.
[245] "Harvard Chan C-CHANGE Launches Project to Increase Climate Resilience at Community Health Clinics in Four States | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health."
[246] "Harvard Chan C-CHANGE Launches Project to Increase Climate Resilience at Community Health Clinics in Four States | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health."

climate change.[247] Harvard Chan C-CHANGE was founded 30 years ago and was the first center based at a medical school to focus on the issues of climate change on human health.[248] While there are only three clinics receiving support from this pilot program, thousands of clinics across the country who are experiencing similar difficulties as North Carolina will be able to benefit.

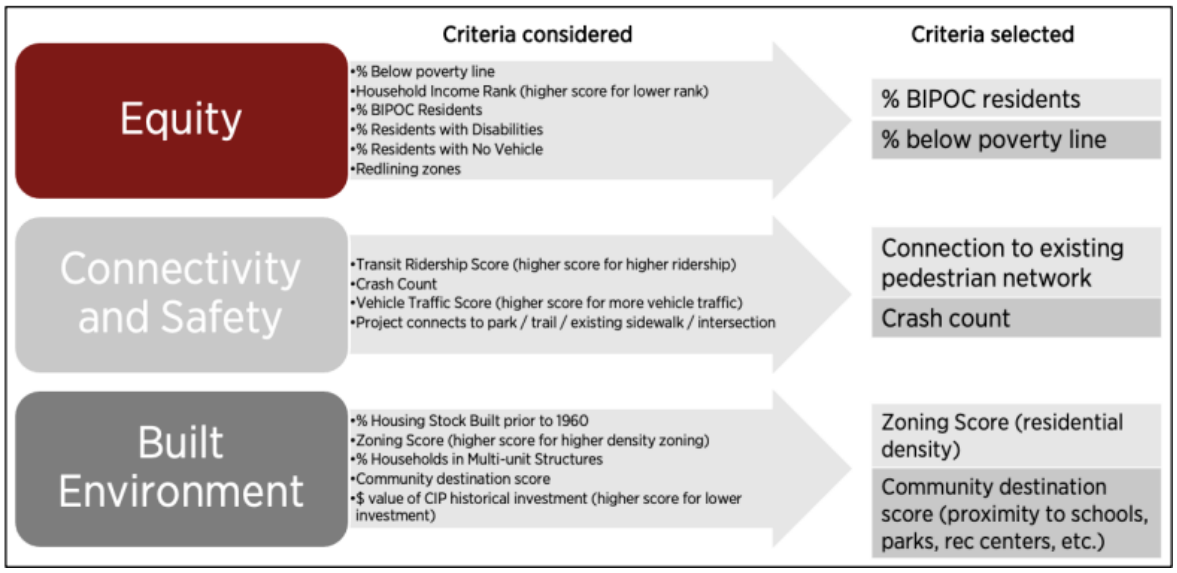
Cities often make decisions such as deciding which sidewalks to repair are based on factors such as volume traffic or number of complaints, but these disadvantaged and under-resourced communities are less likely to make complaints or are not as valued as high-traffic destinations. Repairs for essentials such as sidewalks are crucial for economic opportunities as individuals are able to have access to transportation opportunities, the well-being of individuals as they can connect with their communities, and overall.[249] When we look at Arlington, Virginia, it has a large immigrant community with 80 languages spoken in their public schools. The city increased financial support for their citizens by turning 10% of the country's land into walkable urban places along the underground Metrorail that connects to Washington, D.C. This 10% of land generated 20% of tax revenues 30 years ago, but now they generate more than 50% of tax revenues.[250] Additionally, having walkable cities increases social interaction. Social interaction has been studied for 60 years and consistently correlates with better health.[251] In 2023, 250 pedestrians were killed on North Carolina roads. Sidewalks reduce crashes involving people

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[247]"Harvard Chan C-CHANGE Launches Project to Increase Climate Resilience at Community Health Clinics in Four States | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health."
[248]"What We Do | Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health." 2024. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. HSPH. July 17, 2024. https://hsph.harvard.edu/research/climate-health-c-change/about/.
[249] "Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1." https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/asheville_nc_equity_in_captial_construction.pdf.
[250]Lisa Chamberlain. "Why Walkable Urban Areas Are Efficient Economic Areas in the US." World Economic Forum, Mar. 2023, www.weforum.org/stories/2023/03/why-walkable-urban-areas-are-america-s-efficient-economic-engines/.
[251] Robert Steuteville. "How Walkable Places Lead to Healthier People." CNU, 5 Dec. 2024, www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2024/12/05/how-walkable-places-lead-healthier-people.

walking along roadways by 65–89%.[252] There would be an increase in public safety as there would be less pedestrian involved accidents.[253]

The Harvard Kennedy Schools' Government Performance Lab (GPL) is providing pro-bono technical assistance to help the City of Asheville in North Carolina to prioritize sidewalk construction with a focus on equity.[254] Through support from the GPL, the government can focus on making sure that racial and economic equity are balanced. $200,000 are used to spend annually on sidewalk projects, and the GPL has supported the Neighborhood Sidewalks team in identifying the best way to allocate this funding effectively and equitably. The GPL also supported a cross-agency team of City staff in identifying three major components on which sidewalk projects to prioritize and invest, focusing on equity, connectivity and safety, and the built environment.[255]



[252]"Pedestrian Safety - Complete Streets - NC Vision Zero." NC Vision Zero, 4 Mar. 2025, ncvisionzero.org/safety-focus-areas/pedestrians/.
[253]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1." https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/asheville_nc_equity_in_captial_construction.pdf.
[254]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1."
[255]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1."

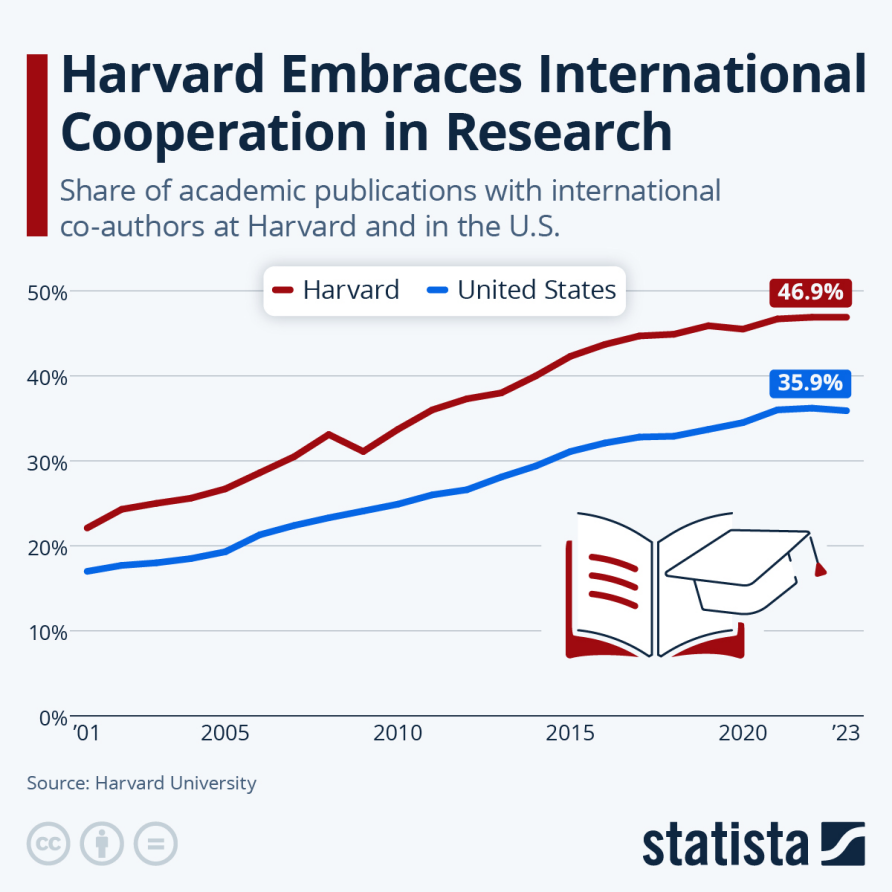
Criteria Considered for Prioritizing Sidewalk Construction [256]

It is still early in Harvard GPL's work in launching the sidewalk prioritization construction framework, but Asheville has witnessed impactful results. Asheville has taken action to revamp and build sidewalks in low-income communities of color, and this prioritization framework will continue this pattern.[257] With these improvements, it allows for individuals to gain access to community resources and have less accidents during transportation. Additionally, this one simple equity-focused prioritization framework results in a chain-effect, allowing this framework to be applied to other issues across the city. For the first time, Asheville has explicitly included equity in deciding how to allocate funding for capital projects, due to Harvard GPL's work.[258] Other departments have been inspired to integrate equity into their decision-making processes, resulting in benefits such as deciding where to install public WiFi stations and create remote learning centers for students during the pandemic.[259] Taking the first step to identify how we can equally support our communities can lead to higher-quality infrastructure in the long-run. Due to this pro-bono work, Asheville has seen improvements in infrastructure, and will continue to see them in future years to come.

Harvard relies on 7,000 students from more than 140 countries to its campuses, which is more than 25% of student enrollment in the 2024-25 academic year. If we were to include all scholars and researchers, the international population at Harvard exceeds 10,000.[260] International students contribute a significant amount to research as in 2023, over 46% of publications had

[256]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1."
[257]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1."
[258]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1."
[259]"Project Feature Advancing Equity through Capital Construction Projects in Asheville, NC 1."
[260]"By the Numbers: A Look at International Students at Harvard and across the U.S."

international co-authors and will continue to increase.[261] Programs such as Harvard Chan C-CHANGE and the Harvard Government Performance Lab are engaging in active research and have shown impact. Harvard relies on federal funding to conduct research, and $2.7 million in Department of Homeland Security grants and $1 billion in federal funding for health research are at risk.[262] Additionally, Harvard student's visas are threatened to be revoked by the Trump Administration, which can be an issue for Harvard and the overall U.S. economy. $43.8 billion was contributed to the U.S. economy by international students alone.



[261] Felix Richter. "Infographic: Harvard Embraces International Cooperation in Research." Statista Daily Data, Statista, 23 May 2025, www.statista.com/chart/34520/share-of-scientific-publications-with-international-co-authors-at-harvard/.
[262] Harvard University. 2025. "Research Funding." Federal Lawsuits. June 20, 2025. https://www.harvard.edu/federal-lawsuits/research-funding/.

Harvard Research With Publications With International Students and in the U.S.[263]

Harvard Chan C-CHANGE and the Government Performance Lab has supported North Carolina and many other states. These programs are in pilot-programs or early on its implementation. There's significant room for even more growth and impact. These are also only a few of the many research programs and programs that Harvard students are contributing to. Intensive research, study, and perspectives are contributed by all Harvard students, both domestic and international. Additionally, with the potential funding cuts for Harvard and other universities, programs like these won't be effectively sustained.

Harvard has shown commitment in implementing community programs and impact through the research conducted by the Harvard community. Impactful programs implemented by Harvard require funding and diverse perspectives and minds. International students are part of the Harvard community, and are contributing to the impactful research and community programs. Harvard relies on international student contribution and federal funding to continue the work of supporting communities who need our support the most.

[263] Felix Richter. "Infographic: Harvard Embraces International Cooperation in Research." Statista Daily Data, Statista, 23 May 2025, www.statista.com/chart/34520/share-of-scientific-publications-with-international-co-authors-at-harvard/.

Ohio

Ohio has emerged as a critical focal point for multiple Harvard-affiliated public service initiatives, particularly in the domains of child and family well-being, maternal health, rural education, and cross-cultural clinical training. These programs, rooted in data-driven policy design and community collaboration, reflect Harvard's long-standing commitment to using research for social betterment. More significantly, these efforts reveal the indirect yet important role of international student talent in strengthening domestic social infrastructure. Through five interrelated case studies this brief explores how Harvard-based initiatives are shaping policy in Ohio. In each case, these programs are enhanced by, or directly benefit from the contributions of international students, alumni, or scholars whose transnational knowledge informs local implementation.

In 2022, Harvard Kennedy School's Government Performance Lab (GPL) selected Cuyahoga County as a recipient of its Child and Family Well-Being Accelerator: a nationwide initiative designed to assist public systems in improving outcomes for children and families at risk of entering foster care. Cuyahoga County, which includes Cleveland, has one of the highest rates of child poverty in Ohio, with approximately 60% of children living below the federal poverty threshold.[264] The GPL's model supports agencies in creating referral systems and inter-agency coordination mechanisms that identify and support vulnerable families earlier in the intervention pipeline. Technical assistance provided through the Accelerator allowed county agencies to adopt real-time tracking systems for social services, introduce data dashboards to

[264] "Projects | The Center on Poverty and Community Development," accessed July 30, 2025, https://case.edu/socialwork/povertycenter/data-systems/child-data-system/projects.

monitor family stability metrics, and pilot kinship care placement policies to minimize child displacement.[265]

Another significant Harvard-rooted intervention in Ohio is TeamBirth, a maternity care model developed by Ariadne Labs: a joint center of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital. TeamBirth aims to improve communication between clinicians and expectant mothers, promoting shared decision-making to enhance safety and patient experience during childbirth. The model was introduced at Cleveland Clinic's Akron General Hospital in 2022 and has since expanded to labour and delivery units at main campus, Hillcrest, and Fairview hospital.[266] In a pilot trial at four U.S. hospitals, over 90% of clinicians said they recommended TeamBirth for use in other labour and delivery units. Additionally, 97% of patients reported that the care team understood their birth preferences.[267] At New Jersey sites, "Black women who were cared for through TeamBirth were 35% more likely to report feeling empowered compared to those who were not involved in the program."[268] This highlights the model's potential efficacy in addressing racial inequities in maternal experience.

In 2019, Harvard University's Center for Education Policy Research selected 30 rural school districts in Ohio to join a federally funded National Center for Rural Education Research Network. Expanding on the Proving Ground model, this initiative works on reducing absenteeism and improving college and career readiness. It is supported by a $10 million federal grant, providing districts with structured support in data analysis and rapid-cycle testing of

[265] "Projects | The Center on Poverty and Community Development."
[266] "Cleveland Clinic Expands TeamBirth Model to More Sites," Cleveland Clinic, accessed July 30, 2025, https://newsroom.clevelandclinic.org/2024/07/01/cleveland-clinic-expands-teambirth-model-to-additional-labor-and-delivery-sites-to-improve-care-address-health-disparities.
[267] "TEAMBIRTH," *Ariadne Labs* (blog), accessed July 30, 2025, https://www.ariadnelabs.org/delivery-decisions-initiative/teambirth/.
[268] By, "Improving Maternity Care through TeamBirth | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health," September 19, 2024, https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/improving-maternity-care-through-teambirth/.

reforms.[269] This partnership exemplified how Harvard-affiliated evidence-based frameworks can directly support local education ecosystems, with the potential to produce measurable gains in student outcomes.

In June 2019, OhioGuidestone's early childhood intervention model, Joyful Together, was selected to participate in Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child Innovation in Action Workshop.[270] Building on this, in January 2020, the Joyful Together ECE (Early Care & Education) iteration was officially designated as a "Frontier of Innovation" by Harvard's Center on the Developing Child, affirming that the program aligned with cutting-edge science on neurodevelopment.[271] During spring of 2020, OhioGuidestone piloted Joyful Together ECE in five early care and education centers in Cuyahoga County, serving infants through pre-kindergarten. The program expanded to eight counties across Ohio: Lorain, Summit, Mahoning, Medina, Stark, Tuscarawas, Erie, and Cuyahoga.[272]

While Harvard's partnerships in Ohio, such as the Child & Family Well-Being Accelerator in Cuyahoga County, are formally established, measurable outcomes have not yet been made public. Much of the existing documentation centers on program design and early implementation. To fully evaluate their impact, future reporting should include metrics such as reductions in foster care entries, increases in kinship placements, caregiver satisfaction rates, and long-term child development outcomes. Having access to these data points would not only

[269] Nick Evans, "Ohio Partners With Harvard On Rural Schools Initiative," WOSU Public Media, February 7, 2019, https://www.wosu.org/news/2019-02-07/ohio-partners-with-harvard-on-rural-schools-initiative.
[270] "Joyful Together© Goes To Harvard | OhioGuidestone," July 16, 2019, https://ohioguidestone.org/joyful-together-goes-to-harvard/.
[271] "Breaking News: Joyful Together ECE Named 'Frontier of Innovation' by Harvard University | The Institute," accessed July 30, 2025, https://institute.ohioguidestone.org/joyful-frontier-of-innovation
[272] "OhioGuidestone's Institute Of Family And Community Impact Continues Spreading Joy With Help From Harvard University | OhioGuidestone," April 20, 2020, https://ohioguidestone.org/ohioguidestones-institute-of-family-and-community-impact-continues-spreading-joy-with-help-from-harvard-university

strengthen public trust but also allow policymakers and researchers to replicate successful elements in other regions.

Pennsylvania

Harvard University's institutional impact and influence well-beyond surpasses its Cambridge campus, shaping public-sector problem solving across the nation. Pennsylvania, a key laboratory for Harvard-led technical assistance, has been especially aided by Harvard-led initiatives—notably, the Government Performance Lab's Pay-for-Success (PFS) project, the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) support in Scranton, and the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative in Harrisburg. All represent targeted state interventions that not only administer exercises but build scalable governance capacity that, in turn, affects the well-being of the state and the country. Essentially, international students have been central to their success. This report evaluates Harvard's Pennsylvania-specific public-sector initiatives and emphasizes how international students are indispensable to their design, operation, and impact.

Harvard Kennedy School's Social Impact Bond (SIB) Lab, supported by the Government Performance Lab (GPL), selected Pennsylvania in 2015 as one of five states to receive PFS technical assistance through a federal Social Innovation Fund award.[273] Harvard dispatched a Government Innovation Fellow to collaborate with state officials on structuring outcome-based contracts in child welfare and public safety.[274] International students at HKS frequently serve in GPL fellowships, participating in field work, constructing evaluation frameworks, and modeling provider performance. Moreover, their comparative welfare policy knowledge—rooted in experience from other national systems—infuses Pennsylvania's model with global benchmarks. By 2024, international students composed 59% of the student body at Harvard Kennedy School,

[273] Corporation for National and Community Service and Harvard University select Pennsylvania for "Pay for Success" technical assistance award, PR Newswire, March 11, 2015.
[274] Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab, "Pennsylvania selected for PFS technical assistance," GPL project list.

underlining the scale that ensures when PFS, PDIA, or Bloomberg-Harvard initiatives are staffed by HKS fellows, international students inherently shape policy frameworks, evaluation metrics, and comparative benchmarking—making their contribution both immense and indispensable given their large numbers and engagement in these programs.[275]

In 2019, Harvard's Center for International Development introduced the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation method to Scranton's administration to address chronic financial instability. Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) is a methodology rooted in international development that encourages local actors to identify governance challenges and test adaptive solutions. The Scranton PDIA initiative focused on municipal debt reduction and procurement reform. Notably, 65% of student research assistants and policy designers affiliated with the project were international, contributing insights from more than 25 national governance systems.[276] These contributions reflect a form of reverse policy transfer, specifically from developing-world experience to domestic U.S. contexts. Harvard's mobilization of international student expertise made PDIA more context-sensitive, directly shaping Scranton's diagnostic methods and implementation strategies.

In 2022, mayors from three Pennsylvania cities—Allentown, Erie, and Pittsburgh—joined the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. The initiative has trained more than 200 mayors from over 25 countries since its launch in 2017, including a growing network within Pennsylvania.[277] According to Bloomberg Philanthropies, nearly 90% of mayors in the program

[275] Nicholas Ramirez, "Harvard Kennedy School Sees Fifth Consecutive Year of Growth in International Students," *The Harvard Crimson*, November 1, 2024, https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2024/11/1/hks-diversity-report-2024/.
[276] Center for International Development. "PDIA in Scranton, Pennsylvania." Harvard University, Building State Capability Blog, 2020. https://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/problem-driven-iterative-adaptation-pdia-case-scranton-pennsylvania.
[277] Alexa Mencia, "3 Pennsylvania Mayors Go Back to School with Bloomberg Harvard Program," *Axios Philadelphia*, July 27, 2022. https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2022/07/27/pa-mayors-harvard-city-leadership-program.

demonstrate measurable improvements in leadership outcomes. International students, including international graduate students, play a behind-the-scenes role in supporting these cities during and after their participation in a nine-month track focused on urban governance. For example, in the case of Allentown, Mayor Matt Tuerk was supported by a network of Bloomberg-Harvard fellows[278] These fellows assisted with urban diagnostics, fiscal modeling, and stakeholder engagement, and as of 2024, international students composed the majority of Bloomberg fellows supporting the initiative's global city partnerships.[279] Their experiences in international city planning and urban infrastructure helped shape the practical implementation of executive education in U.S. city halls.

The Harris Family Fund at Harvard Business School supports MBA students pursuing public impact and civic leadership. Projects funded by the Harris Fund have included public-private partnership models, municipal bond restructuring, and small business development—areas directly applicable to Pennsylvania's economic revitalization needs. In 2021–2022, over 30% of Harris Fund grantees were international MBA candidates.[280] Their participation challenges the misconception that public-sector reform is the exclusive domain of U.S. citizens. By funding international students to lead civic innovation, the Harris Fund broadens Harvard's impact portfolio and democratizes access to U.S. policy labs. These fellows' expertise in development finance and market innovation improves the reach and sophistication of civic interventions.

[278] Alexa Mencia, "3 Pennsylvania Mayors Go Back to School with Bloomberg Harvard Program," *Axios Philadelphia*, July 27, 2022.
[279] Bloomberg Center for Cities. "Annual Impact Report 2023." Harvard University. https://www.cityleadership.harvard.edu/impact-report-2023
[280] Harvard Business School. *Facts and Figures: Harris Family Fund*. HBS Public Leadership Programs. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2024

Across these four initiatives, Harvard's impact in Pennsylvania depends heavily on the global perspective of its international students, who provide not only quantitative and technical skills but also unique contextual understanding from outside U.S. borders. They design and implement programs, serve in fellowships, and produce research that guides long-term city planning and state reform. Without their presence, Harvard's reach into U.S. cities would be narrower and its comparative value diminished, weakening the university, American innovation and progress, states like Pennsylvania, and the country as a whole. The reciprocal nature of their contribution—benefiting both U.S. cities and international capacity—demonstrates why preserving access to international students is strategically vital.

Texas

Harvard's influence in Texas is tangibly seen through high-profile startups, collaborative workforce development initiatives, and business mentorship programs, many of which highlight the value of international student contributions.

Harvard's startup ecosystem has produced incredible gains for the Texas economy. One prominent example is that of Colossal Biosciences, co-founded in 2021 by Harvard's Dr. George Church.[281] The company is headquartered in Dallas, and in early 2025, it became Texas's first "decacorn" (a private company valued at over $10 billion).[282] The company's primary mission is "de-extinction:" restoring extinct species, such as the woolly mammoth, thylacine, and dodo, by using advanced genomics.[283] Beyond de-extinction, Colossal's innovations are driving advances in areas like agriculture and human health, creating a ripple effect in related Texas industries. The startup has secured $435 million in total funding, which it raised from prominent investors both in Texas and worldwide.[284] It employs over 170 scientists worldwide, with Dallas as its primary scientific base, and is currently expanding its 45,000-square-foot laboratory facilities.[285]

South Texas College (STC) is one of four US community colleges, and the only Texas institution, partnering with Harvard's Project on Workforce.[286] This collaboration was designed

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[281] Carl Zimmer, A new company with a wild mission: Bring back the woolly mammoth, September 13, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/13/science/colossal-woolly-mammoth-DNA.html.
[282] Innovates, Dallas, and Quincy Preston. "Dallas' Colossal Biosciences Becomes Texas' First Decacorn, Securing $10.2B Valuation with Series c Funding." Dallas Innovates, January 15, 2025. https://dallasinnovates.com/dallas-colossal-biosciences-becomes-texas-first-decacorn-securing-10-2b-valuation-with-series-c-funding/.
[283] colossal.com. "Reawakening the Lost Wilds of Earth," n.d. https://colossal.com.
[284] O'Grady, Erin. "Dallas' Colossal Biosciences Becomes Texas' First Decacorn, Securing $10.2B Valuation with Series c Funding - Montgomery Street Partners." Montgomery Street Partners, January 15, 2025. https://montgomerystreetpartners.com/news/dallas-colossal-biosciences-becomes-texas-first-decacorn-securing-10-2b-valuation-with-series-c-funding/.
[285] Egan, John. "Colossal Biosciences Becomes Texas' First Decacorn Startup." InnovationMap, January 20, 2025. https://houston.innovationmap.com/colossal-biosciences-decacorn-2670890366.html.
[286] Zapata, Omar. "Harvard University Partners with South Texas College for Workforce Research." MyRGV.com, August 13, 2024. https://myrgv.com/publications/the-monitor/2024/08/12/harvard-university-partners-with-south-texas-college-for-workforce-research/.

to create new pathways for student economic mobility by improving how colleges use technology and labor market data.[287] To make this project a reality, nearly 150 interviews and focus groups across four regions (including STC) informed researchers of the best practices for workforce-aligned training and industry partnerships.

STC is known to be a national innovator in work-study apprenticeships. In fact, it led the nation's first registered nursing apprenticeship program.[288] STC students, many of whom are international students, directly benefit from the tools developed with Harvard. These resources help students enroll in programs tied to high-growth sectors of the regional Texas economy. Following the partnership, STC received a $33,000 stipend to implement its own workforce innovation projects.

Harvard Business School's FIELD (Field Immersion Experiences for Leadership Development) Program annually deploys over 1,000 first-year MBA students, including international students, for hands-on week-long projects in more than 15 US locations, including multiple cities in Texas.[289] The program splits students into teams of six, which then partner with local businesses to solve real-world problems, exposing Texas companies to new business perspectives.[290] These initiatives often focus on equity, workforce skill gaps, and international best practices, and they are facilitated by program faculty and student participants from over 70 countries. Harvard's strong support for international student FIELD participants ensures that

[287] STC, Harvard University collaborate to increase regional economic mobility . "STC, Harvard University Collaborate to Increase Regional Economic Mobility." South Texas College, August 29, 2024. https://news.southtexascollege.edu/stc-harvard-university-collaborate-to-increase-regional-economic-mobility/.
[288] www.southtexascollege.edu. "South Texas College," n.d. https://www.southtexascollege.edu.
[289] Harvard Business School. "Curriculum | MBA," 2023. https://www.hbs.edu/mba/academic-experience/curriculum.
[290] Harvard Business School. "MBA Voices Blog | MBA," 2023. https://www.hbs.edu/mba/blog.

Texas businesses collaborating with the program gain access to cutting-edge ideas from around the world.[291]

Texas's status as a leader in biotech, workforce development, and business education is significantly enhanced by Harvard initiatives that include international students. The presence of Harvard-trained, international specialists in Texan companies and colleges supports the state's talent. Harvard's international student programs both improve tangible outcomes for Texas, like company valuations and job placements, and bring global cultural diversity and new models for higher education and industry partnership to Texas.

[291] Harvard Business School. "The Field Method | MBA," 2023. https://www.hbs.edu/mba/academic-experience/the-field-method.

Wisconsin

With the help of international students, Harvard has made meaningful contributions to Wisconsin through research, policy engagement, and direct community partnerships. In the two case studies of tackling the urgent challenge of PFAS contamination and helping local businesses through Harvard Business School's FIELD Immersion Program, it is clear that Harvard has played a vital role in supporting Wisconsin's well-being.

Harvard's contributions to Wisconsin's public health have been particularly impactful in addressing PFAS contamination, an urgent environmental health issue in the state. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), often called "forever chemicals," have polluted water and soil in parts of Wisconsin (from Marinette's firefighter training sites to municipal wells) and pose risks such as cancer, immune system suppression, and developmental problems.[292] Researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, many of them international students like researcher Xindi Hu, have been at the forefront of PFAS research, producing findings that informed Wisconsin's policy response and community actions in recent years.[293] For instance, in May 2023, Harvard Chan School scientists led a major study on PFAS in U.S. drinking water that included extensive data from Wisconsin.[294] Analyzing over 44,000 water samples from 18 states (including Wisconsin) between 2016 and 2022, the researchers uncovered the first statistically robust evidence of sociodemographic disparities in PFAS exposure.[295] The

[292] AP News. "Study: Toxic PFAS Chemical Plume Detected in Green Bay." January 3, 2023. https://apnews.com/article/green-bay-michigan-wisconsin-lake-marinette-428b54cab038e6d41da77b3981fa3170.
[293] Hu, Xindi C., David Q. Andrews, Andrew B. Lindstrom, et al. "Detection of Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs) in U.S. Drinking Water Linked to Industrial Sites, Military Fire Training Areas, and Wastewater Treatment Plants." *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* 3, no. 10 (2016): 344–50. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.estlett.6b00260.
[294] Liddie, Jahred M., Laurel A. Schaider, and Elsie M. Sunderland. "Sociodemographic Factors Are Associated with the Abundance of PFAS Sources and Detection in U.S. Community Water Systems." *Environmental Science & Technology* 57, no. 21 (2023): 7902–12. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.2c07255.
[295] Ibid.

study found that community water systems serving higher proportions of Black and Hispanic residents are significantly more likely to have PFAS contamination above safe levels. This Harvard-led research, conducted in partnership with Silent Spring Institute, was published in a top peer-reviewed journal and garnered national attention, and it notably coincided with the U.S. EPA's proposal of the first-ever national drinking water standards for PFAS in 2023.[296]

The U.S. EPA's updated advisory level of 4 parts per trillion (from 70 ppt) for PFOA/PFOS prompted Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources to begin aligning state standards accordingly.[297] Further, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle also came together in 2023 to propose a $125 million investment to help Wisconsin communities remediate PFAS pollution.[298] This unprecedented funding proposal, which has seen bipartisan support, demonstrates the sense of urgency about PFAS that was orchestrated by Harvard's academic research. Harvard's contributions have been frequently cited in media and policy discussions, reinforcing that no amount of PFAS is truly safe, which in turn gave momentum to Wisconsin's aggressive actions. In fact, the Air National Guard base in Madison, Wisconsin (Truax Field) became the first U.S. Air Force installation to completely eliminate PFAS-based firefighting foam in its hangar systems, a testament to the impact of Harvard's research.[299]

Harvard Business School's FIELD Immersion program is a hands-on course that places first-year MBA students in cities across the country to work with local organizations on real-

[296] Tech, M. T. "Study: Communities of Color Exposed to More 'Forever Chemicals.'" *Consumer Notice, LLC*, June 29, 2023. https://www.consumernotice.org/news/communities-of-color-higher-risk-pfas/.
[297] Wisconsin DNR. "DNR, DHS Respond To EPA's Announcement Of Maximum Contaminant Levels For PFAS In Drinking Water." https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/91041.
[298] "Wisconsin Lawmakers to Vote on Spending Bill to Address PFAS Water Contamination." https://undergroundinfrastructure.com/news/2023/october/wisconsin-lawmakers-to-vote-on-spending-bill-to-address-pfas-water-contamination.
[299] WWIS Radio. "Wisconsin National Guard's Truax Field – 1st to Eliminate Facility-Based Foam." April 20, 2023. https://wwisradio.com/wisconsin-national-guards-truax-field-1st-to-eliminate-facility-based-foam/.

world business and social challenges. HBS takes a distinctly global approach to education, reflected in its diverse student body, with 39% of MBA students being international.[300]

In 2022, HBS launched a domestic version of the program, where Wisconsin played a key role as one of 15 host locations.[301] As part of FIELD, students are embedded with businesses and nonprofits across the state, contributing fresh perspectives on issues ranging from innovation to economic development. One Wisconsin project partner was the 3rd St. Market Hall in downtown Milwaukee. In spring 2022, an HBS FIELD student team worked with this new downtown food hall, conducting field research, interviewing consumers, and pitching data-informed ideas to enhance the food hall's product, service, and customer experience, all free of charge.[302]

Harvard's academic expertise and experiential learning programs have translated into real-world impact for Wisconsin communities. Whether through public health research driving environmental policy or student teams supporting local economic development, Harvard's engagement with Wisconsin continues to foster progress and innovation across the state, none of which would've been possible without the contribution of international students and their influence.

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[300] "MBA Experience - Global - Harvard Business School." https://www.hbs.edu/global/mba-experience/Pages/default.aspx.

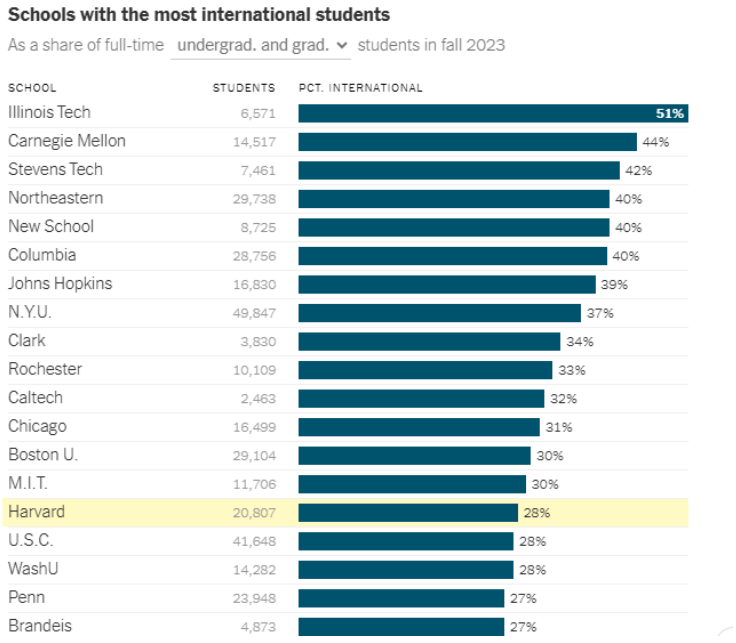
[301] Harvard Business School. "New FIELD Immersion Course Launches with a Domestic Focus." March 23, 2022. https://www.hbs.edu/news/articles/Pages/field-immersion-course.aspx.

[302] "3rd St. Market Hall Selected As Field Immersion Project Partner For Harvard Business School." *Urban Milwaukee*, May 16, 2022. https://urbanmilwaukee.com/pressrelease/3rd-st-market-hall-selected-as-field-immersion-project-partner-for-harvard-business-school/.

Case Studies

Columbia University

International students have played a crucial role in supporting the U.S. economy and college campuses overall. However, the Trump administration has threatened Harvard with enrolling international students, which would remove more than a quarter of the university's student body.[303] After this announcement, this move was frozen by a federal judge within 24 hours. This also highlights the risk of other higher education institutions, such as Columbia and NYU, which have even larger numbers of international students than Harvard. [304]



Schools With the Most International Students.[305]

[303] Emily Badger and Aatish Bhatia, Asmaa Elkeurti, Steven Rich, and Ethan Singer. "These Are the U.S. Universities Most Dependent on International Students." The New York Times, May 24, 2025. https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/23/upshot/harvard-trump-international-students.html.
[304] These Are the U.S. Universities Most Dependent on International Students."
[305] These Are the U.S. Universities Most Dependent on International Students."

Columbia University has the third-largest international student population of any U.S. university. The university has 28,738 international students, which makes up 40% of the student body as of fall 2023. The international student community is diverse, as over 100 countries are represented and 800 languages are spoken at Columbia.[306] Columbia students can pay over $70,000 in tuition, and students from overseas studying at the school translate to significant funding, such as $903.1 million for the university. [307]

During fall 2024, Columbia enrolled 13,745 international students, and Columbia is one of the several competitive research universities that had to develop strategies for ensuring students' safety. Schools like Harvard and MIT have hosted webinars to guide and warn international students overseas on activities such as overseas travel and engaging in pro-Palestinian speech. However, there are some legal concerns, as there are international students who got their visas revoked despite not being protesters.[308] The Trump administration revoked visas or deleted records from a government database for more than 1,600 international students as of May 7.[309] Many of these revocations have been reversed due to federal judges' restraining orders, but these actions taking place in the first place show the dangers for free speech and freedom of education for our universities.

International students studying in U.S. universities tend to contribute to STEM and innovation, which expands U.S. globalization. The most popular degrees are Statistics (1,805 students), Liberal Arts General Studies (1,676 students), and Business Administration and

[306] Columbia.edu. "International Community | Columbia Undergraduate Admissions," 2025. https://undergrad.admissions.columbia.edu/life/community/belonging/international.
[307] Carballo, Rebecca, Madina Touré, and Amanda Friedman. "Trump's Immigration Stance Endangers One of the Biggest Revenue Streams for Columbia University." POLITICO. Politico, May 17, 2025. https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/17/columbia-international-students-threatened-trump-policies-00352712.
[308] "Trump's Immigration Stance Endangers One of the Biggest Revenue Streams for Columbia University."
[309] "Trump's Immigration Stance Endangers One of the Biggest Revenue Streams for Columbia University."

Management (1,304 students).[310] These are fields that can develop our country further, and having more perspectives within these fields can expand our contributions.

There have been increases in international students at the Ivy League in both graduate and undergraduate levels of education, especially in the graduate level. Harvard's undergraduate foreign population increased by around 100 students from 2013 to 2023, and graduate students increased by nearly 2,000.[311] The Trump administration wishes to cap Harvard's foreign students at about 15%. [312] The attempt to block international students can damage these universities' mission and reputation. Universities that do not have students from other backgrounds and experiences are at a competitive advantage.

The threat of revoking visas for international students can lead to not only damage to the U.S. economy, but also to the communities on and around college campuses. International students at colleges provide great value and provide great financial support to prestigious universities such as Columbia and Harvard. Specifically at Columbia, international students contributed $903.1 million to the school, and on a larger scale, 1.1 million international students at U.S. colleges have contributed $43.8 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2023-2024 academic year.[313] Without international students on U.S. campuses, the future of education and our economy could be at risk.

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[310] Collegefactual. "Columbia University in the City of New York International Students& Information on International Students by Country at Columbia." College Factual, May 2013. https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/columbia-university-in-the-city-of-new-york/student-life/international/.

[311] Collin Binkley, "International Student Enrollment Becomes a Liability for Ivy League Colleges." AP News, June 5, 2025. https://apnews.com/article/international-students-harvard-columbia-ivy-league-cb330dbf66d4b035e66ea160e4ede856.

[312] "International Student Enrollment Becomes a Liability for Ivy League Colleges."

[313] NAFSA. "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy." NAFSA, November 18, 2024. https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.

The government's actions to revoke visas for international students can significantly impact the way U.S. colleges and universities navigate their finances, which contributes to the quality of education of international and domestic students. International students contribute to our economy and classrooms. Prestigious universities such as Columbia and Harvard are being attacked by the Trump Administration, and these universities have a high international student population, and it is important to show support and provide resources to ensure international students can thrive and continue to support not only their own education but also the progression of the country.

Louisiana State University

The impact and presence of international students on well-known universities such as Harvard or Columbia University is often called to attention. However, with 1.1 billion international students across various colleges and universities in the United States, they have an increasingly prominent role on campuses and a notable impact on many different kinds of colleges' economies. Schools from smaller, private liberal arts colleges to larger state-funded universities all host foreign students. For example, Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge, a large public flagship in the south, and Harvard University, a globally renowned private institution, both schools have international students as learners, but play different roles in international education at each.

Harvard University, located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a private Ivy League school with an endowment of over $50 billion. It enrolls thousands of international students across its graduate and undergraduate programs and is known for drawing applicants from over 150 countries.[314] Harvard sees its international population not just as students, but as future world leaders, collaborators, and donors.

Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge, by contrast, is a public university that must justify spending and revenue more transparently. With around 1,500 international students during the 2008–09 academic year, LSU conducted a detailed study to determine the economic impact of these students on the institution and the surrounding community. This case study

[314] Harvard University Office of Institutional Research & Analytics. Fact Book: Faculty and Staff. Accessed July 18, 2025. https://oira.harvard.edu/factbook/fact-book-faculty-staff

provides a grounded, data-based view of how international students contribute financially to a state university and how their involvement reaches beyond tuition payments.[315]

At LSU, the per-student contribution to the institution appeared negative at first, at around $6,474 annually. This was largely due to the inclusion of institutional support like graduate assistantships and scholarships. But once the study removed these support systems from the equation, the data flipped: international students actually contributed between $226 (undergrads) and $3 (grad students) in net institutional benefit. What's more revealing, though, is what happens outside the university budget. Factoring in living expenses, dependents, and indirect contributions, each international student brought in an estimated $54,888 to the Baton Rouge community. This demonstrates a classic case of: "they may cost us, but they help everyone around us."

At Harvard, such accounting doesn't get publicized in the same detailed way, but the impact is undeniable. Harvard international students pay among the highest tuition rates in the country, and many receive little to no institutional aid, especially at the graduate level. Those who do often bring in their own grants or fellowships. Their economic contribution plays out not only through university channels, but also in the greater Boston economy.[316] In 2024 alone, Harvard alumni (many of them international) contributed over $1.2 billion in donations, much of which supports programs that benefit future students, including those from abroad.

International students at LSU reported receiving hands-on support, including airport pickups, furnished housing help, and even household supplies from the International Hospitality

[315] Michael Funk, International Student Economic Impact Model (ISEIM): A Study of International Student Economic Contributions at LSU-BR (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2011), https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/1300.

[316] Brookings Institution. "International College Students Matter for the Economy." Accessed July 18, 2025. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/international-college-students-matter-for-the-economy

Foundation's "Loan Closet." These grassroots efforts make Baton Rouge feel welcoming, even with limited institutional funds. LSU's focus is on creating comfort for students without large price tags. Harvard takes a more extensive approach with things like advising offices, language support, and research fellowships for international students. Also, a lot of their international graduate students take up positions as teaching assistants or lab researchers, essentially contributing to Harvard's research output while gaining experience and income.[317] Their involvement helps maintain the university's global reputation while boosting economic productivity.

At the national level, the presence of international students plays a significant role in the U.S. economy. NAFSA's 2023–24 data shows that international students added $43.8 billion to the national economy and supported 378,000 jobs. For every three international students, one American job was created or sustained. Massachusetts ranked among the top states in international student contribution, while Louisiana still saw a meaningful $118 million impact.[318] These numbers underscore why universities and local governments invest in international recruitment. Harvard, for example, has publicly warned that visa restrictions or political uncertainty could lead to enrollment declines, risking hundreds of millions in lost revenue and research productivity. The economic value of international students isn't just about what they spend during college but rather the long-term networks, donations, businesses, and research they contribute afterward.

Considering their similarities, Harvard and LSU both have a campus where international students get to involve themselves academically and socially, which undeniably offers benefits to

[317] Harvard Alumni Association. "About the HAA." Accessed July 18, 2025. https://alumni.harvard.edu/community
[318] NAFSA: Association of International Educators. "International Student Economic Value Tool 2023." Accessed July 18, 2025. https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2

the economy. At Harvard, international students blend into a massive ecosystem of global research, private endowment, and elite networks. At LSU, their presence is much more visibly linked to the surrounding economy, the affordability of local housing, and the sustainability of student support services.[319] Ultimately, both institutions make it clear that international students make a difference everywhere. Whether it's funding local grocery stores for the Baton Rouge community or leading world-changing research in Cambridge, their presence is a win for both universities and thus the overall U.S. economy.

Harvard and LSU offer two contrasting, yet complementary, portraits of how international students contribute economically to higher education. LSU's approach is deeply data-driven and locally focused. The ISEIM model provides clear, campus-specific proof that international students strengthen the university's bottom line and inject tens of millions into the local economy. Harvard's model is less about calculation and more about scale. The university's prestige allows it to attract international students who often pay full tuition and contribute to world-class research labs. These students also feed the long-term alumni pipeline, supporting Harvard's billion-dollar endowment and global network. While LSU must show its value to state policymakers, Harvard's economic impact is broadly assumed but just as significant. Together, the two institutions prove that international students are not just campus contributors; they are essential drivers of education, innovation, and regional growth.

International students impact the economies of all kinds of universities, such as LSU and Harvard. At LSU, each international student contributed over $54,000 to the local economy, despite appearing as a cost on the university budget. Harvard's international students, though not analyzed in the same way, brought in an estimated $384 million to the greater Boston area. The

[319] Axios Boston. "International Student Visa Restrictions Could Cost Boston Billions." June 2025. https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-boston

models differ (LSU uses precise survey data, while Harvard reflects broader macroeconomic influence), but both demonstrate that international students are critical economic players. Their value extends far beyond tuition, shaping research, labor markets, and global engagement.

New York University

International students hold an essential demographic in U.S. higher education, arguably the most notable case applies to New York University, which in 2022–2023 hosted the largest number of international students in the U.S. for the 9th consecutive year (21,081 students)—a number that exceeds the entire undergraduate enrollment of many Ivy League schools. Compared to Harvard, nearly 6,793 international students from 147 countries were enrolled in the 2024–25 academic year, constituting 27.2% of Harvard's total student body (over 24,900 students), NYU demonstrates a broader global integration strategy.[320]

The economic impact of NYU's international students on the New York City economy is immense. According to the world's largest and most diverse nonprofit association dedicated to international education, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, international students at NYU only contributed over $758 million to the regional economy in 2022, supporting more than 9,800 jobs.[321] In contrast, Harvard's international students contributed approximately $325 million, supporting around 4,200 jobs in the Greater Boston area.[322] These figures demonstrate that international students are not merely tuition-payers – they are indeed local economic engines supporting the American economy.

NYU maintains degree-granting campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, as well as 15 global academic centers, operationalizing its international student engagement in the meantime. [323]A significant portion of the students at these locations are international and many transition to NYU's main New York campus injecting more "local economic engines" to the U.S.A

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[320] Institute of International Education. *Open Doors Report 2024*. Accessed August 2, 2025. https://opendoorsdata.org

[321]NAFSA: Association of International Educators. "Economic Value Statistics, 2022." Accessed August 2, 2025. https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/economic-value-international-students

[322] Ibid.

[323] New York University. "Global Programs and Sites." Accessed August 2, 2025. https://www.nyu.edu/global.html

exclusively. Harvard, by contrast, does not operate any degree-granting international campuses, signaling a more domestic-facing institutional strategy compared to its fellow peer in accademia which operates a distributed model of global education that positions international students as central, not peripheral.

NYU Tandon School of Engineering released a statistic where it presented that 42% of startups incubated in 2023 were founded and/or co-founded by international students, raising over $140 million in venture capital and creating nearly 500 jobs.[324] International students account for a disproportionate share of entrepreneurial activity. Analysts suggest that an international student friendly environment solidified for NYU during the 2020 visa controversy, when the university independently filed amicus briefs and provided legal aid to over 1,000 students.[325] Harvard participated via institutional coalitions but did not provide university-specific support at the same scale where in contrast NYU's proactive measures reflected a deep institutional commitment to its international student body.

NYU's international students are foundational given that they account for a quarter of enrollment and generate hundreds of millions in economic value for the university. While Harvard benefits from prestige and a strong international reputation, NYU's model integrates international students into the core of its campus identity and local impact and does it, arguably, most successfully in the United States.

NYU leverages its international student population to drive American economic activity and entrepreneurial innovation. International students contribute over $750 million to NYC's economy alone and launch major startup ventures in the city and across the country. Harvard

[324] NYU Tandon School of Engineering, *NYU Future Labs Impact Report 2023* (Brooklyn, NY: NYU), https://engineering.nyu.edu/research-innovation/future-labs.
[325] New York University News, "NYU Responds to Federal Immigration Policy Changes," July 2020, https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2020/july/international-students.html.

remains centrally and domestically focused compared to NYU, but NYU demonstrates the broader institutional value and scalability of embracing global students at scale.

Oregon State University

Oregon State University (OSU) is a public land-grant university located in Corvallis, Oregon in the western United States.[326] OSU is one of the most decorated schools within Oregon, boasting a wide variety of degree programs, online programs, scientific research, campuses, and experiment stations.[327] OSU has over 32,000 undergraduate students as of 2025, with an additional 5,800 graduate students. Students attend OSU from all 50 states in the United States, as well as 102 countries.[328] OSU is one of two universities in the state of Oregon to achieve the R1 research designation, with the second university being the University of Oregon. The research expenditure of OSU is considerable, spending $367 million in 2023.[329] OSU is an excellent, yet accessible place to conduct research in the western United States, even providing a small, modular nuclear reactor for students to experiment with.[330]

Compared to most public universities, OSU has a particularly large international student population. In the fall of 2024, OSU enrolled 2,197 international students spanning 102 countries.[331] This comprises 8.8% of the total student body. Around 900 students – almost half the total international population – are enrolled in graduate level programs such as PhDs, masters programs, business school, or any of the 100+ graduate programs offered at OSU.[332] The

[326] "'R1' Research Institutions," accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/institution_classifications/r1.
[327] "About | Oregon State University," accessed July 22, 2025, https://oregonstate.edu/about.
[328] Ibid.
[329] "Research Annual Report 2023 | Division of Research and Innovation | Oregon State University," December 3, 2023, https://research.oregonstate.edu/research-annual-report-2023.
[330] "Nuclear Engineering | College of Engineering | Oregon State University," August 8, 2022, https://engineering.oregonstate.edu/academics/programs/nuclear-engineering?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20772868776&gbraid=0AAAAAqhEjTh2vHpK_HyH_aTi-k_egD-Fu.
[331] "Parents and Families | Undergraduate Admissions | Oregon State University," accessed July 22, 2025, https://admissions.oregonstate.edu/parents-and-families.
[332] "International Admissions | Undergraduate Admissions | Oregon State University," September 1, 2023, https://admissions.oregonstate.edu/international.

international student population at OSU, like many other universities around the country, has generally been expanding over the past several decades, although there's been a recent drop in attendance. In 2014, there were 3,466 international students attending OSU, a much larger figure than the 2,197 currently enrolled. This constitutes a 37% decrease in the international population. According to an executive summary, much of this loss was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, although losses have been accrued from travel bans during the first Trump administration as well as difficulties in acquiring student visas and increasing competitiveness among universities for international talent.

Like OSU, Harvard boasts a large and burgeoning international student population. In the 2023-2024 academic year, international students made up 27.2% of the total student population.[333] As is common among American universities, the percentage of international students is higher among graduate programs than undergraduate programs. However, unlike OSU, the percentage of international students has not decreased within the past 10 years. In 2014, 22.5% of Harvard's enrolled students came from outside the United States.[334] That percentage has continued to grow year over year. Notably, Harvard's international population did not decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the percentage of international students was 23.8%. During the 2019-2020 academic year, that percentage rose to 24.1%.[335] Over the next year, growth stalled, keeping the proportion of students at 24.1%.[336] After the pandemic ended, growth continued as it had during before the pandemic.

[333] "Charted: International Students at Harvard (2006–2024)," accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.visualcapitalist.com/charted-international-students-at-harvard-2006-2024/#google_vignette\.
[334] International Students at Harvard | One Harvard, One World, n.d., accessed July 22, 2025, https://oneworld.worldwide.harvard.edu/international-students-at-harvard/.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.

Harvard's dodge of the international enrollment slump that plagued other universities during the pandemic is remarkable. One reason for this is that Harvard's particularly outstanding research and academic offerings allows it to successfully compete with other American universities, securing invaluable international talent in spite of global trends in student enrollment.[337] Another reason is that since Harvard is a private university, it is shielded from fiscal state and federal governments. During the pandemic, the increased load on the healthcare sector as well as depreciated demand exasperated fiscal woes of state governments.[338] For instance, California's UC system found itself lacking the sufficient funds to support students and faculty during the pandemic even in spite of federal subsidies through the CARE Act.[339]

In 2008, OSU identified the rising importance of attracting international students. Around this time, universities began recruiting students from outside the United States and the federal government began to adopt policies to encourage further intellectual transfer.[340] OSU's response to the changing strategy was to launch INTO OSU, an initiative that aims "to increase the number of and percentage ratio of international students at OSU and to improve the overall level of service that OSU provides for them."[341] INTO OSU provides marketing and recruitment services outside the United States, including a 3 term pathway program called the International Year One (IYO) that allows students to gain OSU credit for a year while they complete English proficiency exams and college preparatory coursework before entering OSU formally as a

[337] "Faculty | Harvard," accessed July 22, 2025, https://college.harvard.edu/academics/faculty.
[338] "Mounting Peril for Public Higher Education During the Coronavirus Pandemic," *Center for American Progress*, June 11, 2020, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/mounting-peril-public-higher-education-coronavirus-pandemic/.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Daniel Costa and Ron Hira, "The Department of Homeland Security's Proposed STEM OPT Extension Fails to Protect Foreign Students and American Workers," Economic Policy Institute, accessed July 22, 2025, https://www.epi.org/blog/the-department-of-homeland-securitys-proposed-stem-opt-extension-fails-to-protect-foreign-students-and-american-workers/.
[341] "INTO OSU | Oregon State University," December 11, 2015, https://intoosu.oregonstate.edu/.

Sophomore. INTO OSU also offers the Academic English Program that is a CEA-accredited course that allows international students to prove proficiency in English, an often necessary component of enrollment at American universities as well as requirement for student visas such as F-1s and occasionally J-1s and M-1s.[342]

[342] How To Prove Your English Language Proficiency For A USA Student Visa. Study in USA. November 3, 2024. https://swecvisaconsultant.com/how-to-prove-your-english-language-proficiency-for-a-usa-student-visa/.

The University of California System

International students contribute significantly to California's economy and to the financial stability of the University of California (UC) system. With 154,000 international students in the state, and approximately 35,000 of them enrolled at UC campuses, this population represents both an educational and economic asset.[343] In the context of the 2025–26 UC budget plan, which includes net funding reductions of about $30 million and increased reliance on tuition revenue, the presence of international students takes on even greater economic and fiscal importance.[344]

Under the 2025–26 UC budget plan, the system receives $10.8 billion in total core funding, where 53% comes from tuition and fee revenue, and 43% comes from the states (the remainder derived from other sources).[345] This budget includes a $272 million ongoing reduction in General Fund support (public funding for UC), offset in part by a projected $241 million increase in student tuition and fee revenue due to higher charges and enrollment growth; the net effect is a $30 million (0.3%) decline in core funding.[346] Given this decline, international students represent a crucial funding stream, and in the 2025–26 school year, the University of California is raising the nonresident supplemental tuition rate by 10% to $37,602.[347] Even though this price hike exceeds inflationary pressures, UC is undertaking this course of action in

[343] Michael Burke and Amy Dipierro, "Concern Grows as Visas Are Terminated for Dozens of International Students at California Colleges," EdSource, April 8, 2025, https://edsource.org/2025/california-student-visas-terminated-trump-administration/729801.
[344] Gabriel Petek, "The 2025-26 Budget: University of California," February 1, 2025, https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2025/4998/University-of-California-022725.pdf.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Gabriel Petek, "The 2025-26 Budget: University of California," February 2025, https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2025/4998/University-of-California-022725.pdf.

consistency with peer institutions like the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia.[348]

With future state budget deficits projected in the coming years and likely cuts to General Fund support, UC's financial stability is increasingly tied to nonresident enrollment—namely, international students who will pay higher tuition and often contribute more to local economies through living expenses. UC knows too well the benefit of international students, for without them, the institution wouldn't be able to stay afloat.

International students at UCLA spent $33.7 million on goods and services in the 2016–2017 academic year, highlighting their direct contribution to the local Los Angeles economy through rent, food, transportation, and discretionary spending.[349] Further, given rising tuition, cost of living, and international enrollment since 2016, this figure is likely a substantial underestimate of current contributions. Additionally, about 93% of UCLA graduates stayed in California following graduation.[350] This is despite the fact that international students make up around 13% of the student population.[351] Crucially, this suggests that international students likely contribute to the state's long-term labor force and tax base even after they complete their education. Hence, these alumni not only continue spending locally, but they also fill workforce shortages, pay taxes, and in many cases, launch businesses that employ others.

While UCLA has not published a recent institution-specific impact figure, UC Davis reports that its international students contribute over $441 million annually to California's

[348] Ibid.
[349] Beacon Economics, *2018 UCLA Economic Impact Report 2018*, n.d., https://www.ucla.edu/pdf/ucla-economic-impact-report-2018.pdf.
[350] Beacon Economics, *2018 UCLA Economic Impact Report 2018*, n.d., https://www.ucla.edu/pdf/ucla-economic-impact-report-2018.pdf.
[351] "Our University's Facts and Figures at a Glance," https://www.ucla.edu/about/facts-and-figures.

economy and support nearly 6,000 jobs, according to NAFSA.[352] Moreover, UC Davis is located in a smaller, less expensive region than Los Angeles; the fact that international students can generate this level of economic activity in a mid-sized college town is telling of what they can produce in bigger urban centers like Los Angeles or San Diego.

Within the current budget landscape, international students play a vital role in maintaining the UC system's financial resilience. From UCLA's demonstrated spending patterns and high graduate retention rates, to UC Davis's $441 million economic impact, international students clearly support both the university and the state economy. As UC faces declining General Fund support and rising fiscal pressure, international students offer both fiscal stability and long-term economic growth.

[352] Thomas John Watts, "UC Davis Economic Impact," January 8, 2021, https://www.ucdavis.edu/about/economic-impact.

The University of California, Berkeley

Over the past few decades, international students have become central to the academic, economic, and cultural life of U.S. universities. Especially in the modern knowledge economy, global talent fuels the success of American higher education. Nowhere is this clearer than at universities like UC Berkeley and Harvard, where international students drive research, launch startups, and sustain the financial stability of universities. Drawing on recent enrollment trends, academic outcomes, and economic contributions, this case study shows how both schools rely on global mobility to maintain their edge in education and innovation.

The scale and structure of international enrollment at UC Berkeley and Harvard reveal two different institutional models that both rely heavily on global students. In 2023-2024, UC Berkeley enrolled 7,835 international students, making up approximately 17.2 percent of its total enrollment.[353] At Harvard, international students comprised an even greater share:, 27 percent of total enrollment across all undergraduate and graduate schools. While the absolute number of international students is comparable between the two universities, the composition varies significantly. Harvard's international population is concentrated in its graduate schools, with roughly 5,000 international students pursuing master's and doctoral degrees, and about 1,700 undergraduates.[354] By contrast, Berkeley's international population is almost evenly split between undergraduate (3,755) and graduate (3,844) students.[355] Exchange students account for an additional 236 students at Berkeley, which does not apply to Harvard's reporting structure. Both universities have shown sustained growth in international enrollment over the last decade,

[353] "Statistics | Berkeley International Office." Accessed July 20, 2025. https://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/about-us/statistics.
[354] "International Students at Harvard | One Harvard, One World. " https://oneworld.worldwide.harvard.edu/international-students-at-harvard/.
[355] "Statistics | Berkeley International Office."

even amid the COVID-19 pandemic and visa policy fluctuations. At Berkeley, international enrollment grew by 13 percent between 2013 and 2023.[356] Harvard's growth has been even steeper, showing a 72 percent increase since 2006.[357] These trends reflect a broader rise in global demand for U.S. higher education and indicate that international students continue to seek American institutions.

International students are a major revenue engine for both institutions, helping to balance operating budgets and injecting hundreds of millions of dollars into their regional economies. At UC Berkeley, non-resident tuition is nearly triple the in-state rate ($51,032 on average for undergraduates; $33,000–85,000 for graduate students), and with 7,835 enrolled international students, that generates an estimated $250 million in annual tuition and fee revenue.[358] Berkeley's global cohort also fuels the wider California economy, adding $575 million in local spending and supporting roughly 5,400 jobs in 2023, the highest state total reported by NAFSA.[359] Harvard's private-tuition model charges the same sticker price to all students ($57,246 on average for undergraduate; $55,000–73,000 for graduate students). Because 27 percent of its 25,000-plus students hold foreign passports, Harvard collects approximately $385 million in international tuition revenue, about ¼ of its $1.43 billion tuition-and-fees line.[360] Harvard's international cohort contributed $383.6 million and supported 3,910 jobs in 2023, placing the Commonwealth third nationally for economic impact from global students.[361]

[356] "Statistics | Berkeley International Office."
[357] "International Students at Harvard | One Harvard, One World. "
[358] "Statistics | Berkeley International Office."
[359] "2023 Economic Value Report For CA | NAFSA." https://www.nafsa.org/isev/reports/state?state=CA&year=2023.
[360] "International Students at Harvard | One Harvard, One World. "
[361] "2023 Economic Value Report For CA | NAFSA."

This deliverable highlights how the international student populations at UC Berkeley and Harvard are foundational to each university's academic strength and financial model. Both schools rely on global students to sustain tuition revenue, elevate research output, and maintain a competitive edge in the global education market. Although their institutional structures differ (public vs. private), the incentives to recruit and retain international students are very similar. As policymakers consider visa policy, funding formulas, and higher education priorities, these two cases show that international students are not only learners but essential contributors to innovation and economic vitality.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

International students contribute billions annually to the U.S. economy through tuition, living expenses, and research output, while strengthening the global reach of American universities. At the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), a public flagship, they make up nearly 20% of the student body and generate an estimated $400 million each year for the local and state economy, far exceeding their direct tuition payments.[362] At Harvard, the financial model looks different: with its vast endowment, the university is less reliant on tuition revenue, but international students still enhance research output, intellectual diversity, and global networks in ways that benefit both the institution and the U.S. more broadly.[363]

At both UIUC and Harvard, tuition revenue from international students plays a role in sustaining the institution, but the scale and necessity differ. UIUC, as a public university facing declining state appropriations, down from approximately 50% of its budget in the 1980s to less than 12% today, has turned aggressively to out-of-state and international students to fill its budget gap.[364] International students at UIUC pay full out-of-state tuition, bringing in an estimated $155+ million annually to the operating budget.[365] At Harvard, the massive $50.9 billion endowment generates nearly $2 billion per year, covering more than 40% of the university's operating budget, while tuition and fees account for only about 20% of revenues.[366]

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[362] "U. Of I. Is No. 2 in Nation among Public Universities for International Students – News Bureau," Illinois.edu, 2015, https://news.illinois.edu/u-of-i-is-no-2-in-nation-among-public-universities-for-international-students.
[363] Diti Kohli, "Even to Harvard, the World's Richest University, $2.2 Billion Makes a Big Difference - the Boston Globe," BostonGlobe.com, 2016, https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/04/16/business/trump-harvard-budget-funding-cuts/.
[364] Illinois Board of Higher Education, "Shift to Tuition and Fees from State Appropriations," Ibhe.org, 2018, https://www.ibhe.org/DataPoints/Shift-to-Tuition-and-Fees-from-State-Appropriations-June-2018.htm.
[365] Chicago Sun-Times, "University of Illinois Braces for Visa Revocations for Chinese Students," WGLT, June 4, 2025, https://www.wglt.org/illinois/2025-06-04/university-of-illinois-braces-for-visa-revocations-for-chinese-students?.
[366] Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Research Administration, "2022 Fiscal Year-End Deadlines," Harvard.edu, 2022, https://hcsra.sph.harvard.edu/news/fiscal-year-end-2022-deadlines.

Compared to Harvard, UIUC receives state funding, estimated at approximately $700 million in 2024, which Harvard, as a private institution, does not have access to.[367] However, Harvard more than compensates for this through alumni contributions and philanthropic giving, which far exceed the state appropriations received by public universities like UIUC.[368] When it comes to the role of international students in subsidizing American students' education, this effect is less pronounced at a state university like UIUC, where state and federal governments provide grants and loans to support domestic students. At UIUC, where about 67% of domestic students receive some form of financial aid, international students, who pay full, unsubsidized tuition, help fill funding gaps and effectively subsidize education for U.S. students.[369] Although Harvard welcomes international students, their tuition is a much smaller component of the financial model, and they are admitted more for academic and research excellence than for revenue.[370]

International students also generate substantial economic activity at the local and state levels. At UIUC, international students account for about 20% of the student body and contribute an estimated $336 million annually to Illinois' economy through housing, dining, transportation, and other spending, supporting thousands of local jobs and strengthening the regional economy of Champaign-Urbana in measurable ways.[371] Without UIUC's student body, and especially the

[367] Qaasim Jatoi, "Pritzker Approves Budget Increase for UI System - the Daily Illini," The Daily Illini, June 2024, https://dailyillini.com/news-stories/university-news/administration/2024/06/01/pritzker-approves-budget-increase-for-ui-system/.
[368] Ritu Kalra and Timothy Barakett, "Annual Financial Report," Harvard.edu, 2019, https://finance.harvard.edu/annual-report.
[369] Anna Sieg, "University of Illinois Schools Raise Tuition for Fall 2025 Enrollment," https://www.wifr.com (WIFR, January 23, 2025), https://www.wifr.com/2025/01/23/university-illinois-schools-raise-tuition-fall-2025-enrollment/.
[370] Diti Kohli, "Even to Harvard, the World's Richest University, $2.2 Billion Makes a Big Difference - the Boston Globe," BostonGlobe.com, 2016, https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/04/16/business/trump-harvard-budget-funding-cuts/.
[371] Barnet Sherman, "International Students Infuse Tens of Millions of Dollars into Local Economies across the U.S.," Ohio Capital Journal, April 18, 2025, https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2025/04/18/international-students-infuse-tens-of-millions-of-dollars-into-local-economies-across-the-u-s/.

international students who contribute disproportionately to local revenue, the region would struggle to sustain itself without the spending and investments these students bring during their undergraduate years.[372] Their economic impact also extends to the broader Illinois economy, including Chicago, with international students in Illinois contributing over $1.4 billion statewide and supporting more than 17,000 jobs across sectors like retail, real estate, and hospitality.[373] Harvard's international students contribute to the Boston/Cambridge economy as well, with one estimate placing the combined economic impact of Harvard and MIT's international students at over $500 million annually, though with Harvard less reliant on them, the university itself is insulated from local economic swings tied to enrollment.[374] In UIUC's case, the local economy and the university are deeply intertwined with the presence of international students, while Harvard's vast resources make it less vulnerable to fluctuations in international enrollment, even though both campuses benefit from the vitality and spending that these students bring.

International students play a vital role in the labor force at UIUC, particularly in sustaining its research and teaching missions through graduate assistantships, lab work, and technical innovation. In fields like engineering and computer science, they make up nearly half of the graduate student population, with a significant concentration of Asian students, especially from China and India.[375] Their contributions are critical not only to UIUC's global reputation in STEM but also to supporting the U.S. economy with highly skilled workers who move into roles

[372] Konrad Putzier, Douglas Belkin, and Anthony DeBarros, "College Boom Towns Go Bust as Enrollment Declines Batter Local Economies," WSJ (The Wall Street Journal, May 19, 2025), https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/college-towns-economy-macomb-illinois-aae84dcc?reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink.
[373] NAFSA, "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy," NAFSA, November 18, 2024, https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[374] Steph Solis, "Harvard Cuts Could Severely Damage Boston-Area GDP, Report Says," Axios (Axios Boston, June 9, 2025), https://www.axios.com/local/boston/2025/06/09/harvard-cuts-gdp-boston-economy.
[375] Martin McFarlane, "International Statistics," Illinois International Student and Scholar Services, October 2024, https://isss.illinois.edu/download_forms/stats/fa24_stats.pdf.

at companies like Intel, Amazon, Microsoft, and national research labs, often remaining in technical and leadership positions within industry.[376] At Harvard, international alumni have also advanced into prominent positions globally, including as prime ministers, central bank governors, and leaders of international organizations.[377] Research shows that UIUC's international graduates have a broader tendency, particularly in STEM fields, to remain in the U.S. and contribute to its technical workforce, while many of Harvard's international alumni pursue globally oriented careers in leadership, policy, and academia.[378] Depending on the kind of education each institution offers, international students pursue paths that bring different benefits to their alma mater and to American society.

The roles international students play at UIUC and Harvard reveal how institutional missions and financial structures shape their contributions to American higher education and society. At UIUC, they are deeply embedded in the university's financial health, research output, and regional economy, filling critical gaps in STEM fields and sustaining the local labor market. At Harvard, international students are woven into the university's intellectual and cultural fabric, extending its influence outward as they join transnational networks and assume roles of global consequence. While moral arguments rightly defend the place of international students in American higher education, their practical contributions independently underscore their indispensable role and reach beyond moral justification alone.

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[376] "Letter to Dr. Timothy K. Killeen (President of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) on Transparency from Universities on National Security Risks Posed by Chinese Nationals in STEM Programs," Select Committee on the CCP, March 19, 2025, https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/media/letters/letter-dr-timothy-k-killeen-president-university-illinois-urbana-champaign.

[377] Ricardo Salas-Díaz and Kevin L Young, "Where Did the Global Elite Go to School? Hierarchy, Harvard, Home and Hegemony," Global Networks 25, no. 1 (October 14, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12509.

[378] "New Data Show U.S. Retains Significant Share of Foreign Science and Engineering Talent upon Graduation | Association of American Universities (AAU)," Association of American Universities (AAU), April 18, 2025, https://www.aau.edu/newsroom/leading-research-universities-report/new-data-show-us-retains-significant-share-foreign.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst

The influx of international students represents a critical economic engine for U.S. higher education. In the 2023–24 academic year, international students contributed roughly $44 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 378,000 jobs.[379] Notably, community college enrollments surged, with international students generating $2.0 billion in spending and supporting 8,400 jobs, reflecting a 33% increase in economic contribution and 28% growth in jobs compared to the previous year. This economic impact is geographically concentrated: twelve states - led by California, New York, Massachusetts, Texas, and Illinois - accounted for 57% of the national contribution. [380]

UMass Amherst hosts around 3,363 interantional students, ranking 83rd among 1,279 colleges and universities in popularity with international students.[381] International students at UMass Amherst contributed $188.7 million to the economy and supported 1,984 jobs during the 2022-2023 academic year, marking a 17% increase in comparison to the previous year.[382] Additionally, in the fiscal year 2022, the UMass system —including UMass Amherst—generated $8.3 billion in economic activity and supported approximately 40,000 external jobs across Massachusetts.[383] On the other hand, Harvard hosts nearly 7,000 international students from

[379] Anumita Kaur and Júlia Ledur, "The U.S. Has More than 1 Million Foreign Students. Here's Who They Are.," *The Washington Post*, May 25, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/05/25/international-students-harvard-trump/.
[380] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA," November 18, 2024, https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[381] "UMass Amherst International Students& Information on International Students by Country at University of Massachusetts Amherst," accessed July 23, 2025, https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/university-of-massachusetts-amherst/student-life/international/.
[382] "Report Finds UMass Amherst International Students Contribute Over $188 Million to Massachusetts Economy : UMass Amherst," accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.umass.edu/news/article/report-finds-umass-amherst-international-students-contribute-over-188-million.
[383] "UMass Donahue Institute | UMass Economic Contribution Analysis - FY 22," accessed July 21, 2025, https://donahue.umass.edu/our-publications/umass-economic-contribution-analysis-fy-22.

more than 140 countries, constituting about 27% of its student body.[384] Combined with visitor housing and consumption, these students account for $384 million injected into the Boston metro economy.[385]

Spending by international students at UMass Amherst fuels local businesses—housing, retail, food, and transportation—creating spillover employment beyond campus boundaries. In the 2021–2022 academic year, UMass Amherst's nearly 4,200 international students generated $156.9 million for the region and state, which supported 1,773 jobs across sectors like housing, dining, retail, transportation, telecommunications, and health insurance, placing UMass Amherst fifth among Massachusetts colleges in economic benefit from international student activity.[386] Beyond housing and retail, international students at Harvard augment professional sectors such as healthcare and biotech.[387] Given the current changes in immigration policies, a potential drop in Harvard's international body could reduce Boston's GDP by $180 million and cost around 1,125 jobs.[388]

Nationally, international students sustain over 378,000 jobs, reflecting a job-to-student ratio of roughly 1:3.[389] During the 2022 fiscal year, UMass Amherst generated $2.9 billion in economic activity across Massachusetts and supported 13,200 external jobs, emphasizing the

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[384] Jaclyn Diaz, "By the Numbers: A Look at International Students at Harvard and across the U.S.," KVCR News, May 24, 2025, https://www.kvcrnews.org/2025-05-24/by-the-numbers-a-look-at-international-students-at-harvard-and-across-the-u-s.

[385] Anumita Kaur and Júlia Ledur, "The U.S. Has More than 1 Million Foreign Students. Here's Who They Are.," *The Washington Post*, May 25, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/05/25/international-students-harvard-trump/.

[386] "UMass Amherst Ranks Fifth Among Massachusetts Colleges and Universities in Economic Benefits Generated by International Students : UMass Amherst," accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.umass.edu/news/article/umass-amherst-ranks-fifth-among-massachusetts-colleges-and-universities-economic.

[387] "UMass Amherst Ranks Fifth Among Massachusetts Colleges and Universities in Economic Benefits Generated by International Students : UMass Amherst."

[388] "Axios Boston," Axios, accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-boston-6c7c7bfa-1bee-4aca-b3d6-3a0693127326.

[389] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA."

institution's deep integration into regional labor markets, benefitting sectors like construction and consumer services.[390] Simultaneously, at Harvard, federal research funding, out of which roughly $2.5 billion is at risk, supports roughly 1,380 direct research jobs, 700 supplier roles, and around 1,000 induced jobs via household spending.[391] Additionally, the presence of 7,000 international students at Harvard directly sustains 1,125 jobs (housing, retail, services) and another 5,000 induced household jobs.[392]

During the 2022 fiscal year, UMass Amherst generated $2.9 billion in economic activity and supported 13,200 external jobs, delivering a 7-to-1 return on its $421.8 million state investment. This impact was driven by campus operations, construction projects, and the spending of students, faculty, and staff.[393] By contrast, Harvard University's innovation infrastructure, driven by Harvard Innovation Labs, has supported over 6,000 venture teams since its launch in 2011. These ventures have collectively raised over $8 billion in funding and maintain a strong track record in commercializing research and fostering high-growth enterprises across sectors such as biotech, AI, and social impact.[394]

Recent shifts in federal visa policy directly affected the international community at UMass Amherst; by April 2025, visas had been revoked for at least 13 students. Though their legal status was eventually restored, this event caused widespread concern amongst the students

[390] "UMass Amherst Generates $2.9 Billion in Economic Impact for Massachusetts : UMass Amherst," accessed July 21, 2025, https://www.umass.edu/news/article/umass-amherst-generates-29-billion-economic-impact-massachusetts.
[391] Bjorn Markeson & Chandler West, "Measuring the Economic Risk of Federal Actions Against Harvard," accessed July 21, 2025, https://blog.implan.com/harvard-impact.
[392] Steph Solis, "'It's a New England Problem': Harvard Cuts Severely Harm Local Economy, Report Says," Axios, June 9, 2025, https://www.axios.com/local/boston/2025/06/09/harvard-cuts-gdp-boston-economy.
[393] Amherst Indy, "UMass Amherst Generates $2.9 Billion in Economic Impact for Massachusetts - Amherst Indy," October 28, 2023, https://www.amherstindy.org/2023/10/27/umass-amherst-generates-2-9-billion-in-economic-impact-for-massachusetts/.
[394] "Harvard Innovation Labs," Harvard Innovation Labs, accessed July 21, 2025, https://innovationlabs.harvard.edu/.

and travel warnings from campus leadership.[395] By contrast, the situation at Harvard is even more vulnerable. In 2025, visa restrictions and threats to STEM OPT and federal research funding endangered $3.9 billion in Massachusetts' total educational contribution, causing concerns over potential job losses and broader threats to Boston's research economy.[396]

International students are essential economic contributors to the U.S. economy. At both UMass Amherst and Harvard, they drive innovation, support university budgets, and foster global competitiveness. UMass Amherst relies on international enrollment to offset demographic decline, whereas Harvard amplifies global prestige through theirs. While both institutions benefit economically from international students, Harvard's model is more deeply interlinked with global research funding and visa stability. UMass Amherst's exposure is primarily tuition-driven, making it less vulnerable to federal policy shifts but still financially sensitive. The tuition, research, and community contributions of foreign students are indispensable, and weakening this pipeline could risk long-term academic and economic loss.

[395] Jill Kaufman, "With New Travel Ban, UMass Amherst International Community Urged Again to Defer Travel," New England Public Media, June 9, 2025, https://www.nepm.org/regional-news/2025-06-09/with-new-travel-ban-international-umass-amherst-community-urged-again-to-defer-travel.
[396] Solis, "International Students Are in Limbo — as Is Their Economic Impact."

The University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota stands as a compelling example of how public research universities can successfully include international students and how these international students can then contribute to their state's economic growth. The University of Minnesota is a leader in international student enrollment. According to College Factual, the University of Minnesota ranks 21st nationally among leading institutions hosting international students, with 5,191 total international students in 2018, and the Twin Cities campus ranks first for students from Malaysia, Vietnam, and South Korea.[397] Of the Korean international students surveyed by the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, 38% were transnational, meaning they graduated from high schools in the United States (23%) or other international high schools outside of Korea and the United States (15%).[398] The University of Minnesota also sends many domestic students abroad as a part of its cultural exchange opportunities through its Learning Abroad Center, which offers programs in over 50 countries.[399] The university ranked in the top 20 research institutions nationally for the percentage of the institution's undergraduate enrollment studying abroad.[400]

One major source of economic growth from University of Minnesota international students is through tuition money. According to the Minnesota Daily, international students pay

[397] Collegefactual.com. "University of Minnesota - Twin Cities International Students& Information on International Students by Country at UMN Twin Cities." College Factual, May 2013. https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/university-of-minnesota-twin-cities/student-life/international/.
[398] Umn.edu. "Data and Research Regarding International Undergraduate Students at UMN | Global Programs and Strategy Alliance," 2014. https://global.umn.edu/icc/resources/umn-research.
[399] Umn.edu. "Learning Abroad Center | University of Minnesota," 2025. https://umabroad.umn.edu/.
[400] Umn.edu. "Global Snapshot | M Global," 2024. https://mglobal.umn.edu/global-snapshot.

$35,518 annually in tuition and fees,[401] representing a premium over average domestic costs of $18,626.[402]

Beyond tuition money, the effect of international students purchasing goods and services, and joining the workforce, should also be taken into consideration. After considering these contributions, along with the multiplier effect (that is, that by spending money and contributing to the workforce, they create new jobs and more economic growth throughout the state economy), NAFSA estimates that international students contribute $332 million to Minnesota's state economy.[403]

The University of Minnesota has implemented specific programs and policies to cultivate the growth of international student researchers. One of these is by offering nine Twin Cities-based research groups that specifically focus on international undergraduate students. International students, like the ones in these groups, contribute to the university's total research efforts, which had $955 million in research expenditures in 2018 across disciplines ranging from artificial intelligence to molecular biology.[404]

One major point of contrast between the University of Minnesota and Harvard are their juxtaposed relative stabilities when it comes to their international student policies. While Harvard is currently experiencing extreme volatility with its international student policies, with a federal enrollment freeze threatening international student admissions and their program

[401] Contreras, Valentina. "UMN Sees Impact of International Students despite New Challenges." The Minnesota Daily, 2025. https://mndaily.com/294343/top-story/umn-sees-impact-of-international-students-despite-new-challenges/.
[402] onestop.umn.edu. "Cost of Attendance | Twin Cities One Stop Student Services," n.d. https://onestop.umn.edu/finances/costs/cost-attendance.
[403] Nachtigal, Taylor. "International Students Could Boost Economy." The Minnesota Daily, 2025. https://mndaily.com/238872/uncategorized/international-students-could-boost-economy/.
[404] University of Minnesota. "University of Minnesota Reaches Record Levels of Research Funding, Expenditures," December 6, 2019. https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/university-minnesota-reaches-record-levels-research-funding-expenditures.

entirely.[405] The University of Minnesota has experienced relative stability in the turmoil, sustaining international enrollment growth consistently in the past decade with a stable policy environment supporting continued international engagement.

One primary similarity between the two universities is their total international student enrollment numbers. The University of Minnesota is ranked 21st nationally in its international student enrollment count with 5,191 total international students. Similarly, Harvard reported a total of 6,793 international students in 2024-2025.[406] The two Universities are able to sustain such numbers due to a combination of strong academic reputation, comprehensive support services, and diverse program offerings.[407, 408]

While both Harvard University and the University of Minnesota are similar in their international student enrollment and research output, Minnesota's public structure creates resilience against political pressures that have recently disrupted Harvard's international programs, allowing for sustained collaboration between domestic and international students in advancing research. Their differences in political volatility could lead to potential future research disparity.

[405] Binkley, Collin, and Michael Casey. "Trump Administration Bars Harvard from Enrolling Foreign Students." AP News, May 22, 2025. https://apnews.com/article/harvard-trump-foreign-student-457d07268fba9c1f6f7f32fe0424bc3b.
[406] Richter, Felix. "Infographic: Foreign Students Make up 27% of Harvard's Enrollment." Statista Daily Data. Statista, May 23, 2025. https://www.statista.com/chart/34519/international-students-at-harvard-university/.
[407] admissions.tc.umn.edu. "Study Abroad | Office of Admissions," n.d. https://admissions.tc.umn.edu/life-minnesota/study-abroad.
[408] Harvard College. "Admissions Statistics | Harvard College." Harvard.edu, 2024. https://college.harvard.edu/admissions/admissions-statistics.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Among U.S. institutions, Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) are both highly regarded, ranked at 3rd and 27th in the nation, respectively.[409] While Harvard and UNC were founded over 150 years apart, they were both the first of their kind in the U.S. Dating back to 1636, Harvard is the nation's oldest university. Meanwhile, UNC became the nation's first public university at the time of its founding in 1789.[410] Since their beginnings, both institutions have led the nation in research, innovation, and education, attracting talented students from around the world.

Harvard, a top destination for international students, had a total international student population of 6,793 for the 2024-2025 academic year—roughly 27.2% of the total student body.[411] In comparison, approximately 2600, or 12.5%, of UNC's 32,438 students enrolled in the fall of 2023 were international.[412] Despite enrolling thousands more students than Harvard, UNC hosts less than half the number of international students as Harvard does.

In recent years, UNC has become extremely selective in its admissions of out-of-state students, including those from other countries. While the university does not publish an acceptance rate for international students, it is worth noting that the overall out-of-state acceptance rate was just 8.2% in 2022, compared to 43.1% for in-state students.[413] With this in mind, most estimates of the acceptance rate for international students lie in the single digits. This

[409] U.S. News & World Report, "The Best National Universities in America," US News & World Report, 2025, https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities?_sort=rank&_sortDirection=asc.
[410]"History and Traditions - the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill," The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, September 12, 2019, https://www.unc.edu/about/history-and-traditions/.
[411]Harvard University, "International Students at Harvard | One Harvard, One World," n.d., https://oneworld.worldwide.harvard.edu/international-students-at-harvard/.
[412]The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Facts and Figures," UNC Global, n.d., https://global.unc.edu/about/facts-and-figures/.
[413]The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Admissions | Admissions Case," admissionslawsuit.unc.edu, n.d., https://admissionslawsuit.unc.edu/about/admissions/.

drastic gap between in-state and out-of-state acceptance rates can be attributed to a 1986 UNC System policy mandating that 82% of any entering class must be composed of in-state students.[414] This policy, along with UNC's lack of financial aid for international students, likely results in an international student population much lower than Harvard's.[415]

In the 2023-2024 academic year, UNC's international students contributed $112.8 million to the state of North Carolina and supported 1,211 jobs. UNC ranked 3rd among universities in North Carolina for the economic impact of international students—with Duke University and North Carolina State University taking 1st and 2nd place, respectively.[416] As a whole, international students contributed $816 million to North Carolina's economy in the same year, meaning that UNC accounted for 13.8% of all international student contributions.

In Massachusetts, international students contributed $3.9 billion to the economy in the 2023–2024 academic year. Just as UNC ranked 3rd in North Carolina, Harvard ranked 3rd among Massachusetts universities for the contributions of its international students. However, Harvard's international students contributed over 3 times as much money to the economy as their peers at UNC—$383.6 million, to be specific. Harvard's international students also supported 3,910 jobs, 3 times as many as UNC's international students did.[417]

While UNC restricts the number of out-of-state undergraduate students, the university's graduate programs feature a much higher share of international students. In UNC's Kenan-

[414]The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Admissions | Admissions Case," admissionslawsuit.unc.edu, n.d., https://admissionslawsuit.unc.edu/about/admissions/.
[415]The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Inter-national Students - Undergraduate Admissions," Undergraduate Admissions, May 21, 2025, https://admissions.unc.edu/apply/international-students/.
[416]NAFSA, "2022 Economic Value Report for NC," NAFSA, 2022, https://www.nafsa.org/isev/reports/state?state=NC&year=2022.
[417]NAFSA, "2023 Economic Value Report for MA," NAFSA, 2023, https://www.nafsa.org/isev/reports/state?state=MA&year=2023.

Flagler Business School, nearly half of all doctoral candidates come from outside the U.S.[418] Meanwhile, in Harvard Business School, 37% of all graduate students are foreign-born. In other graduate programs, such as the Kennedy School and the School of Public Health, 56% and 42%, respectively, of students are from outside the U.S.[419] Here, it is important to note that UNC ranks 9th among U.S. universities for research and development expenditures, and Harvard ranks 15th.[420] Given the billions of dollars that both institutions spend on research each year—and their large international graduate student populations—it is likely that foreign-born graduate students have a powerful direct impact on research output at both schools.

The data present a significant difference in the presence and impact of international students at Harvard and UNC. Being a public university, UNC's undergraduate admissions policies limit the university's ability to admit large numbers of international students, in turn capping the potential economic impact of international students. At Harvard, which enrolls more than double the number of international students as UNC, the international student body contributes three times the amount of money as its peers at UNC do to the state economy. When it comes to the graduate level, Harvard and UNC are more comparable. Both institutions enroll very high numbers of graduate international students, particularly in their doctoral programs. Seeing as research is a core component of nearly all doctoral programs and many master's programs, international students are likely heavily involved in research at the graduate level at both UNC and Harvard. While exact figures quantifying research output by international

[418]The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "PhD International Applicants | UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School," Unc.edu, 2025, https://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/programs/phd/admission-requirements/international-applicants.
[419]Nina Pasquini, "What Happens If Harvard Loses Its International Students | Harvard Magazine," Harvard Magazine, June 11, 2025, https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2025/06/harvard-trump-international-students.
[420]National Science Foundation, "NSF – NCSES Academic Institution Profiles – Rankings by Total R&D Expenditures," ncsesdata.nsf.gov, n.d., https://ncsesdata.nsf.gov/profiles/site?method=rankingBySource&ds=herd.

students at either institution are not available, the share of international students in the overall student population offers valuable insight into their potential contributions.

Policy Risks and Future Threats

Despite studying at U.S. universities, most international students leave the U.S. after graduation. Only 17 percent of bachelor's degree recipients stayed in the U.S. after graduating in 2021. While master's and doctoral students are more likely to be retained, they still choose to remain at rates of just 51 percent and 76 percent, respectively.[421] Yet, a 2021 survey found that 73 percent of prospective international students would remain in the U.S. after graduation if visas were more accessible.[422] If the U.S. were to permit these graduates to remain, they could increase U.S. economic activity by $233 billion in wages this decade.[423]

The true economic impact of international students is their influence after graduation. However, since F-1 visas expire when students graduate, most students are generally prohibited from working in the US after graduation. There are several programs that allow students to remain in the US. One such program is the Optional Practical Training period. This program allows students to work in the US for a year after graduation, subject to approval by the educational institution with SEVP certification as well as the USCIS.[424] This program has become pivotal in the quest to retain foreign talent after graduation. Many foreign students feel that if they can't be guaranteed occupation and residence in the US after graduation, then it's in

[421]Reuben Francis, "Most International Graduates of American Universities Ultimately Leave the U.S.," Economic Innovation Group, June 27, 2024, https://eig.org/immigrant-retention-estimates/.
[422]Julie Heng and Yutong Deng, "Innovation Lightbulb: Not Just Attracting but Retaining International STEM Students," Csis.org, 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/innovation-lightbulb-not-just-attracting-retaining-international-stem-students.
[423]FWD.us, "Retaining U.S. International Student Graduates Could Help Fill Millions of Critical Job Openings," FWD.us, February 3, 2022, https://www.fwd.us/news/us-international-students/.
[424] "Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students | USCIS," November 25, 2024, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students.

their interest to return to their home country. By providing students with the opportunity to remain in the US for an additional year, it creates an incentive for students that better retains talent. In 2008, the Obama administration introduced the STEM OPT extension which allowed students to remain in the US for two years after graduation if they graduated with a degree in the sciences. Over the past five years, the OPT program has gained increasing relevance. According to a recent report, over 240,000 students worked in the US via the OPT program in the 2023/2024 academic year.[425] For reference, there were just under 300,000 international undergraduate students pursuing a bachelor's degree over the same time frame.[426] From 2017 to 2024, the number of international undergraduate students has actually declined, with growth in international student populations primarily attributed to the OPT program and graduate schools.[427]

The program has not gone without its controversy. The main problem is that since people working through the OPT program aren't permanent residents, they aren't expected to pay taxes toward Social Security or Medicaid.[428] As a result, employers can afford to pay them less without the worker taking any salary cuts. This gives OPT workers a huge competitive advantage over their domestic peers. Since Social Security and Medicaid taxes account for roughly 15% of wages, OPT workers can be paid 15% less and take home the same amount of money. Naturally, this displaces US-born workers who might otherwise be more qualified for the position. This in

[425] "IIE Open Doors / Academic Level," IIE Open Doors / Academic Level, accessed June 22, 2025, https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/academic-level/.
[426] "IIE Open Doors / Academic Level."
[427] "IIE Open Doors / Academic Level."
[428] "STEM OPT Frequently Asked Questions | Study in the States," accessed June 22, 2025, https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/additional-resources/stem-opt-frequently-asked-questions.

turn makes it harder for domestic workers to break into the market, which forces companies to become more dependent on foreign talent, which pushes out domestic workers, and so forth.[429]

Meanwhile, competitor countries are capitalizing on America's retrenchment. Canada has streamlined its post-graduation work permit process[430] and the United Kingdom is expanding visa opportunities and post-study pathways,[431] offering a welcoming contrast to the perceived hostility of US immigration policy. These nations are acquiring the next generation of engineers, scientists, and founders who once would have made their careers in the US.

In an era defined by global talent mobility, the U.S. must decide whether to impose barriers or capitalize on the extraordinary value international students bring. Limiting access, whether through visa constraints or enrollment caps, risks undermining America's research dominance, startup ecosystem, and academic prestige. What would the impact be if international enrollment at institutions like Harvard were capped at 15%? How many research breakthroughs would stall, startups collapse, or domestic jobs vanish as a result? As Canada limits permits[432] and China aggressively recruits STEM talent, the U.S. has a fleeting opportunity to position itself as the global destination for innovation, economic growth, and academic excellence. In the midst of an AI revolution, climate urgency, and skilled labor shortages, retaining and welcoming international students is not just a cultural choice; It is an economic imperative.

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[429] "International Students and American Competitiveness | Association of American Universities (AAU)," November 17, 2022, https://www.aau.edu/key-issues/international-students-and-american-competitiveness.
[430] Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "Work in Canada after You Graduate: About the Process - Canada.ca." Canada.ca, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/after-graduation/about.html.
[431] McKinney, CJ, and Melanie Gower. "Changes to UK Visa and Settlement Rules after the 2025 Immigration White Paper." House of Commons Library, May 20, 2025. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10267/.
[432] Matina Stevis-Gridneff and Ian Willms, "Canada Tightens Immigration Policy and Leaves Thousands in Limbo," Nytimes.com (The New York Times, October 12, 2024), https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/12/world/canada/canada-immigration-policy.html.

The U.S. gains top global talent at the expense of developing countries, particularly in Africa and South Asia, which send many of their brightest students to study in America.[433] Retaining these students after graduation maximizes the economic return on U.S. higher education investments.[434] However, this "brain drain" benefits the U.S. while potentially weakening the human capital of source countries. Circular migration programs, international research partnerships, or U.S.-backed entrepreneurship hubs abroad—to promote a more balanced, win-win outcome could be a possible replacement and a solution to such a win-lose relationship.

[433] World Bank. "International Migration and Development," 2021.
[434] Brookings Institution. "The Economic Case for Retaining International Graduates," 2020.

Policy Recommendations

Reforming F-1 Visa Policy

International students are a cornerstone of Harvard University's academic excellence and global reputation. They bring intellectual diversity, foster cross-cultural understanding, and contribute billions to the U.S. economy. Yet, despite their value, restrictive immigration policies undermine Harvard's ability to recruit, retain, and fully benefit from this talent pool. The current F-1 visa framework creates uncertainty for graduates, particularly those from countries facing long green card backlogs. This instability not only jeopardizes individual career trajectories but also weakens Harvard's role in sustaining the nation's innovation economy.

The F-1 visa, the primary entry point for most international students, permits limited post-graduation work through Optional Practical Training (OPT) and, for STEM graduates, a two-year extension. These pathways are temporary, administratively burdensome, and leave graduates vulnerable to employment interruptions if they fail to secure an H-1B visa through the lottery system.

For graduates from populous nations like India and China, per-country green card caps compound the problem, producing wait times that can exceed a decade. During this period, skilled alumni face professional uncertainty and are often compelled to leave the U.S. This loss is particularly acute for Harvard, whose international alumni are disproportionately represented among the world's leading researchers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers.

The economic stakes are significant: in the 2023–2024 academic year, international students contributed over $40 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 368,000 jobs

nationwide, with Massachusetts ranking among the top five beneficiary states.[435] Without reforms, the U.S. risks ceding this talent to countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, all of which offer clearer post-graduation residency pathways.

Congress should amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to grant F-1 visa holders an automatic three-year post-graduation work authorization and eliminate per-country green card caps for advanced degree recipients. This reform would create a predictable, transparent path from education to employment, aligning immigration policy with the country's economic and academic interests while ensuring that institutions like Harvard can retain and leverage the global talent they train.

Massachusetts' economy is driven by sectors—biotechnology, finance, and advanced technology—that thrive on access to high-skilled labor. Harvard-trained international graduates are heavily recruited into these industries, yet many leave prematurely due to visa expiration. The Massachusetts Biotechnology Council reports that more than a quarter of its 2024 hires were international talent, much of it educated within the state.[436] When these employees depart, companies face costly recruitment and training cycles, and ongoing research initiatives are disrupted.

Beyond employment metrics, international graduates strengthen the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem. A 2023 National Foundation for American Policy study found that over half of U.S. billion-dollar startups had at least one immigrant founder, many of whom first entered the country as international students.[437] Retaining such graduates has a multiplier effect,

[435] Massachusetts Biotechnology Council. Annual Workforce Trends Report. Cambridge, MA: MassBio, 2024.
[436] NAFSA: Association of International Educators. International Student Economic Value Tool. Washington, DC: NAFSA, 2024.
[437] National Foundation for American Policy. *Immigrants and Billion-Dollar Startups*. Arlington, VA: NFAP, 2023.

creating new companies, generating tax revenue, and reinforcing Massachusetts' status as a global innovation hub.

Reforming the F-1 visa in the recommended manner addresses multiple policy priorities, including a guaranteed three-year work authorization post-graduation, giving employers confidence in hiring and retaining top talent without the unpredictability of the H-1B lottery, and eliminating per-country caps, which ensures that graduates from high-demand countries are not penalized by arbitrary quotas, supporting a true merit-based system. By keeping high-skill talent in Massachusetts and other states, the reform strengthens regional economies and maintains U.S. leadership in innovation-intensive sectors. Predictable immigration pathways make Harvard and the U.S. writ large a more attractive destination for the world's best students, countering aggressive recruitment efforts from competitor nations. Moreover, retaining these graduates ensures the U.S. fully capitalizes on the taxpayer and private investment already made in their education.

International students embody Harvard's mission to educate leaders who will make a difference globally. Yet current immigration policy undermines this mission by forcing out talent that could contribute to the nation's prosperity and global standing. Amending the Immigration and Nationality Act to grant automatic three-year work authorization and remove per-country caps for advanced degree recipients would secure Harvard's ability to recruit and retain the brightest minds, bolster the Massachusetts economy, and reaffirm America's position as the world's premier destination for higher education.

Creating a Startup Visa Pathway

Harvard attracts some of the brightest international minds, students with the talent and drive to launch the next generation of transformative companies. Yet under the current visa system, these students are forced to gamble not only on the success of their ventures, but also on the legality of their continued presence in the very country they seek to contribute to. Despite their potential to create jobs, attract investment, and drive innovation, international graduates are often compelled to leave the U.S. due to rigid and outdated visa limitations. A more effective solution would combine a Harvard-led Startup Fellowship with a government-partnered, venture capital-backed visa pathway, creating a dual-track model that allows international graduates to remain in the U.S. while building their companies. This approach ensures accountability through trusted institutional and private-sector partners and offers a bold yet practical path forward. Grounded in Harvard's leadership and investor networks, the model aligns global talent retention with the nation's long-term economic interests.

International students make up a significant portion of the U.S. higher education system, including over 25% of Harvard's student body.[438] However, current immigration frameworks offer no clear startup visa pathway for graduates who wish to remain in the U.S. to build companies. Instead, international graduates must rely on makeshift or restrictive visa options. The Optional Practical Training (OPT) program allows F-1 visa holders to work for 12 months post-graduation (with a 24-month STEM extension), but it's insufficient for a startup to gain traction or secure institutional funding.[439] The H-1B visa, designed for high-skilled workers, is

[438] Jaclyn Diaz, "By the Numbers: A Look at International Students at Harvard and across the US," opb (OPB, May 24, 2025), https://www.opb.org/article/2025/05/24/by-the-numbers-a-look-at-international-students-at-harvard-and-across-the-u-s/.
[439] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students | USCIS," www.uscis.gov, April 22, 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students.

capped annually and assigned by lottery, with only a 24–30% chance of selection, and requires a sponsoring employer, which a startup founder may not have.[440]

Other pathways include the O-1 visa, requiring proof of "extraordinary ability," and the EB-5 immigrant investor visa, which demands significant capital investment (usually $800,000 or more) and job creation, criteria that are inaccessible to early-stage founders.[441] The International Entrepreneur Rule (IER) allows for temporary parole (not a visa) if the startup has raised at least $250,000 from qualified investors or $100,000 in government grants, but its implementation is inconsistent and its legal permanence uncertain.[442] Altogether, these fragmented options reflect an outdated immigration system that discourages international graduates from remaining in the U.S. to innovate and create jobs.

International graduates have already played a critical role in driving U.S. innovation. According to a 2022 report by the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP), 25% of U.S. unicorn startups (valued at $1 billion or more) had at least one founder who originally entered the country as an international student.[443] These companies, including DoorDash, Instacart, and Brex, created an average of 860 jobs each, with some employing over 1,400 Americans.[444]

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[440] Claudia P Martorell, "H-1B Registration Numbers for FY 2026 H-1B Cap Reveal an Increase in Selection Rate," Natlawreview.com (National Law Review, 2025), https://natlawreview.com/article/h-1b-registration-numbers-fy-2026-h-1b-cap-reveal-increase-selection-rate.

[441] Steven Nelson, "How Trump's $5M 'Gold Card' for Rich Migrants Would Work — Here Are the Other Nations That Have Tried It," New York Post, February 26, 2025, https://nypost.com/2025/02/26/us-news/how-trumps-5m-gold-card-for-rich-migrants-would-work-heres-the-other-nations-that-have-tried-it/.

[442] The, "Long Live the International Entrepreneur Rule: An Opportunity to Boost Jobs and Economic Growth Is Hiding in Plain Sight - Progressive Policy Institute," Progressive Policy Institute, February 3, 2021, https://www.progressivepolicy.org/long-live-the-international-entrepreneur-rule-an-opportunity-to-boost-jobs-and-economic-growth-is-hiding-in-plain-sight/.

[443] National Foundation for American Policy, "Immigrant Entrepreneurs and US Billionaire Companies," July 2022, https://nfap.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-BILLION-DOLLAR-STARTUPS.NFAP-Policy-Brief.2022.pdf.

[444] Stuart Anderson, "New Research: Immigrants Have Started More than Half of America's Billion-Dollar Startup Companies Nearly Two-Thirds of U.S. Unicorn Companies Were Founded or Cofounded by an Immigrant or the Child of an Immigrant," 2022, https://nfap.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Immigrant-Entrepreneurs-and-Billion-Dollar-Companies.DAY-OF-RELEASE.2022.pdf.

More broadly, immigrant founders are behind 55% of all U.S. billion-dollar startups, reinforcing the long-term economic contributions of foreign-born entrepreneurs. A National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) working paper found that a 10 percentage point increase in foreign-born Master's graduates in a cohort was associated with a 0.4 percent increase in the number of startups, demonstrating that international talent not only creates firms directly but also boosts entrepreneurial activity among U.S.-born peers.[445]

It's clear that international graduates are not simply beneficiaries of U.S. higher education. They are key drivers of job creation, innovation, and global competitiveness. Without a tailored immigration pathway, the U.S. risks losing this talent to countries with more founder-friendly policies.

The proposed startup visa pathway is designed as a dual-channel model that combines the credibility of Harvard's institutional endorsement with the market-driven rigor of venture capital validation. First, Harvard would launch a competitive Startup Fellowship for recent international graduates who are actively building companies. Eligibility would require that fellows maintain at least 10% ownership in their venture and hold a central leadership role. A university committee would assess applicants based on the viability and innovation potential of their startup ideas, granting selected fellows access to legal support, startup resources, and temporary work authorization, most feasibly through a cap-exempt H-1B or extended parole under the International Entrepreneur Rule (IER).

To transition from temporary to long-term residency, fellows would need to secure a qualifying investment, such as $250,000 or more, from a government-approved or Harvard-vetted venture capital firm or startup accelerator. These firms would be pre-screened based on

[445] John Bound et al., "FINISHING DEGREES and FINDING JOBS: U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION and the FLOW of FOREIGN IT WORKERS," 2014, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w20505/w20505.pdf.

their track record, due diligence standards, and alignment with innovation and job creation goals. In effect, this pathway uses private sector investment as a proxy for startup viability, adding a second layer of validation to the university's selection process. The structure mirrors elements of successful international models such as Canada's Startup Visa and the U.K.'s Innovator Founder Visa, both of which rely on trusted third-party endorsements.[446] The result is a high-integrity, low-fraud startup visa framework grounded in institutional credibility and real-world entrepreneurial performance.

Implementing this startup visa model would yield substantial economic and strategic benefits. Financially, even a small cohort of 10 to 15 retained startups per year could generate thousands of jobs. Based on NFAP data, immigrant-founded unicorns in the U.S. create an average of nearly 900 jobs each, suggesting that retaining even a handful of international founders at Harvard could contribute tens of millions in annual payroll and tax revenue. These startups would not only create direct employment, but also stimulate local economies and attract follow-on investment into the U.S. innovation ecosystem.

The model also enhances Harvard's institutional leadership and global standing. It would position the university as a pioneer in talent-driven immigration reform, offering a replicable model for peer institutions and a scalable pilot for federal legislation. Additionally, the proposed framework ensures rigorous gatekeeping by tying long-term visa eligibility to both university endorsement and third-party investor confidence. This mitigates the risk of misuse while expanding access for high-potential entrepreneurs. Critically, the policy also reinforces U.S. competitiveness at a time when countries like Canada, the U.K., and Australia are aggressively

[446] INGWE, "Canada Startup Visa – Best Type of Designated Organization," Ingwe.ca, 2025, https://www.ingwe.ca/blogs/canada-startup-visa-designated-organizations.

recruiting international founders through dedicated visa programs.[447] By enabling the U.S. to retain the very talent it educates, this startup visa pathway ensures that global innovation continues to be built and scaled on American soil.

[447] Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, "Business Innovation and Investment (Provisional) Visa (Subclass 188) Entrepreneur Stream," Immigration and citizenship Website, 2019, https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/business-innovation-and-investment-188/entrepreneur-stream.

Creating a Tiered Security Clearance Visa to Retain STEM Talent

America should keep winning the global talent race and guard its crown-jewel research at the same time. The FBI has documented systematic IP-theft pressures on Chinese and Russian students in sensitive STEM fields, calling U.S. campuses "prime targets" for foreign collection.[448] Yet every international STEM graduate who stays raises U.S. patent output and soft-power reach, while contributing about $40 billion a year to the economy.[449] Other allies already balance these goals with programs like the UK's ATAS[450] and Canada's "Named Research Organizations" blacklist[451] that screen only the riskiest projects, not all students.

Congress should create a Secure Research & Talent (SRT) visa track that pairs tiered research clearances with an earned-trust green-card incentive. Under the SRT system, foreign graduate students would be placed in three security tiers (open, sensitive, and controlled) based on project export-control codes, mirroring existing ITAR/EAR[452] rules but run by DHS rather than universities. Students in the two higher tiers would complete an online research-security certification and undergo a single-window background check modeled on the UK ATAS; in return, those who finish a U.S. PhD and spend three years in domestic R&D labs would receive expedited adjustment-of-status eligibility.[453]

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[448] *China: The Risk to Academia*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d. https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/china-risk-to-academia-2019.pdf.
[449] "International Students Contribute Record-Breaking Level of Spending and 378,000 Jobs to the U.S. Economy | NAFSA." November 18, 2024. https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/international-students-contribute-record-breaking-level-spending-and-378000-jobs.
[450] GOV.UK. "Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)." June 10, 2025. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme.
[451] "Safeguarding Your Research." https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/safeguarding-your-research.
[452] "Deemed Exports FAQs." Accessed https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/policy-guidance/deemed-exports/deemed-exports-faqs.
[453] "Options for Alien STEM Professionals to Work in the United States | USCIS." January 24, 2025. https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/options-for-alien-stem-professionals-to-work-in-the-united-states.

This approach narrows scrutiny to the small percentage of projects that truly matter for national security while signaling that compliant students are more welcome, not less. It also minimizes institutional red tape, universities simply tag projects by export-control code, saving federal research dollars now lost to duplicated campus vetting.[454] Crucially, giving top talent a clear, merit-based path to permanence aligns their economic self-interest with staying and innovating in the United States, counteracting "talent repatriation" drives like China's Thousand Talents program.[455] By replacing today's blunt visa throttles with targeted clearance plus powerful retention carrots, the SRT track would protect critical technologies and keep the world's best minds, trained at places like Harvard, working for America's future.

[454] "Key Issues in University Research: Deemed Export | Office of Research Security & Trade Compliance." Accessed. https://www.researchsecurity.pitt.edu/key-issues-university-research-deemed-export.
[455] Thompson, Adrienne. "US Targets Chinese Talent in Drive to 'Decouple' Science." *Center for Security and Emerging Technology*, December 14, 2020. https://cset.georgetown.edu/article/us-targets-chinese-talent-in-drive-to-decouple-science/.

Developing a National Talent Circulation Visa

Brain drain, which is when highly educated students from lower-income countries stay in wealthier nations, is a longstanding concern around the world. This problem has exacerbated inequality with some countries losing more than 80% of their highly educated population, with around 20 other countries losing between one third and one half of their college graduates.[456] The United States has contributed to this problem, with visa barriers sometimes forcing even those who would want to go back to their home economies to stay or lose their status instead of encouraging two-way mobility between countries.[457] Conversely, some immigrants may decide to return to their home country immediately rather than staying in the United States for any period of time after graduation, meaning that the United States is losing out on the value provided by these students due to its all-or-nothing approach. This policy proposal aims to develop a National Talent Circulation Visa to combat brain drain.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, most international students enter on F-1 visas. F-1s can pursue Optional Practical Training (OPT), but this is time-limited.[458] Transition to an H-1B (temporary specialty worker) visa is highly constrained by annual caps, lottery systems, and employer sponsorship complexity.[459] Currently, no mechanism exists for short-term or mid-term opportunities for students to travel between the US and their home countries for joint projects, nor for streamlined reentry after students collaborate with international

[456] Docquier, Frédéric. "The Brain Drain from Developing Countries ." *The Brain Drain from Developing Countries* 31 (2014). https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.31.
[457] McGrath, Emily. "Vanishing Advantage: The U.S. Brain Drain Has Begun." The Century Foundation, May 2025. https://tcf.org/content/commentary/vanishing-advantage-the-u-s-brain-drain-has-begun/.
[458] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students | USCIS." www.uscis.gov, April 22, 2020. https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students.
[459] USCIS. "H-1B Cap Season | USCIS." USCIS, December 11, 2024. https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations/h-1b-cap-season.

organizations[460] (hereinafter referred to as "circulation"). Legislative precedent in the form of Congressional action and bilateral agreement exists for special-category visas, such as J-1 exchange and visa waivers, similar to the one proposed here.[461]

One potential solution to the aforementioned problem would be to create a visa program open to international graduates of US institutions, especially those in STEM fields and other high-need sectors.

Such a visa could grant up to five years of temporary post-graduation work authorization in the US, which would allow it to extend beyond OPT limitations.[462] It would also incorporate explicit provisions for short-term or mid-term return to home countries, such as for research, teaching, or startup creation, with guaranteed re-entry to the US for continued employment or collaboration. It would require participating US employers or universities to document partnerships with home-country public agencies, institutions, or firms to promote the transfer of knowledge. Incentives for US employers could include that those who develop talent-sharing partnerships with home-country organizations may be eligible for research tax credits or expedited workforce approval processes.

This visa would be legislatively created through an amendment to the INA, similar to how past pilot visas have been enacted by Congressional statute along with bilateral agreement.[463]

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[460] Shie, Grace, Morgan Bailey, and Maximillian Del Rey. "The International Student Talent Pipeline: Changes in US Visa and Work Authorization Policies." Mayerbrown.com, May 30, 2025. https://www.mayerbrown.com/en/insights/publications/2025/05/the-international-talent-pipeline-changes-in-us-visa-and-work-authorization-policies.

[461] Ester, Karma. "CRS Report for Congress Immigration: Foreign Physicians and the J-1 Visa Waiver Program," December 9, 2004. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/RL31460.pdf.

[462] Sankar, Deepa. "Post Study Work Permit in USA: How and When to Apply for Work Permit after Studying in USA?" Yocket Study Abroad, July 25, 2025. https://yocket.com/blog/post-study-work-permit-in-usa.

[463] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Immigration and Nationality Act." U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, July 10, 2019. https://www.uscis.gov/laws-and-policy/legislation/immigration-and-nationality-act.

This visa proposal mitigates the brain drain commonly seen in countries that send their students to the United States. This could help the US build global partnerships while continuing to enforce its stricter immigration policy under the current administration. US employers would benefit from a more predictable system for hiring international graduates, and they would be incentivized to partner internationally, supporting American competitiveness in a globalized economy.

Establishing a Visa Category for Early-Stage Company Founders

The 1.1 million international students in the United States are vital contributors to the nation's entrepreneurial landscape.[464] These students launch startups at rates eight to nine times higher than their U.S.-born peers.[465] For every additional 150 international graduate students, one new startup emerges within five years.[466] Moreover, every 10 percentage point increase in the share of foreign-born students within a master's cohort is associated with 0.4 more startups founded by cohort members, substantially exceeding the rate observed among U.S.-born students.[467] At Harvard, international students comprise approximately 25% of total enrollment, close to 7,000 individuals from more than 140 countries for 2024–25.[468] Crucially, international students have founded or co-founded about 44% of all billion-dollar ("unicorn") startups in the United States, and 24 American unicorns were started specifically by former Harvard international students.[469]

Despite this, the United States lacks a targeted immigration pathway for student founders, forcing many to leave for places with looser immigration policies like the UK and Australia.[470] A dedicated startup visa for international students who found early-stage U.S. companies would solve this problem by allowing entrepreneurial graduates to remain in the country, contribute to

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[464] Open Doors Data. "International Students." November 18, 2024. https://opendoorsdata.org/annual-release/international-students/.
[465] Beine, Michel, Giovanni Peri, and Morgan Raux. The Contribution of Foreign Master's Students to US Start-Ups. December 2024. https://www.nber.org/papers/w33314.
[466] Ibid.
[467] Peri, Giovanni. "International Graduate Students Create More Startups and Drive Entrepreneurialism among Their Native-Born Peers." January 12, 2025. https://globalmigration.ucdavis.edu/news/international-graduate-students-create-more-startups-and-drive-entrepreneurialism-among-0.
[468] Conte, Niccolo. "Charted: International Students at Harvard (2006–2024)." *Visual Capitalist*, June 2, 2025. https://www.visualcapitalist.com/charted-international-students-at-harvard-2006-2024/.
[469] Primack, Dan. "Harvard Ban Threatens Startup Pipeline." Axios, May 27, 2025. https://www.axios.com/local/boston/2025/05/27/harvard-ban-threatens-startup-pipeline.
[470] Nikos-Rose, Karen Michele. "International Students Boost Startup Creation, Lifting Local Jobs and Revenue, New Research Shows." UC Davis, January 14, 2025. https://www.ucdavis.edu/news/international-students-boost-startup-creation-lifting-local-jobs-and-revenue-new-research.

the economy, and create jobs for Americans. Otherwise, the United States loses invaluable minds and powerhouses that serve only to prop up the American economy.

The current U.S. immigration system presents significant structural obstacles for international student entrepreneurs. The F-1 student visa strictly prohibits off-campus employment during the first academic year and limits subsequent off-campus work to specific authorized programs.[471] Even when permitted, employment is limited to 20 hours per week during the academic term in on-campus roles, creating ambiguity around whether start-up involvement qualifies; further, violations can result in immediate termination of visa status.[472] These constraints make it extremely challenging for aspiring founders to start and grow a business, and consequently, students are forced to delay start-ups until graduation.

The policy that many international graduates then turn to is Optional Practical Training (OPT), the primary post-graduation employment pathway; in fact, over 72% of foreign graduates use OPT after earning their degrees, permitting up to 12 months of authorized work.[473] OPT offers a short-term solution, however, because it is non-renewable, must be directly related to the student's major, and is not designed to support genuine entrepreneurial activity. In fact, for entrepreneurs, OPT is wholly incompatible. Requiring employment with an e-verified company, a minimum salary threshold, and evidence of a traditional employer-employee relationship—especially for international students trying to launch their own ventures—makes it extremely difficult to meet these conditions within the OPT timeframe.[474]

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[471] "Students and Employment | USCIS." April 8, 2025. https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment.
[472] "Chapter 6 - Employment | USCIS." December 20, 2023. https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-2-part-f-chapter-6.
[473] Khoo, Pauline. *If You Extend It, They Will Come: The Effects of the STEM OPT Extension*. April 2023. https://www.thecgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Effects-STEM-OPT-Extension_02.pdf.
[474] "Mastering Entrepreneurship on F1 Visas in the US." June 13, 2024. https://cptdog.com/blogs/entrepreneurship-on-f1-visas.

The H-1B work visa might seem like another possible route and is theoretically accessible to start-up founders. However, it is subject to a cap of 85,000 individuals and has a lottery system where only one-third are approved.[475] Further, it poses unique challenges for those with an interest in owning and controlling their own companies, since an individual cannot qualify as both an employee and employer simultaneously.[476]

To address some of these gaps, the International Entrepreneur Parole (IEP) program was introduced in 2017 by the Obama administration.[477] However, the incoming Trump administration did not pursue or promote the program, leading to no outcomes resulting from the policy.[478] Regardless, it faces structural challenges, for it only allows a maximum of three founders per company, restricts work to the startup named in the application, and does not offer a pathway to permanent residency.[479] Additionally, as a form of "parole" rather than a visa, its continuation and eligibility criteria remain at the "case-by-case" discretion of each administration, causing periodic instability.[480] With Trump's second administration, it's unclear whether the program will be halted again. What is clear is that without a robust entrepreneur visa, Harvard and other American universities risk losing the very value they help create through

[475] David Phillips. "Mastering the U.S. Immigration Landscape: Visa Options and Opportunities for Startup Founders." May 12, 2025. https://www.tryfondo.com/blog/masters-exemption-startup-founders.
[476] Ibid.
[477] The Progressive Policy Institute. "Long Live the International Entrepreneur Rule: An Opportunity to Boost Jobs and Economic Growth Is Hiding in Plain Sight." *Progressive Policy Institute*, February 3, 2021. https://www.progressivepolicy.org/long-live-the-international-entrepreneur-rule-an-opportunity-to-boost-jobs-and-economic-growth-is-hiding-in-plain-sight/.
[478] Ibid.
[479] Fragomen - Immigration Attorneys, Solicitors, and Consultants Worldwide - USCIS Relaunches International Entrepreneur Parole Program. "USCIS Relaunches International Entrepreneur Parole Program." Accessed August 12, 2025. https://www.fragomen.com/insights/uscis-relaunches-international-entrepreneur-parole-program.html.
[480] Fisher Phillips. "International Entrepreneurs Now Eligible for U.S. Entry and Work Authorization – Know the Details Compared to Other Immigration Options." March 10, 2022. https://www.fisherphillips.com/en/news-insights/international-entrepreneurs-us-entry-work-authorization.html.

world-class education, as many founders are forced to leave before their startups have a chance to succeed.

The proposal is to create a U.S. startup visa for recent international graduates who actively lead and hold significant ownership in U.S.-based startups, allowing them to remain in the country for 3–5 years with a path to permanent residency based on business milestones such as investment, revenue, or job creation, with an initial cap of 15,000 visas annually. Unlike the limited International Entrepreneur Parole (IEP) program, this visa would not restrict eligibility to just three co-founders and would permit some income flexibility, such as limited outside work, while the startup scales.

Nationally, the potential is transformative. According to modeling by the Kauffman Foundation, 75,000 startup visa recipients over 10 years could generate up to 1.6 million new U.S. jobs, while also strengthening local startup ecosystems and driving growth in the technology sector.[481] At Harvard and nationally, international student entrepreneurship is impactful, but the U.S. risks losing all of these benefits without clear pathways to stable residency and long-term business establishment.

Global innovation hubs offer proven models for such reform. Canada's Start-Up Visa program, launched in 2015, admitted over 5,600 entrepreneurs and family members in 2024 alone, a 285% increase from the previous year.[482] A 2022 study found that over 680 companies created through the Start-Up Visa generated 6,200 jobs and $518 million in GDP.[483] Further,

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[481] Stangler, Dane, and Jared Konczal. "Give Me Your Entrepreneurs, Your Innovators: Estimating Employment Impact of a Startup Visa." SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 2226454. Social Science Research Network, February 28, 2013. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2226454.

[482] Quito, Eivy Joy. "Canada's Start-Up Visa Program Hits Record Highs with Unprecedented Growth." *ImmigCanada Immigration Consulting Services*, February 26, 2025. https://immigcanada.com/canadas-start-up-visa-program-hits-record-highs-with-unprecedented-growth/.

[483] Tám Tháng. *The Vital Economic Immigration Impacts of Canada's Start-Up Visa Program*. August 9, 2023. https://eternainternational.com/vn/the-vital-economic-immigration-impacts-of-canadas-start-up-visa-program/.

immigrant founders in Canada also create jobs at a higher net-per-firm rate than native-born business owners.[484] The Canadian government started the program as a pilot in 2013, a model the United States could follow. In the United Kingdom, the Innovator Founder Visa supports multi-year stays and offers residency pathways; nearly 40% of the country's fastest-growing firms now include at least one foreign-born founder.[485]

The evidence is clear: international student entrepreneurs are catalysts for innovation, job creation, and global competitiveness. Outdated immigration policies convert these strengths into missed opportunities, driving talent toward nations that actively welcome and invest in them. By enacting a dedicated Startup Visa, the United States can transform this loss into long-term economic gain, retaining the very innovators our universities attract and cultivate. The United States can choose to lead the world in attracting and keeping the brightest minds. The alternative is to watch competitors build the companies, technologies, and industries that should have been made in the United States.

[484] Picot, Garnett, and Anne-Marie Rollin. *Immigrant Entrepreneurs as Job Creators: The Case of Canadian Private Incorporated Companies*. Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, no. 423. Statistics Canada, 2019.
[485] The Entrepreneurs Network. "Job Creators 2024." August 2024. https://www.tenentrepreneurs.org/job-creators-2024.

Exempting International Graduates from the H-1B visa cap

For decades, the United States has been a top destination for talented individuals from across the globe. To retain this talent, the U.S. immigration framework includes a multitude of both immigrant and nonimmigrant visa programs. For most international students and graduates, the primary pathway to employment in the U.S. is through a limited number of employment-based visas—most notably, the H-1B visa. The H-1B visa program is meant to support high-skilled labor needs, yet it is subject to complex requirements and stringent participation caps. These restrictive policies force many international graduates to leave the United States, resulting in a significant loss of talent.

The H-1B visa for specialty occupations is a nonimmigrant visa granted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to skilled foreign workers for an initial period of 3 years, with the possibility for extension. Among other requirements, a position must require theoretical and practical application knowledge—as well as at least a bachelor's degree—to qualify as a specialty occupation. In order to receive an H-1B visa, a noncitizen must have their employer file a petition on their behalf.[486] The U.S. Congress has capped the number of new H-1B visas issued every fiscal year at 65,000. If the number of petitions filed by employers exceeds 65,000 in a given year, a lottery is held to determine which petitions are allowed to proceed.[487] Since the H-1B lottery is entirely random, there is no guarantee that an employer's petition will be selected, regardless of when or how early it is filed.

[486]U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "H-1B Specialty Occupations, DOD Cooperative Research and Development Project Workers, and Fashion Models | USCIS," www.uscis.gov, February 5, 2021, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/h-1b-specialty-occupations.
[487]USCIS, "H-1B Cap Season | USCIS," USCIS, December 11, 2024, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations/h-1b-cap-season.

In addition to the 65,000 regular H-1B visas issued each year, there are an additional 20,000 H-1B visas reserved for noncitizen workers with a master's degree or higher from a U.S. institution. This so-called "master's cap" provides those who have earned a graduate degree in the U.S. with two opportunities to have their petition selected. When more than 20,000 H-1B advanced degree exemption petitions are filed, an initial lottery is held to fill the 20,000 slots. However, all remaining petitions are then entered into the general H-1B lottery, increasing their chance of selection.[488] Additionally, those who are petitioned for by institutions of higher education, nonprofit research organizations, or government research organizations are exempt from the H-1B numerical cap—bypassing the lottery entirely.[489]

Even though the H-1B advanced degree exemption exists, the demand for H-1B visas has outgrown the numerical cap. In the 2021 fiscal year, around 275,000 H-1B petitions were filed, 46% of which were advanced degree exemptions. This means that roughly 126,500 applicants holding U.S. graduate degrees were competing for just 20,000 exempt slots—and, more broadly, for a total of 85,000 available visas.[490] This level of competition is a key factor in the high rate of departure among international students following graduation. In 2021, only 17 percent of foreign-born bachelor's degree recipients stayed in the U.S. after graduation. While master's and doctoral degree holders had higher retention rates—51 percent and 76 percent, respectively—a substantial portion still left the country.[491] Yet, a 2021 survey found that 73 percent of prospective international students would remain in the U.S. after graduation if visas were more

[488]U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "USCIS Reaches Fiscal Year 2026 H-1B Cap | USCIS," USCIS, July 18, 2025, https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-reaches-fiscal-year-2026-h-1b-cap.
[489]USCIS, "H-1B Cap Season | USCIS," USCIS, December 11, 2024, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations/h-1b-cap-season.
[490]U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "FY 2021 H-1B Cap Petitions May Be Filed as of April 1 | USCIS," USCIS, April 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/archive/fy-2021-h-1b-cap-petitions-may-be-filed-as-of-april-1.
[491]Reuben Francis, "Most International Graduates of American Universities Ultimately Leave the U.S.," Economic Innovation Group, June 27, 2024, https://eig.org/immigrant-retention-estimates/.

accessible.[492] Based on current trends, an estimated 100,000 international graduates each year would prefer to stay and work in the United States. If permitted to do so, these individuals could collectively contribute up to $233 billion in wages to the U.S. economy over the course of the decade.[493]

To address the talent loss associated with current visa limitations, the federal government should implement a targeted exemption from the H-1B numerical cap for international graduates of accredited U.S. institutions. This exemption would not alter existing eligibility criteria or sponsorship requirements, rather it would remove the element of random selection for those who have completed their education in the U.S. and obtained a qualifying employment offer.

The current structure of the H-1B visa program has clearly been outpaced by U.S. employers' mounting demand for noncitizen skilled workers. By issuing a limited number of new H-1B visas each year, particularly to graduates of U.S. universities, the United States forfeits both valuable talent and the potential for hundreds of billions of dollars in economic activity. To remain globally competitive and continue attracting the world's most qualified students, the federal government should implement an additional H-1B cap exemption specifically for international graduates of accredited U.S. universities. Existing policies, including the H-1B "master's cap" and lottery exemptions for nonprofit organizations, provide precedent for such an exemption. Importantly, this reform would not alter the core eligibility requirements of the H-1B program; graduates would still be required to secure a job offer and employer sponsorship. This ensures that only those who meet the established skill and

[492]Julie Heng and Yutong Deng, "Innovation Lightbulb: Not Just Attracting but Retaining International STEM Students," Csis.org, 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/innovation-lightbulb-not-just-attracting-retaining-international-stem-students.
[493]FWD.us, "Retaining U.S. International Student Graduates Could Help Fill Millions of Critical Job Openings," FWD.us, February 3, 2022, https://www.fwd.us/news/us-international-students/.

employment criteria would benefit from the exemption, while removing the arbitrary barrier of the lottery system for U.S.-educated individuals.

Streamlining the F-1 to H-1B Visa Transition Pathway

Harvard currently hosts approximately 6,793 international students, making up 27.2% of its total student body.[494] These students, primarily on F-1 visas, contribute significantly to Harvard's academic output and cultural diversity. However, when they graduate and seek employment in the United States, their legal status becomes highly precarious due to challenges in transitioning from F-1 to H-1B visas. In May 2025, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security revoked Harvard's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certification, jeopardizing the legal standing of roughly 6,800 international students until a court granted emergency relief.[495] This incident revealed a serious institutional gap: Harvard lacked a dedicated legal framework to safeguard its international students during sudden federal policy changes. This brief proposes a dual approach: establishing a legal clinic at Harvard and joining a multi-university coalition to advocate for structural reform of the visa transition process.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, international students contributed $43.8 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 378,175 jobs across the country.[496] The visa cap for each fiscal year is set at 65,000 visas, alongside an additional 20,000 visas for individuals with a U.S. master's degree or higher. Simultaneously, in 2023 alone the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) received over 483,000 applications, making the acceptance rate fall below

[494] Visual Capitalist, "Charted: International Students at Harvard (2006-2024)," accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.voronoiapp.com/current-events/Charted-International-Students-at-Harvard-2006-2024-5275.
[495] Maya Yang, "Trump Administration Halts Harvard's Ability to Enroll International Students," US News, *The Guardian*, May 22, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/22/trump-harvard-international-students.
[496] "NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool | NAFSA," accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2.

20%[497, 498] With only a 12-month Optional Practical Training (OPT) window (36 months for STEM majors) the timing and randomness of the H-1B process add enormous legal uncertainty for graduating students.[499]

While the Harvard International Office (HIO) provides procedural advising on student visa compliance, it doesn't offer legal representation in court proceedings.[500] Thus, when the SEVP was revoked in May 2025 it caused confusion and panic. Students tried finding immigration attorneys, and many were unfamiliar with their rights or emergency options like motions to reopen.[501] Harvard's lack of a dedicated legal team left hundreds of students exposed to status lapses, which could have lasting repercussions. This event also highlighted the need for an institutional safety net capable of responding rapidly to visa related crises.

While Harvard does not currently operate an in-house immigration legal clinic for international students, peer institutions have successfully built legal clinics that specialize in immigration law, demonstrating that institutions can have in-house legal infrastructure for immigration support. For example, at Yale Law School, students in the Legal Assistance: Immigrant Rights Clinic provide court representation, policy advocacy, and legal strategy in immigration-related cases, supervised by faculty. While these services are generally directed at the broader New Haven community, they establish a replicable model for legal expertise housed

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497 "Navigating the H-1B Cap Season for FY 2026 | Alerts and Articles | Insights | Ballard Spahr," accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.ballardspahr.com/insights/alerts-and-articles/2025/01/navigating-the-h-1b-cap-season-for-fy-2026?utm.

498 "United States: Nearly 484,000 Registrations Were Received for the FY 2023 H-1B Cap, USCIS Reveals | Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy LLP," accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.fragomen.com/insights/united-states-nearly-484000-registrations-were-received-for-the-fy-2023-h-1b-cap-uscis-reveals.html?utm.

499 "Practical Training | ICE," August 20, 2020, https://www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training.

500 "About Visa Sponsorship at Harvard | Harvard International Office," accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.hio.harvard.edu/visa-sponsorship?utm.

501 "Chapter 4. Motions to Reopen and Reconsider | USCIS," March 11, 2019, https://www.uscis.gov/administrative-appeals/aao-practice-manual/chapter-4-motions-to-reopen-and-reconsider.

within a university.[502] Harvard could also follow this model, tailoring the mission to specifically support Harvard's international students navigating F-1 to H-1B transitions, OPT complications, and emergency legal challenges

Harvard could initiate or strengthen a coalition of peer institutions to push for reforms to the H-1B system, much like the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, which brings together leaders of colleges and universities to advocate for immigrant, refugee, and international student rights.[503] As an example, the Alliance has submitted public comment letters calling on the U.S. government to modernize H-1B regulations, including proposals to better align the F-1 student program with employment-based visa pathways.[504] A targeted H-1B sub-coalition could campaign for expanded H-1B caps for university-affiliated workers, green card fast-tracks for U.S. trained international graduates in STEM, and year-round cap-exempt employer options. Harvard's academic credibility and global reputation could bring legitimacy and media attention to this initiative.

The legal clinic could be based at Harvard Law School, staffed by professors, supervised law students, and external immigration lawyers. Harvard could partner with firms such as Fragomen that are already working on immigration related issues.[505] The organizing of the coalition can be coordinated through the Office of Federal Relations, with the initial funding

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[502] "Legal Assistance: Immigrant Rights Clinic | Yale Law School," accessed August 6, 2025, https://law.yale.edu/studying-law-yale/clinical-and-experiential-learning/our-clinics/legal-assistance-immigrant-rights-clinic.

[503] "The Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration," Presidents' Alliance, accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.presidentsalliance.org/.

[504] Info Account, "Comment Letter on Modernizing H—1B Requirements, Providing Flexibility in the F—1 Program, and Program Improvements Affecting Other Nonimmigrant Workers (DHS Docket No. USCIS-2023-0005)," *Presidents' Alliance*, December 20, 2023, https://www.presidentsalliance.org/comment-letter-on-modernizing-h-1b-requirements-providing-flexibility-in-the-f-1-program-and-program-improvements-affecting-other-nonimmigrant-workers-dhs-docket-no-uscis-202/.

[505] "Fragomen - A World of Difference in Immigration - Immigration Attorneys, Solicitors, and Consultants Worldwide," Fragomen - Immigration Attorneys, Solicitors, and Consultants Worldwide - About Fragomen, accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.fragomen.com/about/about-fragomen.html.

coming from alumni networks or external grants. Additionally, the goals and success rates can be tracked by the Harvard International Office.

The risks of this proposal include political scrutiny, resistance to change within Harvard, and upfront costs. However, the benefits far outweigh them. A legal clinic would immediately reduce uncertainty for thousands of students, while a policy coalition could achieve systemic reform.Harvard has the resources and influence to protect its international students and shape national immigration discourse. Harvard's international students are vital to its intellectual and cultural community. Yet the F-1 to H-1B visa process places them in precarious legal limbo post-graduation. By launching a university-run immigration legal clinic and leading a national coalition for H-1B reform, Harvard can provide immediate legal security while pushing for long-term structural change. This approach is affordable, impactful, and consistent with the university's global mission.

Harvard-Yenching Visa Access Partnership

Harvard enrolls nearly 6,800 international students—27% of its student body in the 2024–2025 academic year.[506] Nationally, according to NAFSA, international students contributed $43.8 billion annually to the U.S. economy and generated around 378,175 jobs during the 2023–2024 academic year.[507] Yet the U.S. retained only 41% of its international graduates from the 2012–2020 period and just 17% of bachelor's degree holders.[508] Harvard educates elite global talent but is unable to retain most of their international alumni due to the restrictive and unpredictable nature of the U.S. immigration system. This paper proposes the Harvard-Yenching Visa Access Partnership (HY-VAP), a university-led program to secure post-graduation stability for international students through visa pipelines, housing support, and targeted advocacy.

The U.S. loses around 150,000 international graduates each year due to the lack of visa access.[509] H-1B visas are capped at 85,000 annually despite over 400,000 applications in recent years.[510] OPT offers 12 months of work authorization, extendable by 24 months for STEM graduates, but does not guarantee permanent residency, forcing them and the economic value they bring with them to leave the country.[511] Even at Harvard, many international graduates leave the U.S. within a year despite high employer interest, especially in STEM fields, representing a direct loss to both the university's network and the national labor market, creating

[506] Statista. "International Students at Harvard University in 2024–2025." August 2025. https://www.statista.com/chart/34519/international-students-at-harvard-university/
[507] *NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool*. (n.d.). NAFSA. https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2
[508] Economic Innovation Group. "Immigrant Retention Estimates." 2024. https://eig.org/immigrant-retention-estimates/
[509] Economic Innovation Group. "Immigrant Retention Estimates." 2024. https://eig.org/immigrant-retention-estimates/
[510] H-1B visas are capped at 85,000 annually despite over 400,000 applications in recent years
[511] U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "Optional Practical Training (OPT) Data." 2023.

a shortfall of a highly productive and in-demand workforce. The falling out between leading American universities and the Trump administration regarding international students will most definitely paint a far more daunting picture for America's brain drain issue.

Visa uncertainty discourages prospective applicants, as clearly indicated by recent statistics published by both *The Guardian* and *The Economic Innovation Group*. In 2024, the U.S. denial rate for international student visas rose above 40%, up from roughly 15% a decade earlier.[512] That same year, new international student enrollment dropped 30%.[513] The Department of Homeland Security's temporary revocation of Harvard's SEVP certification in May 2025, though reversed by court order, threatened over 6,000 students' legal status.[514] Such actions disregarded the U.S.'s reputation as a safe haven for any student around the globe wanting the best education and a prospective future in the United States.

Harvard's research output and finances depend on international students. Over 50% of STEM PhDs in the U.S. are earned by non-citizens,[515] and more than 25% of U.S. patents name at least one foreign-born inventor.[516] At Harvard, full-tuition revenue from international students helps fund research, faculty salaries, and domestic student aid.[517] Declining enrollment would damage Harvard's ability to sustain this ecosystem.

Competing countries in education, like Canada, have outpaced the U.S. by linking post-study work to permanent residency, resulting in a stay rate for international graduates exceeding

[512] The Guardian. "U.S. Student Visa Denials Reach Record Levels." May 23, 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/23/trump-harvard-international-students
[513] ICEF Monitor. "International Student Enrollment Drops in U.S." June 2025. https://monitor.icef.com/2025/06/real-time-insights-on-shifting-international-student-interest-in-the-us/
[514] The Guardian. "Federal Government Moves to Revoke Harvard's SEVP Status." May 23, 2025.
[515] National Science Foundation. "Survey of Earned Doctorates." 2023. https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf24300
[516] U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. "Patenting by Foreign-Born Inventors." 2023. https://www.uspto.gov
[517] Harvard University Fact Book 2024–2025. https://oir.harvard.edu/fact-book

60%.[518] Likewise, Australia and the UK have adopted similar pathways in retaining young, talented, and highly productive workers in their respective national labour markets. Meanwhile, the U.S. stay rate for bachelor's degree holders is approximately 17%.[519] These policy differences explain why Canada's international student population grew by 29% in 2023[520] while the U.S. saw sharp declines.

The Harvard-Yenching Visa Access Partnership (HY-VAP) is a comprehensive, university-led initiative designed to tackle the critical challenge of retaining international graduates in the United States by providing guaranteed pathways to legal work authorization and, later on, residency culminating in citizenship. HY-VAP secures a dedicated allotment of employer-sponsored H-1B visa slots exclusively for Harvard alumni, bypassing the traditional lottery system that leaves many qualified graduates without any chance to stay in the United States and add their professional, talented economic value to the national economy. This visa pipeline is supplemented by in-house legal services that assist graduates and their employers with complex immigration procedures, ensuring timely and successful petition submissions. To address one of the most immediate barriers to retention—affordable housing—HY-VAP offers subsidized transitional housing in Cambridge and Boston for up to two years post-graduation, easing rent inflation pressures that disproportionately affect international students and early-career professionals. By integrating visa sponsorship and housing support, HY-VAP represents a holistic solution that leverages Harvard's institutional resources to sustain its global talent pipeline to stay in the U.S.A.

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[518] Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "International Student Statistics." 2024. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada

[519] Economic Innovation Group. "Immigrant Retention Estimates." 2024. https://eig.org/immigrant-retention-estimates/

[520] Harvard University Fact Book 2024–2025. https://oir.harvard.edu/fact-book

International students are vital to Harvard's global leadership, yet most leave after graduation due to bureaucratic red tape. The Harvard-Yenching Visa Access Partnership addresses this by creating guaranteed visa pathways and ensuring post-graduation housing for a decent amount of time. This approach protects Harvard's investment in global talent and positions the university as a leader in national talent retention reform, something extremely valuable for the U.S.'s soft and economic power.

Promoting Research Projects Focused on Global Issues

Brain drain is when there is the migration of skilled individuals in search for better quality of life, access to advanced opportunities, and higher salaries.[521] Many individuals, especially international students, are migrating from developing countries to developed countries. In 2000, almost 175 million people (2.9% of the world's population) were living in a country outside of their birth country for more than a year, 65 million of these people were economically active. There are more opportunities for employment and technological advancements in developed countries compared to the home countries of many of these individuals.[522]

Many international students, including graduate students training in research, come to the United States because the United States has been the global standard since World War II. 1.1 million international students contributed $44 billion to the U.S. economy, just a quarter of that number of U.S. students left the country to study, contributing less to the economics of the rest of the world.[523] In a 2022 report, founders of 25% of U.S. billion dollar startup companies came to the U.S. as international students. 80% of these companies either have had an immigrant as a founder or in a C-suite role. Additionally, 35% of U.S.-based Nobel Prize winners were foreign-born and almost half of them had earned their highest degree in the U.S.[524] The U.S. is experiencing extensive brain gain and is benefiting the country's overall economy and the lifestyles of these individuals. With the Trump administration making it difficult for

[521]Sunita Dodani, and Ronald Laporte. "Brain Drain from Developing Countries: How Can Brain Drain Be Converted into Wisdom Gain?" Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine 98, no. 11 (November 1, 2005): 487–91. https://doi.org/10.1258/jrsm.98.11.487.
[522]"Brain Drain from Developing Countries: How Can Brain Drain Be Converted into Wisdom Gain?"
[523]David M Lodge. "From Brain Gain to Brain Drain: The Cost of Undermining U.S. Higher Education |." Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability, June 24, 2025. https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/blog/from-brain-gain-to-brain-drain-the-cost-of-undermining-u-s-higher-education/.
[524]"From Brain Gain to Brain Drain: The Cost of Undermining U.S. Higher Education |."

international students to thrive at U.S. institutions and cutting research funding, other countries are investing in university-based R&D to researchers.[525]

Least developed countries are countries with some of the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development across many ranges of indexes. Least developed countries have a gross national per capita income (GNI) of below USD$1,018.[526] There are 46 least developed countries and are home to 1.1 billion people, which is 14 percent of the world's population, but 75% of these people are living in poverty. These countries are also at risk of external economic shocks, natural and man-made disasters, diseases, and climate change.[527]

The U.S. leads in medicine and social science with no major competitors in the general view of global scientific research.[528] While it is not clear on what the specific focus is on the topics that the U.S. researches on, we can allocate more time and focus to researching issues that developed countries are facing. Universities can create a program for students and researchers to focus on a developing country. They will identify an issue that the country is facing and work to find solutions using research funding specifically made to study that issue. This gives students opportunities to practice and gain knowledge, while also finding solutions to fix issues in developing countries so that individuals can eventually live a better quality of life.

There should be more research funding and work to address global issues that developing countries are facing. These countries do not have as much technological resources such as the U.S. The skills of the international students are still being applied to the country even if they are

[525]"From Brain Gain to Brain Drain: The Cost of Undermining U.S. Higher Education |."
[526]United Nations. "5 Things You Need to Know about the World's Least Developed Countries | UN News." news.un.org, March 3, 2023. https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134087.
[527]"5 Things You Need to Know about the World's Least Developed Countries | UN News."
[528]Authors, Autumn, Melissa Toney, and Flagg. "Comparing the United States' and China's Leading Roles in the Landscape of Science CSET Data Brief," 2021. https://cset.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/CSET-Comparing-the-United-States-and-Chinas-Leading-Roles-in-the-Landscape-of-Science-1.pdf.

not physically in the country. There is not a perfect solution to solving brain drain, but there are ways to minimize the impacts of this issue. By implementing certain programs to specifically address issues such as climate change and diseases within developing countries, international students can focus on their education in the U.S., while also supporting and giving back to their home country.

Removing FICA Tax Exemptions for International OPT Workers

The federal government should remove the FICA tax exemption from foreign OPT workers while creating more secure pathways for F-1 and J-1 students to become "resident aliens" post graduation. Currently, international students working in the United States through the OPT, STEM OPT, or CPT programs are briefly exempt from paying FICA taxes into Social Security or Medicare.[529, 530] Normally, the cost of the Social Security tax (formally known as OASDI) and the Medicare tax are split equally between the employer and employee, totalling a 15.3% tax.[531] Thus, workers who are exempt from this tax may be paid 15.3% less than their tax-paying competitors while still bringing home the same amount of money. Naturally, this makes these workers particularly attractive to employers. This puts domestic workers and international resident aliens at a significant disadvantage in the workforce, making it more difficult for them to find jobs and disincentivising students from entering STEM fields. Requiring these workers to pay FICA taxes would help return parity.

Removing the lucrative tax incentives is not enough however. American employers systemically benefit from underpaying immigrant workers[532] because the perpetual lack of a secure resident status from hostile immigration legislative and executive infrastructure enables employers to underpay their workers or outright engage in wage theft.[533] Providing legal and

[529] "Foreign Student Liability for Social Security and Medicare Taxes | Internal Revenue Service," accessed August 2, 2025, https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/foreign-student-liability-for-social-security-and-medicare-taxes.
[530] "26 U.S. Code § 7701 - Definitions," LII / Legal Information Institute, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/26/7701.
[531] "FICA - International Taxation - University of Richmond," Universityfinance, accessed August 2, 2025, https://universityfinance.richmond.edu/payroll/international/employment/fica.html.
[532] "Immigrants and the Labor Market," Public Policy Institute of California, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.ppic.org/publication/immigrants-and-the-labor-market/.
[533] "Migrant Workers' Access to Justice for Wage Theft," Migrant Justice Institute, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.migrantjustice.org/wagethefta2j.

workplace protections to immigrant workers and offering stable pathways to long-term US-residency would ameliorate the habitual sub-market payment of foreign workers, raising the wage of workers across critical industries. This would improve the labor prospects of native-born Americans,[534] improve the quality of life of immigrants in the United States,[535] and bring about more nationwide economic growth.[536]

FICA taxes are taxes paid to the federal government as mandated by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act, the eponymous law from which the taxes derive their name.[537] The tax is a payroll tax levied on all work conducted in the United States with some exceptions.[538] FICA taxes fund two critical social programs in the United States: Social Security and Medicare. These programs provide financial assistance to the elderly, the disabled, children of the disabled, and retirees.[539] In the 2025 fiscal year to date, social security and medicare taxes amounted to $1.35 trillion. For reference, that's 65% more than the US spent on its military in 2024.[540] This enormous fiscal burden is levied on American taxpayers across the country. Section 7701 of the Internal Revenue Code establishes several exemptions from participating in this tax burden, particularly for international student workers. The distinction the IRS draws is between "resident aliens" and "nonresident aliens." Resident aliens must pay FICA taxes, nonresidents generally do

[534] "The U.S. Benefits from Immigration but Policy Reforms Needed to Maximize Gains: Recommendations and a Review of Key Issues to Ensure Fair Wages and Labor Standards for All Workers," Economic Policy Institute, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.epi.org/publication/u-s-benefits-from-immigration/.
[535] Omar Martinez et al., "Evaluating the Impact of Immigration Policies on Health Status Among Undocumented Immigrants: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health / Center for Minority Public Health* 17, no. 3 (June 2015): 947–70, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-013-9968-4.
[536] "Ida.Org/Research-and-Publications/Publications/All/e/Ec/Economic-Benefits-and-Losses-from-Foreign-Stem-Talent-in-the-United-States," accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.ida.org/research-and-publications/publications/all/e/ec/economic-benefits-and-losses-from-foreign-stem-talent-in-the-united-states.
[537] University of Richmond, "FICA - International Taxation - University of Richmond"
[538] Ibid.
[539] Ibid.
[540] Mike D. [R-AL-3 Rep. Rogers, "H.R.2670 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024," legislation, December 22, 2023, 2023-04-18, https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2670.

not. Normally, anyone who has been in the United States for 31 days of the calendar year or 183 days over the past 3 years passes the Substantial Presence Test and becomes a resident alien.[541] However, foreign students working in the United States through an F, J, or M visa are exempt from these taxes for the first five years of their presence in the United States.[542] Thus, foreign students working in the United States during college are exempt from paying the same taxes levied on their native born peers.[543] Not coincidentally, most bachelor degree programs in the United States are completed within four years, and the OPT program that allows foreign students on F-1s to continue working after graduation lasts one year.[544] Many of these workers leave the United States after their OPT period is complete, thus providing limited long-term benefits to the United States.[545] However, while they're here, they occupy many entry-level positions in the US labor market at sub-market pay rates. As a result, recent college graduates in America who are already experiencing unemployment at rates above the general population[546] are finding it increasingly difficult to compete with their peers working through the OPT program. Requiring OPT workers to pay FICA taxes could reduce the inevitable harm inflicted to native students.

The removal of the tax incentive should of course be balanced with easier pathways to become "resident aliens." Stagnating wages and insecure employment opportunities in the

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[541] "Substantial Presence Test | Internal Revenue Service," accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/substantial-presence-test.
[542] "Foreign Student Liability for Social Security and Medicare Taxes | Internal Revenue Service," accessed August 2, 2025, https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/foreign-student-liability-for-social-security-and-medicare-taxes.
[543] Ibid.
[544] "Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students | USCIS," November 25, 2024, https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students.
[545] "Advanced International STEM Students Increasingly Anticipate Shorter-Term Work Stays After Graduation.," *Presidents' Alliance*, September 9, 2024, https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/research/advanced-international-stem-students-increasingly-anticipate-shorter-term-work-stays-after-graduation/.
[546] "The Labor Market for Recent College Graduates," accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market#--:explore:unemployment.

United States is brought about by immigration. Legislators should look neither to nativism nor to a restriction of immigration for solutions, but rather to amendments to tax and immigration law that puts international students on the same playing field as their native peers. FICA tax benefits and hostile immigration architecture provide employers with pretexts to pay immigrants less, reducing salaries overall and creating a wealth transfer from working Americans to shareholders.[547]

[547] George J. Borjas, "Lessons from Immigration Economics," *The Independent Review* 22, no. 3 (2018): 329–40.

Preventing Gentrification Through City-University Collaboration

The past few decades have seen an exponential increase in the number of international students hosted in the United States. Whether certain policymakers like it or not, their presence is strengthened by their academic achievements and often generous financial contributions. Harvard University itself benefits from international students through tuition, research work, and creating an increasingly diverse student body. However, as these students move into surrounding neighborhoods such as Cambridge and Allston, some community members raise concerns about rising rent prices and local gentrification. While international students are sometimes misattributed as contributors to housing pressures, research suggests they are not the primary drivers. To ensure Harvard can continue attracting global talent without exacerbating local housing tensions, a two-part policy approach should be adopted: a temporary rent freeze in highly impacted zones, paired with long-term investment in increased housing supply.

Harvard, with its $50 billion endowment and extensive global reach, attracts thousands of international students who inevitably contribute to Boston's economy, whether by pursuing local work-study jobs and internships or consuming Boston's products and services. In the fiscal year of 2024, international alumni donated over $1.2 billion, which helped fund future Harvard programs relating to the entirety of the student body across Harvard's multiple schools.[548] Regardless, many residents still view international students through a local lens as competitors for the need of housing in already dense neighborhoods, thus enabling tensions and resentment. However, international students are a key aspect of the richness of Harvard and other respective schools that facilitate innovation in the area.

[548] Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance, "Statement of Solidarity with International Students and Scholars," *Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance*, June 2025 https://haaaa.sigs.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=464.

While international students are visible newcomers, data suggests they are not the leading cause of gentrification. Rather, international students and other minority groups that have recently taken a larger presence become a scapegoat for large corporations and upperclass members who actually cause gentrification. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard, major contributors to rising rents in Boston include luxury housing developments, tech-industry expansion, and speculation by real estate investors. These forces gentrify working-class neighborhoods by displacing long-term residents as "redevelopment" projects.[549] In contrast, international students generally rent modest apartments or shared housing and stay for a limited duration. Misidentifying them as the core issue can deflect attention from larger structural contributors to housing unaffordability.

Like many urban areas and college towns, Cambridge has often struggled with affordable housing shortages. Things such as zoning restrictions, limited space for new development, and slow permitting processes have further obstructed the available and affordable housing supply.[550] While Harvard has constructed some of its own graduate housing, demand continues to exceed supply. In 2020, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition ranked Boston as the third most gentrified U.S. city, as about 21.3% of neighborhoods in Boston were gentrified between 2013 to 2017.[551] This gentrification mismatch impacts not only college students but also service workers and working-class families. Without policy action, resentment may grow between local

[549] Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, *Boston Neighborhood Change Interactive Map* (launched February 1, 2019), Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University
[550] Massachusetts Unlocking Housing Production Commission, *Building for Tomorrow: A Report from the Unlocking Housing Production Commission* (Boston: Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, February 2025).
[551] Deyscha Smith, "In a New Study, Boston Was Ranked the Third-Most Gentrified City in the U.S.," *Boston*, July 9, 2020.

communities and international student populations who are perceived, fairly or not, as competing for scarce housing resources.

To mitigate immediate tensions, Harvard and local policymakers could collaborate to implement a short-term rent freeze in select high-pressure neighborhoods, such as Central Square and parts of Allston. This freeze would cap rental rate increases for a period of 1–2 years while broader solutions are implemented. This targeted intervention would stabilize vulnerable residents without broadly interfering in the housing market. Importantly, the freeze should exempt new construction to avoid disincentivizing developers from building needed housing.

The second part of the policy involves Harvard taking a more active role in increasing the housing supply.[552] This could include building additional graduate housing, acquiring underutilized property for conversion into student residences, and partnering with city officials on zoning reform. Harvard has both the financial and political capacity to lead these efforts. By increasing housing stock, they can reduce pressure on the private rental market, easing tensions while continuing to welcome international students. In parallel, the city could accelerate approval for mixed-income developments to ensure that new housing benefits a diverse population.

International students are scapegoated for gentrification, yet the broader economic landscape reveals a nuanced reality. Harvard's international student body brings enormous academic and financial value to the institution and region. Policies should reflect this nuance. A temporary rent freeze offers immediate relief to residents while sending a message that community stability matters. Simultaneously, expanding the housing supply ensures Harvard meets its future needs without crowding out local populations. Harvard can remain a beacon for

[552] Harvard University, "Housing," *In Focus*, Harvard University, September 2024, accessed August 3, 2025, https://www.harvard.edu/in-focus/housing/.

global talent without ignoring the local costs of inaction. The two-pronged approach balances equity and excellence.

The American Dream

The American Dream is defined as the belief that the United States is the land of opportunity where anyone can achieve their fullest potential through hard work and determination.[553] In reality, there is a lot to be debated on the "American Dream" as it fails to account for wealth gaps furthered by capitalism, yet it still motivates people worldwide to seek opportunities in the U.S. Whether this dream is fueled by the students themselves or their families, many see an American education leading to upward mobility and economic security.

In a study conducted by Dr. Ariela Popper-Giveon and Dr. Yael Keshet, they conducted 10 in-depth interviews with Arab physicians from Israel working in public hospitals to understand their career motivation. The researchers identified key themes about their experiences in a multicultural setting without preconceived assumptions: they found that medicine was seen as the family's collective dream rather than an individual one; it was viewed as the surest path to socioeconomic mobility and stability; and many participants saw medicine as a way to integrate into broader society and overcome barriers and limited opportunities in other fields.[554] While this study focused on a specific demographic, many international students resonate with both wanting to pursue the American Dream themselves and for their families, as 41% of people believe that the American Dream is achievable.

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