

# International Student Mobility to the US

International students contribute to the [US economy and American innovation](#). They add diversity and value to our college and university classrooms, campuses, and neighboring communities.

Yet unfortunately, international student enrollment has decreased in recent years. And although the decline can't be traced to one specific factor, some of the circumstances contributing to the decrease could have been avoided.

As an association of college counseling and admission professionals guiding students in their transitions to US higher education, NACAC encourages its members to advocate for reduced barriers to international student mobility.

## Barriers to Enrollment

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The overall number of enrolled international students at US colleges and universities has declined, and the trend is on pace to continue, according to [data from the Institute of International Education \(IIE\)](#). Almost half of all colleges and universities surveyed by IIE in 2018 reported a drop in new international enrollments, a dip affecting total enrollment figures moving forward.

Barriers include:

- [Competition with other countries](#)
- [Student concerns about guns and violence](#)
- [Increased visa delays or denials](#)
- [Uncertainty regarding the future of H-1B visas](#)
- [Unpredictable US political environment](#)
- [Reduction of scholarship programs in home countries, such as Saudi Arabia](#)
- [High tuition at US institutions](#)
- [Challenges completing standardized testing outside the US.](#)

## Outreach and Advocacy

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Help bring this issue of international student mobility to light. Share information with critical stakeholders and let others know about the important contributions of international students.

- ✓ **Talk to your dean/president and share your institution's international student enrollment figures. Highlight the economic consequences of dips in enrollment and discuss reasons for the decline.**
  - Educate leadership on the various factors influencing international student enrollment on campus.
  - Ask them to use their positions of power to meet with elected officials and advocate for international students.
- ✓ **Encourage elected officials to support policies that promote international student mobility to the US.**
  - [Review current action alerts](#) from NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
  - Register for NACAC's annual [Advocacy Meeting](#) in Washington, DC (usually held in late February or early March) and/or your affiliate's state advocacy day.
- ✓ **Talk to business leaders and tourism officials about the impact international students have on your community.**
  - Groups to reach out to include, but are not limited to: local and state chambers of commerce, [Sister Cities](#), state departments of business or economic development, and [tourism authorities](#).
- ✓ **Empower colleagues by engaging with NACAC, International ACAC, and other affiliates.**
  - By raising these issues with your colleagues, you can help them understand the important role international students play in the classroom and on campus.
  - Encourage your colleagues to advocate for international student mobility in their daily interactions.

For more information, please view [NACAC's student mobility policy initiative resources](#) or contact the association's [legislative](#) or [global engagement](#) departments.