



## **Illinois International Education FACT SHEET**

*The Importance of International Students  
to the State of Illinois*

“It is clearly in America's long-term national security interest to welcome international students to come here to study. International students in U.S. classrooms widen the perspectives of their U.S. classmates, contribute to vital research activities, strengthen the local economies in which they live, and build lasting ties between their home countries and the United States.”

~Allan E. Goodman, President and CEO of the Institute of International Education

## Economic Impact

*Last year foreign students and their families contributed around \$617,000,000 to the Illinois economy.*

### National Statistics

- In 2003-2004, for the first time since 1971-1972, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions decreased.
- In 2003-2004 international students and their dependents contributed more than \$13 billion to the U.S. economy.
- The international education and training sector is the fifth-largest U.S. service sector export.

### Illinois Statistics

- In Illinois there were 25,609 foreign students enrolled in 2003-2004, a **5.6% decrease** from 2002-2003; this is in stark contrast to the 6.3% growth rate Illinois experienced between the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 academic years.
- Illinois is sixth largest host of international students in the U.S.
- With 17,319 students, the Chicago metropolitan area is the fifth largest host city in the U.S.

## The Value of Globalized Campuses

- According to Allan Goodman, "...educational exchange programs ... are the best investment that America can make reducing misunderstanding of our culture, our people and our

policies. An educational experience in America pays dividends to our nation's public diplomacy over many years."<sup>1</sup>

- Foreign students and scholars are at the forefront of cutting edge research.
- Additional overseas markets for U.S. products and services are created when these students return to their countries with a new loyalty to the state of Illinois and American-made products.
- According to a study by the Massachusetts Port Authority, the average international student enrolled in a U.S. institution generates 47 return trips to the U.S.
- The leading countries of origin for foreign students in Illinois mirror trends for the nation as a whole and are as follows:

Country of Origin	% Total	Total Number
India	20.2	5,169
China	14.1	3,604
Republic of Korea	11.7	3,005
Japan	4.3	1,104
Taiwan	4.0	1,034

## What International Students Study

- 80% of international students in the United States are enrolled at four-year institutions; 20% attend two-year institutions.
- The growth of foreign student enrollment at community colleges has doubled in the past ten years.
- While in 2003-2004 the number of international undergraduate students declined by 5%, the total number of international students enrolled at the graduate level increased 2.5%.
- The most popular fields of study for international students in the U.S. are business and management (19%), engineering (17%), and mathematics and computer sciences (12%). After two years of growth, the number of international students studying mathematics and computer sciences has declined 6% in each of the past two years. The Social Sciences (10%) and

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<sup>1</sup> Baillot, Marion. "Restrictions on Visas Fret U.S. Educations." The Washington Times. 11 Oct 2004.

Physical and Life Sciences (8%) have seen increased growth of 18% and 2% respectively.

- In Illinois, the most popular fields of study for foreign students (based upon current enrollment) are as follows:

Field of Study	% Total
Business & Management	21.4
Engineering	19.8
Math & Comp. Science	11.5
Social Sciences	10.2
Other	8.3

## Challenges and Barriers

*Stricter post-September 11<sup>th</sup> U.S. public policy and international challenges make attracting international students increasingly difficult.*

- International undergraduate enrollments decreased by almost 5%, with undergraduate enrollments decreasing from each of the top 5 sending countries (China -20%, India -9%, Japan -14%, Korea -1%, and Canada -3%)

### U.S. Public Policy

- The U.S. is creating an unwelcoming climate for international students, demonstrated most visibly by the difficulty they face in securing visas. Problems include delays in processing visa applications, additional visa interview requirements, and the arbitrary detention of students who seek to comply with new “special registration” requirements.
- In 2003, the number of student visas issued by the U.S. dropped 8%, to 215,694 after falling 20% in 2002. Those are the two largest drops since the government began to track student statistics in 1952.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Keeping Out the Wrong People,” Business Week 4 Oct 2004: 90.

- Students are seeing their visa applications being rejected in record numbers: The refusal rate hit 35% last year, up from the previous record of 34% in 2002.<sup>3</sup>
- Congress has decreased State Department funding to market U.S. education overseas. The 2003 budget was \$245 million compared to \$335 million in 1994. While this year's budget at \$317 million is a slight increase from 2003, other countries are much more aggressive in attracting international students.<sup>4</sup>

### **International Competition**

- International competitors in Australia, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom have been recruiting aggressively and capitalizing on more difficult and expensive U.S. visa regulations, tracking systems and security measures.

Australia has adjusted its policies to attract foreign students and enrollment is up 53% since 2001.<sup>5</sup>

In 2002, Canada enacted a law making it easier for students to stay in Canada upon completion of studies.<sup>6</sup>

Canada's international student enrollment in 2002-2003 was up 15% from the previous year.<sup>7</sup>

International students at universities in Britain increased 23% from 2001-2002 to 2002-2003.<sup>8</sup>

Visa requirements in the U.K. have changed to allow students to work while they study.

Germany is actively promoting a tuition-free International Degree Program available in English.<sup>9</sup>

- While the above countries are experiencing increases in foreign student enrollment, U.S. universities experienced a 36% decline in the number of applications by foreign students to undergraduate institutions in 2003-2004.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Keeping Out the Wrong People," Business Week 4 Oct 2004: 94.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Baillot, Marion. "Restrictions on Visas Fret U.S. Educations," The Washington Times. 11 Oct 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Carlile, Jennifer. "Germany Woos American Students" MSNBC News 26 Mar 2004.  
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4601000/>

All statistics, unless otherwise noted, are from the *Open Doors 2004 Report on International Educational Exchange*.