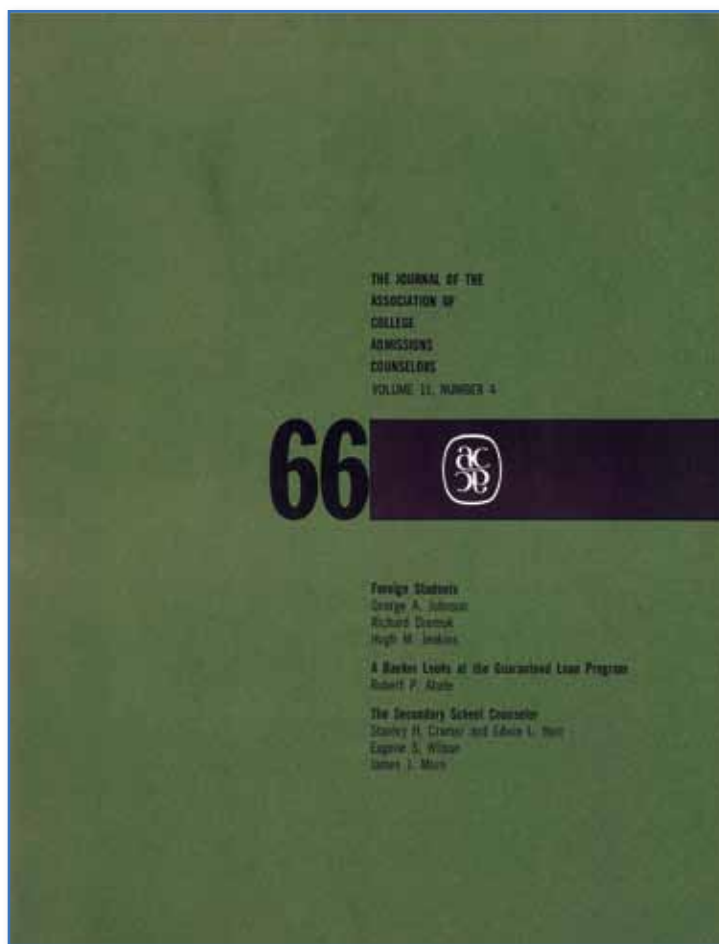


1966

Will We Be Admitting Foreign Students in 1975?

Response: "The International Student Question: 45 Years Later" by Fanta Aw on page 10



There are factors which may slow this growth—primarily the expansion of educational facilities abroad. However, this development may eventually lend itself to an even greater need for advanced training in the U.S. Also, the emphasis by developing countries on educational curriculums designed to alleviate economic need may result in our institutions' having to continue to educate young people from these countries in fields which they cannot pursue at home.



From 1966: **RICHARD DREMUK** is the assistant dean for foreign and graduate admission at the University of Illinois, Urbana. He is presently completing his master's degree at New York University, where he has served as an assistant to the dean of admissions, associate director of the Foreign Student Center, and an instructor in the American Language Institute.

Over the past several years, the admissions officer has been confronted with a situation that does not fit into the scheme of his normal operations—namely, the admission of foreign students. Often, because it has not been in the order of things, he has delegated this “irksome” problem to some “lowly” assistant or to the interested professor who at one time volunteered to assist on the occasional application from abroad.

These applications continue to come and will increase in number—perhaps beyond our present expectations. Therefore, it is up to us to provide the leadership that we have given so well in other areas of educational administration. This leadership must result in the development of foreign student programs at our institutions that are no less than excellent.

Although many of my fellow admissions officers may believe that this question of foreign students is esoteric and should be left entirely to the domain of the foreign student adviser, perhaps I can provide something more tangible which will attract their interest and motivate them to action.

Will we be admitting foreign students in 1975? The answer is most certainly, yes! The question should really be, how many?

Just a few years past—although the 1940’s and 1950’s may seem a long time ago—we were commenting on the great numbers of foreign students descending upon our colleges and universities. In academic year 1944-45 we spoke of 7,000; in 1950-51 of 30,000; in 1955-56 of 36,500; in 1960-61 of 58,000. Just four years ago, the foreign student census takers were estimating an enrollment of 100,000 by 1970. This figure is fast being revised upward. In this last academic year, 82,000 foreign students were in attendance at our post-secondary educational institutions. Because of this sharp increase we are now thinking of 120,000 by the end of this decade. Perhaps we’re too conservative. Although we had over 50,000 at the beginning of the 1960’s, we were conjecturing then that the explosion of domestic student enrollment would result in an automatic limitation on the growth of our foreign student population. Well, the war babies are in class and somehow we have accommodated 26,000—or 60 percent more foreign students. How many by 1975? I wouldn’t venture a prediction at this time.

There are factors which may slow this growth—primarily the expansion of educational facilities abroad. However, this development may eventually lend itself to an even greater need for advanced training in the U.S. Also, the emphasis by developing countries on

educational curriculums designed to alleviate economic need may result in our institutions’ having to continue to educate young people from these countries in fields which they cannot pursue at home. These factors will have ramifications for both our graduate and undergraduate schools. And the rapid progress of the United States in science and technology will require the presence of increasing numbers of foreign students at our institutions to acquire this advanced knowledge.

Let us look at Europe. The limited, and in some countries almost nonexistent, university facilities on that continent after WWII resulted in a substantial number of European students in attendance at American schools, many with the aid of the Fulbright program. Now that Europe is enjoying an unprecedented prosperity, with its universities enrolling more students at expanded facilities, we would expect a decline in the rate of European students coming to the U.S. On the contrary, the number of Europeans at our schools has risen almost uninterruptedly since 1954 and is expected to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. Japan is a similar example. Perhaps parallel patterns will eventually emerge for the rest of the world.

Among ourselves, we have discussed currency restrictions, political events, more intensive screening in admissions as possible restraints on foreign student enrollment, but the flow has not lessened and will not. Our challenge is to create a plan of action by which we can operate in order that these scholars derive the maximum benefit from their training in the United States. This plan must be consistent with, and complementary to, the objectives of our colleges and must contribute to their progress.

The most important issue facing us is the potential commitment of American higher education to international educational exchange. I refer not only to our colleges and universities as a whole, but also to the commitment of individual institutions.

Almost all of our schools profess an interest in having foreign students on campus, but how many of our institutions are adequately prepared to undertake the responsibility inherent in admitting these students? Many administrators and faculty members express affirmative interest in having foreign students simply to provide an international flavor or color to their campuses. There may be nothing wrong with this approach and, in fact, some benefit may derive from it; however, we are concerned with the creation of foreign student programs that will offer the maximum opportunities and benefits to all concerned.

I propose that each college and university undertake a self-evaluation of its resources in order to determine if and how it can educate foreign students. The institution must also decide on the extent of its investment toward international exchange either alone or in cooperation with other institutions.

In order to provide a basis for even making this investment, I will set down several reasons why foreign students should be accepted and enrolled.

Reasons for Enrolling Foreign Students

The first reason is fairly evident. All colleges and universities no matter how large or small—have a basic obligation and responsibility to communicate among scholars throughout the worldwide academic community. The sources and development of scholarship obviously go beyond the geographical limits of community, state, nation, or continent.

Although our colleges were established primarily to prepare Americans for life in our society, our society is no longer limited to its regional environs. Our local or provincial colleges were initially exposed to students from beyond the borders of their respective communities and states when they received their first applications for admission from candidates in neighboring and nearby states. Eventually, as the movement of people was facilitated by modern modes of transportation, students began to appear on their campuses from all parts of the nation. This movement of students is now international and worldwide in scope.

It is often difficult to realize that students from Venezuela, Colombia, Jamaica, and many other foreign places can now travel to New York, Washington, Philadelphia, and Chicago as rapidly as many registrants from California, Oregon, and several other of our western states. International travel is too easy and too rapid to act as a barrier to the exchange of substantial numbers of students.

Our fundamental role of preparing Americans for leadership positions continues, but our graduates no longer think of making their mark exclusively in our local corporations, school systems, or even among the skyscrapers of our great cities. They have come to realize that their achievements, their successes, their futures may be made anywhere in the world.

We can, therefore, surmise that the presence of foreign students plays an increasingly important role in the education of our young people. These students from abroad are giving to our youth the opportunity to study and assimilate with individuals with whom they may, someday, have to deal.

At the same time we are providing potential foreign leadership with an exposure to our developing leaders. This contact on our campuses will provide them both with an opportunity to know and understand each other. The tangible benefits resulting from these relationships may only become evident in future years.

Another reason for accepting foreign students is the opportunity they provide for an institution to serve our national interests by sharing its resources with less privileged countries. The educational development of their people is of paramount importance, since their manpower is usually the most tangible, and often the only, natural resource of these nations.

Our effort is not restricted to only those students from less developed countries; it should extend to students from all nations. The acquisition of individual skills and knowledge is essential to the development and progress of every nation.

Institutional Self-Evaluation Necessary For Foreign Student Program

If these reasons are sufficiently compelling for an institution to undertake a program for foreign students, the first step in the necessary self-evaluation is to ascertain which aspects of its program are most useful and beneficial to foreign students. At the same time, the college must determine which type of foreign students are best suited to its program, given their previous scholastic preparation and achievement and their social and cultural circumstances in their home countries.

The institution must also be prepared to establish a satisfactory apparatus to admit its foreign students. I am speaking of those practical operations involving applicant screening, the evaluation of foreign credentials, and securing information about English proficiency, finances, and other related factors. In order to perform these functions adequately, the college must develop either a complete competence for such matters among its staff or, at least, partial competence which will depend on a cooperative arrangement with other academic institutions and organizations involved in the educational exchange field. The degree of staff development along these lines should be based on the extent of the foreign student program maintained by a college either individually or in a cooperative arrangement with other schools.

Evaluation of Foreign Students

One of the fundamental failings in our admission of foreign students is what I call “the good student at home, therefore good student here” concept. The assumption is made that students who have performed well in their home countries will automatically do well in the United States. The weakness of this assumption is obvious when speaking not only about foreign applicants, but also domestic applicants.

In the case of American applicants we are usually aware of differences among various state and local educational systems, and in many instances between one high school or college and another. Our guidance personnel are also conditioned to steering students to undergraduate colleges or graduate schools where they will be able to compete effectively and thus derive adequate benefit from their continued studies.

Unfortunately, because of limited experience, we are unable to measure and guide foreign students with equal facility. For foreign students, the problem is intensified and somewhat more acute because of greater divergences in their educational backgrounds. These are differences of educational quality and culture which exist, not only between nations, but among the institutions of individual countries.

Prospective foreign applicants have available a dearth of information on the breadth and depth of our system of higher education. They are not always aware that we have over two thousand accredited colleges and universities as well as several hundred approved technical and professional institutes. As a result, many of them do not realize it is possible to acquire a first-rate American education at other schools besides those 42 institutions where almost fifty percent of our national foreign student enrollment clustered during 1964-65. It is, of course, encouraging learning from the latest census compiled by the Institute of International Education that foreign students and scholars were enrolled at 1,859 institutions last year, but it should also be noted that 697 institutions reported that they had no foreign students in attendance during the same period. More specifically, 38,155 students were concentrated at 42 institutions.

We must ask, however, whether all of the students enrolled at those 42 schools are qualified to meet the high scholastic demands of those institutions.

Although we do not have studies to pinpoint the problem, we do know that substantial numbers of foreign students transfer to other schools after their first or second year here, and many others who came for a degree return home without having graduated because of academic failure that has resulted, in most cases, from their inability to meet the requirements of their American alma mater.

What causes this movement? Why do they transfer? Why do they return home without having achieved their objectives?

I would respond by simply saying that these students had been accepted and placed at the wrong academic institutions; wrong, in the sense that the particular school is unable to meet the student's scholastic needs as related to his preparation and background.

In accepting foreign students, many admissions officers—at both large and small institutions—pay too little attention to the content of the applicants' previous education. They will first check to see if the applicant has graduated and then if his grades are equal to the admission requirements of their institution. They may also review the courses completed by the applicant, but very often their concern is more for titles than for content or substance. They are also not usually aware that in many instances their applicants while studying in their home countries may have had infrequent access to textbooks, almost no library facilities, many teachers with minimal and unsatisfactory training, and a minimum of modern laboratory equipment if any at all. For a number of applicants from less developed countries the extent of their chemistry and physics laboratory equipment might well have been a Bunsen burner, a test tube, and a pulley. An exaggeration? Unfortunately, it isn't for too many of our foreign applicants.

The facilities of the American school system, which the admissions officer normally takes for granted when considering domestic applicants, have not been available to most students from underprivileged nations.

I might add that the admissions officer also lacks the comfort of the security offered by our multitude of private and governmental accrediting and regulatory agencies when evaluating foreign educational systems. When they do exist abroad, we cannot be sure they are as thorough or efficient as our own organizations.

The problem of evaluating the foreign students' academic background is compounded when admitting students to mathematics, science, and technology programs; and about half of our foreign

Affiliate Achiever

Bob Nesmith

***Dean of Admission and
Student Financial Planning***

**Centre College, Danville, KY
Kentucky ACAC**

Why are you in this profession?

Good timing and good luck! Like many folks, I fell into this line of work. Why have I stayed in it? The joy of working with college students and on a college campus; the advice and camaraderie of terrific colleagues, both on my campus and in the profession; the dynamism of a competitive environment; the variety of skills and talents called upon daily by the work.

students are enrolled in these fields. It is essential that foreign students be placed at institutions where they can effectively pursue their studies. Students with limited quantitative scholastic preparation—whether with high grades or not—should be studying at institutions where the academic requirements are commensurate with their background. Conversely, students with strong preparation should be placed at schools which are equal to their capabilities.

I am not proposing a lowering of standards. What I am suggesting is a wider distribution of foreign students among our colleges and universities, based on more accurate initial placement. Therefore, we must, in our self-evaluation, appraise the quality of our institution and admit only those foreign students who meet the requirements of our self-estimate. This is a difficult task for an institution, although we are all aware—in a general way—of the relative strengths and weaknesses of our respective institutions. To some extent we make these confessions when publicly announcing our freshman profiles; however, this sparse information is hardly a satisfactory descriptive rating of American undergraduate colleges. I do not know of any available data by which we can rate and compare graduate schools.

This self-appraisal is essential when admitting foreign students. Not to take this action may be to do disservice to a number of candidates, as well as an institution. Inaccurate admissions decisions may lead to eventual student failure—failure, which for many foreign students is more irreparable and tragic than for American students—to say nothing of the wasted expenditure of time, effort, and money.

Other Problems

I will briefly mention several other problem areas and some of the specific steps being taken to improve our programs.

We must look at the type of foreign student we are educating and his potential for effectively contributing to the progress of his country upon his return. I am referring specifically to the economic classes from which our foreign students come. According to the available statistics approximately 16 percent of our foreign students receive full or partial financial support from the United States and foreign governments (about 10 percent of this group receives aid from the U.S. government). Almost 40 percent are self-supporting, and for 16 percent we do not know the source of their support. The balance—approximately 28 percent—receives support from private sources, that is, American or foreign corporate and eleemosynary organizations as well as colleges and universities.

We can safely say that about half of our foreign students are self-supporting. While a number of these students may at some time become financial problems, most of them have adequate sources of income. When we take into account the high cost of our education and the convertibility to dollars of many foreign currencies to say nothing of the local purchasing power of these currencies—it is evident that our students are relatively well-off at home. They come from the economic elite of their countries and, I might add, the social class that is often least effective in stimulating progress. Often, this group is also under considerable and continual political pressure in many of the less developed countries.

Throwback: 1966

22nd NACAC National Conference is held in Washington, DC. Ted Cooper (George Washington High School, DC) is NACAC president.

Star Trek debuts.

The average new car: \$2,650

Miranda rights are established.

Seattle Public Schools Boycott protests racial segregation.



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Our exchange efforts should be expanded to reach students in the less privileged economic and social groups from which influential leadership will eventually emerge.

Briefly, other problems are education to meet national manpower needs and the matter of over-education. There has been a growing conflict between many American universities and the United States and foreign governments as to the amount of training foreign students should acquire here. When a university has a capable scholar, it will encourage him to go on for advanced study and a higher degree. Very often this student has been sent to this country by a governmental agency for a specific type and amount of training which is designed to eventually fill manpower or skills need in his home country. As a result, the governmental agency and the university are often in disagreement over which objective should prevail—the further development of the student’s intellectual potential or the immediate assumption of a position which may be aimed at achieving short-range or long-range objectives at home. If either view prevails, there are possible disadvantages. If the student continues at the university, he may become “over-educated”; he will have skills too advanced, at that moment, for his country and it will be unable to assimilate him into its development scheme. On the other hand, a student may return “under-educated” and in time become disgruntled by the fact that he had not acquired further training in his field. Eventually, he may also be subordinated in position to men who have received more advanced training. Of course, it is also possible that he may be sent abroad again for additional study; however, his country’s acute need for his skill may often preclude this possibility.

I can offer no solution, but this problem is becoming more important as the manpower requirements of many nations are related to our national foreign student program.

I would like to describe how we might best tackle these problems in order to develop an effective international exchange program of maximum benefit to the students and institutions concerned. I have already mentioned that of foremost importance is the determination by each college and university of the role to which it is willing to commit itself in this work.

The second essential factor is the willingness to join in a cooperative effort. The most effective exchange programs have been those involving the joint participation of several academic institutions and private and governmental agencies.

The most notable examples of cooperative programs have been the U.S. government and private student programs administered by the Institute of International Education and the African Scholarship Program of American Universities. Under the latter program, the combined

efforts of more than two hundred colleges and universities have enabled over one thousand young Africans to pursue the highest quality undergraduate programs available in this country during the past five years. ASPAU has enjoyed the participation and support of the African-American Institute and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The student exchange programs of IIE are presently the most extensive available to the American academic community. The IIE program is essentially a cooperative effort involving the participation of almost five hundred colleges and universities, the U.S. government, and private foundations and corporations. Each year almost two thousand foreign students are placed at the academic institutions cooperating in this program. Approximately half of these students receive financial aid in various forms from the universities and other private sources. More than fifty percent of this group receives U.S. government travel grants under the Fulbright-Hays Act. It should be noted that the original Fulbright Act of 1946 was conceived as a cooperative effort of both the private sector and government. The IIE is also responsible for the placement of more than six hundred students who have been awarded full grants by the U.S. Department of State.

All IIE-related students are first screened by one of 129 selection committees in 109 countries. These committees include U.S. Educational (Fulbright) Foundations, bi-national commissions, committees for study and training in the United States and other similar educational organizations, both governmental and private. Their membership is normally bi-national and includes a significant number of educators.

Almost every student is selected in accordance with the requirements set down by the cooperating colleges and universities; that is, academic quality, scholastic and professional objectives, English proficiency, and in the case of students recommended for university scholarships, financial need.

Although I have referred to only the IIE and ASPAU programs, there are other private and governmental organizations carrying on student exchange programs. Several that come to mind are the programs of the American Friends of the Middle East, the African Graduate Program, the American-Korean Foundation, the Belgium-American Foundation, and the Agency for International Development, and the Organization of American States.

Direct student exchange programs are but one example of successful cooperative effort in this field. There are also the programs aimed at assisting academic institutions in improving their admissions procedures as well as developing their staff competency in working with foreign students. Notable among these were the series of five foreign student admission workshops cosponsored by the IIE and the College

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The International Student Question: 45 Years Later

Response to “Will We Be Admitting Foreign Students in 1975” on page 4

Since the publication of Dremuk’s article 45 years ago, the landscape of international educational exchange has changed significantly. Some of the most notable trends distinguishing the past from the present are:

- Enrollments of international students have increased over the years, totaling 723,277 in 2011, according to the Institute of International Education. However, the growth in enrollments has been uneven, suggesting volatility in student mobility.
- Other nations, especially those in Asia-Pacific and Europe, are competing with the US to attract international students. Their strategies include aggressive branding and marketing of programs and institutions, relaxed immigration policies, and competitive pricing. The US faces serious global competition and may be in real danger of losing its dominance as the destination of choice for international students.
- International students constitute an ever-increasing source of revenue for colleges and universities, given declining state funding for higher education and increased operational costs. As institutions increasingly rely on tuition revenue, the race for full-paying international students has intensified within the US, but with little attention paid to the educational rationale.
- International enrollment has become a lucrative business for some institutions. As such, a larger number of higher education institutions are creating staff positions charged with international recruitment activities whereas others



are attempting to retrain admission professionals (especially those with a domestic orientation) to take on the task of international recruitment.

- In their quest to recruit larger number of international students, some institutions are outsourcing international recruitment to agents and other third parties. This practice is not without controversy with regard to ethical, legal and financial issues.
- Institutions engaged in recruitment activities often focus on recruitment and admission with little attention paid to retention and the overall student experience. This approach may result in possible “mismatches” and undermine institutional reputations if not carefully assessed.

Forty-five years ago, Dremuk’s article emphasized the importance of institutional commitment to international educational exchange while expressing concerns regarding different dimensions

of institutional readiness. Key issues of institutions’ ability to recruit, retain and graduate international students persist. In fact, the challenges identified in Dremuk’s article have become even more pronounced in this larger context of global competition for international students. The most pressing challenges are:

- **Socioeconomic diversity:** More than 80 percent of undergraduate international students in the US are family- or self-financed. The US, therefore, continues to educate principally the younger generation of elites from other nations. There is very little socioeconomic diversity among the international student body.
- **Lack of diversity in institutions where international students study:** International students continue to be concentrated in a relatively select number of institutions. Despite the number and diversity of accredited institutions in the US, close to 60 percent of international students choose to attend the 170 institutions, each hosting more than 1,000 students. This type of concentration fails to leverage the competitive advantage of the US higher education system.
- **Knowledge base of admission professionals:** Institutions continue to be challenged in expanding the knowledge and expertise of admission professionals as it relates to evaluating foreign credentials, academic background of international students and English language proficiency. Meanwhile, US institutions also must stay abreast of changes in educational systems throughout the world that impact international student admission to remain competitive globally.

- **Intercultural competence:** The level of intercultural competence of professionals engaged in international enrollment and international student programs and services continues to be a challenge, particularly for smaller institutions with little infrastructure in place and a short history of hosting international students.

The changing landscape of international educational exchange calls for US institutions to consider a holistic, strategic approach to

international enrollment management. Such an approach includes strategic recruitment, admission, retention, graduation, and re-entry of international students. Professionals engaged in international enrollment management and student program and services must be held to high standards of ethical practices by their professions and institutions, and must avail themselves of professional development resources available through international education associations and others. Ultimately, US universities hosting international students have an obligation to

do “right” by students and their families. Short-term gains from increased recruitment of international students should not and cannot be made at the expense of students and institutional reputation.



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Admitting Foreign Students, from page 9

Entrance Examination Board during 1963-64. These workshops, held at five different locations, were aimed at strengthening the admissions processes at schools with limited experience in admitting foreign students.

The recent creation of foreign student admission sections in the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers are also potentially important developments for the academic community. By enabling admissions officers to exchange information and ideas, to initiate studies and other projects, and to arrive at a common understanding of admissions practices, much can be accomplished in this key phase of the exchange program.

By pooling resources and sharing ideas, both locally and nationally, colleges will best be able to initiate and carry out international student programs most appropriate and beneficial to them. Our overall efforts, through cooperative ventures, will be the most important step toward achieving the educational exchange objectives of our universities, our students, and our nation.

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