

# These Are the U.S. Universities Most Dependent on International Students

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The Trump administration’s threat to block Harvard from enrolling international students would remove more than a quarter of the university’s student body, a share large enough to rock its campus and, potentially, its tuition revenue.

The move, frozen within 24 hours on Friday by a federal judge, also highlights the risk other universities face from an administration that has shown deep hostility toward higher education. N.Y.U., Johns Hopkins, Columbia and Carnegie Mellon have even larger international student shares than Harvard does.

This metric that once reflected their international renown — and financial strength — now looks like a vulnerability.

### Schools with the most international students

As a share of full-time undergrad. and grad. ▼ students in fall 2023

SCHOOL	STUDENTS	PCT. INTERNATIONAL
Illinois Tech	6,571	51%
Carnegie Mellon	14,517	44%
Stevens Tech	7,461	42%
Northeastern	29,738	40%
New School	8,725	40%
Columbia	28,756	40%
Johns Hopkins	16,830	39%
N.Y.U.	49,847	37%



SCHOOL	STUDENTS	PCT. INTERNATIONAL
Clark	3,830	34%
Rochester	10,109	33%
Caltech	2,463	32%
Chicago	16,499	31%
Boston U.	29,104	30%
M.I.T.	11,706	30%
Harvard	20,807	28%
U.S.C.	41,648	28%
WashU	14,282	28%
Penn	23,948	27%
Brandeis	4,873	27%
Rice	7,972	26%
Cornell	25,334	26%
Duke	16,557	25%
Stanford	17,212	24%
Saint Louis	12,904	24%
Princeton	8,849	24%
Yale	14,854	24%
Northwestern	19,451	24%
Illinois	47,118	23%
Ga. Tech	25,178	23%
U.T. Dallas	25,108	23%
N.J.I.T.	10,388	23%
Mt. Holyoke	2,206	22%
Dartmouth	6,678	21%
Georgetown	15,453	20%
U.M.B.C.	11,523	20%
Brown	10,832	19%
Case Western	11,143	19%
Grinnell	1,707	19%
Emory	13,565	18%
U.C.S.D.	40,716	18%
Washington	43,118	18%
Bentley	4,690	17%
Fran. & Marshall	1,902	17%
Berkeley	41,572	17%
Denison	2,391	17%
G.W.	18,049	17%

SCHOOL	STUDENTS	PCT. INTERNATIONAL
Michigan	48,167	17%
U.C. Irvine	35,511	16%
Tufts	11,953	16%
U.C. Davis	38,184	15%

Shows fall enrollment of full-time students at selective four-year colleges and universities that offer bachelor's degrees and above, with at least 1,000 students. • Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Carnegie Classification

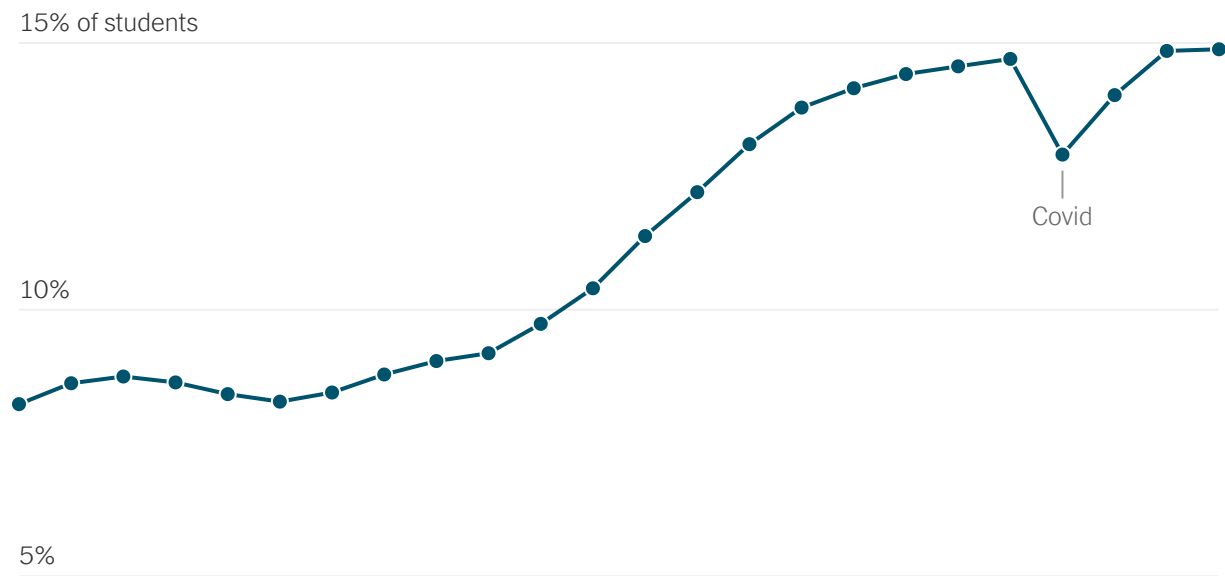
The share of international students studying at these colleges and across the United States has been growing for the past two decades as rising incomes in countries like China and India have produced more families looking to educate their children in America.

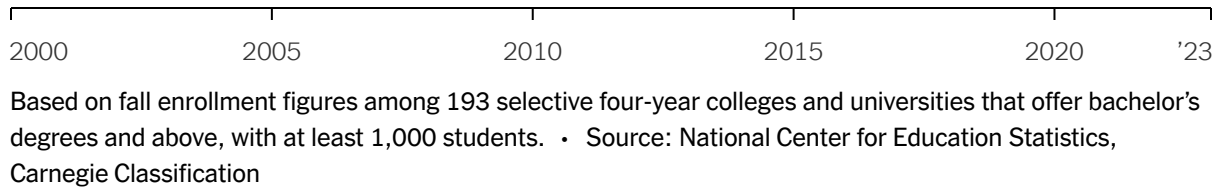
Domestic forces have played a role, too: Public research universities in particular have turned to international students, who commonly pay full price for tuition, to help compensate for declines in state funding for education.

“We have all this debate about trade deficits with China right now,” said Gaurav Khanna, an economist at the University of California, San Diego, who has studied these shifts in higher education. “That’s a deficit in goods. But when you think of services — like higher ed services — we have a big surplus.”

Share of students who are international

Among full-time undergrad. and grad. students at 193 colleges





Higher education is, effectively, a major American export — and one where the foreign students consuming it do so in American communities, also spending money on housing, groceries and books there. More than 1.1 million international students contributed about \$43 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2023-24 academic year, most of it on tuition and housing, according to an analysis by NAFSA, a nonprofit association of international educators.

U.S. students, by contrast, often receive financial aid directly from universities or other federal programs. And at public universities, many pay lower in-state tuition. As a result, foreign students can end up contributing more than one and a half times as much as their American counterparts in tuition dollars, said Mirka Martel, head of research, evaluation and learning at the Institute of International Education.

Another way to look at this is that the higher tuition paid by international students helps subsidize lower costs for U.S. students. At some public universities, international students pay a tuition rate that's even higher than regular out-of-state tuition.

For universities, all of this means that a decline in international students could have serious financial consequences, beyond disrupting classrooms, research and the next generation of workers in the United States. And even without threats as grave as the one Harvard now faces, colleges and universities were already bracing for a decline in international students amid the Trump administration's cuts to federally funded research and aggressive immigration enforcement.

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