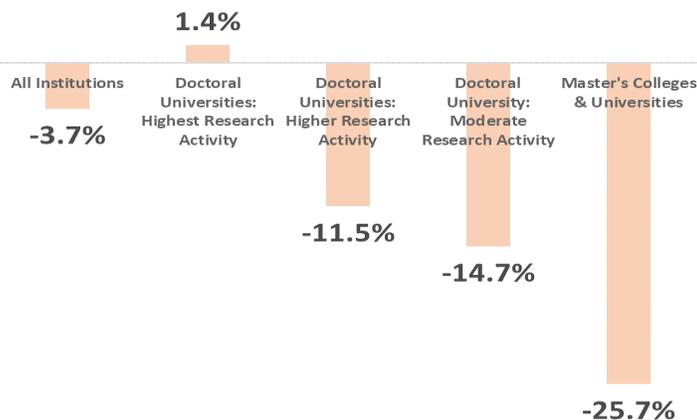


Trends in International First-Time Graduate Enrollment

CGS Research in Brief, October 2018
By Hironao Okahana & Enyu Zhou

According to the 2018 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees (GE&D), first-time graduate enrollment of international students at participating institutions declined by 3.7% between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017. This brief highlights some additional analysis pertaining to international graduate enrollment trends.

Figure 1. Change in First Time International Graduate Enrollment Between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 by Carnegie Classification

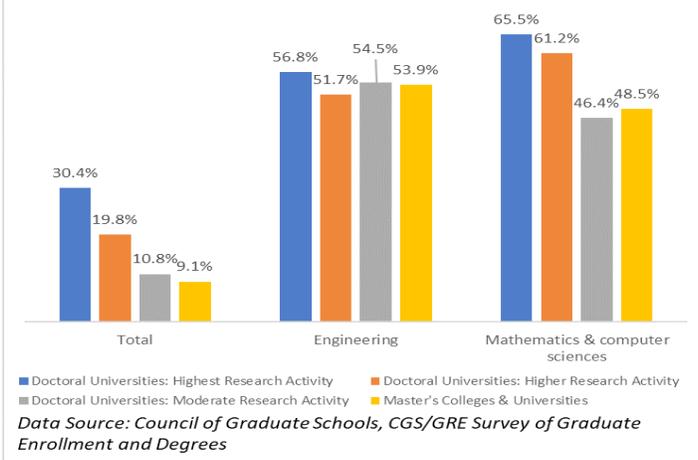


Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees

Key Findings:

- Despite the 3.7% decrease overall, at Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity (R1), first-time international graduate enrollment increased by 1.4% between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017. At other types of institutions, however, first-time international graduate enrollment decreased by double digits. (Figure 1)
- Compared to R1 institutions, proportionally fewer international graduate students attend other types of institutions. However, in some fields of study, such as engineering and mathematics and computer sciences, a large number of incoming graduate students at non R1 institutions are also international. (Figure 2 - on next page)
- At R2 and R3 institutions, domestic first-time enrollment also declined between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017, and overall first-time graduate enrollment decreased by 4.2% and 7.1%, respectively. While there are fields in which first-time enrollment has been declining for some years, there are others that saw a sudden decline between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017. (Table 1 - on next page)

Figure 2. % Shares of Int'l Students among First-time Graduate Enrollment in Selected Broad Fields, Fall 2016



Takeaway Points:

- A number of factors influence the global academic mobility of students; the Fall 2017 enrollment data suggest that the current U.S. visa policy and the uncertainties surrounding it may be, in part, impacting the flow of international graduate students coming into the United States.
- It appears that U.S. graduate education, broadly speaking, is still attractive to international talents, as is evident from first-time international graduate enrollment at R1 institutions. For other types of U.S. institutions, given the current political and policy climate, global competition for international graduate students may have increased.
- For R2 and R3 institutions, the decline of first-time international graduate enrollment comes in addition to stagnating, if not declining, first-time graduate enrollment of U.S. domestic students. If this decline becomes a pattern, it could pose a significant challenge to the health of graduate programs, particularly those programs with a large number of international students.

Table 1. Changes in First-time Enrollment by Citizenship Status and Broad Field of Study at R2 and R3 Institutions, Fall 2007 to Fall 2017

	% Change between Fall 2016 & Fall 2017			Annual Average % Change between Fall 2012 & Fall 2017			Annual Average % Change between Fall 2007 & Fall 2017		
	All Students	U.S. Domestic Students	Int'l Students	All Students	U.S. Domestic Students	Int'l Students	All Students	U.S. Domestic Students	Int'l Students
Doctoral Universities: Moderate Research Activity (R2)									
Total	-4.2%	-2.0%	-11.5%	0.0%	-0.3%	1.7%	0.6%	0.5%	2.3%
Arts & Humanities	-0.9%	-1.0%	-2.4%	-1.9%	-2.7%	8.3%	-1.2%	-1.6%	5.4%
Biol. & Ag. Sciences	3.1%	3.2%	4.3%	0.7%	1.6%	-0.3%	0.9%	1.7%	-2.3%
Business	1.2%	3.9%	-11.9%	1.1%	3.1%	-5.6%	1.8%	2.8%	-0.6%
Education	-8.8%	-5.8%	-32.1%	-3.1%	-2.8%	-2.5%	-1.8%	-1.9%	3.5%
Engineering	-7.4%	-3.2%	-11.4%	1.0%	1.0%	2.1%	3.1%	4.7%	2.1%
Health Sciences	3.6%	3.5%	2.5%	4.7%	4.2%	21.2%	5.0%	5.3%	3.7%
Math. & Computer Sci	-8.7%	8.2%	-18.0%	5.7%	1.9%	11.6%	4.6%	4.1%	5.5%
Physical & Earth Sci	0.2%	0.8%	0.8%	-1.3%	-0.4%	-0.2%	-0.6%	-0.6%	0.8%
Public Adm. & Service	-0.3%	-0.2%	12.2%	1.3%	1.1%	6.0%	1.5%	1.4%	7.6%
Social & Behavioral Sci	-9.5%	-7.3%	-21.3%	-0.7%	-0.3%	1.3%	-0.4%	0.0%	1.8%
Other Fields	-0.3%	3.0%	-13.5%	-3.8%	-3.7%	-0.4%	-2.8%	-3.1%	-0.4%
Doctoral Universities: Moderate Research Activity (R3)									
Total	-7.1%	-4.8%	-14.7%	-0.1%	0.2%	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%	3.1%
Arts & Humanities	0.9%	3.0%	-16.6%	-3.2%	-3.5%	2.8%	-2.9%	-3.3%	1.0%
Biol. & Ag. Sciences	-1.0%	-1.1%	0.8%	0.0%	-0.7%	1.7%	1.3%	0.7%	6.7%
Business	-7.6%	-1.5%	-11.4%	1.0%	2.7%	-5.3%	2.4%	2.3%	3.1%
Education	-10.6%	-10.0%	-24.5%	-3.7%	-3.5%	-4.9%	-3.0%	-3.1%	3.8%
Engineering	-6.2%	17.5%	-23.6%	6.4%	10.1%	5.1%	3.5%	6.5%	1.2%
Health Sciences	-2.6%	-3.8%	-16.6%	3.0%	2.2%	6.4%	14.1%	14.4%	2.0%
Math. & Computer Sci	-6.6%	7.8%	-9.9%	7.3%	2.7%	15.9%	4.9%	2.4%	11.0%
Physical & Earth Sci	-11.7%	-13.8%	5.8%	-5.4%	-5.6%	-4.5%	-2.4%	-1.3%	-0.7%
Public Adm. & Service	-2.5%	-0.4%	-7.7%	2.4%	2.6%	8.7%	7.9%	11.2%	4.1%
Social & Behavioral Sci	-3.4%	-3.2%	-3.3%	-0.8%	-1.1%	2.6%	-1.7%	-2.0%	1.5%
Other Fields	0.7%	-2.4%	4.9%	2.7%	3.0%	1.7%	1.3%	0.6%	9.0%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees

CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees is an annual survey of U.S. graduate schools, co-sponsored by CGS and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board since 1986. It is the only annual national survey that collects data on graduate enrollment by all fields of study and is the only source of national data on graduate applications by broad field of study. The report includes responses from 619 institutions and presents statistics on graduate applications and enrollment for Fall 2017, degrees conferred in 2016-17, and trend data for one-, five- and ten-year periods.

Conversation Starters:

- How does your institution's international and domestic enrollment figures compare to the national numbers? How does your institution compare to your peer institutions and graduate programs regionally and nationally?
- How have international graduate recruitment strategies at your institution changed in recent years? Has your institution historically relied on specific countries and/or graduate programs for international recruitment? How do you continue to strategically position your graduate school/programs in an increasingly crowded international marketplace?
- How does your institution's international and domestic enrollment figures compare to the national numbers? How does your institution compare to your peer institutions and graduate programs regionally and nationally?