

**MINUTES**  
**International Students and Scholars Committee**  
**21 November 2019**

Present: Dr. Warren Johnson (Chair and Secretary), Ms. Nikki Adams, Dr. Derek Jenkins, Mr. Deepak Rapaka, Dr. Thillainatarajan Sivakumaran, Mr. Atin Suri

Absent: Mr. Reed Blalock, Dr. Robert Bradley, Ms. Mariana Cisneros, Mr. Adrian Everett, Dr. Maurice Gipson, Dr. Gauri Guha, Dr. Alan Utter, Dr. Karen Wheeler, Ms. Dominique White

Dr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm and distributed some highlights from this year's recently released *Open Doors* report compiled by the Institute of International Education (see Appendix 1). According to the report, international student enrollment in US institutions of higher education is at an all-time high (1,095,299), but there were declines in new undergraduate numbers and the percentage change in 2018-2019 compared to the previous year fell to only +0.05 %. Leading fields attracting international students are engineering, business/management, and math/computer science. The leading countries of origin are China and India (both of which had increases over 2017-2018), far outstripping South Korea and Saudi Arabia, the next countries on the list, both of which saw decreases.

Then Dr. Sivakumaran was asked to report on the situation at A-State. Currently the university has some 600 international students (700 if Optional Practical Training [OPT] is included in the numbers), down from around 850 in 2016. While the incoming numbers are up from Fall 2018, the university graduated many also last year, leaving the net total lower. Other institutions in the state, such as the Southern Arkansas Univ., have experienced much more dramatic drops. Dr. Sivakumaran attributed A-State's relatively better position to our more diverse undergraduate international student body, although Canada, Taiwan, and Brazil [ranked numbers 5, 7, and 9 on the IEE list of sending countries] have been difficult markets because of problems finding good agents. At A-State, the greatest loss has been from India (as instanced by applications to the masters programs in Engineering Management and Computer Science), and there has been some decline from China as well. Indian students have begun favoring the UK and Canada, where they have authorization to work off-campus while pursuing their studies, unlike in this country, and where they have greater chances of finding employment after finishing their degrees. A-State is looking into changes, including to admission requirements, that might be beneficial in attracting more international students. On the positive side, affordability continues to be a major draw toward the university; however, those who can afford to go elsewhere sometimes do. Dr. Sivakumaran expects an increase in the Spring numbers, and reminds the committee that retention statistics for international students are equal to or better than those for domestic students. Dr. Sivakumaran pointed to current federal immigration policies as a major cause of these decreases, policies that hurt those less financially stable and those hoping to get OPT status, which is now determined by a lottery rather than through employer sponsorship. Despite these declines, tuition revenue from international students to A-State was some \$3,000,000 last year.

Study abroad has seen some positive developments. Dr. Sivakumaran applauded support from the administration that has allowed for an increase in the travel vouchers available to A-State students studying abroad to a maximum of \$1,500, depending on need. Careful cost management, including

having the university handle travel arrangements itself when possible rather than rely on providers such as EF Tours, helps make these experiences more accessible to students. (Dr. Jenkins raised a question about the use of such providers; Dr. Sivakumaran responded that while they have the advantage of taking care of everything, that service comes at a cost, and programs without dedicated scholarship support might want to consider carefully the use of such providers.) The administration has now allowed funds from tuition on faculty-led trips to go toward faculty travel expenses, also helping to keep costs in line for students. Notable programs that have drawn good enrollments include the upcoming trip organized by Dr. Katherine Baker of Art + Design to Paris and the one sponsored by Counseling to Tokyo. There are interdisciplinary collaborative initiatives in the offing. Programs are available to all students in the ASU system, and indeed to those outside the system, including graduates.

Dr. Johnson asked Dr. Sivakumaran about his involvement in the ongoing strategic planning process. Dr. Sivakumaran responded that international recruitment is one of the targeted areas within the enrollment management plan, although he reminded the committee about the importance of study abroad as one of the high-impact activities that promotes better student engagement and retention.

Finally, Dr. Sivakumaran noted that the next International Food Night will be 22 November, and that these events have exceeded attendance expectations in recent years. Most attendees are domestic students. Dr. Johnson invited Mr. Rapaka, who authored some ideas that were previously circulated to the committee (see Appendix 2), to make any additional comments. Dr. Sivakumaran expressed interest in working to attract recipients of an Indian scholarship program that Mr. Rapaka mentioned, but noted problems encountered by some students recruited through certain agents, who do not inform potential students well about A-State, which can cause them problems during their visa interviews. He emphasized the importance of choosing judiciously the agents with whom the university deals.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.

## Appendix 1

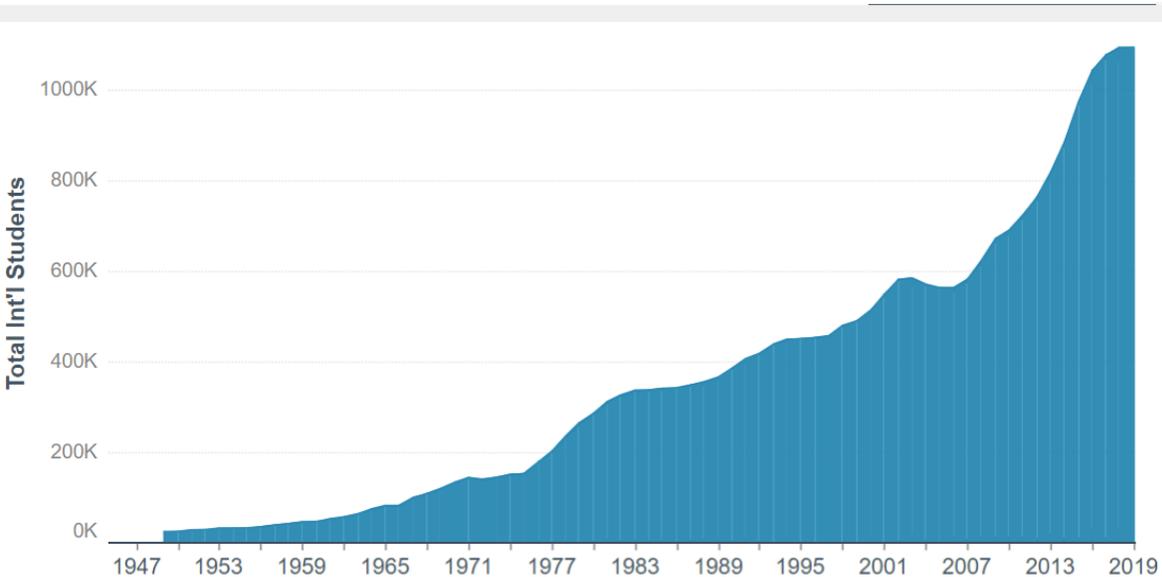
### International Student Enrollment 2018-2019

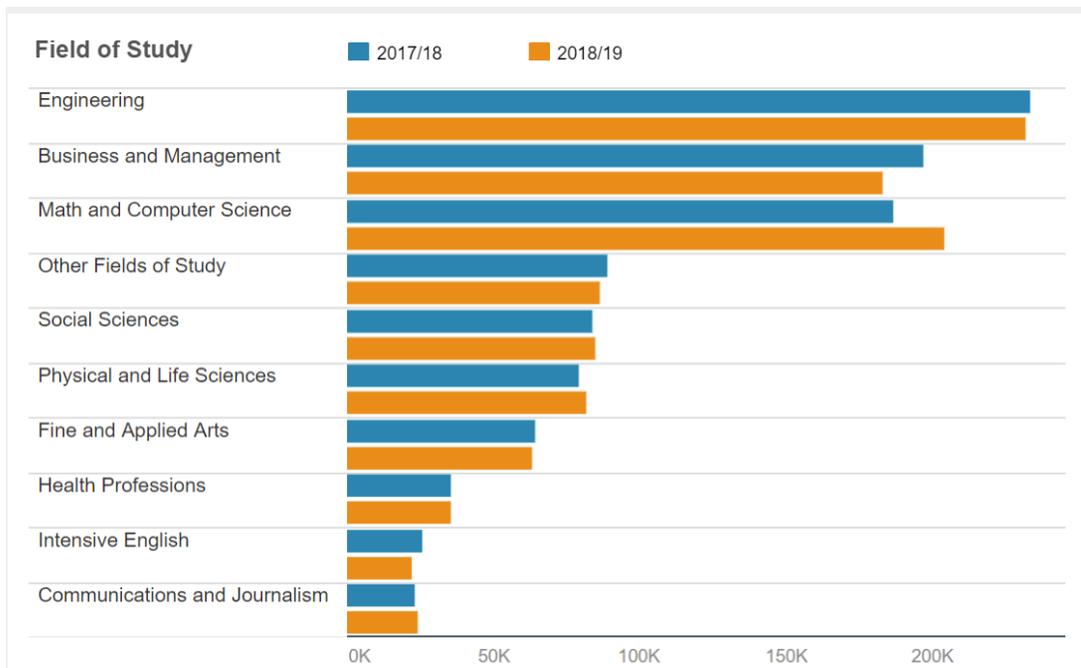
## Enrollment Trends

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DATA  
FROM THE 2019 OPEN DOORS® REPORT



Year	Enrolled Int'l Students	OPT	Total Int'l Students	Total U.S. Enrollment*	% Int'l	Annual % Change
2018/19	872,214	223,085	<b>1,095,299</b>	19,828,000	5.5	0.05
2017/18	891,330	203,462	<b>1,094,792</b>	19,831,000	5.5	1.48
2016/17	903,127	175,695	<b>1,078,822</b>	20,185,000	5.3	3.35
2015/16	896,341	147,498	<b>1,043,839</b>	20,264,000	5.2	7.07
2014/15	854,639	120,287	<b>974,926</b>	20,300,000	4.8	10.00
2013/14	780,055	105,997	<b>886,052</b>	21,216,000	4.2	8.10
2012/13	724,725	94,919	<b>819,644</b>	21,253,000	3.9	7.20
2011/12	679,338	85,157	<b>764,495</b>	20,625,000	3.7	5.70
2010/11	647,246	76,031	<b>723,277</b>	20,550,000	3.5	4.70
2009/10	623,119	67,804	<b>690,923</b>	20,428,000	3.4	2.90





**Leading Places of Origin**  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DATA  
FROM THE 2019 OPEN DOORS® REPORT

**open doors®**

Select a Year:  Search Leading Places of Origin:

Rank	Place of Origin	Number of Students	% of Total	% Change
1	China	369,548	33.7	1.7
2	India	202,014	18.4	2.9
3	South Korea	52,250	4.8	-4.2
4	Saudi Arabia	37,080	3.4	-16.5
5	Canada	26,122	2.4	0.8
6	Vietnam	24,392	2.2	0.3
7	Taiwan	23,369	2.1	4.1
8	Japan	18,105	1.7	-3.5
9	Brazil	16,059	1.5	9.8

Source: Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 2019*  
(<https://p.widencdn.net/6tpaeo/Open-Doors-Annual-Data-Release-2019-11-17-Print>)

## Appendix 2

### Comments by Mr. Deepak Rapaka

Dear Committee members,

I would like to share my thoughts on the topics discussed in the meeting.

I believe Office of International Student Services has always done a great job, in integrating international students. One problem which I see is, no matter how many activities/programs are conducted, the students from various countries/cultures/perspectives are dynamic, means they keep changing every year. There is no way to measure/compare/forecast the success of one activity to another. So how can we expect student integration in a constant way?

Just my thought, how about collaboration between each organization from various countries? Which starts from orientation day itself. Example, let there be meetings conducted twice a month (each representative from each country's Org), reports on how their country students feel on campus, professor ratings, program ratings? competitions between each organization based on their popular game? food festivals, learning cultures, movie nights, contests, etc. (I assume ISS has already done this too)

If am not wrong, the meeting also raised the topic of recruiting international students.

I am from southern part of India, I observed mainly three kinds of students who planned for masters, with various reasons.

1. Dreamers – They pick the university and they can afford it.
2. Followers – (Due to competition and unemployment) I saw many students who just follow their friends' path, while their friends follow the consultant choice. (I guess ASU already has tie-ups with those consultancies)
3. Funded by government – AP and TG are two states which offer scholarships for financially poor students who have extremely good grades in their bachelors. It might be a good idea to collaborate with them, in this case university won't lose tuition fee and they will know they are recruiting the best students especially for research-based programs.
4. Finally, as a member of GSC, I see that we are trying to collaborate with as many organizations as we can and if it works, it will be helpful in the coming years.