

Here from abroad

Study: Slowdown in growth among foreign students

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The number of international students studying at U.S. colleges increased by 1.5 percent, reaching a new high of 1.09 million in the 2017-18 school year, according to reports released Tuesday by the Institute of International Education.

There were 121,260 international students in New York during the 2017-18 school year, up 2.4 percent from the year prior, and contributing nearly \$5 billion to the state's economy, according to the report, which uses enrollment data from fall 2017. New York, has been second to California, which is the No. 1 host state in the country since at least 2001, according to Institute data.

International student enrollment across 13 Long Island institutions remained relatively flat at 11,754 students in fall 2017, according to data from the report and provided by local institutions.

Though the total number of students is on the rise, institutions across the Island and nation are seeing declines in the number of new students coming from other countries, as well as an overall slowdown in growth.

"We've seen a trend for the last couple of years in terms of the decline in international applications," said Rodney Morrison, associate provost for enrollment and retention management at Stony Brook University.

Stony Brook is one of the top host schools in the state, with 5,969 international students as of last fall — a slight increase from 5,739 in 2016-17, according to the report.

The public institution and others nationally had been hearing safety concerns from the families of international students prior to the 2016 presidential elections as a result of the political rhetoric they were hearing, Morrison said. The university tried instead to share its message of providing a welcoming, safe environment, he said.

The Institute of International Education's annual Open Doors



Lajja Gajjar, 26, of Gujarat, India, is a senior at New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury.

report surveys public and private colleges and universities, and counts undergraduate and graduate students, as well as those on nonimmigrant visas designed for foreign students. The Manhattan-based nonprofit group partners with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to provide information on international student mobility.

National growth in overall international enrollment is primarily attributed to increased participation in the Optional Practical Training program, which allows students on nonimmigrant visas to stay in the country and practice their skills for up to 12 months during or after they complete their programs, or up to 36 months for graduate students in STEM fields. OPT participation grew by 15.8 percent in the 2017-18 school year.

But the rise in overall growth is the lowest it's been since the 2005-06 school year, according to the report.

And a total of 6.6 percent, about 19,000 fewer new students came from other countries to the U.S. higher education system in fall 2017 — continuing a downward trend that began in the 2015-16 school

year, according to the report.

The slowdown is due to a range of factors, including the rising cost of college in the United States and increased competition from other countries, institute officials told reporters.

While the United States remains the top host of international students globally, countries such as China and India are expanding their own home capacity to retain their students and attract those from other countries, according to the Institute.

Students from China and India make up more than 50 percent of international students studying in the United States, with South Korea and Saudi Arabia also among the top sending countries, according to the report.

Enrollment was also impacted by the end of a scholarship program in Brazil that paid for students studying abroad and another program winding down in Saudi Arabia, according to the Institute. The number of students coming to the United States from Saudi Arabia decreased 15.5 percent in the 2017-18 school year from the year prior.

International students made up about 24 percent of the 7,400

student population attending New York Institute of Technology's New York campuses, said Nada Marie Anid, vice president for strategic communications and external affairs, and interim vice president for enrollment management. NYIT has main campuses in Old Westbury and Manhattan as well as satellite sites in Jonesboro, Arkansas; China; Vancouver; and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The institution saw a slight decrease in international enrollment going from 2,598 international students in the 2016-17 school year to 2,318 in fall 2017, according to the report. Anid attributed the decline to an "unbelievable spike" in students who came from India in 2015 who have now graduated.

With stricter visa restrictions put in place in 2016 under the Trump administration, NYIT has been taking the opportunity to grow its Vancouver campus, she said. "It could be the same student applying to New York and if there is a problem then the student is diverted to Canada."

International students are important because, especially at the graduate level they contribute to the institution's re-

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Here are the public and private colleges in New York State with the highest number of international students in the 2017-18 academic year:

- **New York University** 17,552, up 1.3 percent from 2016-17
- **Columbia University** 14,615, up 3.7 percent
- **SUNY Buffalo** 7,126, down 1.7 percent
- **Cornell University** 6,775, up 6.1 percent
- **Stony Brook University** 5,969, up 4 percent

SOURCE: 2017-18 OPEN DOORS REPORT, INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

DATABASE
Foreign student
enrollment in the U.S.
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