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## For What it's Worth...

Does the world matter? One may wonder whether the United States has become so insular, perhaps so self-indulgent, to think that the outside world doesn't matter so much.

Obviously, business and industry perspectives would differ greatly from that perspective. Whereas the world is our oyster, it is perhaps has become our nemesis. The 20th Century was the American Century globally. The US virtually owned manufacturing, technology, economics, and knowledge creation. But this is the Asian Century. All roads point to Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul, and Kuala Lumpur, among others. Perhaps US greed is catching up with us, as even US companies have off-shored most of the manufacturing jobs to lower-cost third world nations. The hair on my neck stands up straight when I hear people complaining about our lack of competitiveness and the growth of the global economy beyond our doors. But we helped make this happen. And for the world, it isn't a bad thing. For us, not so good.

The same trends are happening in higher education. We owned higher education in the 20th Century. And we still "own" it, so to speak. Over a third of the top 100 institutions in the Shanghai rankings are US based. And US institutions will always be among the best. However, other nations are catching up, like the Chinese, Indians, and Koreans. We aren't getting worse, per se, but they are getting better. This, along with 9/11, resulted in a large decline in international students in the first part of the past decade. As our essay in this month's Swail Letter on Higher Education states, the population of international students declined from 689,000 to 618,000 between 2001 and 2003. But the numbers have rebounded greatly, with 859,000 F1 visas awarded in 2008.

So the world is coming back to US higher Education. And this helps to improve our system. But we need to take note that, while students used to stay and get jobs in America, they are now choosing to go home and help build their economies. This is also a good thing for the world, as it creates a better balance and reduces the gap between the haves and have-nots in our global society. We can't always be thinking locally anymore. The world is our oyster. And it's theirs, too.

**Watson Scott Swail, Ed.D.**  
*President & CEO, Educational Policy Institute*

## THIS ISSUE

### Trends in International Student Enrollment **P2**

As the total number of students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities has steadily increased since the early 1980s, so has the number and proportion of international students. In this issue of The Swail Letter on Higher Education, we look at recent trends in international student enrollment at US institutions, complete with areas of study, origins of students, and perspective on the issues facing institutions in serving students and meeting and creating the demand.

## UPCOMING EPI EVENTS

### RETENTION 2010

Join us June 9-11, 2010 in Chicago, Illinois for the International Conference on Student Success. Visit our website for more information.

### RETENTION 101 Workshop

This fall EPI will be hosting another hands-on workshop for higher education professionals. Stay tuned for more information.

### AACRAO SEM 2010

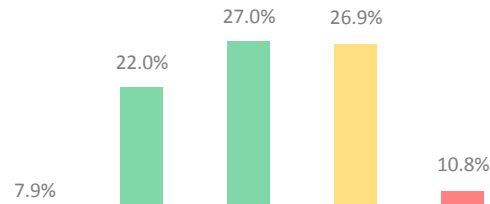
November 7-10. AACRAO, in partnership with EPI, is sponsoring the 20th annual Strategic Enrollment Management conference in Nashville, TN.

# Trends in International Student Enrollment

*The coming decade--where we have been--where we are going*

As the total number of students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities has steadily increased since the early 1980s, so has the number and proportion of international students. In 1980, foreign student enrollment was pegged at 286,000 students in the US (IIE, 2009). By 2007-08, international student attendance increased by 119 percent, or 337,000 students to 623,805. This enrollment count exceeds the previous all-time high of 586,323 students reported in 2002-03. Of specific interest is the increase in new international student enrollments, which has seen a 31.2 percent

**EXHIBIT 1. Total International Student Enrollments, Fall 2008 compared to Fall 2007**



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Following planning to enroll in postsecondary institutes became a focus of national security (Starobin, 2006). Immigration policies and regulations were altered, which has a major affect for international student enrollment. For example, the implementation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) cre-

national students to feel concern for the safety of their children and question the general acceptance of foreign-born individuals in America (In Tough Times, 2004). As a result, parents were less willing to support their children attending college in the United States.

**EXHIBIT 2. New International Student Enrollments, 2004/05-2007/08**

	2004/05 New Int'l Students	2005/06 New Int'l Students	2006/07 New Int'l Students	2007/08 New Int'l Students	% Change from 06/07	% Change from 04/05
Undergraduate	59,943	61,342	63,749	68,195	7.0	13.8
Graduate	61,350	64,235	72,726	78,489	7.9	27.9
Non-Degree	10,653	17,346	20,703	26,437	27.7	148.2
Total	131,946	142,923	157,178	173,122	10.1	31.2

SOURCE: Open Doors 2008, Report on International Educational Exchange, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/page/131548/>