

Feb. 8, 2018

International Applications to U.S. Graduate Schools Decrease for 2nd Consecutive Year

From 2005 to 2016, international applications had increased year over year. But international applications for U.S. graduate schools have since fallen, raising fears that the two recent declines could be the beginning of a larger trend, according to a report by the Council of Graduate Schools.

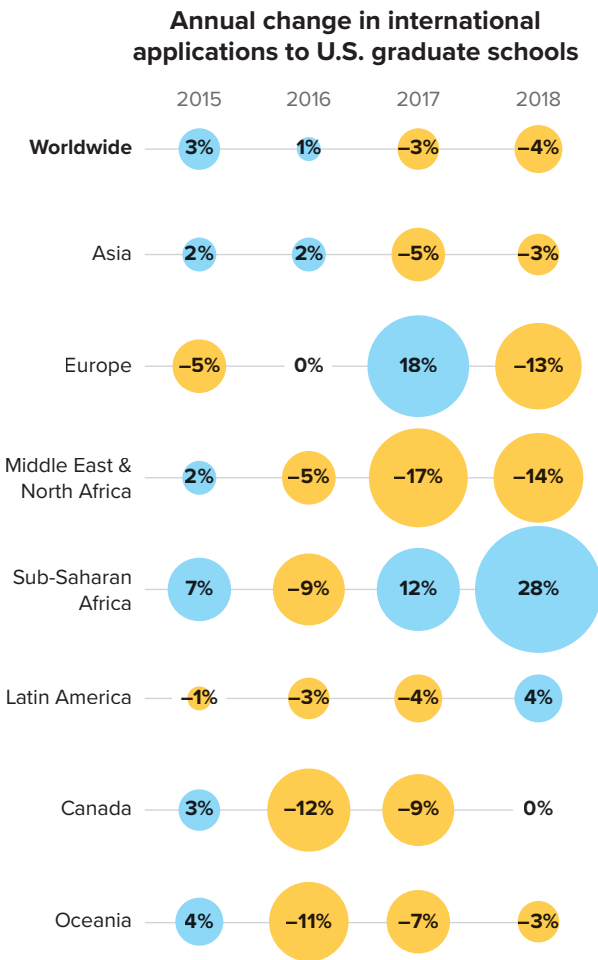
Schools are monitoring changes in immigration and visa policy, and are concerned about “the possible negative impact to the U.S.’s image as a welcoming destination for international students and scholars,” said CGS President Suzanne Ortega.

This year’s negative trend was exacerbated by large declines in a handful of countries, including a 12 percent decline from India — the second largest country of origin for international graduate students — and a 27 percent decline from Iran.

Actual enrollment by international graduate students fell by only 1 percent, suggesting that acceptance and enrollment were up among those who applied. Data from other sources show similar declines in international applications and enrollment at the undergraduate level.

Most international graduate applications are for degrees or certificates in mathematics, computer science or engineering. Applications for engineering programs fell by 16 percent compared with the previous year, the largest decrease by field of study.

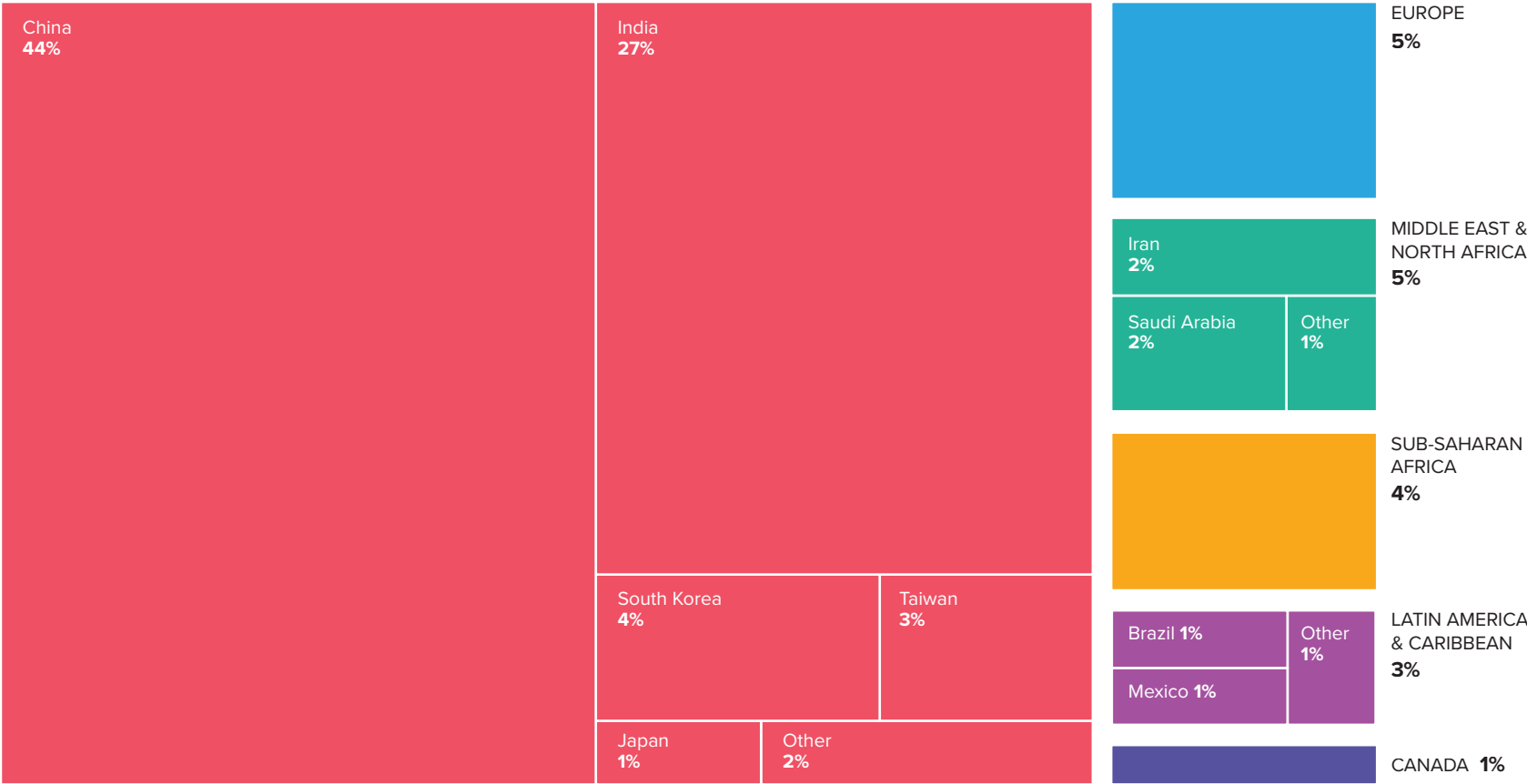
For many schools, international enrollment is a major source of tuition revenue because foreign students typically pay full tuition. In 2015, foreign students paid more than \$9 billion in tuition to U.S. public universities — 28 percent of total tuition revenue, far exceeding their 12 percent share of the student population.



Share of international graduate applications by region and country

Data for Fall 2018. Country-specific breakdowns provided only for the top ten sources of international applicants

ASIA 81%



Sources: Hironao Okahana and Enyu Zhou, “International graduate applications and enrollment: Fall 2018,” Council of Graduate Schools; Tanza Loudenback, “International students are now ‘subsidizing’ public American universities to the tune of \$9 billion a year,” Business Insider

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