

COVID-19 IMPACT ON NEW ENGLAND HIGHER EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has disrupted regular operations at nearly every postsecondary institution across the U.S. The pandemic also threatens to reshape the future of several aspects of college life, including the recruitment of international students to study in the New England. **Most colleges expect a decline in international students – especially from Asia, which accounts for 70.1% of all international students worldwide – due to travel restrictions and health advisories.** The vast majority of international students in New England in AY 2018-19 originated from China (32.3%) and India (15.6%).

In [AY 2018-19](#), there were **98,666 international students at New England's colleges and universities**, which comprised **9.4% of the region's total enrollment**. These students have been major contributors to New England's economy. In AY 2018-19, international students added an estimated **\$4.3 billion to the region's economy**.

The American Council on Education (ACE) forecasts that **international student enrollment for AY 2020-21 could drop by as much as 25%**. Given the concerning dip in the region's overall higher education enrollment largely due to demographic shifts that are projected to continue through 2032, even a slight shift in the enrollment of foreign students – who typically pay full tuition – would significantly impact nearly all higher education institutions in New England, from Ivy League schools to community colleges.

9.4%

Percent of student body in New England comprised of foreign students in AY 2018-19.

\$4.3 B

Estimated amount foreign students added to the New England economy in AY 2018-19.*

IF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT FALLS BY 25% IN AY 2020-21, IT WILL MEAN...

\$790+ M

in estimated forgone revenue just from lost undergraduate tuition and required fees at New England's colleges and universities.*

In AY 2019-20, non-resident students at the region's public four-year institutions paid, on average, **\$32,105** in tuition and required fees.

This "non-resident premium" was **\$17,900 higher (+126%)** than the amount paid by in-state students. See methodology below.

THE REGION'S TOP INSTITUTIONS HOSTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (AY 2018-19)

Connecticut

- University of Connecticut 4,172
- Yale University 3,636

Maine

- University of Maine 458
- Colby College 241

Massachusetts

- Northeastern University - Boston 16,075
- Boston University 10,598

New Hampshire

- Dartmouth College 1,383
- University of New Hampshire 1,016

Rhode Island

- Brown University 2,092
- Rhode Island School of Design 1,067

Vermont

- University of Vermont 885
- Middlebury College 301

PROJECTED BROADER ECONOMIC IMPACT

In AY 2018-19, each international student added an average of **\$43,863** to local and state economies across New England (In terms of tuition and living expenses. See methodology below for explanation of terms). If, as ACE projects, international student enrollment will decline by 25% in the next academic year, this could lead to **a staggering loss of more than \$1 billion** to the region's economy.

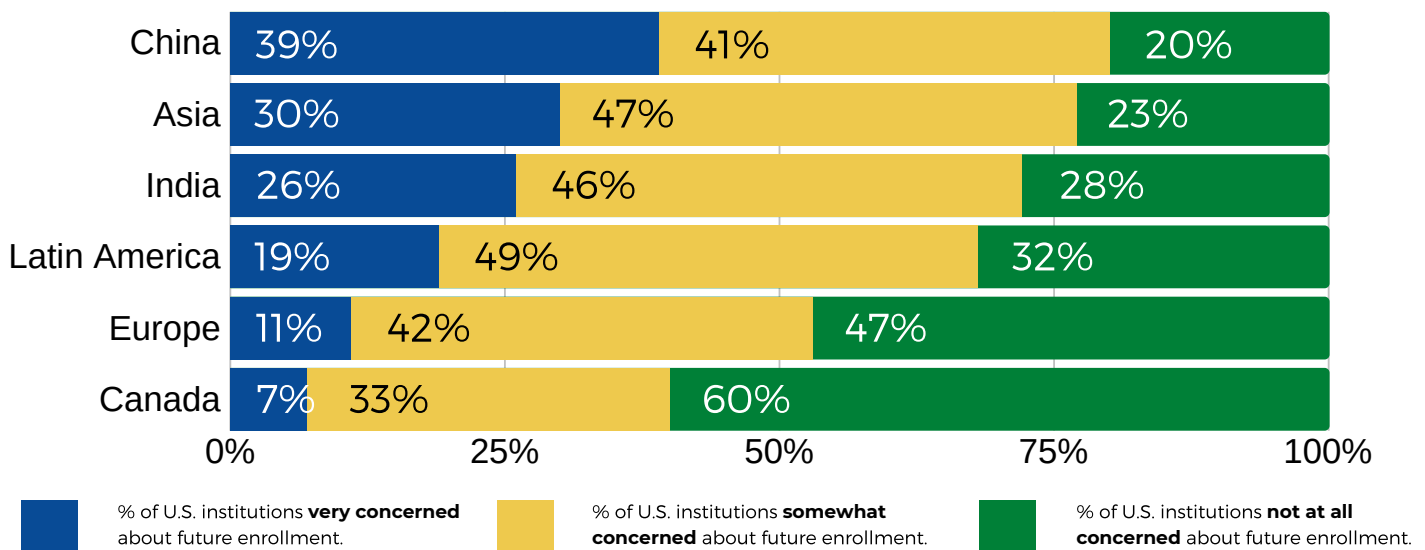
Location	International Enrollment (AY 2018-19)	Economic Contribution in AY 2018-19 (In Terms of Tuition and Living Expenses*)	Forecasted Economic Contribution with 25% Decline in International Students in AY 2020-21 (In Terms of Tuition and Living Expenses*)	Difference/Loss
New England	98,666	\$4,327,800,000	\$3,245,850,000	-\$1,081,950,000
CT	4,333	\$588,900,000	\$441,675,000	-\$147,225,000
ME	14,832	\$51,100,000	\$38,325,000	-\$12,775,000
MA	71,098	\$3,200,000,000	\$2,400,000,000	-\$800,000,000
NH	5,376	\$143,500,000	\$107,625,000	-\$35,875,000
RI	1,335	\$263,700,000	\$197,775,000	-\$65,925,000
VT	1,692	\$80,600,000	\$60,450,000	-\$20,150,000

SOURCE: NEBHE Analysis: Institute for International Education, 2019 Open Doors Report

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

According to [survey results](#) from the Institute for International Education, in November 2019 – approximately one month before the World Health Organization [cites](#) the first confirmed cluster of cases of COVID-19 – roughly **80% of postsecondary institutions in the U.S. had already expressed concerns about maintaining or increasing international student enrollment from China** and **77% cited worries about future enrollment from Asian countries outside of China and India**. While many institutions originally addressed these concerns by reportedly focusing on recruiting students from Asia, new international travel restrictions, social distancing measures, and uncertainty about the near future have impeded those recruitment efforts – and will continue to do so if travel bans remain in place into the summer or fall.

Fall 2020 International Student Regional Recruitment Concerns, as of November 2019



SOURCE: Institute for International Education, 2019 Fall International Student Enrollment Snapshot Survey.

UNCERTAINTY FOR CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

For current international students in the U.S., certain aspects of their F-1 status remains unclear. New [guidance](#) from the Department of Homeland Security permits international students to maintain their visa statuses, even if a college has shifted its classes to online-only. Students must maintain a full course load during this temporary transition to online instruction. However, unfortunately for prospective students or those with expired visas, the U.S. State Department has suspended F (student) and M (vocational student) visa application services until further notice.

ACE and several other higher education advocacy groups recently [submitted a letter](#) to the U.S. State Department requesting further clarity on the F-1 status of international students. Issues raised in the letter include questions on the status of students who attend schools that have temporarily closed entirely and the outlook for students who are unable to return to their home country due to current travel restrictions and health advisories.

The current situation is still unfolding, and several questions remain to be answered. While U.S. Homeland Security continues to monitor developments associated with the spread of COVID-19, keep abreast of the federal government's policies for current and prospective international students at Homeland Security's [Study in the States COVID-19 web page](#).

*NEBHE ANALYSIS: METHODOLOGY

International student enrollment data is provided by the Open Doors report, published annually by the Institute of International Education in partnership with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. In our analysis, we use the term *international student* in conformity with the [definition adopted by the OECD and UIS in 2006](#). According to this convention, the term *international student* denotes a student who crosses borders for the specific purpose of studying. This term should not be conflated with *foreign student*, a non-citizen enrolled at an institution of education outside his or her home country, but who has not necessarily crossed a border to study (therefore not strictly mobile, and causes an over-count of actual mobility figures).

Tuition and living expense data, which are used to calculate the total amount of economic benefit, come from the Institute of International Education and the U.S. Department of Education's National Center of Educational Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Figures are rounded to the nearest one-hundred thousand.

Tuition and fee data, which are used to calculate the potential lost revenue at colleges and universities, come from The College Board's Trends in College Pricing. The estimate provided is a conservative one based on the full-price, non-resident (out-of-state) net tuition and fees at public four-year institutions for AY 2019-20. These prices are generally less expensive than tuition and fees at private colleges and universities. Because the available data do not clearly indicate (1) the average tuition and fees that international students pay at private institutions or (2) the proportion of foreign students who attend schools in the public and private postsecondary sectors, we have chosen to make our estimates based on the overly cautious assumption that 100% of international students in New England attend a public four-year institution. In reality, the actual forgone revenue in lost tuition and fees due to a decline in foreign student enrollment would likely be quite a bit higher, as many of these students attend more costly private colleges. Indeed, as the chart on page one indicates, the top institutions hosting international students in New England is roughly evenly split between the region's public and private colleges and universities. Our hope is to convey that even our overly conservative estimate indicates the staggering amount of revenue loss that our region's institutions face with a 25% dip in international enrollment for the upcoming academic year.

SOURCES: NEBHE analysis of data from the Institute for International Education, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, The College Board Annual Survey of Colleges for the 2018-19 Academic Year, NAFSA,