

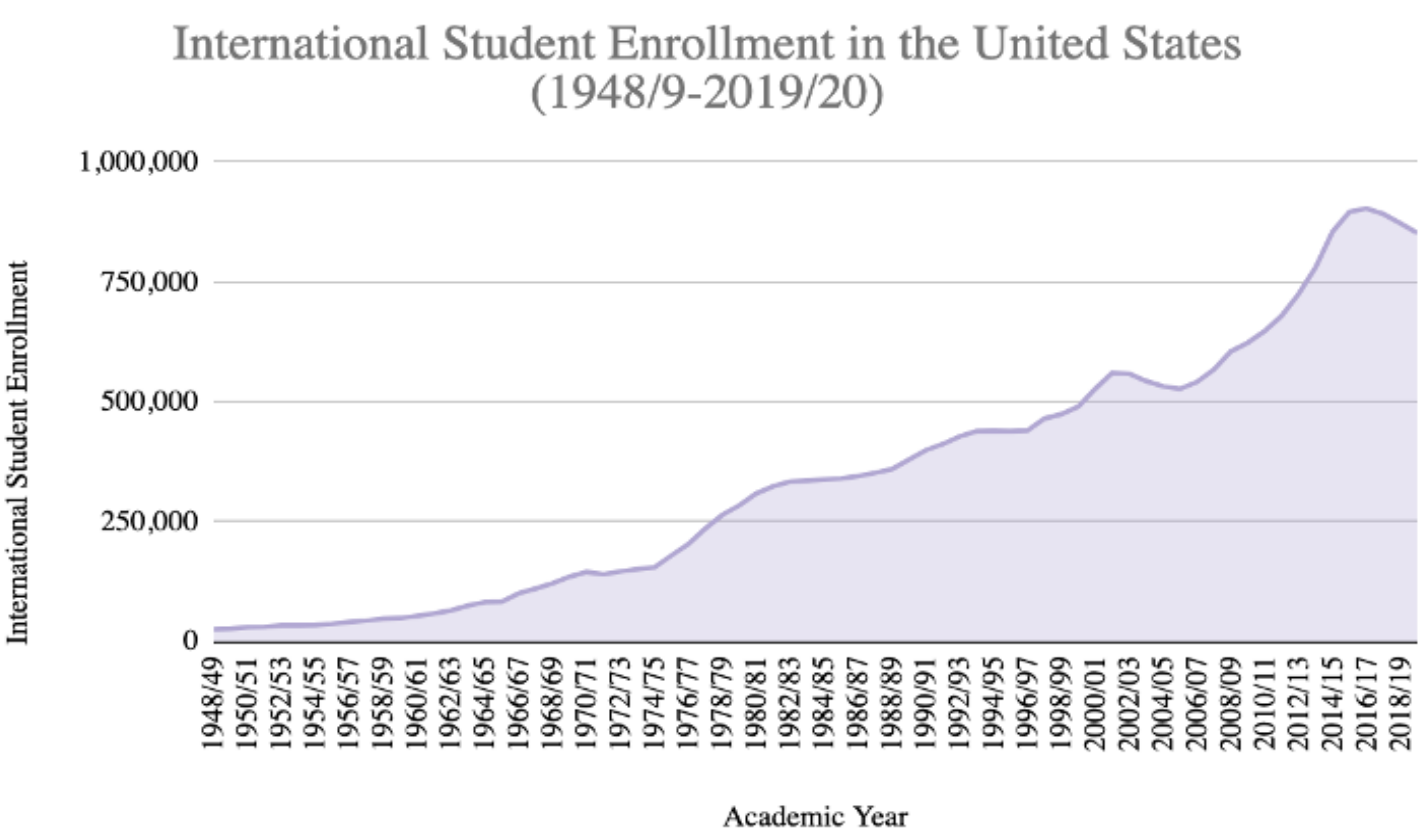
# Institutional Context Drives Mobility: A Comprehensive Analysis of Academic and Economic Factors that Influence International Student Enrollment at United States Higher Education Institutions

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## Background and Context

- Massive growth in international student enrollment (ISE) worldwide (OECD, 2019)
- Overall proportion of ISE in U.S. has decreased over the last 20 years (OECD, 2019)
- ISE in U.S. hit peak in the 2016/2017 academic year, with 903,127 students enrolled (IIE, 2020)
- New ISE has declined over 10% overall in the last four years (IIE, 2020)



### Main factors that influence ISE

- Ranking
  - International students prioritize rankings to select a college (Branco Oliveira & Soares, 2016)
- Economic, Immigration, and Employment Factors
  - Immigration challenges have increased in recent years
  - 68% of Ph.D. students in 2014 utilized OPT (Wadman & Stone, 2017)
  - As tuition has increased, ISE has grown (IIE, 2020)
- Geographic and Spatial Factors
  - Students typically prioritize the host country before other factors (Marginson, 2006)

## Purpose

The purpose of this *ex post facto* quantitative research study was to understand how **ranking**, **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**, **tuition**, **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, and the **unemployment rate** impact ISE in the United States by examining trends over time at the institutional level and differentiated based on Carnegie Classification

## Methodology

- Examined 2,884 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the U.S. using existing data
- 4 RQs: 11 variables from 2004-2019
- Collected data from 4 governmental agencies and 1 media company
- Utilized Time Series Regression, Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model with an Arellano-Bond Estimator for RQs 1 and 2, and Linear OLS Regression for RQs 3 and 4
- Research Models

$$y_{sit} = \alpha + \alpha_1 y_{sit-1} + \alpha_2 y_{sit-2} + \alpha_3 y_{sit-3} + \alpha_4 y_{sit-4} + \beta_1 (\mathcal{W}_{sit} + \mathcal{W}_{sit-1} + \mathcal{W}_{sit-2} + \mathcal{W}_{sit-3} + \mathcal{W}_{sit-4}) + \beta_2 (\mathcal{X}_{sit}) + e_t$$

$$y_{sit} = \alpha + \beta_1 (\mathcal{W}_{sit}) + \beta_2 (\mathcal{X}_{sit}) + e_t$$

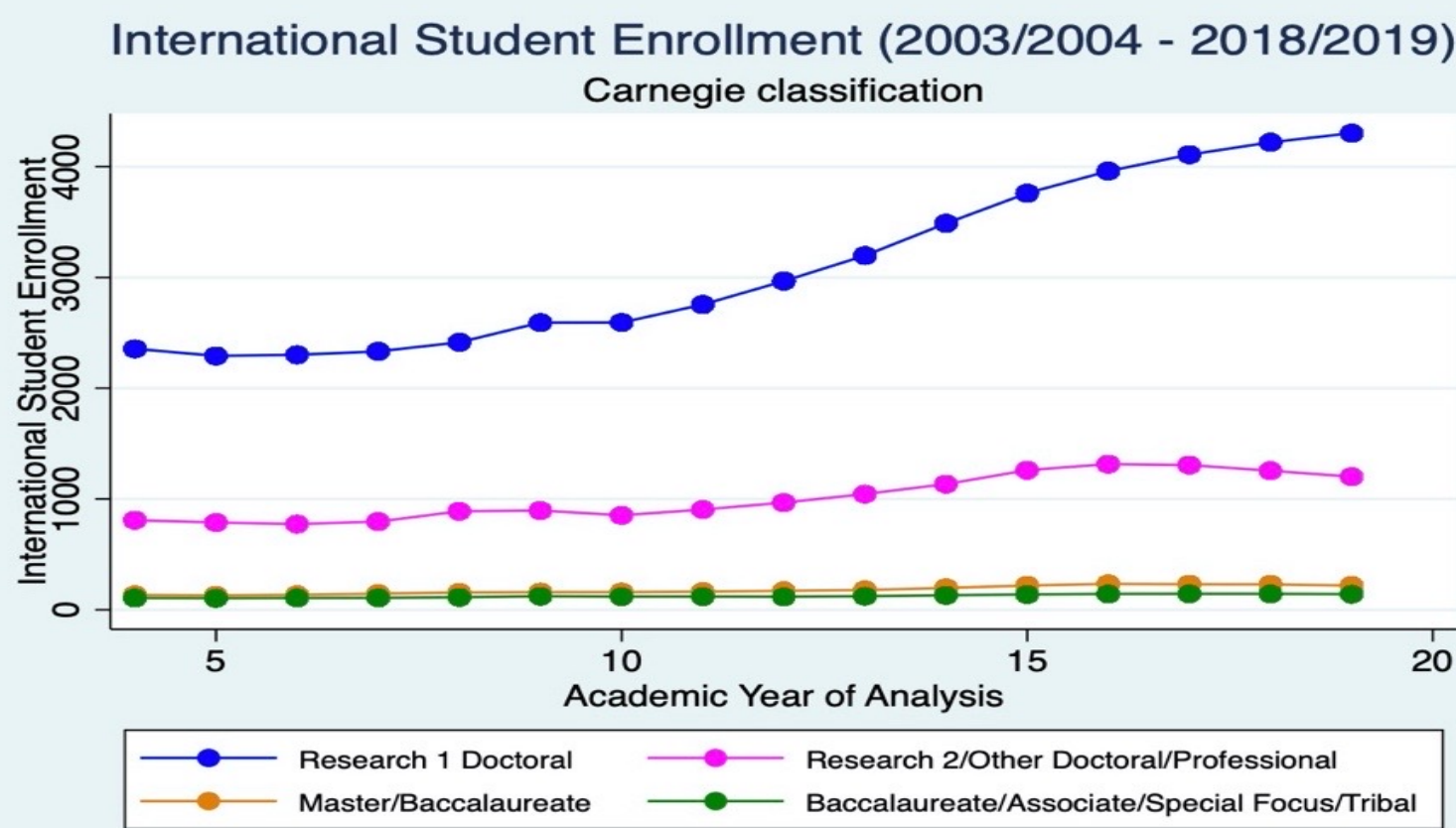


U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

## Key Findings

### Select Overview of HEIs in sample

- 42.75% of HEIs are in a city
- Top 5 states (California, New York, Texas, Massachusetts, Florida) comprised 28.53% of HEIs, and 41.8% of ISE
- Research I Institutions represented 3.57% of HEIs & 36.40% of ISE
- ISE % overall was 3.53 % - increased from 3.06% in 2004 to 4.35% in 2019



**Ranking:** Significance depended on HEI; 20% of ISE in top 50 ranked HEIs; importance is growing  
**Tuition:** No significant influence overall, but positive predictor for CC1 HEIs

**Economic Conditions:** Mixed results, mostly in line with studies that have found different impact of the GDP or unemployment; more research needed

**OPT:** Significant and positive predictor, particularly CC3 and CC4

**Institutional Funding:** Public institutions enrolled significantly more students

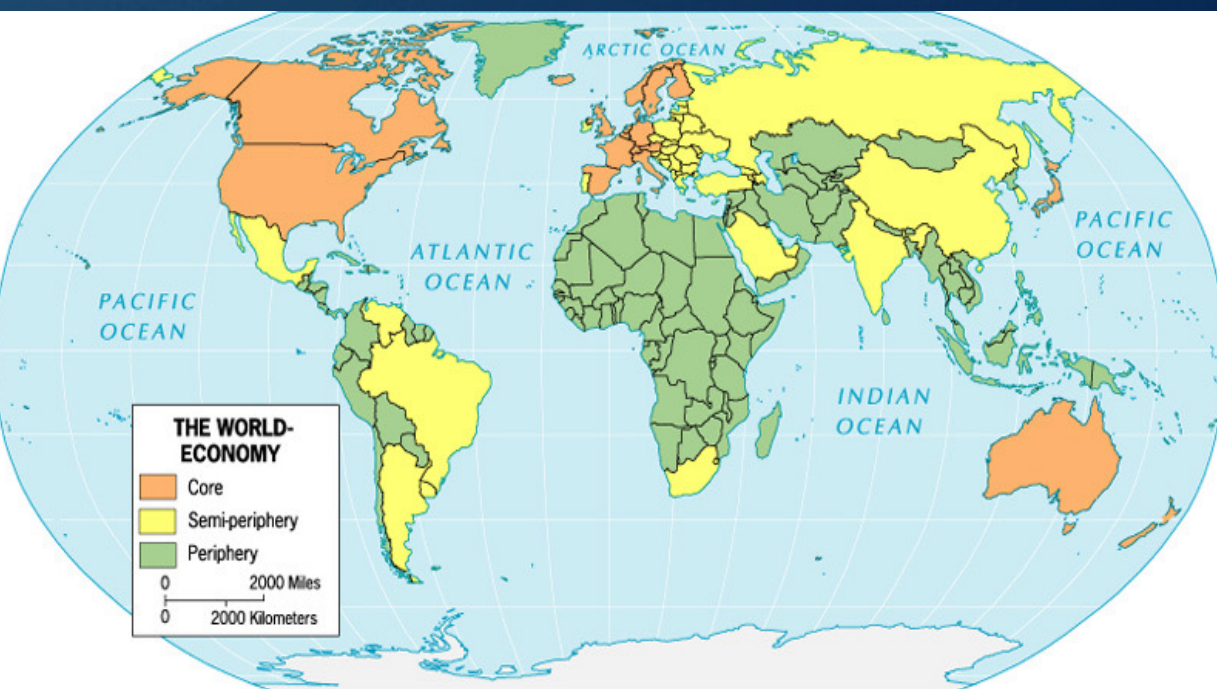
**Campus Setting:** Urban locations enroll a significant proportion of international students

## Discussion and Implications

| Carnegie Classification   | External Factors | Adjustable Institutional Characteristics |          |      |            |       | Fixed Institutional Characteristics |                   |                 |               |
|---|------------------|--|----------|------|------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|   | Ranking          | Tuition                                  | Graduate | STEM | Enrollment | OPT * | GDP                                 | Unemployment Rate | Campus Setting* | Funding Type* |
| CC1: Very High Research Doctoral Institutions                                   | ++               | +  | o        | ooo  | +++        |       | ++                                  | +++               |                 |               |
| CC2: High Research Doctoral, & other Doctoral/Professional Institutions         |                  | ooo                                      |          |      | ooo        |       |                                     | ++                |                 | o             |
| CC3: Master & Baccalaureate Institutions  | +                | ++                                       |          | +    |            | ooo   |                                     |                   | ooo             | ooo           |
| CC4: Baccalaureate/Associate, Associate, Special Focus, and Tribal Institutions | ooo              | oo                                       | ooo      | ooo  | +++        | ++    | +                                   |                   | ooo             | ooo           |

+ (2008-2019 analysis): + - significant; ++ - med. significant; +++ - very significant  
o (2018/2019 analysis): o - significant; oo - med. significant; ooo - very significant  
Note. Green = positive; Red = negative; Purple = difference based on lag or category

- HEIs need to work with Federal policymakers and advocacy organizations to prioritize immigration legislation
- Institutional context is critical, and HEIs should focus on leveraging their strengths and not chase prestige
- HEIs need to diversify their enrollment streams and focus on supporting students throughout the life-cycle
- Career Support and Alumni Services are arguably the most important campus partnerships for ISS professionals



World Systems Theory Map (Wallerstein, 2004): 1 of two theories utilized for this study