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**Latitudes: When it comes to international education, the map keeps shifting for U.S. colleges**

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# Latitudes

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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## A majority of colleges report an increase in international applications

International applications to American colleges are continuing to climb, but the post-pandemic enrollment bump may be subsiding.

A little more than half of colleges [surveyed](#) by the Institute of International Education said overseas applications increased for fall 2024. But that's a smaller share than in [2023](#) and [2022](#), when applications rose at 61 and 65 percent of colleges, respectively.

About a third of colleges reported falling numbers, while 17 percent said they were steady.

The institute, known as IIE, began conducting a spring survey of American colleges during Covid to provide more immediate information to supplement its [annual Open Doors census](#). Here are a couple of other international-student trends worth flagging:

**China may be fading — as a source and as a priority.** Just a quarter of colleges said applications from China were on the rise, while nearly half saw growth from India, which has supplanted China as the [largest source](#) of foreign students in the United States.

China also trails India as a priority for student recruitment. Interestingly, colleges named India as a top market for undergraduate and graduate recruitment, even though India supplies five times as many [graduate students](#) to the U.S. as undergraduates.

**Applications from sub-Saharan Africa soared. But will that lead to commensurate increases in enrollment?** A large share of colleges said applications from [Ghana](#) and Nigeria jumped. Still, U.S. [visa-denial rates](#) of more than 55 percent in the region mean that interest doesn't necessarily yield as many actual students.

Applications were also up from Bangladesh and Nepal, colleges told IIE.

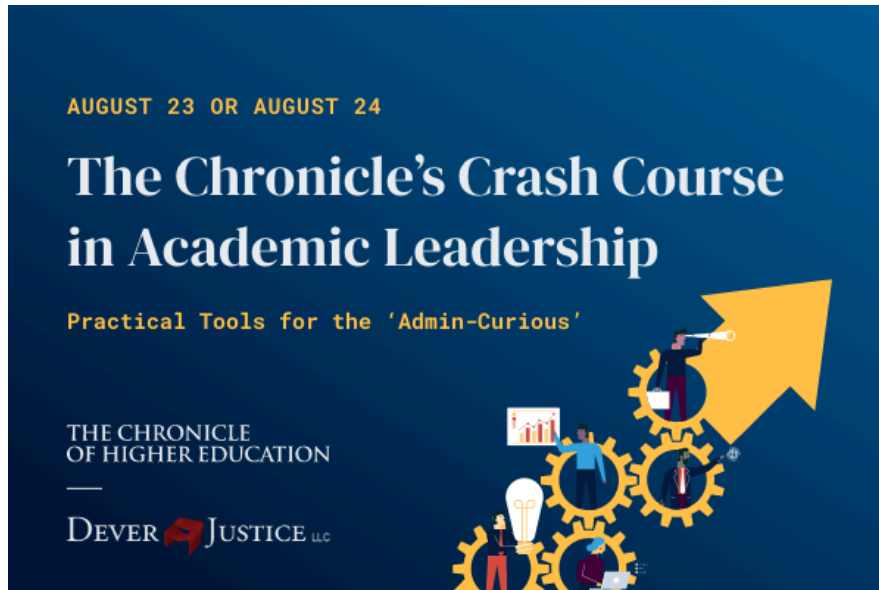
**When it comes to reaching students, colleges were as likely to use recruitment agents as to hold in-person events overseas.** Fifty-eight percent of colleges surveyed use agents as a recruitment strategy, while at the undergraduate level, 57 percent traveled to college fairs or regional expos in students' home countries. (In-person events were not among the top six measures for recruiting graduate students.)

The frequency of agent use is evidence of the normalization of a [once-controversial recruitment practice](#). Alumni, current international students, and social media were also common channels for engagement with prospective students.

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## For study abroad, finally a recovery

For study abroad, the shadow of Covid might finally be lifting.

Nine in 10 colleges said they anticipated that student participation in education abroad, which [cratered during the pandemic](#), would be stable or growing. Just one college reported to IIE that overseas programs for this fall were canceled. Also of note:

**They'll always have Paris. And maybe Seoul?** Traditional destinations in Western Europe continue to be popular, but colleges also are making programs in countries such as Australia, Costa Rica, Japan, and South Korea a priority, the survey shows.

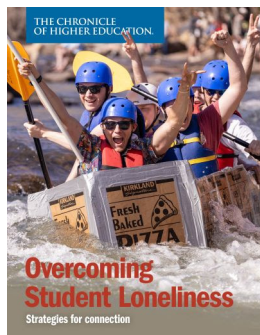
**Follow the professor.** More than half of students who went overseas in the last academic year participated in faculty-led programs, while the rest directly enrolled in foreign universities, took part in student exchanges, participated in organized study-abroad programs, or did internships or research internationally.

**American colleges are taking “incremental” steps toward more-sustainable study abroad, IIE said.** Forty-five percent of responding institutions said they were trying to make international study more [climate friendly](#), including expanding virtual exchanges, creating an education-abroad-specific sustainability plan, and prioritizing transportation with less carbon admissions while overseas. No single strategy, however, was being followed by a sizable share of colleges.

About 660 colleges participated in the survey, a 25-percent response rate.

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## On a (sort-of) break ...

*Latitudes* will be a little shorter this week and next while I'm on vacation. I'll see you after Labor Day, hopefully rested, relaxed, and without too many black-fly bites.

In the meantime, thanks for reading. I always welcome your feedback and ideas for future reporting, so drop me a line at [karin.fischer@chronicle.com](mailto:karin.fischer@chronicle.com). You can also connect with me on [X](#) or [LinkedIn](#). If you like this newsletter, please share it with colleagues and friends. They can [sign up here](#).

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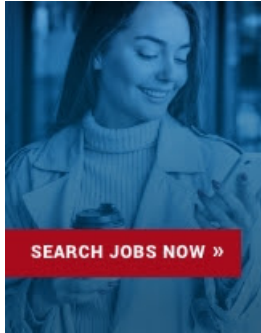
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