



SUBSCRIBE & SAVE
Less than \$3 per week

THE WEEK



My Account



[Talking Points](#)

[The Week Recommends](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Cartoons](#)

[From the Magazine](#)

[More ▾](#)

[Home](#) | [Education](#)

TALKING POINT

Where will international students go if not the US?

China, Canada and the UK are ready to educate the world



[Newsletter sign up](#)



Ironically, Trump's crackdown will 'hamper' his administration's goals for the 'economy, science and technology, and national security'

(Image credit: Illustration by Stephen Kelly / Shutterstock / Getty Images)

BY JOEL MATHIS, THE WEEK US PUBLISHED 2 HOURS AGO

As the Trump administration broadens its crackdown on international students, those students and their families are looking abroad to complete their education. The world's young scholars are seeking alternatives to U.S. colleges and universities.

Foreign students are "in chaos" as the White House threatens their American education, said The Hill. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in late May that the administration had paused new student visas, would "aggressively revoke visas" for Chinese students, and suggested the U.S. could cap international student admissions at all American colleges at 15% of total enrollment. The administration believes foreign students study in America for "political purposes, not educational or scientific ones," said Jay Greene, a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

The 'world's gain'?

The world's "star students" are now looking instead to universities in Asia and Europe, said NBC News. There are "plenty of foreign governments and universities" eager to cultivate the talents of young people who have long come to America and "helped make the United States a global tech and scientific leader." One likely winner will be China. The country is set to become "significantly more attractive than before to students and researchers from the Global South," said Simon Marginson, a professor of higher education at the University of Oxford.

Subscribe to The Week

Escape your echo chamber. Get the facts behind the news, plus analysis from multiple perspectives

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE



Sign up for The Week's Free Newsletters

From our morning news briefing to a weekly Good News Newsletter, get the best of The Week delivered directly to your inbox.

SIGN UP

"Every ambitious Chinese parent" has longed to send their child to Harvard University, said Alex Lo at [The South China Morning Post](#). Now they are having second thoughts. "What's the point of investing millions in your child's education" if they can suddenly be deported because of a presidential whim? That will be America's loss, but it will be the "world's gain, and not the least [China's](#)." Chinese students are likely to stay home rather than trying out their luck in an "increasingly hostile, not to say racist, America."

The U.S. is "not going to lose its appeal overnight," said Karishma Vaswani at [Bloomberg](#). It will remain a "coveted" place for many foreign students to study because of the "potential to find lucrative employment after graduation." But [Canada](#) and the U.K. are already "poised to scoop up disillusioned applicants." So are [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#). [Hong Kong](#), Tokyo and Malaysia additionally stand to benefit, as Trump makes the U.S. a "far less inviting option" for students who want to "study, grow and build their future."

'Shooting itself in the foot'

The losses will be felt not just on U.S. campuses but in "local and state economies, as well," said [The Washington Post](#). During the 2023-24 school year, roughly 1.1 million foreign students contributed \$44 billion to the American economy. Those students "pay rent, they go to restaurants, they travel," said Nicholas Barr, a professor at the [London](#) School of Economics. America is "shooting itself in the foot big time."

America is "putting its [economic engine](#) at risk," said David L. Di Maria, the vice provost for global engagement at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, at [The Conversation](#). The irony is that Trump's crackdown will "hamper" his administration's "America First" goals for the "economy, science and technology, and [national security](#)." Pushing away foreign students who study science and engineering will "ultimately redirect talent to other countries, allies and adversaries alike."

Sign up for Today's Best Articles in your inbox

A free daily email with the biggest news stories of the day – and the best features from TheWeek.com

SIGN ME UP

- ☐ Contact me with news and offers from other Future brands
- ☐ Receive email from us on behalf of our trusted partners or sponsors

By submitting your information you agree to the [Terms & Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) and are aged 16 or over.



Joel Mathis, The Week US