

Latitudes

THE CHRONICLE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

You can also [read this newsletter on the web](#).

“I view it as a business”

President Donald J. Trump — whose administration [froze student-visa interviews over the summer](#) and threatened to deport foreign students for [public protests](#) and [parking tickets](#) — emerged as an unexpected proponent of international students in a recent interview.

“We take in trillions of dollars from students. You know, the students pay more than double when they come in from most foreign countries. I want to see our school system thrive,” Trump said Monday on [Fox News](#).

“It’s not that I want them,” he added. “I view it as a business.”

Trump's puzzling positive remarks laid out the economic case for the value of enrolling students from overseas. College degrees are one of the United States' largest service exports and a \$44-billion-a-year industry, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Yet, [as I pointed out not long ago](#), the economic argument seemed to be falling flat — with the American public and specifically with the country's businessman-in-chief.

Maybe the president has bought in. Cutting the number of international students “would destroy our entire university and college system,” Trump told the host, Laura Ingraham. “I don't want to do that.”

It's a perspective that would seem at odds with the actions of his own administration. But it's not the first time that Trump has sounded a similar note. This summer he appeared to [walk back](#) a threat by Secretary of State Marco Rubio to “aggressively revoke” Chinese students' visas. During his campaign, Trump called it a priority to retain “brilliant” international students by giving [green cards to graduates of American colleges](#).

Of course — as I expect many readers will note in my social-media feeds — these past statements haven't appeared to have an appreciable impact on policy. In addition to actions like the visa freeze, which coincided with the period when the bulk of student applications are submitted, the Trump administration has [reinstated a travel ban](#), pledged to [do away with post-study work for foreign students](#), and [proposed capping international enrollments](#) in exchange for federal funds in its “compact” with colleges. There are concerns that these measures could discourage overseas enrollments.

All these headlines reflect the fact that international education sits at the nexus of two of the most-contentious issues in today's politics: higher education and immigration.

I don't pretend to know what's in the president's mind, but I would make one point: Trump made his green-card comments on a podcast hosted by Silicon Valley investors who support high-skill immigration.

But he was certainly not egged on to embrace a pro-international-student position by Ingraham, who sharply challenged him. “A lot of MAGA folks are not thrilled about

the idea of hundreds of thousands of foreign students in the United States,” she said. “Why, sir, is that a pro-MAGA position when so many American kids want to go to school and there are not places for them because universities are getting rich off Chinese money?” When Trump raised the economic windfall from foreign students, she rejoined, “So what?”

The president’s response wouldn’t have been out of place at an international-education conference: “I actually think it’s good to have outside countries. I want to be able to get along with the world.”

Upcoming Premium Webinar

The banner features a blue background. On the left, the text 'THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION' is in white, with 'Higher Ed in Crisis' in large white serif font below it. Underneath is the subtitle 'Strategies for Managing Response and Communication' in a smaller white font. At the bottom left, a black box contains the text 'PREMIUM WEBINAR' in white, followed by 'NOVEMBER 12 | 1 PM ET' in white. To the right of this is a white button with the text 'Sign Up Now' in blue. On the right side of the banner is an illustration of a classical university building with a red circle around its entrance. Several hands holding microphones are positioned in front of the building, suggesting a press conference or media event.

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Higher Ed in Crisis

Strategies for Managing Response and Communication

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Preparing for effective crisis response is critically important in today's tumultuous higher-ed landscape. Join us for a premium webinar exploring key elements

of the crisis management process, the roles that different campus stakeholders play, and strategies to improve communications and decision-making in an emergency. [Learn more and register today.](#)

Supreme Court upholds passport gender rules

The U.S. Supreme Court will allow the Trump administration to stop issuing passports that reflect the gender identity of transgender and nonbinary Americans.

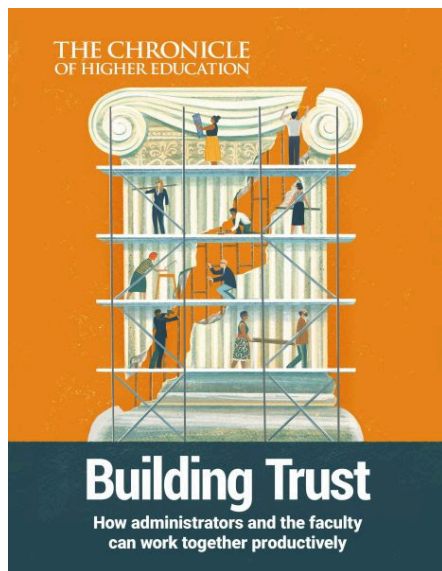
The [unsigned order](#) will allow a policy that requires U.S. passports to display a person's sex at birth to go into effect temporarily while lower courts consider its legality.

The rule applies to first-time applicants and those renewing passports. Current passports will not be revoked and remain valid.

I'm curious how colleges and education-abroad providers are advising trans and other LGBT students planning to study overseas. Students and scholars, does the policy affect your decision to travel in and out of the United

States for education, research, or conferences? Email me at karin.fischer@chronicle.com, and I could share some of what I find in a future Latitudes.

From the Chronicle Store



Building Trust

Building trust between college leader faculty members can be difficult even in ordinary times, but higher ed continues to face an extraordinary set of challenges. [C report](#) for insights on forging stronger productive relationships.

China increases scientific leadership

45 percent

That's the share of team leaders involved in China-U.S. scientific collaborations who were from Chinese universities. Researchers at the University of Chicago used machine learning to analyze nearly 6 million papers to identify the extent of joint authors' intellectual leadership, assigning higher values for key roles such as those identified as designing the project. In 2010, Chinese scholars led just 30 percent of international collaborations.

The [findings](#) suggest that China is moving beyond being a significant contributor to research to a position of global scientific influence.

Around the globe

The California Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling that a University of California policy preventing students without legal status in the United States from working on-campus jobs is [discriminatory](#).

Thirty-seven colleges and organizations joined a [brief](#) in a case challenging Texas' abrupt decision to repeal a law providing in-state tuition to undocumented students.

Columbia University is the latest institution to receive a [letter](#) from a congressional committee pushing colleges to cut ties with China.

Three more scholars from China hosted by the University of Michigan have been charged with [smuggling biological](#) material into the country.

A British university halted research into [human-rights abuses](#) in China under pressure from the government there.

The Canadian government again plans big cuts in student visas, but international graduate students will be [exempt](#) from the caps.

A new organization will represent foreign students in [Australia](#).

Australians say they are losing trust in higher education, with respondents in a [recent poll](#) indicating that they believe colleges there prioritize profits, not education.

And finally ...

In response to a recent newsletter, many of you shared your experiences being a world away from events unfolding at home. Krista McCallum Beatty, director of the Office of International Students and Scholars at Michigan State University, writes:

“I was abroad both times Barack Obama was elected to the presidency. The first time I was in Germany on a Fulbright, and the second time I was in Ethiopia to adopt our son. My husband and I still talk about hiking in Ethiopia and hearing the news that President Obama had been reelected from our Ethiopian guides. They were as excited as we were.”

Meanwhile, Lloyd Paradiso, an international-education consultant, was in Glasgow earlier this year when his “beloved” Philadelphia Eagles took on the reigning champs, the Kansas City Chiefs, in the Super Bowl. Game time was at 1 a.m., and he had a morning flight.

“Being ridiculously superstitious, I fell asleep with the Eagles up by around 20 points, thinking I couldn’t risk watching or listening to another minute,” he said.

Paradiso learned of the Eagles’ dominant performance from his “jovial, hungover, animated taxi driver.” He “regaled me with a spirited rendition of how badly we dogged the Chiefs all the way to the airport. I don’t think I could have enjoyed or celebrated any better,” said Paradiso.

Sadly for me, the Toronto Blue Jays didn’t have the same luck, losing the World Series in an 11-inning heartbreaker. But I got to watch several middle-of-the-night games in a bar beneath Waterloo Station with what seemed like every other Canadian in London. And that’ll make a good story, right?

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