

---

# Latitudes: A year in the trenches has leaders anxious and fatigued

1 message

---

**Karin Fischer at The Chronicle**  
<newsletter@newsletter.chronicle.com>

Wed, Feb 18,  
2026 at 11:02  
AM

Reply-To: newsletter@newsletter.chronicle.com  
To: amadorsapo@gmail.com

ADVERTISEMENT



NAFSA 2026  
Global by  
DESIGN  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO  
May 26-29 | Orlando, FL USA

Presidents,  
Vice Chancellors,  
and Rectors Summit

Special Program Details →

THE  
CHRONICLE  
OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION

# Latitudes



By Karin Fischer

**In this week's Latitudes:** Negative enrollment projections. Diversifying Fulbright. Is the Education Dept. geographically challenged? But first ...

## A 'FOUR-ALARM FIRE'

---

Never has an expression of politesse been so fraught.

"Good." "Well." "Fine." People said those words in response to my greeting at the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) conference, meeting this week in Washington, D.C. Their faces said something different.

The last year has been a rough one for the field, which has been caught up in the political tumult around both higher education and immigration. After the initial pleasantries, people told me stories of anxiety, alarm, and fatigue: Faculty members caught in the latest travel ban. One-quarter of the fall's incoming international students denied visas. Out-of-the-blue legal-status revocations. Big staffing cuts. Campus leaders who preemptively shut down programs in China and other geopolitically sensitive parts of the world rather than risk having to answer to a congressional inquiry.

And international educators are bracing for what comes next, such as restrictions on postgraduate work for international students and a rule, expected any day, that would put [time limits](#) on their study in the United States.

"I think everyone can agree we're in a four-alarm-fire, all-hands-on deck situation — choose your metaphor," LaNitra Berger, a past president of NAFSA: Association of International Educators and an associate professor at George Mason University, said during the opening plenary.

Paulo Zagalo-Melo, AIEA's president, looked to the Olympics for a metaphor and settled on skeleton, in which participants barrel headfirst down an icy track. Working in international education is, he said, "fast, intense, and sometimes you're wondering how you got into this position."

I don't mean to suggest dispiritedness; rather, there's a recognition among conference-goers of the pressures and problems — anticipated as well as unforeseen — ahead and a resolve to act. "It's a dynamic period," one administrator told me at a Monday reception, a phrase in the running to become the new "we're living in interesting times."

For readers at the AIEA meeting, I hope to see you at Wednesday afternoon's plenary session, where I'll be leading a discussion on how to move forward in volatile times. And for those who aren't, I'll share some of the themes and developments from the conference in future newsletters.

Meanwhile, the Canadian in me will keep greeting people with "Hello, how are you?"

LIMITED-TIME OFFER: SUBSCRIBE FOR \$1/WEEK



Enjoying the newsletter? [Subscribe today](#) to try unlimited digital access starting at \$1 a week. You'll unlock indispensable reporting and insights, the subscriber-only Daily Briefing newsletter, and more.

## MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS TOP FULBRIGHT LIST

---

Thirteen minority-serving institutions are among the top producers of Fulbright scholars and students, about 10 percent of the colleges recognized.

Eight of the colleges are Hispanic-serving institutions (HSI), two are historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), and six are Asian American and Native Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPSI). Three colleges have more than one designation.

<b><u>Institution</u></b>	<b><u>Award</u></b>	<b><u>MSI designation</u></b>
Arizona State U.	Student	HSI
Barnard College	Student	AANAPSI
California State U. at Los Angeles	Scholar	AANAPSI + HSI
California State U. at Sacramento	Scholar	AANAPSI + HSI
Haverford College	Student	AANAPSI
Indiana U. at Bloomington	Student	HSI
Morgan State U.	Scholar	HBCU
St. Catherine U.	Student	AANAPSI
Texas State U.	Student	HSI
Texas Tech U.	Scholar	HSI
U. of Arizona	Scholar	HSI
U. of California at Los Angeles	Student	AANAPSI + HSI
Virginia State U.	Scholar	HBCU

A pair of colleges have the most Fulbright scholars for their institutional type: Morgan State University is the top master's institution, and Virginia State University is first among baccalaureate institutions. Both are HBCUs.

The flagship American academic-exchange program sought to broaden participation under the Biden administration. "We want our program to reflect the great diversity and talent of this remarkable nation," Donna Brazile, who was then the chairwoman of the scholarship board, [told me](#) in 2023. The Trump administration has rolled back diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

You can see the full list of top-producing institutions [here](#).

## A PROJECTED DECLINE

---

### -1 percent

That's the predicted annual drop in international students coming to the United States through 2030, according to a [forecasting report](#) by QS Quacquarelli Symonds, a global-education company.

The negative outlook is the result of enrollment declines from countries that are the top senders of international students — but not for the same reasons. Visa-policy changes and potential restrictions on postgraduate work opportunities are tempering Indian-student interest, while a slowing economy, improvements in its own universities, and geopolitical and security tensions with the United States are behind China's downturn. And South Koreans are just growing old — a shrinking youth population means it has already hit its demographic cliff.

There are some potential bright spots, like [West Africa](#) and Vietnam.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR | MARCH 18



### Higher Ed in Crisis: Strategies for Raising Funds in a Challenging Environment

To help advancement professionals and academic leaders tasked with raising funds navigate today's tumultuous funding landscape, *The Chronicle* is hosting a premium webinar that will provide key context and strategic tips for achieving development success. [Learn more and register today.](#)

## FOREIGN FUNDING UPDATES

---

American colleges took in \$5.2 billion in [foreign gifts and contracts](#) in 2025, new data from the U.S. Department of Education shows.

In total, there were 8,300 transactions. Carnegie Mellon University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were the top recipients.

Along with the 2025 data, the public database has been updated since [I first wrote about it in January](#) to include information about funding from governments, universities, or other entities from countries that have been designated as “countries of concern” by the U.S. government.

But the department does not appear to have revised inconsistencies in source country names: Both “England” (No. 4) and “Great Britain” (No. 9) make the list of the top 10 donor countries. The database also reports separate amounts for “Korea,” “South Korea,” and the “Republic of Korea.” Psst, they’re all the same nation.

### FROM THE CHRONICLE STORE



### The Budget Crisis Is Here

Colleges find themselves in budgetary turmoil. How can they respond? [Order this report](#) to learn how innovative institutions are adapting to a new financial reality and finding ways to thrive despite headwinds.

## AROUND THE GLOBE

---

**More than 1,000 academics** have signed a [letter](#) asking Northwestern University to apologize for its treatment of a former professor of neurology following a federal investigation. The letter also said the university should protect researchers from “unjust scrutiny” based on race or ethnicity.

**An immigration judge** has blocked the [deportation](#) of a graduate student who led protests against Israel at Columbia University because of procedural missteps.

**Students at some Iranian universities** [boycotted](#) exams to protest the [detention and killing](#) of demonstrators, many fellow students, during anti-government rallies.

**A new governing coalition in the Netherlands is [rolling back](#)** higher-education funding cuts and reversing a policy cutting English-language degrees that were put in place by the prior administration.

**Colleges in Cuba suspended** classes and turned to remote learning because of a [fuel shortage](#).

**Eight colleges were** recognized by NAFSA for their [international-education work](#).

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) or message me confidentially at [Signal](#). 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](#).

#### FROM CHRONICLE CAREERS



**Job Opportunities:** [Search thousands](#) of faculty, administrative, and executive job openings and [upload your resume](#) to be searchable by employers!



**Chronicle Careers** provides insights, tools, and advice to help you in career development, job seeking, and hiring.

## THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

[Lead With Insight](#)

© 2026 The Chronicle of Higher Education  
900 19th Street, N.W. 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006

This email was sent to [amadorsapo@gmail.com](mailto:amadorsapo@gmail.com).

[Read this newsletter on the web.](#)

Manage your newsletter preferences, [stop receiving](#) this email, or [view](#) our privacy policy.