Generational Change and Evolving Motivations for Studying Abroad

What are the implications for leaders?

Panelists:

Britta Baron (Vice-Provost and AVP (International), University of Alberta)
Hristo Banov (Manager of Business Analytics, AFS Intercultural Programs)
Jonathan Lembright (Regional Director, Southeast Asia, IIE)

Chair:

Andrea Kammerer (Senior Business Analyst)
In This Session

1. Evolving motivations for studying abroad
2. How external realities affect motivations
3. Audience discussion

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Evolving motivations for studying abroad
Mapping Generation Z:
Attitudes Toward International Education Programs

Scope
Reach: **27 COUNTRIES**
Number of responses: **5,255**

Data Collection
Online: **89%**
Paper-based: **11%**
Timeline: **MAR’ 16 - DEC’ 16**

Surveys
Translations: **16 LANGUAGES**
Content was kept the **SAME** across countries

Respondents
Ages: **13 - 18**
Been on exchange: **0%**
Considered exchange before: **60%**
Main motivation: Cultural exploration
Main motivation: Cultural exploration
Underlying motivation

![Bar chart showing influential vs not influential factors]

- Language Learning
- Experience a new education system
- Make future plans
- Important for parents
- Exciting opportunity
- Make new friends
- Experience a new culture

Influential factors:
- Academic: 95, 86, 56, 76, 65, 76, 95
- Cultural: 90, 77, 74, 62, 93, 87, 93

Not influential factors:
- Academic: 26
- Cultural: 26
IIE: HEIs and Student Motivations

IIE: Understanding International Student Yield for Fall 2017, Farrugia & Andrejko
Motivations Framework

- **Push Out**
  - Leave Home Country
  - IIE/AIFS Global Education Research Report 5, Macready & Tucker

- **Pull Towards**
  - Choose HEI System
    - Student selects UK, US, AUS

- **≠ Push Filter**
  - Access Blocked
    - UK, US filtered out

*Example: AUS Chosen*
Prospective Student Impressions

IIE/EducationUSA: What International Students Think About U.S. Higher Education

16,000 prospective students from 19 countries
- Read as “67.7% of prospective students agree that the U.S. is...”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide range of schools and programs</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality higher education system</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcomes international students</td>
<td><strong>67.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.8</strong></td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition is expensive</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many scholarship opportunities</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good student support services</td>
<td><strong>56.8</strong></td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult or complex visa procedures</td>
<td><strong>50.3</strong></td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe place to study</td>
<td><strong>45.6</strong></td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of living</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The table above shows the percentage of prospective students from 19 countries who agree with the given statements regarding U.S. higher education.
Prospective Student Priorities

• For U.S. study, in 2016, 23% of students indicated personal safety was a strong factor in their decision making. This jumped to 88% in 2017.
• For all destinations, 69% noted importance of strong international student services, and 56% reported that international faculty were a powerful draw.

Admitted Student Concerns

- **Students from Asia (including China, but not India) are mainly concerned with post-grad employment opportunities and program affordability, rather than safety and feeling unwelcome.**
- **Indian students - 80% of institutions responded that physical safety was their most pronounced concern.**
- **MENA students - 50% reported visa concerns and feeling unwelcome as their top concern.**

*IIE: Understanding International Student Yield for Fall 2017, Farrugia & Andrejko*
UAlberta’s experience around motivations
University of Alberta

- 38,000+ students
- 7,000 international students from 133 countries
- Now aiming at quantity and diversity for international students – no longer quantity
- Need for quality/diversity focused strategy requires sophisticated data
International students expect positive career impact

• Start career information with pre-departure briefings & on campus orientation

• Address challenges for international students with co-op placements

• Activate international alumni as resource for career advice/mentoring

• Need to be specific and evidence based when presenting UAlberta value proposition
External realities affecting international education
**Turbulent external realities - GenZ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Low Importance</th>
<th>Med. Importance</th>
<th>High Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Making New Friends</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being Homesick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School Re-Entry</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitting In Culturally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Study / Life Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant increase in mindfulness of GenZ toward risk and security issues
IIE: HEIs & the Sociopolitical Climate

Negative Impacts

International students cited the U.S. social and political climate as a potential deterrent to study in the United States, 45.3%

International students expressed feelings that they are not welcome, 24.2%

International students expressed the desire to leave or left the U.S. as a result of the current social and political climate, 9.3%

There has been an incident on campus or in the community that has targeted international students in a negative manner, 5.9%

Other, 5.5%

Fall 2016

Fall 2017

Positive Impacts

International students have expressed feelings that they are welcome, 25.1%*

International students have become more unified and active on campus due to the U.S. social and political climate, 18.2%*

There has been an incident on campus or in the community that has brought the student body together in support of international students, 9.4%

Other, 4.2%

Fall 2016

Fall 2017

*IIE: Fall 2017 International Student Enrollment Hot Topics Survey, Julie Baer*
HEI Responses to the Climate

1) On-campus Outreach
- Alerted students to changes in U.S. policies: 64.7%
- Created opportunities for int’l students to discuss U.S. social and political events: 53.9%
- Provided counseling services for int’l students: 50.1%
- Provided or connected students to legal counsel regarding U.S. policies: 37.4%

2) External Outreach
- Issued statements supporting int’l students: 63.3%
- Generated social media that int’ students are welcome: 41.8%
- Engaged with policymakers to educate and urge support for int’l students: 24.0%
- Not initiated any additional programs or issued any statements: 12.3%

IIE: Fall 2017 International Student Enrollment Hot Topics Survey, Julie Baer
Behind the Declining Numbers

- Visa application process or visa delays/denials
- Cost of tuition/fees at U.S. host institution
- Social and political environment in the United States
- Enroll in another country's institutions (other than the U.S.)
- Feeling unwelcome in the United States*
- Enroll in other U.S. institutions
- Changes in foreign government-sponsored scholarship programs
- Securing a job in the United States after their studies*
- Home country political and/or economic problems
- Stay home and enroll in their own country's higher education institutions
- Physical safety in the United States (e.g., gun violence, civil unrest)
- Potential problems at the port of entry

IIE: Fall 2017 International Student Enrollment Hot Topics Survey, Julie Baer
Behind the Increasing Numbers

Top 5 Factors

- More active recruitment efforts by institution: 61.5%
- More active outreach to admitted students: 45.5%
- Growing reputation and visibility of institution abroad: 45.5%
- Increased institutional support staff for recruitment and admissions: 23.8%
- Growth of institutional scholarship opportunities for int’l students: 19.6%

IIE: Fall 2017 International Student Enrollment Hot Topics Survey, Julie Baer
### Concern for Fall 2018 Recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Not At All Concerned</th>
<th>Somewhat Concerned</th>
<th>Very Concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle East &amp; North Africa</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia (Excluding China &amp; India)</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa, Sub-Saharan</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IIE: Fall 2017 International Student Enrollment Hot Topics Survey, Julie Baer*
Turbulent external realities - UAlberta
• Positive Canadian attitude to international students

• Immigration policies offer opportunity into permanent residency

• International students considered to be ideal fit for Canada’s immigration needs
Building a welcoming culture

• Multicultural environment with generally open and accommodating attitude to people from other countries

• Still need to understand international students not as marginal community, but as integral members of our university environments

• Lack of social integration perceived as one of three most pressing concerns of international students

• Need to update and improve international student services and integrate seamlessly with overall student services
Concerns for safety

• Canada benefits from image as safe country
• Not just safety from terrorism, but also from other threats such as mental health challenges, traffic safety, etc.
• Many enhanced policies and services to ensure international student safety and integrity
Questions & Answers
AFS

International, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit education organization

Program activity in 99 countries
59 AFS Network Organizations
12,600 participants annually
40,000 active AFS volunteers

Visit our Research Website & Download the Complete Study: Research.afs.org

IIE

IIE has been a world leader in international education and works to build more peaceful and equitable societies by advancing scholarship, building economies and promoting access to opportunity.

IIE collaborates with a range of corporate, government and foundation partners across the globe to design and manage scholarship, study abroad, workforce training and leadership development programs.

University of Alberta

Major Canadian research university

31,000 undergraduate students

388 undergraduate programs

Education abroad programs in over 50 countries

15% undergraduate students participate in education abroad