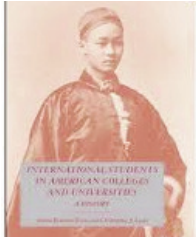




## ***International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History.***

Bevis, T. B. & Lucas, C. J. (2007). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN-13: 978-0-230-60011-9. 279 pp., \$86.63.



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*International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History* provides a comprehensive historical overview of international student exchange in the U.S. The purpose of this book is to trace the history of international students in institutions of American higher education by enumerating why and how international students have studied in the U.S. since the 18th century. It also provides an overview of international students' impact on American higher education and society. International educators will not only obtain historical knowledge of international students but also become enlightened about the field of internationalization.

Written in a chronological order, the book opens up with a brief overview of how students have travelled to foreign regions primarily in Europe, such as ancient Greece, to learn in premodern times. In subsequent chapters, Bevis and Lucas trace the emergence of international students and describe how and why international students came to the U.S. Through data collected from historical primary sources, they analyze issues pertaining to population change, such as immigration policy, global competition, and political movements in foreign countries, among other factors.

The book focuses on reasons to support international students that started in the early 1900s. Today, supporting international students remains an important working area for student service professionals figuring out the best ways to facilitate cultural adjustment and English language training, among other dilemmas. The book also describes two essential organizations born during international students' proliferation in the early 1900s: the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA, now called the National Association of International Educators).

World War I and World War II, the Great Depression, the Cold War, and their aftermath are the primary world events that Bevis and Lucas describe in

the book as being related to the development of international student exchange. Bevis and Lucas acknowledge the critical role that immigration regulations played for visiting and international students and scholars. Their illuminating account begins with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and continues with the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which profoundly affected student migration to the U.S. The McCarran-Walter Act made international students' visa processing more complex and presented more challenges. In the late 1950s, as immigration regulation eased, academic institutions planned to expand international student enrollment.

Bevis and Lucas also highlight the growing ability of community colleges to attract foreign students in the 1980s. By the end of 20th century, the international student enrollment percentage was the highest in community colleges, compared to other institutions.

The final section of this book concludes that increasing global competition in the late 20th century has promoted the internationalization of American higher education. Increasing U.S. visa restrictions and a less welcoming attitude towards non-Americans drove international students to study in English-speaking countries other than the U.S. The 9/11 attacks also led to more restricted visa issuance policies and ultimately precipitated a temporary decline in international student enrollment.

In its epilogue, the book presents Harvard economics professor George J. Borjas and NAFSA international educators' debate about the rationale for supporting international students. Borjas questions whether such a large-scale foreign program is in the best interests of the U.S. because of what it costs the U.S.. Meanwhile, NAFSA calls for an elevation of international education as a national priority to attract the world's talents in order to restore U.S. competitiveness. This topic is currently lively in the field of campus internationalization.

The epilogue presents perspectives from NAFSA and Borjas in a balanced and impartial way. Since its establishment, NAFSA has been the leading advocate for raising awareness about the importance of U.S. international competence in attracting more international scholars. Borjas criticizes the little control that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has had over the number and type of students who are being admitted (the INS has since developed a tremendously improved electronic tracking system); he compares a student visa to a ticket to the U.S. Borjas argues that there is little evidence to support the claim

that international students employed in research labs and classrooms have quickened the pace of scientific discoveries and assisted with scientific teaching. He retorts the claim that international students' tuition has contributed to the U.S. economy with figures showing that the U.S. actually subsidizes international students' education with taxpayers' money. Most importantly, Borjas blames the INS for advancing national security problems by allowing an influx of international students. As the authors have declared earlier in the book, the book does not comment on the significance of the subject. It only showcases the arguments from both sides.

This book covers a hyperbolic gap in the field of international education research with respect to international student exchange. As Bevis and Lucas indicate in the preface, this study "certainly seems long overdue" (p.xiii) given that no book-length works over the past 37 years have been generated about international students in American colleges and universities, despite their rapidly growing number, the economic contribution of their tuition and expenses, and the impacts they have made to scientific development of the U.S. For professionals who work with international students, this is definitely a must-read.

In its attempt to review the history of international students, the book touches lightly on the majority of other aspects about international students' experiences, including immigration regulations, financial grants, government policies related to student exchange, student recruitment initiatives, programs designed and administered on campus for newly arrived students, students' adjustment to American culture and academic environment, English language training, and the recent controversy over international students' very existence. Although it does not illuminate all these issues in extensive detail, it generates a comprehensive blueprint of the field. This book does not try to analyze international students' general significance in U.S. higher education and society and only provides a narrative and historical review.

The strength of this book is its collection of international student enrollment census information from a reliable source, IIE Open Doors, from a variety of pivotal historical periods in order to indicate changes in international students' enrollment. The statistics and quantitative data presented from the late 19th and early 20th centuries are especially valuable. Although the book does not advance a large number of profound theories, it brings comprehensive analysis to bear on historical and current international policies and programs.

Its focus is on international educators engaged in research about campus internationalization. Practitioners who are looking for ways to revamp international education models within their institutions now have access to a more thorough understanding of their history and can reflect on what they have done.

However, the book does contain a few minor flaws. For example, the format of foreign nationals' names is not consistent through the book. A couple of historical events from foreign countries also are not clearly stated. For example, Bevis and Lucas write that "China was defeated by Japan in 1895" (p. 63), without offering any clear context to help readers understand that piece of history. In addition, a chart on page 197 about types of student visas presents incomplete and misleading information on the J-1 visa type. The authors primarily use "foreign students" to designate students from other countries who pursue higher education in the U.S. on a student visa. Although they clearly state why they use this term at the beginning, it sounds unpleasant and biased compared to that used in the mainstream: international student.

Overall, this book is beneficial and informative for professionals in the field of international higher education, specifically those who work with international students. It will allow those professionals to review the history of their field, reflect on their work practices, and have a deeper understanding of current policies and programs related to international students.

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#### **About the Reviewer:**

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