

Highlights from
Physics Students From Abroad:
Monitoring the Continuing Impact of Visa Problems

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- In the Fall of 2004, about half of the PhD-granting departments and about one-quarter of the Master's departments reported they had accepted one or more foreign students who were either denied entry or substantially delayed because of visa problems (**Table 3**). However, this is an improvement over what was reported two years earlier.
- Visa problems were not just restricted to entering students. Around 60% of PhD departments reported that currently enrolled foreign students had experienced problems

securing return visas during the previous year after leaving the US to travel abroad. Almost a quarter of these departments also reported similar difficulties encountered by foreign faculty and staff researchers.

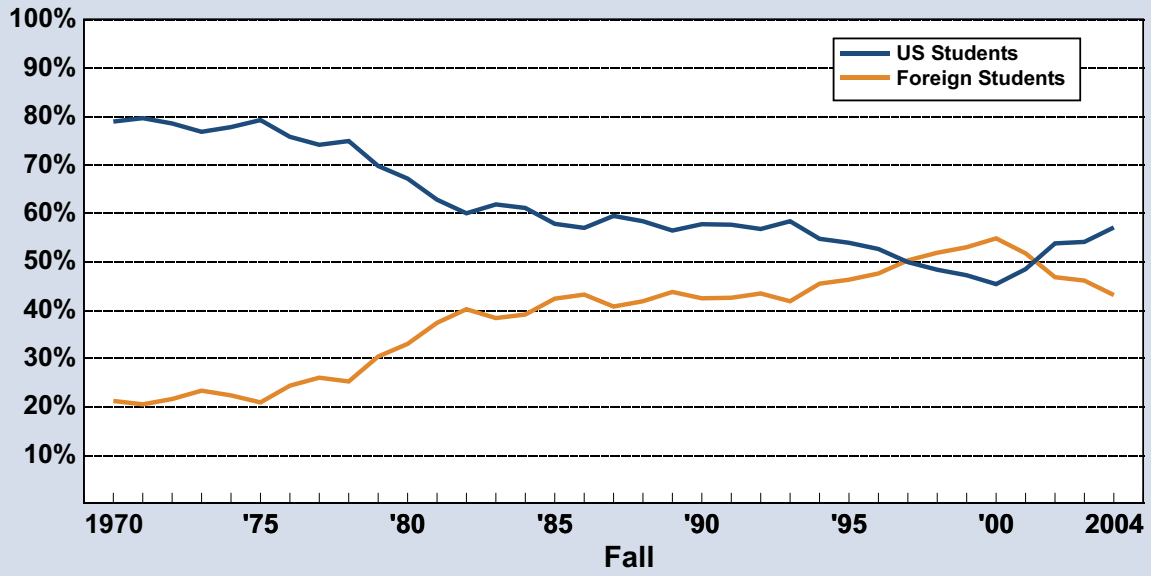
- Visa problems were not distributed equally among departments. Smaller PhD-granting departments and Master's departments continue to be the most adversely affected, with a substantially larger proportion of their accepted international students being denied entry than was the case among the larger PhD departments.

- Overall, we estimate that 12% of the admitted foreign students for the Fall of 2004 were at least initially prevented from gaining entry into a physics department because of complications in securing a visa. This is down from the 20% reported for the Fall of 2002.
- Changes in the number of applications departments receive continue to be a poor indicator of the number of international students they ultimately accept and enroll (**Table 2**). Many factors come into play that affect the number of applicants that ultimately enroll, and difficulties in obtaining a visa is just one of them.

- Despite the difficulty many international students encounter in securing a visa to enter the US in recent years, declines in the absolute number of foreign first-year physics graduate students have not been as great as one might expect. First-year foreign student enrollment for the Fall of 2004 fell 3% from the Fall of 2002 and a total of 13% since the Fall of 2000 (**Table 4**).

Figure 1. Citizenship of First-Year Physics Graduate Students, Fall 1970-2004.

Percent of Students



AIP Statistical Research Center: Physics Students from Abroad.

Table 2. International Applications and Enrollments at US Graduate Physics Departments, Fall 2004.

<u>Applications</u>	Top PhD- Extensive	Other PhD- Extensive	PhD- Intensive	Masters
Total Number of Applications from International Students	7,900	10,100	1,100	600
Average Number of Applications from International Students per Department	225	92	29	9
Change from Fall 2002*	0%	23%	-34%	21%
<u>Enrollments</u>				
Total Number of Non-US Citizens Enrolling as <i>First-Year</i> Students	388	671	129	95
Average Number of Non-US Citizens Enrolling as <i>First-Year</i> Students per Department	11.1	6.1	3.4	1.4
Change from Fall 2002	-12%	-4%	50%	-9%
Percent of Non-US Citizens Among <i>First-Year</i> Students in Fall 2004	43%	46%	44%	29%
Percent of Non-US Citizens Among <i>First-Year</i> Students in Fall 2002	45%	51%	38%	40%
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* Based on the subset of departments that responded in both 2002 and 2004.

Table 3. Visa Problems at Graduate Physics Departments, Fall 2004.				
	Top PhD- Extensive	Other PhD- Extensive	PhD- Intensive	Masters
Percent of Departments with International Students Denied Entry in Fall 2004	27%	52%	54%	25%
Change in Percent from Fall 2002*	-37%	-21%	-7%	-11%
Percent of Departments with No Visa Problems in Fall 2002 & Fall 2004*	30%	15%	38%	52%
Denials as a Percent of Total Non-US Citizens Accepted in Fall 2004	4%	13%	21%	34%
Change in Percent from Fall 2002*	-5%	-10%	-8%	-4%
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* Based on the subset of departments that responded in both 2002 and 2004.				

Table 4. Number of First-Year Graduate Students Enrolling in US Physics Departments.			
Fall of	US	Foreign	Total
2000	1228	1485	2713
2001	1343	1434	2777
2002	1535	1339	2875
2003	1711	1457	3168
2004	1746	1294	3040
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Source: AIP Enrollments and Degrees Survey.			