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International Education in the Twenty-First Century: Lessons Learned from 9/11 and Cautious Hope for the Future

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In this chapter, we begin by describing the importance of international education and the nationwide movement to internationalize colleges and universities in the United States. Next, we highlight how 9/11 has played a role in internationalization, with a specific focus on changes in the monitoring of international students, student mobility, and public attitudes toward immigrants in the U.S. Finally, we discuss the U.S. government and education response to 9/11, the future of international education, and why the continued promotion of global awareness and cultural competency is critical to higher education. Events such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have far reaching implications for international educators and the strategies they use to educate global citizens in the twenty-first century.

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10.1 The Importance of International Education

The term *international education* is used to describe a variety of approaches and fields of study including the academic approach of comparative and international education, K-12 education with international components, international schools worldwide, and the professional field centered on the internationalization of higher education (Dolby and Rahman 2008). For the purposes of this chapter, the primary focus is on the professional practice of international educators at colleges and universities. International educators share a wide variety of responsibilities including strategic planning, program development, assessment, study abroad advising, immigration assistance, on-campus programming, and the development and maintenance of international partnerships. To be successful, international educators must have broad knowledge of global citizenship education, U.S. and other immigration policies, current events, and an understanding of how these factors shape global academic exchange and attitudes toward internationalization efforts. In other words, international educators need the broad skill set that educators at liberal arts institutions hope to instill in their students.

Over the past 30 years, the term *internationalization* has been used to communicate how global citizenship education should be integrated into the overall educational experience, rather than occur on the margins (Green and Olson 2003). The pervasive movement to internationalize college and university campuses prepares graduates for success in the twenty-first century (ACE 2012), as scholars found that students who are educated as global citizens are more likely to engage in behaviors that reflect intergroup empathy, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability, and are less likely to exhibit prejudice and intolerance (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller 2013). As students graduate and pursue their professional lives, their appreciation of diversity and cultural understanding will, a range of theories posit, help to foster peaceful relations within a global and multicultural society. The American Council on Education (ACE) Blue Ribbon Panel on Global Engagement emphasized the responsibility within higher education for the development of graduates as globally informed citizens, stating,

“It is the obligation of colleges and universities to prepare people for a globalized world, including developing the ability to compete economically, to operate effectively in other cultures and settings, to use knowledge to improve their own lives and their communities, and to better comprehend the realities of the contemporary world so that they can better meet their responsibilities as citizens” (ACE 2011, 14).

Ideological, political, and economic rationales have driven the growth of international education. A vital aspect of campus internationalization involves hosting international students and scholars, which is why events such as 9/11 can have wide-ranging repercussions within higher education. International members of the campus community enrich the educational experience through cultural exchange and by providing an alternative perspective in and out of the classroom. The knowledge and skills that students learn during authentic interactions with individuals from other cultures are invaluable for personal and professional growth. For example, domestic and international students can learn more about intercultural communication and understanding, reduce the use of stereotypes and other cognitive sources of prejudice (Arkoudis et al. 2013; Deardorff 2006; Lee et al. 2014), further their understanding of their own culture, and develop a more nuanced global perspective (Yefanova et al. 2015). The presence of international students also provides economic benefits to the U.S. In 2017/18, international students contributed \$39 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 455,000 jobs. According to a NAFSA (the Association of International Educators) economic analysis, three jobs result for every seven international students attending a U.S. college or university (NAFSA 2018).

Building a campus climate of internationalization is a gradual process. In this regard, international educators must overcome varied obstacles, among them a limited understanding of the importance of cultural competency and skills required for success in the twenty-first century, the narrow accessibility of study abroad, and inadequate institutional support. The somewhat isolationist perspective and inward-looking educational system in the U.S., along with the pervasive belief that it is unnecessary to learn a language other than English, has hindered past internationalization efforts (Green 2002; Hudzik 2011; IIE 2014).

In 2018, the Pew Research Center reported that 92% of European students learn a second language in primary and secondary school compared to 20% of students in the U.S. Many European countries report that 100% of their primary and secondary students are learning a second language (Devlin 2018). Here again, one sees the negative impact that American Exceptionalism, a topic discussed in many chapters in this volume, has on the higher education environment, especially global learning initiatives.

Surprisingly, although the U.S. federal government increased funding for foreign language education post-9/11, the response within higher education institutions appeared less enthusiastic. In fact, the requirement of a foreign language for graduation declined in all types of institutions from 53% in 2001 to 37% in 2011. When looking at four-year institutions only, this decline seemed less dramatic (71–65% for baccalaureate; 82–73% for doctorate granting institutions), but nevertheless reflected a decreased curricular interest in having students learn a second language (Hudzik 2011). Language course enrollments also have declined 15.3% from 2009 to 2016 (Looney and Lusin 2018). There is evidence, however, that despite the reduced curricular requirements for foreign language in U.S. higher education since 9/11, public interest in international travel has increased. In 2016, more U.S. citizens were prepared to travel abroad than ever before—U.S. passport ownership has increased from 17% in 2000 to 42% in 2018 (U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs 2018). Though global literacy scores remain somewhat low ($M=55\%$), a majority of U.S. students indicated that knowledge of international relations, global issues, and non-U.S. cultures was extremely important to their education (Council on Foreign Relations and National Geographic 2016).

Although international educators, business leaders, and most of the general public have agreed that study abroad is essential to a twenty-first century higher education, the percentage of U.S. students who go abroad for study remains small. In 2016/17, 10.9% of college students reported an international academic experience, leaving almost 90% without this essential part of a global education (IIE 2018a). Cost is often a primary challenge for U.S. students, as are family concerns, social constraints, and curricular requirements (Commission on the

Abraham Lincoln 2005). Colleges and universities work to make study abroad affordable; however, they are challenged both by the cost of overseas programs and the perception of study abroad as exclusively for elite, affluent students. Furthermore, participants have traditionally been Caucasian women from liberal arts institutions (Hoffa 2007; IIE 2018b; Commission on the Abraham Lincoln 2005; NAFSA 2015). Minorities, male students, nontraditional aged students, community college students, and students with disabilities have had the lowest level of participation (Dessoif 2006; IIE 2018b). Although there is some evidence to suggest that the U.S. mindset might be changing gradually, it is clear that the U.S. lags behind other countries regarding the appreciation of global perspectives, language training, and cultural understanding.

In order for internationalization efforts to be successful, institutional leadership must promote a vision that consistently communicates to students, faculty, and staff that international education is critical to the comprehensive educational experience. The Center for International and Global Engagement (CIGE) has promoted a model of internationalization comprising of an articulated institutional commitment; administrative structure and staffing; curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes; faculty policies and practices; student mobility; and collaboration and partnerships. Such a commitment to internationalization requires financial resources, time, personnel, effort, and support from all campus constituents. If institutional support is lacking, internationalization efforts are unlikely to be successful (ACE 2012). Considering these challenges, the field of international education is particularly sensitive to events such as 9/11 due to the complicated interconnections among public attitudes, educational trends, world events, U.S. international relations, and issues related to international students and scholars living in the U.S.

10.2 Changes in International Student Monitoring

The former chair and vice chair of the 9/11 Commission, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, clarified the importance of international education to the United States in a post-9/11 society. According to them, “The

U.S. cannot conduct itself effectively in a competitive international environment when our most educated citizens lack minimal exposure to, and understanding of, the world beyond U.S. borders. If we lack the ability to see ourselves as others see us—a skill imparted through the direct experience of living and studying abroad—then we diminish our ability to influence and persuade foreign governments and world opinion. Ignorance of the world is a national liability” (Kean and Hamilton 2008, 9). The 9/11 Commission clearly endorsed campus internationalization, as did professionals in the field. One year after 9/11, a survey of approximately 500 international educators indicated that 98% continued to see international exchange and study abroad as an essential part of U.S. education (IIE 2002). At the same time, however, international educators across the U.S. experienced a shift in the responsibility for the monitoring of international students.

The desire to tighten U.S. visa regulations after 9/11 resulted in new legislation and calls for action within Congress. In addition to the 2001 Patriot Act and the demand for enhanced monitoring of international students, individual members of Congress expressed concern and encouraged further restrictions on U.S. student visas. For example, one senator called for a six-month complete moratorium on the issuance of student visas, but later retreated and agreed that if international educators worked closely with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to maintain records and reporting, then a moratorium might be unnecessary. In reaction to this proposal, and in an effort to express their willingness to work with INS, professionals in higher education proposed policies that would help to ensure visa compliance, such as reporting any students who did not arrive on campus within 30 days of the academic term start date (Curry 2001).

One of the most obvious ways that 9/11 affected international education was through the rapid implementation of a new electronic tracking system for international students. The INS was already working to develop a system meant to streamline the overall immigration process; however, the post-9/11 changes to the visa system specifically targeted international students. This was most likely based on the false belief that multiple 9/11 attackers arrived in the U.S. on student visas and overstayed their eligibility, although the 2004 *9/11 and Terrorist Travel*

Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States indicated that only one of the attackers had entered the U.S. on a student visa (Eldridge et al. 2004). Incorrect claims about the 9/11 hijackers' visas have been perpetuated by media sources and lawmakers who support stricter visa regulations. NAFSA has questioned why U.S. policy makers continue to repeat this misinformation, particularly because student visas accounted for only 6% of issued visas in 2012 and because these students are monitored more than any other type of visa holder in the U.S. Some argue that this belief originates from fear rather than an actual threat (Farley 2013). Although some of the changes in the visa process were already underway before 2001, the speed and nature of the changes appeared to be a direct response to 9/11.

In order to understand the scope of the changes in international student monitoring, it is important to understand the history of the U.S. student visa process and the role of international educators as advocates for international students and scholars. There are three visa categories used for international students: F visas for academic study; M visas for vocational study; and J visas for cultural exchange. These visas grant temporary non-immigrant status that must be renewed on a regular schedule. Prior to 9/11, Congress enacted the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), requiring F-1 and M-1 schools and universities, as well as J-1 exchange visitor sponsors, to collect information regarding international students' attendance, academic standing, and any change in visa status.

After 9/11, the Patriot Act of 2001 expanded the foreign student tracking system and required that the new system be fully operational by January 1, 2003. The expansion included the monitoring of students in air flight, language training, and vocational schools, or any "other approved educational institutions" deemed appropriate by the Attorney General and Secretaries of State and Education. In 2002, the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act increased student monitoring and closed perceived loopholes. This resulted in the creation of the electronic Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students (CIPRIS), which evolved into the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), providing

an online tracking system for international students. The sudden shift to collect and maintain all information electronically made a formidable impact on college and university personnel. Until this time, most data collection had been done manually and was required to be electronic only “where practical.” Furthermore, the new requirements and regulations placed international education professionals in a primary role to assist the INS in tracking international students. SEVIS automated the data collection process and was fully operational for incoming students on February 15, 2003. This date was also the deadline for all institutions to apply for Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certification and for entering all new students into the SEVIS system (Siskin 2005).

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 disbanded the INS, and effective March 1, 2003, the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) subsumed most INS functions. Within DHS, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was responsible for the new electronic system used to track international students. SEVIS provided a way for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and DHS to more easily identify students who violated the terms of their student visas. Designated School Officials (DSO) at higher education institutions were required to report whether a student had arrived to campus within 30 days of the class start date, when a student dropped below a full course load without prior authorization, and the start date of the next term. The DSO also had the authority to terminate a student’s record for non-compliance. By requiring university personnel to fulfill these responsibilities, this tracking system helped to identify individuals who obtained student visas but did not intend to study in the U.S. Even at institutions with a small number of international students, the added duties of SEVIS reporting reduced the time available for personal interactions with international students, and as a result, decreased on-campus support and advocacy efforts (Starobin 2006). Although educational institutions had a legal mandate to comply with the new system, there were no additional funds available to support the required personnel.

The IIRIRA mandated that, by April 1, 1997, educational institutions collect a fee, not to exceed \$100, from each international student; this

fee would be remitted to the Attorney General to fund new regulations at the federal level (Siskin 2005). Though international educators supported enhanced monitoring to bolster national security, they expressed little support for the new I-901 fee and publicly contested passing on the responsibility of fee collection to educational institutions. An amended rule removed this responsibility, but students still were required to pay the separate fee electronically before submitting a visa application and fee. As the largest professional organization of international educators with over 10,000 members, NAFSA routinely serves as an advocate for international students. To this end, in November 2003, Executive Director and CEO of NAFSA Marlene Johnson sent a letter to ICE reiterating disapproval of the fee payment process, stating that it was not based on law and served as a deterrent to study in the U.S. Johnson emphasized that the IIRIRA mandated that the fee amount should be based on the cost “of conducting the information collection program” and in no way stipulated that students pay a fee prior to the visa application. In 2002, the DHS enlisted the KPMG accounting firm to recalculate an appropriate fee amount based on changes since 1999. KPMG recommended that a \$54 fee would cover the expenses required; however, the DHS proposed \$100 as the fee amount (Johnson 2003). In 2008, ICE increased the I-901 fee paid by F-1 or M-1 visa applicants to \$200. Ten years later, the DHS proposed that this fee be increased to \$350. It also proposed that the fee paid by colleges and universities for the initial SEVP certification petition needed to enroll F-1 and M-1 students be increased from \$1700 to \$3000. DHS also proposed to add a fee of \$1250 for institutional recertification, which must occur every two years (DHS and ICE 2018). As of March 2019, these proposed fee changes were under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

These fees in large part were created to support federal expenses associated with the SEVP monitoring system that was implemented after 9/11. NAFSA argued that if these fee increases were approved, they would contribute to the trend of international students choosing to study in countries other than the U.S. Moreover, they argued that the proposal for the fee increases misrepresented SEVIS and portrayed it as an anti-terrorist tool, though its primary purpose was to identify non-compliance and, in reality, tracks only a small percentage (5–6%) of non-immigrant visa holders (Welch 2018b).

The new system of electronic monitoring also created a perception of international educators as “Big Brother,” who must report any suspicious behavior to the DHS (Tella 2010; Urias and Yeakey 2005). To illustrate this point, in 2003 a student at Carnegie Mellon University expressed that, although he had lived in the U.S. since he was 14 years old and never felt like a foreigner, the new SEVIS regulations led him to grow concerned about the violation of his privacy. He worried that, “When it becomes efficient, it becomes easier. It just cascades and all of a sudden the government’s got every little bit of information about me, my credit card number and whatever. It kind of scares me” (Schackner 2003, A-1). International educators worked to overcome this misconception, though there was no denying that many were perceived as agents of the DHS. They also feared that the more complicated and time-consuming student visa application process would deter students from study in the U.S. and decrease inbound student mobility.

10.3 Visas and Changes in Inbound Student Mobility

Student mobility in international education involves incoming and outgoing students who choose to study abroad, typically through bilateral exchanges, direct enrollment at universities, or through third party providers. The period of study can be a few months, a semester or quarter, a full academic year, or the full period required to earn a degree. While a comparative analysis of the pre- and post-9/11 international education environments reveals some telling statistics on the U.S. position in the world, increased difficulty in obtaining student visas influenced the five-year decline in inbound student mobility following 9/11 (IIE 2003; Lowell et al. 2007; Walfish 2002).

There was a noticeable downward slide in inbound international student mobility in the U.S. after 9/11. Prior to 2001, numbers had increased steadily since 1949 (IIE 2009). Two years before 9/11 (1999/00), the number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities was 514,723, a 4.8% increase from the previous year. Following

9/11, a steady downward trend for international student enrollment began and continued for approximately five years. The country of origin that saw the greatest decline after 9/11 was Saudi Arabia (−25.2% in 2002/03), the home country of 15 of the 19 men involved in the 9/11 attacks.

However, the post-9/11 decline in the number of international students studying in the U.S. was brief, and since 2007, this number has continued to rise, with the exception of the two years following the 2008 recession (IIE 2016a; see Table 10.1). In 2015/16, the number of international students in the U.S. reached over 1 million, with 1,043,839 studying at American colleges and universities. In 2017/18, international students comprised 5.5% ($N=1,094,792$) of the approximately 20 million total students in U.S. higher education (IIE 2018b).

How did the students' countries of origin change after 9/11? Prior to 2001, the majority of international students in the U.S. were from China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea (South), and Taiwan. In the two years following 9/11, the origin countries remained similar, with the exception of Canada replacing Taiwan (IIE 2003). It is noteworthy that although Saudi Arabia experienced the greatest decline immediately following 9/11, 10 years later it was in the top 15 countries of origin. The largest increase occurred in 2006/07, with an almost 129% increase in Saudi students from the previous year. Overall, the number of students from Saudi Arabia studying in the U.S. in 2016/17 was 20 times higher than in 2005/06 (from 3035 to 61,287). With the exception of Saudi Arabia, there were no significant changes in the most common countries sending students to study in the U.S. The considerable increase in students from Saudi Arabia after 9/11 was an outlier in the Middle Eastern region, considering there was little change in the number of students originating from neighboring countries.

Indirectly, then, the 9/11 attacks and the various alliance-building initiatives between Washington and Riyadh in the subsequent “war on terror” led to the rise in Saudi students studying in the U.S. Due to the post-9/11 strained relations between the U.S. and the Saudi governments, in 2005 Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and U.S. President George W. Bush came to an agreement that resulted in a Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) Scholarship Fund to enhance cultural and educational partnerships between the two countries

Table 10.1 Number of international students in U.S. 1999/00–2017/18

Year	International students in U.S.	% change
1999/00	514,723	4.8
2000/01	547,867	6.4
2001/02	582,996	6.4
2002/03	586,323	0.6
2003/04	572,509	−2.4
2004/05	565,039	−1.3
2005/06	564,766	−0.1
2006/07	582,984	3.2
2007/08	623,805	7.0
2008/09	671,616	7.7
2009/10	690,923	2.9
2010/11	723,277	4.7
2011/12	764,495	5.7
2012/13	819,644	7.2
2013/14	886,052	8.1
2014/15	974,926	10.0
2015/16	1,043,839	7.1
2016/17	1,078,822	3.4
2017/18	1,094,792	1.5

Source Institute of International Education (2016a)

(Taylor and Albasri 2014). The scholarship provided each eligible student from Saudi Arabia with up to \$200,000 for tuition and benefits to enroll at U.S. colleges and universities. However, since 2016, the growth in the number of students from Saudi Arabia has slowed due to reduced government funding for the scholarship and a more academically competitive application. In 2016/17 Saudi Arabia remained the third most popular country of origin; however, it was the first time since 2005/06 when the growth in students from Saudi Arabia was less than 10% from the previous year (IIE 2016b). From 2015/16 to 2016/17, the number of Saudi students in the U.S. declined 14.2%, and subsequently another 15.5% in 2017/18. Nevertheless, in 2017/18 there were eight times more Saudi students in the U.S. than in 2001/02 (IIE 2018a).

Whatever the students' country of origin, following 9/11, obtaining a U.S. student visa became a more arduous task than before. Applicants were required to participate in personal interviews, which often led to lengthy delays and little explanation in cases of visa denial (Yale-Loehr et al.

2005). In September 2002, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) was implemented to require all male non-citizens between the ages of 16 to 45 from 25 Asian and Middle Eastern countries to register as they entered the U.S. and check in with immigration officials regularly. If students violated these new regulations, they could be fined, jailed, or deported. Security checks were instituted at U.S. embassies, and these same students were subject to a 20-day waiting period (NAFSA 2004; Vanzi 2004). After the waiting period was phased out in 2002, such applicants then became subject to Visa Condor checks, a special name check clearance procedure (Garrity 2003; Yale-Loehr et al. 2005). Applicants who met certain criteria (e.g., country of origin, field of study) were subject to a mandatory Security Advisory Option (SAO), but consular officers could also request a SAO if they believed any applicant posed a security risk. Other applicants were subject to a Visa Mantis check, which safeguarded against individuals who might pose a risk for the theft of U.S. goods and information (NAFSA 2004). After 2004, the United States Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) Program (replaced in 2013 by The Office of Biometric Identity Management) required students to provide biometric information (i.e., digital photo, fingerprints) in order to obtain entry and exit documents that could be read electronically (DHS 2018). The new security checks led to a sharp decline in F-1 visa issuances.

Visa issuance data during the decade-and-a-half after 9/11 is instructive. Two years after 9/11, the overall number of visas issued decreased 36% (from 2001 to 2003). The U.S. government began keeping statistics in 1952, and the two largest drops in visa issuance were in 2002 and 2003. In part, this may have been attributable to the backlog of applications due to new visa regulations following 9/11 (Ante 2004). However, this decline was short lived. In 2005, the number of F-1 visas issued increased 9.4% when compared to 2003, and in 2006 the number was almost 28% higher than 2003, with a number comparable to the pre-9/11 years. After 2007, the number steadily rose until 2016, when there was again a 36.6% drop in the number of visas issued. From 2016 to 2017, the decline in F-1 visa issuance was 17%. In 2016 and 2017, the F-1 visa refusal rate of 34% to 35% was not much different from 2002/03 (see Fig. 10.1; U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs 2017).

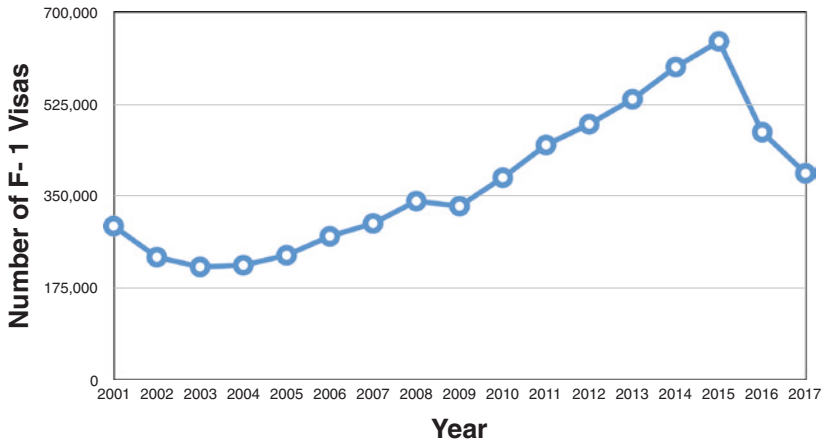


Fig. 10.1 U.S. F-1 visa issuances 2001–2017 (Source U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs)

When considering visa issuances versus actual student enrollment, caution must be used because changes in visa duration and other requirements may influence application frequency. For instance, a 2014 U.S. visa policy change that allowed Chinese students, the largest international student population in the U.S., to obtain 5-year rather than 1-year F-1 visas, led to a decrease in visa applications but not student enrollment. However, overall visa issuance and denial cannot be ignored in light of the declining number of international students who choose the U.S. for foreign study (ICEF Monitor 2018).

Following 9/11, visa rejection affected students from throughout the world, but it affected Muslim-majority countries the most. Though only 13% of international students in the U.S. originated from Muslim countries, they accounted for 24% of the denied visa applications though 2003 (Lowell et al. 2007). However, it is important to acknowledge that students from the Middle East and Muslim countries were not the only ones affected by changes in the visa application process. Economic and political events after 2001 led to changes for all student applicants, including the South American countries of Venezuela, Columbia, and Argentina, where visa issuances dropped by 20%. For almost two years after 9/11, some international educators felt that the visa application and issuance process in the U.S. moved away from “core principles” such as openness and embracing multiculturalism,

and toward “zero tolerance for any ambiguity that might have security implications” (Yale-Loehr et al. 2005, 3). Prospective international students cited the difficulty in obtaining visas as a deterrent to study in the U.S., and some professionals in international education argued that 9/11 “fundamentally changed the face of recruiting, introducing layers of security checks and alienating many students and their families in the process” (McMurtie 2005, A8). In 2019, the student visa process remained much the same.

Following 9/11, the U.S. suffered a loss of scientific and technological talent that formerly had been provided by international students and scholars. Students who studied subjects on the Department of State’s sensitive/critical fields watch list (e.g., nuclear technology, physics, information security) had the most difficulty obtaining visas (Brumfiel 2003). Approximately 75% of universities surveyed reported difficulties in helping scholars gain admission into the U.S. (NAFSA 2003), and there were those who argued that the SEVIS monitoring system “sent unwelcoming messages to the world’s academic communities” (Starobin 2006, 1). In response to the difficulties in obtaining visas in the years following 9/11, the DHS regularly updated SEVIS and the student visa application process, often in direct response to the issues identified by international educators. They also began to develop cooperative partnerships with identified countries to promote academic exchange.

During this time, professional organizations such as NAFSA made public statements indicating that, while they supported national security efforts, they also strongly believed in the value of academic exchange and encouraged further improvements to the visa process. In 2009, NAFSA Senior Public Policy Advisor Victor Johnson stated, “The visa process should serve as a barrier to people with criminal or terroristic intent...But it should also be a gateway for people with the talent our economy and society requires” (Kaplan 2009, 132). In collaboration with a group of science, academic, and engineering professionals, NAFSA issued a 2009 statement to the federal government directly addressing the problems international scholars experienced in obtaining entry visas (Brumfiel 2003). International educators consistently communicated the important role of academic exchange in preparing citizens for the twenty-first century (McMurtie 2005; NAFSA 2003). They also made clear that, with continued improvements, many issues with the SEVIS system could be effectively mitigated (Starobin 2006).

10.4 Other Possible Reasons for Post-9/11 Inbound Student Mobility Changes

While international politics and visa restrictions were significant, the increased competition for international students from other countries (possibly influenced by the global economic recession following 9/11) and the rising cost of higher education in the U.S. also might have been deterrents. Other possibilities include a decline in favorable attitudes toward the U.S. (Lowell et al. 2007) and a climate of prejudice and discrimination surrounding immigrants and international students (McMurtie 2001).

In 2017/18, the number of international students in the U.S. appeared substantially large at 1 million; however, because the U.S. has the largest capacity in higher education across the world, this number must be considered proportionally to understand how other countries are becoming more attractive to international students. For instance, in 1999 the U.K. instituted an international student recruitment strategy that increased the number of students by 118,000 by 2006, which was more than two times the U.S. increase during that time. Between 1999 and 2005, international student enrollment in the U.S. increased almost 17%, whereas the U.K. saw 29% growth, Australia 42%, France 81%, and 46% in Germany (ACE 2006). Similar to the U.K., other countries, such as Australia, Canada, Germany, and New Zealand, have developed strong recruitment strategies to attract international students (Kless 2004; McMurtie 2001). Some historically less traditional destinations (i.e., New Zealand, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore) have worked to become more popular with international students by providing spousal benefits and easier immigration procedures (Mooney and Neelakantan 2004). Though the U.S. had the largest market share of international students in 2017 (24%) compared to the U.K. (11%), China (10%), and Australia (7%), overall growth in the U.S. has slowed. In 2016/17, 40% of U.S. colleges and universities reported a decline in international applications (Redden 2017). Reasons included more stringent visa regulations, fear of discrimination, lack of post-completion employment opportunities, a decrease in

available funding for international students, and an overall global economic decline (Lowell et al. 2007; Quinton 2018). Professionals in the field have argued that the U.S. has neither developed an official national strategy for international student recruitment nor a climate that embraces the skills and knowledge offered by international students and scholars.

The global economic recession following the 9/11 attacks also may have influenced the declining growth of international students. Although there is some debate as to whether the 9/11 attacks contributed substantially to the economic recession of 2001, there is certainly evidence that the event was a catalyst for negative economic repercussions within the U.S. airline and tourism industry. Economic effects extended beyond the U.S. to the international financial and trade markets, influencing international capital flow and the value of the dollar, and consequently, the economic stability of other countries (DePietro 2017; Economic Effects of 9/11 2002).

In combination with the recession, the rising cost of higher education in the U.S. made it increasingly difficult for international students to afford U.S. colleges and universities. Compared to other countries post-9/11, the U.S. and Japan consistently ranked highest in overall cost (i.e., combined costs of tuition and living) at approximately \$25,000 a year. Australia, Canada, and New Zealand have ranked second, ranging between roughly \$10,000 and \$15,000. Countries with some of the lowest costs of education were found in continental Europe, where total costs ranged between \$5000 and \$10,000 (Usher and Medow 2010). In order to remain competitive as a destination for international students, the U.S. must address the cost of higher education, as well as immigration policy, because students can find a less expensive quality education and more progressive visa and residency policies in other countries (Verbik and Lasanowski 2007). In 2006, the Department of Education and NAFSA recommended that, to encourage international student applications, the U.S. should remove restrictive visa regulations and provide a clear path to permanent residency for international graduates with specialized advanced training in STEM fields (NAFSA 2006; Spellings Report 2006).

In addition to increased competition for international students and rising costs of education, the declining image of the U.S. in the eyes of the world may have contributed to the slowed growth in international students. Before 9/11, polls indicated that, in Western Europe, attitudes toward the U.S. were generally positive, ranging from 62% favorability in France to 83% in the U.K. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, these numbers dropped substantially in 2004, with 37% of French respondents and 58% of U.K. respondents indicating favorable attitudes toward the U.S. (Pew Research Center 2015). In the Islamic world, leaders were divided; approximately half indicated that individuals in their countries held favorable views of the U.S. and the other half indicated unfavorable views. At the same time, world leaders overall reported that people in their country believed that 9/11 was the result of U.S. policy and that it was “good that Americans know what it is like to be vulnerable” (Pew Research Center 2001, 1). In the same poll, respondents indicated that they had a favorable opinion of the U.S. because it continued to represent the land of opportunity and democracy, not because they approved the actions of U.S. leaders. Disapproval of the U.S. was greatest among citizens of primarily Muslim nations, and much of this animosity stemmed from U.S. policy toward the Arab world (Zogby 2003). Among international students, a 2005 study found that they most strongly agreed with the statement, “American people like to dominate other people” ($M=4.06/5$), and indicated most disagreement ($M=2.47/5$) with the statement, “Americans are peaceful people” (Fullerton 2005, 135–136). The negative perceptions of the U.S. immediately after 9/11 were aimed at “U.S. power” rather than the people who lived in the country (Pew Research Center 2001).

While the 2001 Pew Survey found the image of the U.S. had become somewhat less favorable following 9/11, U.S. attitudes toward other countries and immigrants also became more negative. Immigrants in the U.S. experienced increased prejudice, which led to further complications for international students. In general, studies have found that international students in the U.S. report higher levels of perceived discrimination and homesickness than their U.S. counterparts (e.g., Rajapaksa and Dundes 2002) and that they are conscious of the possible negative perceptions of their home countries (Min-Hua 2007).

In addition, domestic students may lack cultural understanding of their international peers, which can lead to international students feeling academically and socially excluded (Lee and Rice 2007). Due to media portrayals of immigrants, international students may feel inferior and interpret negative reactions to accented or non-fluent English as intolerance of foreign cultures (Poyrazli and Lopez 2007). Students from regions other than Europe, particularly the Middle East and Africa, have reported greater levels of discrimination than European students (Hanassab 2006), though racism and discrimination are not isolated to Arab and Muslim students (Frey and Roysircar 2006; Poyrazli and Lopez 2007).

Though it is difficult to identify 9/11 as a direct cause of the prejudice directed toward international students, particularly ones who appeared to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent, the event may have served as a catalyst for renewed xenophobia and greater ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism can set the stage for greater disparaging of the out-group and more allegiance to the in-group (Tajfel and Turner 1986). After 9/11, much of the negative attitudes toward immigrants focused on anyone who appeared Arab or Muslim, including South Asians and Sikhs, rekindling historical feelings of Islamophobia (Beydoun 2018). These groups became the target of hate crimes, racial profiling, bullying, shootings, and murder much because they appeared to share the national heritage or religion of the 9/11 hijackers. Following 9/11, 20–60% of Muslims in the U.S. reported that they had experienced discrimination (Human Rights Watch Report 2002). A majority of the Muslim-Americans reported negative aftereffects of 9/11, including verbal harassment and greater suspicion during airport security (Abu-Raiya et al. 2011). In an October 2001 public opinion poll in the U.S., 47% of Americans had a favorable view of Islam; however, in 2010, a similar poll indicated that this number had dropped 10 points to 37%. Indirectly, changes in the words used to discuss terrorist events may have fed negative behaviors. Jason Villedem (2001) noted that the term “9/11” became part of the American lexicon, as did “al-Qaida, Taliban, ground zero, radicalism, extremism, anthrax and the Axis of Evil.” After 9/11, international students, particularly those from the Middle East and South Asia, were more likely

to seek academic study in countries other than the U.S. (Urias and Yeakey 2005).

In January 2017 an executive order, which repeated the myth that many of the 9/11 terrorists had entered the U.S. on visitor, student, or employment visas, established a temporary travel ban on individuals from seven countries—Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (White House 2017). In September 2017, the Trump administration dropped Sudan and added the countries of Chad, North Korea, and Venezuela to the ban (eventually omitting Chad). The Director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, Philip Altbach, expressed concern that the “extreme vetting” promised by the U.S. administration under President Trump would add to the difficulties that international students and scholars have experienced since 9/11. In addition, Chair of the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership at the State University of New York Albany, Jason Lane, compared the 2017 visa situation to 9/11 when he stated that, “There will certainly be a lot of attention on what the Trump administration does in terms of student visas, particularly J-1 visas that allow students to work, which Trump has suggested may need to be somehow revised” (Bothwell 2016, 1). Though the revised travel ban was suspended by federal courts for some time, a June 26, 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision upheld the travel ban, which led to international educators again publicly expressing their concern. Serving as an advocate for international students, Jill Welch, NAFSA Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy, issued a statement in reference to the ban:

At a time when we should be making every effort to create connections and ties around the world through robust international exchange with all nations, especially those in the Middle East, the Supreme Court’s decision poses a grave threat to our national security and keeps us from building those necessary relationships abroad. While universities and colleges work tirelessly to welcome international students and scholars, the chilling effect of this policy and the uncertainty for our international students and scholars will undoubtedly continue the current downturn in U.S. international student enrollment as the world wonders whether America will

hold true to our values. Today, the United States can be seen as a country that bans people from our shores, not on the basis of what they have done, but for where they are from. (Welch 2018a)

The March 2018 announcement that officials within the Trump administration pushed to ban visas for Chinese students was disheartening for international educators. NAFSA Executive Director and CEO, Esther D. Brimmer, reacted by stating, “Generations of foreign policy leaders agree that international students and scholars are one of America’s greatest foreign policy assets. If the administration imposes restrictions that will further prohibit students and scholars from choosing the United States as their destination, we will suffer devastating impacts for decades to come...International students and scholars create jobs, drive research, enrich our classrooms, strengthen national security and are America’s best ambassadors and allies. Students should never be used as bargaining chips, and we cannot afford to lose this valuable resource” (Brimmer 2018).

10.5 The U.S. Educational Response to 9/11

Following 9/11, it was clear that expertise in foreign language and cultural competency had been lacking in U.S. education (Green and Olson 2003; Lane-Toomey 2014). Therefore, the U.S. government, global foundations, and educators reemphasized the importance of learning about other cultures, languages, and the political, economic, and cultural implications of globalization at all levels of education. In 2007, Stephanie Bell-Rose, then President of the Goldman Sachs Foundation, stated the importance of international education to bridging relationships among nations:

International education is going to be the primary means by which we are able to bridge the cultural and linguistic divides that exist not only within our country, but also globally. Without an appreciation for other cultures, other languages, national history of other countries, and the problems and contributions of other countries, we think that school

children in America will not be able to become effective global leaders. We need them to become effective global leaders and we believe that 9/11 was a very vivid illustration of the compelling case for promoting a better understanding of and appreciation for other people, other cultures, other religions, and other geographies. (Bell-Rose 2007)

The U.S. response was increased federal funding for academic programs in Area Studies (i.e., the development of a subspecialty in language or an area of the world), language training, cultural exchange, and study abroad. President George Bush invested \$114 million in the 2007 fiscal year to establish the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), “a plan to further strengthen national security and prosperity in the twenty-first century through education, especially in developing foreign language skills.” The intent was to encourage the study of critical languages by U.S. citizens through educational programs that target K-12 education, college/university level students, and working professionals (Powell and Lowenkron 2006). Critical languages are considered to be critical to U.S. national security and include languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Russian, and Turkish (NSEP 2017). The NSLI shared similarities with the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which was passed to counter fears that the U.S. was losing its technological edge in the Cold War with the Soviet Union (History, Art, and Archives 1958). Seventy-five percent of the NSLI was funded through the Departments of State and Education, and the Department of Defense invested more than \$750 million to train employees in critical languages over six years from 2007 to 2011 (Capriccioso 2006). Although immediately after 9/11 U.S. policy makers believed that international students and scholars were a national security threat, NAFSA and other organizations recognized that international exchange was critical to national security in the future (NAFSA 2006).

Other enhanced federal programs included the U.S. Department of State’s Critical Languages Scholarship Program (CLS), which is a fully funded language and cultural program for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students. According to the Modern Languages Association (MLA), these programs were effective. Between 1998 and 2002, U.S. college enrollment in Arabic doubled. In addition,

a MLA ad hoc committee examined the language crisis following 9/11 and proposed a new and an integrative approach for teaching foreign languages to achieve “deep translingual and transcultural competence” (Geisler et al. 2007, 237). The MLA committee agreed that the language crisis must be addressed at all levels of education, not only at the university. They also reiterated the importance of study abroad as a path to learning about language and culture. In 2012, the Department of Education emphasized this commitment in its first International Education Strategic Plan (U.S. Department of Education 2012).

As the importance of global learning was reemphasized, leaders in higher education renewed the promotion of global citizenship education as an essential learning outcome for the twenty-first century. In 2005, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched its Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, and published the goals and learning outcomes in *College Learning for the New Global Century*. By including diversity and global learning experiences as part of high-impact practices in higher education, this professional organization endorsed global citizenship education. Knowledge of human cultures, civic engagement, and intercultural understanding and competence were all identified as components of the AAC&U essential learning outcomes (AAC&U 2005).

After 9/11, leaders in higher education also began stronger promotion of study abroad. In his November 2001 remarks at the President’s Associates Dinner, Harvard University President Lawrence H. Summers responded to 9/11 by stating, “These are issues that will require us to address globalization at every level. Whether it is making sure that more of our students have the opportunity to study abroad, to be in developing countries, and experience and see cultures very different from our own...” (Summers 2001). The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) declared that “internationalization is the single most important leadership challenge of the 21st century” (NASULGC 2004, 17). Since then, other institutions and organizations have followed suit. The 2014 IIE Generation Study Abroad initiative boasted a \$2 million commitment, and the goal

was to double the number of U.S. students abroad by 2017/18 (IIE 2014). The 2016 Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act provided competitive grants to students, with a specific initiative to increase access for minorities, students with financial need, and non-traditional students. The goal of this program was to increase the number of U.S. students abroad to 1 million in 10 years (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln 2005).

However, it is noteworthy that, while the federal government supported increased language learning and professional organizations and college administrators lauded study abroad, many colleges and universities decreased or eliminated foreign language as a graduation requirement. This seemed contradictory to the goals of international education and was a surprising reaction to the foreign language and cultural competency priorities that arose after 9/11. Educators recognized the need for foreign language education, but that did not translate into enhanced integration of this requirement into higher education curricula. This disconnect must not be ignored as international educators consider the future of global citizenship education.

10.6 Conclusion

Looking to the future, international educators acknowledge the wide range of factors that play a role in the mission to internationalize higher education. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 resulted in increased challenges, most prominently a more complicated visa process and the increased monitoring of international students and scholars. At the same time, 9/11 also led to positive developments including a more concerted and organized advocacy system for academic exchange, a working partnership between international education professionals and U.S. immigration officials, and an increased commitment to global education.

What do these developments mean for international education? When considering the legacy of 9/11, international educators must remember the mission of the profession. Though this chapter focused primarily on international education in the U.S., the mission of internationalization inherently transcends national borders. With continued

support from professional organizations such as NAFSA, IIE, ACE, the Forum on Education Abroad, EAIE (European Association of International Educators), and others, the field has continued to promote global citizenship education as the core of peaceful international relations, human rights, and social justice. International educators have emphasized that academic exchange is not an impediment to, but rather a part of, the national security solution. Restricting the movement of international students and scholars is detrimental to U.S. scientific, political, economic, and social interests. In the future, the role of international education professionals as advocates for academic exchange will become increasingly critical. There are forces beyond higher education that challenge the promotion of cultural exchange, and indirectly, cultural understanding. It has been clear that misinformation and fear of the “other” have contributed to misguided legislation that makes it difficult for international scholars and students to gain entry into the U.S. While acknowledging national security concerns, international educators have a continued responsibility to educate the public regarding the advantages of welcoming students and scholars from abroad into the U.S.

It is noteworthy that the authors of the 9/11 Commission Report viewed international education as a pathway to more peaceful relations with those abroad. The report stated, “The United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange, and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope” (Eldridge et al. 2004, 377). The commission also stated, “Education that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamic terrorism” (Eldridge et al. 2004, 378).

Though the 9/11 Commission focused on national security concerns related to terrorism, the message that “education teaches tolerance” is one of the fundamental components of international education. As institutions of higher learning continue to educate global citizens for the twenty-first century and beyond, there should be a cautious hope that international education can nurture global leaders who respect all people. Academic exchange reduces the use of stereotypes as catalysts for discrimination and fear of the other, and it can facilitate a sense of responsibility,

not only to local communities, but also to those across the globe. This mutual interdependence and goal sharing leads to decreased intergroup competition and increased cooperation among individuals and nations. It is more difficult to make decisions that harm people who are familiar and known. In this regard, J. William Fulbright stated, “The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy—the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately. The simple purpose of the exchange program...is to erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets nations against one another. The exchange program is not a panacea but an avenue of hope...” (Fulbright 1989).

As internationalization efforts continue, 9/11 serves as a reminder that a country’s response to tragic events can either embrace international partners and foster positive collaboration, or alienate them, resulting in damage to the progress made by international educators and world leaders over the past century. U.S. political leaders have an obligation to maintain the safety of citizens; however, they can do so while welcoming and understanding the advantages of a multicultural society. The benefits of campus and community internationalization are clear, and if policy decisions are based firmly on evidence acknowledging that academic exchange serves to strengthen national security, rather than threaten it, then policy makers and international educators can work together to promote the importance of global awareness and its inextricable ties to human rights and well-being for all.

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