



# International Students

## Cultural Challenges and Opportunities



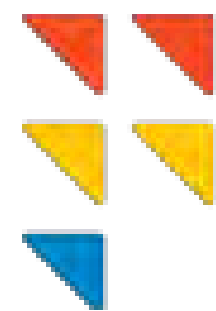
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# Presenters

*Kindel Hollis*, Senior Associate Director of Admissions, Trinity University (TX)

*Glen McGee*, Presidential Spouse, Salem College (NC) - Session Chair



# Introduction





# *Agenda*

## **Enrolling a Community**

- Enrollment Trends
- Recruitment Pathways
- Challenges
- Opportunities

## **Building a Community**

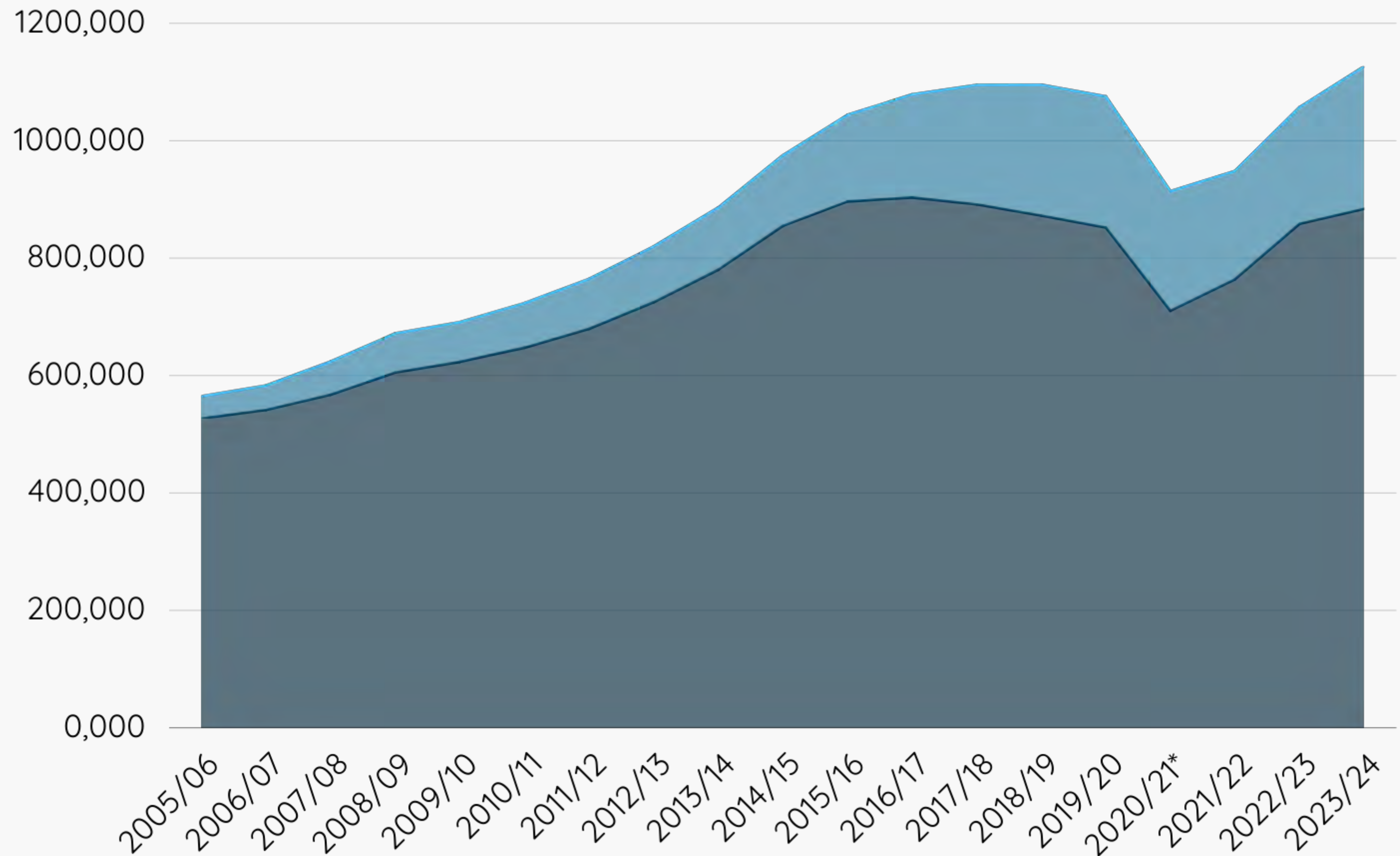
- Who to Contact
- How to Connect
- Support on Campus
- Special Considerations

## **Retaining a Community**

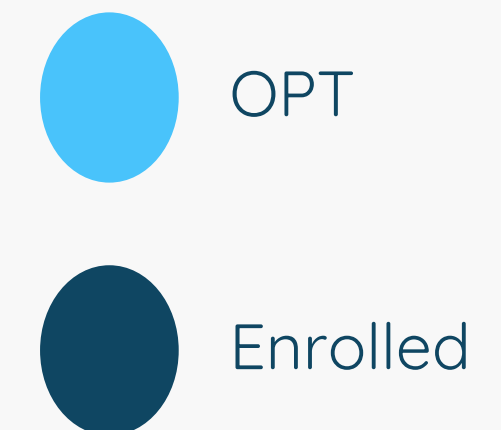
- Retention
- Engaging After Graduation



# Enrollment Trends

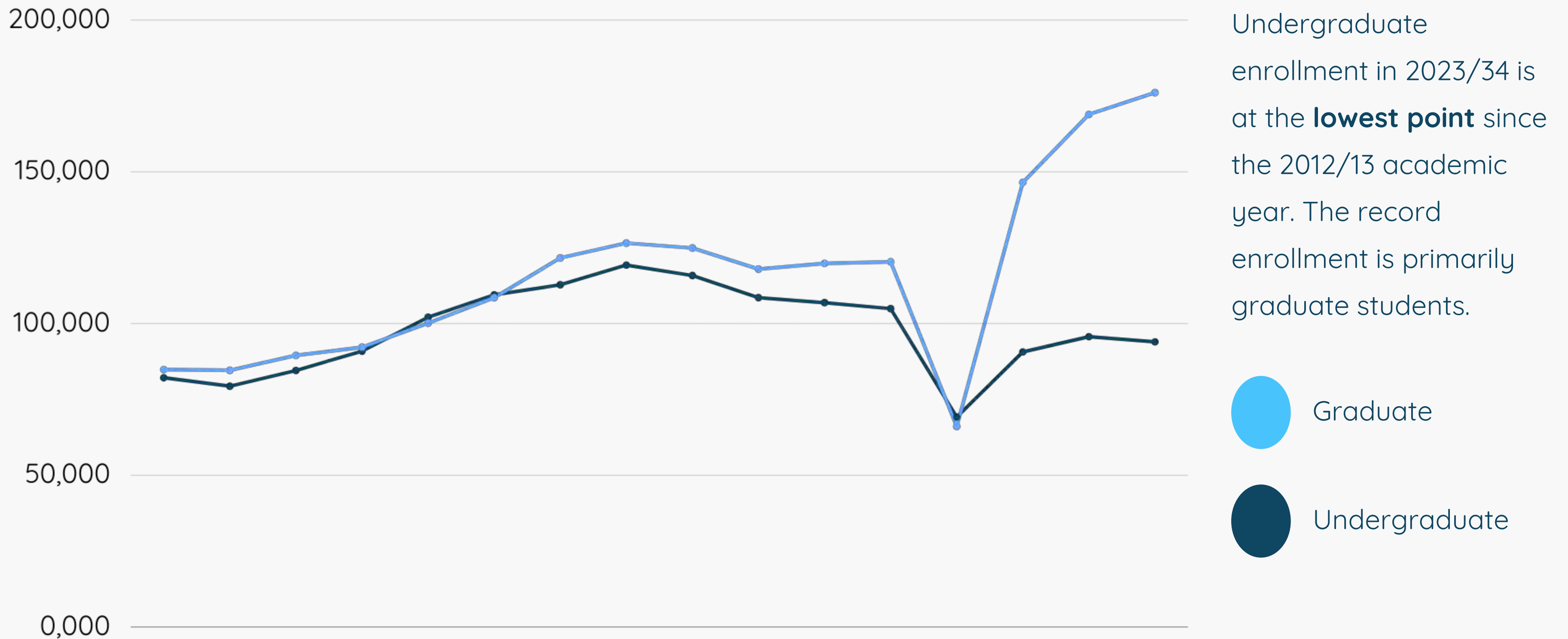


In 2023/24, the total number of international students **increased by 7%** from the prior academic year and **reached an all time high**.





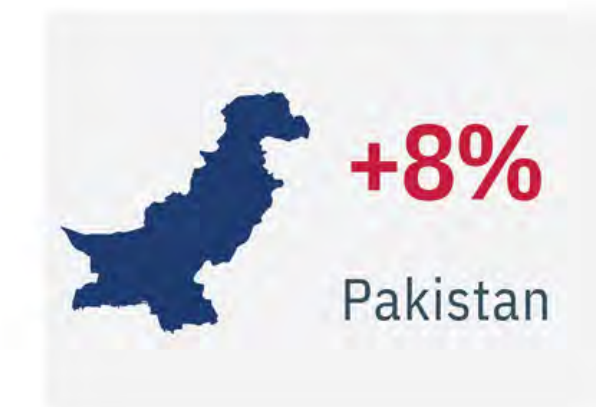
# Enrollment Trends



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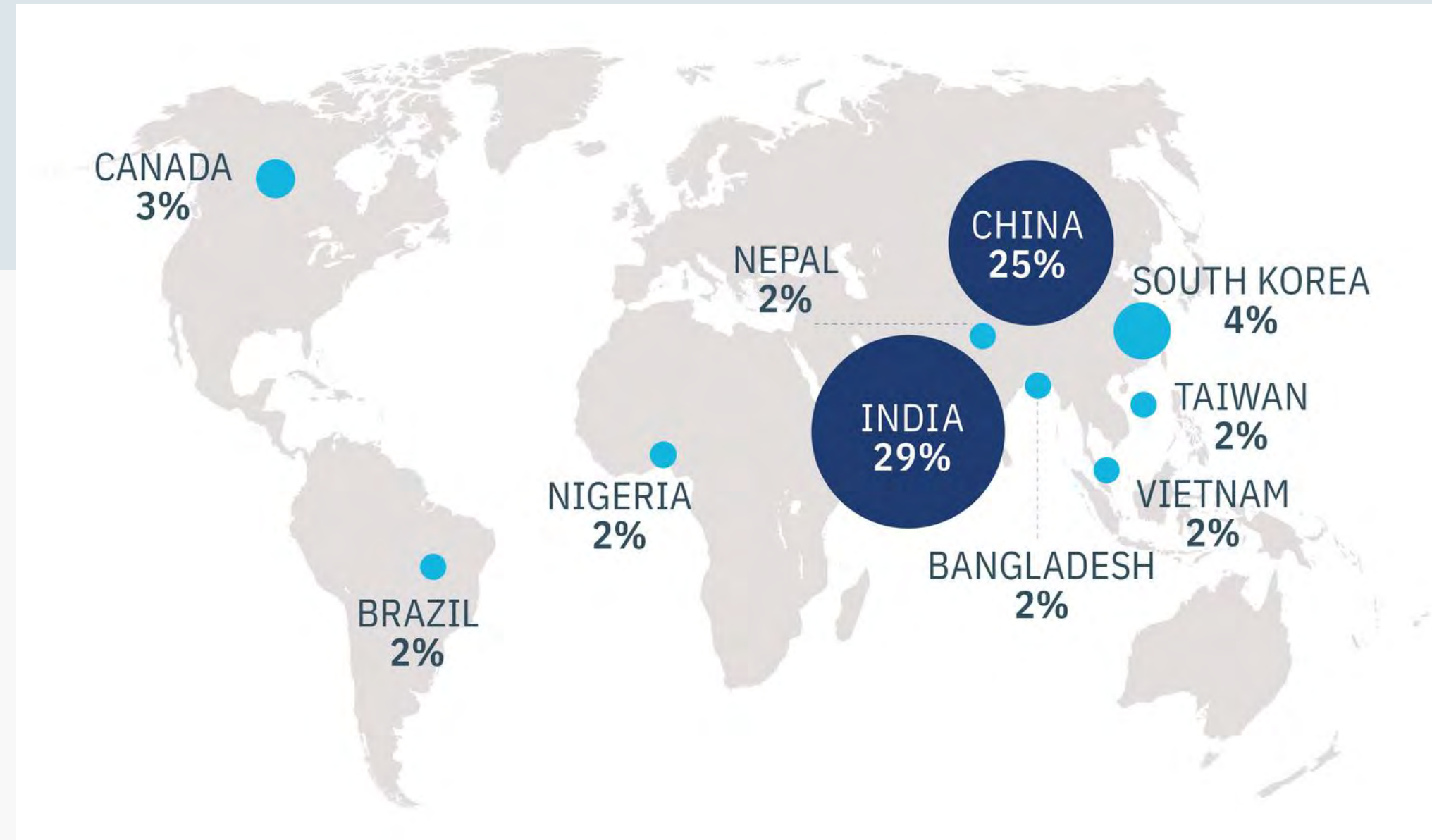
## Countries with Growth

These are the top senders of international students with the largest increases in 2023/24





# *Enrollment Trends*



Students from India and China accounted for 54% of international students in 2023/24.



# *Enrollment Trends*



Math and  
computer science

**25%**



Engineering

**19%**



Business and  
management

**14%**



Physical and  
life science

**8%**

**56% of international students in the US studied in STEM fields.**



# *Challenges*

## **Political**

- US political landscape
- Global conflict and decreased mobility
- Future of OPT/CPT in the wake of the Chevron decision
- Visa access and denial rates

## **Budgets and Costs**

- University budget constraints
- Market volatility and student ability to pay
- Unpredictable global economy
- Strength of the USD

## **Institutional**

- English Proficiency - lingering COVID impact
- Shifts in international curriculums
- Heightened focus on rankings in cluttered landscape



# *Opportunities*

## **Leverage Existing Relationships**

- Continue to support existing pathways and partnerships
- Travel, professional development
- Creative collaborations between teams and departments

## **Build Institutional Strengths**

- Highlight existing popular programs
- Identify STEM designated programs and opportunities for growth
- Strengthen internship and research programs for international students

## **Support and Retain Current Populations**

- Include international students and programs in strategic planning
- Build a welcoming campus community and culture
- Support and retain current staff members who support students

# *Opportunities*



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**1,126,690 international students**

enrolled at US higher education institutions or were on OPT in the  
2023/24 academic year,

**an all-time high.**

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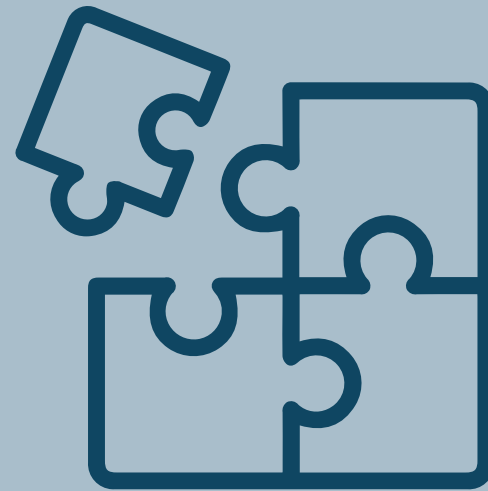
# *Building a Community*

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## **Who to Contact**

- Departments and divisions
- Find the people doing the work
- Talk to different types of students!



## **How to Connect**

- Best times of year
- Asking what they need
- Being realistic about support



## **How to Help**

- Silence is a message.
- Play to your strengths!
- Bandwidth and expertise



# *Building a Community*

## **Support on Campus**

- Taking inventory - what do we already do?
- Who do we already have in place?
- Who can we enlist for more support?

## **Special Considerations**

- Culture shock
- Different needs at different times - scaffolded support
- Where are you from?
- Holidays, food, religion, and culture
- Visa regulations

## **Cultural Context**

- High context vs low context cultures
- Empathy

# *Retaining a Community*



According to a 2019 National Foundation for American Policy study, international students often have higher graduation rates than the overall student population, sometimes by 20% or more...





# Q&A



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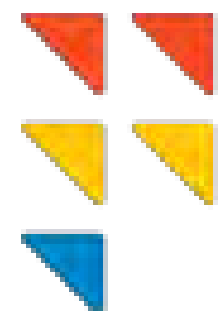
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