Immigration Reform related to International Students

Moderated by:

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Session Objectives

With just under 1 million foreign students in US higher education, we need to:

- Hear and contrast the nuanced pros and cons of mechanisms for retaining foreign STEM graduates

- Have an open-minded, respectful discussion based on data and metrics

- Determine what position (if any) we deans as a group should be promoting related to this issue

Sample of Arguments for Benefits

- "Every foreign-born student who graduates from a U.S. university with an advanced degree and stays to work in STEM has been shown to create on average 2.62 jobs for American workers—often because they help lead in innovation, research, and development." According to a 2012 report from the Information Technology Industry Council, the Partnership for a New American Economy, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

- As of 2010, Immigrants founded 18 percent of all Fortune 500 companies, many of which are high-tech giants, generated $1.7 trillion in annual revenue, employed 3.6 million workers worldwide, and included AT&T, Verizon, P&G, Pfizer, Comcast, Intel, Merck, DuPont, Google, Cigna, Sun, US Steel, Qualcomm, + According to a 2011 report from the Partnership for a New American Economy

Sample of Arguments for Benefits

- ¼ of all engineering and technology-related companies founded in the US from 1995 to 2005 "had at least one immigrant key founder, produced $52 billion in sales and employed 450,000 workers in 2005."
According to a 2007 study by researchers at Duke University and Harvard University

- "Women represent ~45 percent of the total number of international students" and "International students contribute more than $21 billion to the U.S. economy." According to the U.S. Department of Commerce

Sample of Arguments for Risks

- Giving STEM graduates a green card is a widely popular but misguided policy. Advocates of automatic green cards for STEM graduates base their positions on one or more of a number of suppositions:
  - The U.S. economy is lagging because we don't have enough scientists and engineers to meet industry demand;
  - and/or increasing the supply will directly increase the innovation level in the economy;
  - and/or increases in the number of scientists and engineers in other countries will put the United States at a competitive disadvantage.

- Each argument has the same intuitive appeal as that of motherhood and apple pie yet, when looking at the evidence, we find each of these arguments lacks empirical support.
  Hal Salzman Sociologist at the E.J Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

Sample of Arguments for Risks

- There are more than 5 million native-born Americans with an UG degree in STEM, but not working in STEM with another 1.2 million degree holders not working at all. There are also 1.6 million foreign-born residents with an UG degree in STEM that are also not working in STEM fields or working at all.

  Report by Steve Camarota and Karen Zeigler for Center for Immigration Studies

Fresh Off the Press The Economist.

Train 'em up. Kick 'em out

Economist, Jan 30th 2016 | From the print edition

"[US] visa rules are needlessly strict and stress keeping out terrorists rather than wooing talent. It is hard for students to work, either part-time while studying or for a year or two after graduation. The government wants to extend a scheme that allows those with science and technology qualifications to stay for up to 29 months after graduating. But unions oppose it, claiming that foreign students undercut their members' wages."

"For a country that wants to recruit talented, productive immigrants, it is hard to think of a better sifting process than a university education. Welcoming foreign students is a policy that costs less than nothing in the short term and brings huge rewards in the long term."

"Train 'em up. Kick 'em out. It's a bit shortsighted, isn't it?"

Speakers for this Session

- Presenting the argument 'For':

Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness
  - A recognized expert in global competitiveness and innovation
  - Built and oversees the Council on Competitiveness Technology Leadership and Strategy Initiative (TLSI), engaging more than 50 Fortune 500 chief technology officers.

- Presenting the argument 'Against':

Professor Norman Matloff, Computer Science, UC Davis
  - Former database software developer in Silicon Valley
  - Conducts research both in computer science and in theoretical and applied statistics.
  - Particularly interested in the use of foreign labor in the U.S. computer industry. His article in the *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* on the H-1B work visa is the most comprehensive (99 pages, 300+ footnotes) academic work published on the H-1B issue.

Questions and Answers (two to get started)

1. Are we asking the wrong questions when we ask about STEM degrees?

   Are we lumping over-subscribed topics with topics under great demand? For example, the general impression is that Biology degree holders have a very tough time getting good jobs. At the same time, career fairs in mechanical or biomedical engineering often have more recruiting companies than graduates. Should we talk and think separately about Engineering and STM? Should we delineate between sub-disciplines of engineering?

2. Are there ways of decoupling immigration law and international student recruitment?

   If international students, their supporters (being families, businesses, government, and international agencies) perceive our immigration law as being unduly restrictive, is there not a risk of losing at least part of the currently estimated $21B in tuition and expenses from international students studying in the USA?