

4.9% Increase Reported in Number of Foreign Scholars at U.S. Universities

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, the number of foreign scholars doing research or teaching at doctoral-degree-granting universities in the United States rose in 1996-97.

According to the Institute of International Education, a total of 62,354 foreign scholars were working at U.S. research universities last year, 2,951 more than in 1995-96, for an increase of 4.9 per cent.

The data are from "Open Doors 1996-97," the institute's latest report on international educational exchange, which is being released this week.

The 1996-97 total is the largest number of foreign scholars ever recorded in the survey. The previous record was set in 1991-92, when 62,148 foreign scholars came to the United States. In each of the two years that followed, the total declined.

Researchers play down the significance

of a "record" number. "Unlike our count of foreign students, which is based on a census, the total for scholars comes from a survey of selected institutions that attract the vast majority of them," says Todd Davis, director of research at the institute and editor of "Open Doors." He says the increase "is nice to see, but I still think we're in kind of a holding pattern."

The institute received responses to its survey from 356, or 88 per cent, of the 405 universities it contacted. Foreign scholars working at other types of institutions, such as the National Institutes of Health, are not included in the survey totals.

MOST INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

The term "foreign scholar" generally refers to academics, mostly at the postdoctoral level, who are not pursuing a degree or other credential but are in the United

States to perform research or to teach. Last year, 81.9 per cent of them said they were involved primarily in research, about the same level as in previous years.

Three-quarters of the scholars were men. The largest proportion of scholars, 27 per cent, were in the health sciences.

The number of scholars from Asia increased 6.6 per cent last year. China, Japan, South Korea, and India sent the most. The 4,419 scholars from South Korea represented an increase of 26.5 per cent.

Europe, the region that sends the second-largest number of scholars, showed an increase of 3.1 per cent. While Germany sent 4,301—the largest number from Europe—Russia, with 2,471, and Poland, with 802, also contributed significantly to the overall increase in European scholars.

"The number of scholars now goes up as the number of students goes up—it's all

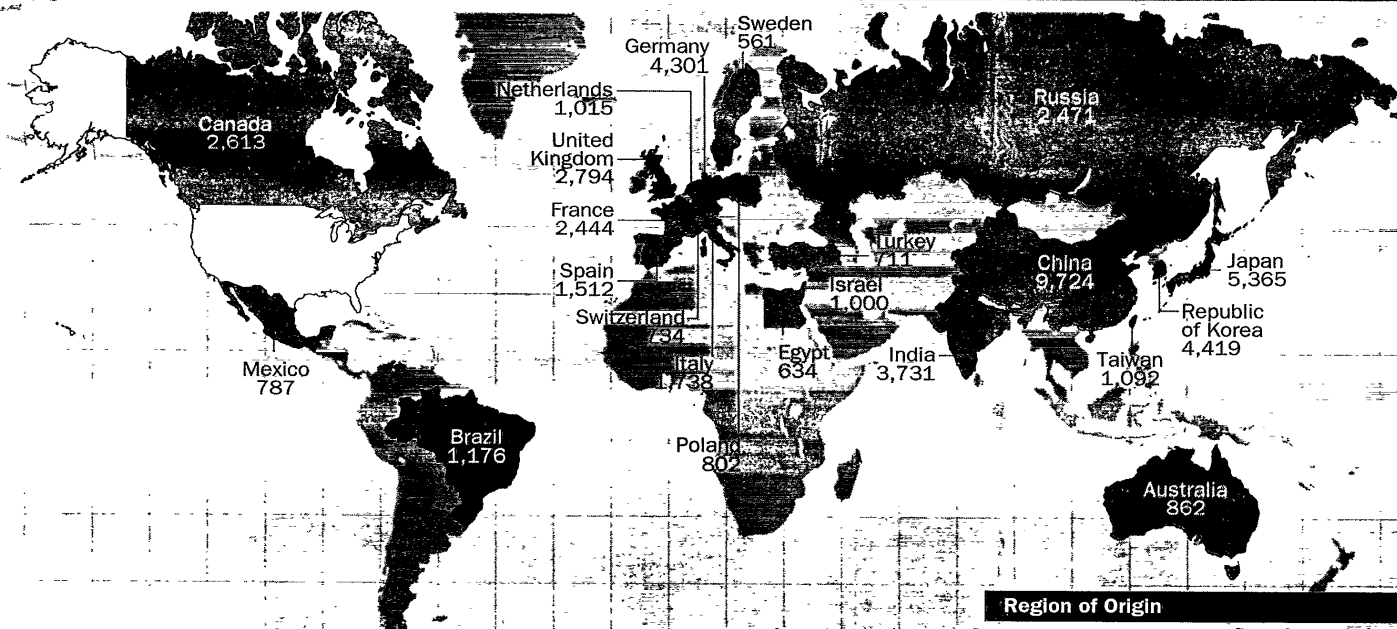
part of the internationalization of higher education," says Gail Szenes, director of the Office for International Students and Scholars at New York University. "Certain disciplines, by their very nature, have always drawn people from all over the world to U.S. universities. But higher education itself has become very international, and that increases the opportunity and the demand for people from other countries to come here. It's a good thing."

Harvard University attracted the largest number of foreign scholars, 2,382, followed closely by the University of California at Berkeley with just 24 fewer. No other institution had as many as 2,000.

Copies of "Open Doors 1996-97" are \$42.95, plus \$5 for shipping within the United States, from I.I.E. Books, (800) 445-0443, or via the World-Wide Web (<http://www.iiebooks.org>). —P.D.

Foreign Scholars at U.S. Institutions, 1996-97

Where They Came From: Leading Countries of Origin



Institutions With the Most

Harvard U	2,382
U of California, Berkeley	2,358
U of California, Los Angeles	1,519
U of California, San Diego	1,451
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	1,376
U of Washington	1,236
U of Pennsylvania	1,220
U of Minnesota, Twin Cities	1,188
Cornell U	1,155
Stanford U	1,143
U of California, Davis	1,134
U of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	1,034
U of Michigan, Ann Arbor	1,022

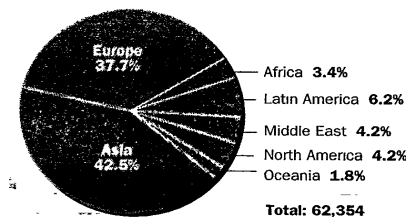
Their Sex

Men	74%
Women	26

Leading Fields of Specialization

Health sciences	27%
Life sciences	15
Physical sciences	14
Engineering	12
Social sciences	5
Agriculture	4
Mathematics	3
Business and management	3

Region of Origin



What They Did in U.S.

Research	82%
Teaching	12
Teaching and research	7