

# **THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**A Report from the Office of the University Economist**

**November 2018**

**Kent Hill, Ph.D.**

Research Professor, Department of Economics; and  
Principal Research Economist, L. William Seidman Research Institute

Center for Competitiveness and Prosperity Research  
L. William Seidman Research Institute  
W. P. Carey School of Business  
Arizona State University  
Box 874011  
Tempe, Arizona 85287-4011

(480) 965-5362

EMAIL: [Kent.Hill@asu.edu](mailto:Kent.Hill@asu.edu) or [Tom.Rex@asu.edu](mailto:Tom.Rex@asu.edu)  
[wpcarey.asu.edu/research/competitiveness-prosperity-research](http://wpcarey.asu.edu/research/competitiveness-prosperity-research)  
[economist.asu.edu](http://economist.asu.edu)



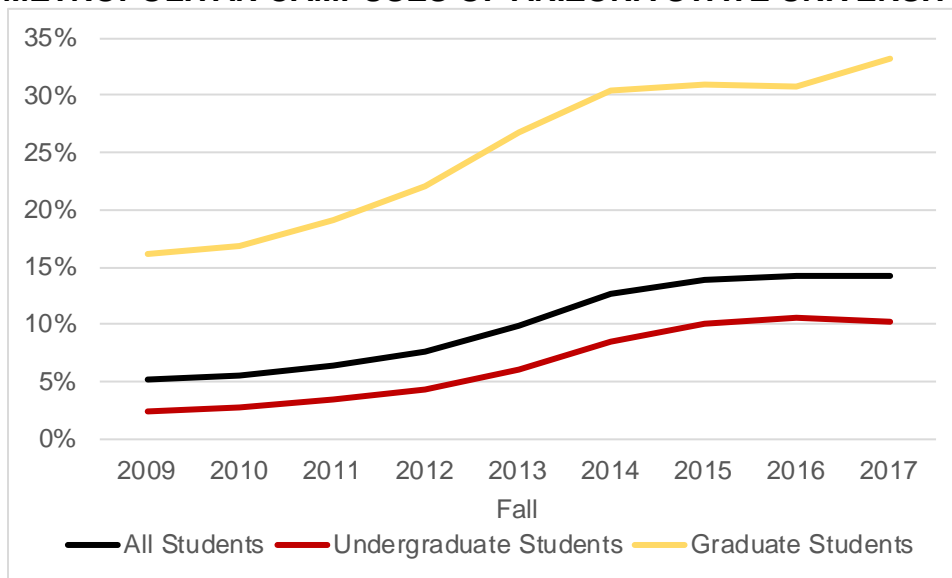
Enrollment of international students in fall 2017 at the metropolitan campuses of Arizona State University (ASU) — the Downtown Phoenix campus, the Main campus in Tempe, the Polytechnic campus in Mesa, the Thunderbird School in Glendale, and the West campus in Phoenix — increased to 10,268 students from 3,549 students in the fall semester of 2009. Enrollment of international on-line students are not included in this total; on-line students are not considered in this analysis.

In fall 2009, international students accounted for 5.2 percent of total student enrollment at ASU’s metro campuses. By fall 2017, the international student share had increased to 14.3 percent (see Chart 1). Between the fall semesters of 2009 and 2017, enrollment of international students increased 6,719 (see Chart 2). The growth in international students over this period more than accounts for the growth in total student enrollment, which was only 3,764.

International students have become increasingly important at ASU’s metro campuses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Between the fall semesters of 2009 and 2017, international students accounted for 96 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment increase of 4,921. The international student share of total undergraduate enrollment rose from 2.4 percent in fall 2009 to 10.2 percent in fall 2017. Total enrollment of graduate students declined 1,157 between the fall semesters of 2009 and 2017. Enrollment of international graduate students, on the other hand, increased 1,981 over this period. The international student share of total graduate student enrollment rose from 16.1 percent in fall 2009 to 33.3 percent in fall 2017.

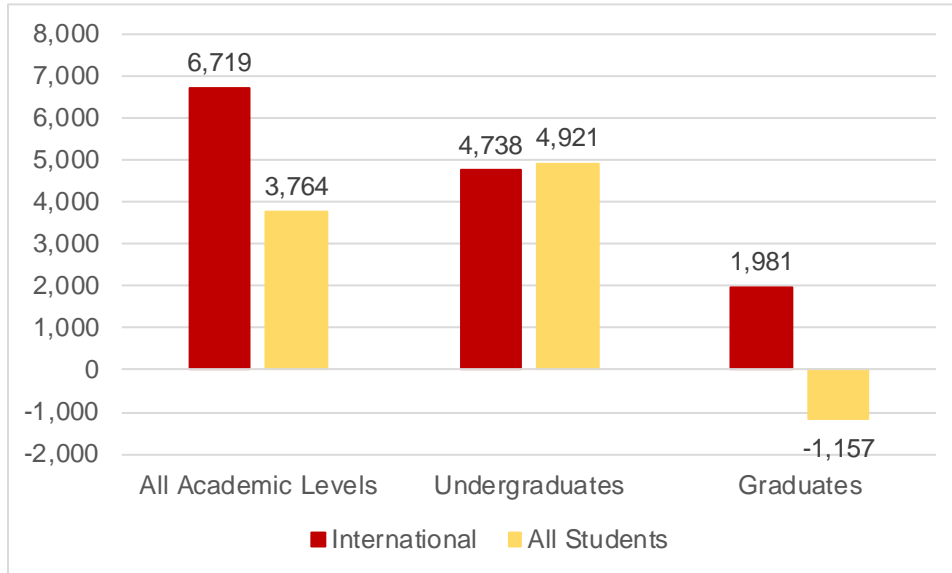
International students have become increasingly important to ASU as a source of revenue, both because of their growing numbers and because, as nonresident students, they pay relatively high

**CHART 1**  
**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AS A SHARE OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT AT THE METROPOLITAN CAMPUSES OF ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**



Source: Arizona State University ([facts.asu.edu](http://facts.asu.edu)).

**CHART 2**  
**ENROLLMENT GROWTH AT THE METROPOLITAN CAMPUSES OF ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY BETWEEN THE FALL SEMESTERS OF 2009 AND 2017**



Source: Arizona State University ([facts.asu.edu](https://facts.asu.edu)).

tuition rates. In fall 2017, across all academic levels and excluding on-line students, average tuition and fees net of waivers was \$12,300 per international student as compared to an average across all ASU students of \$8,100 per student. Among undergraduates, international students paid 76 percent more in net tuition and fees than did the average student.

Combining enrollment numbers and average net tuition figures, international students enrolled accounted for 20.9 percent of the total net tuition and fees collected by the university in fall 2017 (excluding on-line students).<sup>1</sup> This compares to the previously cited figure of 14.3 percent for the international student share of total ASU enrollment at the metro campuses. Among undergraduates, international students accounted for 10.2 percent of total undergraduate enrollment but 17.0 percent of the net tuition and fees collected from all undergraduates.

Through their local consumer spending, international students attending ASU’s metro campuses have a significant impact on jobs and incomes in the Arizona economy. There are large numbers of international students living and spending in the Phoenix metro area, and consumption expenditures per international student are high compared to other ASU students. Using the responses from a 2016 ASU Student Spending Survey to estimate spending in fiscal year 2018, international undergraduates enrolled at ASU spent a total of \$2,217 per month on housing, utilities, telecommunications, food, entertainment, retail, and personal services (see Table 1). This is 46 percent more than what the average ASU undergraduate spent per month.

<sup>1</sup> Net tuition and fees paid by international students enrolled on-line at ASU in fall 2017 was less than 1 percent of the amount paid by international students enrolled at ASU’s metropolitan campuses.

**TABLE 1**  
**ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SPENDING BY ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**STUDENTS, FISCAL YEAR 2018**

	Monthly Personal Consumption Expenditures Per Student*	Annual Impact on the Arizona Economy of Spending by ASU Students**	
		Gross State Product in Millions	Employment
All Academic Levels:			
International Students	\$1,912	\$182.0	2,210
All Students	1,578	1,025.0	12,230
Undergraduate Students:			
International Students	2,217	117.0	1,400
All Students	1,520	775.1	9,240
Graduate Students:			
International Students	1,471	65.0	810
All Students	1,849	249.9	2,990

\* Estimated using results from the 2016 ASU Student Spending Survey. Tuition is not included in the expenditures.

\*\* Includes multiplier effects. Estimates of the economic impact of ASU were made using an Arizona-specific version of IMPLAN, an input-output model used widely by researchers throughout the United States.

Source: Center for Competitiveness and Prosperity Research, L. William Seidman Research Institute, W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University.

Across all students (undergraduate and graduate), international students are estimated to have spent a total of \$200.2 million per year, excluding tuition, in Arizona in fiscal year 2018. The economic impact of this spending, including multiplier effects, is estimated to be \$182.0 million in Arizona gross state product and 2,210 Arizona jobs. International students accounted for approximately 18 percent of the total spending impact that all ASU students have on the Arizona economy.

Another channel of economic impact from ASU students relates to the university's operating expenditures that are financed by student tuition revenues. Net tuition payments made by international students enrolled at ASU's metro campuses represented 3.6 percent of the university's total operating expenditures in fiscal year 2018. The economic impact of this portion of ASU's operating expenditures is \$82.5 million in Arizona gross state product and 1,050 Arizona jobs.

Including the impacts from student spending and from net tuition payment, the total economic impact of ASU's international students enrolled at ASU's metro campuses was \$264.5 million in Arizona gross state product and 3,260 Arizona jobs in fiscal year 2018.