

Impact of Visa Issues on an International Physics Graduate Student in the U.S.

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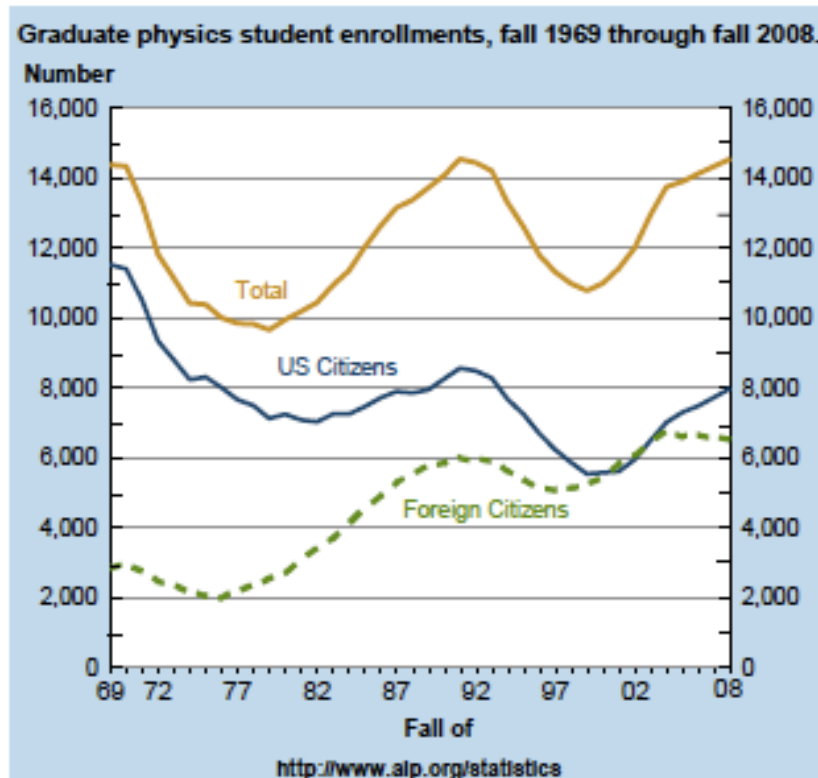
What I am going to talk about...

- **Statistics**
 - Number of U.S. students and foreign students
 - Countries of citizenship
- **Student Visa**
 - Visa problems
 - Visa validity period and number of allowed entrees for different citizenships
- **Visa Issues**
 - Denials
 - Administrative Processing
- **Impacts**
 - Scholastic life
 - Personal life
- **Examples**
 - Iranian student
 - Chinese student
- **Summary**

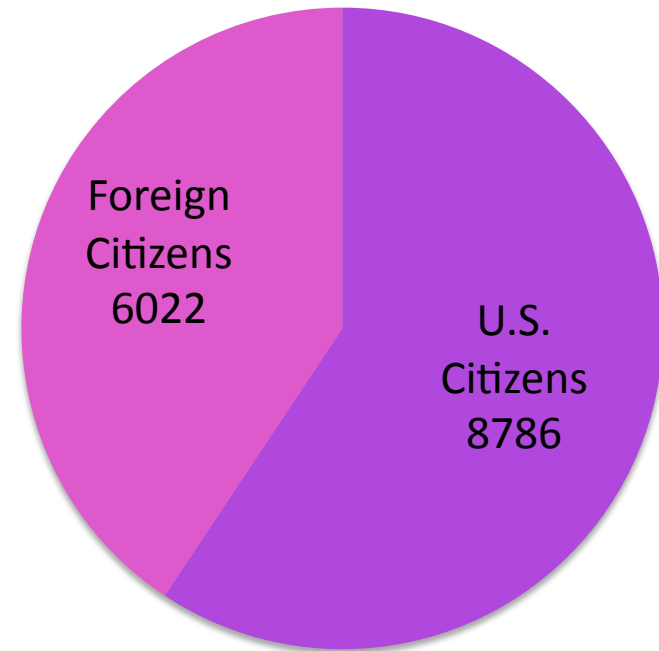
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Statistics: Number of U.S. students and foreign students

About 40% of the US physics graduate students are temporary visa holders.

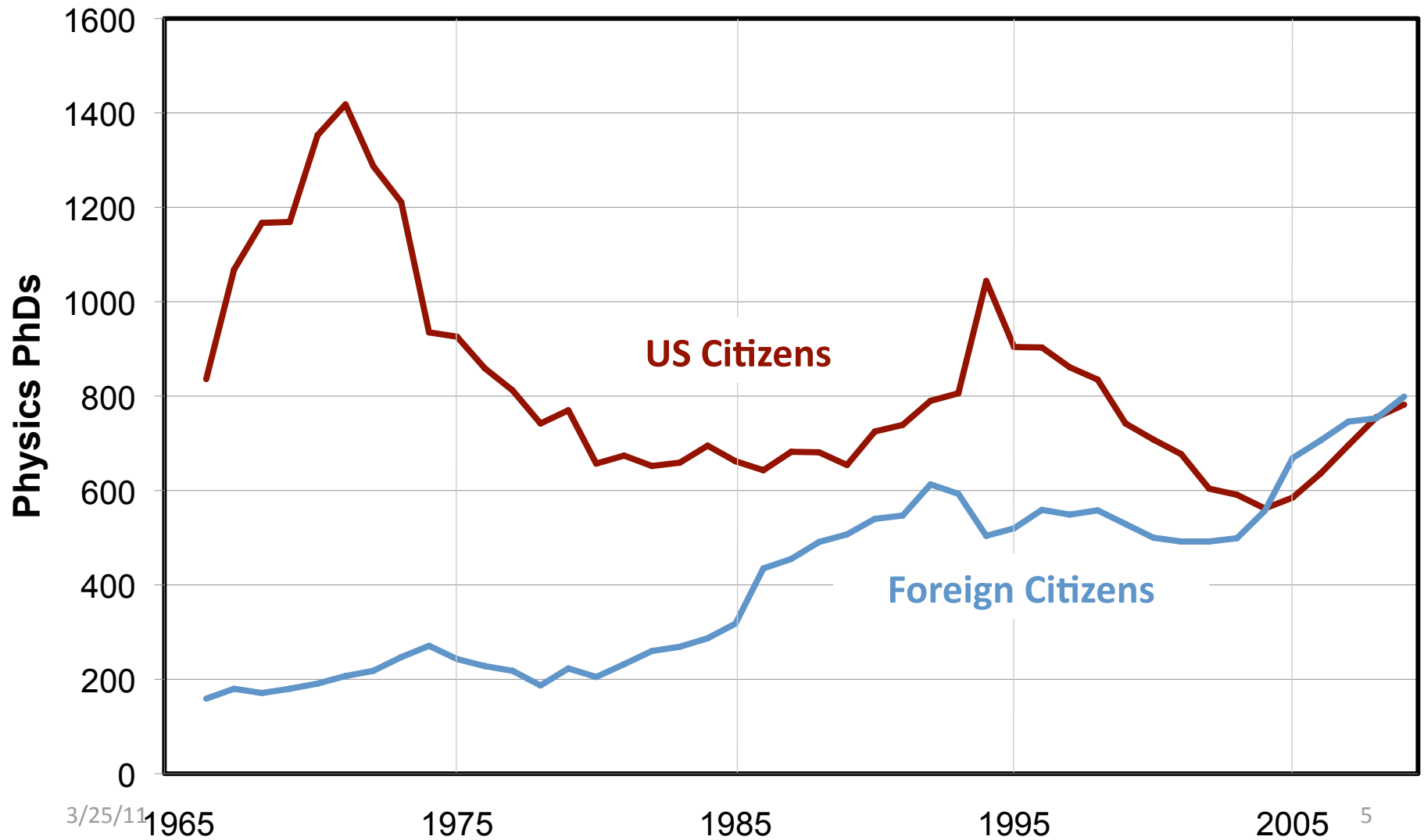


Data of year 2009



www.aip.org/statistics

Physics PhDs Awarded to US and Foreign Citizens



Statistics: Countries of citizenship

Region and countries of citizenship of foreign first year physics and astronomy graduate students.

Type F visas issued in 2010

Continents	2010 %
Asia	69.4
Europe	15.4
Africa	4.6
South America	6.1
North America	3.9
Oceania	0.6

<http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

Region & Countries	2004 %
<u>Asia & Middle East</u>	68
China	33
India	12
South Korea	5
Pakistan	5
Other Asia	8
Middle East	5
<u>Europe</u>	21
Eastern	11
Western	10
<u>Americas</u>	9
Mexico, South and Central America	6
Canada	3
<u>Africa</u>	2
<u>Australia, New Zealand</u>	0

<http://www.aip.org/statistics/> 6

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Student visa: Visa problems

Percent of departments with ... in Fall 2004	Top PhD Extensive	Other PhD Extensive	PhD Intensive	Masters
International students denied entry	27 %	52 %	54 %	25 %
No visa problems	30 %	15 %	38 %	52 %

	Top PhD Extensive	Other PhD Extensive	PhD Intensive	Masters
Denials as a percent of total non-US citizens accepted in Fall 2004	4 %	13 %	21 %	34 %

AIP Statistical Research Center: Physics Students from Abroad

Student visa: Visa validity period and number of allowed entries for different citizenships

Country	Allowed Entries	Validity Period (months)
Iran	one	3
Afghanistan	one	3
North Korea	two	3
Sudan	multiple	6
Iraq	multiple	12
Russia	multiple	12
Armenia	multiple	12
China	multiple	12
Syria	multiple	24
Nigeria	multiple	24
South Africa	multiple	36
Mexico	multiple	48
Saudi Arabia	multiple	60
India	multiple	60
South Korea	multiple	60
Pakistan	multiple	60

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Visa Issues: Denials

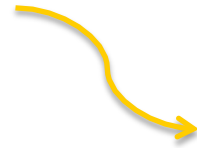
- ✧ It can happen either for the first time applicants or for the returning students.

Reasons:

- Mainly because the officer believes the student is going to live and work in US
 - But sometimes the reason of this thought is not clear
 - It might be because of the political issues between the governments, which can sometimes influence the visa applicants
- ✧ Students can apply for the visa again after the denials

Visa Issues: Administrative Processing

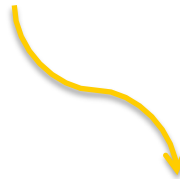
Some visa applications require further administrative processing



The timing is varying based on the situation for each case



Only when the background check is done, students can obtain their visas



It might take weeks or months to receive the student visa

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Impacts: Scholastic Life

Visa delay may cause:

- ✧ Missing a semester or more
- ✧ Losing scholarship
- ✧ Losing even the academic position

Visa issues may lead in:

- ✧ Missing collaboration meetings
- ✧ Missing international conferences
- ✧ Less academic relationships

Impact: Personal Life

- ✧ Can't leave the US even in case of emergency
- ✧ Missing family members and friends
- ✧ Feeling lonely in holidays
- ✧ Feeling depressed

- ✧ Can't plan for life as wish
- ✧ Obtaining a visa consumes too much time
- ✧ Obtaining a visa is costly in some cases
- ✧ Less international academic relationships
yield to fewer job opportunities

Impact: Personal Life

✧ A thought:

✧ Calling it a paradox?

You should show your strong ties to your country when you want to apply for visa

--> you can't easily go back home

--> you decide not to leave the country while you are studying

--> you get disconnected from your home country and get adapted with the culture and the life style of US

--> you don't want to go back when you finished your studies

--> you find a job and you stay!

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Examples: Iranian Student

An examples of an Iranian Physics Graduate Student at the department of physics at Louisiana State University:

- ✧ A physics graduate student got an admission for the fall 2009 from LSU and his visa administrative processing took about 8 months. He deferred his offer for two semesters until he finally could reach the summer 2010 semester. He basically missed one academic year in his life, waiting for the visa. He got his visa only few days before the offer expires.

An examples of the Iranian Physics Graduate Students at the department of physics at Washington University in St. Louis:

- ✧ A young couple, both physics students missed fall 2008 semester because of the visa issues. Later, when their advisor went to Europe for his one-year sabbatical, he was encouraging them to join him with a complete financial support. But, they declined this journey, because of their previously bad experience.

Examples: Chinese Student

“Well, I knew it would probably take me two months to get a new visa for reentering the U.S. before I came back, but still I took the chance. And I’m right now stuck in China since my visa is still in Washington under administrative processing. The new semester has already started. I had to contact the teacher saying I couldn’t be back on time, asking friends to cover the labs I teach... it was a mess. And right now I don’t know when my visa can receive its administrative, or should I say, whether it would ever receive administrative. If it takes too long, I think maybe I have to contact the department to see if I can defer my study for a semester without losing my assistantship. If I can come back to U.S. this time, I would prefer to never leave this land before I finish my Ph.D. But my grandparents, they are already in their late seventies. If anything happens to them while I’m here, what am I to do? If I go back, probably I would never be able to come back to finish my study, and I’d probably regret it forever. If I stay, maybe I won’t even be able to see them one last time, and I would never forgive myself for that. Let me just hope that nothing would happen before I got my degree and I could get my visa as soon as possible...”

-- Gaomin Wang, Physics Graduate Student, Louisiana State University

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Summary

- ✧ About 40% of physics graduate students are international students
- ✧ Some of the citizenships can only get single entry visa and short validity period
- ✧ Visa denials and long administrative processing negatively affect scholastic and personal life of an international graduate physics student
- ✧ Finding ways to resolve these visa issues might positively affect the progress of an international physics graduate student

Thanks for your attention