

Graduate Enrollment Without Borders: Overcoming International Challenges to Attract the World's Best Students

What application and enrollment trends will higher education institutions face in the coming years? During a recent webinar, Liaison sought the answer to this question in data published by [the Council of Graduate Schools \(CGS\)](#) and not-yet-published data from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

We were inspired by some positive trends – for instance, first-time enrollments of Master's and Doctoral candidates have remained steady, despite their decreasing application numbers. Although the number of international students from certain countries has declined in recent years, there have been upticks in the numbers of students from elsewhere in the world. For example, the numbers of both final applications and first-time enrollments of students from Mexico, Japan and Sub-Saharan Africa all increased between Fall 2018 and Fall 2019. Also, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. science programs increased again in 2018, after a modest decline the previous year.

Still, there's cause for concern if we rely on yesterday's strategies to meet tomorrow's graduate recruitment and enrollment goals.

Needless to say, the global higher education landscape has irrevocably changed in an incredibly short period of time. There are still more questions than answers at this point, but here's what we do know:

- ➔ **Given the pre-pandemic enrollment decline, relying on traditional recruitment and engagement strategies will no longer ensure a steady stream of domestic or international graduate enrollees – or the revenue they generate.** It's now more important than ever to have unfettered access to your peers and the strategies they're using to overcome the challenges associated with recruiting and enrolling the best students.
- ➔ **That, in turn, means that your institution needs to do more with less.** By some estimates, COVID-19 will cause a \$4.5 billion hit to international education. Of course, many graduate fields were already experiencing a troublesome decline in enrollment for several years prior to COVID-19. You almost certainly have more challenges to address these days, and no corresponding increase in resources to tackle them all.
- ➔ **At the very least, you must do more than maintain the size of your traditional applicant pool.** You need to get creative about creating a bigger – and better – applicant pipeline, and one proven way to do so is by joining the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) Community at no cost to your institution.

HOW WILL JOINING THE CAS COMMUNITY HELP YOUR INSTITUTION?

In addition to helping domestic and international applicants quickly find and apply to multiple best-fit schools through a single platform, a CAS provides participating institutions with visual, analytical insights into real-time application and enrollment trends that help you actively target best-fit students. A CAS streamlines admissions processes, encourages application completion and enables meaningful communications with applicants from their first inquiry.

Joining a CAS delivers a variety of important benefits to institutions determined to boost international enrollment. For example, joining a CAS will offer access to your peers at other colleges and universities and, by extension, you'll discover their "lessons learned" and best practices for navigating the new realities of international recruitment. It will allow you to do more with less by eliminating time-consuming administrative tasks and freeing up more resources to identify and interact with the exact students you want to attract.

And joining a CAS instantly expands your applicant pool by putting your program on a global platform available and accessible to students from countries that are currently underrepresented on your campus.



One of the things that really attracted me to CAS was the ability to build communities within and across disciplines at the graduate level. The more we work together, the stronger we're going to be as a community of educators and institutions. In the long run, that will only help the students we serve in their education and career preparation."

DAVID T. POOLE
Director of Admission



GAIN ACCESS TO YOUR PEERS.

Ask any of the 31,000 programs that are members of Liaison's CAS Community and they'll tell you: The global challenges of 2020 have proven that you can rely on us to provide uninterrupted admissions services, to streamline your processes and to fill your pipeline with the best students in the world. But more than that, participating in a CAS gives you access to invaluable industry insights.

When you partner with Liaison, you partner with your peers, learning how they overcome obstacles similar to those you face and how they've achieved the success you hope to achieve. The CAS Community shares best practices through:

- ➔ Webinars like [Graduate Enrollment Without Borders: Overcoming International Challenges to Attract the World's Best Students](#), the session that inspired this report.
- ➔ Magazines like [The Admissionist](#), [GME: Today & Tomorrow](#) and [Engineering: Today & Tomorrow](#), which explore the art, science and industry of higher ed admissions, graduate management education and engineering education, respectively.
- ➔ Events like the yearly [Liaison User Conference](#), which brings together hundreds of admissions and enrollment leaders for workshops, training sessions and networking opportunities.



Our previous process took literally weeks on end, with people working 80 hours a week to prepare applications for review. With CAS, we didn't have to spend that time processing applications to get everything where it needed to be or sending requests for letters of recommendation out — all those things were handled by the software itself or by Liaison's services team."

MATT CIPRIANO

Former Associate Director of Enrollment
and Education Operations



DO MORE WITH LESS.

CAS combines highly customizable admissions management technology with processing services so you spend less time on manual administrative tasks and more time on what matters: recruiting, engaging and enrolling applicants.

CAS application processing services help you:

- ➔ **Increase productivity.** Reduce administrative effort with no impact on budget by using our team as an extension of your admissions office.
- ➔ **Cultivate early matriculant loyalty.** Reinvest your staff's time and attention on recruiting, admitting and nurturing best-fit students rather than completing manual administrative tasks.
- ➔ **Gain a competitive advantage.** Differentiate your institution with a streamlined application and substantially less time to decision.
- ➔ **Digitize, organize, centralize and secure your documents.** Protect the integrity of your application assets and save money and space by going paperless.



Students we had not tapped into were logging on, seeing our programs and clicking on us. With CAS, we connected with new students. As of this fall, we have documented an increase of 7.5% in full-time enrollments as compared to two years ago."

ROBBIE MELTON, PH.D.

Transitional Dean



EXPAND YOUR APPLICANT POOL.

CAS increases your programs' exposure, offers outsourced marketing expertise and visualizes trends to expand your applicant pool. Through CAS, you gain access to more comprehensive data about the international applicants you hope to attract. And joining a CAS means students from every corner of the world will be able to discover your program and submit an application, even if they had never previously considered doing so.

CAS marketing services will help you:

- ➔ **Communicate your brand.** Reinforce your institutional brand with your own images and descriptions of your specific programs.
- ➔ **Expand your reach.** Students come to CAS to explore their options. Get the attention of students who hadn't previously considered your institution by including it in the central directory of programs like yours.
- ➔ **Drive students to apply.** Target inquiries or a purchased list of prospects and drive them to start their applications, and remind in-progress applicants to complete their applications.
- ➔ **Make data-driven decisions about your messaging.** Use your own data and data pooled from CAS member schools and programs to benchmark against your peers. See how well your message is being received and create more informed plans for improving outreach and yield.

GRADUATE ENROLLMENT WITHOUT BORDERS, MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE CAS COMMUNITY

Through partnerships with over 30 professional associations, Liaison has launched over 40 CASs, including BusinessCAS for graduate management education programs, EngineeringCAS for graduate engineering programs and GradCAS for programs where there are no national affinities or professional associations.

BUSINESSCAS
by LIAISON

22% of applicants from the 2018-2019 cycle came from outside of the U.S.

The top 5 countries outside of the U.S. that applicants come from are:



India



China



Saudi
Arabia



Nigeria



Brazil

GRADCAS
by LIAISON endorsed by common app

20% of applicants from the 2018-2019 cycle came from outside of the U.S.

The top 5 countries outside of the U.S. that applicants come from are:



India



Saudi
Arabia



Nigeria



China



Nepal

ENGINEERINGCAS
by LIAISON

82% of applicants from the 2018-2019 cycle came from outside of the U.S.

The top 5 countries outside of the U.S. that applicants come from are:



China



India



Iran



Nigeria



Saudi
Arabia

Unfortunately, the uncertainty and challenges associated with international recruiting are not likely to disappear overnight. On the bright side, there are steps you can take right now to improve your institution's international recruitment efforts, such as joining the CAS Community to participate in a global network of mutually supportive peers, enhance admissions office efficiencies and expand your pipeline to include more international students.

Ready to practice graduate enrollment without borders? Contact me to see how a CAS will help your institution overcome international challenges to attract the world's best students.



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