

Transatlantic Perspectives on Student Mobility

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Introduction

Over the past year, BBC News, Bloomberg News, NBC News, NPR, The Washington Post, Voice of America, and other media outlets have reported on the phenomenon of U.S. students pursuing higher education outside of the United States. In these reports, Germany is frequently mentioned as a preferred destination due to the country's tuition-free public universities, affordable cost of living, and study options in English.¹ Although framed as a recent trend, U.S. students have been studying in Germany for decades while concurrently German students have pursued higher education in the United States, forming a transatlantic flow of students between the two countries.

As a Robert Bosch Fellow and higher education professional, one of the goals of my fellowship was to better understand this mobility. What are current trends in transatlantic mobility? How does each country facilitate the movement of students? What roles do individual institutions and national actors play? How is mobility part of a broader internationalization of higher education? What are future prospects for transatlantic mobility?

This paper aims to organize the above questions in a brief synthesis of the current state of student mobility in Germany and the United States. The synthesis is informed by my professional experience facilitating student mobility and exchange, and by insights from my fellowship work stages at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany's national agency for the internationalization of higher education, and Free University Berlin, a leading public research university and German "University of Excellence." Through this paper, I hope to underscore the importance of this aspect of U.S.-German relations and contribute in a small way to the greater discourse on the transatlantic relationship.

Mobility and the Internationalization of Higher Education

Higher education today is a global enterprise. Higher education institutions (HEIs), often with the support of governments and other institutional actors, are promoting cross-border research cooperation, facilitating student and staff mobility, and the internationalization of postsecondary curriculum.

¹ Andy Eckhart and Carlo Angerer, "Why American Students Are Flocking to Germany—and Staying," *NBC News*, February 17, 2016, <http://www.nbcnews.com/feature/college-game-plan/why-american-students-are-flocking-germany-staying-n515961>; Sarah Grant, "Why more students are leaving the U.S. for college," *Bloomberg News*, March 22, 2016, <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/why-more-students-leaving-u-140947054.html>; Michael Lipin, "More Americans Study in Germany to Avoid College Debt," *Voice of America*, November 8, 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/content/americans-study-in-germany-to-avoid-college-debt/3044768.html>; Nelson, Soraya Sarhaddi, "For Americans Seeking Affordable Degrees, German Schools Beckon," *NPR*, June 28, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/06/28/418262031/for-americans-seeking-affordable-degrees-german-schools-beckon>; Rick Noack, "Americans can study in Germany for free, in English. An increasing number are doing it," *Washington Post*, February 20, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/02/20/americans-can-study-in-germany-for-free-in-english-an-increasing-number-are-doing-it/>; and Franz Strasser, "How US students get a university degree for free in Germany," *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-32821678>.

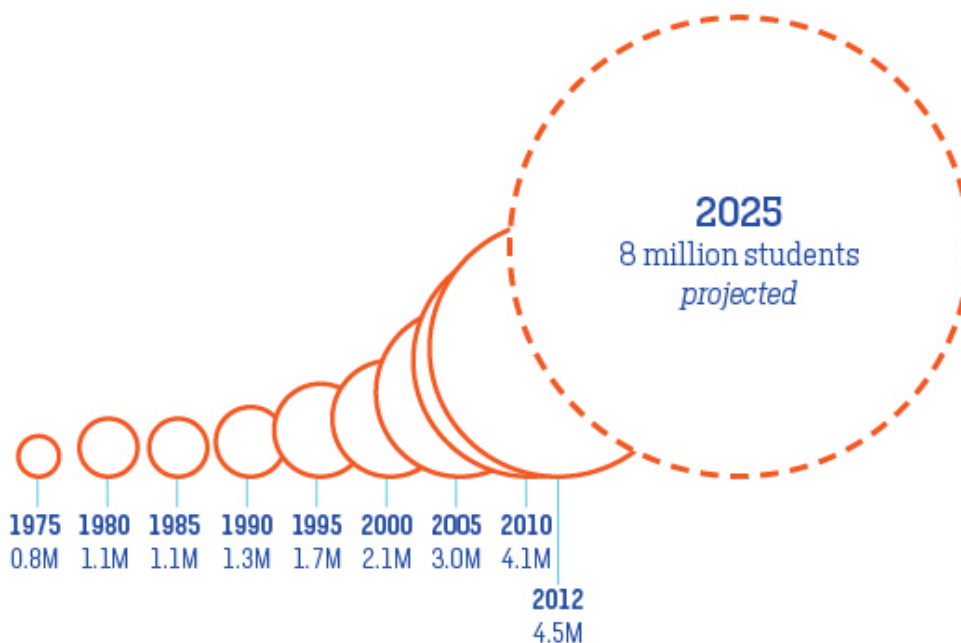
Although these activities have been occurring for years, more recently they have become part of a concept known as “comprehensive internationalization.” The American Council on Education defines this as “a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate international policies, programs, and initiatives, and positions colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected.”²

For many HEIs, comprehensive internationalization is not a goal in itself but rather a means of fulfilling the mission of their institution, missions which have increasingly emphasized the institution’s role in addressing global challenges and preparing students to be global citizens. In this context, student mobility has become a popular—if not primary—vehicle for the internationalization of HEIs with significant economic and educational implications for both sending and receiving countries.

Global Mobility

Each year, millions of students leave their home nation to pursue higher education in another country. According to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, in 2014 over 4.5 million students were enrolled in HEIs outside of their home country. The number of internationally mobile students worldwide has more than quadrupled since 1990 and is expected to exceed 8 million by 2025.³

GROWTH OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Source: OECD Education at a Glance, 2014

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² American Council on Education, *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* (Washington DC: American Council on Education, June 2012), 3.

³ Institute of International Education, *Project Atlas*, <http://www.iie.org/projectatlas> (accessed March 13, 2016).

Of all internationally mobile students, 48% are enrolled in Europe, 21% in North America, and 18% in Asia. 53% of all international students worldwide come from Asia, with China and India the top sending countries.⁴

The global growth in mobility has been driven largely by students from upper-middle economies. Between 2000 and 2012, the number of international students from upper-middle income countries (those with a gross national income per capita between \$4,126 and \$12,745) increased 161% compared to a 29% increase from high-income OECD countries. Growth in student mobility from upper-middle-income countries such as China, Brazil, Mexico, and Turkey is outpacing growth from both low- and high-income countries.⁵

In several high-income, non-OECD countries, government-funded, national scholarship programs have enabled mobility growth.⁶ The King Abdullah Scholarship in Saudi Arabia covers the costs of 90% of Saudi students pursuing degrees abroad. In 2014 the scholarship supported over 207,000 Saudi students at a cost of \$6 billion, about 25% of the country's overall budget.⁷ Brazil's Science Without Borders program aims to send 101,000 undergraduate and graduate students abroad for full and partial degree training by 2015.⁸ The program had a budget of \$918 million in 2015, though a weakening Brazilian economy and subsequent budget cuts have essentially frozen the program for 2016, with support available only for existing recipients and no new scholarships awarded.⁹

While national scholarship programs have facilitated mobility for many students, the majority of internationally mobile students worldwide are self-financed.¹⁰ Self-financed students account for 60% of the growth in the international student population in the United States between 2003/04 and 2013/14. Today, nearly two-thirds of all international students in the United States are self-financed.¹¹

International Students in the United States and Germany

The United States and Germany are two of the most popular destinations for internationally mobile students. According to data from the Institute of International Education, the United States was the top host country worldwide for international students in 2014 with 974,926 students. Germany was the fourth-most popular host country with 301,350, behind only the United States, United Kingdom (493,570), and China (377,054). These figures represent significant increases for the United States and Germany from the previous year (+10% and +6.8%, respectively) and are record highs for inbound mobility to each country.¹²

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Alejandro Ortiz, Li Chang, and Yuanyuan Fang, "International Student Mobility Trends 2015: An Economic Perspective," *World Education News & Reviews*, February 2, 2015, <http://wenr.wes.org/2015/02/international-student-mobility-trends-2015-an-economic-perspective/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Katy Paul, "Saudi tightens rules for scholarships to study abroad," *Reuters*, February 1, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-education-idUSKCN0VA35R>.

⁸ Philip G. Altbach and David Engberg, "Global Student Mobility: The Changing Landscape," *International Higher Education* 77 (Fall 2014), 12.

⁹ "Brazil's Science Without Borders programme facing cuts in 2016," *ICEF Monitor*, September 15, 2015, <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/09/brazils-science-without-borders-programme-facing-cuts-in-2016/>.

¹⁰ Altbach and Engberg, "Global Student Mobility," 11.

¹¹ Ortiz, Chang, and Fang, "International Student Mobility Trends."

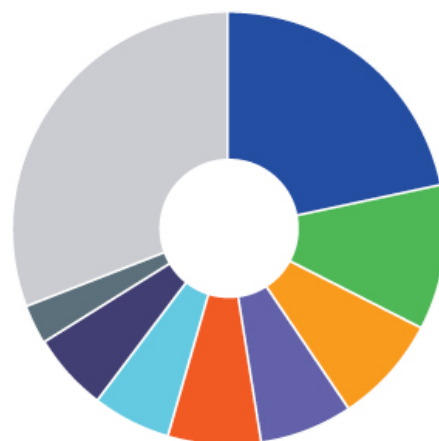
¹² Institute of International Education, *Project Atlas*.

The United States and Germany also have some of the highest shares of international students worldwide (22% and 7%, respectively). While international student numbers in the United States and Germany are at their highest to date, each country’s overall shares have decreased since 2001, when the United States and Germany had 28% and 9% of all international students worldwide. During this period, other nations emerged as hosts of significant numbers of international students, including China, Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong.¹³

HOST DESTINATIONS, 2001 & 2014



2001
2.1 million students



2014
4.5 million students

Source: Project Atlas, 2015

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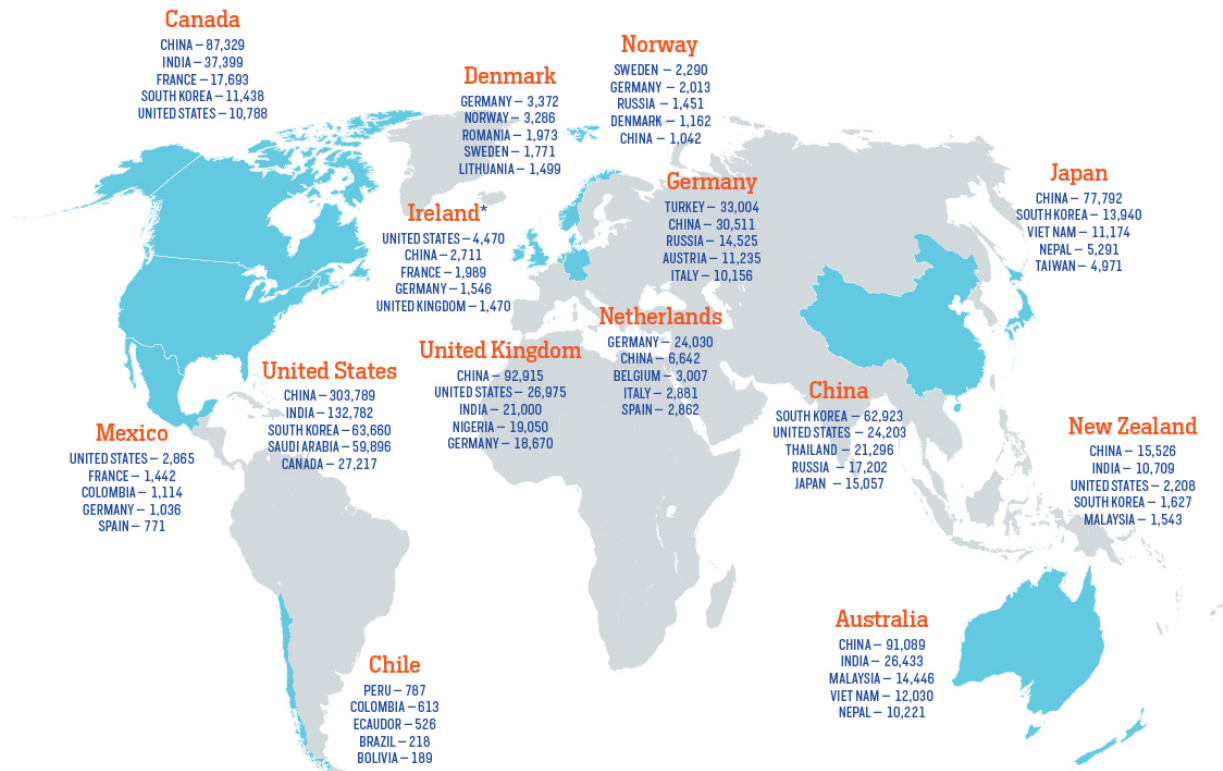


Students from China comprise the largest group of international students in both the United States and Germany. In 2014, there were 303,789 Chinese students in the United States, while Germany hosted 30,511. After China, students from India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Canada make up the four next largest groups in the United States. In Germany, students from Russia, Austria, and Italy comprise the largest groups after China.¹⁴

¹³ Altbach and Engberg, “Global Student Mobility,” 12.

¹⁴ Institute of International Education, *Project Atlas*.

LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY HOST COUNTRY, 2014



*Ireland data represents full-time enrollments only.

Source: Project Atlas, 2015

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Mobility of U.S. and German Students

In addition to inbound mobility, both the United States and Germany are experiencing significant growth in the outbound mobility of their students. Outbound mobility can be characterized as 1) students who make temporary, study-related visits abroad for academic credit towards a degree in their country of origin (“credit mobility”) or 2) students who pursue an entire degree outside of their country of origin (“degree mobility”).¹⁵

¹⁵ Data on U.S. credit mobility is reported annually by the Institute of International Education in its *Open Doors Report on International Education*. The report includes data on U.S. students studying abroad (as well as international students and scholars in the United States) based on reporting from individual U.S. institutions. The Institute of International Education has also published reports on degree mobility of U.S. students based on survey data collected through its *Project Atlas*. In Germany, the primary source for data on credit and degree mobility is *Wissenschaft weltweit*, an annual publication produced by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW). According to the 2015 edition, “there are no official statistics regarding the entirety of all temporary study-related international mobility among German students as yet” and mobility “can currently only be estimated with the help of student and graduate surveys.”

Temporary Visits Abroad

According to the *Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange* from the Institute of International Education, 304,467 U.S. students completed temporary visits abroad for academic credit during the 2013/14 academic year. This figure was an all-time high and an increase of 5.2% over the previous year. Despite this positive trend, only about 10% of all U.S. undergraduates complete such stays abroad by the time they graduate.¹⁶

Compared to their U.S. counterparts, German students make temporary visits abroad at a much higher rate. *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, an annual publication on mobility in Germany, reports that 37% of German students in 2015 completed a study-related visit abroad by the time they graduated, an increase from 32% in 2013. Prior to 2013, growth had been somewhat stagnant with the most significant increase occurring between 1991 and 2000 when the proportion of German students who made temporary stays abroad rose from 20% to 32%.¹⁷

Western Europe is the most popular region for both U.S. and German students making temporary visits abroad. More than 53% of U.S. study abroad students select Western Europe, with 32% alone studying in the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain.¹⁸ Similarly, 59% of German students in temporary visits abroad study in Western Europe, with 33% studying in the United Kingdom, Spain, and France.¹⁹

In terms of duration, students from both countries tend to favor short-term programs over longer durations, with such programs especially popular among students from the United States. In 2013/14, 62% of U.S. students who made a temporary visit abroad did so for two months or less compared to 34% of German students.²⁰

German students who make temporary stays abroad are more likely than U.S. students to choose longer stays. Of those German students who study abroad, 15% make visits lasting between two and four months, 31% complete visits between four and six months, and 20% make visits longer than six months in length. In comparison, 35% of U.S. students study abroad for one to two quarters or one semester, while only 3% go for an academic or calendar year.²¹

U.S. students who make temporary visits abroad are likely to major in STEM Fields (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) (22.6%), Business (19.6%), Social Sciences (18.7%), Foreign Languages and International Studies (7.8%), and Fine or Applied Arts (7.0%).²²

¹⁶ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange*, <http://www.iie.org/opendoors> (accessed March 13, 2016).

¹⁷ Martin Bruder, Simone Burkhart, Barbara Franke, Ulrich Heublein, and Jan Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen* (Bonn: German Academic Exchange Service; Hanover: German Centre for Research on Higher Education Science, 2015), 49, 51.

¹⁸ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report*.

¹⁹ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 56-57.

²⁰ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 56; Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report*.

Degree-Related Stays Abroad

In addition to making temporary, study-related visits abroad, an increasing number of U.S. and German students are pursuing entire degrees outside of their home country. According to the publication *New Frontiers* by the Institute of International Education, 46,571 students from the United States pursued full degrees abroad during the 2011/12 academic year, a 5% increase from the previous year. The majority of those U.S. students were enrolled in an undergraduate degree program (42%) or master's degree program (42%), with the rest pursuing a doctoral degree (16%).²³

In comparison, German students pursue degrees abroad at significantly higher numbers than their U.S. counterparts. According to *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 138,500 German students enrolled in degree programs abroad in 2012, an increase of 2,500 from the previous year. This continues a 20-year period of uninterrupted growth in German students who study overseas with aim of taking a degree.²⁴

In terms of host regions and countries, the top six destinations for U.S. students are the United Kingdom (16,745), Germany (4,057), France (3,300), Australia (2,498), New Zealand (2,467), and China (2,184). Nearly 68% of U.S. students who pursue degrees abroad do so in Anglophone countries, while 25% choose Western European, non-Anglophone countries.²⁵

The majority of Germans who enroll in degree programs abroad also prefer Western Europe. The four most popular host countries for German students seeking a degree abroad are Austria (32,192), Netherlands (25,019), Switzerland (14,352), and the United Kingdom (13,720).²⁶

Regarding field of study, 57% of all U.S. students in degree programs abroad are in the fields of humanities, social sciences, and business and management, while 23% are in the fields of physical sciences, health professions, mathematics and computer science, and engineering. The field of study U.S. students pursue abroad varies based on degree type and destination; nevertheless, at all levels of study the most popular disciplines are humanities and social sciences (26.6% and 20.8%, respectively).²⁷

Most Germans who pursue a degree abroad are enrolled in Economics (22%), Law and Social Sciences (20%), Language and Cultural Studies (14%), Mathematics and Natural Sciences (10%), Medicine and Health Sciences (10%), and Engineering (9%). Like U.S. students, the field of study for German students varies by destination and degree type.²⁸

²³ Raisa Belyavina, Jing Li, and Rajika Bhandari, *New Frontiers: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad* (New York: Institute of International Education, May 2013), 8, <http://www.iie.org/~media/Files/Corporate/Publications/New-Frontiers-US-Students-Pursuing-Degrees-Abroad.pdf>.

²⁴ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 43.

²⁵ Belyavina, Li, and Bhandari, *New Frontiers*, 7.

²⁶ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 43.

²⁷ Belyavina, Li, and Bhandari, *New Frontiers*, 10.

²⁸ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 47.

The State of Transatlantic Mobility

U.S. Students in Germany

The *Open Doors Report* states that 10,377 U.S. students had made temporary study visits to Germany during the 2013/14 academic year. An all-time high, this figure represents an 8.7% increase from the previous year and the twelfth straight year of uninterrupted growth. The number of U.S. students studying in Germany has more than doubled since 2001/02.²⁹

U.S. Study Abroad Students Going to Germany, 2015

Year	# of Students	% Change from Previous Year
2013/14	10,377	+8.7%
2012/13	9,544	+1.9%
2011/12	9,370	+3.9%
2010/11	9,018	+5.5%
2009/10	8,551	+2.7%
2008/09	8,330	+0.8%
2007/08	8,264	+12.4%
2006/07	7,355	+7.2%
2005/06	6,858	+4.6%
2004/05	6,559	+9.6%
2003/04	5,985	+7.1%
2002/03	5,587	+15.1%
2001/02	4,856	-5.1%
2000/01	5,116	+7.8%
1999/00	4,744	+4.6%
1998/99	4,534	+9.4%
1997/98	4,146	Not available

Source: *Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange*

Among U.S. students making temporary visits abroad, Germany is the sixth-most popular destination. The United Kingdom (38,250), Italy (31,166), Spain (26,949), France (17,597), and China (13,763) are the top five host countries.³⁰

In addition to temporary visits, Germany is also a popular destination for U.S. students pursuing entire degrees abroad. According to *New Frontiers*, 4,057 U.S. students enrolled in degree programs in Germany in 2011/12, making Germany the second-most popular country among U.S. students. The United Kingdom was the most popular foreign destination overall for U.S. students pursuing degree study, with 16,745 students.³¹

²⁹ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Belyavina, Li, and Bhandari, *New Frontiers*, 7.

U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad, by Country and Level of Study, 2011/12

Country	Undergraduate		Master's		Doctoral		Total
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
United Kingdom	6,085	36.3%	6,750	40.3%	3,910	23.4%	16,745
Germany	853	21.0%	2,873	70.8%	331	8.2%	4,057
France	1,967	59.6%	1,146	34.7%	187	5.7%	3,300
Australia	1,003	40.2%	1,114	44.6%	381	15.3%	2,498
New Zealand	2,089	84.7%	145	5.9%	233	9.4%	2,467
China	1,028	47.1%	917	42.0%	239	10.9%	2,184
Ireland	488	49.2%	294	29.7%	209	21.1%	991
Spain	497	52.3%	454	47.7%	0	0.0%	951
Netherlands	246	43.4%	321	56.6%	0	0.0%	567
Japan	222	44.0%	196	38.8%	87	17.2%	505
Malaysia	54	54.0%	30	30.0%	16	16.0%	100
Total	14,532	42.3%	14,240	41.4%	5,593	16.3%	34,365

Source: *New Frontiers: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad*

Of those U.S. students enrolled in degree programs in Germany, 21% were pursuing an undergraduate degree (853), 70.8% a master's degree (2,873), and 8.2% a doctoral degree (331). Among the fourteen countries surveyed by *New Frontiers*, Germany had the highest percentage of U.S. students (70.8%) pursuing master's degrees.³²

Wissenschaft weltoffen reports similar numbers of U.S. students pursuing degrees in Germany. 4,855 U.S. students were studying in Germany in 2014 and comprised 1.6% of all foreign students in the country. 88.5% of those U.S. students (4,298) were *Bildungsausländer*—foreign nationals (or stateless students) who obtained their higher education entrance qualification at a school outside of Germany—and 11.5% (557) were *Bildungsinländer*—foreign nationals who obtained their qualification within Germany.³³

The 4,298 students ranked the United States the 16th most important country of origin out of all *Bildungsausländer* in Germany in 2014. The number of *Bildungsausländer* from the United States increased from 2,810 in 2008 to 4,298 in 2014, and has increased 147% since 1999.³⁴

Out of all the German federal states, Berlin had the highest number (1,103) as well as highest share (5%) of *Bildungsausländer* students from the United States in 2014. Students from the United States were the third largest group of *Bildungsausländer* students in Berlin, after China and Russia.³⁵

The most popular field of study for U.S. undergraduate students in Germany is business and management, while humanities is the most popular field for U.S. students at both the master's and doctoral level.³⁶

³² Ibid.

³³ *Wissenschaft weltoffen* data tables, <http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de> (accessed March 31, 2016).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

German Students in the United States

According to the *Open Doors Report*, 10,193 German students studied in the United States during the 2014/15 academic year.³⁷ With this total, Germany was the fourteenth-most important sender of international students to the United States. Of the German students who enrolled in degree programs in the United States, 31% are undergraduates, 27.7% graduate students, 34.8% other status, and 6.5% engaged in Optional Practical Training.³⁸

In contrast to U.S. students studying in Germany—whose numbers have increased each year since 2001/02—the number of German students in the United States has fluctuated more widely.³⁹ The *Open Doors Report* describes it as follows:

German students peaked in 2000/01 with more than 10,000 students in the U.S., before [sliding] downward with some fluctuations over [the] next decade. The number of students from Germany reached a new peak last year, surpassing a total of more than 10,000 students in the U.S. for the first time since 2000.⁴⁰

Students from Germany in the United States, 2015

Year	# of Students	% Change from Previous Year
2014/15	10,193	+0.3%
2013/14	10,160	+3.5%
2012/13	9,819	+5.0%
2011/12	9,347	-1.2%
2010/11	9,458	-0.9%
2009/10	9,548	-1.4%
2008/09	9,679	+8.7%
2007/08	8,907	+2.9%
2006/07	8,656	-2.0%
2005/06	8,829	+2.2%
2004/05	8,640	-1.2%
2003/04	8,745	-6.0%
2002/03	9,302	-3.2%
2001/02	9,613	-5.1%
2000/01	10,128	+3.3%
1999/00	9,800	+2.4%
1998/99	9,568	+2.8%
1997/98	9,309	+3.5%

Source: *Open Doors Report on International Education*

³⁷ The Institute of International Education counts only students studying at an institution of higher education in the United States on a temporary visa that allows for academic coursework. Students at institutions other than accredited colleges and universities are not counted (i.e. secondary schools or vocational schools). Individuals who have permanent residency or a separate work visa are not counted.

³⁸ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report*.

³⁹ The ability to make direct comparisons between U.S. and German students using the *Open Doors Report* is limited, as the report includes German students making temporary visits as well as degree-related stays in the United States, but captures only U.S. students making temporary stays abroad in Germany (and not U.S. students pursuing degrees).

⁴⁰ Institute of International Education, *Open Doors Report*.

Wissenschaft weltoffen shows a pattern of German mobility similar to *Open Doors*. While data is not available on the numbers of German students making temporary visits in the United States, 9,819 German students pursued degrees in the United States in 2012. The United States hosts 7.1% of all German pursuing a degree abroad, making it the fifth-most popular destination behind Austria (23.2%), the Netherlands (18.1%), Switzerland (10.4%), and the United Kingdom (9.9%).⁴¹

Factors Shaping Transatlantic Mobility

A wide variety of factors shape student mobility between the United States and Germany. These include structural factors such as state economy, institutional funding, immigration policy, degree offerings, and language of instruction, as well as non-structural elements such as student motivations, personal attitudes and individual concerns. While all of these issues cannot be discussed completely within the scope of this paper, the following are four factors that have particular significance to mobility within and between the United States and Germany.

Masters Programs

One of the most recent developments in transatlantic student mobility has been international student enrollment in master's programs. In the United States, master's programs are a key point of entry for international students. 77% of first-time international graduate students in the United States were enrolled in master's and certificate programs in fall 2015. Out of this group, graduate students from China and India each accounted for 36% of total international first-time graduate enrollment.⁴²

Master's programs are also an important avenue for mobility to Germany. Out of all first-year international students in 2013 planning to graduate from a German HEI, 42% were enrolled in a master's program. From 2008 to 2013, the number of first-year *Bildungsausländer* aiming to obtain a master's degree in Germany has more than doubled, from 8,793 to 21,384. During this same period, the overall number of *Bildungsausländer* in a master's program more than tripled from 20,783 to 66,647.⁴³

Nearly half of all *Bildungsausländer* students in German master's programs come from Asia, with 40% originating from South and Southeast Asia. China (17.8%) and India (10.5%) are the top two senders of students to Germany, while the United States ranks twelfth (2.0%) among sending countries. Engineering is the most popular field of study among international master's students in Germany.⁴⁴

Although the overall number of U.S. students in German master's programs is relatively low compared to other sending countries, master's programs are a key component of transatlantic student mobility. 70% of all U.S. students pursuing a degree in Germany are enrolled in master's programs, giving Germany the highest percentage of U.S. students pursuing master's degrees among all host countries. This figure outpaces the overall

⁴¹ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 43.

⁴² Hironao Okahana and Jeff Allum, *International graduate applications and enrollment: Fall 2015* (Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools, December 2015), 10-11.

⁴³ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 130.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 137-138.

percentage of U.S. students who choose master's study when pursuing degrees abroad (42%).⁴⁵

While the reasons for the high percentage of U.S. students pursuing master's study in Germany are not extensively documented, a survey by the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) suggests that country, study program, and career are the main reasons why international students pursue master's study in Germany:

The majority of *Bildungsausländer* on a master's programme in Germany expect to have better career opportunities. Equally important are the good reputation of German higher education institutions and the better student conditions as compared to their home countries....the majority of international master's students cite the high level of technological development in Germany. Also significant is interest in the German language and in Germany overall. Many international students also cite financial reasons as playing a part in their decision to study in Germany.⁴⁶

It is unclear to what extent the DSW survey captures U.S. student motivations for pursuing master's study in Germany. Nevertheless, many German HEIs consider U.S. students an important segment of master's program enrollment. Individual HEIs as well as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)—Germany's national agency for internationalizing higher education—are actively promoting German master's programs and developing recruitment strategies for prospective U.S. students.

Study Options in English

Another factor in advancing transatlantic mobility has been the proliferation of study options in English. In Germany and other non-English-speaking European countries, English has become a common language of instruction at the master's level. Today, more than half (57%) of German HEIs offer master's programs taught in English.⁴⁷ As of November 2014, there were 867 master's programs taught in a foreign language in Germany, with 848 in English and the other 19 in Spanish, Italian, French or Dutch.⁴⁸

The ability to study in English allows U.S. students greater access to studies abroad, as many students lack proficiency to study entirely in another language. This is particularly relevant for transatlantic mobility given recent U.S. enrollment trends in German language.

In its publication *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education*, the Modern Language Association reports 86,700 enrollments in German language courses in U.S. institutions of higher education in 2013. Although German is the fourth most-commonly studied language in the United States (after Spanish, French, and American Sign Language), the number of German language enrollments has decreased 9.3% from 2009 and is at its lowest total of the past two decades.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Belyavina, Li, and Bhandari, *New Frontiers*, 8.

⁴⁶ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 134.

⁴⁷ Bernhard Streitweiser, Jennifer Olson, Simone Burkhart, and Niels Klabunde, "Coordinated German Internationalization: Broadening Perspectives," *International Higher Education* 83 (Special Issue 2015), 24.

⁴⁸ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 141.

⁴⁹ David Goldberg, Dennis Looney, and Natalia Lusin, *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education* (New York: Modern Language Association, February 2015), 2, www.mla.org/content/download/31180/1452509/2013_enrollment_survey.pdf.

German Language Enrollments In U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

2013	2009	2006	2002	1998	1995	1990
86,700	95,628	94,147	91,100	89,013	96,263	133,594

Source: Modern Language Association, *Language Enrollment Database*.⁵⁰

Despite this decline in enrollment, a record number of U.S. students are studying abroad in Germany (more than 10,000 during the 2014/15 academic year). The reason for this growth amidst a decline in German language enrollments is unknown, though a possible explanation is that more U.S. students are pursuing study options that do not require language proficiency, such as short-term visits or master's programs in English.

Revenue and Tuition

Two factors that impact contemporary student mobility—transatlantic as well as global—are revenue and tuition. International students in the United States have become an important source of revenue for U.S. HEIs because of the additional tuition and fees from their enrollment. In 2013/14, international students contributed almost \$20 billion in tuition and fees to U.S. HEIs, a 72% increase from \$11 billion in 2007/08. International student revenue outpaced U.S. funding support, which grew from more than \$6 billion in 2007/08 to nearly \$10 billion in 2013/14, an increase of 49%. California, New York, and Texas—the three most popular U.S. states for international students—received a total net income of \$4 billion, \$3.3 billion, and nearly \$1.5 billion, respectively, in 2013/14, averaging \$31,000 per international student.⁵¹

The increase in revenue from international students has coincided with a nationwide decrease in U.S. higher education spending since the 2008 financial crisis. In the United States, state spending on higher education is down an average of 20% from 2007/08, with 47 of 50 states spending less per student in the 2014/15 academic year than they did at the beginning of the crisis.⁵² U.S. HEIs have cut budgets, raised tuition and fees, and placed a greater emphasis on revenue generating activities such as summer sessions, executive training, continuing education, and international and non-resident enrollment.

Against this backdrop, a large international recruitment enterprise has intensified student mobility to the United States, particularly from China, Korea, India, and other Asian countries. Individual institutions have developed marketing and admissions schemes to recruit international students, while higher education consortiums and state-sponsored programs engage students who wish to study in the United States. Professional organizations, study fairs, recruitment agents, consultants, enrollment management services, preparation programs, and other public and private actors also contribute to this enterprise.⁵³

⁵⁰ Modern Language Association, *Language Enrollment Database, 1958-2013*, <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/Surveys-Reports-and-Other-Documents/Teaching-Enrollments-and-Programs/Language-Enrollment-Database-1958-2013> (accessed May 31, 2016).

⁵¹ Ortiz, Chang, and Fang, "International Student Mobility Trends."

⁵² Michael Mitchell and Michael Leachman, *Years of Cuts Threaten to Put College Out of Reach for More Students* (Washington DC: Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, May 13, 2015), 1, <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/5-13-15sfp.pdf>.

⁵³ The recruitment of international students to the United States has not been without controversy. A prevailing critique is that international students, especially those from China and other Asian countries, are not sufficiently prepared—linguistically, academically, or socially—for study in the United States, resulting in a lack of cultural integration on campus and degradation of the academic quality of host

Although German students are also recruited for study in the United States, the prospect of attracting fee-paying students from Germany is smaller given the presence of tuition-free higher education and comparable study options in Germany.⁵⁴ Cost does appear to be a factor in German student mobility, as seen in the United Kingdom when a tripling of U.K. tuition fees in 2012/13 was followed by a 9% decrease in the number of German degree students there.⁵⁵

Costs such as tuition and fees can also have a significant impact on the mobility of U.S. students. Concerns over cost can discourage U.S. students from studying abroad and are a serious barrier to student mobility. In its 2015 *State of the Field Survey*, the Forum on Education Abroad reports that rising costs of participation ranked among the greatest challenges to increasing the number of U.S. students participating in education abroad.⁵⁶

These concerns are part of a greater national conversation about the affordability of U.S. higher education and the amount of debt students are accumulating. In its publication *Taking Action: Higher Education and Student Debt*, the U.S. White House Council of Economic Advisers and Domestic Policy Council state:

Over the past three decades, the average tuition at a public four-year college has more than tripled, while a typical family's income has barely budged. Today, 71 percent of those earning a bachelor's degree graduate with debt, which averages \$29,400.⁵⁷

In this environment of cost and debt, Germany's tuition-free higher education seems especially attractive to U.S. students. It also distinguishes Germany from neighboring European states, many of which are introducing tuition systems or increasing tuition fees for international students.⁵⁸ The prospect of tuition-free study would explain the increase in U.S. student mobility to Germany; however, further analysis is necessary to determine any correlation between Germany's tuition policy and transatlantic mobility trends.

HEIs. There are also concerns about the financial risks in having such a large percentage of students from Asia should an economic downturn in Asian markets occur. Recruitment practices have also been under scrutiny, with some foreign agents accused of unethical practices, for example, enabling fraudulent applications or making unrealistic admissions claims to prospective students. Finally, U.S. HEIs are also facing accusations that they favor admission of international students over domestic students because international students typically pay higher tuition fees compared to domestic students.

⁵⁴ Students—both German and international—who pursue degree study in German public HEIs pay no tuition but typically pay a one-time enrollment fee and an administrative fee each semester.

⁵⁵ Bruder, Burkhart, Franke, Heublein, and Kercher, *Wissenschaft weltoffen*, 43.

⁵⁶ Forum on Education Abroad, *State of the Field Survey Report* (Carlisle: Forum on Education Abroad, 2015), 7, <https://forumea.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ForumEA-2015-State-of-the-Field-Survey-Report.pdf>.

⁵⁷ The Domestic Policy Council and The Council of Economic Advisers, *Higher Education and Student Debt* (Washington DC: The White House, June 2014), 3, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/student_debt_report_final.pdf.

⁵⁸ It is important to note that German higher education has not always been tuition free. A 2005 court ruling in Germany allowed the *Bundesländer* (state governments) that control and finance higher education to start charging tuition fees. A public backlash eventually led those *Bundesländer* which had instituted tuition fees to repeal them.

Tuition-free higher education in Germany is possible due to the country's long-standing belief in the public funding of higher education.⁵⁹ The majority of HEIs in Germany are public institutions and receive their budget from the responsible ministry of the *Bundesland* (German federal state) in which they reside. It is estimated that 80% of German HEIs' overall budgetary needs are covered by the *Bundesländer*.⁶⁰

With this state support and policy of tuition-free higher education for both German and international degree students, there is less motivation for German HEIs to increase international enrollment for solely financial reasons because international students are not considered a revenue stream in the German model.⁶¹

Institutional and National Priorities

Among the many factors shaping transatlantic mobility, institutional and national priorities have perhaps the greatest impact. While Germany and the United States continue to be longstanding partners in higher education, many U.S. HEIs have focused their institutional priorities and strategy towards China, India, Korea, and other Asian countries to capitalize on emerging markets and opportunities.⁶² This includes expanding institutional cooperation with Asian HEIs in research collaboration, establishing joint degree programs, and enabling staff and student mobility.

For some U.S. HEIs, inbound student mobility that results in revenue generation has gained greater priority over non-revenue generating activities such as reciprocal student exchanges. Some German HEIs have reported that their U.S. university partners have curtailed or even eliminated reciprocal exchange activities because of budget constraints. In other instances, U.S. HEIs have concentrated their mobility activities on recruiting international students to fee-based, non-degree programs.

In addition to inbound mobility, institutional and national priorities are also shaping outbound mobility of U.S. students. While Western Europe continues to be the most popular study destination for students from the United States, recent U.S. national schemes for outbound mobility have emphasized study in Asia and other non-Western European countries. For example, the Gilman International Scholarship encourages Pell Grant recipients to study in destinations other than Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, while the Freeman Awards for Study in Asia, 100,000 Strong China, and 100,00 Strong in the Americas promote study and exchange to Asia, China, and the Americas, respectively.

⁵⁹ Ulrich Teichler, "Ideas of Student Mobility in Germany," *International Higher Education*, No. 67, Spring 2012: 5.

⁶⁰ Jan Beckendorf, "How Germany managed to abolish university tuition fees," *The Conversation*, October 13, 2014, <http://theconversation.com/how-germany-managed-to-abolish-university-tuition-fees-32529>.

⁶¹ There is a financial aspect to international student enrollment, as these students are included in total enrollment counts for the purposes of German HEI budgets. Additionally, international students do pay tuition and fees to some specialized, typically non-degree programs such as international summer schools and study abroad programs. These programs are typically affiliated with a German HEI but operate as a separate entity with the ability to charge fees.

⁶² Beth McMurtrie, "Is Europe Passé?," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 29, 2013, <http://chronicle.com/article/Is-Europe-Pass-/140589/>.

The purpose of these schemes is meant to diversify the study destinations of U.S. students and does not necessarily signal a movement away from the transatlantic relationship. However, recent events involving transatlantic exchange programs suggest shifting national priorities in student mobility.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of State decided to cut 50% of its funding for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX), a bilateral exchange program that supports some 700 German and American high school students and young professionals to visit each other's countries every year. The cuts would have reduced the United States' funding from \$4 million to \$2 million for the 2015/16 program year.⁶³ In testimony before several Congressional committee regarding the Department of State budget request for 2016, Secretary of State John Kerry explained that "State Department has to meet other high priority exchanges throughout recent conflict zones in Europe," citing Ukraine as an example.⁶⁴

Following the announcement of the CBYX funding cut, a transatlantic coalition of program alumni, members of Congress and the German Bundestag, and others rallied against this decision, with the German government even offering to fund the \$2 million gap. In summer 2015, the cut was reversed and U.S. funding of CBYX was restored to the full \$4 million.⁶⁵

Although CBYX is a single case and one that resulted in funding being restored to previous levels, there are other instances where U.S. funding of transatlantic mobility has been more turbulent (e.g. Fulbright Program), suggesting a greater uncertainty over funding for international mobility, not just transatlantic. Even for those programs with stable funding allocations, there are questions whether those funding levels are indeed sufficient. The American Council on Education notes that for the 2015 fiscal year, "the State Department's funding for the educational and cultural exchange programs accounted for a very small proportion of the Department's overall budget—just under 4.5 percent."⁶⁶

In contrast to the United States, mobility is a articulated national priority for Germany and the European Union. The most prominent example is the European Union's Erasmus+ program which has a budget of 14.7 billion Euro and aims to provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience, and volunteer abroad for the period 2014–20.⁶⁷ In Germany, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) funds more than 75,000 Germans and 51,000 foreigners for international mobility through funding provided by the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Federal Foreign Office) and *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* (Federal Ministry of Education and Research).⁶⁸

⁶³ Michael Knigge, "Transatlantic push to save key German-American youth exchange," *Deutsche Welle*, February 25, 2015, <http://www.dw.com/en/transatlantic-push-to-save-key-german-american-youth-exchange/a-18280893>.

⁶⁴ Layth Yousif, "Kerry testifies on FY16 budget request, responds to CBYX funding cuts," *Alliance for International Exchange*, February 26, 2015, <http://www.alliance-exchange.org/policy-monitor/02/26/2015/kerry-testifies-fy16-budget-request-responds-cbyx-funding-cuts>.

⁶⁵ Save CBYX, <http://savecbyx.org> (accessed May 31, 2016).

⁶⁶ Robin Matross Helms, *Internationalizing U.S. Higher Education: Current Policies, Future Directions* (Washington DC: American Council on Education—Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, 2015), 80.

⁶⁷ Altbach and Engberg, "Global Student Mobility," 12.

⁶⁸ German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), *Annual Report, 2015*, <https://www.daad.de/medien/daad-jahresbericht-2015-en.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2016).

Mobility as a national priority is also evident in the targets established by Germany and the European Union. As part of their strategy for internationalization of German higher education, German federal and state governments aim to expand enrollment of international students to 350,000 by 2020.⁶⁹ Regarding outbound mobility, Germany seeks to have at least 50% of German students complete a temporary, study-related visit abroad by the time they graduate, while a European Union target aims to have at least 20% of all European students engage in a temporary visit abroad. With 37% of German students currently pursuing credit mobility, Germany has yet to achieve its national goal but has already surpassed the European Union target.⁷⁰

Unlike Germany, the United States does not have any national mobility targets set by government entities. Rather, mobility goals—both inbound and outbound—are determined primarily by U.S. HEIs and tend to reflect institutions' individual priorities. The best approximate of a national target for outbound mobility is the current Generation Study Abroad campaign. Launched in 2014 by the Institute of International Education, Generation Study Abroad aims to double the number of U.S. students studying abroad for credit mobility to 600,000 students by 2020.

The campaign's platform involves recruiting individual U.S. and international institutions to join as Commitment Partners and pledge to increase study abroad participation. Each individual institution determines the manner in which they contribute to this goal while the Institute of International Education provides stewardship of the campaign. Presently, more than 500 institutions and organizations have joined as partners, including 351 U.S. universities and colleges and five German HEIs.⁷¹

Based on the pledges of existing U.S. higher education partners, the Institute of International Education estimates that a total of 451,900 students will study abroad by 2020 if all campaign pledges are met. To reach Generation Study Abroad's goal of 600,000 students, a 14.5% annual rate in growth would be required through the end of the decade. The rate of growth is currently 5.2% set during the 2013/14 academic year when 304,467 U.S. students studied abroad.⁷²

Future Prospects for Transatlantic Mobility and Internationalization

Recent mobility trends reveal a continued interest by German students in study in the United States and a growing number of U.S. students pursuing higher education in Germany. While growth in student numbers is a positive signal, the future of transatlantic mobility will depend largely on how each country continues to approach mobility and international students.

For example, if U.S. HEIs see international students as sources of revenue and pursue schemes that prioritize inbound, revenue-generating mobility over forms that are more conducive to German students, the United States risks a further stagnation or even decline in the numbers of students hosted from Germany. Alternatively, if Germany should align its tuition policy to that of its European neighbors and begin charging tuition to international

⁶⁹ Charlotte West, "Enrollment is Up!," *International Educator* (Sept/Oct 2014), 12.

⁷⁰ Jan Kercher and Nicole Rohde, "German Students Abroad," *International Higher Education* 75 (Spring 2014), 3-4.

⁷¹ Institute of International Education, *Generation Study Abroad*, <http://www.iie.org/programs/generation-study-abroad> (accessed May 31, 2016).

⁷² Institute of International Education, *Generation Study Abroad*.

students, we may see a reduction in U.S. student numbers, especially those pursuing master's and other advanced degrees.

Although numbers are an important indicator of mobility "health," it is important to also consider the type of mobility taking place. Both U.S. and German educators have expressed concern over short-term mobility programs and have questioned the benefits and outcomes of short-term study. Other educators have advocated for more programs that allow students to engage more deeply with global problems and to develop skills with clear links to students' professional careers. The future of transatlantic mobility may be less concerned with the number of students studying abroad, but rather with the quality of those experiences.

However the United States and Germany approach mobility, it is imperative that mobility be part of a larger effort of internationalizing higher education. Germany is well equipped in this area, according to several evaluations of its internationalization efforts.

In a recent report by the British Council assessing the progress of 11 countries in internationalizing their higher education systems, Germany was ranked first with a score of 8.4 out of 10 based on the combined criteria of openness, access and equity, quality assurance, and degree recognition. The European Quality Charter on Mobility of 2011/12 lists Germany as the only country out of 36 nations that met all four goals of its scorecard:

- 1) national and regional strategies and initiatives and government-based or publicly-funded bodies devoted to providing information and guidance on learning mobility;
- 2) publicly supported internet-based information resources;
- 3) publicly supported personalized services for counseling, guidance, and information; and
- 4) involvement of publicly supported "multipliers" to further provide information and guidance.⁷³

Germany is characterized as having a more coordinated process of internationalization in comparison to other countries. According to Bernhard Streitweiser, et al, the primary internationalization agenda in Germany has been set by "federal-level players who have defined broad goals, which have then been carried out at state and local levels by agencies, research institutes, foundations, and academic institutions."⁷⁴

In comparison to Germany, the United States appears less adept to meet the challenge of internationalization. In *Internationalizing U.S. Higher Education: Current Policies, Future Directions*, Robin Matross Helms points out the lack of a comprehensive national policy towards internationalizing higher education in the United States.⁷⁵ Citing results from the *4th Global Survey of Internationalization of Higher Education*, Madeleine Green claims that U.S. institutions do not assign as high a priority to internationalization as other HEIs:

They are less likely to have a strategic plan for internationalization in place or under development; and their leaders are perceived as assigning less importance to internationalization. In all measures of infrastructural supports, US institutions lag

⁷³ Streitweiser, Olson, Burkhart, and Klabunde, "Coordinated German Internationalization," 25.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 25. The five federal-level players are the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the German Research Foundation (DFG), the German Rectors Conference (HRK), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

⁷⁵ Helms, *Internationalizing U.S. Higher Education*, 1.

behind, including the likelihood of having a dedicated office, dedicated budget, monitoring and evaluation system, or explicit targets or benchmarks.⁷⁶

To better address internationalization, Helms calls for a “broad, well-coordinated set of well-funded initiatives that support comprehensive internationalization of U.S. higher education.” She argues that:

a focused effort is needed to better leverage existing U.S. federal government policies and programs in advancing higher education internationalization, address aspects of internationalization that are not currently well-supported, and ensure that all internationalization-related policies and programs—existing and new—are adequately funded. Ultimately, the internationalization of higher education needs to become a jointly held national priority by the government and higher education institutions.⁷⁷

Conclusion

In many ways, transatlantic mobility mirrors the broader conversation on the transatlantic relationship. Like the transatlantic relationship, facilitating mobility between the United States and Germany requires navigating a complex and constantly changing web of institutions, governments, and policy. Ensuring the future of transatlantic mobility will require an ongoing commitment to U.S.-German cooperation, the adoption of new models and approaches to mobility, and deeper integration between HEIs in the United States and Germany.

⁷⁶ Madeleine F. Green, “Is the United States the Best in the World? Not in Internationalization,” *International Higher Education* 81 (Summer 2015), 8, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/8728>.

⁷⁷ Helms, *Internationalizing U.S. Higher Education*, 1.

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