

OPPORTUNITIES & ANXIETIES: A STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE TRUMP ERA

by
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Over one million international students are currently pursuing their education in the United States. But the number of newly enrolled international students is dropping. Some research suggests that President Donald Trump’s anti-immigrant policies, particularly his Muslim ban that has received international attention, may be to blame for this decline.

This Article presents the results of qualitative empirical research I conducted to investigate the link between President Trump and declining international student enrollment. I interviewed more than 40 undergraduate and graduate students from abroad studying in the United States. I learned that there are unique opportunities that draw and will likely continue to draw international students to the United States to pursue their education, even in the face of changing U.S. immigration policies. Yet international students do have substantial anxieties about studying in the United States, some of which are traceable to President Trump’s words and actions.

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INTRODUCTION

Two days after the election of President Trump in November 2016, an international student came to my office desperate to understand what the consequences of the election might be for her. She was anxious and scared. She and I had never met before. She just knew that I taught immigration law, and she needed someone to talk to.

Following that conversation, I tried to reach out to international students to discuss their anxieties, and, as much as possible, to alleviate them. A colleague¹ and I held a forum at our law school for international law students. While we did not advertise it as a campus-wide event, students from a variety of departments showed up with questions. The university soon arranged for a second event at a more central location.²

What became immediately clear was that many international students were worried. They knew that, as a candidate, Donald Trump rode a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment.³ What would that mean for them when he became president?

In January 2017, President Trump assumed office. Five days into his presidency, Trump issued an executive order regarding border security.⁴ Two days later, Trump signed an executive order purporting to ban the entry of citizens of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen as well as suspending the U.S. refugee program worldwide.⁵ These actions prompted a wave of litigation and protests⁶ that continues today.⁷

¹ The wonderful Sabrina Balamwalla, who is now teaching at Wayne State University Law School.

² Liz Kacher, *Immigration Discussion: Post-election Q&A Session on Immigration Held at the Loading Dock*, DAKOTA STUDENT (Dec. 2, 2016), <https://dakotastudent.com/9535/news/immigration-discussion/>.

³ See, e.g., Michael Tesler, *How Anti-Immigrant Attitudes Are Fueling Support for Donald Trump*, WASH. POST (Nov. 24, 2015), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/11/24/how-anti-immigrant-attitudes-are-fueling-support-for-donald-trump/?utm_term=.ec06c8d0aa14.

⁴ Exec. Order No. 13,767 of Jan. 25, 2017, Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements, 82 Fed. Reg. 8793 (Jan. 30, 2017) (to be codified in 3 C.F.R. (2018)).

⁵ Exec. Order 13,769 of Jan. 27, 2017, Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, 82 Fed. Reg. 8977 (Jan. 27, 2017) (to be codified in 3 C.F.R. (2018)).

⁶ See, e.g., Earl M. Maltz, *The Constitution and the Trump Travel Ban*, 22 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 391 (2018); Howard M. Wasserman, “Nationwide” Injunctions are Really “Universal” Injunctions and They Are Never Appropriate, 22 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 335

Universities around the country responded quickly to the orders, issuing statements to faculty and students.⁸ Many schools, like Haverford College, advised those affected by the ban not to travel outside the United States.⁹ Others, like the University of California, Berkeley, identified in-house resources for students and faculty affected by the ban, including help from the International Studies Office as well as mental health services.¹⁰ University of Oklahoma President David L. Boren took the moment to emphasize that international students “are valued members of our university family:”

Bringing international students to study in our country helps build lasting friendships with people all around the world. Those who study in our country become persuasive and articulate friends of the United States when they return to their home countries. When we reduce the opportunities for young people to come to America to take advantage of the educational opportunities here, we not only harm them, but we also damage the image and inspiration of America around the world.¹¹

(2018); Steve Almsy & Darran Simon, *A Timeline of President Trump's Travel Bans*, CNN (Mar. 30, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/10/us/trump-travel-ban-timeline/index.html>.

⁷ Adam Liptak, *Supreme Court Allows Trump Travel Ban to Take Effect*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 4, 2017), https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/us/politics/trump-travel-ban-supreme-court.html?_r=0.

⁸ David Comp, *Running List of University/College and Higher Education Organization/Association Responses to President Trump's Executive Order Entitled "Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Entry into the United States by Foreign Nationals"*, INT'L HIGHER EDUC. CONSULTING BLOG, (Jan. 29, 2017), <http://ihed-djc.blogspot.com/2017/01/running-list-of-universitycollege-and.html>.

⁹ Message from Kimberly Benson, President of Haverford College, to Haverford Students, Faculty, and Staff (Jan. 31, 2017), <https://www.haverford.edu/college-communications-president/news/regarding-executive-order-immigration>. At the University of North Dakota School of Law, Professor Julia Ernst made her regularly-scheduled field trip to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, normally a required component of her International Human Rights course, optional in response to the travel ban.

¹⁰ Message from Nicholas Dirks, UC Berkeley Chancellor, to Members of the Berkeley Community (Jan. 29, 2017), http://news.berkeley.edu/2017/01/29/trump-travel-ban/?utm_content=buffer422d1&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_ca-mpaign=buffer.

¹¹ *Boren Statement Regarding Executive Order*, U. OKLA., http://www.ou.edu/web/news_events/articles/news_2017/statement-from-ou-president-david-l-boren-regarding-president-t.html. The interim president of Lewis and Clark offered similar words. See David Ellis, *A Message of Support For Our International Community*, THE SOURCE (Jan. 30, 2017), <https://www.lclark.edu/live/news/35273-a-message-of-support-for-our-international> (“[The ban] will have no impact, however, on the love, respect, and support we have for each and every member of this community. You are welcome here. We pledge our support and we do not want you to leave. You enrich our lives and we humbly hope to enrich yours in return.”).

In addition to issuing statements to their own university communities, 48 college and university presidents wrote a letter to President Trump, exhorting him to reconsider his executive action.¹² They wrote: “American higher education has benefited tremendously from this country’s long history of embracing immigrants from around the world. Their innovations and scholarship have enhanced American learning, added to our prosperity, and enriched our culture.”¹³

Another 171 organizations “representing a broad spectrum of professional scientific, engineering and education societies, national associations, and universities” also wrote to President Trump asking him to reconsider his ban, which they opined would compromise the nation’s ability to “attract international scientific talent and maintain scientific and economic leadership.”¹⁴ The American Council on Education wrote to then-Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly about the travel ban as well, noting that “International exchange is a core value and strength of American higher education.”¹⁵

The University of North Dakota (UND), where I work, similarly issued a campus-wide response to the travel ban. International students were cautioned about travel outside the United States.¹⁶ A campus vigil was held in support of UND’s international community and those affected by the travel ban.¹⁷ University President Mark Kennedy affirmed

¹² Letter from Univ. Presidents to President Trump (Feb. 2, 2017), <http://www.princeton.edu/president/eisgruber/docs/Presidents-Letter-Immigration.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.* In November 2017, several university and college presidents joined together to form The Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, an organization dedicated to increasing “public understanding of how immigration policies and practices impact our students, campuses and communities.” *Founding Statement*, PRESIDENTS’ IMMIGRATION ALL., <https://www.presidentsimmigrationalliance.org/founding-statement/>. The group’s founding statement includes an emphasis on international students, who

enrich our campuses as educational and research environments. Our colleges and universities are magnets for the world’s talent, from those ready to contribute to our nation’s prosperity to those who dream of making their home countries more just, inclusive and equitable societies. The presence and contributions of international students and scholars are key to achieving our educational and service missions to create and disseminate knowledge for the betterment of the individual, society and the world. This enhances the education and understanding of all students, their preparation to live and work in an increasingly connected world, and their readiness to tackle global challenges.

Id.

¹⁴ Letter from the Am. Physical Soc’y to President Trump (Jan. 31, 2017), <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/letters/upload/multisociety-imm.pdf>.

¹⁵ Letter from Colleges and Universities to Sec’y Kelly (Feb. 3, 2017), <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Letter-From-Institutions-to-DHS-on-Immigration-Executive-Order.pdf>.

¹⁶ E-mail from Katie Davidson, Dir. of Int’l Ctr. (Jan. 28, 2017) (on file with author).

¹⁷ David Dodds, *Beyond ‘Politeness and Niceness’*, UNIV. N.D. TODAY (Jan. 31, 2017),

UND's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.¹⁸ At the same time, the university reaffirmed its commitment to being a "conduit through which global interrelationships are enhanced by a learning and teaching environment that is aware of and sensitive to the diversity of its constituents."¹⁹

In the context of this movement, I set out to conduct empirical qualitative research regarding international students' feelings concerning study in the United States at this point in time. Between March and October 2017, I met with 42 international students at the University of North Dakota. My interviewees hailed from every continent except Antarctica. They included undergraduate and graduate students studying a wide spectrum of fields. I asked these students what prompted them to study in the United States and whether they would do it all again, given the chance. In the context of our discussions, I learned about the opportunities they saw in studying in the United States and the anxieties that studying here engendered, especially in recent months.

This Article comes out of those interviews. Part I of this Article provides background regarding the importance of international students to the United States, and it identifies concerns that universities have had about how the election of President Trump might affect the enrollment of international students at U.S. institutions of higher learning. Part II discusses international students at the University of North Dakota and the findings from my empirical study.

I. BACKGROUND

In this section, I provide data regarding international students, including their impact on the United States economy. I also provide background to explain why U.S. universities and colleges have been worried that Trump's election may negatively affect the enrollment of international students.

A. *International Students in the United States*

Over the past 70 years,²⁰ the number of international students hosted by the United States has grown steadily, increasing every year for the past

<http://blogs.und.edu/und-today/2017/01/beyond-politeness-and-niceness/>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ E-mail from Sandra Mitchell, Assoc. Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion (Jan. 31, 2017) (on file with author) (citing Definition of Diversity, UNIV. N.D. (Nov. 2, 2016), https://und.edu/provost/diversity/_files/docs/dac-best-practices-group-11-2-2016.pdf).

²⁰ *Enrollment Trends: Previous Years*, INST. OF INT'L EDUC. (2016).

11 years.²¹ The only true dip in international students over the decades can be traced directly to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.²²

Readers may be surprised by the sheer number of international students who choose to pursue their education at institutions of higher learning in the United States. In 2015–2016, the United States achieved a new record by welcoming over one million international students.²³ That record was broken again in 2016–2017 with a 3.4% increase.²⁴ International students represent a little over 5% of all enrolled students in the country.²⁵

But in 2016, for the first time in more than a decade, the number of *new* international student enrollments declined by 10,000—about a 3% drop.²⁶ Despite this decline in new students, the total number of international students in the United States increased because more international students took advantage of Optional Practical Training (OPT), a program administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), that allows graduates to work temporarily²⁷ in areas related to their academic studies and thus remain longer in the United States while still being classified as students.²⁸

By studying in the United States, international students contribute substantially to our economy. The U.S. Department of Commerce's

²¹ *Open Doors 2017 Executive Summary*, INST. OF INT'L EDUC. (2017), <https://www.iie.org/Why-IIE/Announcements/2017-11-13-Open-Doors-2017-Executive-Summary>.

²² Kit Johnson, *International Student Enrollment: Is it Time to Panic Now?*, IMMIGRATION PROF BLOG (Feb. 24, 2017), <http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/immigration/2017/02/international-student-enrollment-is-it-time-to-panic-now-.html>; Jason Lane, *Ignoring the Power of International Exchange: Will Trump's Immigration Ban Undercut American Soft Power?*, THE CONVERSATION (Jan. 30, 2017), <https://theconversation.com/trumps-immigration-ban-will-it-undercut-american-soft-power-72156>.

²³ *Open Doors 2016 Executive Summary*, INST. OF INT'L EDUC. (2016), <https://www.iie.org/Why-IIE/Announcements/2016-11-14-Open-Doors-Executive-Summary>.

²⁴ *Open Doors 2017 Executive Summary*, *supra* note 21.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *2017 Open Doors Press Briefing*, YOUTUBE (Nov. 13, 2017), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YXo5OEjIVE&feature=youtu.be>.

²⁷ The length of time that a student can work on OPT varies by their field of study. Graduates of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) can participate in OPT for 36 months. Neil G. Ruiz, *More Foreign Grads of U.S. Colleges are Staying in the Country to Work*, PEW RES. CTR. (May 18, 2017), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/18/more-foreign-grads-of-u-s-colleges-are-staying-in-the-country-to-work/>. Other graduates can work on OPT for 12 months. *See, e.g.*, Stuart Anderson, *Are International Students Next on the Menu*, FORBES (Oct. 15, 2017), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2017/10/15/are-international-students-next-on-the-menu/#5521162b5e9f>.

²⁸ Ruiz, *supra* note 27 (discussing the fivefold increase in students taking advantage of OPT).

Bureau of Economic Analysis tracks the education of international students as an exported service.²⁹ In 2015, international students contributed more than \$35 billion to the U.S. economy.³⁰ In 2016, that figure climbed above \$39 billion.³¹ International students contribute to the U.S. economy not only with tuition dollars but also with spending—buying food and books, paying rent, and spending on travel and entertainment.³²

The United States has been privileged to host so many international students in large part because its universities are regularly ranked among the best in the world.³³ Having international students present in the United States both enhances the worldwide reputation of U.S. institutions and improves the educational experience for all students by bringing diverse perspectives into the classroom.³⁴

B. The Trump Effect on International Students in the United States

Even before his election, there were concerns that a Trump presidency might affect international student enrollment. Only a few of Trump's tweets during his presidential campaign addressed international students, and those were positive. "When foreigners attend our great colleges and want to stay in the U.S., they should not be thrown out of our country," Trump wrote.³⁵ He also said: "I want talented people to come into this country—to work hard and to become citizens. Silicon Valley needs engineers, etc."³⁶

But the white paper that defined Trump's campaign positions on immigration raised some alarms for international students. Trump stated that "we need to stop giving legal immigrant visas to people bent on

²⁹ See *U.S. International Transactions Tables*, BUREAU OF ECON. ANALYSIS 132 tbl. 3.1 l. 18 (May 18, 2017), <https://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2017/10-October/1017-international-transactions-tables.pdf>.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² *C.f.* The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Students (Jan. 2013), https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.259052!/file/sheffield-international-students-report.pdf (evaluating the impact of international students at Sheffield-based universities).

³³ See, e.g., *World University Rankings 2018*, TIMES HIGHER EDUC., https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2018/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats. (U.S. institutions claiming 15 of the top 20 spots worldwide).

³⁴ See, e.g., Corrected Amicus Curiae in Support of the Appellees International Refugee Assistance Project et al. at 4–6; *Int'l Refugee Assistance Project v. Trump*, 857 F.3d 558 (4th Cir. 2017) (No. 17-1351).

³⁵ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TWITTER (Aug. 18, 2015), <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/633695559900073984?lang=en>.

³⁶ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TWITTER (Aug. 18, 2015), <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/633695409408491520?lang=en>.

causing us harm . . . our immigration system is being used to attack us.”³⁷ Did this mean that the president hoped to restrict legal immigration? Would he limit visas for international students and graduates?

The white paper identified concerns about particular U.S. visa programs.³⁸ Trump singled out the H-1B visa, which allows individuals in specialty occupations to work temporarily in the United States,³⁹ arguing that the prevailing wages paid to H-1B workers are too low and that American workers ought to be hired first.⁴⁰ This was a concerning position for international students, many of whom hope to obtain an H-1B in order to work lawfully in the United States after graduation. Indeed, the system is set up to help international students obtain an H-1B visa. While there are a limited number of H-1B visas available each year,⁴¹ and it’s a highly competitive process to receive one,⁴² there are 20,000 H-1B visas set aside for those receiving master’s degrees or higher degrees from U.S. educational institutions.⁴³

In addition to challenging the H-1B visa, Trump’s white paper attacked the J-1 visa,⁴⁴ a visa geared towards temporary visitors on educational or cultural exchanges.⁴⁵ Specifically, the white paper endorsed ending the “J-1 visa jobs program for foreign youth.”⁴⁶ That statement might have referenced a narrow band of J-1 exchanges called Summer Work Travel,⁴⁷ which allow international post-secondary students to work and travel in the United States for a single, non-extendable, four-month visit coinciding with their summer vacations.⁴⁸ But, as commentators noted, “[i]t was unclear if the proposal referred to the J-1 program as a whole—parts of which colleges use to bring in

³⁷ *Immigration Reform that will Make America Great Again!*, TRUMP CAMPAIGN, at 5 (Aug. 16, 2015), <https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/Immigration-Reform-Trump.pdf>.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ Immigration and Nationality Act § 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) (2012).

⁴⁰ *Immigration Reform that Will Make America Great Again!*, *supra* note 37, at 5.

⁴¹ There is a Congressionally set cap of 65,000. See Kit Johnson, *Importing the Flawless Girl*, 12 NEV. L.J. 831, 848–49 & n.158 (2012). Certain jobs, however, including positions at institutions of higher education, are exempt from this cap. Immigration and Nationality Act § 214(g)(5)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1184(g)(5)(A).

⁴² Johnson, *supra* note 41, at 849 (noting how long it took to reach the cap in different fiscal years).

⁴³ Immigration and Nationality Act § 214(g)(5)(C).

⁴⁴ *Immigration Reform that Will Make America Great Again!*, *supra* note 37, at 5.

⁴⁵ Immigration and Nationality Act § 101(a)(15)(J); see also Kit Johnson, *The Wonderful World of Disney Visas*, 63 FLA. L. REV. 915, 937–41(2011) (outlining the history of the J visa program).

⁴⁶ *Immigration Reform that Will Make America Great Again!*, *supra* note 37, at 5.

⁴⁷ Johnson, *supra* note 45, at 950–54 (outlining the criteria for Summer Work Travel).

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 950.

visiting foreign scholars.”⁴⁹ If a broader critique was meant, that would be highly concerning for institutions of higher education.⁵⁰ More than 380,000 individuals came to the United States on a J visa last year.⁵¹ Those included more than 46,000 students at U.S. universities and colleges,⁵² along with more than 37,000 professors and research scholars.⁵³

Beyond his white paper, Trump’s campaign rhetoric towards immigrants generally was divisive. In December 2015, Trump first proposed a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.”⁵⁴ During his campaign, Trump also expressed deep concerns about U.S. workers losing their jobs to foreigners, as had happened to certain information technology workers at Disney.⁵⁵

Throughout campaign season, international students were apparently listening. A March 2016 survey of 40,000 prospective international students in 118 countries revealed that 60% said they would be less likely to study in the United States if Trump were elected.⁵⁶

After Trump’s election, concerns about his effect on international student enrollment grew.⁵⁷ Prospective international students and their

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Redden, *Implications of Trump’s Presidential Victory for International Students*, INSIDE HIGHER EDUC. (Nov. 10, 2016), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/11/10/implications-trumps-presidential-victory-international-and-undocumented-students?width=775&height=500&iframe=true>; see also Lane, *supra* note 22.

⁵⁰ A change to Summer Work Travel would, naturally, concern those employers who rely on the short-term work of that category of J visa recipients. See Johnson, *supra* note 45, at 950–54 (discussing such workers at Walt Disney World). But eliminating the SWT program would not affect U.S. institutions of higher education.

⁵¹ U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS, TABLE XVI(A) CLASSES OF NONIMMIGRANTS ISSUED VISAS (INCLUDING BORDER CROSSING CARDS) FISCAL YEARS 2012–2016, <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/AnnualReports/FY2016AnnualReport/FY16AnnualReport-TableXVIA.pdf>.

⁵² U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, BUREAU OF EDUC. AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, PARTICIPANT AND SPONSOR TOTALS: COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT, <https://j1visa.state.gov/basics/facts-and-figures/participant-and-sponsor-totals/?program=College+and+University+Student&state=&x=5&y=13>.

⁵³ U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, BUREAU OF EDUC. AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, PARTICIPANT AND SPONSOR TOTALS: PROFESSOR AND RESEARCH SCHOLAR, <https://j1visa.state.gov/basics/facts-and-figures/participant-and-sponsor-totals/?program=Professor+and+Research+Scholar&state=&x=14&y=15>.

⁵⁴ Trump-O-Meter, *Establish a Ban on Muslims Entering the U.S.*, POLITIFACT (Jan. 16, 2017), <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/trumpometer/promise/1401/establish-ban-muslims-entering-us/>.

⁵⁵ Ted Johnson, *Donald Trump Zeroes in on Disney Layoffs in Bashing Guest Worker Visas*, VARIETY (Mar. 4, 2016), <http://variety.com/2016/biz/news/donald-trump-disney-h-1b-1201723103/>.

⁵⁶ Karin Fischer, *A Trump Presidency Could Keep Some International Students Away*, CHRON. HIGHER EDUC. (June 1, 2016), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/A-Trump-Presidency-Could-Keep/236662>.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, *Moody’s Warns Trump Presidency Could Hurt*

parents indicated “second thoughts” about pursuing education stateside.⁵⁸ To at least some, the United States was suddenly “risky” with “too many uncertainties.”⁵⁹ One survey of international students found about a third had a decreased interest in studying in the United States “due to the current political climate.”⁶⁰ Interestingly, a February 2017 survey of overseas “education agents,” individuals who advise international students about where to apply, indicated that the travel ban “permanently damaged” how 11% of recruiters saw the United States, and that it had “temporarily dampened” the opinion of another 44% of recruiters.⁶¹ That survey is particularly significant because recruiters have “a lot of sway They can convince people to go to a country or not.”⁶²

Colleges Counting on International Students, WASH. POST (Nov. 18, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2016/11/18/moodys-warns-trump-presidency-could-hurt-colleges-counting-on-international-students/?utm_term=.b51689d7a145 (“the flow of international students into the United States will wane if Trump upholds a campaign promise to limit or end the H-1B visa program for high-skilled foreign workers.”); Kit Johnson, *The Trump Effect on Enrollment of International Students in the US*, IMMIGRATION PROF BLOG (Nov. 17, 2016), <http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/immigration/2016/11/the-trump-effect-on-enrollment-of-international-students-in-the-us.html> (“the mere possibility of restrictive immigration policies will undoubtedly affect international student enrollment”).

⁵⁸ Safia Samee Ali, *International College Students Leery of Trump Could Cost U.S. Billions*, NBC NEWS (Dec. 10, 2016), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/international-college-students-leery-trump-could-cost-u-s-billions-n691871>; see also Mizuho Aoiki, *Trump Factor has Japanese Students Rethinking Study in U.S.*, JAPAN TIMES (Feb. 24, 2017), <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/24/national/trump-factor-japanese-students-rethinking-study-u-s/#.WnYxZ6inFPY> (“seeing Trump made me a bit scared to live there”); Aditya Bhardwaj, *International Students Fear for Future Under Trump*, CORNELL DAILY SUN (Nov. 20, 2016), <http://cornellsun.com/2016/11/20/international-students-fear-trump-presidency/> (“[my parents] are seriously re-considering whether they should send my sister to the United States for her undergraduate degree next year”); Nida Najar & Stephanie Saul, *Is It Safe? Foreign Students Consider College in Donald Trump’s U.S.*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 16, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/17/us/is-it-safe-foreign-students-consider-college-in-donald-trumps-us.html> (“if it’s Trump in the White House, we’re not sure we want to send you to the U.S.”); Emily Tate, *Should I Still Move There?: An International Student’s Dilemma About America in the Age of Trump*, HUFFINGTON POST (Dec. 16, 2016), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/international-students-reconsider-moving-to-america-under-trump-presidency_us_58530cf5e4b08debb78830ea.

⁵⁹ Hameed Aleaziz & Nanette Asimov, *UC Sees 1st Drop in International Applicants in More than Decade*, S.F. CHRON. (Apr. 1, 2017), <http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/UC-sees-1st-drop-in-international-applicants-in-11043891.php>.

⁶⁰ PAMELA KIECKER ROYALL & ANNE DODSON, EAB & ROYALL & CO., EFFECT OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT 4 (2017), <http://ns.eab.com/International-Student-Survey>.

⁶¹ ANTON CRACE, PROFESSIONAL INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESOURCES, US & THEM: EDUCATION AGENT EXECUTIVE WHITE PAPER 1 (2017).

⁶² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

More than half of the recruiters reported that students had concerns about the travel ban.⁶³

Meanwhile, international students already present in the United States expressed fear and uncertainty about continuing their education here.⁶⁴ They raised concerns about being “locked in” the United States without the ability to travel to visit family or attend academic conferences.⁶⁵ That is, while these scholars knew that they could leave the United States, they harbored worries about whether they would be readmitted upon their return.⁶⁶ They worried they might be turned away due to the Muslim ban or that they might be excluded based on some other new immigration policy.⁶⁷

Nearly half of U.S. institutions saw drops in applications received from international students in 2017.⁶⁸ Those reduced applications then turned into reduced admissions, with 46% of graduate deans reporting “substantial downward changes in admission yields for international

⁶³ CRACE, *supra* note 61, at 11.

⁶⁴ Mariama Diallo, *Will Trump’s Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Discourage Foreign Students?*, VOICE OF AM. (Dec. 30, 2016), <https://www.voanews.com/a/donald-trump-anti-immigrant-rhetoric-foreign-students/3657270.html>; Steve Esack, *Pennsylvania Colleges Could Lose Lots of Money in Trump Travel Ban*, MORNING CALL (Feb. 27, 2017), <http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/pennsylvania/mc-pa-trump-higher-education-immigration-fears-20170225-story.html> (“I felt like I wasn’t welcomed here anymore”); Max Filby, *International Students’ Impact in Ohio: \$1.1 Billion*, J. NEWS (Nov. 27, 2016), <http://www.journal-news.com/news/international-students-impact-ohio-billion/WzP4Q5cslfYYX6040wOxDO/> (“The election results have actually given me a little bit of fear.”); Dawn Rhodes, *With Trump as President, International Students Ponder Future in U.S.*, CHI. TRIB. (Jan. 19, 2017), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-international-students-post-trump-met-20170112-story.html>.

⁶⁵ Caroline Kitchner, *Trump is Driving Some of the World’s Brightest Foreign Students out of America*, VOX (Jan. 31, 2017), <https://www.vox.com/world/2017/1/31/14453566/trump-muslim-immigration-ban-foreign-university-students>.

⁶⁶ *See, e.g.*, Filby, *supra* note 64 (“Wright State student Nathan Balasubramanian is flying home to India for winter break, but his family is worried he won’t be allowed back into the United States when classes resume in January.”).

⁶⁷ *See id.*

⁶⁸ Jeffrey Mervis, *Drop in Foreign Applicants Worries U.S. Engineering Schools*, SCIENCE (Feb. 14, 2017), <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/02/drop-foreign-applicants-worries-us-engineering-schools>; Hironao Okahana, *Data Sources: Highlights from the 2017 CGS Pressing Issues Survey*, COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHS. (2017), <http://cgsnet.org/data-sources-highlights-2017-cgs-pressing-issues-survey-0>; (“Nearly one half of graduate deans at U.S. doctoral universities (48%) indicated they are seeing downward changes in international graduate applications this year, compared to the last application cycle. . . . Many wrote in concerns related to the current political climate and immigration policies.”); AACRAO, *TRENDING TOPICS SURVEY: INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS FOR FALL 2017 – INSTITUTIONAL & APPLICANT PERCEPTIONS at 2* (Apr. 4, 2017), <http://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/TrendTopic/Immigration/final-report.pdf> (“38% of responding institutions report a decline in international applications . . .”).

students,” which is to say a reduction in the number of admitted students who choose to enroll.⁶⁹ Some of the declines were “modest to moderate” while others were “more substantial.”⁷⁰ In Fall 2017, U.S. universities and colleges experienced a “flattening” in the overall number of enrolled international students as well as an average decrease of 7% in the number of newly enrolled international students.⁷¹

II. THE STUDY

This section focuses on my study of international students at the University of North Dakota (UND). I begin with information about UND and my research methodology. I then discuss the findings from my study—looking first at the opportunities international students identified regarding study in the United States and then at the anxieties they shared about pursuing their education stateside.

A. *The University of North Dakota*

The University of North Dakota is the flagship university for the state of North Dakota.⁷² It is a public institution with both undergraduate and

⁶⁹ Okahana, *supra* note 68; CHRISTINE FARRUGIA & NATALYA ANDREJKO, IIE CTR FOR ACAD. MOBILITY RESEARCH AND IMPACT, SHIFTING TIDES? UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT YIELD FOR FALL 2017 at 2 (July 2017), <http://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/TrendTopic/Immigration/new-study.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Redden, *International Enrollments: From Flat to Way Down*, INSIDE HIGHER ED (Sept. 5, 2017), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/05/some-universities-are-reporting-declines-international-enrollments-ranging-modest>; see also Karin Fischer, *Many Colleges See a Drop in International Students*, *Chronicle Survey Finds*, CHRON. HIGHER EDUC. (Sept. 6, 2017), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Many-Colleges-See-a-Drop-in/241109>; Elizabeth Redden, *Boom in Indian Enrollments, Followed by Bust*, INSIDE HIGHER ED (Oct. 30, 2017), <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/10/30/after-huge-surge-enrollment-india-central-missouri-sees-substantial> (discussing how enrollment of Indian students at the University of Central Missouri dropped with “precipitousness”). Interestingly, while the United States is experiencing a decline in international enrollment, Canadian schools are increasing their international student enrollments. Laura Krantz, *Increasingly, Foreign Students are Choosing Canada over U.S.*, BOS. GLOBE (Sept. 16, 2017), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/09/16/increasingly-foreign-students-choose-canada-over/khkot6AYt9lakpIFLTNGvM/story.html> (“The increase is not all because of Trump. Canada has made international student recruitment a national goal to spur economic growth. It now has 353,000 international students and wants 450,000 by 2022. But the political uncertainty in the United States—as well as in the United Kingdom—has given Canada’s effort an unexpected boost.”).

⁷¹ 2017 *Open Doors Press Briefing*, *supra* note 26.

⁷² *Forbes America’s Top Colleges: University of North Dakota*, FORBES, <https://www.forbes.com/colleges/university-of-north-dakota/>.

graduate programs. The university offers more than 200 fields of study, including medicine, law, and aviation.⁷³

UND hosts 15,000 students, hailing from all 50 states and some 80 countries.⁷⁴ As of 2017–2018, more than 1,000 international students study at UND.⁷⁵ They make up a little more than 7% of the student body.⁷⁶

UND is located in the city of Grand Forks, which is on the very eastern edge of the state. The city is bordered on the east by the Red River, on the other side of which is East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Grand Forks is about 80 miles south of the U.S.-Canada border.

Grand Forks is one of the coldest cities in the United States,⁷⁷ with a 30-year average low of just above six degrees Fahrenheit.⁷⁸ With those temps, it may be no surprise that UND is hockey country. In 2016, the UND men's hockey team won its eighth NCAA championship.⁷⁹ And the Lamoureux twins, who helped the U.S. women's hockey team secure gold at the 2018 Olympics in PyeongChang, both hail from Grand Forks and are UND grads.⁸⁰

A particular strength of UND is its globally renowned John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, one of the world's leading centers for aviation training.⁸¹ The school's aerobatic team won the International Aerobatic Club Collegiate National Championship Team Award an impressive nine years in a row, beating out teams from the U.S.

⁷³ *Fields of Study*, UNIV. N.D., <http://und.edu/academics/registrar/fields-of-study.cfm>.

⁷⁴ *About UND*, UNIV. N.D., <http://und.edu/discover/about-und.cfm>.

⁷⁵ *UND Student Profile 2017–2018*, UNIV. N.D., <https://und.edu/discover/student-profile>.

⁷⁶ *Id.*

⁷⁷ Alexander Kent, *Brrrr: America's 50 Coldest Cities*, USA TODAY (Feb. 28, 2015), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2015/02/28/247-wall-st-coldest-cities/24107481/> (ranking Grand Forks 2, after Fairbanks, Alaska); *Top 50 Coldest Cities in America*, NICHE (Apr. 12, 2017), <https://articles.niche.com/top-50-coldest-cities-in-america/> (ranking Grand Forks the coldest city in the United States).

⁷⁸ *Id.* (6.3 degrees to be exact).

⁷⁹ *Raise It! North Dakota Brings Home 8th NCAA Title*, UND ATHLETIC MEDIA RELATIONS (Apr. 9, 2016), <http://www.undsports.com/ViewArticle.dbml?ATCLID=210877997>.

⁸⁰ April Baumgarten, *Grand Forks, UND consider ways to honor Lamoureux twins*, WEST FARGO PIONEER (Feb. 23, 2018), <https://www.westfargopioneer.com/sports/hockey/4408458-grand-forks-und-consider-ways-honor-lamoureux-twins>.

⁸¹ *See, e.g., The Top 10 Aviation Colleges for 2018*, BEST CS. <http://www.thebestcolleges.org/rankings/the-top-10-colleges-for-aviation-degrees/>; Sarina Houston, *The Best U.S. Aviation Colleges*, BALANCE, (Oct. 15, 2017), <https://www.thebalance.com/top-u-s-aviation-universities-282905>; Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (“UND has one of the best aviation program[s]”).

Air Force Academy and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.⁸² Indeed, UND-related small-plane and helicopter activity helps to make Grand Forks International one of the country's busiest airports as judged by the number of take-offs and landings.⁸³

B. *Research Methodology*

Between March and October 2017, I interviewed 42 of UND's international students. I spoke with 20 undergraduates and 22 graduate students; of the total, 25 were men and 17 were women. The interviewees hailed from six different continents with the largest number from Canada (14), followed by Saudi Arabia (8), and South Korea (6). They studied a range of subjects, with the highest number pursuing law (15), aviation (14), and engineering (4). Two of the students were exchange students, present in the United States on J visas⁸⁴ to study but not to seek a degree.⁸⁵ The rest were full-time international students here on F visas,⁸⁶ which are available to degree-seeking full-time students.⁸⁷

I spoke with most subjects (26) in a one-on-one setting. Two subjects opted to be interviewed together, and I also conducted interviews in two different small-group classroom settings of five and nine students each.

The interviewees learned about my study in different ways. Some responded to posters that I hung at various spots around campus. Others responded to e-mails that were distributed on my behalf by student organizations with an international membership. The two in-class interviews were arranged by instructors. All subjects were volunteers who were not compensated for their time.

⁸² Kaylee Cusack, *Flipping for Competition*, UND TODAY (Nov. 28, 2017), <http://blogs.und.edu/und-today/2017/11/flipping-for-competition/>.

⁸³ See, e.g., *GFK Ranked 17th Busiest Airport in U.S.*, GRAND FORKS HERALD (Nov. 6, 2012), <http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/2183531-gfk-ranked-17th-busiest-airport-us>.

⁸⁴ That is, they received visas pursuant to Immigration and Nationality Act § 101(a)(15)(J).

⁸⁵ See notes 44–53 and accompanying text (discussing the purpose of the J visa, which is the promote international exchange). Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Mar. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

⁸⁶ That is, they received visas pursuant to Immigration and Nationality Act § 101(a)(15)(F).

⁸⁷ See *Student and Employment: F-1 Student Visa, U.S.*, CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVS. (Mar. 11, 2016), <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment>; see also U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT, SEVIS BY THE NUMBERS: BIENNIAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRENDS (June 2017), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/byTheNumbersJun2017.pdf> (describing F visa holders are “Nonimmigrants whose primary purpose is to complete an academic course of study at an SEVP-certified school or program.”).

Each interviewee was provided with an Informed Consent Statement approved by UND's Institutional Review Board.⁸⁸ As outlined in that statement, I described for interviewees that the purpose of my study was "to explore the experience of international students in the United States, if and how that experience has changed with the election of President Trump, and what perceptions there are about the future of international students in the United States."⁸⁹ With that as my stated goal, I allowed interviews to develop organically to take various directions. I found students responded most openly to questions about why they chose to study in the United States, whether anything about their study here had been different from what they anticipated, and if they would do it all again, given the chance.

C. Findings

Recurring themes in the interviews were the opportunities that draw international students to study in the United States and the anxieties that students harbor about studying here. Thus, I will divide my discussion correspondingly.

1. Opportunities

When I asked interviewees about why they chose to study in the United States, nearly every student responded by discussing the "opportunities" that studying in the United States opened up for them.⁹⁰ "Opportunity" was not a word that I used or a prompt that I gave, but it was a word that interviewees chose, over and over again.

Some spoke about opportunity in vague, almost philosophical terms. Others saw pursuing their education at the University of North Dakota, specifically, as a unique opportunity.

a. Opportunities in the United States

The United States, many students noted, is unique. It is not only a "land of opportunity,"⁹¹ "it's like the first country,"⁹² "the top world superpower,"⁹³ "one of the greatest countries in the world."⁹⁴

America is a place where people can "Dream. Work hard. See results."⁹⁵ In this country, there are "a lot of options."⁹⁶ That means it is possible to "achieve something."⁹⁷

⁸⁸ On file with author.

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ *See, e.g.*, Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

⁹¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

⁹² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

⁹³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

⁹⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

⁹⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

⁹⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

For some students, education in the United States itself was the opportunity they were excited to achieve. Students mentioned the “very good universities”⁹⁸ in this country, the opportunity to pursue majors not available elsewhere⁹⁹ and to “switch from one field to another,”¹⁰⁰ the chance to learn,¹⁰¹ and the opportunity to meet the top people in their field of study.¹⁰² Studying in the United States, one said, is a way to “maximize my education . . . my knowledge and experience.”¹⁰³ It offered “another chance,”¹⁰⁴ the start of “something new,”¹⁰⁵ a means to get away from the old life that I had,¹⁰⁶ a path towards “a job that ha[s] some challenge,”¹⁰⁷ “my dream.”¹⁰⁸

Many talked about the value that would be placed on their American education back in their home countries.¹⁰⁹ Part of that value derived from the opportunity to improve their English skills.¹¹⁰ Students also saw value in the other skills¹¹¹ learned during their course of study, including, for example, seeing “other research environments,” learning from those, and taking those skills back home.¹¹² Some reported that their American education would open doors to professional jobs in their home country that would otherwise not be available.¹¹³

Beyond any particular course of study, students saw value in learning about the United States and interacting with Americans first hand.¹¹⁴ They talked about the benefits of gaining a “different[] perspective”¹¹⁵ on “the culture, the people”¹¹⁶ and “American society”¹¹⁷—“to see what it is

⁹⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

⁹⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (estimating 70% of top universities worldwide are in the United States).

⁹⁹ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁰⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁰⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017) (“valued so highly”).

¹¹⁰ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹³ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹¹⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (“the culture” “the lifestyle”).

really like.”¹¹⁸ That included the chance to “enjoy the country”¹¹⁹ which is so “large and diverse.”¹²⁰ As one student said, “I’m seeing what I haven’t seen. I’m experiencing what I haven’t done before. Here is [an] environment I haven’t been [in] before. And that makes me think more about myself. And that begs me [to] widen my sight[,] my mindset.”¹²¹ Others echoed this sentiment, saying that studying in the United States provided the chance to “experience something new,”¹²² “to improve myself.”¹²³

Beyond the classroom and experiencing the United States generally, many students were interested in the opportunity to gain experience in their fields outside the classroom—whether through Optional Practical Training¹²⁴ or full-time jobs after graduation.¹²⁵ Some saw this as valuable experience to gain “before going back to share.”¹²⁶ Others had the “hope of getting a permanent status”¹²⁷ in the United States, to work in this country¹²⁸ where it’s the “major league”¹²⁹ meaning not just high pay¹³⁰ but also the opportunity to “work with the best.”¹³¹

Some saw working in the United States as opening doors that were closed in their home countries¹³² where the fields they were studying were less developed,¹³³ less varied,¹³⁴ or less in demand.¹³⁵ There are, as one said, “More things going on. More people. More jobs.”¹³⁶

¹¹⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹¹⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²⁴ See note 27 and accompanying text.

¹²⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (even though s/he doesn’t think s/he will ever get that).

¹²⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹²⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹³⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹³¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹³² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (asserting that big corporations quash innovators in home country whereas the United States fosters entrepreneurs).

¹³³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Mar. 2017) (discussing rocket propulsion aerospace, not seen as a viable career back home).

¹³⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (discussing opportunities in the United States to practice in certain fields of law); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (discussing the draw of practicing law under the U.S. Constitution with the opportunity to speak directly to a jury);

In sum, studying in the United States presented the interviewees with numerous opportunities, whether in the United States or back home. Emblematically, one student said: “Everyone must come here and see the United States. I believe in that.”¹³⁷ After all, “it’s where the cool stuff happens.”¹³⁸

b. Opportunities at UND

Beyond the general benefits of studying in the United States, two groups emerged who identified specific opportunities associated with studying at the University of North Dakota: law students and aviation students.¹³⁹

i. Law Students

In 2016, nearly 15% of students at UND’s School of Law were international students.¹⁴⁰ In 2017, that figure dropped to just over 11%. Most, though not all, of these international students are Canadian citizens.

During my interviews of Canadian law students, I heard a common story as to how they ended up at this institution for their degree: Canada does not have many law schools—just 16 to be exact.¹⁴¹ Student seats in Canadian law schools are extremely limited.¹⁴²

The United States, in contrast to Canada, has more than 200 ABA accredited law schools.¹⁴³ Admissions are competitive, but not nearly as

Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Aug. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹³⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Aug. 2017) (law); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (aviation).

¹³⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“a lot more jobs”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“Job prospects [are] so much higher here.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“A lot of great work opportunities here in the U.S., especially in North Dakota.”).

¹³⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹³⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹³⁹ This is not to say that other students did not identify UND-specific opportunities. To be sure, other students chose UND because of the opportunity to study with specific individuals (*e.g.*, Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017)) or because of other opportunities unique to themselves and their circumstances (Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017)).

¹⁴⁰ 2016 *Standard Information 509 Information Report*, UNIV. N.D., https://law.und.edu/_files/docs/future-students/pdf/2016-aba-509-report.pdf.

¹⁴¹ *Canadian Law School Profiles*, OXFORD SEMINARS, http://www.oxfordseminars.ca/LSAT/lstat_profiles.php; Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁴² Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁴³ ABA-Approved Law Schools, AM. BAR ASS’N, <https://www.americanbar.org/>

constrained as in Canada.¹⁴⁴ Students who cannot gain entrance to a Canadian law school may still do incredibly well at a U.S. institution, pass the bar, and go on to successful legal careers whether in the United States or in Canada.

Those circumstances indicate that many qualified Canadian students might be interested in studying in the United States. But it does not explain why such students would be drawn to the University of North Dakota. Geography plays an important role. Most, though not all, of UND's Canadian law students hail from Manitoba, a Canadian province that borders North Dakota. For them, UND is "close to home."¹⁴⁵ Many are from the province's largest city, Winnipeg, which is roughly a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Grand Forks. This makes the University of North Dakota School of Law an effective commuting school for many: A substantial number of Canadian students attend classes during the week and spend their weekends back home in Manitoba.¹⁴⁶ Some have spouses and children in Manitoba.

In addition to geographical proximity, UND is able to draw Canadian students because it offers tuition to Manitoban students at a discounted rate. While such students do not pay in-state tuition, they do pay a specialized rate applicable to "contiguous" states and provinces, a category that includes Montana, South Dakota, and Saskatchewan.¹⁴⁷ It is a lesser rate than non-residents from other states or nations pay.¹⁴⁸ Thus, study at UND is a more affordable option than study at another U.S. law school.¹⁴⁹

Finally, some Canadian students choose to study at UND because they perceive the school as having many desirable qualities.¹⁵⁰ Students cited UND's emphasis on experiential education (while bemoaning the recent suspension of the school's clinic),¹⁵¹ writing courses,¹⁵² and

groups/legal_education/resources/aba_approved_law_schools.html.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁴⁵ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (noting "location" and proximity to Winnipeg as key reasons for choosing to study at UND).

¹⁴⁶ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁴⁷ *Residency Information*, UNIV. N.D., <http://und.edu/admissions/student-account-services/residency.cfm>. Interestingly, Minnesota students fall under a third tuition category altogether, but for the law school, the rates for Minnesota and contiguous states is the same. *Id.*

¹⁴⁸ *Id.*; see also Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁴⁹ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017). Notably, UND offers an affordable legal education as a general matter; it is one of the least expensive law schools in the United States. *Top 10 Affordable Recognized Law Schools in U.S.*, BEST SCHOOLS., <https://thebestschools.org/features/top-affordable-recognized-law-schools>.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁵¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁵² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

“community.”¹⁵³ Students liked how “professors know your name,”¹⁵⁴ the vibrancy of student organizations,¹⁵⁵ and experiences like moot court.¹⁵⁶

This combination of supply and demand, geography, and cost allows UND School of Law to claim a unique niche for Canadian law students.¹⁵⁷

ii. Aviation Students

Studying aviation is another unique category of opportunity for international students at UND. The prestige and recognized excellence of UND’s Department of Aviation at the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences¹⁵⁸ is a distinct draw for students.¹⁵⁹

For some aviation students, UND is chosen for them. That was true for the aviation students with whom I spoke from Saudi Arabia.¹⁶⁰ These students are employees of Saudia,¹⁶¹ also known as Saudi Arabian Airlines.¹⁶² The company has sent them to UND on a five-year program to study aviation—the path to a career as a pilot for Saudia.¹⁶³

Saudia is not the only company that sends its employees to UND’s aviation department. Air China has sent students to study aviation at UND as well.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, since the late 1980s, Saudi Aramco, a Saudi Arabian oil company, has sent two to three students a year to UND for helicopter training.¹⁶⁵

The tremendous reputation of UND’s aviation department, coupled with the relationships that the school has built with international companies, ensures the program always has a substantial cadre of international students.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁵⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁵⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁵⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁵⁷ While the UND School of Law presents a unique opportunity for Canadian law students, clearly Canadian students make their mark on the UND School of Law community. *See, e.g.*, Canadian Law Student Society, <https://law.und.edu/students/organizations/clss/index.cfm>.

¹⁵⁸ *See The Top 10 Aviation Colleges for 2018, supra* note 78.

¹⁵⁹ *See, e.g.*, Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁶⁰ *See, e.g.*, Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁶¹ SAUDIA AIRLINES, <http://www.saudia.com>.

¹⁶² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017)

¹⁶³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“There are 17 of us on this program.” “Saudi Airlines has been sending people here to the U.S. for 40 years or something like that.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“We sign a contract. There [are] no other choices.”).

¹⁶⁴ *Air China Send 57 Additional Students to UND Aerospace*, UND AEROSPACE (Nov. 26, 2007), <http://atmos.und.edu/news/news-article.aspx?NewsId=261>.

¹⁶⁵ Jen Boyer, *UND Aviation – Helicopter Program in Vertical Daily News*, UND AEROSPACE (May 16, 2017), <http://aero.und.edu/news/news-article.aspx?newsid=2419>.

¹⁶⁶ Around 1% of all international students in North Dakota are enrolled in

2. *Anxieties*

The international students with whom I spoke discussed not only the opportunities that drew them to this country, but the anxieties they had about pursuing their education stateside. I did not specifically ask interviewees about their anxieties. Rather, I asked whether and how studying in the United States was different from what they expected, whether the election of President Trump changed their feelings about studying in the United States, whether they would do it again, and whether they believed other prospective international students would continue to choose to study in this country.

In response, over and over again, students talked about being anxious,¹⁶⁷ apprehensive,¹⁶⁸ and scared.¹⁶⁹ They reported a “sense of fear”¹⁷⁰ and “uneasiness”¹⁷¹ about studying in the United States as a non-citizen.

Travel was one thing that interviewees identified as a source of anxiety.

For some, particularly non-minority Canadian students, the concern for travel was short-lived and related to UND’s advice, in the wake of President Trump’s first travel ban, not to travel out of the country.¹⁷² For example, Canadian students who were already in Canada when UND issued its travel advisory worried about getting back into the United States.¹⁷³ Others had more generalized worries about crossing the U.S.-

“flight school,” which means study at UND’s Department of Aviation. *See* DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC., *STUDY IN THE STATES*, <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-by-the-numbers> (mapping “trends and information on international students studying in the United States using data from the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System”).

¹⁶⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Mar. 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“apprehension, anxiety”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“sense of anxiety”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“anxiety, anxious feelings”).

¹⁶⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁶⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“I was scared.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (“I’m still scared though.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“Everyone is afraid.”).

¹⁷⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁷¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁷² *See, e.g.*, Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017). (“I didn’t go home for that first month.”). I also had a student approach me after class to ask about their ability to return to Canada after the advisory against travel came out.

¹⁷³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“Some of us were home . . . Someone else sent an email saying you should be fine. Should and will be [are] two different things. All my stuff is there. I’m a student [t]here. [It was r]eally nerve wracking.”).

Canadian border,¹⁷⁴ including the student who told their spouse to “try not to look suspicious”¹⁷⁵ during a crossing.

For non-Canadian international students, concerns about international travel meant that they skipped opportunities to travel into Canada.¹⁷⁶

Saudi students, in particular, identified a fear of the immigration process itself.¹⁷⁷ They talked about choosing to fly through particular airports in an effort to avoid potential problems¹⁷⁸ and choosing not to return home during breaks.¹⁷⁹ “All of us are afraid to go back to Saudi Arabia to visit, because we might not enter the U.S. [again].”¹⁸⁰

That fear was not limited to students from the Middle East. One African student missed walking his sister down the aisle at her wedding because he was afraid that he would not be able to get back into United States.¹⁸¹ His mother encouraged him not to participate in the wedding, telling him: “don’t risk it.”¹⁸²

Beyond travel anxieties, interviewees reported increased worries over how they were perceived by Americans. “I’m always worried about what my classmates think,”¹⁸³ one student said. “I feel like people . . . now. People think that I’m taking up a spot that an American law school applicant could have taken.”¹⁸⁴ “I feel not welcome.”¹⁸⁵

Some experienced anxieties directly tied to their education. That is, some reported being “very uneasy, uncertain” about their future: “Theoretically I couldn’t finish my education.”¹⁸⁶ Not knowing how

¹⁷⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017). (“When I cross the border now I’m scared Crossing the border this past weekend . . . [I was] more nervous than I would be regularly This time he might not let me through.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (sharing “anxiety” about crossing the border with spouse for the first time, noting: “What if they asked . . . what [s/he] thought about the election . . . ?”).

¹⁷⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁷⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (skipped a class field trip); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017) (“[I] don’t dare go there.”).

¹⁷⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁷⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁷⁹ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁸⁰ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁸¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

¹⁸² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

¹⁸³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁸⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“If there’s this whole *American First* concept, [what] if people I go to school with think that [I] took a spot in the law school that should’ve gone to an American.”).

¹⁸⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁸⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

President Trump might change the rules was “scary.”¹⁸⁷ “You can’t really tell your fate. If you actually get all you’re expecting to get from America.”¹⁸⁸ Some educational anxieties were not about the ability to continue studies, but about the ability to have research funded in the wake of cuts by President Trump to science funding.¹⁸⁹

Social media was another source of anxiety. As one student said:

[Would publicly disagreeing with Trump] threaten my status here? . . . Do I need to worry about my social media? . . . Having a voice might actually concern a president. And that’s really strange. . . . I don’t want to threaten what I’m doing here and my potential for what I’m doing in the future . . . I don’t want to affect my visa.¹⁹⁰

Another commented: “I don’t feel comfortable voicing my ideas anymore. Leave that to Americans who are allowed to be in the country to do that for me.”¹⁹¹ Beyond voicing ideas, one student talked about curating social media before attempting to enter the United States because of worries that their phone would be searched and how U.S. authorities might react to anything they would find: “Actually, before I c[a]me, I look[ed at] my pictures. Photo by photo. On my phone. Do I have any [photos of] killing, guns, wars? [I] deleted everything. All the apps. I looked [at] all the apps and signed out.”¹⁹²

International students were “very aware” of their international status.¹⁹³ With that awareness came a “hyper realization” of the limitations of that status and a need to protect it by not engaging in social activism, such as protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline,¹⁹⁴ which might lead to an arrest or otherwise threaten that status.¹⁹⁵ More than limiting activism,

¹⁸⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“he could do whatever he wanted”); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017) (“[My mother] was worried about me and my visa. Are they going to kick you out of America?”).

¹⁸⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁸⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

¹⁹⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁹¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁹² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

¹⁹³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (“I was already feeling myself a foreigner in this community.”).

¹⁹⁴ The Dakota Access Pipeline funnels oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Those opposed to the pipeline’s development engaged in protests in North Dakota from August 2016 through February 2017. *See* Rebecca Hersher, *Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight*, NPR (Feb. 22, 2017), <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/22/514988040/key-moments-in-the-dakota-access-pipeline-fight>.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“People were saying you can’t go to demonstrations or rallies or stuff because I do that sort of stuff at

the awareness that any interaction with law enforcement might threaten their immigration status led international students to be “super super super conscious . . . more, more careful” to not put themselves “in any vulnerable position.”¹⁹⁶

Work experience was another source of anxiety. Students expressed concerns about a range of issues that might affect their ability to gain work experience in the United States, including rumored cuts to Optional Practical Training,¹⁹⁷ restrictions on H-1B visas,¹⁹⁸ and the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).¹⁹⁹ NAFTA is important to UND’s Canadian law students who hope to work in the United States: NAFTA’s TN visa²⁰⁰ offers a fast-track process for skilled professionals to work in the United States.²⁰¹ Changes to the free trade agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico could eliminate this visa option.²⁰²

home. [I n]ever thought I can’t go. In case I were to get arrested.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (expressing concern that if they were to participate in protests, “I could be considered a non-national against the government.”).

¹⁹⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017).

¹⁹⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017); *see also supra* note 27 and accompanying text for discussion of OPT; Stuart Anderson, *Are International Students Next on the Menu?*, FORBES (Oct. 15, 2017), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2017/10/15/are-international-students-next-on-the-menu/#5521162b5e9f> (discussing rumored cuts to OPT).

¹⁹⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017); *see also supra* notes 39–43 and accompanying text for discussion of the H-1B visa; Jethro Mullen, *Trump to Propose Ending Rule Allowing Spouses of H-1B Holders to Work in U.S.*, CNN (Dec. 15, 2017), <http://money.cnn.com/2017/12/15/technology/h1b-visa-spouses-h4-trump/index.html> (discussing the possibility of eliminating work authorization for spouses of H-1B holders); Sara Ashley O’Brien, *Trump Administration Toughens H-1B Visa Renewal Process*, CNN (Oct. 25, 2017), <http://money.cnn.com/2017/10/25/technology/business/h1b-visa-renewal-uscis/index.html> (discussing tougher hurdles to renewing an H-1B visa); Frida Yu, *Is Anyone Good Enough for an H-1B Visa?*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 23, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/23/opinion/immigration-visa-h1b-trump.html> (discussing increased scrutiny of H-1B petitions).

¹⁹⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Aug. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); *see also* E-mail from Interviewee to author (Apr. 2017) (on file with author) (If NAFTA were to go by the wayside, “I don’t have any hope here.”).

²⁰⁰ The TN visa is unusual in being treaty-based. The other visas mentioned in this Article, including the H-1B, J, and F visas, are all statute-based.

²⁰¹ Maya Kroth, *How a NAFTA Repeal Would Affect Mexican Business Depends on Who You Ask*, PRI (Nov. 27, 2017), <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-11-27/how-nafta-repeal-would-affect-mexican-business-depends-who-you-ask>; U.S. DEP’T OF CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGR. SERV., TN NAFTA PROFESSIONALS, <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/tn-nafta-professionals>.

²⁰² Andy Semotiuk, *Professional Careers Teeter on The Tight Rope While NAFTA Negotiations Resume*, FORBES (Nov. 16, 2017), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/>

Students recognized that it would be difficult to get a job in the United States after graduation.²⁰³ At the same time, as one noted: “It would really suck to go through this whole degree and ‘sorry, you can’t get a job here.’”²⁰⁴ In particular, students worried about whether employers would “give preference to Americans . . . Maybe . . . it’s going to be mandated that they give preference to Americans now.”²⁰⁵ As another commented: “What if I cannot get a job here, what’s the next step?”²⁰⁶ “I feel more like my future isn’t secure.”²⁰⁷

Students expressed concern not just about employment discrimination, but discrimination within their communities.²⁰⁸ Some worried about discrimination before even coming to the United States.²⁰⁹ “I thought if I go there I can be discriminated [against]. I had this first impression like prejudice.”²¹⁰ Some students had experienced specific instances of anti-immigrant harassment during the course of their study.²¹¹ Some tied these incidents directly to Trump: “After Donald Trump got elected, people start[ed] to think [they] can say some[]

andyjsemotiuk/2017/11/16/professional-careers-teeter-on-the-tight-rope-while-nafta-negotiations-stall/#55e7327615d7.

²⁰³ See, e.g., Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Mar. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

²⁰⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); see also Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“To go through three years of law school [and] I can’t even work in the states? So what am I’m supposed to do now?”).

²⁰⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); see also Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (expressing worries about “[w]hether employers will invest and keep me”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“Still a little worried that he would want to create jobs just for Americans.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“I may be from Canada but . . . I’m still taking American jobs.”).

²⁰⁶ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017); see also Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (listing “opportunities for when done with study” as a concern).

²⁰⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

²⁰⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

²⁰⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

²¹⁰ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

²¹¹ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (discussing incident where they were yelled at on the street in Minneapolis); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (May 2017) (being stared at in the mall); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Aug. 2017) (being told “You seem like an immigrant.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (recounting “day-to-day interaction[s] with strangers” replete with anti-immigrant sentiment).

discriminating thing in public. That's a big change."²¹² For instance, people "tell me to get out of this country."²¹³

Guns were another frequent concern. Students expressed fear over the accessibility of guns, the prevalence of gun violence, and reports of campus shootings.²¹⁴ Multiple students said that they worried about people who could "shoot you because they don't like what you're doing or saying."²¹⁵ It is clear that news reports of shootings particularly affected international students. For example, one noted that "After [the] Las Vegas thing,²¹⁶ I just think . . . [in] Grand Forks, also people have guns."²¹⁷ Another spoke about how reports of police violence stoked fears of U.S. police: "you don't really know what they're going to do . . . people are unpredictable when they're under pressure. That is a little bit scary."²¹⁸ Guns, it seems, are a source of constant stress to some when in public spaces. As one student said: "I think about the gun thing quite often . . . Sometimes when I've been [at] Walmart. Where would I hide here?"²¹⁹

²¹² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

²¹³ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (discussing reactions to the student's accent in on-line video games).

²¹⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) ("[B]efore coming, I was worried about [the] constant violent shooting of people."); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) ("I think this state in particular, just the presence of guns, was very shocking to me."); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Aug. 2017) ("Everyone in America has guns.").

²¹⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); *see also* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Aug. 2017) ("I don't honk my horn at anyone who cuts me off. Guy's got a shotgun in the back."); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (contrasting Hong Kong with US "where [people] can kill without reasons").

²¹⁶ On October 1, 2017, a gunman opened fire on a country music festival in Las Vegas, Nevada; 58 people died, and more than 500 individuals were injured in the deadliest mass shooting committed by an individual in U.S. history. *See, e.g.,* Ken Belson, Jennifer Medina & Richard Pérez-Peña, *A Burst of Gunfire, a Pause, Then Carnage in Las Vegas That Would Not Stop*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 2, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/02/us/las-vegas-shooting-live-updates.html>.

²¹⁷ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (worried post Las Vegas). Notably, Las Vegas isn't the only shooting to affect international students. In February 2017, two citizens of India were shot in a Kansas bar; relatives of the victims urged fellow citizens not to send their children to study in the United States. *More International Students Uneasy About Studying in the U.S.*, WBUR (Feb. 28, 2017), <http://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2017/02/28/international-students-uneasy-us>. Indian students expressed concerns about studying in the US after that event. Annie Gowan, *'Everyone's Nervous': Some Students in India Rethink US Study Plans After Kansas Shooting*, CHI. TRIB. (Feb. 25, 2017), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-india-kansas-bar-shooting-20170225-story.html>.

²¹⁸ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

²¹⁹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017) (The same

War was yet another concern. Students expressed fear over President Trump's interactions with North Korea.²²⁰ One student, who had escaped ISIS attacks back home, stated: "I don't want to die here because of nuclear war."²²¹

The international students I spoke with had various concerns, but it was clear overall that they were anxious and felt uncertain about their future as students and, potentially, as workers in the United States. One student perhaps spoke to the root of these anxieties, when he or she said that for international students "it's out of control for you."²²²

CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps the most salient takeaway from my interviews is the level of optimism international students have about studying in the United States. The overwhelming majority said they would do it all over again; if given the chance, they would return to the United States to study.²²³ At the same time, the anxieties identified by international students were noteworthy. As one might have expected, some concerns were directly attributable to President Trump and his immigration politics. But the concerns raised about gun violence in the United States were unexpected.

It should be emphasized that each student I spoke with was already pursuing education in this country. Each had already applied to UND, been accepted, enrolled, and had gone through a process to obtain a visa to come to the United States. In short, they had already made a commitment to this country. This begs the question of whether prospective students around the globe will be willing to make the same commitment in the same or greater numbers as in past years. Will they see the opportunities available in the United States as outweighing the anxieties studying here may engender?

One interviewee said it best when he noted an Arabic expression: "The eye eats."²²⁴ The expression helps pinpoint questions about the future of international students: Are international students abroad

interviewee reported "My mother was a little worried" about the prevalence of guns and gun violence in the United States.). Notably, a local Walmart employee died in a 2015 shooting incident. *See* Ed Payne, Shooter kills employee, wounds another at North Dakota Walmart, CNN, (May 27, 2015), <https://www.cnn.com/2015/05/26/us/north-dakota-walmart-shooting/index.html>.

²²⁰ Interviews with UND students, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

²²¹ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Oct. 2017).

²²² Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

²²³ *But see* Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) ("[I w]ouldn't do it again."); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) ("I think I wish I would've stayed home.").

²²⁴ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017).

“already tasting how bad it will be” based on what they see in the media:²²⁵ Will fears of discrimination, violence, travel restrictions, and limited job opportunities convince students to study elsewhere?²²⁶ Matriculation numbers in the future will answer these questions. In the meantime, it seems clear that the anxieties that international students carry weigh more heavily than one might think, but they are buoyed by the hopes they hold about the immense possibilities they associate with the United States.

²²⁵ Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“in the media we’re bombarded. . . . It would dissuade people from going to school in the states.”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“I’d put money on the fact that there’s people who’d be less inclined to come to the states just because of the message it is setting”).

²²⁶ *See, e.g.*, Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“Prospective students will think that . . . what’s the point the point of an American law degree if won’t be able to stay?”); Interview with UND student, in Grand Forks, N.D. (Apr. 2017) (“I think the future of Canadian students coming into the U.S. is BLEAK, I really do.”).