

Western Hemisphere

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela

154

EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

81 Comprehensive
54 Standard
19 Reference



The Western Hemisphere (WHA) has 154 EducationUSA centers:

- 21 comprehensive, 12 standard, and two reference centers in the Andean sub-region
- 31 comprehensive, 12 standard, and 12 reference centers in the North America, Central America, and Caribbean sub-region
- 29 comprehensive, 30 standard, and five reference centers in the Southern Cone sub-region

Advising centers in WHA are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, bi-national centers (BNCs), American Spaces, Fulbright Commissions, local higher education institutions (HEIs), national government ministries, public libraries, and nonprofit organizations. Ten new centers opened within the past year in the Bahamas (Nassau), Brazil (Foz do Iguacu, Caxias do Sul, Juiz de Fora, and São Paulo at Mackenzie Presbyterian University), Mexico (Hermosillo), Panama (Panama City), Paraguay (Ciudad del Este), and Venezuela (Caracas and Lecheria). The region has 162 advisers, 49 percent of whom are based at BNCs.

EducationUSA advising centers in the region offer at least one annual pre-departure orientation, which is open to the public, either in-person or virtually. Advisers collaborate with Consular officers, U.S. higher education admissions offices, and international student services officers, as well as alumni, during these orientations to offer comprehensive information to students and their families. Centers in countries with foreign government initiatives organize pre-

departure orientations tailored to the needs of those programs.

EducationUSA fairs take place at least once a year in the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, and South America, and attract massive crowds of qualified students interested in studying in undergraduate, graduate, intensive English language, and short-term programs in the United States. There are also specialized fairs and country-specific tours throughout the region. A key public diplomacy tool for U.S. and local governments, fairs often include the presence of high-profile government officials. EducationUSA centers frequently support Education Trade Missions and state educational consortia visits organized by the U.S. Department of Commerce. EducationUSA advisers also organize and support U.S. embassy- and consulate-organized alumni fairs, at which U.S. government officials share their experiences as college or university students with the public and distribute information about their alma maters.

EducationUSA advisers participate in local as well as commercial fairs organized by private organizations to promote exchange opportunities in the United States. EducationUSA advisers at these fairs host information sessions and interact with the public in exhibit halls.

Hosting U.S. HEI representatives is a high priority for WHA EducationUSA advising centers. During these visits, advisers set up group presentations, open houses, one-on-one appointments, and specialized workshops for tailored audiences at EducationUSA centers and partner institutions. In addition, EducationUSA advisers record HEI

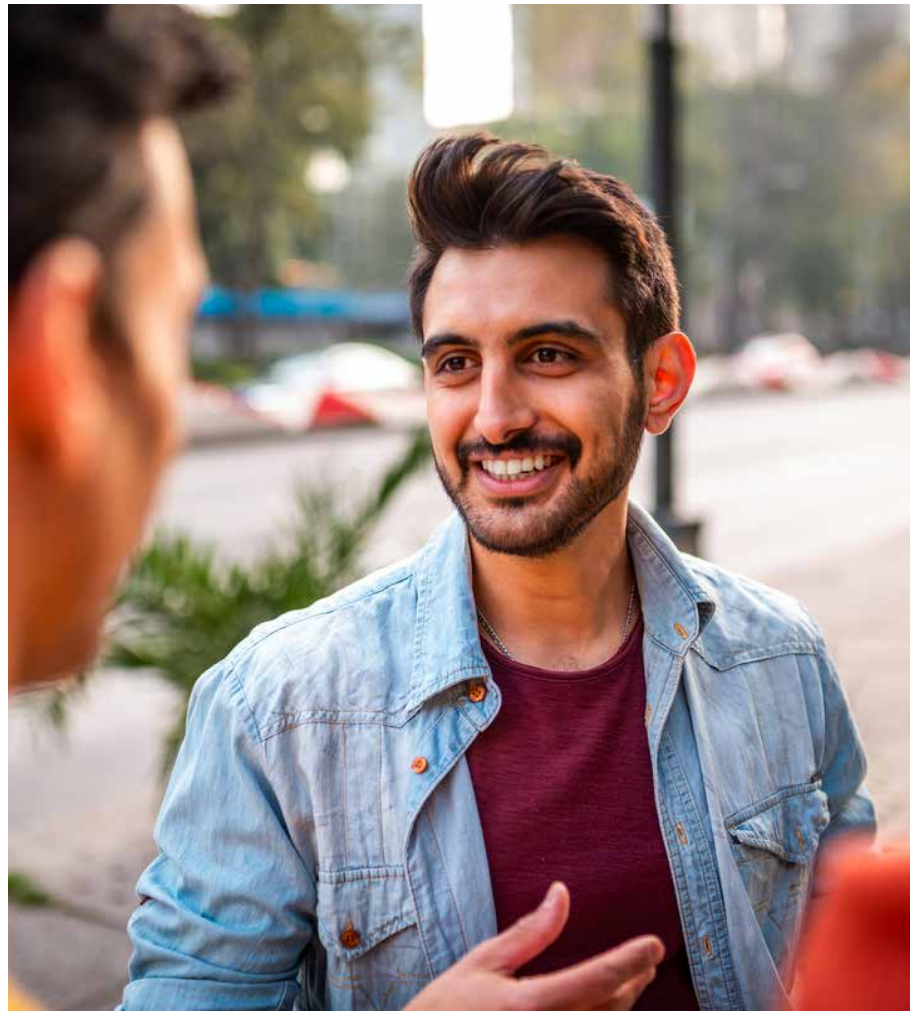
representatives' workshops, interviews, videos, and podcasts to share virtually with the public through social media outlets.

Over the past year, WHA EducationUSA advisers hosted more than 400 webinars to connect U.S. college and university representatives with local students, parents, and counselors to inform them about U.S. higher education opportunities and explain the application process. U.S. embassies and U.S. HEIs co-host EducationUSA webinars and viewing parties for virtual events such as EducationUSA Interactive webinars.

Advisers use virtual advising to target audiences in remote locations such as the Amazon, and the Canadian Arctic, the Galapagos Islands, and Patagonia, as well as in countries or areas of a country in which the current political and security environment limits the possibilities of in-person presentations. They use social media tools (such as Facebook, Google Hangouts, Skype, and WhatsApp) to promote EducationUSA services.

Advising centers in the region connect with current international students in the United States as well as alumni of U.S. institutions and U.S. government exchange programs to support activities such as alumni fairs, cohort advising, and outreach. EducationUSA advisers throughout the WHA region engage with U.S. students, volunteers, and professionals to promote the United States as a higher education destination. For example, Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs), Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), Gilman Scholars, and other U.S. students studying abroad at local universities collaborate with EducationUSA on various activities, including delivering writing workshops, tutoring students in English, and conducting outreach visits in remote areas.

Many universities overseas continue to express interest in developing and strengthening partnerships with U.S. HEIs to increase academic exchanges between the United States and institutions in the WHA region. To strengthen internationalization efforts, EducationUSA advisers in several countries act as liaisons between U.S. and local universities, offering capacity-building workshops on best practices for study abroad that are funded by



the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) USA Study Abroad Branch.

The Opportunity Funds program is currently available through EducationUSA centers in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. During the past year, 152 students from across the WHA region were enrolled in the program.

Regional Overview

Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America make up the U.S. Department of State's WHA region, a diverse area spread across 35 countries that boasts a combined total population of approximately 900 million. With five countries among the top 25 sending countries of international students to the United States (Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela) and 107,084 students in the United States

during academic year (AY) 2018-2019, the WHA region is second only to Asia in international student mobility to the United States. The region has steady growth in the numbers of undergraduate and graduate students and represents 9.8 percent of total international students in the United States.

Despite economic and political challenges throughout the region, the economy in WHA continues to be generally stable. Petroleum, mining, agriculture, manufacturing industries, and services (including banking and tourism) remain sources of wealth for the majority of WHA countries. As a result, the Americas still allocate substantial resources to expand science, technology, and innovation and to develop a strong, capable workforce to continue growing local and regional economies. Advisers report that WHA students' top choices in 2019 for academic programs in the United States were

Western Hemisphere



business and entrepreneurship; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and social sciences.

Though WHA seems to be a cohesive region, its languages, cultures, and educational systems vary by sub-region. Educational systems follow the British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish models, in combination with regionally developed credentialing models aimed at achieving standardization in the sub-regions. Academic calendars vary across the region, and some make it difficult for students to submit the required documents on time for U.S. college and university admissions deadlines.

WHA countries have diverse economies and deep disparities in gross domestic product per capita and purchasing power. Access to quality education at the primary school level and beyond is an issue for socially excluded communities across the region. Access to telecommunications varies greatly. Although, on average, more than 70 percent of people in WHA have internet access, internet usage ranges from 33 percent in Haiti to more than 94 percent in Canada.

Flight options in WHA can be limited. There are few regional hubs to facilitate direct travel between countries. In Central America and the Caribbean, flights typically connect through Miami, Panama,

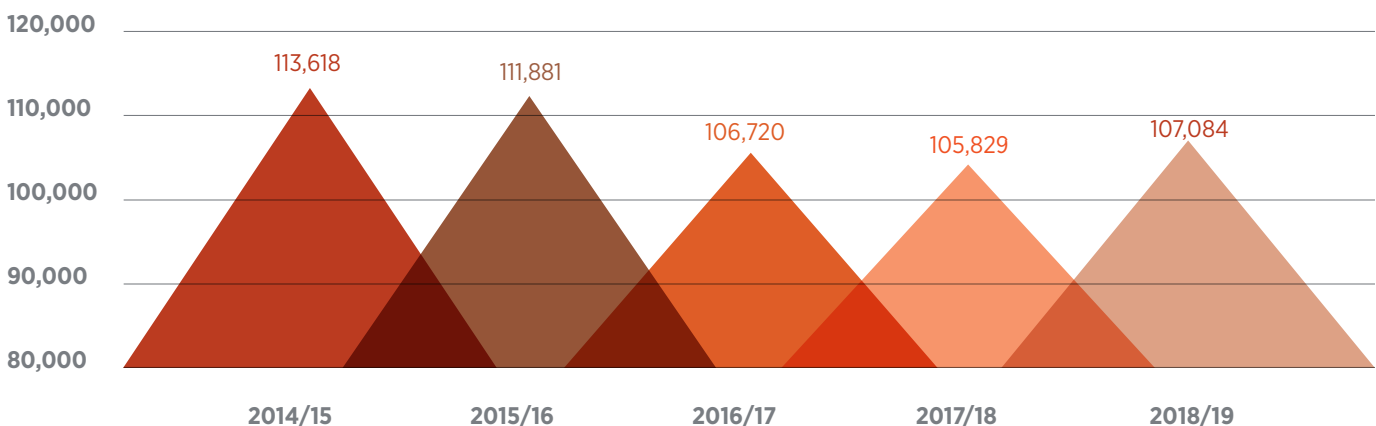
and San Salvador. In South America, Bogota, Buenos Aires, Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, and Sao Paulo are the major hubs.

Flight travel between smaller cities is not always frequent. Ground transportation may be the only option for traveling within smaller countries. Travelers to the region should refer to U.S. Department of State travel advisories for up-to-date guidance and recommendations, paying careful attention to local conditions.

Recent Trends

EducationUSA advisers continue to address questions from students related to safety and security on U.S.

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



campuses, obtaining student visas, and being welcome in the United States. EducationUSA advisers are working hard to demystify issues, explaining to students the actual environment in the United States, sharing examples of inclusion, and highlighting the benefits of U.S. study. Advisers continue to amplify #YouAreWelcomeHere messaging from HEIs across the country as evidence of campus communities and state and local governments welcoming international students. Such messages have been helpful in reassuring students and their parents that U.S. campuses are truly dedicated to welcoming international students and are interested in their success and well-being.

Local political and economic conditions in WHA continue to drive mobility to the United States. Economic recessions force young professionals to delay graduate studies or seek more affordable options, while local security concerns drive parents to consider sending their children abroad for undergraduate studies. Despite the cost of a U.S. higher education, many families in the region recognize its value and are willing to invest in it, resulting in increases in student mobility to the United States.

Diasporic connections and offers of in-state tuition rates continue to attract WHA students to northeastern, southern, and western U.S. states. As a result of Mexico and Canada's proximity to the United States, student interest is concentrated in states near the borders of those countries. An increasing number of international students appear to express a preference for institutions located in predominantly urban and coastal areas of the United States, where they believe they will be welcomed and feel safer.

Many students within the Caribbean community choose to study at the regional University of the West Indies. To retain more students in the region, Caribbean governments are beginning to transform other local HEIs from two-year to four-year models. Institutions seek to internationalize their campuses. They also seek to build partnerships with U.S. institutions to improve the quality of their academic programs and attract more students. These institutions are offering dual degrees, increasing transfer options for students, and facilitating

faculty exchanges. The Caribbean is the sub-region with the highest growth in graduate student enrollment. The United States remains the top study destination for students from the Caribbean.

In some countries, industry is investing in academia, and public-private partnerships to fund international educational initiatives are becoming more common. Workforce development has become a priority in bilateral dialogues, resulting in a focus on partnerships between nontraditional institutions (such as technical universities) and U.S. community colleges. Such partnerships are supported by the private sector.

Teacher training through exchanges and virtual platforms is increasingly a key part of national and regional educational programs and policy. Governments are focused on strengthening teachers' language and pedagogical skills as well as supporting capacity-building efforts across the region. Many local governments are funding short-term English language programs for students and teachers, and these programs are now more readily available in non-English-speaking WHA countries

The 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund is the U.S. Department of State's signature hemisphere-wide education initiative to champion the power of education and provide opportunity between the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere. The Innovation Fund is a public-private sector collaboration among the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, U.S. embassies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private companies, regional governments, and HEIs working to strengthen regional education cooperation.

The Innovation Fund is a central mechanism that helps to create new institutional partnerships, build capacity, increase training opportunities, and provide access to new models of short-term academic exchange programs. As of March 2020, the Innovation Fund had awarded 232 grants to 477 teams of HEIs in 25 countries and 49 U.S. states. Currently, 2,300 education institutions have joined the Innovation

Network, which includes more than 1,200 universities and colleges in the United States.

EducationUSA centers in Latin America support 100K Innovation Fund grant opportunities and partnerships designed to increase student training opportunities to and from the United States. Learn more and join the Innovation Fund network at www.100kStrongAmericas.org.

In a new initiative in Brazil, some high schools offer dual Brazilian-U.S. high school diplomas. Several universities and companies (such as Texas Tech University, University of Missouri, Griggs International Academy, and, more recently, Pearson Academy, with its U.S. homeschooling platform) have partnered with high schools in Brazil to offer required courses in English, leading to a U.S. high school diploma. ACT is reaching 15,000 10th-through 12th-grade students with its Global Assessment Certificate pathway program. Such programs have created a new pool of students for U.S. HEIs to engage by significantly increasing the number of prospective students interested in applying to undergraduate programs in the United States.

Central American countries continue to report steady northbound mobility, with a high percentage of students enrolling specifically in two-year institutions. Honduras leads this sub-region in the total number of students studying in the United States, with El Salvador being the top sender of students from Central America to U.S. community colleges.

Throughout WHA, there is increased interest in short-term and summer programs, as well as pre-professional experiences, including internships, in the United States.

Countries in the Spotlight

Brazil. The United States continues to be the leading higher education destination for Brazilians. Brazil ranks ninth in the world in sending students to the United States, according to the latest *Open Doors* statistics. There are 40 EducationUSA offices in Brazil, with 47 EducationUSA advisers who cover a country similar in size to the United States.

Brazilian advisers continuously hold webinars and Facebook Live events

Western Hemisphere

to promote U.S. higher education, providing accurate information about study opportunities in the United States. Due to the enormous size of Brazil, EducationUSA advisers frequently use virtual advising tools and online resources to reach more students. Fulbright ETAs and U.S. Foreign Service Officers volunteer to mentor EducationUSA students both in-person and during fairs. EducationUSA Brazil organizes general fairs and fairs that target specific fields of study, such as the Master of Laws (LLM) fair circuit. Additionally, EducationUSA collaboration with the Lemann Foundation, one of the largest NGOs in Brazil, has contributed to racial equity and social inclusion initiatives on the national level through the Opportunity Funds program.

It is predicted that Brazil will experience a 2.2 percent economic growth in 2020. President Jair Bolsonaro's administration is seeking partnerships with the United States at all levels. Some U.S. HEIs that were in the process of signing specific STEM agreements with officials from the outgoing administration have been able to finalize these agreements under President Bolsonaro's administration.

Another trend in Brazil is the implementation of programs that provide U.S. high school diplomas at private, bilingual K-12 high schools. This initiative is a response to families' expectations that their children be academically prepared to succeed in a globalized society. It also makes local schools more competitive internationally. The majority of Brazilian students who receive these

diplomas plan to pursue a college degree in the United States, and EducationUSA advisers have been conducting targeted outreach visits to these schools with U.S. HEIs representatives.

EducationUSA offers an annual road show college fair circuit—ending in the host city of the large Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) conference—to help facilitate more U.S.-Brazil partnerships. Brazilian universities have increased the number of classes taught in English to attract more international students, and those with state-of-the-art facilities have research partners in STEM fields, taking advantage of specialties, such as Brazil's expertise in undersea petroleum exploration and drilling. The Brazilian government requires all petroleum companies operating in Brazil to donate a percentage of their income to Brazilian universities to fund research.

Colombia. STEM areas continue to be of interest for students and a priority area for the Colombian government. EducationUSA Colombia hosts an annual tour in four cities, with a focus on recruiting for U.S. STEM-focused programs. In December 2019, the Colombian government converted the administrative department in charge of science and technology policy (COLCIENCIAS) to MinCiencias, the country's first Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. This new ministry reflects the Colombian government's priority to support STEM activities and promote scientific research and collaboration.

In February 2020, MinCiencias launched a program to support women and girls from vulnerable communities who plan to study science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM) areas: Fondo + Mujer + Ciencia (Fund + Woman + Science). Details are forthcoming regarding the program execution and development, but the hope is that many of these women will pursue STEM-related graduate programs in the United States (https://minciencias.gov.co/sala_de_prensa/nace-fondo-para-promover-la-vinculacion-mujeres-y-ninas-en-ciencias-tecnologias).

The Colombian government also supports many academic activities related to the Orange Economy initiative, which focuses on the creative industries and innovation within the cultural sector (<https://investincolombia.com.co/news/943-what-is-the-orange-economy.html>).

On October 22, 2019, the U.S.-Colombia bilateral relationship reached an important inclusive education milestone. The U.S. and Colombian governments and local partners signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to promote academic cooperation and cultural exchange opportunities between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Colombian HEIs with significant Afro-Colombian student populations. This MOU also builds on the social inclusion, education diplomacy, and economic prosperity efforts of both governments and civil society through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Racial and Ethnic Equality (CAPREE). This effort is part of the Colombian government's

Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2014/15	2018/19	%Change
Sint Maarten	52	109	109.6%
Cuba	94	163	73.4%
Curaçao	75	122	62.7%
Dominica	166	227	36.7%
Antigua and Barbuda	120	164	36.7%

109.6%

Sint Maarten has the largest percentage growth in the region over the last five years (*with over 100 students*)

Five Countries of Origin in the Region with Highest Per Capita College-Age Student Mobility to the United States



Bermuda
College-Age Population
3,785



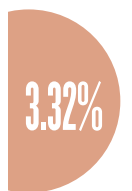
Bahamas
College-Age Population
32,912



British Virgin Islands
College-Age Population
2,017



St. Kitts and Nevis
College-Age Population
4,047



Sint Maarten
College-Age Population
3,283

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2017 Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

strategy to create higher education opportunities for youth and students specifically from Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations (<https://co.usembassy.gov/the-governments-of-colombia-and-the-united-states-promote-cooperation-in-higher-education-to-benefit-african-descendent-populations-in-both-countries/>).

EducationUSA has 11 centers throughout Colombia, making it easier for U.S. universities to recruit students from various parts of the country (not only in Bogota). Medium-sized cities such as Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, and Cartagena are excellent recruitment destinations, because they have high-quality local schools and are economically prosperous. EducationUSA centers in Bogota at COLFUTURO and Fulbright are strategically important, because these two institutions support many Colombian graduate students in the United States.

Dominican Republic. With approximately 50 HEIs, strong government support for international education, and a large youth population, the Dominican Republic offers exciting opportunities for academic mobility. Dominicans have a strong connection to the United States, especially because nearly 2 million people of Dominican descent live in the United States. Dominican HEIs have created innovative, joint 3+1 undergraduate and 1+1 or hybrid graduate degree programs with U.S. universities, including Florida International University, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), State University of New York (SUNY) Empire State College, St. John's University, Pennsylvania State University, and Creighton University, to name a few.

The Dominican government also funds thousands of international scholarships for its citizens to study abroad in countries such as Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States through its Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. The government funds graduate degree programs in basic sciences, technology, health, engineering, education, and agri-food sciences. Since 2008, the Dominican government has also provided support to the U.S. government's Fulbright Program, providing USD\$600,000 dollars annually

to add 10 slots for Dominicans to pursue graduate degree programs at U.S. universities in priority fields for the country.

The U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo supports increased student mobility through initiatives that highlight the visibility of U.S. higher education, including the Florida-Dominican Republic Higher Education Summit. The November 2019 summit brought together 150 Dominican and Florida-based higher education representatives to discuss partnership opportunities for student and faculty mobility and joint research. Thirty representatives from 11 Florida HEIs and 120 representatives from 20 Dominican HEIs attended the summit. A similar event, the Northeast U.S.-Dominican Republic Higher Education Summit, is scheduled to take place in the Dominican Republic in November 2020.

EducationUSA has two advising centers in the Dominican Republic that are located in the two largest cities: the capital city of Santo Domingo and the second largest city in the northern part of the country, Santiago de los Caballeros. In close collaboration with the U.S. embassy, the EducationUSA adviser advances U.S. public diplomacy goals by promoting U.S. higher education and guiding students through the U.S. admissions process.

What to Expect Over the Next Three to Five Years

North and Central America and the Caribbean

- Many transitions in government have recently taken place in the region. These transitions will likely lead to

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2018/19	% Change
Canada	26,122	0.8%
Brazil	16,059	9.8%
Mexico	15,229	-1.5%
Colombia	8,060	1.1%
Venezuela	7,760	-7.3%

Western Hemisphere

revised educational policies, which will entail more in-country training and professional development opportunities, as opposed to support for education abroad. Therefore, the majority of students and professionals from the sub-region studying abroad will do so with financial support from competing foreign governments that establish partnerships for student academic mobility, training, and professional development. While the U.S. remains the top choice as a study destination, barriers (such as the cost of visas, tuition, and living expenses, as well as the complicated application process) limit the number of students studying in the United States. Many students choose to study in countries that have easier and less expensive application processes and that provide the possibility of working during their studies and/or immediately after they complete their studies.

- As workforce development continues to be a priority for Mexico, as well as most Central American and certain Caribbean countries, interest in short-term certificate programs and partnerships between local technical universities and U.S. community colleges continues to grow. The objective of these programs is to provide vocational education to workers in emerging industries (such as renewable energy, tourism, oil, gas, and mining) as well as traditional economic sectors (such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services). Additionally, non-English-speaking countries have an increasing demand for training in English for specific purposes.
- Public-private partnerships in Mexico and Central America continue to be popular models for supporting and sustaining regional academic exchange initiatives. Mexico is the leading country in the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund initiative in terms of the number of participating institutions from both the local government and the private sector. In Panama, academia, local government, and the private sector support the Knowledge in Panama initiative, which aims to position Panama as the premier study and research destination in the region. In El Salvador, the U.S. embassy has established the Salvadoran American Scholarship Program to increase resources for

exchanges, public awareness of cost-effective options for overseas study, and the strengthening of Salvadoran educational institutions. The fund complements the goals of El Salvador's Partnership for Growth by investing in human capital and building long-term institutional strength in education. In Costa Rica, efforts to develop a workforce that meets the demands of multinational companies based there are creating new opportunities for collaboration among nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and academia in support of nontraditional exchanges and virtual education.

- The U.S. government continues to support *Caribbean 2020*, a U.S. interagency strategy for engagement in the Caribbean. Education is one of six priority areas outlined in the strategy, and that priority focuses on support for public-private partnerships that facilitate higher education and workforce development in the United States and the Caribbean. *Caribbean 2020* also focuses on U.S. colleges and universities, to recruit qualified students from the region; deployment of U.S. academic experts to the region, to develop early literacy curricula; and provision of technical assistance programs and virtual tools to teachers, policymakers, and civil society.

South America: Andean Region

- The last quarter of 2019 saw political transitions and civil unrest in four of the five Andean region countries. Political instability is expected for at least the next two years as several countries hold elections and/or face controversial economic and social reforms. Despite transitions in the region, most governments continue to prioritize the education sector and support the efforts of local institutions to internationalize and promote student mobility. The economy in the region will likely stabilize in the next three to five years. Students will look for affordable options to study abroad. Financial aid opportunities from other countries will impact students' willingness to choose the United States as a study destination.
- Bolivia is currently at the end of an economic expansion period and is soon predicted to enter a period

of contraction. The severity of this contraction is yet to be determined, but it will likely affect many families, hindering their ability to send their children abroad to study. Nonetheless, during such periods, young professionals will seek to distinguish themselves, and there will likely be an increased interest in obtaining a foreign education. Advisers have noticed growing student interest in pursuing graduate programs abroad.

- While the U.S. continues to be the desired destination for Colombian students looking to study abroad, mounting competition from other countries, especially those that offer affordable study options and a simple visa process, could be a factor in the coming years. The Colombian peso continues to be devalued, so Colombians will continue to look for opportunities for scholarships and lower tuition offers from U.S. institutions. The Colombian government will continue to focus on education, specifically in STEM-related fields, and the development of research and innovation, which may in turn lead to additional programs and funding dedicated to academic mobility and international research collaboration. Student protests related to government funding levels for public universities continue to have a significant impact on the higher education landscape in Colombia and will likely continue to do so. As a result, many public universities are postponing or canceling semesters, which is important to take into account for recruitment visits to Colombia. This may delay the issuance of transcripts and related educational documents. Please contact the Regional Educational Advising Coordinator (REAC) for more information.
- Ecuador's economic recession is intensifying and will likely impact the country for several years. While Ecuadorian students are interested in studying abroad, they look for affordable opportunities to do so. The government is focusing its initiatives on improving primary and secondary education. The U.S. embassy in Ecuador recently signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education to offer training to English teachers to improve students' English proficiency levels. This initiative will increase the number

of students who will be able to study abroad in English-speaking countries.

- While Peru’s upcoming presidential election will likely create political and economic uncertainty over the next year, Peruvians will continue to look for opportunities to study abroad. Current government actions to improve local education opportunities are yielding a better-prepared generation of students to study in the United States; they have a stronger academic foundation and better English skills. These initiatives include the English language program Inglés, Puertas al Mundo (English, Doors to the World), which is focused on improving the quality of English teaching and increasing the number of hours that students receive English instruction. Colegios de Alto Rendimiento (COAR) is another popular program that funds the country’s most promising students, regardless of socioeconomic background, so they can attend elite, public boarding schools offering the International Baccalaureate curriculum. At the university level, the government is implementing a reform to evaluate and grant licenses to local universities. So far, 89 universities have been granted licenses, and the 43 that have been denied licenses will have to close their doors. This initiative will improve the quality of higher education in the country and therefore improve the academic level of potential graduate students. The latest *Open Doors* report showed a 5.4 percent increase in Peruvians studying in the United States, the largest increase in the Andean region, making Peru a prime recruitment market for international students.

- Though Venezuelans continue to prioritize the U.S. as a study destination, the humanitarian crisis in this country has changed the patterns of student mobility, with Venezuelan students gravitating to more affordable and accessible neighboring countries for study. The closure of the U.S. embassy in Caracas has also made it more difficult for Venezuelans to apply for student visas, though they can still receive visas from U.S. embassies in neighboring countries. This pattern in student mobility will likely persist in the near future. Venezuelans currently living outside of Venezuela

will continue to seek opportunities to study in the U.S., despite facing hurdles such as visa applications and difficulty accessing transcripts. EducationUSA advocates for and supports these displaced students. The worsening of Venezuela’s political and economic environment also expedites the flight of professors to other countries in the region. This loss of faculty has deeply affected the quality of local higher education and academic options available. In 2018, the U.S. embassy in Caracas joined forces with the American Council on Education, SUNY’s Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Center, and local Venezuelan universities to develop two pilot COIL virtual programs to support Venezuelan universities and strengthen network learning globally. The programs aim to strengthen relations between students and faculty, offer online strategies for faculty, and improve English language learning. This type of virtual international

exchange will remain a popular method for engaging with Venezuela into the foreseeable future.

South America: Southern Cone

- The new government in Brazil is in the process of establishing its educational policies and priorities. Since the new Minister of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communications is a former astronaut, STEM will undoubtedly remain an important focus of the Brazilian government. Because new middle and secondary education reform includes English as the only mandatory foreign language, there will be more demand for English courses. University students in Brazil are looking for an international experience, even though their universities may not have agreements with U.S. HEIs for credit. Short-term and non-degree courses that allow students to spend a summer or one semester abroad are popular options. Undergraduate recruitment is also in demand, because dual high

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2017/18	% Change
Costa Rica	8,681	4.3%
Mexico	5,963	4.0%
Ecuador	4,055	0.8%
Peru	3,939	6.6%
Argentina	3,805	11.2%

Five Countries (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2013/14	2017/18	% Change
Martinique	42	121	188.1%
Colombia	439	905	106.2%
Saint Lucia	56	113	101.8%
Barbados	156	258	65.4%
Cayman Islands	92	148	60.9%

Western Hemisphere



school diploma options (Brazilian and U.S.) are becoming more common in major cities. EducationUSA has a new tri-border (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay) office located at one of the largest private HEIs in Foz do Iguacu. It is possible to recruit students from three countries when visiting EducationUSA in this region.

- Argentina is now 22nd in the world and the fourth largest destination in South America in terms of receiving U.S. study abroad students. Partnerships created under the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund and Fulbright initiatives contributed to the 11.2 percent increase in U.S. students studying in Argentina in 2019. That same year, Argentina also reported a 5.4 percent increase in the number of students studying in the U.S. The number of degree-seeking students increased 1.6 percent at the graduate level and a significant 13 percent at the undergraduate level. This result is partially due to the proactive efforts of the EducationUSA advisers in the country. The Alberto Fernandez administration took office in December 2019 and will remain in government until 2023. The Fernandez administration has openly expressed interest in strengthening technical education and STEM careers in Argentina.

- A new university entrance exam will debut in Chile in 2022 and will have two mandatory tests: one for reading skills and the other for mathematical skills. These tests will no longer measure knowledge in traditional subjects, but rather the essential skills to perform well in higher education, with reference to the content and skills of the school curriculum from seventh to 10th grades. Each university will define how to weigh factors (such as a student's grade point average [GPA], class rank, or test results) based on the profile of the student it is looking for and according to the institution's educational model. Students with a GPA within the top 10 percent of their class can apply to university, even if they do not receive the minimum 450-point average required on the two mandatory tests. This change will take effect beginning in 2021 and could benefit more than 6,000 young people who have been excluded from the system. However, this change is seen as a disadvantage by families whose students have typically done well in the current system. As a result, those families may be looking to send their children to study overseas to give them a competitive advantage in the local job market.

- The Ministry of Finance in Paraguay has launched a program targeting students studying English, French, German, and Portuguese. Through the Becas Don Carlos Antonio Lopez

(BECAL) government scholarship, 100 undergraduate students per year will receive funding to support their preparation for graduate studies abroad. Students may renew scholarships for up to two years. More students from Paraguay may apply to graduate programs in the United States through these Paraguayan foreign government graduate scholarships. Additionally, another program launched by BECAL in 2019 helps promote study abroad. That international mobility program is for current undergraduate students who wish to spend a semester abroad. There are two options for this program: The first is to apply directly to one of the world's top 300 universities (per three global rankings) and, if accepted, receive funding from BECAL to cover the semester abroad (up to USD\$10,000 per student). The second option is to apply directly to one of the Paraguay-Kansas Committee partners (including some universities outside of Kansas) and receive a USD\$10,000 BECAL scholarship to study abroad. There are 38 and 50 scholarships per year, respectively, for these options. Only current undergraduate students who have completed 50 percent of their studies can apply.

- The government of Uruguay has incorporated English and technology into the public curriculum at all levels. It focuses heavily on promoting 21st-century tools, such as English language skills, innovation, and technology. In the past 13 years, the government has established the National Agency for Innovation and Research (ANII) and Plan Ceibal, the organization championing Uruguay's national one-laptop-per-child initiative. Seventy-five percent of Uruguayan university students speak English. Uruguayan universities seek to expand their connections to U.S. universities, especially in fields of engineering, technology, education, international relations, and business. Universities are interested in increasing study exchanges, dual-credit courses, and joint degree programs. As of March 1, 2020, Uruguay has a new government that will likely support increasing exchanges and creating more opportunities for Uruguayan students to study in the United States.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

EducationUSA has at least one Facebook fan page in each WHA country and nearly 300,000 followers, and EducationUSA advisers are expanding their reach through increasingly popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, and blogs. Advisers use the WhatsApp messaging application to disseminate information about upcoming events and for cohort advising. Advisers also use Skype for virtual advising and virtual office hours. Facebook event ads and Facebook Live are effective outreach tools in the region. All of these platforms are available for universities to promote their programs and are effective methods to engage with local audiences. The following examples highlight virtual initiatives in the WHA region.

- EducationUSA Colombia's virtual adviser, ED, is available 24 hours a day for consultations. ED also has a mobile application through which students can begin to plan their studies using the EducationUSA *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* model.
- EducationUSA continues to implement webinars and Facebook Live events, highlighting specific parts of the application process. Webinars and podcasts produced by EducationUSA Mexico and posted on YouTube have exponentially increased the views of EducationUSA-produced content.
- EducationUSA Canada continues to rely on technology to reach students. With the First Wednesdays on Facebook Live initiative, launched in spring 2018, EducationUSA Canada regularly provides information on *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* to large audiences. EducationUSA offers a virtual essay-writing boot camp every summer. This four-session program helps participants finish their personal statements for submission with college applications in the fall.
- EducationUSA Brazil and Chile have developed an online cohort advising program that is being replicated in several cities to support virtual discussions. In addition, advisers have developed and implemented a cohort outreach program under which they return to a school or university four

times to meet with a select cohort of students. Advisers have created campaigns involving Black History Month, women's empowerment, and U.S. universities that famous Oscar-winning actors have attended.

- EducationUSA in La Paz, Bolivia, now offers virtual advising services for the neighboring city of El Alto. El Alto has a population of approximately 1 million inhabitants, and the demand for services has increased in the past year.
- Venezuelans rely heavily on social media for information from U.S. universities. Internet connectivity issues and local power outages make virtual activities challenging. EducationUSA centers host viewing parties to help local students view webinars at times when connectivity is more stable, such as in the early afternoon.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Interact with students through EducationUSA webinars and in-person presentations at advising centers.
- Use alumni to recruit students, but do not underestimate the value of sending representatives to build trust and name recognition. Consult EducationUSA when sending alumni to represent your institution.
- Connect current students on campus with potential students from the same country, so the former can share their experiences (via mobile videos, Skype, webinars, etc.).
- If visiting a major city, consider joining other universities recruiting in the country. High-traffic EducationUSA centers prefer to welcome small groups of universities instead of juggling many individual visits simultaneously.
- Reach out to EducationUSA advisers from off-the-beaten-path locations. These relationships may yield new connections with students interested in studying in the United States. EducationUSA can help identify these locations.
- Distribute materials in local languages: Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

- Institutions that have local-language-speaking representatives have proven to be the most successful in recruitment efforts. Parents are more likely to engage the institutions in a meaningful way and follow through in sending their child abroad.
- Highlight anecdotes of institutional support, programs, and services that might be of interest to students from the region, especially those related to culture, history, politics, sports, food, and the arts.
- Use local-language websites to attract students from government scholarship programs.
- International schools have often been the focus of recruitment efforts, but U.S. universities have recently begun to recruit qualified students from prominent national schools as well.
- Stay informed about faculty-led study abroad programs at your institution. Ask professors and students to stop by EducationUSA advising centers to meet local students, and ask students to share their experiences.
- Send U.S. interns from your institution to EducationUSA advising offices to help advisers with local projects and help promote your institution within that country.

Institutional Partnerships

Institutions in several countries in the region have internationalization goals and mandates, and many are ready to enter into broader partnerships, such as faculty exchanges, research or internship programs, and group study abroad for both inbound and outbound students. Dual and/or joint degrees and collaborative online education are becoming more popular.

Before you pursue new institutional partnerships, inventory your faculty on existing relationships—formal and informal—with HEIs and their faculty in the WHA region. Identify the types of programs that are or would be relevant and sustainable for both institutions.

Organizing in-person meetings with institutional representatives is often the best approach for developing partnerships.

Western Hemisphere

Contact the appropriate REAC to develop an initial strategy before traveling. EducationUSA can also share contact information of local institutions. Look for in-country university associations, and participate in their conferences.

For non-English-speaking countries, it is beneficial to have a staff member who speaks the local language to effectively communicate with local institutions. Though staff in international relations offices will speak English, leadership at the institutions will likely not have English fluency.

After a visit to the country, it is important to have regular follow-up with the local institution. Subsequent in-person meetings may be needed to solidify the relationship.

Consider attending the annual NAFSA conference. Several international HEIs from the region attend this conference.

Foreign Government and Private Funding

Argentina. After the G-20 summit in Argentina in 2018, the United States and Argentina signed an Education Framework Memorandum of Understanding to enhance educational exchange programs. In 2019, the Ministry of Education's Department of International Scholarships and International Cooperation (DGCIN) funded more than 130 scholarships to the United States, including 35 Master's degree students and Ph.D. candidates, 17 Argentine teaching assistants, 22 research grants, 10 Friends of Fulbright participants, and 48 teachers and principals for short-term courses. Ten U.S. HEIs are now hosting Friends of Fulbright students, and EducationUSA organizes pre-departure orientations for these students. The government also funds BEC.AR, which provides scholarships for Master's programs and research grants in STEM fields. Argentina supported 15 BEC.AR scholarships in 2019. The City of Buenos Aires Magistrates' Council awards four LLM scholarships through Fulbright. The National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) funds 25 postdoctoral research grants. For research, the National Institute for Agricultural and Technological Research (INTA) awards six grants. The Fernandez administration, which took office in December 2019, is establishing new educational policies and priorities but has already identified technical education and STEM as priorities.

Antigua and Barbuda. Antigua and Barbuda offer a government-funded grant of approximately USD\$5,000 annually, as well as low-interest loans, to students pursuing tertiary-level studies, including online study at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The Bahamas. Lyford Cay Foundation scholarships are generally worth as much as USD\$15,000 per academic year. In addition, the Ministry of Education has implemented a tiered system to award grants and merit-based scholarships ranging from USD\$7,500 to USD\$35,000 for study abroad.

Barbados. The Barbados Scholarships and Exhibitions are merit-based undergraduate scholarships awarded to approximately 30 students with very high scores on the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) or in an associate's degree program at the Barbados Community College. The scholarship pays for tuition and airfare, and provides a stipend of about USD\$3,500 per year for study at home or abroad. In addition, the National Development Scholarships provide approximately 10 awards each year in various disciplines to students between the ages of 18 and 40 who have already been accepted to an internationally accredited university at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Bolivia. In 2014, the Bolivian government launched a scholarship program called Soberanía for graduate studies at top international universities. Eligible fields of study for this scholarship include STEM, medicine, and law. The scholarship covers all costs. However, due to current political changes in Bolivia, the scholarship program is on hold.

Brazil. The Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) Print Program's goal is to increase the academic and social impact of the science produced in Brazil and foster international mobility among Brazilian Ph.D. students and faculty. The program allows Brazilian universities to expand their network of international contacts and partnerships in priority academic fields. The Fulbright Commission in Brazil works with CAPES to expand Fulbright's professional development support for public school teachers. In 2019, Fulbright sent more than

1,000 teachers to U.S. HEIs for one-month teacher training programs.

Canada. The Killam Fellowships Program, administered by Fulbright Canada, provides an opportunity for exceptional undergraduate students from universities in Canada to spend one semester or a full academic year as an exchange student in the United States. This program provides a cash award of USD\$5,000 per semester (USD\$10,000 for the full academic year). For more information, visit fulbright.ca. The Mitacs Globalink Research Award provides USD\$6,000 for seniors in undergraduate programs as well as for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in Canada, to conduct 12- to 24-week research projects at universities overseas (<https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/globalink/globalink-research-award>).

Chile. After 52 years of operation, the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) became the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID). ANID is an administrative agency that oversees programs that promote, encourage, and develop research in all disciplines, technological development, and scientific-technological innovation. ANID focuses on five strategic areas: the formation of advanced human capital, associative research, individual research, visibility of knowledge and generation of strategic networks, and applied research. The mission of the advanced human capital branch is to bolster the advancement of science and technology in the country by funding scholarships for promising graduate and postgraduate students pursuing overseas study. Examples include graduate scholarships in Chile for Master's and Ph.D. programs (scholarships for education professionals and public officials are also included) and graduate scholarships for Master's, Ph.D., and postdoctoral study abroad. The Tuition-Free Program (Gratuidad) provides low-income students financing for tuition and fees for the duration of their studies. In 2019, 376,433 students were awarded Tuition-Free scholarships, an increase of 14.9 percent compared to 2018. Of the undergraduate students at Chilean institutions, 57.2 percent receive this benefit.

Colombia. COLFUTURO (<http://colfuturo.org>), a nonprofit foundation established in 1991 with the support

of the government of Colombia and the private sector, provides loan-scholarships for Colombians to pursue graduate study abroad. These financial aid mechanisms involve granting a student loan that can turn into a partial scholarship if the student complies with certain policies such as working for the public sector upon returning to Colombia. The United States is the overall number one destination country for COLFUTURO beneficiaries, and one of the 11 EducationUSA centers in Colombia is located in COLFUTURO. ICETEX, the Colombian government entity that promotes higher education through national and international educational credits, offers loans for students to pursue graduate study abroad (<http://www.icetex.gov.co>).

Costa Rica. The Costa Rican USA Foundation for Cooperation (CRUSA), in collaboration with the World Bank and local HEIs, supports international exchange and student mobility initiatives in STEM fields, using tools that include the Opportunity Funds program. Through its partnership with the BNC Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano and its EducationUSA center, CRUSA will support approximately 30 Costa Ricans, awarding USD\$40,000 on average, per student, for two years by 2022 (<https://crusa.cr/capital-humano-conocimiento-e-innovacion-becastecnicos/>).

Dominica. The Dominica government awards one Island Scholarship each year to the student with the highest score on CAPE. In addition, the Dominica government awards approximately five scholarships annually to the top student in each of the five faculties of Dominica State College.

The Dominican Republic. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCyT) continues to support study abroad at the graduate level, with 7 percent of all applicants choosing the United States as their study destination. MESCyT prioritizes Master's and Doctoral degrees in the following areas: engineering, basic sciences, public health, education, agriculture, food, and animal sciences. The Ministry seeks to develop partnerships to establish articulation agreements with U.S. research-focused universities that offer in-state tuition for scholars from the



Dominican Republic (<https://mescyt.gob.do/becas-internacionales/>). Inicia Educación provides scholarships to Dominican educators, administrators, and professionals for Master's degrees in education-related fields at top-ranked programs (www.iniciaeducacion.org).

Ecuador. The National Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (SENESCYT) currently offers few scholarships for study abroad. There is no information about upcoming calls for the graduate-level scholarship program. Fundación Capacitar is an NGO that offers a combination of grants and loans to cover the living expenses of current and future Ecuadorian university professors pursuing graduate degrees abroad. Financial support from Capacitar can be used for graduate studies, and the amount provided varies, depending on the applicant's financial situation (<http://www.fundacioncapacitar.org/requisitos.php>).

Guatemala. GuateFuturo offers loans of as much as USD\$50,000 for Master's programs. Students may be awarded scholarships for 50 percent of the loaned amount, provided they comply with three requirements: 1) be awarded a postgraduate degree, 2) return to Guatemala, and 3) remain in the country for three to five years. Students can obtain an additional 10 percent discount if, upon returning to the country, they engage in employment for one year

in the public sector or as teachers or researchers in public or private institutions. Those pursuing Master's degrees in management or Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs are awarded only 25 percent of the loan amount as a scholarship.

Honduras. The government of Honduras' Becas Honduras 20/20 funds graduate studies abroad through the International Graduate Scholarships Program initiative (becashonduras2020.gob.hn). In 2019, approximately 197 Honduran students received awards to cover airfare, lodging and maintenance, tuition and fees, medical insurance, and materials. Priority fields of study for this program are tourism, housing, textiles, agriculture, manufacturing, and business support services. HONDUFUTURO offers the same model of support as GuateFuturo (described under the Guatemala entry), with loans of up to USD\$50,000. Students may be awarded scholarships for 50 percent of the loan amount, provided they meet three requirements: 1) be awarded a postgraduate degree, 2) return to Honduras, and 3) remain and work in the country for three to five years. Students can obtain an additional 10 percent discount if, upon returning to the country, they immediately engage in employment for one full year as teachers in local universities. Those pursuing Master's degrees in management or MBA programs are awarded only 25 percent of the loan amount as a scholarship.

Western Hemisphere

Mexico. The U.S. embassy in Mexico, with support from local higher education associations and in partnership with HEIs, offers a series of short-term programs focused on women and minority empowerment as well as research. In addition to managing traditional Fulbright exchanges, the Fulbright Commission in Mexico (COMEXUS) supports non-Fulbright innovative, short-term programs in undergraduate research, teacher training, and professional internships, both in Mexico and the United States. The government of Mexico sends graduate students mainly via the Fulbright Commission and the National Council of Science and Technology.

Panama. The Panamanian government continues to prioritize the strengthening and development of local education, focusing mainly on two areas: English and STEM. With the goal of increasing the quality of English instruction in public high schools through teacher training, programs such as Panama Bilingue will continue to provide short-term study scholarships (<https://www.meduca.gob.pa>). The National Secretariat for Science Technology and Innovation (SENACYT) administers several scholarship programs, including the Fulbright-SENACYT scholarship, at the undergraduate and graduate levels in a range of fields. The Secretariat recently announced an expansion of support and eligible programs, including doctoral candidates and internships (<https://www.senacyt.gob.pa>). The Institute for Training and Development of Human Resources (IFARHU), a Panamanian government institution designed to develop human capital through education, offers loans of as much as USD\$80,000 to support completion of undergraduate and graduate programs abroad as well as scholarships to complete short-term, intensive language training (www.ifarhu.gob.pa).

Paraguay. In 2015, the Paraguayan government launched its first scholarship program, BECAL (www.becal.gov.py). This program funds approximately 120 scholarships each year for Master's and Doctoral students in education and STEM fields. Students must be accepted at one of the top 300 world universities or top 100 higher education programs, according to three university rankings. In addition to providing government scholarships, the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay administers

the Fulbright Program. This is the third year that EducationUSA has co-organized BecasPy, a mentorship program for Fulbright and Fulbright-Cal, with support from BECAL. This program has been held annually in three different cities to attract students from outside the capital.

Peru. PRONABEC (which stands for Programa Nacional de Becas, or National Scholarship Program in English) is Peru's government agency for scholarship programs and manages Beca Presidente de la República. The scholarship supports Master's and Doctoral studies in STEM, public policy, and education (<https://www.pronabec.gob.pe/beca-presidente/>). The call for applications began in May 2020 for programs beginning in Fall 2020 and ending in Fall 2021. Programa Crédito-Beca Reto Excelencia-SERVIR (www.retoexcelencia.gob.pe/) is a loan-scholarship program that helps public servants pursue graduate studies abroad. To date, more than 220 government employees have benefited from this opportunity. The government has confirmed the program will be available in 2020, but it has not yet shared an official launch date for the call for applications.

Uruguay. The government of Uruguay identifies or nominates candidates for U.S. embassy exchange programs, and, in recent years, it has become a strong contributor to Fulbright academic programs. Every year, ANII funds Fulbright scholarships for study at U.S. institutions to earn Master's or Doctoral degrees in subjects such as biotechnology, environmental sciences, information and communications technology, human and animal health, energy, education, creative industries, agribusiness and agro-industry, transportation, and criminology (<http://www.fulbright.org.uy/becas-para-uruguayos/%20beca-de-posgrado/>). Of all ANII funds, 40 percent are dedicated to supporting students attending U.S. universities.

Organization of American States (OAS). Students from member countries are eligible for Rowe Fund loans (www.oas.org/en/rowefund/). These interest-free loans are available at the graduate level throughout the region and for undergraduate studies in English-speaking Caribbean countries. The Rowe Fund offers EducationUSA Opportunity

Funds students from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay the opportunity to apply for this loan without a cosigner.

Regional Economics and Market Demand

The majority of governments in WHA have identified STEM-related fields as key focus areas for workforce development and economic growth. Governments in the region support both technical and research-related pursuits in STEM fields. Specific strategic sectors include oil, gas, mining, agribusiness, and healthcare. Several countries, such as Colombia, are investing in the "Orange Economy" and considering how culture and creative industries can play a pivotal role in economic development. Entrepreneurship is a regional focus area as countries consider ways to support small business growth. Several countries also rely on service industries (tourism, banking, information) as major employment sectors.

Countries in the region seek opportunities to collaborate on non-degree, tailor-made short-term programs, especially for technical education. Such programs include internships and other hands-on experiences for young professionals, virtual education opportunities, and capacity-building opportunities with local academic institutions as well as the public and private sectors.

Regional EducationUSA Events

Refer to the EducationUSA website and social media accounts of specific countries to find current country-specific information about upcoming fairs, webinars, center events, and other activities. Contact the appropriate REAC for the region you are interested in engaging. Additional opportunities include participation in beginner adviser trainings, thematic sub-regional workshops, and capacity-building workshops for local HEIs.

Fairs and Conferences

Brazil. EducationUSA organizes the Brazil Roadshow in seven cities every spring (typically in April), immediately before or after Brazil's premiere international education conference, FAUBAI. This tour is a great opportunity to recruit students, meet key leaders in internationalization, and establish partnerships. In 2019, the Roadshow reached more than 5,178 students. For updates, visit <http://educationusa.org.br/site/the-brazilian->

educationusa-roadshow/ or contact roadshowbrazil@educationusa.org.br.

Caribbean. Aside from traditional, independently organized Caribbean college fairs, EducationUSA organizes fairs in the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. EducationUSA is evaluating the feasibility of offering a virtual fair in place of the in-person Caribbean fair circuit, which had been planned to take place in October 2020.

Colombia and Central America STEM Tour. In March 2020, EducationUSA organized the fourth annual EducationUSA STEM Tour, including four stops in Colombia and stops in Costa Rica and El Salvador. While the Costa Rica stop was canceled, it is planned as an annual event. The tour promotes both graduate and undergraduate programs in STEM. In addition to participating in a fair in each of the cities, representatives visit local high schools and universities and take part in cultural events. For updates, please contact colombiatour@educationusa.org.

Guatemala and Honduras EducationUSA Tour. In future years, EducationUSA Guatemala and Honduras plan to host business-focused fairs in Antigua, Guatemala City, San Pedro Sula, and Tegucigalpa. The tour will promote undergraduate and graduate programs in business. In addition to coordinating open public events, advisers will organize a series of networking events and school visits, as well as cultural activities to enrich the experience.

High School Counselor Training Workshops. EducationUSA Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Eastern Caribbean islands, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago

organize training workshops on U.S. higher education for local high school counselors.

LLM Fair. In 2019, EducationUSA's third South America LLM Fair circled to eight cities in five countries: Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Curitiba, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Lima, and Bogota. The event included 50 U.S. HEIs and attracted approximately 1,175 visitors. The fall 2020 LLM fair will not take place in-person as previously planned. However, there will be a general virtual college fair for the Western Hemisphere on September 19, 2020. For updates, please contact llmfair@educationusafair.org.

South America. The 2019 South America EducationUSA fair circuit attracted 84 U.S. colleges and universities, traveled through 12 cities, and had more than 33,000 students in attendance. While the 2020 South America EducationUSA fair circuit will not take place in person as previously planned, there will be a virtual college fair for the Western Hemisphere on September 19, 2020. For updates, please contact southam@educationusafair.org.

Venezuela. EducationUSA Venezuela offers EducationUSA Mock Fairs in all four centers across the country. As political and economic conditions have made it difficult for U.S. university recruiters to visit the country, EducationUSA has devised this innovative approach to educate the public about U.S. higher education while giving their English language students a challenging and engaging project. EducationUSA advisers train English students from local BNCs to research and represent U.S. colleges and universities at these fairs, for which U.S. institutions are encouraged to send

materials. Mock fairs reach more than 6,000 students a year.

Alumni Fairs. EducationUSA regularly hosts alumni fairs, in which U.S. embassy and consulate officers represent their alma maters after receiving guidance from their institutions and EducationUSA advisers. U.S. HEIs are encouraged to mail informational materials to the organizers for use in these fairs.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

Costa Rica continues to be the region's top receiving country, with 8,681 U.S. students in AY 2017-2018, making it the ninth most popular study abroad destination worldwide for U.S. students. Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru are also leading host destinations in the region, and all are ranked among the top 25. With 14.9 percent of the total U.S. study abroad population in WHA, which is only second to Europe, it is noteworthy that Barbados, Brazil, Curaçao, Guatemala, Guyana, Panama, St. Lucia, and Uruguay are rapidly growing destinations.

Studying abroad continues to be an area of academic mobility that holds immense potential for Colombia. On the ground, advisers are seeing a great increase in interest in U.S. study abroad in Colombia from academic communities in both the U.S. and Colombia. More U.S. institutions are sending students for semester exchanges through third-party providers, and there is an increase in short-term faculty exchanges to Colombia.

The new Bolivian government has lifted the visa requirements for U.S. citizens, which is likely to result in more study abroad opportunities and institutional partnerships promoting student mobility with the United States.

In 2019, U.S. embassies and/or Fulbright Commissions in Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Uruguay received Study Abroad Engagement Grants from the USA Study Abroad Branch at ECA to carry out capacity-building projects to promote American study abroad in the region. EducationUSA centers have collaborated with local universities, embassies, and Fulbright Commissions to support these initiatives.

Best and Worst Times of the Year to Interact with Students (Face-to-Face and Virtually)

The academic calendar in WHA varies greatly. In Northern Hemisphere countries, the academic year runs from August, September, or October to May, June, or July. In Central America and Southern Hemisphere countries, the school year aligns more closely with the calendar year, running from February or March to November or December. However, a few countries have varied academic years, depending on the region within the country. Avoid traveling during Christmas, at the beginning of the New Year, and during region-specific festivities, such as Carnival, Holy Week, and All Saints' Day/Day of the Dead. Check with REACs before planning a trip, to avoid visiting during local holidays.