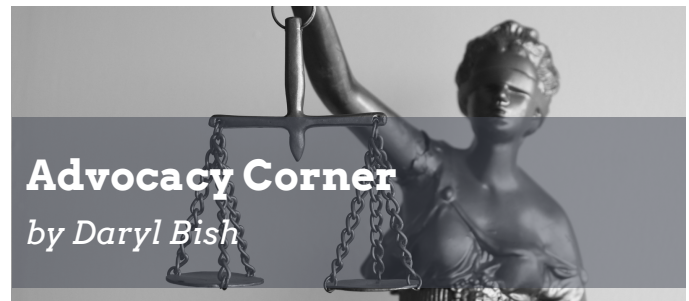


We encourage you to submit an article for a future publication or become a reviewer. It is a wonderful way to get involved in EnglishUSA and score professional development for yourself. We thank our sponsor, iTEP for their support of the EnglishUSA Journal. We hope to see you at the next EnglishUSA Stakeholders' Conference on October 13 and 14 in Alexandria, Virginia. Be sure to mark your calendars!

Happy reading!

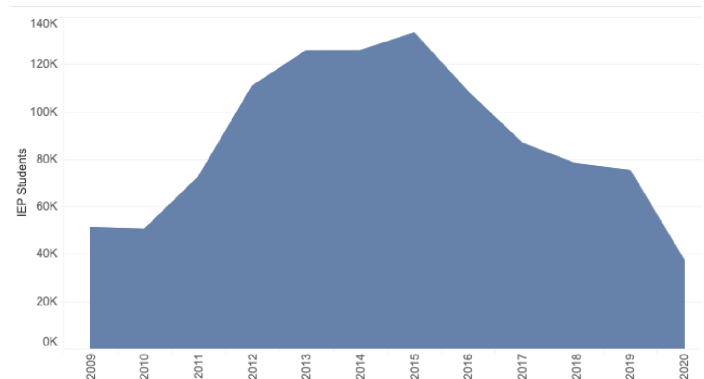
*Lisa Kraft is the Director of International Special Programs and Director of ELI Academics at Pace University. She serves as President of the EnglishUSA Executive Board and is a member of the Professional Development Activities Committee. Her work focuses on developing sustainable relationships with international partners and providing the best educational experience possible for international students and visitors.*

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Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted international education in the U.S. resulting in dramatic decreases in international student enrollment. In November 2021, the Institute of International Education (IIE) released the 2021 Open Doors Report for the 2020/2021 academic year. It showed a 15% decrease in international student enrollment at U.S. schools from the previous year, which is the largest year-to-year decrease in enrollment ever reported by IIE. Such a large decrease in student numbers effects all sectors of international education, but English Language Programs (ELPs) were particularly devastated. IIE reports that international student enrollment in Intensive English Programs (IEPs) decreased over 50% from 2019 to 2020.

*IEP Enrollments by Year*



*Institute of International Education (2021). IEP Student Enrollments by Total Students and Total Student Weeks, 2009-2020) Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from <https://www.opendoorsdata.org>.*

*Hopefully, the forthcoming IIE report on IEP enrollments in 2021 will show that programs are rebounding from the lows of 2020, but low enrollments continue to impact the field as we enter the third year of the global pandemic.*

EnglishUSA members have reported increased student numbers in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, but they have been uneven across the field and not close to pre-pandemic enrollments. This, one hopes, is not the much talked about “new normal” and that ELPs will continue seeing increased enrollments in the 2022/2023 academic year. There is reason to believe this will happen.

Since the Biden administration issued its Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education last year, visa appointment wait times have improved, embassies are prioritizing student visas, nonimmigrants are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter the country, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced plans to set new agency-wide backlog reduction goals. Furthermore, in a sign that the administration is open to learning lessons from the pandemic, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) permanently adopted the use of electronic signatures and transmission for the Form I-20, a move universally praised by Designated School Officials (DSOs) and programs. Most recently, in April 2022, SEVP extended its March 2020 COVID-19 guidance to cover the 2022-23 academic year. This allows schools to continue counting online classes toward a full course of study in excess of the regulatory limits. While many ELPs are resuming in-person classes and services, continuing the March 2020 guidance gives programs flexibility should COVID cases again increase in their areas.

These significant and welcome developments demonstrate that the administration is working to support international education as it recovers from the effects of the pandemic, but more could be done. In April 2022 the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration called on the Department of State to improve visa application processing for students and to “continue to remind consular

officers that attendance at a lesser-known college, is not, in itself, a reason for refusing a student visa applicant”. This mirrors the request made by EnglishUSA, NAFSA, TESOL, UCIEP, ACCET, and CEA in their August 2021 joint letter recommending that consular officers adjudicate student applicants “regardless of chosen institution or program type, given that all accredited and SEVP-certified legitimate schools must be accorded the same weight under the law.” Consular officers should, for example, not determine that an applicant should take equivalent English courses in their country of residence before studying in the U.S.

The administration has not yet developed a national strategy for recruiting international students. Ideally, the recruitment strategy “sets specific enrollment targets, engages a broader number of U.S. institutions in enrolling international students, and seeks to attract a more diverse pool of students from a wider range of countries and regions around the world” as recommended by NAFSA and supported by EnglishUSA, UCIEP, and TESOL. EnglishUSA is continuing to advocate for a national recruitment strategy that includes English language study in the U.S. We urge you to discuss this with your congresspeople. You can also submit a letter to the administration via NAFSA and urge them to take action and include English language study in any national recruitment strategy.

To further support ELPs and the field, Cheryl Delk-Le Good, Executive Director of EnglishUSA, applied to become a member of the reinstated Homeland Security Academic Advisory Council (HSAAC). English language training is a unique, large, and diverse sector of the international education field serving international and domestic students. Cheryl’s knowledge, experience, and expertise in the English language training field and the regulations and issues impacting it would benefit the HSAAC. Her inclusion would give

the HSAAC direct representation of the English language training field.

EnglishUSA is hopeful that Cheryl will be included on the HSAAC and that the Biden administration will develop a national strategy for recruiting international students. In the meantime, we are taking a significant step to promote and support English language programs in the U.S. In May 2022, EnglishUSA applied for a Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. If awarded, the grant would support several initiatives that will contribute to rebuilding U.S. capacity to host English language students and increase U.S. competitiveness in the global IEP industry. While the initiatives in the grant proposal do not directly support advocacy efforts, a primary initiative is to collect enhanced data on ELP enrollments and operations in the U.S.

Currently, U.S. IEP enrollment data at the national level comes from the Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors Report (referred to above) and a Data Mapping Tool by SEVP. SEVP also releases an annual SEVIS by the Numbers report but enrollment data on language training students is not included. The report focuses more on degree programs and K-12 students. Neither the IIE Open Doors Report nor the SEVP data collect detailed information on IEP enrollments, such as course type, age groups, study groups, or visa type (current reporting only looks at F-1 data). If the grant is approved, EnglishUSA proposes developing data sets that meet industry specific needs and support EnglishUSA advocacy efforts. In short, EnglishUSA's goal is to collect IEP-specific data that, for the first time, represents the diversity and nuance of the field.

We at EnglishUSA appreciate your support and encourage you to continue to advocate for your students and programs. Please share your thoughts and questions about any of the above topics on EnglishUSA's Engage Forum.



*Daryl Bish is the Assistant Director and PDSO at the University of Florida English Language Institute. He has extensive experience as a teacher, program recruiter, and administrator, having worked for university and community college programs. His master's degree is in Curriculum and Instruction, with TESL Certification. He has served as the NAFSA IEP Network Leader, a CEA site reviewer, and is currently Chair of the Advocacy and External Relations Committee on the EnglishUSA Executive Board.*