



## **Joint Statement on Supporting International Students and Intensive English Programs in the United States**

*January 19, 2017*

More than one million international students from 175 countries attend colleges and universities in the United States, with over 100,000 of those attending short-term intensive English programs (IEPs). As organizations committed to advancing excellence and equity in English language education, TESOL International Association (TESOL), EnglishUSA, and the Consortium of University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP) strongly affirm their support for these students and the IEPs that help them attain their academic, professional, and personal goals.

The United States has long been a global leader in international education and cultural exchange, providing a welcoming environment for students from around the world who come to learn about culture and language, exchange ideas, and build a sense of identity and cultural awareness. Unfortunately, the uncertain political and economic climate could make the United States seem less likely to offer international students a safe place to learn and grow. That uncertainty, however, underscores the importance of providing these students with access to IEPs.

IEPs enable international students to develop their English language proficiency, and they also provide social and cultural benefits. They enable students to collaborate with their peers from around the world, which fosters the respect for diversity and multiculturalism that are fundamental to the global economy. While studying English, international students also learn about U.S. culture, and through their interactions they gain firsthand knowledge of the United States, its people, and its values. Through the relationships that an IEP encourages, American and international students can develop a mutual understanding, and international students carry that understanding back to their home countries.

IEPs and international students also bring economic advantages. In 2015, international students added more than \$36 billion to the U.S. economy, a \$4 billion increase over the previous year.\* In addition, these students bring immense intellectual capital. U.S. colleges and universities are the envy of the world, largely because they attract the best and brightest students from all parts of the globe, students who lead cutting-edge research projects and develop innovations that benefit the U.S. economy. As the number of international students studying in the United States continues to grow, IEPs contribute significantly to state and local economies, which helps to sustain economic growth across the country.

TESOL International Association, EnglishUSA, and UCIEP stand together in support of international students and IEPs. Successful IEPs provide opportunities for collaboration across national boundaries, they foster respect for diversity, and bring economic advantages that encourage growth and innovation. It is vital that the United States continue to welcome international students and scholars, who enrich campus communities and create opportunities for greater cross-cultural understanding. We urge the U.S. government to support international students by facilitating access to high-quality IEPs. The leadership of TESOL, EnglishUSA, and UCIEP, stands ready, as always, to assist in this important endeavor.

*\*For more detailed information on the economic impact of international students in the United States, please see the [NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool](#).*