



A Guide to Hiring Global Student Talent

Talent Toolkit



GO GLOBAL

UNLOCK OUR PIPELINE. BECOME A POWERHOUSE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Go Global

- 3 Workshop Recap
- 4 Meet the Experts

Understand the Landscape

- 6 Pittsburgh Landscape
- 7 Competitive Landscape
- 8 The Bottom Line

Get Started Guide

- 10 Make the Case
- 12 Recruitment
- 14 Legal and Institutional Support
- 16 Company Culture



ABOUT GO GLOBAL

Welcome to the Go Global Toolkit!

Go Global began as a strategic partnership between nine Pittsburgh organizations that want to pave the way to attract and retain top global talent in our region. We came together to host a workshop of employers, schools, and legal experts to demonstrate the benefits, demystify the process, and collaborate on recruitment solutions.

[WATCH THE HIGHLIGHTS](#)

With world class educational institutions and a diverse range of organizations already here, the stage is set for us to **unlock our pipeline and become a powerhouse**. Use this guide as a resource to get started in your organization.



MEET THE EXPERTS

Source of International Talent Panelists (University Perspective)



Karina Chavez
Pittsburgh Council
on Higher Education



Valerie Kerr
University of
Pittsburgh/
Swanson School



Sean McGowan
Carnegie Mellon
University



Marie Deem
LaRoche University



Linda Gentile
Carnegie Mellon
University

Hiring International Talent Panelists (Employer Perspective)



Grace Lee
UI/UX Candidate



Kelly Roddy
ConnectiveRx



Pat Gallagher
MSA Safety



Karen Walter
Near Earth
Autonomy



Geoff Burke
Koppers



Navid Kazem
Arieca

Navigating Visa Sponsorships Panelists (Legal Perspective)



Ankur Goel
Microsoft



Andrew Behnke
Dentons



Kimberly Bennett
Jackson Lewis



Ellen Freeman
Immigration Law

UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE

Setting the scene for global talent in Pittsburgh



UNLOCK OUR PIPELINE BECOME A POWERHOUSE

We need to keep global college talent in Pittsburgh. And we can't wait.

Pittsburgh is facing unresolved and accelerating problems from historic decline. Our population losses are causing alarming repercussions: losing regional jobs, shrinking labor force, declining tax base, and more.

To reverse decline, erase the scarcity mentality, and begin to thrive, we must chart a new strategy and catalyze a prosperous future. A key part of that strategy is retaining more global college talent.

We can start with the highly qualified international students who are studying at some of the nation's best universities, right here in our backyard.

#1
**IN NATURAL
POPULATION
DECLINE**

Negative
JOB GROWTH

4.5%
**FOREIGN BORN
POPULATION IN
PITTSBURGH**

VS

13.5%
**NATIONAL
AVERAGE**

COMPETITION IS INTENSIFYING

Competition for talent is intensifying as the Pittsburgh region's demographics point to continued shortages. Other markets are facing similar conditions, but many have already amped up their games, regularly recruiting early talent from Pittsburgh institutions.

Big markets like New York, Silicon Valley, Atlanta, Boston, and Austin continue to attract Pittsburgh graduates, but we're also seeing students choose mid-size destinations like Cleveland, Charlotte, and Madison. Cities like Tulsa and Nashville are actively running talent attraction campaigns for remote workers.

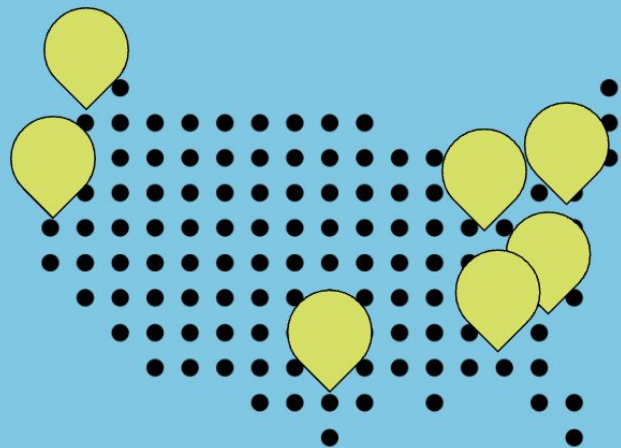
Student focus groups consistently show all students view global-mindedness as an indicator of how advanced companies are on technology, culture, and ultimate market success. It's vital that we think globally.

Double Click: First destination outcomes



CMU's Career & Professional Development Center collects data on their students' first career destinations. **Check out [their dashboard](#) for some eye-opening data** on where CMU students are moving after graduation.

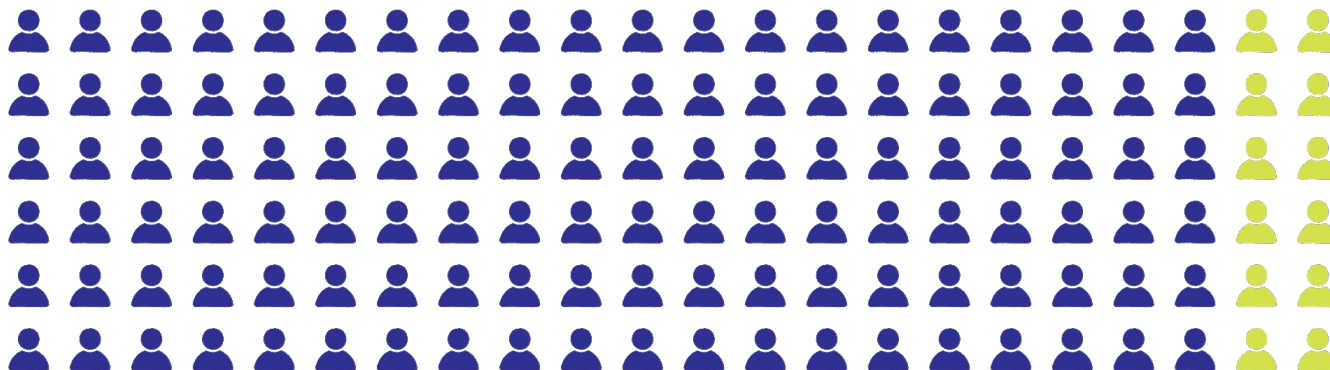
Everyone is poaching our talent.



THE BOTTOM LINE:

We have the talent here.

 = 1000 Students



132K Annual university
student population
in southwestern PA

12K International student
population annually,
representing **top global talent**

They have the skills we need.

\$500M

Annual economic impact

This student population represents a massive opportunity for our economy and culture. International students especially are highly likely to study **high-demand, high-powered fields** such as AI, robotics, machine learning, data science, and international business.

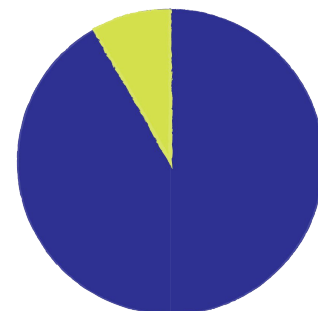
And they want to stay,
but they're leaving.

50%

of college students leave
Pittsburgh after graduation

90%

Of international
students leave, citing
lack of opportunity



GET STARTED GUIDE

Take the first steps in your organization.



MAKE THE CASE

Lay the groundwork.

Identify advocates

Find champions in the C-Suite first, since leadership sets the tone for the organization and understands the business realities supporting the investment.

Next, rally support among hiring managers and recruiters who have the challenge of filling high-skill, hard-to-fill positions.

Make the case

Be prepared to highlight the benefits of hiring international students. Do your research – you can start with the Double Click article on this page, and the activity on the following page.

Start with internships

Did you know? Because visa sponsorship is not required for international students at U.S.-based internships, you can easily test and learn by hiring international interns.

Double Click: Global talent drives results



Companies with diverse teams that include international employees are:

- 35% more likely to outperform their competitors
- 70% more likely to capture new markets.
- More likely to help companies embrace innovation, a global perspective, and a sustained competitive edge

[Read more on the Johns Hopkins Blog.](#)

“These are individuals that chose to come across the world for a reason. They're very passionate, very strong-willed, educated, and great candidates.”

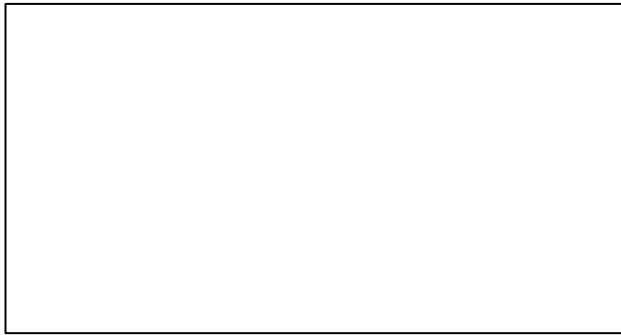


Geoff Burke
Sr. Talent Acquisition
Specialist at Koppers

BOTTOM LINE BENEFITS

How does enabling your organizations to hire international talent add tangible and intangible value? What would you take back to your CEO, executive team, and hiring manager to relay the benefits?

“Hiring international talent at _____ has bottom line benefits”
(Your organization)

1**2****3**

Benefit Word Bank

Accelerated growth

Improved productivity

Diverse team

Enhanced culture

Strengthened employer brand

RECRUITMENT

Attract top talent.

Start early

Take a look at your existing recruitment process, and identify areas where you could better serve the global talent pool. International students have choices and are planning their own early careers with companies who are likely to support their eventual sponsorship. They will prioritize companies already versed in hiring international students.

Include international employees

Ensure representation in your on-campus and other recruiting to make authentic connections with students. Create signage for fairs and networking events that welcomes international students, rather than excludes them.

Double Click: Go Hyper Local



Are you using local job boards to your advantage? Make sure to post on the platforms of these Go Global partners to reach top talent that's already interested and invested in our region.

- [Pittsburgh Technology Council](#)
- [Vibrant Pittsburgh](#)
- [Innovation Works](#)
- [Pittsburgh Robotics Network](#)
- [Handshake](#)

“As an international candidate myself, it was both heartwarming and uplifting to feel the support and hear the initiatives that universities, organizations, and companies are putting into hiring globally. It felt almost surreal, especially when many times, just being a foreign national can feel like an automatic rejection.”



Grace Lee
UX/UI Candidate

IDENTIFY FIRST STEPS

What are the most difficult positions to fill or teams to staff at your organization?
Start by identifying a particular team and/or roles where you could be successful with hiring international talent.

“These teams struggle to find top talent, and these roles have been open:”

TEAMS

ROLES

LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Rely on the experts.

Engage legal counsel

Legal counsel plays a vital role in guiding company processes and helping you to understand the pathway to hiring and retention. Make sure you have the support you need, either internally or externally.

New federal administrations have typically made changes to the immigration system. To stay up to date on this topic, check in at the sites of the Go Global legal panel:

- [JacksonLewis](#)
- [Dentons](#)
- [Ellen Freeman](#)

“One of the myths that I often hear from employers is that visa sponsorship is too hard, it’s too expensive. It is not as large of an investment as companies often think it is.”



Kimberly M. Bennett
Associate
Jackson Lewis

Partner with institutions

Universities are the holders of the student F-1 visas. They, along with students, handle the major paperwork associated with OPT and CPT visas (see page 15 for visa explanations).

Most institutions also have robust career centers with full-time experts who are more than willing to be a resource to you. If you haven’t already, start building your local network with connections from Pittsburgh institutions. You can start with the employer portals from the Go Global universities:

- [Carnegie Mellon University](#)
- [University of Pittsburgh](#)
- [La Roche University](#)

"Universities and colleges have an incredibly important role to play. They're a liaison, a collaborator, a convener, and a partner with both the students and the employers."



Karina Chavez
Executive Director
Pittsburgh Council
on Higher Education

VISA FACT SHEET

F1 Student Visa:

Allows students to enter the United States as a full-time student at an accredited college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution or language training program. Student must be enrolled in a program that culminates in a degree, diploma, or certificate, and the institution must be authorized by the U.S. government to accept international students.

Optional Practical Training (OPT):

Upon completion of an academic program, students are eligible for temporary employment that is directly related to the F-1 student's major area of study. Students are eligible to receive up to 12 months of OPT employment authorization, and if the area of study was in a designated STEM discipline, they are eligible to extend up to 24 months if offered a job by an employer that fully participates in the "e-verify" employment verification process. If students are not able to attain OPT employment, they are required to change to another immigration status or leave the country 60 days after completing the program.

STEM OPT Extension:

Students that have earned a degree in certain Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, may apply for a 24-month extension of post-completion OPT employment authorization if they are:

- An F-1 student who received certain STEM degrees included in the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) [STEM Designated Degree Program List \(PDF\)](#);
- Employed by an employer who is fully enrolled in and is using E-Verify; and
- Received an initial grant of post-completion OPT employment authorization based on a STEM degree.

O1 Visa:

Allows individuals to gain employment status if they demonstrate extraordinary ability in their field as it relates to sciences, education, business, or athletics. These are often niche skills that are otherwise unavailable in the U.S. labor market and most often apply to Ph.D. professionals and researchers. All applicants are subject to burden of proof.

H-1B Visa Program:

Allows companies in the United States to temporarily employ foreign workers in occupations that require the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge who possess a bachelor's degree or higher in the specific specialty, or its equivalent. H-1B specialty occupations may include fields such as science, engineering and information technology. Each year, 65,000 H-1B visas are available nationwide and an additional 20,000 are available for those individuals with a Master's degree or higher from a U.S. academic institution. Petitions must be filed by April 1 of the year in question with an effective date of October 1; approximately 30% of applicants accepted into the program. It is important to note that universities and non-profits are exempt and can hire foreign nationals without being subject to this quota.

H-1B1:

Similar to H-1B status, the H-1B1 program provides for the temporary employment of nonimmigrant aliens in specialty occupations from Chile and Singapore, limited to 1,400 nationals of Chile and 5,400 nationals of Singapore.

COMPANY CULTURE

Create a welcoming home.

Cultural shifts work both ways

Look at existing cultural changes regarding space, traditions, food, and language for potential shifts or accommodations.

Engage current international employees in the approach.

Put yourself in their shoes

These students came across the world to learn and contribute. They come here to solve big problems and do their best work. Let them do so and bring a diversity of thought, ideas, culture and lived experiences into your company.

Double Click: Duolingo, a Pittsburgh success story



Duolingo is often cited as a best-in-class organization for international recruitment and retention. They've created a strong employer brand, a robust array of programming, and a global culture for international employees.

Read about their approach [on their blog](#).



PAVE THE WAY

Take a moment to sketch out your process — from defining the hiring needs through successful onboarding. Where do you see barriers? Where might you need resources? What would need to change or evolve?

“There’s an opportunity to evolve our process to attract and retain top talent.”

OUR CURRENT PROCESS

--	--	--	--	--

OUR EVOLVED PROCESS

--	--	--	--	--

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