

Speaker:



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Title:
"Challenges and Obstacles for International Scholars *from a Latin American Perspective*"

Abstract:

International students and scholars are invaluable contributors to the global scientific community, enriching it with diverse perspectives and innovative insights. However, they encounter a myriad of challenges when pursuing educational and research opportunities abroad, particularly in the United States. This abstract delves into the significant obstacles these individuals face, encompassing limited access to quality education, language barriers, cultural differences, mental health concerns, financial burdens, and employment complexities.

Access to quality higher education remains a formidable challenge for many international students, especially those from middle and low-income countries. Economic constraints and limited public education availability hinder their educational aspirations. Additionally, language proficiency presents hurdles, necessitating costly English language tests and adjustments to academic writing and presentation styles.

The pressures of academia, combined with culture shock, contribute to mental health issues among international students, underscoring the need for robust support systems. Financially, they bear higher costs, including relocation and visa fees, and grapple with unfavorable tax statuses due to the absence of tax treaties between their home countries and the U.S. Upon graduation, challenges persist in securing permanent employment and residency due to restrictive visa regulations and employer sponsorship requirements. Addressing these obstacles is crucial, not only ethically but also for fostering scientific diversity, inclusion, and innovation.

To mitigate these challenges, there is an urgent need to raise awareness, offer targeted support and resources, and promote equity and inclusion in academia. Implementing enhanced language training, cultural competency programs, and mental health support can facilitate smoother transitions for international students and scholars. Regular communication and check-ins with international colleagues can ensure their well-being and foster a more inclusive academic environment. Embracing diversity and providing tailored support will unlock the full potential of international students and scholars, enriching our scientific community and advancing knowledge for the collective benefit.