Digest of Items of Interest to the Caucus of Academic Reps – November 1, 2013

Positions

- **Bloomberg Distinguished Professor in Statistical Genomics, Johns Hopkins Univ** (see attached)

Conferences/Workshops

- **2014 North Carolina State University Building Future Faculty Program Announcement**

Other News

- **Doctoral Students and U.S. Immigration Policy**

Conferences/Workshops

**2014 North Carolina State University Building Future Faculty Program Announcement**

If you are a graduate student or postdoc or work with graduate students and post-doctoral students, I would like to draw your attention to a unique opportunity to engage future faculty members in an enriching, preparatory experience. North Carolina State University will offer the 2014 Building Future Faculty Program on April 2-5, 2014. This is an all-expenses paid workshop for diverse graduate students and post-docs who are preparing for a faculty career. It is targeted to students who are currently about one year away from beginning a faculty job search. The workshop provides information about what to expect as a faculty member, the kinds of resources available to faculty for teaching, and the type of research productivity that is expected of faculty. During the workshop, participants spend time with faculty and department heads in their discipline discussing how to best prepare for this type of work, what the life of a faculty member is like, and receiving personal tips and feedback. The program aims to increase faculty diversity and inclusion.

Past participants had the following things to say about the program:

- *All of these sessions were incredibly informative and have brought a number of concerns to my attention that I would not have been mindful of without running into issues first.*
- *The department visit was a great platform to ask questions that might not be appropriate in an interview.*
- *This experience has certainly prepared me for the job market as a future faculty member. The knowledge I have gained and the contacts that I have acquired have been invaluable. I would recommend this program to anyone pursuing a career in academia.*

More information about the 2014 Building Future Faculty Program is available at [http://oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/building-future-faculty-program/](http://oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/building-future-faculty-program/) along with the application form. Applications are due by November 10, 2013.
Whether the United States should make it easier for foreign graduates of U.S. universities to acquire visas and permanent residency is an important question raised by current immigration reform proposals (1). Such policies should be informed by rigorous analyses of whether international doctoral students are important for research and support technological innovation. We discuss the evidence on this point, its implications, and some new policy ideas.

There are three rationales commonly cited to ease foreign student entry. First, academic scientists argue that their ability to perform research and generate new knowledge is impaired when universities are unable to recruit the best doctoral students, domestic or foreign (2, 3). Second, the perceived difficulty of getting and sustaining a visa for graduate work in science and engineering (S&E), combined with rapidly improving training around the world, may be diminishing the willingness of international doctoral students to come to U.S. universities (4, 5). Finally, U.S. immigration policies raise barriers that must be surmounted by foreign students wishing to launch careers in the United States after graduation. Many believe this dampens competitiveness by pushing innovative people abroad (6). This policy is increasingly out of touch with more welcoming standards in Canada, Australia, and Europe (7).

In recent decades, the numbers and percentages of foreign doctoral students in S&E programs have grown tremendously. Over the same period, there has been a major increase in research output from those laboratories (see the figure). Yet these trends may simply reflect incidental correlation, both having risen for other reasons, e.g., expanded federal research funding, or increased commercial demand for technical applications of basic science. Without a clear demonstration that enrolling more international students is an instrumental source of more and better science, the claims made above lose much of their force. Any innovation benefits have to be weighed against downsides to immigrant entry discussed in the literature: Foreign students are expensive to train; they drive out domestic counterparts; they reduce salaries of native-born postdoctoral students and scientists and engineers (8, 9). The theoretical basis for adverse effects on native employment and wages is that immigrants and domestic workers are substitutes within skill classes. Recent theoretical and empirical work shows that substitutability may be imperfect, which limits adverse effects of immigrants on salaries (10). Influx of immigrants with certain skills may even raise demand for workers with complementary skill sets (10).