Latin American Higher Education Qualifications: Global Mobility Patterns and Trends

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Overview

Latin America has been the second fastest growing region in the world in terms of its rate of higher education enrollment in the past 20 years. Higher education in the region has undergone massification and multiple reforms. As access to higher education expands and student size grows, international mobility opportunities also increase. This analysis looks into the evolving trends in Latin American student mobility by exploring WES credential evaluation data and examining the WES applicant profile in the U.S. and Canada over the past decade. As a result, the analysis provides a unique lens through which the trends can be viewed against the backdrop of the paradigm shift happening in the migration of the continent's internationally educated population.

The analysis examines the following countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela—a narrow scope compared to IIE and OECD parameters.

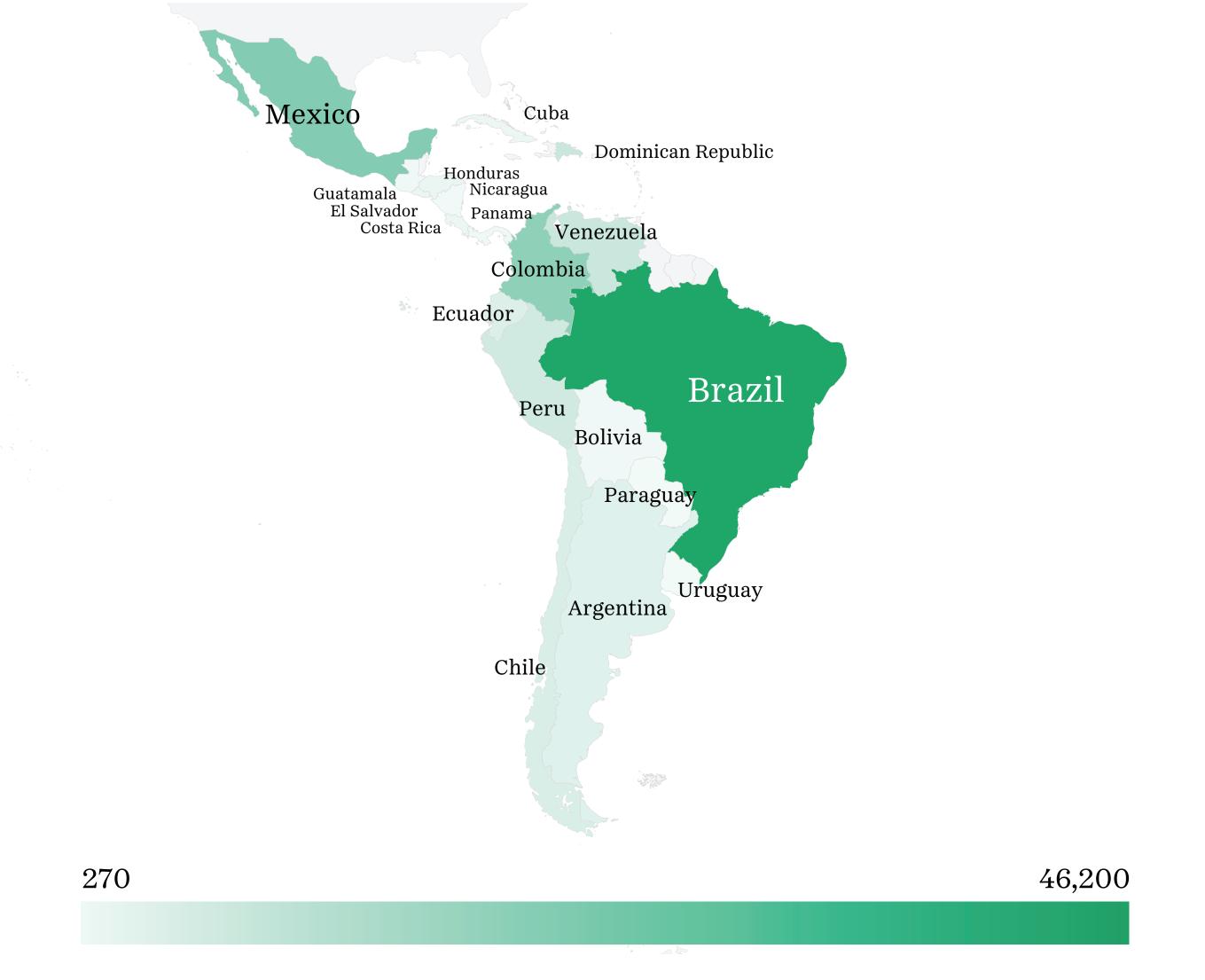
Regional Education Updates

- The Buenos Aires Convention (the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean) sets out to promote academic mobility among the countries in the region. It went into effect in October 2022.
- A growing number of universities in the region invested in building regional university networks and internationalization, partnering with institutions both inside and outside Latin America.

Top 10 Destinations for Tertiary Students from Latin America

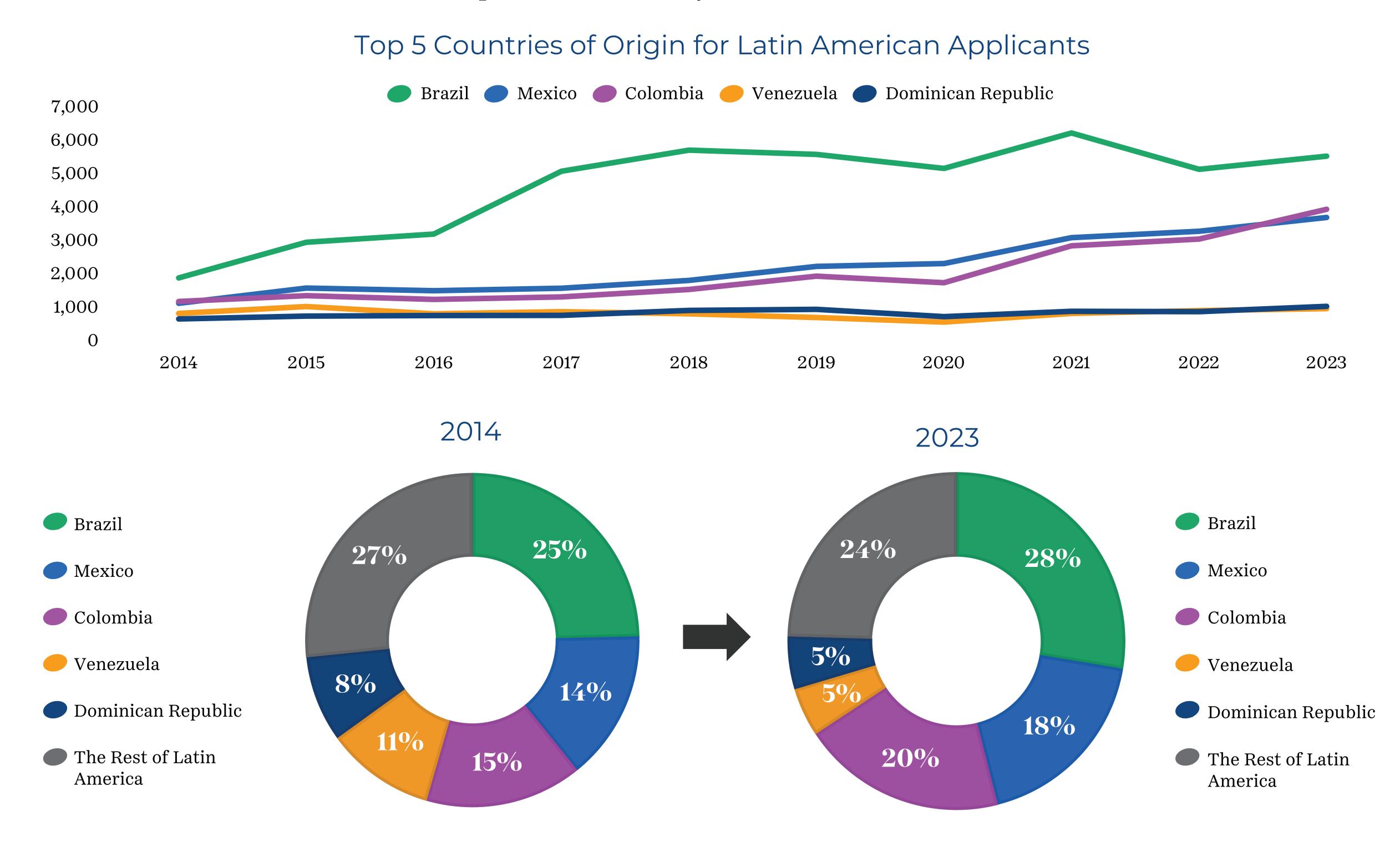


Completed Evaluations with Education Credentials from Latin America (2014-2023)

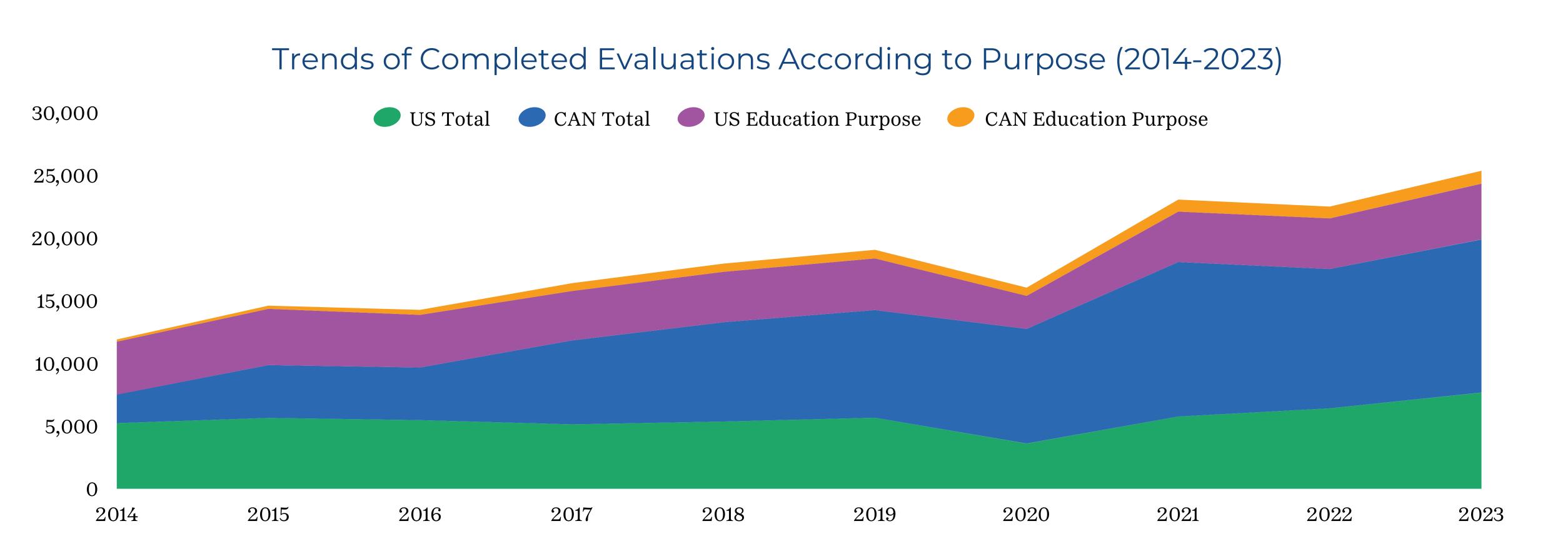


Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia Are the Top Sending Countries in Latin America

Students from the top 5 sending countries make up around three-quarters of all students from Latin America. Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia have been among the top 20 countries of origin of international students for the past decade. In the 2022/2023 ranking by Place of Origin (IIE), Brazil ranks 9, Mexico 12, and Colombia 18. Venezuela has experienced a steady decrease in its share since 2017.

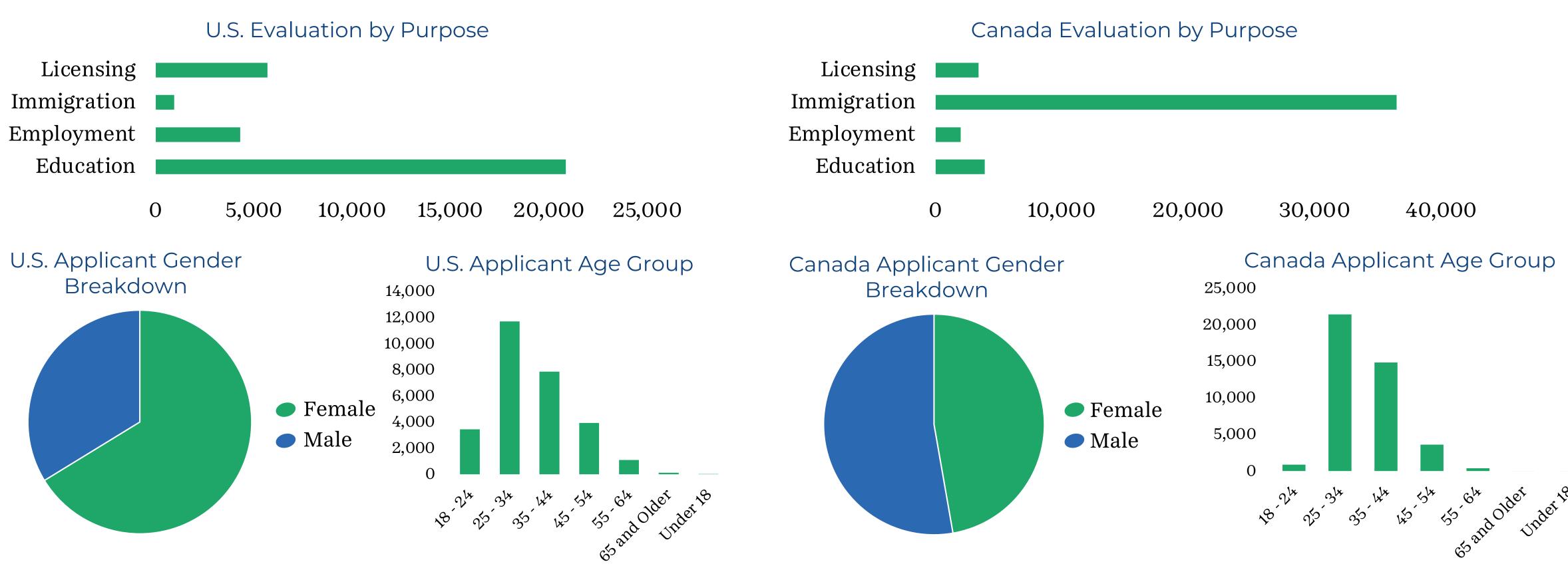


Student Mobility to U.S. Returns to Pre-pandemic Level



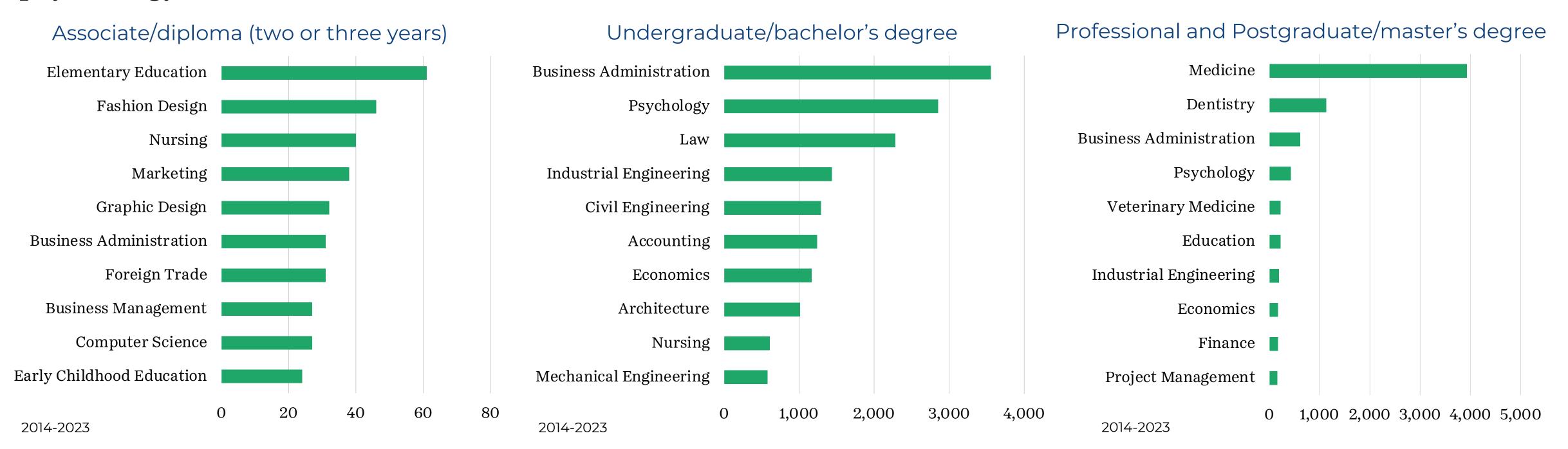
Comparison of U.S. and Canada Latin American Applicant Profile

Although the growth in Canada is strongly driven by immigration, numbers of students seeking tertiary education in Canada have also increased. Inbound students to both the U.S. and Canada are dominated by the 25-34 age cohort. Notably, there are more females than males in the U.S. profile, while the gender breakdown in Canada is more evenly split with a slightly larger male proportion.



Top Fields of Study by Academic Level for Latin American Students

The majority of Latin American international students are enrolled at the undergraduate level. Business administration has consistently been the most preferred field of study over the past decade, followed by psychology and law.



Key Takeaways

Huge disparities in student body size exist between the top 5 sending countries and the rest of Latin America. Intra-regional variation requires careful consideration of each individual country's internal and external factors when looking at the mobility trends of the countries in Latin America as a whole. While Brazil remains the top sending country, Venezuela is likely to lose its leading position, as its outbound mobility continues to decline at a steady pace. Future outlook: possible continued upward trajectory in student mobility to the U.S. and Canada, given strengthened regional efforts in the internationalization of higher education. A recipient country's immigration and student visa policy might flatten growth or accelerate it.

Source:
https://opendoorsdata.org/fact_sheets/student-mobility/
https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDU_ENRL_MOBILE#S WES Evaluation Dat



