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Identification and Development of AI Talent in the United States

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education and retention of AI talent is critical for the United States to maintain dominance in AI development and deployment. While the US leads the AI race in compute and commercial support, several forecasters place the US behind India and China in AI talent. Definitions and measures of "AI talent" continue to evolve alongside algorithms. The US will need to cast a wide net to fill current skills gaps, and to anticipate what types of talent might become useful in the next decade.

01 — INTERNATIONAL TALENT

- International talent remains strategically important in the "AI race." International students earned more than 50 percent of AI-related master's degrees and nearly 60 percent of AI-related PhDs at American colleges and universities in the last decade.
- According to one AI research tracker, the People's Republic of China educates the most "top AI researchers in the world"; however, 72 percent of Chinese-educated AI researchers work in American institutions post-grad.

03 — CURRENT POLICY

- Current federal policy does not adequately address the role of international talent, and focuses heavily on infrastructure and apprenticeships rather than higher education. International students and workers face challenges working and staying in the US, with the OPT-STEM extension only reaching three years.

02 — NON-TECHNICAL TALENT

- AI development and deployment increasingly requires the work of neuroscientists, philosophers, policy experts, and more. Conversations around AI talent often neglect these fields, and further quantification on hiring and global migration of talent in these areas is needed.
- Neuroscientists' work in interpretability is critical to safe AI development and deployment. With theories and tests developed from studying human brains, they have the ability to map neural networks and reveal hidden goals or behaviors.

04 — POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create AI-specific immigration pathways, using E-type visas to separate AI talent from the typical H1B and green card process.
- Fund interdisciplinary programming at universities across the US, using the FIPSE Special Projects Program.

"US institutions employ 59% of the world's elite AI researchers, measured by publications at top-tier conferences."

"Now, [AI companies] are shifting away from recruiting traditional [computer science] majors and towards the broader research base. There's both supply, and the pool of AI devs is also getting exhausted."

— Matthew Law, OpenAI



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