

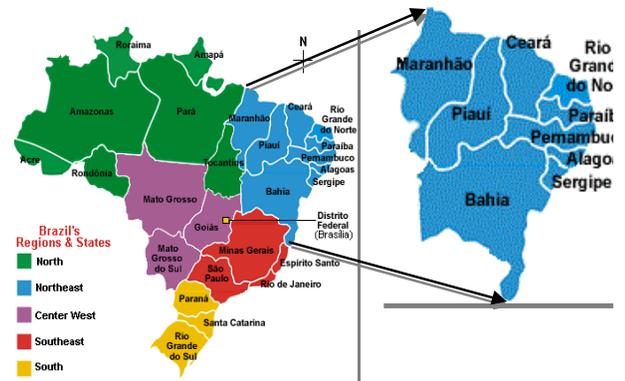


## Educational Partnership Opportunities in Northeast Brazil

November 2014

### INTRODUCTION

Blessed with breathtaking coastlines and extraordinary natural resources, Brazil's Northeast had never been quite able to fulfill its economic potential, until the past 10 years. The Northeast has been growing faster than Brazil itself and is becoming one of the country's leading economic centers. This in turn has created a growing middle class that is aware that education is the key to further growth.



The nine states that make up Brazil's Northeast Region, although still less developed in comparison to the states in the south of the country, have excellent universities. While the international education market within the São Paulo- Rio de Janeiro – Brasília triangle has been established for quite some time, there are strong universities in the northeast that are becoming more engaged in seeking international partnerships. U.S. colleges and universities looking to find new partners in this region of Brazil will be warmly received, and many are already sending students and faculty overseas. The Scientific Mobility Program continues to offer U.S. schools a great opportunity to host Brazilian students whose expenses are paid by the Brazilian government. We encourage U.S. educational institutions to visit the region to establish long-term faculty and student exchanges, and research projects with the excellent schools in the area. This report provides a brief overview of the Northeast's potential for U.S. educational institutions looking to increase their presence in this region of Brazil.

### ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The Region is geographically equivalent to almost twice the size of California, a population of approximately 51 million, and an economic output similar to that of Peru. The state capitals of Recife, Salvador, and Fortaleza are the three largest population and economic centers in the Northeast. Historically an agricultural center, billions of dollars of investment and improvements in infrastructure have diversified the economy, including attracting substantial investments in the energy, IT and logistics sectors, and led the region to grow at rates faster than the nation as a whole.

During the past decade, the economy has more than doubled. While the GDP growth rate of Brazil was at 2.5% in 2013, in the states of Pernambuco and Ceará it reached 3.5% and 3.4% respectively. Under President Dilma Rousseff, resources were poured into the region. The industrial complex and port of *Suape*, just south of Recife, has seen \$2.5 billion in public investment between 2011 and 2014. It hosts the hemisphere's largest shipbuilder, the hemisphere's largest wheat mill (Bunge), and the country's largest refinery, Abreu e Lima, a \$17 billion investment. Investments in infrastructure and education are expected to continue in part because of Northeastern voters' strong support for President Rousseff in the October 2014 elections.

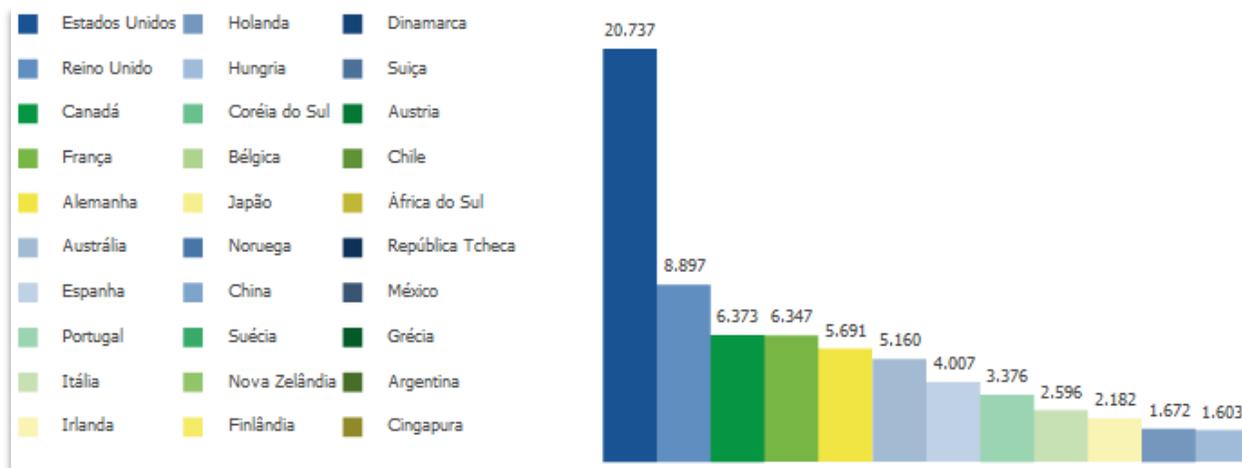
## **OPPORTUNITIES**

U.S. educational institutions looking to the Northeast will find receptive partners as U.S. colleges and universities enjoy tremendous popularity with students. For the 2012/2013 academic year, there were 10,900 Brazilian students studying in the U.S., a 20 percent increase over the previous year. The large public universities, considered generally more prestigious than private institutions in Brazil, will favor relationships with those that offer faculty exchanges and research projects, including joint publications. Brazilian administrators also express their interest in finding partners that offer dual-degree programs.

### *Scientific Mobility Program*

Through the Scientific Mobility Program (formerly called "*Science without Borders*"), the Brazilian federal government has increased its investment in sciences. The federal program aims to provide 101,000 scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students from Brazil for one year of study at colleges and universities in the United States and other countries. The program's specific focus is on promoting scientific research, increasing international cooperation in the STEMS and engaging students in a global dialogue through international education. Already over 71,000 Brazilian students have studied worldwide, mainly undergraduates. The U.S. has been by far the most popular destination, receiving over 20,000 students. It is expected that the program will continue throughout Dilma Rousseff's second term (2015-2018).

### Scientific Mobility Program Countries of Destination



The dark blue line above represents Brazilian students that chose the U.S. as their destination for studying abroad, followed by the U.K, and Canada in second and third place respectively. The Brazilian universities sending the largest number of students to the United States are federal universities with strong STEM programs. The top schools from the northeast of the country that have taken advantage of the program include the University of Pernambuco with 1,866 students, the Federal University of Ceará with 1,716 students, and the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador with 1,583 students. Northeast students follow Brazil’s national trend in choosing the U.S. as their top destination.

#### *Win the World Program*

Win the World, or ‘*Ganhe o Mundo*’, is a government program specific to the northeastern state of Pernambuco. Since 2012, high school students with English language backgrounds are chosen from public schools to receive scholarships to study abroad in English-language countries for five to six months. In 2013, more than 1,200 high school students qualified for the scholarships. Since the program is targeted at students attending public high schools, students tend to come from lower-income households who otherwise would not be able to study abroad.

The state of Pernambuco covers all expenses over the course of the program and is conscious in selecting school partners that are cost-effective, making Canada and New Zealand more competitive than the U.S. High schools interested in hosting Brazilian exchange students through this program should contact the U.S. Commercial Service in Recife.

#### *Potential Partners*

The Federal University of Pernambuco, well known within Brazil for its scientific research, has twice been elected the best university from the north and northeast of Brazil by *Guia do Estudante*, a national university ranking magazine. The University has recently collaborated on research projects with Texas A&M, Duke University, and Ohio State, among others. Similarly, the Federal University of Ceará’s (UFC)

programs are considered to be some of the best in Brazil. UFC is a public and tuition-free university, like most federal universities, with strong academic programs in the sciences, medicine, engineering and education. The University currently ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in the country overall and second in Computer Science, according to a university ranking by the popular newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*.

The University of Paraíba, in the city of João Pessoa, has already engaged in building partnership agreements with U.S. schools such as the University of Illinois, Ohio State University, and SUNY Oswego, among others. The Federal University of Bahia, already well-established in the international arena with partnerships such as the University of Florida, the University of Michigan, Rutgers, Temple and Georgia State University. The Federal University has also established a program to teach one-month classes in English at their campus, in collaboration with Michigan State University faculty.

There are private institutions that are working to develop their international programs. The University of Fortaleza (Unifor), in Ceará's state capital of Fortaleza, has diverse programs with a strong international exchange focus. Unifor offers courses for both Brazilian and international students with a number of courses in English. The Universidade Católica de Pernambuco, another private institution, has an urban campus setting in the middle of the city of Recife. The Catholic University focuses on undergraduate studies and is particularly strong in the humanities and medicine. University officials have informed us that they are looking to expand their international partnerships with U.S. institutions.

Below is a sample of universities in the Northeast that are open to partnerships with U.S. educational institutions.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Location City and State</b>	<b>Top Areas of Study</b>	<b>Public/Private</b>	<b>Student Population</b>
Universidade Federal do Pernambuco	Recife – Pernambuco	Computer Science, Biomedicine, Physics Chemistry, Law, Mathematics	Public	28,642
Universidade do Ceara	Fortaleza – Ceara	Architecture, Physics, Mathematics Computer Science Chemistry	Public	23,682
Universidade de Fortaleza	Fortaleza – Ceara	Architecture	Private	24,513
Universidade Federal da Bahia	Salvador - Bahia	Business, Biology, Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, Physics	Public	27,317
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	Natal – Rio Grande do Norte	Chemical Engineering Physics, Psychology Business Administration Biomedicine	Public	24,536

Universidade Federal da Paraíba	João Pessoa - Paraíba	Agronomy Chemistry Chemical Engineering Mathematics, International Relations	Public	27,213
Universidade Federal de Sergipe	Sergipe – Sergipe	International Relations Chemistry Dentistry Physics	Public	23,989
Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco	Recife – Pernambuco	Veterinary Science Agronomy Fishing Engineering Gastronomy	Public	10,104
Universidade de Pernambuco	Recife – Pernambuco	Mechanical Engineering Electrical Engineering Dentistry Medicine Sports Science	Public	16,969
Universidade Federal de Campina Grande	Campina Grande- Paraíba	Medicine, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Env. Science, Agronomy	Public	10,400
Universidade Católica de Pernambuco	Recife – Pernambuco	Law, Computer Science Architecture Chemistry Chemical Engineering Environmental Engineering	Private	10,000
Universidade Federal de Piauí	Teresina - Piauí	Education, Agronomy, Medical Sciences, Physics	Public	16,000

## CHALLENGES

While Brazil continues to be a great market for recruiting students, the Northeast has some special considerations. Despite moving forward at a higher growth rate than other parts of the country, it is still less developed compared to the south and southeast of the country. The majority of students cannot afford to pay U.S. tuition without assistance. U.S. educational institutions looking to recruit large number of self-funded students may find a better candidate pool in southern Brazil.

While schools in the northeast may be more open to building partnerships with U.S. institutions, there is still a lack of infrastructure to accommodate U.S. students looking to study in Brazil. Many of the schools with whom we have spoken are addressing this challenge by working with individual students to find

appropriate accommodation. Housing through youth hostels that offer semester leases, or placing students with families is common.

Similar to the rest of the country, the main challenge for students from the Northeast studying abroad continues to be weak English language skills. However, there are a number of programs sponsored by the U.S. and Brazilian government that are addressing the English-language gap. In 2012, the Ministry of Education launched “English without Borders”, an initiative to support university students that improves English language teaching in schools through a variety of learning methodologies. Approximately 2 million users will be provided online English courses. More than 250,000 TOEFL exams will be offered to assess students’ language ability, and classroom courses will be provided by public universities to those students who fit the profile for the Scientific Mobility Program. The Federal University of Paraíba confirmed to us that in just two years the program has been quite successful in preparing science and engineering students who would otherwise not qualify for the Scientific Mobility Program.

The Brazilian government-funded Fulbright English Teaching Assistants places two teaching assistants in each of the 59 Federal Universities. In 2013, 1080 Brazilian secondary English teachers took six-week courses at U.S. universities in a cooperative program with the U.S. government. Also, USAID has a partnership with the Ministry of Education called English Learning Laboratories. This corporate partnership program funds language centers to help awardees of the Brazilian Scientific Mobility Program scholarships to improve their English skills for their study in United States.

## **MARKET ENTRY**

U.S. educational institutions can increase their exposure to Brazilian students in various ways. Those looking for sustainable growth are encouraged to take a long-term approach. Schools may contact the nearest [U.S. Department of Commerce Export Assistance Center](#) or [Education USA](#) office to discuss specific strategies.

The following are general market entry strategies to consider:

- As in most countries, developing partnerships that encourage faculty exchanges and research between institutions remains highly effective. In many cases, because of a lack of partnerships in comparison to the more popular Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo hubs, U.S. schools will find meaningful partners in Northeast Brazil who are committed to results. U.S. schools seeking university partnerships are encouraged to work with the U.S. Commercial Service to visit Brazil through our Gold Key program.
- [Working with IIE](#) to receive students through the Scientific Mobility Program may be the simplest way to attract Brazilian students for a one-year fully-funded study abroad program. Institutions that can address the English language issue by providing conditional acceptance tied to English language training may have a competitive advantage in attracting Brazilian students.
- Participating in student recruitment fairs hosted by Education USA and other institutions.

- Because of the difficulty in learning English, high schools or colleges that offer short-term ESL programs for international students do well in recruiting students. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Brazil see an increase in students combining summer vacations with English language learning programs.
- U.S. institutions may work with agents or representatives to market their programs to potential students. Some institutions have strong alumni networks that sponsor events in Brazil to market their brand.

For more information about education opportunities in the Northeast, please [Izabela.Duarte@trade.gov](mailto:Izabela.Duarte@trade.gov)

Locate the nearest U.S. Export Assistance Center or Commercial Service offices by visiting [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov)

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