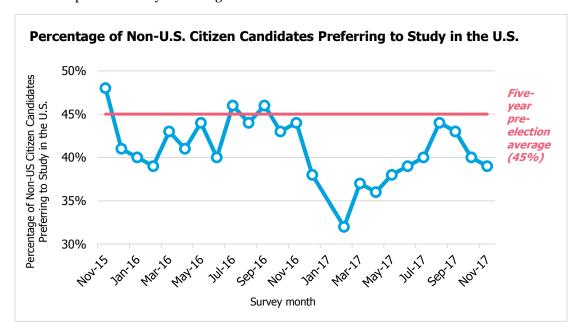**Graduate Management Admission Council®**

International Candidate Interest in U.S. Business Schools Stays Below Pre-2016 Election Levels

Monthly surveys highlight a recent three-month decline in interest amid uncertainty around post-graduation work opportunities and safety concerns

December 2017

U.S. business schools continue to face reduced interest from international candidates more than a year following the 2016 presidential election, according to recent data collected from non-U.S. citizen mba.com registrants. Monthly surveys show that international candidate preference for the U.S. as their study destination hit a low in February, steadily recovered through the summer, and has since declined for three consecutive months. Interest has stayed below the previous five-year average each month since the election.

Percentage of Non-U.S. Citizen Candidates Preferring to Study in the U.S.

Recent Downturn Driven by Post-Graduation Work Opportunities, Safety Fears

Among the 1,992 non-U.S. citizen candidates surveyed between September and November 2017, 23 percent previously considered applying to a U.S. program but do not currently plan to apply. The most frequently cited reasons for their decision are concerns around their ability to obtain a job in the U.S. post-graduation (54%), concerns around their ability to obtain a student visa (51%), safety and security fears (47%), the political environment (42%), and racism and discrimination fears (39%).

This year, about half (49%) of the nearly 700 U.S. business school programs that responded to the 2017 Application Trends Survey reported receiving fewer international applications than they had the previous year. Just 31 percent of programs reported international application increases, and 20 percent reported no significant change.

GMAC will continue to track international candidate interest in U.S. business schools into 2018 with periodic surveys of prospective students and the annual Preliminary Application Trends Survey, slated to launch in February. For additional insights on graduate business education, please visit gmac.com/research.