



# Obama to boost US recruiting

**Guy Healy**

**T**HE US is likely to step up its recruitment of the world's best young minds in the wake of last week's election win by Barack Obama, some leading American academics say.

Stanford Graduate School of Business political science professor David Brady says he expects a "jump shift" in US efforts in the global talent wars.

After a visa crackdown in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks, the US market share of overseas students fell to 21.6 per cent in 2004, down from 25.3 per cent in 2000, figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development show. Professor Brady, a visiting fellow at the University of Sydney's US Studies Centre, said that since many of the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks held student visas, he couldn't see how US universities could liberalise their heavy monitoring of students.

"Security will never go back to as lax as it was before 9/11," says Brady, also deputy director of conservative think tank the Hoover Institution.

"The US will step up (recruitment) to cover the whole range of graduate students, particularly engineering, physics, economics, natural resources and chemistry."

A "continuation of the existing trend" in which developed societies increasingly

recognise the link between university training and innovation, and the influence of Obama as president, will drive recruitment.

"You'll get a jump shift under Obama. He comes in with the ability to be more co-operative, less unilateralist," Brady says.

"It's an easier way to do that and there's a lot of business support for it. And, frankly, universities and faculty and young college students were huge supporters of Obama."

Similarly, Carnegie Mellon Adelaide executive director Tim Zak says the US recruitment of foreign students is still below the levels before 9/11.

"In the meantime, the UK and Australia really welcomed more international students. It's much more competitive for international students," Zak says.

"I expect under Obama the trend to attract the best and brightest to the US will continue and perhaps attempt to accelerate.

"It's very clear that national economies are increasingly more competitive as they attract the very best minds in the world.

"For hi-tech, more value-added industries and products, attracting the best and brightest is critical to success."

Before the global financial crisis, international higher education enrolments were projected to rise from 2.2 million to 3.7 million by 2025, student placement firm IDP Education says.