



Student Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

July 10, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Matthew T. Albence
Deputy Director and Senior Official
Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf and Deputy Director Albence,

I write to echo the concerns of my state and local fellow student leaders, and the more than one million international students studying in the United States, regarding the guidance released on Monday, July 6, 2020 by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). While we are still waiting for a clarification and a final decision for international students, this guidance blurs even more the already muddy waters of the higher education's uncertain future.

ICE's new regulations come at a time when institutions are stepping up swiftly to protect their communities and reopen the country. Now, more than ever, we need flexibility, not a big step backwards. ICE should allow any international student with a valid visa to continue their education regardless of whether a student is receiving his or her education online, in person, or through a combination of both, whether in the United States or in their home country, during this unprecedented global health crisis. If a student decides to enroll to a college who plans to physically reopen, and then mid-way through the academic year the college switches modality, these students will be forced to leave the United States on a one-way trip to the closed borders of their home country. And given their countries of origin and time zones, many of them would not be able to make an online program work from their home countries. They would have to drop out permanently.

International students yield an estimated economic impact of \$41 billion and support more than 450,000 U.S. jobs. These students contribute significantly to the overall cultural, educational and economic growth of our nation. In addition to harming individual students, this would substantially damage public colleges and universities that have become more dependent on international student tuition as states have cut funding.

We urge the administration to drop this policy, reevaluate its position and offer international students and institutions the assurance and protection needed to survive the new normal and take into great consideration the educational and health wellbeing of our students.

Sincerely,



Jorgo Gushi
Chair
Student Advisory Council

CC:

Attorney General Maura Healey
Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place
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