



May 30, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations, we write to express deep concern regarding the recent announcement that U.S. embassies and consular sections are pausing new student visa interviews to prepare for additional social media screening and vetting.¹ This pause would greatly impede the ability of international students already admitted to our institutions for the summer and fall 2025 semesters to enter the country in a timely manner and pursue their studies. As we have previously communicated, we stand ready to work with federal officials to address security concerns regarding any international students. However, we are concerned that imposing a broad pause on all student visas would send a message that our nation no longer welcomes talented students and scholars from other countries. Such a pause will also hinder our ability to compete for the world's best and brightest minds to study in the United States.

Following the news this week about the pause in student visa interviews, we are alarmed that you plan to begin the revocation of student visas for Chinese students, who have already been vetted and are completing their education in the U.S. While we do not want any student in the U.S. that is a threat to national security, this sudden action will discourage the overwhelming majority of international students with benign and honest intentions, especially those from China, from choosing to study in the U.S. We hope you will share additional information about this new policy as soon as possible. As you likely know, we worked closely with the previous Trump administration as Presidential Proclamation 10043 was implemented to address national security concerns.

Higher education has actively engaged and has long been a partner with the federal government in addressing malign foreign influence and other national security threats targeting our research and education missions. We have worked in cooperation with law enforcement to ensure that institutions are diligent in preparing for and responding to threats while also continuing to protect the beneficial and safe exchange of students and researchers across the globe. Higher education has been and continues to be a partner with the federal government in addressing national security concerns in our visa and immigration system. For example, we engaged with the federal government on the creation of the Student and Exchange

¹ May 27, 2025, *Politico* report of State Department Memorandum student or exchange visitor (F, M, and J) visa appointment: <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/27/trump-team-orders-stop-to-new-student-visa-interviews-as-it-weighs-expanding-social-media-vetting-00370501>

Visitor Program following 9/11 and have continued to do so in the years since to improve the system. We hope to continue working with the State Department and the administration on these important issues, which impact our exchange programs, international students, and research programs.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, over 1 million international students chose to study in the United States, resulting in a nationwide economic impact of nearly \$44 billion.² An extended pause in scheduling interviews would discourage international students from coming to the United States.³ We urge the State Department to make any pause on student visa processing as short as possible and use all available tools to cut wait times and streamline the process for student visa applicants. We have been encouraged that State had previously waived interviews for certain nonimmigrant visa applicants, including those who previously held visas in the same nonimmigrant categories.⁴ We also ask that you prioritize clarity and transparency on any new policies so our institutions, as well as our international students, have clear guidance on these policy changes. Addressing these issues and concerns will help ensure the United States remains a destination of choice for talented global students seeking to study in our country.

We stand ready to be a resource and partner in welcoming international students to the United States and to our institutions of higher education. We understand and embrace the need to continue to thoroughly vet international students. At the same time, we encourage the State Department to act expeditiously to implement any new vetting measures so new student visas can continue to be quickly and efficiently processed. In addition, if there is an extended delay, we ask that the State Department take proactive actions to quickly process student visa applications after the pause, so there can be no delays in the leadup to the 2025-2026 academic year. We look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell, President

On behalf of:

Achieving the Dream

ACPA-College Student Educators International

American Association of Colleges and Universities

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

² <https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2>

³ <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Letter-State-Visa-Processing-070524.pdf>

⁴ <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/important-update-on-waivers-of-the-interview-requirement-for-certain-nonimmigrant-visa-applicants.html>

American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
Association for Institutional Research
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Campus Compact
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Complete College America
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Social Work Education
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration
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