

Letter in Solidarity with International Students

To Our Fellow Gators,

BACKGROUND

On July 6th, 2020, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced their policy modifications regarding international students studying in the United States. Despite many universities offering online-only courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, international students are not allowed to take all online courses and be able to maintain their legal visa status in the United States. If international students fail to take an in-person or hybrid course, either at their current university or transfer to another university that does, they are required to leave the country.

IN SOLIDARITY

As your Associated Students Board of Directors, it is our responsibility to engage in campus-wide collaborations and external advocacy efforts. We strongly condemn the recent xenophobic decision made by DHS, ICE, and the current federal administration. All San Francisco State students deserve equitable and safe access to their education, especially during this pandemic. We stand in solidarity with all international students, both at San Francisco State and across the California State University system. As your student representatives, we promise to advocate and continue to support you with all of our available resources and services. We want to recognize international students and their feelings of concern, confusion, fear, anxiety, etc. It's clear that the decision by DHS and ICE was shortsighted, and if implemented, it will lead to devastating effects on international students and their ability to complete their education, find housing, afford transportation, and access crucial campus resources and services.

As of today, many students face travel bans implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19, creating an impassable barrier to their home countries. In addition to this barrier, if a student was able to get back to their home country, forcing them to return could put them at a significantly higher risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Plus, students cannot simply transfer to another university just four weeks before the Fall 2020 semester starts, creating another barrier for international students to find education elsewhere. The quality of education for international students will deteriorate if this policy is implemented, due to the lack of resources and clear challenges, such as access to the internet, coordinating time zone differences, and the inability to access specific materials and software needed for online courses. When students do not have access to these basic

needs, it can have a grave impact on their academic progress and well being. Whether a student does or does not face all of these difficulties, no student should be forced to leave this country unwillingly, and international students deserve to pursue their education at SFSU just as much as any other student, and we will fight to ensure that stays true.

WHAT'S BEING DONE

We want to reassure SF State international students that we, as your representatives, have been holding meetings and conversations about the best way to combat this ruling. We have yet to receive full and complete updates about the situation and how the CSU plans on responding to the ruling. The decision will most likely come out of the Chancellor's Office who oversees the entirety of the California State University system. The Cal State Student Association (CSSA), which is composed of student leaders from all 23 CSU campuses, is currently working with the Chancellor's Office to find a solution and ensure that our international students are protected. CSSA has also been working on creating a resolution to confront the deplorable policy decision made by DHS and ICE. Student leaders are mobilizing, gathering information, reaching out to higher-ups, and standing in solidarity with you. We will provide further insights once we are given more information.

In Solidarity,

Your Associated Student Board of Directors

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