

UAOSU Supports International Students and Faculty

UAOSU draws strength from the diversity of its members, including international faculty, some of whom came to the US as international students, and who recognize the hardships, challenges, and rewards of an education in the United States. We, the Organizing Committee of UAOSU, treasure the humanity and contributions of international students and all immigrants now and historically in our institution, community, and nation.

We are elated by the reversal of the Department of Homeland Security's cruel and unnecessary changes to [the Student Exchange and Visitor Program \(SEVP\)](#), which would have canceled international students' F-1 and M-1 visas if face-to-face classes are not offered in Fall 2020.

The proposed changes to SEVP were reprehensible. In a time of great uncertainty and a rising Covid-19 infection rate nationwide, the Trump administration attempted to seize yet another opportunity to pursue its nativist agenda that targets, blames, isolates, and punishes innocent people. With borders closing around the world to people who live in the U.S., international students would have faced an appalling choice: risk exposure to Covid-19 by transferring to an institution that is holding in-person classes, risk becoming an internal refugee unable to return home due to the Trump administration's failure to control the spread of Covid-19 in the U.S., or leave the U.S. and risk being unable to continue their education.

Aside from punishing blameless students for something completely outside their control, this decision would have put inappropriate pressure on university administrators at OSU and across the country to take unnecessary risks with the lives of students, faculty, and staff. It is clear that the Trump administration is willing to endanger students and educators in an effort to pretend that the pandemic is "disappearing." With universities nationwide preparing for budgetary shortfalls, the potential financial impact of losing international students could have forced administrators to re-open prematurely or risk further financial instability.

We applaud the university administration's decision to join 19 other universities in suing the Department of Homeland Security to prevent the implementation of the new ICE rule. Other immediate actions that the administration can take to demonstrate their commitment to OSU's international students and faculty include:

- Provide information about legal resources to international students or faculty who may be affected by future Department of Homeland Security decisions
- Expand the Beavers Care initiative to financially support international students who need legal aid, services, and/or representation
- Reaffirm and explain the university's status as a [sanctuary university](#)
- Update OSU's ["Know Your Rights"](#) page
- Create an FAQ page with links to additional resources
- Communicate regularly with the OSU community regarding how the university intends to support international students
- Make sure all communication is transparent and accessible for students at any level of English fluency, as well as available in multiple languages

- Provide free housing in dorms for international students unable to travel home due to the pandemic and/or travel restrictions

Despite the reversal of the SEVP changes, it is essential that the OSU community prepare for further assaults on international students and faculty from the Trump administration. Unity and coordination will be necessary to protect our community and fight back against future rule changes. When new rules emerge that threaten the safety of international students and faculty, the Organizing Committee of UAOSU wants to work with the OSU administration, international student associations, ASOSU, CGE, and other groups on campus to devise creative ways to protect students and other community members, without increasing students' financial burden or delaying their graduation. For example, OSU could create a task force focused on developing new internships, assistantships, and/or independent study opportunities.

It is clear that not just international students and faculty but all of higher education is under attack. We call on our members and all OSU faculty members to take the following actions. First, if you have not yet done so, check in with international students you are currently working with or have worked with in the past to offer your support and demonstrate that we value them as part of our community. Second, advocate for our institution and the members of our community by calling, emailing, and tweeting at your representatives about issues that affect higher education. Calls to your representatives' offices are most effective; you can find the contact information for your representatives using [this tool](#). Please take the time to use your voice and stand up against government failures to invest in higher education and attempts to victimize international and minoritized students.

Signed,

Organizing Committee of UAOSU