

From: "UCS Students" <[ucs@brown.edu](mailto:ucs@brown.edu)>  
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:28 PM  
To: "community.undergrad.ucs@lists.brown.edu"  
<[community.undergrad.ucs@lists.brown.edu](mailto:community.undergrad.ucs@lists.brown.edu)>  
Subject: In Support of International Students

Dear Undergraduate Community and Brown Administrators,

We, as the Undergraduate Council of Students working in tandem with members of the international student community, strongly condemn the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [guidance for the Student and Exchange Visitor Program](#) issued on July 6, 2020 by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

This guidance will bar international students from remaining in the United States if either their schools move completely online or if the student takes a fully online course load. Further, this would force international students currently residing outside the US to choose between risking their health to return to Brown or losing their visa. These regulations substantially threaten not just the overall wellbeing of international students, but it cuts at the fabric of who we are as a University community.

[Approximately 15% of Brown's student population comes from abroad](#). Brown has an obligation to actively protect and care for our international community in the face of these targeted and shameful policies.

Though the administration [claims](#) its hybrid system will allow international students the option to return or enroll remotely, the current policies do not provide enough guidance, accommodations, or support. Relying on Brown's hybrid semester plan is *not* enough to ensure the safety of every student in peril nor accommodate for everyone's academic situations.

UCS believes that the administration has insufficiently supported the international community at Brown. For this reason, we have compiled a summary of priorities based on a more detailed [list of demands](#) drafted by members of the international student community. However, we strongly encourage University administration to engage *directly* with international students including but not limited to reviewing [this document](#), authored by international students themselves, which further details implementation. As an undergraduate community we refuse to stand by as international students' educational aspirations are squandered and it is our duty to

promote and protect the wellbeing of the international student community, as well as amplify their voices in this time of need.

In the meantime, if you are an international student, here is an [anonymous feedback form](#) that you can use to express your thoughts and concerns regarding the most recent policies. We will be actively checking the results up until EOD 7/13 EDT and share any questions/comments with appropriate administration (Global Center, College, OISSS, etc).

We demand the following actions from the university:

### **Accommodations**

1. Amendment to its policy on the 15th July deadline to fill out the Fall 2020 Location of Study Form that will decide whether a student has to stay remote or return to campus for the Fall 2020, including:
  - a. Extend the deadline of Fall 2020 Location of Study Form to after July 31, 2020 when the course schedules for fall are released.
  - b. The decisions will not be binding and changes can be made after the deadline
  - c. Resources such as Zoom calls and information sessions to help students make informed decisions
  
2. Clearly explain “leave-taking” policies and their consequences for international students in the context of Fall 2020. Additionally, we call for the university to:
  - a. Communicating how leave-taking will affect the visa, SEVIS, and CPT/OPT status for international students in light of the new regulations,
  - b. Providing flexibility on leave-taking through specialized advising on this to international students, especially non-seniors,
  - c. Publicly guaranteed acceptance of late leave applications for Fall 2020, in line with private administrative communications that they will accept leave applications until the first day of classes
  
3. Provisions to create a specialized course which will allow students, regardless of concentration, to fulfill the existing SEVIS requirements. This will give students more peace of mind if they do choose to return, and if they are currently already in the United States.

4. Conducting a specialized pre-registration period for only international students that will guarantee them a position in at least one in-person class before registration opens for other students.
  - a. Prioritizing registration for international students who are seniors who may need to enroll in multiple classes that are offered in-person to complete degree requirements
  
5. Releasing a complete list of which classes will be offered in-person and which will be offered online before the deadline to fill out the Fall 2020 Location of Study Form for degree-planning purposes, as students must know whether they will be able to complete their requirements, theses, etc. while also reacting to the new restrictions and deciding whether they can return to the US.
  - a. For students learning remotely in their home countries, tailored guidance regarding completing coursework at an institution within a student's home country and transferring credits over to navigate fulfilling degree requirements

## **Guidance**

6. Clear and concise guidance from President Paxson or other qualified administrators on the new ICE regulations. This should address the legal grey areas that arise because of Brown's adoption of the hybrid model.
  - a. If they will be able to enroll as a full time student taking a full course load online while maintaining the same visa status as Spring 2020, from their home country during the fall.
  
7. Clarify, inform, and address the needs for students who may not be able to return to campus in the fall, due to personal health concerns, international travel restrictions and/or other,
  - a. Whether they will face ramifications of visa non-compliance
  - b. Information surrounding potential visa compliance penalizations
  - c. Guidance about the possibility of taking the fall semester as their "off" semester

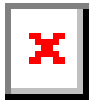
## **Advocacy**

8. Brown must leverage its institutional power through the [Office of the General Council](#) and the [Office of Government and Community Relations](#) to legally and politically oppose this regulation
  - a. [Harvard and MIT](#) have sought legal action against the Department of Homeland Security over this new regulation.
  - b. [Cornell](#), [Princeton](#), and [Penn](#) among others are filing amicus briefs in support of Harvard and MIT

We implore the university to further account for these considerations and more as it moves forward. The Undergraduate Council of Students promises to continue to advocate with international students to the university to provide the support they need to have a safe and successful 2020 Fall.

In Solidarity,  
The Executive Board of the Undergraduate Council of Students

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