

March 12, 2020

To the Leaders of the Higher Education Community,

As a response to the emerging, novel coronavirus (COVID-19), many universities and colleges are adjusting their policies with regard to classroom learning, travel and student health. These institutions have put out written communication advising students of how to respond to this pandemic and what support systems are available, including mental health services.

While information is being shared broadly with the school community, we want to ensure that immigrant students or those with international student visas are not being penalized by ICE for adhering to university policies.

On March 9, a federal program overseeing policies and practices for international students, including those part of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), released guidance. They encourage institutions to do the following:

Student Visas:

- Generally, an international student visa does not allow students to enroll in online courses; however, SEVP is waiving this restriction so long as universities and colleges notify SEVP of the changes within 10 days of implementing them.
 - If any students from our campus community are carrying an international student visa, it is imperative that schools notify ICE immediately of any changes to their policies.

Protocol for Notifying ICE's SEVP:

- Please refer to the following document for more information on how to document changes and inform ICE:
<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm2003-01.pdf>.

Given that SEVP also limits international students from being out of the U.S. for more than five months, and in light of recent travel bans, we recommend that campuses that close make some accommodations available for students who may not be able to leave.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please email us at schools@nyclu.org or call 212-607-3300.

Sincerely,

Campus Organizers
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