

January 31, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly,

I write on behalf of the undersigned higher education organizations to congratulate you on your confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and to offer our assistance with challenges that the Department faces in connection with international students, faculty and scholars at U.S. institutions of higher education.

We support efforts to enhance the nation's security. We also believe that it is in our collective interest to ensure that the United States remains the destination of choice for the world's best and brightest students, faculty and scholars.

The roughly one million international students that attend U.S. colleges and universities add to this country's intellectual and cultural vibrancy, and they also yield an estimated economic impact of \$32.8 billion and support 400,000 U.S. jobs, according to recent estimates.

International students and scholars have served America well throughout our history. These individuals enrich our campuses and the country with their talents and skills. The overwhelming majority return home as ambassadors for American values, democracy and the free market.

Steps intended to protect national security may inadvertently hamper these exchanges. This would only deprive our nation of one of its best tools for global scientific and economic preeminence and extending democratic values and cultural understanding throughout the world, making us more susceptible to the distortions and myths of extremist organizations and movements.

Unfortunately, even temporary restrictions can be damaging. President Trump's executive order, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," has created uncertainty and fear across the country and on our campuses, particularly among students, faculty and scholars from the affected countries, as well as others who worry the restrictions may expand to other countries.

We are concerned about the problematic implementation of the 90-day freeze on visas, such as cases of people with valid visas being turned away. We fear the chilling effect this will have on the ability of international students and scholars to continue to see the U.S. as a welcoming place for study and research.

The executive order contains language indicating that DHS has some flexibility in implementing it. We thank you for exercising that authority in the case of lawful permanent residents (“green card” holders). We urge you to continue to use this discretion whenever possible for students and scholars who clearly pose no threat.

We are eager to meet with you and your staff at your earliest convenience to discuss our specific concerns and to help you and the Department as you carry out your important duties.

We are confident that it is possible to create policies that secure our nation from those who wish to harm us, while also welcoming those who seek to study, conduct research and scholarship, and contribute their knowledge and talents to our nation’s higher education institutions, economy and overall security. And that will be our goal in working with you and your team on this issue.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad  
President

On behalf of:

AACRAO: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

ACPA–College Student Educators International

ACT

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Association of University Professors

American Council on Education

American Dental Education Association

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

APPA: Leadership in Educational Facilities

Association of American Colleges & Universities

Association of American Law Schools

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Universities  
Association of American University Presses  
Association of Catholic Colleges and 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  
Association of Research Libraries  
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources  
Council for Advancement and Support of Education  
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities  
Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
Council of Independent Colleges  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council on Governmental Relations  
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 for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education  
National Association of College and University Business Officers  
National Association of Colleges and Employers  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
National Association of System Heads  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
National Council of University Research Administrators  
Thurgood Marshall College Fund  
UNCF  
University Professional and Continuing Education Association