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*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate*  
*Faculty Representative to the Regents*  
*University of California*  
*1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor*  
*Oakland, California 94607-5200*

July 8, 2020

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

**Re: ICE July 6 Visa Policy**

Dear Janet,

The Academic Council of the University of California strongly condemns the xenophobic limitations imposed on the Student and Exchange Visitors Program (SEVP) by the State Department and ICE on July 6, 2020. It also calls on the UC Office of the President and the Board of Regents to lead *a national effort within higher education to oppose these limitations, to have them overturned, and to seek this through the courts and the political system.* These restrictions—combined with earlier efforts to limit the ability of international scholars to take up post-doctoral positions [as well as the general undermining of the United States' immigration system](#)—threaten the ability of the United States to be a leader in international intellectual collaboration and the pursuit of knowledge, so critical during this period of a global pandemic.

The Council wishes to bring particular attention to two federal actions:

On June 22, 2020 the White House [announced](#) the suspension of H-1A and H-1B visas as well as several categories of J visas. This prevented any newly hired post-doctoral scholars from receiving a visa before January 2021 at the earliest. It disrupts the international collaboration that would benefit the research projects and academic departments who sought their expertise.

The restrictions placed on the SEVP on July 6 will affect those international students already in the United States on F-1 and other visas. As outlined by ICE in its July 6 [announcement](#), international students who take completely remote programs will be forced to leave the country. This declaration places an undue burden on international students to remain in the United States in order to have access to on-campus resources. It also forces international students to return to potentially dangerous circumstances in their countries of residence—whether it be state danger or domestic danger.

Council notes the cynicism of this latest action. There is no educational or economic reason to force international students who wish to have access to their campuses to leave the country. It is difficult to see this as anything more than an effort by the Trump administration to pressure

colleges and universities into the appearance of “normality” at the risk of the safety of their communities. Targeting a group with no political leverage reveals the indifference to the human disruption caused by the policy.

We thereby reiterate our opposition to these policy changes and urge the University of California to join with other higher education institutions to make clear its determination to have the policies of June 22, 2020 and July 6, 2020 overturned. While pursuing this goal, we urge UCOP and campus leadership to make creative use of all available resources and policy options to both reassure international students and mitigate any possible harms that they might face in the short term.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kum-Kum Bhavnani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Academic Council

Encl.

cc: Provost Brown  
Academic Council  
Senate Directors  
Senate Executive Director Baxter