



National Association of
Independent Colleges and
Universities

1025 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036-5405

Tel: (202)785-8866
Fax: (202)835-0003
www.naicu.edu

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CONTACT: Pete Boyle, Pete@NAICU.edu
cell: (202) 536-8088

Paul Hassen, Paul@NAICU.edu
cell: 540-419-7519

Statement from NAICU President Barbara Mistick, D.M. on New Temporary Rule Affecting International Students

(July 7, 2020 – Washington, DC) – Yesterday the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a [new temporary final rule](#), prohibiting international students from staying in the United States if they are enrolled in an American college or university that implements an online-only platform for instruction. This guidance also applies to an institution that moves to exclusively online mid-semester in response to rising COVID-19 cases on campus, and to students who are living on campuses that are open, but offering classes online only to protect the health and safety of their faculty and campus community.

NAICU President Barbara Mistick, D.M. issued the following statement:

“This policy is not only extremely punitive to international students, it also threatens the safety of other students and the communities surrounding college campuses. It is the exact opposite of what the higher education community, including NAICU, [recommended](#) last week to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf requesting extended flexibility for international students.

“This move doesn’t appear to be very well-thought out. The new policy puts undo pressure on campuses to stay open when it is unsafe to do so. Transporting international students who may have been exposed to the coronavirus to other campuses (which would be the only way they could remain in the country to continue their education), or to airports to fly back to their home countries, assuming those countries are allowing flights from the United States, pose a myriad of health risks.

“Congress should take immediate action to help roll back this unnecessary and harmful rule.”

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With more than 1,000 colleges, universities, and associations as members, NAICU serves as the unified national voice of independent higher education and reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the United States. Our member institutions include major research universities, faith-based colleges, historically black colleges and universities, minority-serving institutions, art and design colleges, traditional liberal arts and science institutions, women’s colleges, two-year colleges, and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business, and other professions.