

PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE | ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMMIGRATION

Ten Administrative Actions for Immigrant, International, and Refugee Students

March 2023

As President Biden enters the third year of his presidency and our nation recovers from the human and economic impacts of the pandemic, the [Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration](#) and our over 550 Presidents and Chancellors urge the administration to take the following ten immediate immigration policy actions to emerge stronger, more resilient, and with greater well-being for all. Detailed along with others in our updated [Administrative Agenda for Immigration and Higher Education](#), these actions are practical and doable with positive impacts on the ability of our immigrant, international, and refugee students to fully contribute to our campuses, communities, and nation.

Strengthen our economy—Ensure policies facilitate students' access to work and skill-building opportunities, both during their education and after graduation:

1. **Improve DACA efficiencies** by (a) issuing sequential DACA grant periods for renewals instead of overlapping, and (b) updating the existing policy on expired DACA applications to treat any subsequent application as a renewal.
2. **Streamline and allow preprocessing for nonimmigrant visa application waivers** for DACA recipients and DACA-eligible Dreamers.
3. **Formally clarify that participation in fellowships, training, or other work-based learning programs does not constitute "employment" under federal immigration law** if the program meets certain criteria—including that the primary beneficiary is the enrolled student at a higher education institution, the program is a part of the educational experience, the opportunity is non-employment based, and funding provided to the student is to cover the cost of living and education expenses.
4. **Prioritize visa processing for international students and scholars, given their enormous contributions to our campuses and economy.**
5. **Allow the use of curricular practical training** to give international students valuable hands-on experience essential to their career development but possibly outside their degree requirements.

Improve access and equity in higher education—Ensure policies maximize access and promote inclusive excellence and equity:

1. **Issue guidance to states and institutions on best practices to support Dreamer students' access to and through higher education** so that they can complete their degrees, reach their full educational potential, and gain career-building skills.
2. **Implement the Welcome Corps' inclusion of college and university private sponsorship of refugee students.**
3. **Articulate goals for the inclusion of a broad diversity of international students in our classrooms**, including students from the Global South, to achieve greater equity while also advancing foreign policy and economic development goals, and work to address visa processing issues in non-traditional countries.

4. **Improve USCIS processing** so that our colleges and universities can offer programs to international students who can move through the process of their education with less friction and obstacles.
5. **Authorize Special Student Relief (SSR)** for students whose home countries are experiencing crises that place the student under financial hardship, necessitating them to take on more work opportunities. This includes providing SSR for any country that is designated Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED).