

Dear Students,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing briefly to share with you information provided by our Center for International Services regarding current visa regulations applicable to our international J.D. students holding valid F1 and J1 visas. Please know these regulations are being discussed by SEVP and may change before the start of the Fall 2020 semester.

The current exceptions articulated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration (USCIS) that enabled international students to convert to fully online courses applied to Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 semester only. While we anticipate these exceptions will be extended into the Fall 2020 semester, USCIS has not yet reached this decision and therefore international students who remain **in the U.S.** are currently subject to the pre-pandemic regulations limiting the number of online courses during full-time enrollment. Syracuse University and the College of Law are monitoring these developments with industry colleagues and representatives from USCIS and SEVP, and we remain hopeful for uninterrupted study in the coming Fall 2020 semester.

However, if classes return to campus in Fall semester as planned and you are **not in the U.S.** (whether you are registered for online courses or not), Syracuse University will have to end your F-1 record. SU will then issue a new I-20 for you to return as a full-time student in Spring 2021. You will have to pay a new SEVIS fee. Your ability to pursue Optional Practical Training (OPT) at the end of the Spring 2021 semester will also be impacted as, under current regulations, you will need to be a full-time student in the U.S. for two semesters under your newly-issued I-20 in order to be eligible for OPT.

The changes that allowed you to complete your Spring 2020 on campus courses online/remotely in the Spring 2020 semester were limited to Spring and Summer 2020 (only). We are awaiting guidance for Fall 2020 from U.S. immigration authorities. Syracuse University received this update on June 4 and have not received anything further:

*Developing Issues: Fall 2020 semester*

*SEVP has not issued guidance to international students and schools for the fall semester. We understand international students and schools have questions, and SEVP is actively working to issue guidance. In the meantime, the temporary procedural adaptations that permit international students to engage in remote learning are still in place through the summer session. As soon as SEVP finalizes guidance for the fall term, the academic community will be updated. Stakeholders will receive information through a variety of communication channels, and information will be updated on U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) COVID-19 resource page under the Nonimmigrant Students and SEVP-Certified Schools section.*

Please feel free to contact [international@syr.edu](mailto:international@syr.edu) and the College of Law regarding questions you have about your visa and plans for the Fall 2020 semester.

Andrew