

Deep Dive: International Student & Scholar Advocacy in the Time of COVID-19

May 11, 2020

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NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS



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STILL HAVING DIFFICULTY HEARING?

DIAL: 1-866-818-6844 AND ENTER CONFERENCE CODE: 5785234898#

Today's Panelists



- **Heather Stewart**, Counsel and Director of Immigration Policy, NAFSA
- **Rebecca Morgan**, Senior Director, Media Communications & Advocacy, NAFSA
- **Shannon Bedo**, Director of International & Veteran Student Services, Houston Baptist University, NAFSA 2020 Advocate of the Year

Moderator

- **Erica Stewart**, Director, Advocacy & Media Outreach, NAFSA



Heather Stewart
Counsel and Director of
Immigration Policy,
NAFSA

Impact of COVID-19 Response on International Education

- International education is a field that is about people learning, living, and experiencing cultures and countries different from their own.
- This unbelievable time has come with unbelievable costs. Many personal and profound. Others are monetary.
- NAFSA estimates U.S. higher education has spent nearly \$1.5 billion in financial support.



Visa and Immigration Implications



- NAFSA is continuously updating the COVID website at www.nafsa.org/coronavirus.
- The Department of State Exchange Visitor Program guidance is more complete than guidance provided by the Department of Homeland Security.
- Unanswered policy and practice issues continue to mount.
- NAFSA will continue to advocate for policies that recognize the integral role of international students and education to our campuses, our communities, and to our country.




International Students and Campuses Need Certainty

International students need a predictable process and timeline.



A clear process is necessary at every step: from visa issuance, the port of entry, and applications for benefits.



Agency COVID-19 policies must be accepted among and within federal agencies.

Why Act Now?

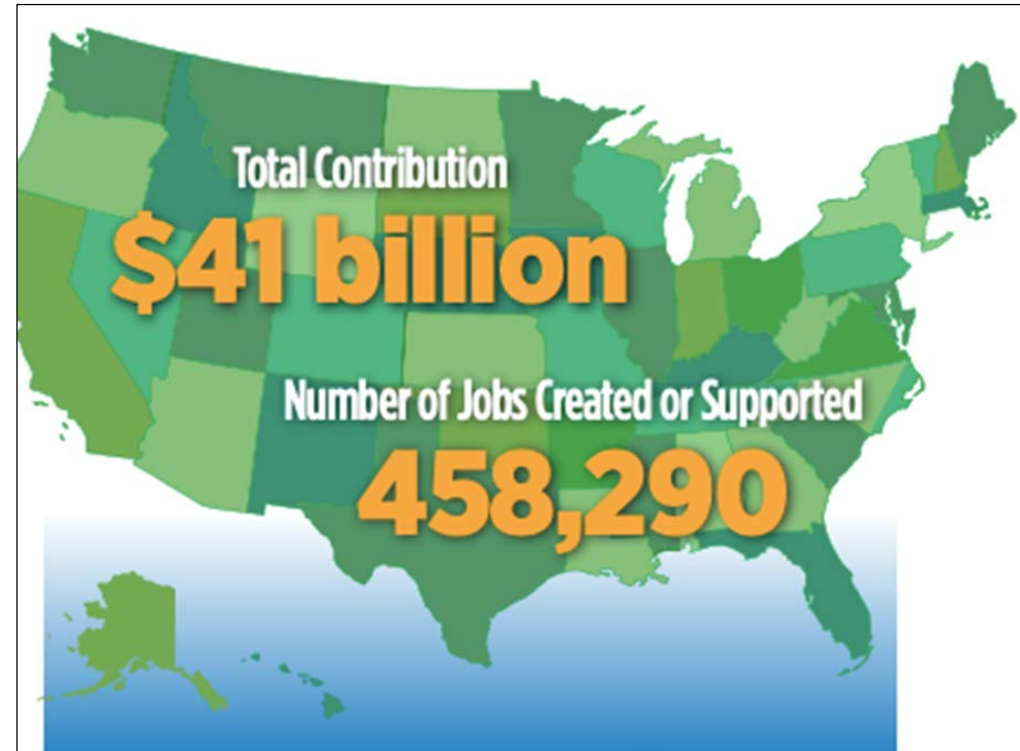
Presidential Proclamation(s)

- April 22, 2020: Presidential Proclamation Suspending Entry of Immigrants Who Present Risk to the U.S. Labor Market During the Economic Recovery Following the COVID-19 Outbreak.
- April 22, 2020 Presidential Proclamation focused on new legal permanent immigrants, however, included a provision to revisit nonimmigrant programs in 30-days.
- At this time, a second proclamation is expected that would include provisions to halt optional practical training (OPT).

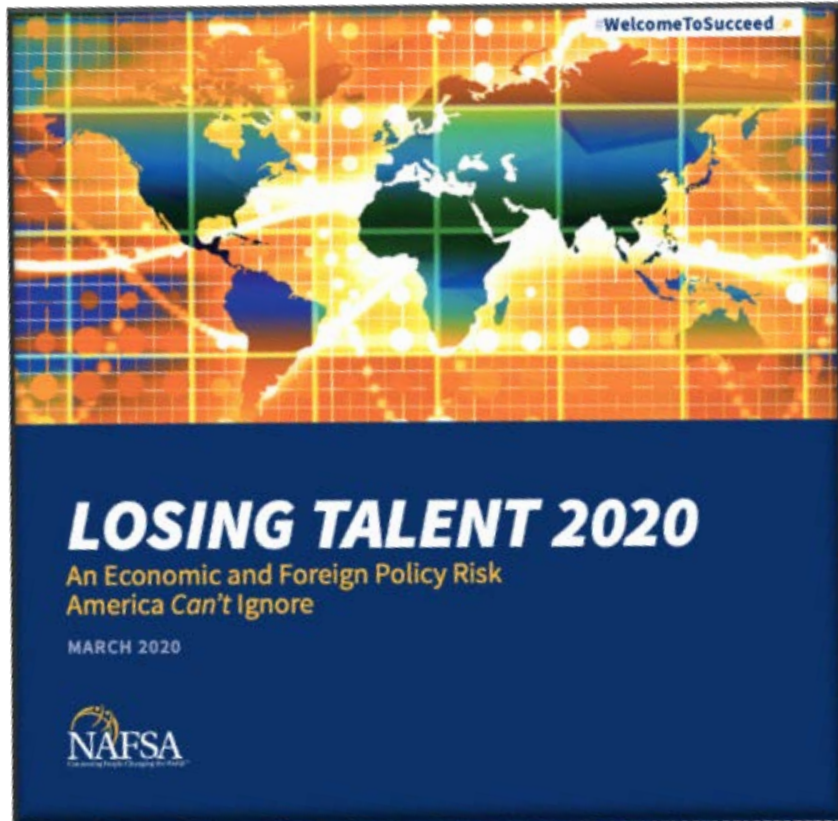


International Students Benefit the United States

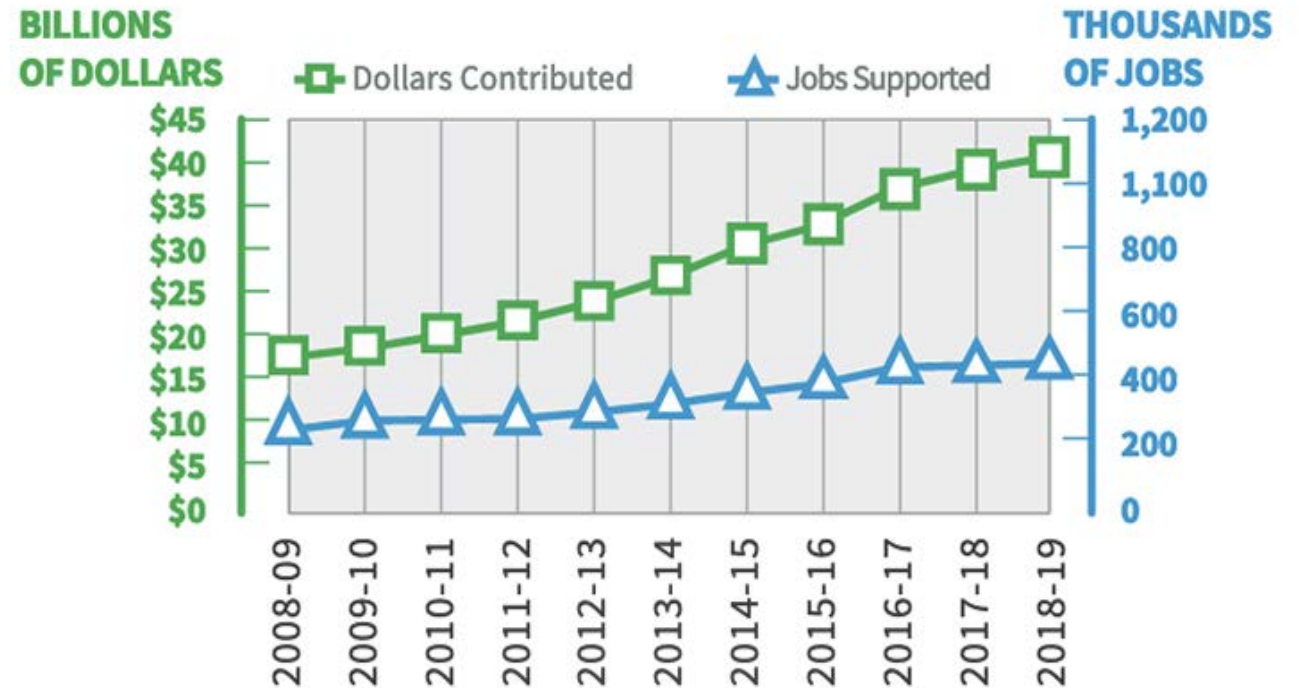
- The premise of the restrictions is that immigrants are not good for the U.S. or the U.S. economy.
- This has been proven to be untrue.
- Yet there will be a push for policies that have been unsuccessful in passing through Congress or regulations.
- “Never let a crisis go to waste.”
- We must tell the story of positive impact international students and scholars make to the United States, to the economy, to job creation, and to the education of domestic students
- One powerful tool in this conversation is NAFSA’s Losing Talent report, which can be found at www.nafsa.org/losingtalent.



Losing Talent



U.S. International Student Enrollment Contributions



Use Your Expertise and Your Voice

- You are experts in your field and your community.
- Your member of Congress is there for you.
- Who else will speak for the needs of your students, scholars, and others involved in international education?





Rebecca Morgan
Senior Director, Media
Communications and
Advocacy, NAFSA



Shannon Bedo
Director of International &
Veteran Student Services
Houston Baptist University
NAFSA Advocate of the Year
2020

Anyone Can Be An Advocate





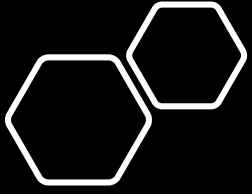
Rebecca Morgan
Senior Director, Media
Communications and
Advocacy



Advocacy Engagement

Advocacy is KEY in today's hectic political climate

- Every interest group is working to make their wants noted by policymakers
- International Education will be missed if constituents don't make their voices heard.
- Lawmakers need to hear from their constituents, not lobbyists



TAKE ACTION!

1. [Email your
Members of Congress](#)

CONNECTING OUR WORLD



2. Introduce (or reintroduce) yourself to their immigration staffer

Urge Congress to Direct Covid-19 Resources to Support International Students & Scholars

Reach out to the immigration staff supporting your elected officials.



Submit the form below and we will respond within 2-3 days with the immigration staffers' names, email addresses, and a sample message you may use to urge your lawmakers' support for COVID-19 resources for international students and scholars.

Please provide your complete home address so we may match you with your correct lawmakers and check the opt-in box if you wish to receive updates about all of NAFSA's advocacy campaigns.

Prefix

Future COVID-19 Policy & Advocacy Webinars

- **Monday, May 18** – Deep Dive: Federal Financial Assistance, 2:00 to 2:30 pm EDT
- **Register at** nafsa.org/deepdive





Questions?

Email: grassroots@nafsa.org

NAFSA Resources



- [NAFSA Coronavirus Critical Resources](#)
- [COVID-19 Legislation and Policy Resources](#)
- [Issue Brief: Revive and Restore International Education Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Report: Losing Talent](#)
- [Take Action: Introduce Yourself to Your Lawmakers' Immigration Staff](#)
- [2020 NAFSA eConnection](#)
- [NAFSA "Deep Dive" Financial Assistance Advocacy Webinar](#) - May 18 @ 2 pm EDT
- Today's presentation will be made available at nafsa.org/deepdive

Resources Supporting the OPT Program



- Niskanen Center report, “[Optional Practical Training \(OPT\) and International Students After Graduation](#)” (March 2019), shows that experiential learning opportunities like OPT lead to increased innovation and higher average earnings, without costing U.S. workers their jobs or decreasing U.S. worker wages.
- National Foundation for American Policy study: “[International Students, STEM OPT, and the U.S. STEM Workforce](#)” (March 2019), found no evidence that OPT participation reduces job opportunities for U.S. workers.
- The Business Roundtable, “[The Economic Impact of Curbing the Optional Practical Training Program](#)” (December 2018) illustrates significant negative effects on the U.S. economy if OPT were scaled back or curtailed, including job losses impacting U.S. workers.