



MRS MATERIALS RESEARCH SOCIETY®
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July 10, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

My name is Matt Copel, and I write to you as the President of the Materials Research Society (MRS). Based in Warrendale, Pennsylvania, MRS is a scientific society comprised of over 15,500 researchers from academia, industry and government and is a recognized leader in the advancement of interdisciplinary materials research.

We are extremely concerned about the recent US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announcement that international students attending colleges are not permitted to take a full online course load this fall semester and remain in the United States. In addition, the US Department of State has stated that it will not issue visas to students enrolled in schools that are fully online for the fall semester, nor will US Customs and Border Protection permit these students to enter the United States. These actions will severely harm the ability of the US to recruit and maintain intellectual talent and to perform at academic institutions.

With this action, current students would be forced to either leave the country, or transfer to a school with in-person instruction to remain in lawful status. These changes could affect tens of thousands of students across the country. Based on 2018 data, the United States remains the country of choice for the largest number of international students, hosting about 1.1 million of the 4.6 million enrolled worldwide in 2017.

This approach has the potential to impose unreasonable economic distress on these students, as many of them have already paid tuition, signed housing leases, and paid health insurance, as well as other costs.

An additional concern is the damage this will inflict on US academic institutions that are working diligently to balance the desire to resume in-person instruction with the responsibility to protect the health and well-being of university students, faculty, and staff, most of which are US citizens. According to recent studies, international students typically pay full tuition, helping to alleviate the costs of other on-campus needs. Many institutions of higher learning also use these funds to help defray the effects of federal and state education budget cuts.

This new guidance, while pitched as a public health protective measure, has the effect of restricting lawful immigrants from entering into the country, and is contrary to established scientific evidence regarding pandemic infection control.

I urge the Administration to overturn this action, and we look forward to a dialogue with you concerning this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Damon Dozier, MRS Director of Government Affairs at 202.763.3814 or dozier@mrs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Copel', with a long, sweeping underline.

Matt Copel
President
Materials Research Society

cc:

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Office of the Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

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