



**United States Department of State**  
Washington, D.C. 20520

December 15, 2023

Mr. Ted Mitchell  
One Dupont Circle, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Email: [saspreitzer@acenet.edu](mailto:saspreitzer@acenet.edu)

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

Thank you for your December 8 letter to Secretary Blinken requesting the extension of Interview Waiver provisions for student (F and J) visa applicants. Because the Consular Affairs Visa Office is responsible for visa matters, your inquiry was forwarded to us for our reply.

The Department of State continually streamlines visa processes, consistent with our national security obligations, to ensure safe, secure, and timely travel to the United States, including for international students. In Fiscal Year 2023, we issued over 600,000 student visas – more than in any year since 2016. Much of this success can be attributed to the current interview waiver authorities, which allow us to focus our resources on higher risk applicants so we can vigorously safeguard national security, while improving processing efficiencies and lowering wait times for certain low-risk applicants.

We share your assessment that the interview waiver policy has been critically important for addressing recent visa processing challenges. While only Congress can amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make these temporary authorities permanent, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are closely coordinating on a plan to extend certain interview waiver flexibilities beyond December 31, 2023.

Thank you for your letter, and for your continued dedication to international student success and mobility. We look forward to continued engagement with the American Council on Education and higher education associations on our

shared goal of ensuring that the United States remains the world's top destination for international education.

We hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Visa Office  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
U.S. Department of State