



STATEMENT

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CGS: Ending Duration of Status Will Harm the Recruitment and Retention of International Students by U.S. Universities

Washington, DC – On Friday, July 17, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued its final rule on altering the longstanding Duration of Status policy. The decision to end this nearly 50-year policy and replace it with a fixed four-year term for F-1 students and J-1 scholars is misguided, unnecessary and threatens America’s standing as one of the world’s foremost destinations for research and innovation.

“As an association devoted to the advancement of graduate education and research, CGS holds firm to the principle that the educational progress and success of all students, including international students, warrants our full support,” said CGS President Chevelle Newsome. “A fixed four-year limit on authorized stay in the United States disregards the realities of doctoral education, in which the pursuit of original research rarely conforms to a rigid calendar. For many students, this policy will place the completion of their degrees in serious jeopardy.”

CGS strongly opposes this final rule because it will adversely affect international students and scholars who are integral to the intellectual and civic life of our campuses and communities. Moreover, this final rule will disrupt ongoing research at colleges and universities nationwide and signal to the world that the United States is no longer a welcoming place for international students, scholars and visitors.

“International students and scholars have options about where to invest their talents and their futures,” said Newsome. “This change to the Duration of Status policy tells them, in no uncertain terms, that they are unwelcome in the United States. Nations around the globe stand ready to welcome the very students we turn away and what we lose, they will gain.”

The decision also further erodes the autonomy of U.S. universities. By requiring Student Exchange Visitors Program (SEVP) authorization before graduate students may change their educational objective or transfer to another college or university, the rule adds a further disincentive for international students and scholars considering the United States for graduate education, training and research.

Simply put, the elimination of Duration of Status is an ill-considered policy that will carry consequences for American higher education and research for years to come.

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About CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 460 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through federal advocacy, research, and the development of innovative programs.