



Office of the President

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

July 13, 2020

Dear Lumberjacks,

Today, NAU, alongside 19 other partner universities, filed a lawsuit in federal court to put a stop to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's recent unanticipated revision to federal rules that results in the revocation of visas for international students enrolled at universities that transition to fully online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The attempt to force colleges and universities to stay open, regardless of changes in the pandemic's course or severity, is reckless and removes our authority to act in accordance with what is best for the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and campus communities.

While NAU is holding in-person classes on its campus this fall, we are also providing our students with choices of how to pursue their studies, among them the opportunity to use remote synchronous access. The revision to the federal rules results in colleges and universities that choose an online-only option simultaneously being forced to eliminate educational opportunities for international students. This is reckless at best and unfairly penalizes international students who can benefit from staying in the U.S. while pursuing their studies online.

This new rule is punitive to international students and to universities like ours where the many and varied contributions made by students from across the globe enhance the NAU experience and enrich our academic, research, and service mission in incalculable ways. Further, this rule may have a devastating impact on the lives of our international students and their ability to continue their studies.

For the approximately 1,300 international students who enroll at NAU each year, studying in the U.S. is a lifelong dream and a significant investment of time, resources, and academic effort. Their presence at NAU increases our diversity of thought and cultural understanding, introduces all of our students to global perspectives, and prepares Lumberjacks to be a part of a global community.

We will keep fighting for all our students' ability to pursue their education and put a stop to the disruption and harm this rule will cause.

Additional details can be found on the [joint coalition lawsuit statement](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rita".

Rita Hartung Cheng
President