

## Communication from March 28, 2025:

### US Current Events and Impact on International Students

Hello International Students,

Many of you have been asking about how current US political events affect you and your travel plans.

**This email contains information about what we do know and what is unclear including:**

- 1) Impact of new policies on visa application renewal
- 2) Travel issues and cautions
- 3) Scams related to current climate of uncertainty
- 4) Follow ALL rules to remain in status
- 5) Funding issues for graduate students

#### 1. Impact of new policies on visa application renewal

- Visa application requirements have reverted back to pre-pandemic rules which require an in-person interview for new visa applications or renewal visa applications when the prior visa expired more than 12 months ago.
- Because the State department staff has also been reduced, this policy change will mean longer visa wait-times for returning international students.
- If your visa is expired and you must travel, you need to make an appointment for a renewal visa as early as possible to avoid potential delays in returning to resume studies.
- Remember that violations of US laws (such as an arrest for DUI, or shoplifting) can result in a visa revocation. While the state department is supposed to notify you via email, they may not have a correct email on file. If you have an arrest FOR ANYTHING, please speak to a GEO advisor BEFORE YOU TRAVEL.
- If you are following the US news, you are also likely hearing about visa revocations for political activism. While the legality of these actions is still being disputed, you should be aware that the current administration is taking action against students who speak out against US government policies.

#### 2. Travel issues and cautions

- There are rumors that new travel bans will be introduced for people from specific countries. At this point, there is no confirmation that the travel bans will happen, but the rumors include [red, orange and yellow country lists](#). There is also no clear confirmation about what these lists mean, but if your country is on the list, travel is not recommended at this time.
- Student visa holders MUST be careful while returning to the U.S. Officers of the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can search devices for social media posts and

other public information before you are admitted to the U.S. As always, we recommend that you follow the recommendations of the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) about protecting your data at the US border including deleting your social media from your devices and carrying fewer devices through the port of entry.

### 3. Scams related to the current climate of uncertainty

- BEWARE: Scammers are taking advantage of the current uncertainty by increasingly targeting international students. We want to remind you that NO US government agency will ask you to IMMEDIATELY deposit or send money to any account and certainly will NOT ask you to purchase a gift card for fines or reimbursements.
- A known scam has been reported throughout the US with at least one case at UNM where scammers have spoofed a UNM phone number, impersonated a UNM Staff member and government agents (in this case ICE agents). In this specific scam, someone called pretending to be a UNM staff member and forwarded a fake email from ICE regarding the person's immigration status. They then try to collect money via bank accounts and by asking the person to purchase gift cards and provide personal information and a scan of the passport.
- If you receive a call from someone stating they are from UNM or ICE asking you to urgently pay money to remain in the US and avoid deportation, STOP, hang up and contact GEO AND report it to the UNM Police (505-277-2241). On the weekend, you can contact us on the emergency line at: (505-277-4436)
- Remember - UNM or the US Government will never ask you for immediate payment over the phone so DO NOT GIVE MONEY WITHOUT CALLING GEO!!!
- If someone from the GEO office calls you about an immigration matter, we will identify ourselves and you can [check the staff website](#) to be sure it is someone from our office. *ALSO if you do NOT know the staff member, tell us you will hang up and call our office directly to ensure it's not a spoofed number (OR WHATSAPP VIDEO, ZOOM OR FACETIME TO BE SURE IT IS WHO YOU THINK IT IS).*
- If you receive a suspicious email, DO NOT CLICK ON ANY LINKS AND [report it as phishing](#).
- Know that beyond the Global Education Office, [LoboRESPECT](#) and the [Student Health and Counseling Center](#) are services for all students to use if they are in need of support.

### 4. Follow ALL rules to remain in status

- In these uncertain times, it is more important than EVER to be sure you are following all rules to remain in status.
- This means: following [full-time enrollment requirements](#) AND ONLY [working LEGALLY](#)
- Failure to get work authorization when required and failure to attend the required number of classes and in-person for in-person classes ARE violations of your lawful status and

can lead to termination of status and removal from the U.S.

#### 5. Funding issues for graduate students

- We know that many graduate students are receiving assistantships through projects being funded by government grants where funding has been paused, suspended or canceled.
- If you lose your assistantship due to these factors, please contact GEO so that we can report to campus administrators the impact on the international student population.
- While we cannot guarantee any new funding, can report the level of the problem to campus leaders who have identified temporary continued funding.

We realize the current situation is creating anxiety and uncertainty for our international students. We are here to HELP YOU! Please come to ask any and all questions regarding the information above and keep open lines of communication with our office about what is happening with you and your communities. To communicate, you can:

- Email [iadvisor@unm.edu](mailto:iadvisor@unm.edu)
- Schedule an [individual advising appointment](#)
- Come to advisor drop- in hours in-person or on [Zoom](#) every weekday (Monday-Friday) from 1:00 – 3:00
- **GEO emergency line is for serious matters**, such as being denied entry to the U.S., being arrested or detained, or if you are experiencing a crisis abroad: **+1 505-277-4436**  
During non-standard business hours and on weekends the phone line will connect you to UNM Campus Police, who can notify GEO of your emergency.

Please spread the word and let us know if you need assistance.

Linda Melville  
Director International Student & Scholar Services  
Global Education Office  
University of New Mexico