

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

October 28, 2010

Dear Mr. President,

Academic exchanges are often seen as a critical component of U.S. engagement in the world and have historically been a successful tool in building relations between nations. They also present students with an unparalleled educational opportunity. Both of these values of academic exchange hold true regardless of where in the world a student studies abroad, whether in China, Indonesia, England, or Cuba. Unfortunately, however, opportunities for students to travel to Cuba on educational programs are almost non-existent due to restrictions placed on study abroad to Cuba in 2004. On behalf of the colleges and universities listed below, NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) write to respectfully ask that you include the removal of current restrictions on academic travel to Cuba in the package of new policies you are considering in response to the transition underway in Cuba and the recent release of political prisoners there.

The regulations implemented in 2004 all but put a stop to educational exchanges between the U.S. and Cuba. We greatly appreciate the work your administration is doing to make it easier for Cubans to come to the U.S. on educational and cultural programs, and hope that similar steps can begin to be taken to increase opportunities for American students to travel to Cuba. According to the latest data available, only about 250 U.S. students studied abroad in Cuba in the 2007-2008 academic year compared to more than 2,100 students who were able to study there only four years earlier.

By lifting the current regulations on academic travel to Cuba, our institutions could begin to offer many more opportunities for students to study abroad in Cuba, to learn about the rich culture and history of the island nation, and begin to make the personal connections that can serve as a valuable platform for developing mutual understanding between our countries.

Together, we respectfully ask you to lift the 2004 regulations placed on academic travel. Additionally, we ask that you work with the Office of Foreign Assets Control to ease current licensure protocols for faculty members at U.S. institutions so they can more easily travel to Cuba and work with Cuban counterparts in research, publication, and other scholarly activities. Action this year would enable many of our institutions to start developing programs for the 2011-2012 school year. These programs would open the door for students across the United



President Barack Obama

October 28, 2010

Page 2

States to have the opportunity to study abroad in a country whose evolution will directly impact our own.

Sincerely,

American University
Binghamton University, SUNY
Drake University
Duke University
Indiana University
Kansas State University
Michigan State University
New Mexico State University
Ohio State University
Pacific Lutheran University

Penn State University
SIT Study Abroad
Stony Brook University
Tulane University
University at Buffalo, SUNY
University of California
University of Delaware
University of Denver
University of Illinois
University of Iowa

University of Kansas
University of Michigan
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of the District of
Columbia
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Washington State University
Wesleyan University