

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
500 12th Street, SW Stop 5600  
Washington, D.C. 20536



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

Dear School Official:

As the head of a school or an institution that the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has certified to accept nonimmigrant students, I am asking for your assistance at this critical time. I want to make you aware of a crucial problem that the federal government cannot ignore – the failure of your school to file for recertification.

Your school recently received a Notice of Intent to Withdraw (NOIW) when it did not file for recertification 30 days before its certification expiration date. SEVP sent this NOIW because, despite a previous reminder to your staff, officials at your institution have failed to respond to our recertification notice sent approximately five months ago. The issuance of an NOIW is the first step in withdrawing a school from the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

When a school fails to file for recertification and is withdrawn from SEVIS, the nonimmigrant students attending the school must do one of two things: (1) transfer to another SEVP-certified school within a defined period of time, interrupting their academic programs; or (2) depart the country. Those nonimmigrant students whose designated school official has authorized any type of employment benefits (e.g., curricular practical training (CPT), optional practical training (OPT) or on-campus employment) will lose authorization for these benefits. Once withdrawn, a school cannot enroll nonimmigrant students.

SEVIS, the online database SEVP manages, now routinely contacts school officials to recertify schools each month. Typically, one-third of the schools contacted to file for recertification each month fail to file during the 180 days they are given to file. Despite our aggressive outreach, availability of training materials on the SEVP website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools/recertification/>, and a previous notice to recertify, there appears to be a perception that SEVP will not comply with its statutory obligation to conduct recertification. That perception is not accurate.

Knowing that, I ask for your help.

Please contact your international student services officials and assure them of our commitment to this process, and instruct them to fulfill their obligation to follow the recertification process immediately. Any delay, particularly if your school has any changes to report, may interrupt your authority to enroll nonimmigrant students.

SEVP is committed to working with you and your staff to eliminate any barriers that preclude your school from filing for recertification. Recertification resources are available at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools/recertification/> to clarify the process for your staff.

Failure to comply with recertification may affect the financial bottom line of your educational institution, will jeopardize the academic progress of any nonimmigrant students on your campus or campuses and will alter their perception of the United States as a country that welcomes the best and brightest students.

Thank you for your attention to and support of this very important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louis M. Farrell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.

Louis M. Farrell  
Director  
Student and Exchange Visitor Program