



March 10, 2021

Rachel E. Canty
Director, Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20536

VIA EMAIL: Rachel.e.canty@ice.dhs.gov

Re: Request for special student relief for students from Myanmar

Dear Director Canty:

We hope that 2021 has begun well for you and your team. We are writing today to request that the Department of Homeland Security - SEVP consider granting Special Student Relief* to F-1 students from Myanmar, which is enduring increasing unrest following the February 1, 2021 coup that returned the country to full military rule. A [March 5, 2021 Information Update](#) from the U.S. embassy in Rangoon describes the situation, reporting on bank closures, limited flight availability, supermarket closures and the security situation.

The most recent [data posted in the SEVP Data Library](#) (2019) shows that there were 2,564 active SEVIS records for students with Burma (Myanmar) listed as their country of citizenship. As the turmoil and emergent circumstances in Myanmar continue, F-1 students from Myanmar would greatly benefit from the availability of Special Student Relief, which allows DHS to suspend the 20 hour per week limits on incident-to-status on-campus and USCIS-authorized off-campus employment, and for students to be considered engaged in a "full course of study" for the duration of their employment authorization if they satisfy specific minimum course load requirements.

NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS

1307 New York Avenue NW, Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20005-4715 USA • Telephone: 1.202.737.3699 • Fax: 1.202.737.3657 • E-mail: inbox@nafsa.org • Web: www.nafsa.org

*President and Chair of the
Board of Directors*
Ravi Shankar
University of Rochester

*Vice President for Scholarship and
Institutional Strategy*
Jeff Riedinger, PhD
University of Washington

*Vice President for Professional
Development and Engagement*
Shinsaeng (Shinn) Ko
Emory University

*Vice President for
Public Policy and Practice*
LaNitra Berger, PhD
George Mason University

Secretary
Diana Carlin, PhD
Saint Louis University

Treasurer
Barry Morris, PhD
University of Central Florida

Executive Director and CEO
Esther D. Brimmer, DPhil



As the situation in Myanmar continues to decline, we ask that you consider and support this request, and to please forward it quickly through the necessary channels within the Department.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request for Special Student Relief to aid the challenges students from Myanmar are currently facing.

Sincerely,

[Signature Redacted]

Esther D. Brimmer, DPhil
Executive Director & CEO
NAFSA: Association of International Educators

* Regulations allow DHS to suspend or alter rules regarding duration of status, full course of study, and employment eligibility, for specific groups of students from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. This collection of benefits is known as "special student relief." [[63 Fed. Reg. 31872](#) (June 10, 1998), amending the Code of Federal Regulations governing F-1 duration of status at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(5), full course of study at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(6)(A) and (B), and employment eligibility at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f) (9) (i) and (ii)]

NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS

1307 New York Avenue NW, Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20005-4715 USA • Telephone: 1.202.737.3699 • Fax: 1.202.737.3657 • E-mail: inbox@nafsa.org • Web: www.nafsa.org

President and Chair of the Board of Directors
Ravi Shankar
University of Rochester

Vice President for Scholarship and Institutional Strategy
Jeff Riedinger, PhD
University of Washington

Vice President for Professional Development and Engagement
Shinsaeng (Shinn) Ko
Emory University

Vice President for Public Policy and Practice
LaNitra Berger, PhD
George Mason University

Secretary
Diana Carlin, PhD
Saint Louis University

Treasurer
Barry Morris, PhD
University of Central Florida

Executive Director and CEO
Esther D. Brimmer, DPhil