



October 26, 2020

Chad F. Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave NW,  
Washington, DC 20016

Sharon Hageman, Acting Regulatory Unit  
Chief Office of Policy and Planning  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
500 12th Street SW Washington DC 20536

**Re: DHS Docket No. ICEB-2019-0006**

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf and Acting Regulatory Unit Chief Hageman,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on behalf of the Pac-12 Conference on the proposed rule establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media.

The Pac-12 Conference is dedicated to developing the next generation of leaders by championing excellence in academics, athletics, and the well-being of our student-athletes. The Conference comprises 12 leading universities in the United States - the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the University of Colorado, the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Stanford University, the University of Southern California, the University of Utah, the University of Washington and Washington State University. The Conference has a tradition as the "Conference of Champions," leading the nation in NCAA Championships in 54 of the last 60 years, with 529 NCAA team titles overall.

Although the stated intent of the proposed rule is to ensure international students do not have an unchecked, open-ended entry into the United States, it is deeply flawed and would undermine the ability of colleges and universities to recruit the best students from around the world. Our Pac-12 universities are proud of the international student-athletes that come to the United States to receive a superior college education and hone their athletic skills in a

Larry Scott  
Commissioner

competitive amateur environment. The conference has between 700-900 international student-athletes competing annually at our 12 universities; we also lead the United States in producing Olympic athletes, including student-athletes from across the globe.

This proposal would disadvantage our universities and the unique experiences of many of our international student-athletes. Our student-athletes have five years to complete their athletics eligibility. Although many of our student-athletes graduate within four years, some including our international student-athletes enroll in a fifth year to complete their degrees (e.g., a “red-shirt” or medical hardship athletic waiver allows five academic years and four athletic years).

The proposed rule could also have financial implications for international students requesting extensions. The cost and burden for international students is significant in time, filing fees, and likely legal fees, and this proposed rule would increase all of them. Our student-athletes participate in highly structured programs that balance full academic course loads with year-round training, practices and competition. Due to the year-round structure of many student athletes academic and athletic workloads, it would be expensive, difficult, and disruptive to return to their home country in order to renew their visas.

The uncertainty this proposed rule would cause our international student athletes would have a detrimental impact on our athletic programs and could lead many international student-athletes to choose other countries to pursue their educational and athletic opportunities. Of particular concern to the Pac-12 is the provision limiting the duration of admission to two or four years in some cases. The proposed rule imposes a two-year maximum period of admission to students who study at institutions that do not use E-Verify universally, which is the case for many Pac-12 universities.

The Pac-12 strongly opposes the proposed rule and asks that it be withdrawn in its entirety. We hope DHS and its offices and agencies will continue to seek input from colleges and universities to address the concerns of the higher education community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Scott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Larry Scott  
Commissioner