

July 3, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations, I write to request that the State Department act to address delays with processing F-1 and J-1 visa applications at U.S. consulates in India, as well as other countries where we may see a surge in applications. As you know, we have seen tremendous growth in students from India enrolling in U.S. institutions of higher education over the past few years. In 2022-2023, there was a 35 percent increase in the number of students from India studying at our U.S. institutions. Overall, students from India that year made up over a quarter of international students in this country.

This year, we expect to see that growth continue, and we are asking the State Department to ensure this surge of applications does not cause a delay in students receiving a student visa to study in the United States for the 2024-2025 academic year.

We understand that U.S. embassies in India have already taken action to begin interviews earlier this year in anticipation of the surge,¹ but we remain concerned about reports of students receiving dates for interviews 100-200 days into the future, which will cause them to miss the start of their academic programs in the fall. We ask that the State Department and U.S. embassies take further action in India as well as in other countries that may see a surge of applicants to prioritize student visa processing during the summer months. We also request a briefing and additional information about how the embassies are planning to address the surge in applications this summer.

Thank you and we look forward to continuing to work with you to support our international students.

¹ May 29, 2024 Economic Times “How the U.S. Embassy is Prepping for an Anticipated Surge in Indian Student Visa Applications this Year”: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/study/how-the-us-embassy-is-prepping-for-an-anticipated-surge-in-indian-student-visa-applications-this-year/articleshow/110538377.cms?from=mdr>

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell, President

Cc: The Honorable Rena Bitter, Assistant Secretary for Bureau of Consular Affairs
The Honorable Lee Satterfield, Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs

On behalf of:

ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American College Health Association
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council of Graduate Schools
ETS
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities