

Resolution on the Impact of Federal Travel Restrictions on International Students, Researchers, and Graduate Workers

Proposed to the Graduate Labor Union (GLU-UE)

Preamble

The Graduate Labor Union represents graduate workers whose teaching, research, and service contribute directly to the mission of the University of Minnesota. Among our membership are international students and scholars who have traveled across the world to pursue education, conduct research, provide healthcare, and contribute to the academic community.

Recent federal travel restrictions affecting several countries, including Iran, have created significant barriers for current and prospective students, researchers, postdoctoral scholars, physicians, and graduate workers. These restrictions have prevented qualified individuals from joining universities, disrupted research programs, separated families, and denied students the opportunity to share major academic milestones with loved ones.

While GLU cannot directly determine federal immigration policy, we can advocate for our members and call upon the University of Minnesota to use its voice, influence, and resources to support students and scholars affected by these restrictions.

Whereas

WHEREAS, the University of Minnesota is a global research institution whose success depends on attracting talented students, researchers, physicians, scholars, and educators from around the world;

WHEREAS, students and researchers admitted to universities in the United States are selected through rigorous academic evaluation processes and should be judged based on their qualifications, achievements, contributions, and potential rather than their nationality;

WHEREAS, federal travel restrictions currently affect several countries, including Iran, and have prevented many qualified students, researchers, scholars, and family members from entering the United States despite having earned admission to academic programs, research appointments, fellowships, and professional positions;

WHEREAS, these restrictions have prevented some admitted students and researchers from joining departments, laboratories, hospitals, and research groups at the University of Minnesota and other institutions of higher education;

WHEREAS, Iranian students, physicians, researchers, scientists, and engineers have a long history of contributing to American universities, healthcare systems, scientific research, and technological innovation, and those contributions demonstrate the value that international scholars bring to the United States regardless of political circumstances;

WHEREAS, students and scholars affected by these restrictions are not representatives of governments and should not be denied educational and professional opportunities because of political conflicts or policies beyond their control;

WHEREAS, restricting the participation of qualified students and researchers harms scientific research, delays discovery, disrupts collaborations, reduces educational opportunity, and weakens the ability of American universities to compete globally for talent and innovation;

WHEREAS, these impacts are particularly significant in medicine, healthcare, engineering, science, and technology, where universities and hospitals rely heavily on international talent to advance research, improve patient care, and train future professionals;

WHEREAS, attracting talented students and researchers from around the world has long been a source of American strength and has contributed substantially to the nation's leadership in higher education, healthcare, science, and innovation;

WHEREAS, previous immigration and travel restrictions affecting students and scholars have been challenged through advocacy, litigation, and public engagement, demonstrating that universities and academic organizations can play an important role in influencing policies that affect higher education;

WHEREAS, travel restrictions impose profound human costs by separating families and preventing parents, spouses, siblings, and loved ones from participating in major life events such as graduations, dissertation defenses, award ceremonies, and other academic milestones;

WHEREAS, many international students spend years away from their families while pursuing advanced degrees, and many parents devote years of sacrifice and support with the hope of witnessing the successful completion of their children's education;

WHEREAS, it is deeply unfair that many international students are able to celebrate these achievements with their families while students from countries affected by travel restrictions are denied that same opportunity solely because of their nationality;

WHEREAS, universities are global institutions whose educational and research missions are strengthened through international collaboration, cultural exchange, and the free movement of knowledge and talent across borders;

Therefore Be It Resolved

BE IT RESOLVED that the Graduate Labor Union recognizes the serious harm that federal travel restrictions impose on students, researchers, scholars, physicians, postdoctoral scholars, graduate workers, and their families;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GLU affirms that students, researchers, and scholars should be evaluated based on their individual qualifications and contributions and not denied opportunities solely because of their nationality;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GLU calls upon the University of Minnesota to publicly advocate for exemptions from federal travel restrictions for students, researchers, scholars, physicians, postdoctoral scholars, and academic workers whose education, research, or professional responsibilities are affected by such restrictions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GLU urges the University of Minnesota to work independently and in coalition with peer universities, academic associations, healthcare institutions, labor organizations, and professional societies to advocate for policies that allow qualified students and scholars from affected countries to participate fully in academic and research programs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GLU calls upon the University of Minnesota to explore all available legal, administrative, and legislative avenues to support students and scholars affected by travel restrictions, including participation in coalition efforts, public advocacy, amicus briefs, support for legal challenges where appropriate, and engagement with state and federal policymakers;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GLU urges the University of Minnesota to expand legal assistance, immigration support services, and emergency resources for students and scholars affected by travel restrictions and related immigration policies;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GLU commits to amplifying the experiences and concerns of affected graduate workers and advocating for policies that protect their ability to study, teach, conduct research, provide healthcare, and participate fully in university life;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that GLU calls upon the University of Minnesota to stand alongside other institutions of higher education in defending the principle that qualified students and scholars should have access to educational and research opportunities regardless of nationality and that universities are strongest when they remain open to global talent.

Statement of Principle

The Graduate Labor Union believes that students and scholars should not lose educational, research, or professional opportunities because of the country in which they were born. Federal travel restrictions affecting countries such as Iran have imposed significant burdens on students, researchers, and families who seek only to learn, teach, discover, heal, and contribute to society.

These policies affect not only the individuals directly impacted but also the universities, hospitals, laboratories, and communities that would benefit from their talents. The University of Minnesota has long benefited from the contributions of international scholars, and GLU believes the university should use every appropriate avenue available to advocate for students and researchers whose futures have been placed at risk by these restrictions.