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Fellow graduate workers,

On Friday, July 17, the Department of Homeland Security published its final rule ending “Duration of Status,” which is the framework that for more than three decades has allowed international students and scholars on F and J visas to remain in this country for as long as they are enrolled, working, and in status. The new rule taking effect on September 15, 2026 will harm international graduate workers at the University of Minnesota, who teach this institution’s courses, staff its labs, and produce its research.

This rule caps international students’ authorized stay at four years, despite the fact that the median PhD takes around 6 years to finish. That means nearly every international doctoral worker will have to ask the federal government for more time to finish a degree they are already years into. This involves submitting a \$420 application to a long federal queue with no guarantee of approval. It also cuts the post-completion grace period from 60 days to 30, and threatens those who miss their date or get denied with automatic unlawful presence.

This rule is rooted in the same xenophobic, racist, white nationalist sentiments this administration has espoused since it took power. It solves no problem, protects no one, and does nothing for the working class of this country. What it does do is to throw our international colleagues into greater precarity by criminalizing the scholarship they were invited here to pursue in the first place. It also hands every employer, including this University, more leverage over workers whose right to remain now runs through fear and paperwork. When our coworkers can be pushed out mid-dissertation, every lab, department, grant, and classroom at this University is weaker for it. Furthermore, scholarly advancement in the United States depends on researchers from around the world choosing to bring their work here, but this rule indicates that the United States cannot be trusted with their futures.

With this, we call upon the University to meet the following demands:

1. Cover costs incurred by international students associated with filing for extension of status
2. Commit to audit and personally notify every international grad worker of their new deadline to request an extension
3. Increase staffing at ISSS to accommodate surge in extension applications and counseling needs
4. Publicly commit to disclose no worker’s information to immigration enforcement beyond what the law strictly compels
5. Publicly affirm that union membership and lawful union activity have no bearing on any student’s immigration status



6. Commit to give every worker affected by these changes the ability to complete their degree remotely when feasible and clearly communicate these options to grad workers

International workers at the University of Minnesota also hold rights afforded by our Collective Bargaining Agreement. These protections (found in Article 22, International Employee Rights) include up to five days of paid immigration leave each year; prompt production of appointment letters and other immigration documents by departments; schedule flexibility, confidentiality, and protection from retaliation during immigration proceedings; a required meeting with the University and the union about returning to campus employment for any worker who loses work authorization; and a prohibition on discrimination or threats based on immigration or citizenship status. These protections are enforceable through the grievance procedure and any worker who needs help accessing these rights should contact their steward.

Additionally, GLU-UE and our national union, UE have put together [this plain language explainer and resource bank](#) so individuals can understand what exactly is in these proposed changes and can act accordingly.

These changes present an existential threat to our university's community. GLU takes these threats seriously, and that is why we present the University with these demands. Not to challenge this administration, but in hopes to work together to protect the research mission of the University of Minnesota. While we appreciate the message the University sent out last week, we hope that in the coming months our employer can agree to take more concrete steps to support and defend international workers on its campuses.

Signed,

GLU-UE Executive Board