

Latitudes: Colleges use this federal safety guidance for study abroad. Now it's gone.

1 message

Karin Fischer <newsletter@newsletter.chronicle.com>

Wed, Apr 16,
2025 at 11:01
AM

Reply-To: newsletter@newsletter.chronicle.com

To: amadorsapo@gmail.com

ADVERTISEMENT



The advertisement features a photograph of two men in a rice field. One man is wearing a green shirt and the other a white shirt. They are both looking at the rice plants. To the left of the photo is the Southern Cross University Australia logo, which consists of a stylized 'S' and 'C' inside a shield shape. To the right of the photo, the text reads 'Grain Gains: the regional Australian university breeding rice for the future'. Below this text is a button that says 'Learn more'. At the bottom right of the advertisement, there is small text that reads 'CRICOS Provider: 03493 | TEQSA Provider Code: PRV12043 Australian University'.

Latitudes

THE CHRONICLE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

You can also [read this newsletter on the web](#). Or, if you no longer want to receive this newsletter, [unsubscribe](#).

Disappearing guidance

The Trump administration's changes to the U.S. Department of State travel and security guidance, including the deletion of information on safety concerns based on race, gender, and sexual identity, have alarmed colleges that rely on the reports for study-abroad programs.

The [Overseas Security Advisory Council, or OSAC](#), a public-private partnership within the State Department that provides risk assessment and best practices to business, academic, and other American organizations abroad, took down country-specific security reports soon after President Trump's inauguration, according to global health and safety directors for colleges and education-abroad program providers. (They asked that *The Chronicle* not publish their names or institutions because of worries about the repercussions of speaking out.)

When the reports were reposted, advice for women and LGBT travelers had been removed, along with guidance for travelers with disabilities and those from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Websites across the federal government have eliminated references to diversity, equity, and inclusion in response to presidential orders.

For example, an earlier version of a country report for Jordan included seven paragraphs of information for female travelers, advising that visitors to the Middle Eastern country "should be mindful of cultural differences; some Jordanians may see seemingly innocuous behavior such as riding in the front seat of a taxi or even polite conversation with the opposite sex as forward and/or inviting."

"To avoid any misunderstandings," the report cautioned, "women should ride in the back seat of taxis, dress modestly, carry a charged cell phone, and avoid solo travel to unfamiliar areas, especially at night."

The [updated version](#) of the Jordan report contains only a hyperlink to general State Department advice for women traveling overseas. More-detailed counsel was also replaced by links to generic guidance

for student, faith-based, disabled, and “LGB” travelers. All references to race and transgender people had been deleted from the Jordan report, which shrank from 10 pages to four.

Some of the changes may be more expected because they reflect the administration’s broader stance on DEI. But the study-abroad administrators said they found removal of information about health and safety concerns more surprising. In the Jordan report, a section on public transportation was gone, including a note that the U.S. embassy does not allow its employees to ride public buses because of safety and security concerns.

A State Department spokesperson said the OSAC reports had been updated to make them “more concise and not duplicative” of [guidance posted elsewhere on the department’s website](#). “There is no higher priority than the safety and security of U.S. citizens and our diplomatic staff overseas,” the spokesperson said.

OSAC reports are often the foundation for study-abroad advising, especially at smaller colleges with less resources. The health and safety directors who spoke with *The Chronicle* said positions like theirs are uncommon, and subscribing to private threat assessments is expensive.

The OSAC revisions could leave students and advisers to make choices about overseas study without a full understanding of risk. For example, countries may have nuanced cultural and social views on gender and sexual identity that are separate from laws on homosexuality. “It’s making people less safe abroad,” a college-based administrator said.

The administrator said he was concerned not just about the changes themselves but about the implications of political ideology shaping government travel advice and security support. “Now that politics is

injected into it, I don't know that if resources come back that we can trust the data."

And a safety director at a study-abroad provider said she worries about the impact of broader federal and state restrictions on DEI on the ability to prepare students to go abroad. "How can we advise them," she said, "if we can't talk about their identity?"

Want to stay up to date on the latest policy actions affecting higher education? Check out *The Chronicle's* [tracker](#) that focuses on Trump's higher-ed agenda.

Upcoming Workshop



While leadership has always required resilience and vision, the challenges of this moment demand something more: the ability to navigate uncertainty together. Our Women Leading Change Program provides leaders the skills, frameworks, and peer support that can help them support their campuses in these unpredictable times. [Learn more and register.](#)

Latest on student-visa revocations

A spate of lawsuits across the country are contesting the Trump administration's efforts to revoke the visas of international students and scholars, and colleges and state officials have signaled their support of such challenges.

Eighty-six colleges and higher-education associations have signed onto an [amicus brief](#) organized by the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration. It seeks to block large-scale arrests, detentions, and deportations, saying that the government's actions have "created a climate of fear" on campuses and could strike a blow to American higher education and innovation.

The attorneys general of 19 states submitted their own [brief](#). They argued that the policy inflicts irreparable harm to the states, is contrary to the public interest, and violates the First Amendment's protection of free speech.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators has [collected](#) more than 1,300 reports of foreign students having their visas revoked, their legal status terminated, and/or being arrested or detained.

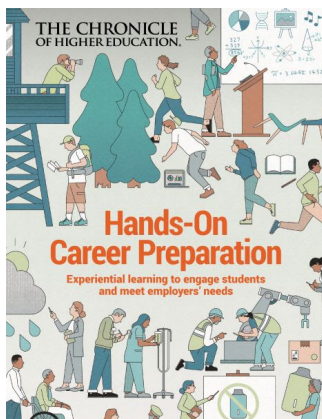
Some of those students are taking the Trump administration to court, saying that they have received little or no justification for the terminations or any opportunity to challenge them. Court cases have been filed in states including Arizona, California, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Washington. In New Hampshire, a federal judge [ordered](#) the government to reinstate the visa status of a Dartmouth College graduate student.

The U.S. for Success Coalition is [calling on Congress](#) to press the administration to avoid immigration actions and travel restrictions that could deter international students and scholars from coming to this country.

In other news:

- The Trump administration has frozen more than \$2 billion in funding to [Harvard University](#) after it refused to comply with a list of demands from the federal government, including reporting foreign students who commit conduct violations immediately to federal authorities and reforming international admissions “to prevent admitting students” who appear hostile “to American values.”
- The Chinese Ministry of Education [warned](#) students to be aware of the risks of studying in the United States after Ohio and other states passed legislation restricting academic ties with China.
- The number of foreign visitors [tumbled](#) 20 percent in March, compared to the same time the previous year, according to customs arrival data. Some overseas scholars have said they were [hesitant to travel to the United States](#) because of trade wars, a volatile political climate, and fears of harassment or detention. The Canadian Association of University Teachers warned Tuesday that academics should go to the U.S. “[only if essential and necessary.](#)”

From the Chronicle Store



Hands-On Career Preparation

Experiential-learning programs are grounded in the belief that true understanding comes from direct engagement with the world. [Order this report](#) to learn how to create learning experiences that align academic goals with work-force demands.

Cuts would eliminate funding for Fulbright and other international educational exchanges

The Trump administration is considering [eliminating all funding](#) for State Department educational and cultural programs, including the Fulbright scholarship, the flagship American exchange program.

An internal memo proposes cutting the State Department budget in half, including reductions to foreign assistance and global health. It would zero out support for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. In addition to Fulbright, the bureau administers the Gilman program, which expands study-abroad opportunities for low-income and first-generation American students; EducationUSA, a global network of centers that advise international students about studying at American colleges; and programs that bring young leaders from around the world to the United States.

The document was first reported on by *The Washington Post* and is part of planning efforts for downsizing the federal government.

The administration earlier this year [suspended payments](#) to State Department grantees, leaving exchange students struggling to pay rent, colleges searching for stopgap funding, and groups that administer the programs facing layoffs. Most grants were later restarted.

During his first term, Trump [proposed deep cuts](#) to international exchange and education programming, but the funds were restored by Congress.

Judge blocks Florida foreign-influence law

A federal judge has [temporarily blocked](#) a Florida law that prevents public colleges from hiring graduate students and scholars from foreign “countries of concern.” The state’s attorney general is appealing the ruling.

The [foreign-influence law](#), approved in 2023, restricts Florida institutions from hiring people from seven countries of concern, including China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria, and Venezuela. A pair of graduate students and a professor filed a [legal challenge](#), saying that the law is discriminatory, unconstitutional, and overrides federal authority for immigration, national security, and foreign affairs. The judge agreed, saying the law requires the state to conduct an independent national-security threat assessment that could be in conflict with federal-government judgments.

In a motion appealing the decision and seeking to put the injunction on hold, state officials said the Florida measure is “fully consistent” with federal rules.

New College of Florida, the state’s public liberal-arts college, recently invoked the law in [firing](#) a Chinese-language professor.

Around the globe

A [sign-on letter](#) from Asian American Scholar Forum expresses concern about the abrupt firing of a professor at Indiana University at Bloomington whose home was searched by the FBI. The letter questions whether such action could be a return of the [China Initiative](#), the federal investigation of academic and economic ties with China during the first Trump administration.

The National Institutes of Health has [barred](#) scientists working in China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Venezuela from accessing certain biomedical databases.

U.S. senators have introduced [legislation](#) that mirrors a measure that passed the U.S. House of Representatives to increase requirements for colleges to report funds from overseas.

A bipartisan bill would make it easier for international graduates from American colleges in advanced STEM fields to gain [permanent residence](#).

A key House committee gave approval for a [bill](#) that would block colleges that host Confucius Institutes, Chinese-supported language and cultural centers, or have relationships with any “Chinese entities of concern” from receiving any funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

A Nigerian man has pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining a student visa and admission to a doctoral program at the University of Missouri as part of a [romance-fraud scheme](#).

Legislation introduced in New Zealand could mandate [institutional neutrality](#) at all colleges.

Fudan University, one of the most prestigious institutions in China, plans deep cuts to enrollments in [liberal arts and humanities](#).

An American academic was arrested in Thailand on charges of [insulting the country’s monarchy](#), which could result in a sentence of up to 15 years.

A Lithuanian college has apologized and removed promotional materials for its [Russian-studies program](#) after students raised objections.

Dutch universities plan a [lawsuit](#) challenging deep cuts to higher-education spending.

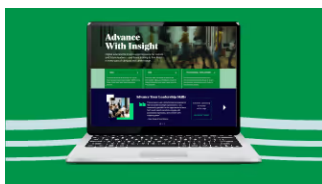
Thanks for reading. I always welcome your feedback and ideas for future reporting, so drop me a line at karin.fischer@chronicle.com or message me confidentially at [Signal](#). You can also connect with me on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Bluesky](#). If you like this newsletter, please share it with colleagues and friends. They can [sign up here](#).

From **Chronicle Careers**

Job Opportunities

[Search thousands](#) of faculty, administrative, and executive job openings and [upload your resume](#) to be searchable by employers!

Career Resources



[Chronicle Careers](#) provides insights, tools, and advice to help you in career development, job seeking, and hiring, plus read this month's article collection!

Read Our Other Newsletters

[Race on Campus](#) | [The Review](#) | [Teaching](#) | [Your Career](#) | [Weekly Briefing](#) | [The Edge](#)

Newsletter Feedback

Please let us know what you thought of today's newsletter in this [three-question survey](#).

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This newsletter was sent to amadorsapo@gmail.com.

[Read this newsletter on the web.](#)

[Manage](#) your newsletter preferences, [stop receiving](#) this email, or [view](#) our privacy policy.

© 2025 [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

1255 23rd Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037