



**ASEE Statement on Prevention of Nonimmigrant Students from  
Taking Online-Only Coursework  
July 8, 2020**

This statement is issued on behalf of the ASEE Board of directors. As a measure of our shared concerns, ASEE also led the development of a multi-society statement.

As ASEE president, I am very concerned that the changes discussed will have a long-term negative impact on our economy and our society and we passionately urge the federal government to reconsider their stated plans. Plans which, in my view, place an enormous **hardship on the affected students, and likely to have a far-reaching, negative impact on American higher education, particularly in engineering and engineering technology, for many years.**

Engineering innovation is an important driver of growth in the knowledge-based economy of the United States; the unintended consequences of this policy change will negatively impact our ability to recover from the economic hardship caused by the pandemic. At a time when engineering talent is more critical than ever to our recovery, now is not the time to be driving talent from our shores.

Sheryl Sorby  
2020-2021 ASEE President

**ASEE POLICY STATEMENT**

The changes announced on June 6, 2020 by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement may have a significant negative impact on many ASEE individual and institutional members, most notably colleges of engineering and engineering technology.

In the face of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities across the U.S. are struggling with whether or how to open for classes this fall, with many choosing either blended or fully online offerings. The announced change prohibits those non-immigrants pursuing academic (F-1 visa) and vocational (M-1 visa) coursework from taking a fully online course load and remaining in the U.S. **Given that a fully online course load may be the only option**

**at many universities, and given the challenges in international travel including visa access, the net effect of this change would appear to be to force large numbers of non-immigrant students to disrupt their studies, leave the U.S., and be unable to return for the foreseeable future.**

The majority of engineering and engineering technology graduate students are foreign born, as are a significant number of undergraduates. As we indicated in a previous policy statement, "A talented engineering workforce is needed to tackle the grand challenges of tomorrow. ASEE member institutions are greatly enriched by the talent, intelligence, work ethic, and diversity of thought that international faculty and students bring to their campuses. Many of these students stay in the U.S. after graduation and contribute to the economy, sometimes starting tech-based businesses or impacting entire industries." Exclusion of non-immigrant graduate students can be expected to have a significantly negative impact on US academic engineering research. Loss of non-immigrant undergraduate students can be expected to have a significant, negative impact on the global awareness and cultural richness of domestic students seeking to compete in an increasingly integrated global economy. Moreover, this action-added to previous actions taken by the current federal administration-continues the creation of a negative atmosphere that impedes our ability to recruit the best global talent to engineering study, instruction, research, and practice. **In sum, the effect of this change will be to inflict significant long-term damage to the global competitiveness of the U.S.** This is not an action we would have expected from a U.S. government, nor is it one that we can support.

While ASEE supports every effort to ensure security within our borders, we hope that these efforts will be carried out in such a way as to minimize disruption to those who teach, practice, conduct research, and study engineering and engineering technology in the U.S. At a time when engineering talent is more critical than ever to our recovery, now is not the time to drive talent from our shores.