

Dear F-1 International Students,

On Monday, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) announced guidance restricting the ability of international students to enroll in fully online programs while in the United States during the fall semester. Through this guidance, the U.S. federal government is seeking to maximize flexibility for students to continue their studies, while minimizing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The guidance states:

- Students attending schools operating entirely online may not take a full online course load and remain in the United States.
- Students attending schools operating under normal in-person classes are bound by existing federal regulations.
- Students attending schools with a mixture of online and in-person classes will be allowed to take more than one class or three credit hours online.

Fortunately, SIU has already announced its fall 2020 instructional plan which states that classes will be offered with a mixture of online and in-person classes. Specifically classes will be offered in several formats which include traditional face-to-face classes, hybrid classes in which a portion of instruction is face-to-face, and fully online or alternate format classes. Under this model of instruction, we anticipate that all current international students will have the opportunity to stay in the U.S. while attending SIU, but great care must be taken to ensure that class enrollment decisions follow the new guidance. Please review SIU's *Plan for Fall 2020* at <https://siu.edu/coronavirus/fall2020/> for details and updates.

We understand that this new guidance from the federal government is confusing and adds yet one more level of uncertainty as you formulate your own plans to continue your studies under difficult circumstances. We also recognize the fact that SIU's plans may change as new information is available and as state and health agencies adapt their own guidance. We are, however, committed to help you meet your educational goals right here at SIU and assist you in making informed decisions. Toward that end, we will be working closely with the campus community and uploading more specific guidance to the COVID-19 FAQ for international students on the CIE website at: <https://cie.siu.edu/internationalstudents/covid19.php>. Also, check in often with your academic unit and academic advisors as faculty and staff teams are finalizing detailed plans for the format of fall class offerings. And as always, stay safe and please feel free to reach out to us at [issinfo@siu.edu](mailto:issinfo@siu.edu).

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