U-M Leaders Issue Statement of Support for Chinese Students, Scholars, and Faculty

June 5, 2020

Chinese students and faculty have enriched the University of Michigan for generations, and the university will strongly oppose any arbitrary restrictions targeting that segment of the U-M community.

That was the message delivered by U-M leaders in an open letter June 4 responding to proposed federal legislation and a recent presidential proclamation aimed at limiting the ability of Chinese students and researchers to study and work at U.S. colleges and universities.

The letter was signed by President Mark Schlissel, Interim Provost Susan Collins, Vice President for Research Rebecca Cunningham and Rackham Graduate School Dean Mike Solomon.

“Our principles of international engagement and cross-cultural understanding have been a foundation of our strength and progress for generations and enhance our standing as a leading international community of scholars,” the leaders wrote.

A May 29 proclamation from President Donald Trump restricts entry to the United States by Chinese graduate students with ties to military-influenced organizations and universities.

According to the letter, much is still unclear about the proclamation and how its implementation may impact U-M students and researchers, including graduate students holding F-1 and J-1 visas and researchers currently in the United States with a valid visa.

“We take seriously threats to national security and have worked to implement practices aimed at addressing foreign government interference, we oppose arbitrary restrictions on Chinese students who have been and continue to be valuable members of the U-M community,” the letter states.

“These restrictions also limit our ability to attract top talent that contributes to our nation’s health, security and economy. We support our Chinese students, researchers and faculty and ardently believe restrictions should be limited to those who pose security risks based on credible intelligence and evidence.”

A separate bill introduced late last month by Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Arkansas, and others would prohibit Chinese nationals from receiving visas to the United States for graduate or postgraduate studies in STEM fields.
“Offering proposals, even for the purpose of taking a political stance, can have an adverse impact on our ability to create a welcoming community that attracts global talent to our university,” the letter states.

“Please know that the university considers these issues top priorities and will continue to monitor them, strategically engage when opportunities arise and strongly oppose efforts to place inappropriate limits on our international students, faculty and visitors.”

Source: The University Record [1]

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