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HELPING HAND

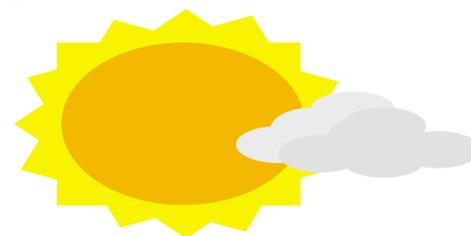
NIU is prepared to assist international students navigate 'harmful and unfair' federal policies / 3



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TODAY'S WEATHER



HIGH
91
LOW
71

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NIU will help students navigate 'harmful' ICE policy

By **KELSEY RETTKE**
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DeKALB – Northern Illinois University President Lisa Freeman says the university is prepared to help international students navigate what she called “harmful and unfair” new federal policies related to noncitizen students and e-learning in the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Monday, the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcements department released new mandates that would bar international students taking strictly online courses in the fall 2020 semester from remaining in the country.

Students who come from different countries represent a significant number of students at higher education institutions across the country, including NIU.

“International students are essential, valued members of the NIU community,” Freeman said in a statement to the Daily Chronicle. “We are prepared to help international students as they navigate the harmful and unfair new policies announced



Shaw Media file photo: Mark Busch

Northern Illinois University President Lisa Freeman says the university is prepared to help international students navigate what she called “harmful and unfair” new federal policies related to noncitizen students and e-learning in the COVID-19 pandemic.

by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding international students and remote learning.”

International students who enroll in U.S. education institutions typically need to be issued a student visa

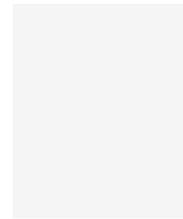
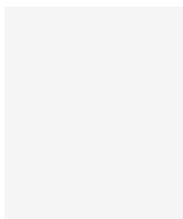
from the U.S. State Department, but will not be issued one if their coursework will be entirely online, the ICE statement reads, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency will not permit students from entering the country.

“Active students currently in the United States enrolled in such programs must depart the country or take other measures, such as transferring to a school with in-person instruction to remain in lawful status,” the mandate reads. “If not, they may face immigration consequences including, but not limited to, the initiation of removal proceedings.”

For students attending schools offering in-person classes in the fall, they will be allowed to remain as long as they only take a maximum of one class or three credit hours online, the announcement states.

Students attending a university which is offering a hybrid of online and in-person classes will be allotted to take more than one course online, but must verify their course load through a Form I-20 through the Student Exchange Visitor Program. That exemption does not apply for students designated as F-1 in English language training programs or M-1 pursuing vocational degrees, according to ICE.

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• **STUDENTS**

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The mandates did not come into play for the spring and summer 2020 semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ICE stated, but will begin to be enforced in the fall semester.

Schools should update their information in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) within 10 days of the change if they begin the fall semester with in-person classes but are later required to switch

to only online classes, or a nonimmigrant student changes their course selections, and as a result, ends up taking an entirely online course load. Nonimmigrant students within the United States are not permitted to take a full course of study through online classes. If students find themselves in this situation, they must leave the country or take alternative steps to maintain their nonimmigrant status, such as a reduced course load or appropriate medical leave.

Freeman said NIU would be at a loss without international students,

and called up remarks made by the Association of Public Land grant Universities President Peter McPherson.

“Our university community is made richer by international students, staff and faculty who choose to be a part of the Huskie family,” Freeman said. “We are strengthened by their

presence and contributions, and we stand by the statement made by Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU) President Peter McPherson: ‘The administration’s new policies for international students studying in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic are incredibly unfair, harmful and unworkable.’”

