



# UAW Local 4121

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May 23, 2020

Dear President Cauce:

First, we want to thank you for all you are doing to support our campus community during these unprecedented times.

We are writing with urgency to ask you to contact Secretary Mike Pompeo, Acting Secretary Chad Wolf, and Secretary Eugene Scalia to express your opposition to President Trump's Executive Proclamation of April 22, 2020. This proclamation would suspend or restrict immigration and programs such as Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), the J-1 exchange visitor program, the H-1B specialty worker program, and the O-1 program for individuals with extraordinary ability/achievement. These programs support international postdocs, faculty, and other academic employees working at institutions of higher education in the US, including nearly 40% of the 6,000 Academic Student Employees and Postdocs employed by the University of Washington.

On April 22, 2020, the White House [issued an Executive Proclamation](#) restricting immigration to the United States. Section 6, Additional Measures, declared: "Within 30 days of the effective date of this proclamation, the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall review nonimmigrant programs and shall recommend to me other measures appropriate to stimulate the United States economy and ensure the prioritization, hiring, and employment of United States workers."

Non-immigrant employment programs utilized by the University of Washington are currently under review per this proclamation. In response, Senators Cotton, Cruz, Grassley, and Hawley [wrote to President Trump on May 7](#) recommending that the White House suspend non-immigrant programs, specifically highlighting the H-1B visa program and the F1 OPT extension. These visa categories cover Postdoctoral Scholars, Research and Teaching Assistants, Tutors, Research Scientists and Techs, Faculty, Lecturers, Medical Residents, and many others that contribute to the critical research and teaching efforts at the University of Washington.

As early career researchers, the vast majority of all graduate students and postdocs working at the UW are facing unprecedented research disruptions from this global pandemic that will profoundly affect our careers. International students and scholars are facing additional precarity due to lack of access to relief programs such as the CARES Act, and inflexible research and career deadlines imposed by visa timelines determined prior to the onset of the pandemic. If visas for international researchers are suspended or renewals are refused, important research being conducted right now at the University of Washington will also be delayed or even

suspended altogether. The time, money, and resources invested in these researchers and scientists will be lost.

International workers are successful job creators and entrepreneurs in the United States. Counter to the claims made by Senator Cotton and colleagues, the presence of non-immigrant visa holders in the workforce does not have a negative impact on US citizens. A November 2019 [report from the Congressional Research Service](#) shows that international students routinely remain in the US after graduation, playing an instrumental role in our business, technology, resource, and healthcare sectors. A [recent analysis by Business Roundtable](#) determined that disruption to the OPT program would lead to decreases in GDP, wages, and employment rates even for US citizens alone. A [study by the National Foundation for American Policy](#) recently found that the presence of workers on H-1B visas can reduce unemployment, increase worker pay, and stabilize employment opportunities for US citizens.

We urge you to join the American Council on Education, American Association of Universities, NAFSA, and dozens of other national education-based organizations to fight for the preservation and continuation of immigration programs and to preserve and expand non-immigrant programs.

Please find [at this link](#) our Union's recent letter to these Secretaries. Would the University administration be willing to send similar letters as soon as possible? Or – if the University has already done so – would you provide us with a copy so we can coordinate our advocacy?

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Meier, PhD  
Postdoctoral Scholar, Psychology

On behalf of The UAW 4121 International Solidarity Working Group:

Sandesh Adhikary, PhD Student, Computer Science and Engineering  
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