

Town Hall Visa Statement 06/25/2020

First I want to recognize that this is a precarious time for all of us, and on top of general COVID-19 disruptions and uncertainties, our international colleagues, team members, spouses, friends, and brothers and sisters have added stress and anxiety about their statuses and ability to stay in the US and work due to the recent Presidential Proclamations.

We have received countless emails, so my intent is to reassure all of the international population, all of our friends, departments, hosts and sponsors at KUMC that the proclamation issued on Monday, June 22, 2020 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspending-entry-aliens-present-risk-u-s-labor-market-following-coronavirus-outbreak/> was much more narrow in scope than we anticipated.

Several visa types were mentioned in the proclamation that I would like to address these:

H1B's visas

- The most recent proclamation limits those who are **outside of the US** from entering the US on an H1B visa. This has some impact on KUMC as our H1B workers should not travel internationally at this time.
- If we you are in the US and changing your status or extending your H1B validity period, or petitioning for a change of employer, you would not be impacted by the Presidential Proclamation.
- Premium processing has also been reinstated.

J1 visas

- If you read the proclamation, you heard that J1 visas are also restricted.
- This bar is for J1 categories we do not sponsor at KUMC, so this does not impact our J1 residents, scholars, researchers etc.
- If you are currently on a J1 visa and need an extension, you will follow the normal processes with your department and Irina Aris.

We have an official summary of the proclamation from Judy Bordeau, our university approved immigration attorney, on our OIP website <http://www.kumc.edu/office-of-international-programs.html>

This recent proclamation follows and extends the proclamation issued in April that prohibited those applying for permanent residency from entering the US.

- Again, anyone currently in the US and applying for Permanent Residency, what we commonly refer to as the Green Card, should not be affected.

Due to COVID-19, there are travel bans barring entry from certain countries for anyone who has resided or traveled to these countries during the previous 14 days, with exceptions for US citizens and Permanent residents, who are required to self-quarantine for 14 days upon return.

These international locations include:

China

Europe

Brazil

So, this would prevent internationals, including students, from traveling into the US from these countries at this time and until the bans are lifted.

Additionally, embassies around the world remain closed except for urgent applications needed for J1 residents, J1's engaged in COVID 19 research and other healthcare providers.

- If you or an incoming employee are traveling internationally from a country that is not banned, KUMC and the health system require a 14-day quarantine per the KDHE guidelines prior to coming to campus for anything whatsoever;
- To this end, all international employees and students arriving from outside the US need to arrive in KC in order to allow for this 14-day quarantine;

There are significant obstacles for international students arriving for degree programs at this time. While we are processing I-20's for students to come to KUMC for the fall semester, if a student is outside of the US and needing to apply for a visa, we are unsure of the student's ability to secure a visa appointment and arrive on time. We are working individually with students and programs to navigate through this. Students within the US, transferring their SEVIS records to KUMC, will have no issues beginning the fall semester as long as they do not travel outside of the US.

For those who are required to check in with Irina due to the regulatory requirements, these must be arranged in advance; we are practicing social distancing of 6 feet and wearing masks for your health and safety.

We don't want those who are newly arriving to feel distanced or unwelcome as this is a very strange time to be arriving at a new job or university in a new country, so we encourage you to make added effort to engage by joining our zoom programming. Additionally, we will be reaching out individually by phone to check in with each of our internationals. Please be expecting a call from one of our team members.

Special Programs and Clinical Rotations

While KUMC highly values international educational exchange, due to all of the significant obstacles, transmission of COVID-19 and space issues, we are not processing learners for our special programs like observerships or international student rotations.

International Travel

If you are planning travel from the United States internationally, please be aware that many countries are not allowing entry from the US. Europe has not allowed entry from the US since March and while they are considering a reopening of borders for July 1, it seems that arrival from the US will remain prohibited due to our positive COVID-19 cases.

Student and Resident IEE's

Due to all of these factors, KUMC has suspended IEE's for students and residents through December 2021; SHP and SON have suspended IEE's for the academic year. The resumption of IEE's are being considered regularly through consultation with the deans.

Finally, I would like to share part of Judy's statement, "We would like to state we believe the proclamation's focus on nonimmigrant workers is too broad and may not be based on compelling data. As an example, a high percentage of H-1B professionals work in computer science occupations. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for individuals in computer occupations in May of 2020 was 2.5%, which is **lower** than the 3.0% unemployment rate for computer occupations in January of 2020, prior to the pandemic. Therefore, while solutions to the current unemployment rate should be actively sought, the presidential proclamation targets a group of workers who we believe are not contributing to the current economic crisis as a broad class; rather, many H-1B professionals work for universities, hospitals and businesses that are directly involved in technical, scientific and medical solutions aimed at fighting the pandemic and improving the US economy. Many

L-1 professionals stimulate international business development in the United States, and H-2B workers provide services in industries that are typically hard to fill with US workers. Overwhelming, studies have proven that US immigration helps rather than hinders US economic growth and innovation."

We understand that there are many intersecting unknowns. To help you with any questions or concerns, OIP is available by text, phone or WhatsApp at 816-668-6414 and email (kconnelly@kumc.edu and Irina Aris IARIS@kumc.edu at all times. We offer open advising on Tuesdays at 2:00 by Zoom and individual appointments by zoom until further notice.

Please know that you are valued and welcome at KUMC. We look forward to assisting you always,

[Kimberly Connelly](#), M.A.T. | KUMC Senior International Officer and Director, [Office of International Programs](#) | PDSO & ARO, FULBRIGHT Advisor | 5007 WESCOE Academic Affairs | **University of Kansas Medical Center** | 3901 Rainbow Blvd. | Mail Stop 3033 | Kansas City, KS 66160 | Phone: 913.588.1480 | Fax: 913.588.1462 | kconnelly@kumc.edu | **CELL** and **WhatsApp** 816.668.6414 |

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." – Marcel Proust