

Dear Director, Regulatory Management Division, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security,

My name is Marissa Machado and I am the International Student Admissions Coordinator at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In 1998, our students paid \$70 to file the form I-765 with USCIS. In 1999 they paid \$100, the years 2000 and 2002 \$120. Examples of the proposed fees include: OPT (I-765) current: \$180, proposed new fee: \$340. Change of status (I-539) current: \$200, proposed new fee: \$300. Replace lost I-94 (I-102) current: \$160, proposed new fee: \$320.

This is very upsetting because in the 2004/2005 academic year there were 8,491 international students in Minnesota. According to iie.org they spent \$172,057,746 in tuition, fees and living expenditures for themselves and their dependents. Our students must create solid portfolios, take English language tests, jump through many academic and financial hoops and leave their families in their home countries in order to contribute to the U.S. industry and economy. At MCAD they are full-tuition paying and must meet the Financial Certification amount of \$36,214 and receive no need-based scholarships. For my small school of 600 Bachelor of Fine Arts candidates this equals a contribution of approximately \$350,000 to our institution and local community.

By raising fees, it looks like the U.S. is not a welcoming place for international students. Many students feel that they are getting 'nickel and dimed'. They bring so much money to our country as is that asking them to pay more for necessary processing forms seems short-sighted.

I fear that in return the U.S. will see retaliation fee hikes for our off campus studies students like the one announced last week. "Fee Hike for International Students in Singapore. Singapore's Ministry of Education is planning to increase fees paid by international students." <http://www.business-standard.com/common/storypage.php?autono=273244&leftnm=6&subLeft=0&chkFlg> <<http://www.business-standard.com/common/storypage.php?autono=273244&leftnm=6&subLeft=0&chkFlg>> And why shouldn't they? The country of Ireland just changed its policy so that a student registration with the police costs 100 euros. Just last year our spring 2006 study abroad participants paid nothing. It is hard enough to encourage U.S. students to forfeit their work study money, sub-lease their apartment, save money for today's exchange rate of \$1 to .52 United Kingdom Pounds and apply for student visas. Although strong-willed students will always find a way to a global experience, added fees like Singapore's will not help my recruiting efforts.

Please do not dramatically increase your fees this year.

Thank you.
Marissa Machado
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
2211 Riverside Ave, CB #143

Minneapolis, MN 55422
612-330-1586/800-788-5678

ACTION ALERT

On February 1, 2007, USCIS issued a proposed rule with DRASTIC increases to the processing fees for most of its applications and petitions. The public comment period to the proposed rule ends April 2, 2007. Only you can provide the information to the USCIS and your members of Congress about the impact of the possible new rules on your students, scholars, and the ability of colleges and universities to recruit and hire the best and the brightest.

The increase filing fees will directly affect students, scholars, and the colleges and the universities that hire them. The filing fee for employment authorization required by international students applying for OPT would nearly double. A change of status filing would increase 68% from \$200 to \$300. Filing for an employment-based green card (I-140) will increase from \$195 to \$475. A full listing of the fees is available on the NAFSA website
<http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/fees_forms_and_processing/proposed_uscis_fee_hikes> .

The fees will not be raised until USCIS publishes a final rule. USCIS and your members of Congress need to be aware of the negative impact of the proposed fee increases. Your personalized (please see the instructions on the next page for examples of personalization you should add) letter detailing this impact is vital. Please take a few minutes to let them know how this will negatively impact your institution! To view the sample letter and take action, please visit www.nafsa.org/takeaction <<http://www.nafsa.org/takeaction>> .

--

--

Marissa Machado
Assistant Director of Admissions
Coordinator of International Admissions
Augsburg College
2211 Riverside Ave, C.B. #143
Minneapolis, MN 55454 U.S.A.
wk: 612-330-1586
fax:612-330-1590
Check us out at www.augsburg.edu

We can't all be captains,there has to be crew.
Be the best of what ever you are.