

*ACE American Council on Education*  
*AAU Association of American Universities*  
*NASULGC National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges*

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April 15, 2002

Governor Tom Ridge  
Director, Homeland Security  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Governor Ridge:

This letter is to comment on the October 29, 2001 Presidential Homeland Security Directive, "Combating Terrorism Through Immigration Policies." In particular, we want to address the following provision: "[t]he Government shall implement measures to end the abuse of student visas and prohibit certain international students from receiving education and training in sensitive areas, including areas of study with direct application to the development and use of weapons of mass destruction."

We share your concerns about safeguarding the nation's security and we want to work closely with you and the Interagency Working Group on implementing this directive.

On the issue of student visa abuse, we are on record in congressional testimony and direct contact with the Administration, indicating our commitment to work closely with the government to ensure that the new SEVIS system for tracking visa holders is implemented successfully, and as quickly as possible.

On the issue of access to education and training in sensitive areas, we believe that the most fruitful approach will be to concentrate on preventing initial entry into the U.S. of individuals who pose a potential security threat. The existing mechanism in the Department of State, called "Mantis," places a special hold on visa applications for fields included on a Technology Alert List. Perhaps this provides a useful starting point for dealing with this issue. We are concerned that the fundamentally open character of our higher education system may make it impossible to construct a workable system for restricting certain students already present in the country from gaining access to information that is made available to other students.

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Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Respectfully,



David Ward  
President  
American Council on Education



Nils Hasselmo  
President  
Association of American  
Universities



C. Peter Magrath  
President  
National Association of  
State Universities  
and Land-Grant Colleges

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April 18, 2002

The Honorable John H. Marburger, III  
Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Rm. 431  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20502-0001

Dear Director Marburger:

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