**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Well, good morning. It's my great pleasure to welcome all of you to the University of Utah town hall webinar. That's hosted by the office of the president, the office of the senior vice president for academic affairs and also the Office for Global Engagement. And the intent of this webinar is to provide Fall 2020 guidance for our international students who are entering the University of Utah on F-1 student visa. I'm Chris Ireland. I'm the university's chief global officer. As such, I am also the head of the Office of Global Engagement. And also I'm a distinguished professor of medicinal chemistry.

I have the privilege of serving as the moderator for today's meeting. We have a distinguished group of panelists for our discussion today. They include: Dr. Ruth Watkins, President of the University of Utah; Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Dan Reed; Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. David Kieda: Associate General Counsel, Katie Carreau; and the Director of International Student and Scholar Services, Chelsea Wells.

I'm delighted to note that we also have almost 250 students who have registered for this webinar and many more that are live streaming this event from around the world. I want to take just a moment to extend our gratitude to all 3,000 of our international students who have chosen the University of Utah to achieve their educational goals. You are now members of the University of Utah family. Your contributions to our community enrich all students, staff and faculty of the University of Utah. And you play a key role in our vision to be a global leader in education, and also prepare students to succeed in an increasingly global society.

From a logistics perspective, we'll start the webinar with welcoming comments from President Watkins, followed by Senior Vice President Dan Reed. This will be followed then by specific topic presentations from our panelists: Katie Carreau, Chelsea Wells, and David Kieda, in that order.

And then we'll finish up with a live question-and-answer session. Students were provided the opportunity to submit questions in advance for the Q and A. And I'm pleased to note that we received almost 100 questions from this audience. Many of these questions were directed at the specific Department of Homeland Security guidance issued on July 6. And to all of our delight, this guidance was [rescinded](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/15/trump-administration-drops-directive-international-students-and-online-courses) on [July 14](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Trump-Administration-Rescinds/249176?cid=wcontentlist_hp_latest). Thus, we will not allow, we will not address, questions about that guidance specifically, although each of the members of the panel will make comments as it relates to their topics. The remaining questions that were asked in the advanced question period will be addressed specifically by the panelists during their presentations. But again, I would remind you that we will have an open question-and-answer period at the end, and all students are encouraged to submit questions through the chat function on our webinar. And those questions will then be presented to the panel and will be answered in order. Any questions that we run out of time with will be answered by ISSS after the event.

So with that introduction, let me introduce President Ruth Watkins.

**President Ruth Watkins:** Oh, thank you very much, Chris, Dr. Ireland, I appreciate it so much. And good morning to all of you, or good afternoon or good evening, depending on where you're joining this webinar from. Thank you for taking the time to be part of this discussion and even more for being part of the University of Utah family.

As Dr. Ireland, our chief global officer mentioned, we value you so much. You make the University of Utah a stronger, better institution. We are delighted that you are part of the University of Utah and want to do everything we can to help you start your studies and/or continue your studies and your engagement with the University of Utah. We so believe in you and appreciate you and want to extend all the resources of the institution to you in support of you and helping you with your goals in education.

As Dr. Ireland mentioned, we applaud the decision that happened on Tuesday of this week, by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to rescind the rule that was adopted on July 6. I want you to know that the voice of the university mobilized quickly to speak against that rule and to join other universities around the nation in expressing our deep concerns. And many of the people that will be speaking today were instrumental in moving forward quickly—even in the context of a pandemic—to express how much we disagreed with that rule and how important you are as students and scholars to the success of the University of Utah, and to us, and broadly, to our communities and your fellow students.

We had joined two lawsuits partnering with other institutions: One specifically with 20 major institutions in the West and PAC-12 members; and of course, the [larger one](https://www.presidentsimmigrationalliance.org/) that engaged many institutions around the country to stop enforcement of the rule. We are delighted that that happened so swiftly before all the mechanics of a lawsuit had to play out.

We have, as Dr. Ireland mentioned, in the neighborhood of 3,000 international students and some 150 faculty scholars who come to us from around the world, as international students and scholars—a very, very important, vibrant community. And we will do all that we can to continue to support you. We will also monitor continued developments that happen in relationship to the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP). And we will pledge to keep you informed of any new decisions that impact our ability to serve you, support you and engage you in the institution. And we will take action again, if we need to do so. We'll join with our peers and we'll express our voice about the importance of international students and scholars at the University of Utah.

So I believe I'm going to pass to Dr. Dan Reed, our Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for his comments, thank you.

**Vice President Dan Reed:** Thanks, President Watkins. I just want to echo what she said: Within minutes of receiving a notice about the rule-making, we mobilized across campus, both to start responding to your questions, but [also] pursuing legal alternatives to address what we thought was an entirely inappropriate and really egregious penalty to be imposed upon you. And I'm really gratified at our ability collectively in the country to be able to turn that back.

But I especially want to echo something that she said about the importance of you. As I was thinking about this meeting, I was thinking about my years in higher education, and back to when I was a student, and the many hours I spent talking to friends from around the world who were also students, and how much I learned from them and, I hope, some things they learned from me.

Across my academic career, I've been privileged to build relationships where I have friends from countries all over the world. It is that international community of scholars—that is really why we value you so much here. You bring insights, expertise, cultural perspective, and we hope you benefit from being here. We know the students in the U.S. benefit from you being here. We live in a global village and that interaction of scholarship crosses national boundaries and is the defining aspect of what a higher education in the United States is about. We value you. We really appreciate the richness you bring to the university experience and the things that you carry back, whether you stay in the U.S. or go back to your home country. And one of the great things, at its best, that I value about the higher educational model in the U.S. is that we do embrace scholars from around the world and that richness defines and improves all of us.

So, know that we are committed to you. And that as President Watkins said, we will vigorously defend your participation in higher education in the United States, because it is deep in our DNA. It is a cultural value that defines who we are, that a global community of scholars enriches all of us. And so never doubt how much we value you, how much we welcome you here, and we are unwaveringly committed to supporting you. Chris?

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** All right, thank you, President Watkins and Dr. Reed. And I think it's very important for all of us that you have expressed what we all believe: That we are a leading international university. And we live in this, as Dan says, we live in that international community in that village. And every member of that village is an important contributor to our success.

So, we're going to transition now to our reports or presentations from our panel members. And we'll start with Katie Carreau. Katie is going to talk about the DHS guidance that was rescinded on July 6, and also, she's going to focus on international students from outside the U.S. that are coming to the university and facing issues associated with consulates being closed and obtaining visas.

So, Katie.

**Associate General Counsel Katie Carreau:** Thanks, Chris. I just want to start and give everyone a little background to understand where we started and how we got to where we are today, based on the laws governing the F-1 international student program. So, the typical rule that's been in place for a long time is that F-1 students can only engage a limited amount of online education while they're doing their program in the United States. So that was the status quo before March.

In March, once the pandemic began, and to the credit of the Department of Homeland Security, they recognized the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and the impact that would have on our international student communities. So in March, they issued guidance that allowed our students to maintain their active F-1 visas status, either inside the United States, or if they chose to leave the United States, to maintain that active status while engaging in 100 percent online learning at the university. That guidance itself said that the duration of the allowance for online education would last for the term of this national emergency. With that understanding the University of Utah and all other institutions of higher education went on to plan their fall learning, understanding that they would have this protection for our international students.

We were all shocked and surprised in July, when they issued guidance that conflicted with that, which essentially said that if F-1 students are engaged in 100 percent online education, they would not be able to do that from the United States. They would only be able to do that if they left the United States. So what happened when that came out on July 6 and 7, through two directives, is that institutions across the United States, across the country and in particular, our university, mobilized to file many lawsuits to challenge that new rule, which we had all relied on in planning for our fall semester.

As President Watkins mentioned, the first lawsuit that was filed was filed by Harvard and MIT. The University of Utah, along with 180 other institutions of higher education, [joined that lawsuit](https://attheu.utah.edu/students/u-statement-on-student-and-exchange-visitor-program/) as a [friend of the court](https://www.presidentsimmigrationalliance.org/), to describe the significant negative impact this would have on our higher ed institutions. We followed that by initiating our own lawsuit with 20 other institutions in the West, through a lawsuit that was filed last week in the state of Oregon. And then there were at least six other cases that I'm aware of that were filed across the country, where the university was also poised to join those cases as well in our support of international students.

Before the cases could get very far this week, the very first hearing that was held in the Harvard-MIT case, the Department of Homeland Security came to that hearing and announced that it would be rescinding the July 6 and 7 directives. So, what that means is that we are put back in a place where the March directives allowing for 100 percent online education govern the student programs at this time. I understand there's still some questions under those March directives. And Chelsea's going to try and answer some of your questions in a few minutes about where things stand based on that guidance. And I will add that there is a hearing this morning in the case that we are a party to, and we are going to do our best to make sure that Department of Homeland Security can't throw any additional surprises at us as they agree to continue to act under the March guidance.

But although we have this really wonderful news that came out on Tuesday, there are still many obstacles that our international students face, particularly if you are outside the United States. So, I just want to point those out so that you guys are still aware of some issues that you may face. So, first of all, consulates abroad have not been operating under normal circumstances since March. Many consulates are closed. Many consulates are only operating with emergency appointments. News this week says that they are going to start reopening and start resuming regular appointment schedules soon, but that varies by country. So, it's really important that you check in with the consulates in the countries that you're in, if you need to obtain a new F-1 visa and your passport to enter the United States for the first time or to return to the United States.

The second issue that still exists is that we still also have several executive orders from the President of the United States that involve COVID-related restrictions on travel to the United States. The countries impacted are Iran, China, and Brazil—which currently the rule is that you may not come directly from one of those countries without spending 14 days in a another, non-impacted country. And we're watching for developments on that, but that's something you should be aware of if you're coming from those countries and it may be difficult to get even the F-1 visas issued, if you're in those countries, even if you have plans to travel to a third country before coming into the U.S.

There are also COVID-related travel bans from the UK, Ireland and the Schengen area. I did see guidance yesterday from the Department of State that specifically says that F-1 students with valid visas will be able to travel directly from those countries, and that's brand new guidance, but that's what we've seen. So, we're hopeful that if you are coming from one of those areas, that you will not encounter problems, but we'll continue to monitor that as well.

So, I think that is the legal side. And I'm happy to answer questions if people are submitting questions about those issues, but I'll turn it back to you, Chris, thank you.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Thank you, Katie. Our next presentation will be from the director of ISSS, Chelsea Wells. She will talk about the impact of the current March guidance now on Fall 2020 semester students, and also start addressing some of the questions that keep popping up from students about class format and modalities, and also impacts on OPT and CPT.

Chelsea.

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** Thank you, Dr. Ireland. Good morning, everyone. I'm thrilled to be here to speak with you about all of these important topics this morning.

But first I will start by discussing the current guidance and as it applies to the Fall 2020 semester. Since DHS has rescinded the guidance that was issued on July 6, we will be reverting back to the guidance originally released in March, 2020. Under the current guidance, we believe that new and continuing students are eligible to obtain their F-1 visa from embassies and consulates to begin or resume their studies in the United States.

Furthermore, since the July 6th guidance has now been rescinded, international students on an F-1 visa do not need to be enrolled in at least one in-person class in order to maintain their status and remain in the United States. You may choose to enroll in all-online or remote classes, or choose classes in a variety of formats. If you will be located outside of the U.S. and unable to enter the U.S. for this fall semester, you will be able to take all-online or remote classes. According to the current guidance, you will also be able to maintain your F-1 active status, even if you're taking all-online or remote classes and even if you're currently located outside of the United States. Additionally, you will not need to be issued an updated I-20 with remarks stating that you will be enrolled in in-person classes. You will still be able to use the I-20 that you've already been issued, provided that it's still valid.

However, although this flexibility is allowed for the fall semester, it's important to remember that if you've been issued an F-1 student visa and would like to maintain your active F1 status, you will still need to be enrolled in a full-time course load for the Fall 2020 semester. That means you'll need to be enrolled in at least 12 semester credit hours if you're an undergraduate student, or nine semester credit hours or three thesis hours, if you're a graduate student. This requirement will apply whether you're currently located outside the U.S. or if you're inside the U.S. in order to maintain your active status.

And now, I would like to address some of the common questions that we've been receiving about the Fall 2020 semester. The first is in regards to class format and availability: As you know, the University of Utah is planning to operate with a hybrid model for this fall. However, we understand that many students are still facing challenges obtaining their visas and many are subject to the travel restrictions in the places Katie mentioned earlier. The University of Utah is happy to announce that we do have some fully online course blocks available for freshmen students, as well as continuing undergraduate students. These courses are fully online and they will be asynchronous. So, you will not experience any difficulties with different time zones. Content will also be recorded and uploaded into Canvas. These fully online options will allow you to begin fulfilling your general education course requirements.

* The first option that's offered is a Block U Global Citizenship, and this course block lasts for two semesters, and it allows you for you to complete all of your general education course requirements so that way you can focus on the classes for your specific major afterwards. If you're interested in this course block, we encourage you to contact the academic advising center and schedule an appointment with the block you advisor.
* The second option is a LEAP online course cluster. LEAP is a learning community, and it's built around a small cohort of students, and it offers wrap-around support as well. To discuss course options or register for these courses, please contact the academic advising center and schedule an appointment with an advisor.

For continuing undergraduate students, classes will be available in a variety of formats, including in person, online, which would be asynchronous learning hybrid, and IVC (Interactive Video Courses) or remote classes, which are synchronous learning. You can find out more about a specific class and the format that it will be offered in by searching the class schedule academic catalog. Through the class schedule catalog, you can also filter to search by a specific class format, such as searching for all online or IVC courses or even courses that will all be taught in person. However, please note that if you will be taking classes in a remote or IVC format outside of the U.S., you may experience certain challenges, which could include some accessibility constraints in certain countries or regions. [Other issues may arise with] synchronous classes, which are listed as IVC. And these are these classes that are taught remotely, but during a set class time. These will be held at a Utah time zone, so if you'll be in a different time zone, just be aware that those classes could be held at a time that might not be the most convenient for you, but it is still an option that's available for you.

And then at the graduate level, your academic program can help you identify which courses might be available and which might be most appropriate for you. We encourage you to contact your academic advisor and your academic program if you have any questions about the course, the available courses and the course format.

Next, I would like to address your questions about options. If you're unable to enter the United States for this fall semester, or you choose to leave the U.S. and you're not interested in taking online or remote classes, there are still some options available for you:

* The first option that you can choose is to take a leave of absence. If you do choose to take a leave of absence, it will allow for you to keep your academic record open, so that you will not need to reapply to return in the future. The leave of absence is an appropriate choice, if you will not be taking any classes during the fall semester. However, please note that your academic record and your immigration record are considered separately. While your academic record will remain open, ISSS will need to close your immigration record. If you're interested in taking a leave of absence, you'll need to work through the Registrar’s Office, and also meet with an ISSS advisor.
* If you will be remaining in the U.S. and you're experiencing a medical condition that may impact your ability to participate in classes this fall, you may be eligible for a medically-reduced course load. A medically-reduced course load allows you to take less than full-time enrollment, even down to 0 credits and remain in the U.S. and maintain your status. This is an option that has always been available to you as an international student on an F-1 visa and the process to apply for it remains the same, and it's not subject to any changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you're working closely with a licensed medical practitioner in the U.S. and feel that you will need a medically-reduced course load, please contact ISSS to set up an appointment with an advisor to discuss the process.

Next, many of you have questions related to arriving late during the fall semester—most commonly because you were finally able to obtain a visa, but it might be after the start of classes. If you are planning to arrive after the first day of classes, please communicate this information to ISSS and your academic department as soon as possible. Many complications may occur if you're arriving late. Customs and Border Protection looks at the start date that's listed on your I-20 when you enter the U.S. and this start date is the first day of classes, which will be August 24 for the fall. Generally, CBP will allow for students to enter the U.S. even after the start date listed for two to three weeks. However, if you enter after the start date, it will be up to CBP to decide if they will allow you to enter. If you're entering much later than two to three weeks after the start of the semester, it could become increasingly likely that you may be denied entry to the U.S. So, it becomes much more risky. And since it is risky, we strongly recommend that you do not attempt to enter the U.S. mid-semester. Instead, we recommend that you either take online or remote classes for the fall. Or, if you're a new student, defer your admission to Spring 2021.

Next, many questions have been raised about how to obtain a new I-20. If you will not be entering the U.S. for the fall semester, but you may need a new I-20 to enter for the spring semester. ISSS has created an E-form, and this will be available next week. We will also be sending out communications and instructions on how to request the I-20. Once you receive the email communication, it's important that you complete it. It's called “Report Fall 2020 Status.” What this will do is it allows ISSS to collect information about your location and your specific situation, so that we can communicate with you about any required immigration documents that you might need, or anything else that you would need to come for Spring 2021.

Lastly, we understand that many of you have questions about OPT and how the policy guidance to taking online or remote classes from your home country may impact your ability to apply for OPT in the future. Unfortunately, the policy guidance does not address any issues regarding OPT. We are still seeking further policy guidance and clarification from the government about any potential impacts to OPT. Once you receive this information, we will certainly be sure to share the information as widely as possible through email blasts on the [ISSS website](https://isss.utah.edu/) and through various networks and the campus community.

If you have additional questions that are not answered during this town hall, or if you have questions about your specific situation, please contact [International Student Scholar Services (ISSS)](https://isss.utah.edu/), and we're happy to answer any questions that you may have, or set up a time for you to meet with an international advisor to discuss your specific situation. We also encourage you to read through the [ISSS FAQ](https://isss.utah.edu/news/3-11-2020-covid-19-faq.php), the frequently asked questions for the Fall 2020 semester due to the COVID-19. You can find this information by navigating to our website at [isss.utah.edu](https://isss.utah.edu/) and the link to the [FAQ page](https://isss.utah.edu/news/3-11-2020-covid-19-faq.php) is very prominently displayed in the banner on our front page.

Thank you very much. And I will now turn it back to Chris.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** All right, thank you, Chelsea. And to all the students, I would remind you that this webinar is being recorded. And I know that Chelsea provided you with a lot of information, and a lot of questions were answered in that section. So, if you didn't pick up or can't remember exactly what she said, you can go back and listen, and then also don't be shy about contacting ISSS directly for additional guidance.

OK, our next presenter is Dean David Kieda of the Graduate School, and David will talk about particularly issues for international graduate students, issues about the tuition benefit program and thesis hours, and also talk about graduation requirements.

David.

**Graduate School Dean David Kieda:** Well, thank you for having me today. I'm really pleased to be able to meet before all of you and talk to you about the Graduate School and professional studies at the University of Utah. The mission of our Graduate Schools [is] to support our graduate and professional students and their success and graduation, and also to provide support during challenging times. And it certainly has been challenging times, during the past few months.

We have been actively working with International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) with Chelsea, as you've heard, and also the deans of academic colleges across campus to develop strategies, to provide solutions to changing situations posed by, as you saw, this change in visa policies. I like it to be known that within a few days of this happening, within a day or two, we were able to effectively develop a plan to work around the unfair constraints that would have been posed by the July 6th Customs policy. And so we thought that we could actually be able to handle this for our graduate students, even despite having these restrictions placed upon us. We're pleased that this rule has been rescinded, of course. This gives us additional options and flexibilities to support your academic careers at the University of Utah, especially during changing times.

Some of the issues we've had concerns over during the past few months, concerned how this online transition has affected our graduate student progress and completion. With the support of our faculty and our administration, we've developed the flexibility to modify existing graduate school and university policies during the COVID-19 emergency. For example, we developed procedures for holding graduate preliminary exams, qualifying exams, and dissertation defenses online, fully online, and being able to do those successfully. So, we have best practices in place, and those are working great.

We've rapidly implemented policies for online submissions of all signatures and documents necessary for the thesis defense, as well as for scholarships, tuition benefits, medical coverage, and any other publication to graduation clearance documents. So, we were able to successfully graduate more than 300 students since the beginning of this, the middle of the semester when we made this transition. And that's about what we would normally expect. We haven't really delayed anybody. In some cases, we've actually sped up the graduation, due to the online processing.

We've also adapted our support network for our graduate students to match the era of COVID-19 and the challenges that are posed. For example, we have traveled awards for graduate students to go to conferences, and we typically award several hundred of these for students to go to conferences across the world or across the United States and present their research, in person, to network, to provide opportunities, to look for postdoctoral positions, since most in-person conferences have now been canceled. Conferences have generally moved to fully online virtual meetings, and we've pivoted our graduate student travel program to support attendance at these conferences.

So, we want our students not to be sitting and waiting for the COVID-19 epidemic to pass, to go back to ways that they were doing things previously. We want them to be actively engaged and moving forward with their studies and to make progress and integrated with how the world is changing. So again, these are all based upon feedback we've had both from our graduate students, international and domestic, as well as by faculty and our administration respond to those needs.

We do have remaining concerns about our newly admitted international students and their ability to obtain visas, to join us for the fall semester. We've developed some online support for those students. All international students are required, if they're teaching, to take international TA training, and that would normally be done in person, but we've moved it fully online. And so the students can start taking this training immediately as soon as they are in the process of securing their visa, and they've accepted their offer. And to start to work on their visa, that way, while you're in your home country, you can clear out some of the orientation things that are possible, learn a number of things about the University of Utah, and start that transition even while you're waiting for your visa to arrive.

We've also added the ability to extend your travel to the United States, your admission to the program until Spring Semester 2021, for those who find it difficult to get a visa by the first few weeks in this semester, we extended it to go to Summer 2021, or even Fall 2021 as maybe. For those of you that find that they need to differ, we are working with our academic departments to invite you to participate in the life of the department anyway. We want you to be members of our community, even if you are deferred by a semester. So, the departments will be reaching out to you to attend seminars, colloquium, meetings, activities online as a virtual member of the community. As many of these things are being offered, even if you in the University of Utah, many of these will be offered virtually anyway, so you would be participating, just like any graduate student that was in the United States.

So, we want you to become a member of our community in Fall 2020, even if your arrival to campus is delayed. We suggest that the best option for new international students, who've been awarded financial aid and tuition waivers, that they should defer for the incoming subsequent semester, if they're unable to make it within the first week or two of the semester [starting]. Our federal laws require that you have to be in the country for 10 days to apply for a Social Security number. And the university cannot provide you a stipend until we have the Social Security number. And so, unfortunately, we're not able to provide that financial aid to you until you've arrived into the country for the first time. Students who are not receiving a stipend or tuition waiver for the fall semester, though, we will be guaranteeing those will be carried forward if you defer into the spring and also into the summer or fall. However, if you're not receiving a stipend and tuition waiver, you can certainly enroll in classes and take fully online coursework or other activities as if you were a full student and then make that transition at the appropriate time.

As you know, Utah is planning to be open to a mixture of both in-person hybrid and online courses in the fall. And in-person coursework is actually experimental stuff that perhaps many of you that are in sciences or in engineering, that you'll be working in labs or perhaps doing clinical work. However, if a situation occurs like in the spring semester when we moved to fully online [coursework] due to federal policy and state policies, we'll follow the same procedures we did in March 2020. We will be continuing your support for your stipend. Your tuition benefits will continue, and we will work to make sure that you complete the semester and that the semester will be a fulfilling experience and you make progress towards your degree. In cases where you are doing research, and that was in-person, we'll move towards alternative assignments. And so we will continue your support and the same thing for teaching assignments, if you were doing in-person teaching, we will move to alternative assignments for your teaching, so that way you get educational experiences, both in research and in teaching.

With that I'd like to say, thank you for having me here today. I think we've established a program that's flexible enough to handle any situation. And we've got the cooperation and support of all the faculty, all the staff and all the administration across campus for your attendance and for your success at the University of Utah. I'm glad to, at any point, meet with any of you on virtually or sending emails back and forth. If you've got concerns, let me know what they are, and if we don't have a solution, we'll find one, thank you.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** All right. Thank you, Dean Kieda.

So that concludes our presentations today. And I want to thank all of our panelists for providing very valuable information for our students. Again, a lot of information has been conveyed and I know it's difficult to keep up, but everything is recorded and is available to you as a resource. We're going to go ahead and start the question and answer section, and we have quite a few questions to go through. Again, we will go through them in the order that they were presented, and if we are not able to get to your questions, then we will be answering all of those questions online.

So, the first question has to do with consulates being closed. And so the question is with consulate service on hold, can the university assist with getting F-1 visas and Katie, I'll direct that question to you.

**Associate General Counsel Katie Carreau:** So, again, I think that's a very fact-specific question based on your country. My understanding is that consulates are going to be resuming appointments starting this week in many locations, but it's dependent on what the COVID situation is in a particular country. I think there's going to be a mad dash to get appointments at consulates, so I do think it is going to be difficult. I would encourage everyone who needs to get an appointment to be jumping online, to try and schedule those appointments, or contact the consulates, to try and schedule those appointments as soon as possible. But the university can certainly try to support you. But I think that the whole world is trying to get visas to enter the United States right now. And it is just very difficult for everyone.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thank you, Katie. And I just would remind you all, a lot of questions are popping up about the I-20s that as Chelsea indicated that if you have an active I-20, that is not expired, that was issued after the March guidance, then that I-20 is still valid. So that does not need to be reissued. And, Chelsea, please correct me if I'm wrong.

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** Oh, that's right, Chris. If you have a valid I-20 right now, you don't need to have a new I-20 issued. The DHS guidance that came out on July 6 was indicating that all students would need to have an I-20 re-issued that's specifically mentioned if they were taking in-person classes. Since that guidance has been rescinded, that's no longer the case. So, you could have a valid I-20, please just continue to use that document.

One thing I will add is that with travel signatures…so if you're a continuing student and your travel signature might be outdated if it's been more than a year, just contact ISSS and we will certainly help you to update that signature so that all of your documents are still valid.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thank you. Next question, I'm living in the U.S. on an F-2 visa. Is it possible to take all of my courses online on the F-2 visa while in the U.S., Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** So the policy guidance that's come out doesn't specifically address F-2, but it would be our understanding that this would be similar to F-1, and F-1 students are able to take all-online classes and maintain their status. So, I think we would certainly believe that that would be the same for students that might be on a dependent visa, which was just like F-2.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, next question: Will I be able to continue my current full-time job while taking online courses, Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** I would say that this is can be a very nuanced question, and it's really specific to a student's individual situation. If a student's been approved for work authorization, through CPT, there is no reason that any taking online classes would impact their CPT at this time. But if you have further questions, I strongly urge you to contact ISSS, because we can set you up with an appointment with an international advisor, and they can talk through your very specific situation, just to make sure that all the proper procedures are being followed.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, next one is: I am an initial student. Can I enter the U.S. with a valid visa? Do I need a new I-20?

And we've actually just answered that question. But Chelsea, if you want to comment more on that, that would be great.

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** So, for initial students, since this DHS guidance has been rescinded, it is our understanding that students would still be able to enter the United States, although they may still be subject to travel restrictions as we discussed earlier. So, you would want to make sure that you're monitoring that situation. You can contact ISSS, and we can help answer some of those questions. But if you're an initial student and you have a valid F-1 student visa, and you have a valid I-20, it's our understanding that you should be able to enter the United States.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, the next question is: Do we need to attend college for hybrid courses, or they will be instructor-led courses? Dan, do you want to comment on that one?

**Senior Vice President Dan Reed:** Sure. There are multiple different definitions of hybrid course, but typically it means some fraction of the course is available online, either synchronously or asynchronously, but there was also an in-person component. So, the in-person component, if you're not in-country, could be somewhat problematic. But I would say again, that's a case, as Chelsea said at the outset, look at the catalog carefully, look at your options and think about the ones that are the best match for you.

But in general, we have multiple modes of course, delivery. And let me just quickly remind you of what they all are:

* One of them is the traditional in-person courses. They meet at a scheduled time, just like they would have before the pandemic happened.
* There are some that are IVC that's Interactive Video Conference. And as Chelsea said, those are offered at a scheduled time. If you're outside the United States, those would be offered in various normal business hours in Utah time zones. So, think carefully about what that might mean for your schedule. It could mean very early the morning or late at night, depending on where you are in the world, if for some reason you're unable to enter the country.
* There are entirely online courses, and those are typically entirely asynchronous, which means you can sign into Canvas and take those anytime, day or night.
* And then there are the hybrid courses I mentioned, which are a combination of in-person and either asynchronous or IVC. So, choose appropriately based on your individual situation.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thank you, Dr. Reed. Next question has to do with STEM OPT and the application process. So, there are delays in that process. And what is the policy regarding STEM OPT extensions? David, you want to comment on that?

**Graduate School Dean David Kieda:** I think Chelsea's a better one to do that.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Alright, Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** So, the STEM OPT process and applying for STEM OPT hasn't changed. So that process, it is still an extension after your initial OPT periods, you would need to apply for regular OPT for the first 12 months and then apply for a STEM OPT extension, if you're eligible based on your specific field. For further information about that process, ISSS does have policy guides on our website that are, that go into quite a bit of detail, but we also really do recommend that any students that are interested in pursuing OPT come and meet with an ISSS advisors so we can discuss what the process looks like, so that we can help you arrange all of your documents and make sure that everything is complete. But the application process for OPT and the STEM OPT extension do go through the federal government. So that is not approved through ISSS, but our advisors can meet with you, can discuss your situation, can make sure that your documents are ready to go for a submission to the federal government. And then you would receive the approval from there. But again, it's a very complicated process, so we do really recommend that you reach out to ISSS and we can help you through that.

**Graduate School Dean David Kieda:** I would like to add that there pending federal presidential directive that might've affected OPT. And you might've heard about that, but it did not. It was never, it was never implemented. And so the OPT has been unchanged and so it's existing in the same way that it has previously.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Okay, thank you both.

**Associate General Counsel Katie Carreau:** Yeah, I'll just add in case people are worried about just the status of OPT in general. There was a lot of talk before the president of the United States issued an executive order on June 22, that impacted a lot of different visa types. The talk was that it would also impact OPT. And as Dave mentioned, that did not happen. There is a separate lawsuit in Washington state challenging whether the OPT program itself is legal. That is another case where the University of Utah has filed an Amicus brief in support of the OPT program. And we are following that closely as well as any other action that might negatively impact the continuation of OPT.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thanks, Katie. Next question is, recognizing that the July 6 guidance was rescinded, when can we expect new guidance from the federal government and actually, do we want new guidance from the federal government, Katie?

**Associate General Counsel Katie Carreau:** I think we're hopeful that they do not issue new guidance. Their agreement in settling these lawsuits has been that the March guidance will continue. If they do try to issue something new that conflicts with the March guidance, that would be contrary to their settlement, but we are also watching that closely because they do issue directives frequently, and we'll want to make sure that they hold up their end of the bargain and that our students are still able to engage in online learning and enter the United States and all the other facts that affect our F-1 student programs in accordance with those settlements.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** All right, thanks Katie. The next one deals with medical issues and does the student under medically-educed course load require a new I-20, Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** Well, the process for the medically-reduced course load remains the same since it doesn't have anything to do with the current COVID-19 pandemic or the DHS guidance that was issued. So, if you would like to request a medically-reduce course load, you would work with ISSS, and we would make sure that you would have all the documents that you would need. This is a process that can be approved through ISSS. And so, we don't really need to issue any new documentation to you. It's something that you would apply. You would submit the documentation, particularly that letter from your licensed medical provider. And then we would be able to indicate in the Siva system, which is a federal database that contains information about international students and their enrollment and travel activity. But we would indicate in there that you've been approved for a medically-reduced course load. So again, that's really a question, if you're interested in applying for a medically-reduced course load, please contact ISSS and we'll be sure to walk you through that process.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thanks Chelsea. The next question has to do with initial students and there was guidance put, an FAQ put out on July 15 by ISSS talking about students reporting to their schools and being active in Sivas and following the guidelines. And this is for F- and M- visa students. And the question here is really, “If a student has not arrived in the States, there was guidance that they should remain in their home country. Is that still remain the case?” They're asking for elaboration and clarification on that comment, Katie?

**Associate General Counsel Katie Carreau:** Yeah, I can comment on that. There is one concerning statement in the July 15 guidance that does say initial F-1 students should stay in their home country. That same guidance also says that continuing students are able to come back. We don't believe that that's the law. We don't, we haven't seen any directives to the Department of State or Customs and Border Protection to prevent individuals from entering the United States. That is one issue that our outside counsel in the case filed in Oregon will be bringing up as we seek to settle that case, or if there's a need to move forward. Our understanding is that is just a suggestion from ICE, but it's not the law and there's nothing that would prevent initial students from entering the United States or securing F-1 visas from US consulates.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thanks, Katie. Next question has to do with CPT in the summer semester. “So, if a student is in line is registered for the fall semester, completely online, are they eligible for CPT in summer 2020?” Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** So at least as we understand it right now, CPT hasn't really been impacted by any of the COVID-19 pandemic or any of the guidance that's been issued. So, the procedures would still remain the same. However, the policy guidance doesn't specifically address OPT or CPT. CPT, it can be very specifically based on the student's situation. So, I very much recommend that for those specific, nuanced situations, we can't really answer in general. And I would urge you to set up an appointment with ISSS. We can look at your specific situation and all of the different requirements that might go into CPT so that we can make sure that you are still maintaining your status and following all of the appropriate requirements.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thank you, Chelsea. The next one has to do with the Fall 2020 Status reporting form. Do all international students submit this or only students who are going to be here for the fall 2020 semester, Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** So, for the Report Fall 2020 Status, it's information we will be collecting from initial students during our orientation process. We have an all-online orientation and we'll be collecting that information from initial students.

For continuing students, we do ask that once that communication goes out, please complete that e-form. It's really important that we have this information. And once we add the information, we're able to kind of categorize students into various groups based on your situation. So we can communicate directly with you about anything that you would need to be able to come to the campus for the spring 2020 semester. So we are asking all students to fill it out and it is important documentation for us to have. The last thing we would want is for any students to slip through any cracks. We want to make sure that everybody is in a good position to be able to return to campus in a future semester if needed.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thank you, Chelsea. Next question: “Is it possible to defer my admission a second time? I've already deferred admission for Spring 2020 to Fall 2020?”

Chelsea?

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** So, deferring is handled in the office of admissions. Typically, students would be deferring once, they wouldn't be deferring a second time. The Office of Admissions can defer students if they're undergraduates, they're deferring students until from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 right now. For graduate students, the students can work with their academic department as well as the Office of Admissions to defer their admission to Spring 2021 or Fall 2021.

Those are the basic guidelines, but if you are interested in any other additional flexibility, because there are some nuances in this situation, I would advise you to talk to the Office of Admissions and there's a specific person that processes. Thank you.

You can also work with the deans of the undergraduate studies or graduate studies as appropriate, and they can advocate for you with the, they can navigate that system. We can, there's nothing that prevents us. It's an institutional policy. There's nothing that prevents us from extending it, the only implication is if it wasn't extended, you'd have to submit a new application and they'd be readmitted. So, the institutional policy is that it would just be keeping the application on file and not requiring a new application in the future. And then authorizing international ISSS as to submit the I-20 and paperwork at the appropriate time.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Here, we have an additional question about deferral. This one's specifically with scholarships that were awarded as part of the graduate program. Can those scholarships be deferred, David?

**Graduate School Dean David Kieda:** So, my guidance to all of my departments is if they defer that they should, if they've given you a written commitment of financial aid and especially tuition benefits that should continue. Now, having said that some international students may have received an award, which said, we will want you to work with this particular specific professor on this particular project. Those projects are federal research grants, and they have to make progress on them. So, if you are deferred, you may not wind up on that same project. You may get signed to a different project, but the departments that I've met with felt they have flexibility to reassign you to a new project, if you're unable to make your assignment in the fall.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** OK, thanks Dave. One final question then for the session today, and again, reminder that if we did not get to your question, you will get an answer directly from ISS. But the final question is about mandatory quarantine for international students coming to the US and the question specifically is, this could be problematic for people required to be in person for a class on August 24. Current status of mandatory quarantine for international students, Chelsea.

**ISSS Director Chelsea Wells:** It's my understanding, and I know that this is a complex issue and there may be other panelists on here who want to weigh in as well. But my understanding is that the university strongly recommends that individuals follow the current CDC recommendations as well as the state department recommendations. So we would recommend that students that are coming to campus from an international destination do plan to self-isolate for 14 days prior to class. I know that this can be really difficult for many students, particularly if you aren't living on campus, but again, if there's official university policy, anyone else on the panel is certainly welcome to give any other information on this.

**President Ruth Watkins:** I can just comment there that at present all the discussions I've been in have focused on following the CDC guidelines and really encouraging the self isolation for that period. I can also say that the university's plan on testing for return to campus, for people who will live in the residence halls, there will be testing that is conducted by our U-Health and with our AIP pathology lab, just to quickly be able to identify anybody who is COVID positive and maybe even asymptomatic. And we are refining the details of how that testing plan will work, and it will soon be announced. So you may stay tuned for that as well, but know that the university has a very robust testing plan in progress and that anyone who's symptomatic will be quickly tested and contact traced. So we're working very hard to promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community as a whole and testing and contact tracing will play an important part of that as well as doing all we can to support the self isolation guidelines that the CDC has provided us.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Thank you, Dr. Watkins. I'd also like to offer Senior Vice President Reed, the opportunity for final comments.

**Senior Vice President Dan Reed:** Thank you, Chris. I just want to echo what I said at the outset. We very much value your presence at the U. We know this has been an extraordinarily, emotionally challenging of event the federal guidance and its recension and that mixed with the already great deal of uncertainty caused by COVID, by consulates and embassies being closed and difficulties getting visas.

We know this is hard but know that we're here to help you in any way that we can either practically. And that's really, what is the role of Chelsea's office of the ISSS, is the field really concrete, individuals’ specific questions, because there are some common things, but every situation often has some individual components. That's what our office is there to help you, but you should feel free to reach out to anyone on campus—the faculty, the university leadership—if you have questions about policies or concerns.

We're committed to help you. There are some things that are not in our control because they're dictated by the U.S. government. As we've all learned in the last two weeks sometimes to our dismay, but within those constraints, we are absolutely committed to you and just know that we're here to help.

**Chief Global Officer Chris Ireland:** Thank you, Dr. Reed. I would just like to then close this session by again, thanking all the panelists for their expert guidance today, and also thank you all for your commitment to all of our students. I think we all recognize how important it is for all of our community, that we have this very rich and vibrant culture associated with our university. And I especially want to thank all the students who have participated in this webinar.

I know there are still many questions that are unanswered, but as a Dr. Reed and President Watkins have indicated, we have a very active staff who are there to support you. And I encourage all of you to seek that guidance from ISSS. They are there to help you through these times, and it is important. We are absolutely committed to you reaching your academic goals and to be successful in not only your goals, but also in the life that these goals will provide you after you become one of our esteemed alumni.

So, with that, I will close the session and again, thank everyone for their participation and stay safe. Thank you all very much.