

# International ACAC Member Forum on U.S. Immigration Ban

## Summary:

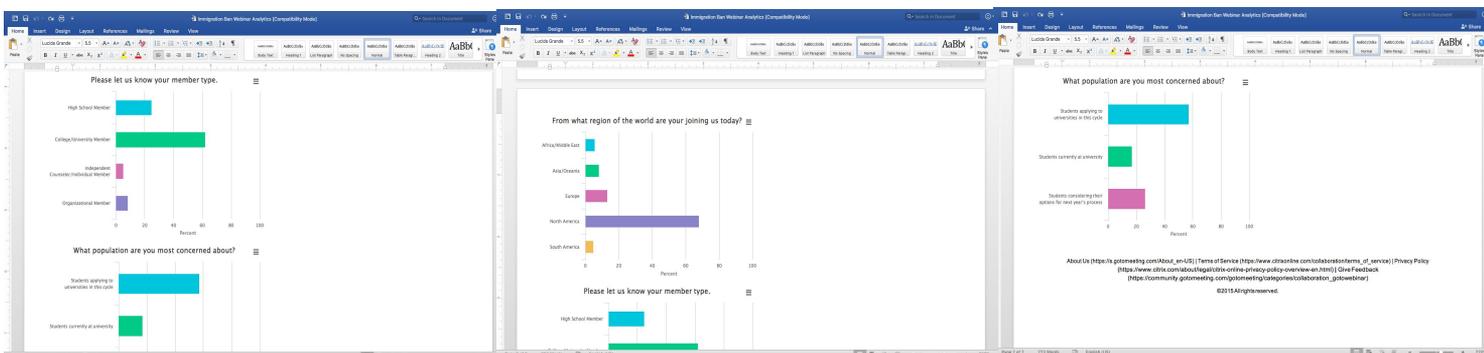
This is a time of uncertainty and shifting sands. Just two days after the webinar the legal position concerning the travel ban changed dramatically and is sure to change again over coming months. The volatility and uncertainty surrounding government decision-making as demonstrated by the Travel Ban E.O. has brought a deep level of concern from the college and university side and those working directly with high school students. The International ACAC webinar comments and questions reflected first and foremost a deep level of concern from both ‘sides of the desk’ for those with immediate need and indeed for future applicants.

A clear message was conveyed by college and university admissions teams that a high level of flexibility will be applied to support students directly affected by the travel ban. Strong and repeated assurances were given to current applicants that flexibility will be ensured, encouraging direct communication from each student to the college/university. In addition, it was felt practical support could be offered regarding I-20’s – to issue as early as possible meaning strong advocacy at the highest level would be needed to accelerate budget reviews and tuition-setting thus allowing as much time as possible for students to navigate administrative processes during these uncertain times.

In addition, concern was expressed on the university and college side about the reputational impact this E.O. will have on future recruitment and indeed upon reception, admissions teams may receive when they travel as they plan to in the Spring and Fall.

From the high school members the focus was expressed in the immediate time frame about visa practicalities, seeking where to gain current and updated information. A broad plea to EducationUSA to maintain communication in regard to visas and advise to students. In addition the question of how best to reassure future and prospective applicants that the USA is a safe and inclusive country to study, especially to the Muslim prospective and existing students would be appreciated. Questions were raised as to how non-US universities are responding to the travel ban in the form of communicating where applications are still open for the current admission cycle.

Finally, unambiguous and robust pleas for advocacy were expressed, directly through representation in Washington and indeed indirectly through lobbying governments representing all International ACAC members.



## Comments:

- The majority representation of attendees from North America may reflect the level of concern among this membership group.
- The very low member numbers in the areas directly affected indicates International ACAC membership gaps, something the Membership Committee are keen to support and develop.
- Many high school members attending working outside the 7 banned countries said they were

working with nationals from the countries directly affected; concerns were spread across the immediate management of students to the longer term advising support for the future prospective students.

Further analysis in regard to ‘primary concern’ follows below, note that these were broad polls, some stated in comments they wished to express concern for all three ‘types’ of students, for example – this is shown simply to offer some mirror of mood across our membership community.

In addition, primarily International ACAC supports the interface and transition between high school (and others) and university. Whilst these existences are of course integrated in many ways in this context, naturally, those at university are less likely to be the primary focus – we can assume these are of course at the forefront of concern for the Universities themselves.

Obviously, the figures must be viewed as proportion of the membership represented rather than as a raw total.

Membership Type	Area of most concern		
	Students in this cycle	Next cycle and future applicants	Currently at University
College/University	50	15	8
High School	10	12	7
Independent	2	2	2
Organisational	5	3	-

### Question Summaries:

Broad summaries where repeated or strongly conveyed comments from those directly impacted were apparent.

### By Area:

Africa/Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focussed on concerns about Islamophobia the US and the search for assurances that this will not happen.</li> <li>- Would like ways to reassure prospective students. (very few views represented)</li> </ul>
Asia/Oceania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visa information requests from other predominantly Muslim nations</li> </ul>
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are universities in non-US destinations responding</li> <li>- Are we prepared for any future ban extensions (suggested e.g. Turkey could be targeted).</li> </ul>
North America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fear of backlash to recruitment figures.</li> <li>- Visa support systems, deadlines</li> </ul>
South America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concerns surrounding visas, uncertainty of reception at customs</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ideas and support needed to facilitate group discussions with Muslim students– cutting through the media messages to practical support</li> </ul>

### By Membership Type:

College/University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concern about the mood of prospective applicants and families considering the US</li> <li>- Reassurance that the travel ban will not affect admission status.</li> <li>- Links and statements of support offered as much as questions.</li> <li>- I-20s - the timetable for setting tuition and fees is a barrier issue, so attempts could be made to accelerate a university’s board of trustees' budget review and tuition-setting.</li> </ul>
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to allay fears surrounding acceptance of cultural difference across college campuses</li> <li>- Visa concerns and how to support those with immediate need – consulate and EdUSA support requested</li> <li>- Request for colleges and universities to continue to offer statements throughout the period. General comments but also specific instructions with named contact details required.</li> </ul>
Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with students with visa concerns, Muslim students considering the US and those currently</li> </ul>

	in the US.
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to send message of reassurance to key geographic areas and nationality groups. Concern about negative impact on perception of US as a study destination</li> <li>- Questions raised about International ACAC and collective US higher education response to the current political decision-making.</li> </ul>

**Additional notes and links offered by membership:**

US Department of State – Visa Wait time information:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/wait-times.html/>  
 American Immigration Lawyers Association, [www.aila.org](http://www.aila.org)

**Advocacy message from Michael Rose, Associate Director for Government Relations National Association for College Admission Counseling:**

“March 5 and 6, 2017, NACAC will hold its annual Advocacy Meeting. This is a unique opportunity to engage with NACAC leadership, members and staff while also introducing NACAC to Members of Congress and urging them to support policies that ensure college access for all students. Your voice is especially important this year since there will be a new president and dozens of new senators and representatives. The meeting is specifically designed so that no prior experience is needed. On Sunday, there will be expert speakers on issues important to NACAC as well as federal policy updates. NACAC staff will also help you prepare for your meetings with Members of Congress or their staff. To register for this event, please visit NACAC's registration website. Once you have registered, please contact your affiliate Government Relations Committee (GRC) chair to coordinate plans for the Hill visits. If you are uncertain who your affiliate GRC chair is, visit NACAC's legislative page and click on your state. Feel free to share this with anyone that might be interested in joining us. Please contact me at [mrose@nacacnet.org](mailto:mrose@nacacnet.org) or 703-299-6817 if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Michael Rose, Associate Director for Government Relations National Association for College Admission Counseling 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 400 | Arlington, VA 22201 [mrose@nacacnet.org](mailto:mrose@nacacnet.org) | [nacacnet.org](http://nacacnet.org) | [@nacacwonk](https://twitter.com/nacacwonk)”