



HARVARD

MEDICAL SCHOOL

August 6, 2019

Dear Members of the Harvard Medical School Community,

The mission of Harvard Medical School affirms our unwavering commitment to alleviating suffering and improving health and well-being for all, not some. The international members of our community—students, faculty and researchers from around the world who bring with them their diverse talents, experiences and insights—are absolutely essential to our collective ability to achieve these aspirations.

Recently, Harvard University President Lawrence Bacow traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Congress and other leaders to discuss issues related to immigration that are having a significant impact on American institutions of higher education. He raised concerns regarding the increasing unpredictability in federal immigration policies, which has led to an atmosphere of anxiety for international students and scholars.

There are reports of protracted visa delays and other difficulties, even for routine processes. For members of our community, this is compromising classroom attendance, postgraduate work, medical residencies and so much more. There are also science-related security concerns promulgated at the federal level that have focused primarily on China, Iran and a few other countries.

American universities, and indeed our country as a whole, thrive because talented people, representing every culture and background, come together to inspire and learn from each other through the safe and free exchange of ideas and experiences. This interchange is critical for making discoveries that have done so much to drive new fields of inquiry, establish new industries and economic sectors and improve the lives of people around the world.

As president Bacow stated in a [letter to Secretary of State Pompeo and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security McAleenan](#), “The success of the American academic system, particularly at research universities, is based on a vibrant, free, and open community that develops talent, produces leaders, and creates new knowledge.” While there are some legitimate concerns about the confidentiality of the peer review process for grants and papers, and respect for intellectual property always warrants vigilance, the mounting and pernicious atmosphere of confusion and suspicion currently leveled against academic institutions should be of the deepest concern to us all. It is clear that the broader societal, legal and legislative issues at play are complex and not easily resolved, but to quote President Bacow: “Singling out one country and its citizens is incompatible with the culture and mission of higher education and our national ideals.”

It is our responsibility to support and advocate for a vibrant open international academic community of which we are a part, one that has contributed so much to improving human life. Please rest assured

that I will continue to work with President Bacow to advocate for and protect the interests of our international scholars.

Sincerely,

George Q. Daley
Dean of the Faculty of Medicine
Harvard University