

Advocacy Corner - v5

Daryl Bish
University of Florida

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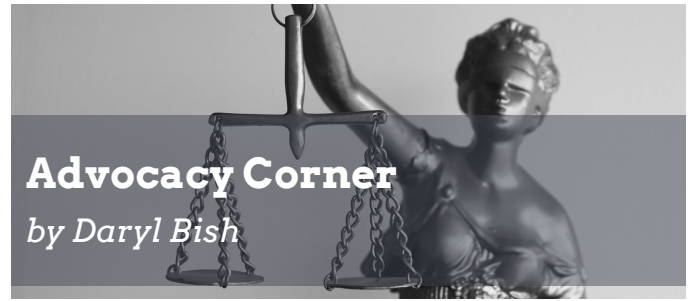
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upcoming issues or any other capacity that you may find feasible. The Executive Director and the EnglishUSA Board Members will be happy to answer your questions and work with you in this process.

Happy reading!

Engin Ayvaz is the Director of the Intensive English Center at Tennessee State University. He serves on the EnglishUSA Executive Board and is the Chair of the Professional Development Activities Committee. His work focuses on quality and excellence in language teaching and international higher education.



While English Language Programs (ELPs) are still coping with and adapting to the unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic, there are reasons for optimism: travel restrictions related to COVID-19 have eased; wait times at US embassies have improved; and programs have reported increasing student enrollments. On the regulatory front, in July the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officially withdrew its proposed rule to eliminate duration of status (D/S) for F students and J exchange visitors after significant advocacy efforts from across the international education industry, including ELPs. If enacted, the proposed rule would have significantly altered English study in the U.S. for international students. EnglishUSA will continue to monitor this issue.

Also in July, the U.S. Departments of State and Education, supported by Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security, released a [Joint Statement of Principles](#) committed to “undertaking actions to support a renewed focus on international education.” The statement is a welcome endorsement of the many benefits of international education, including enhancing national security and the economy, strengthening U.S. higher education, and benefiting American students and communities. Given the current administration’s support for international education and continued improvements in student mobility during the pandemic, ELPs have cause for hope going into 2022.

While this may be true, it is imperative to continue advocacy efforts to support ELPs. In response to the Joint Statement of Principles, EnglishUSA, with NAFSA, UCIEP, TESOL, and support from the accrediting agencies CEA and ACCET, submitted a [joint letter](#) to the Departments of State, Education, Commerce, and Homeland Security emphasizing the importance of post-secondary ELPs and advocating for their inclusion in the renewed U.S. commitment to international education. Specifically, we are advocating that the current administration adopt a national strategy for international education that includes support for English study in the U.S. We recommend that the administration create a coordinating entity at the White House to ensure the success and collaboration of all the necessary government agencies in implementing a first-ever national recruitment strategy. We urge you to discuss this with your congresspeople. You can also submit a letter to the administration [via NAFSA](#) and urge them to take action and include key stakeholders that reflect all facets of international education, including English language training.

In another positive development, Eva Molina, DHS Assistant Secretary for Partnership and Engagement, announced at the EnglishUSA Stakeholder's Conference in October that DHS would reinstate the [Homeland Security Academic Advisory Council \(HSAAC\)](#). The HSAAC advises DHS leadership on matters of homeland security specifically related to the academic community, including international students and visa processing. We hope that the reinstated HSAAC will include members with experience and expertise in the ELP field. To that end, EnglishUSA has contacted Assistant Secretary Molina about stakeholder involvement in the HSAAC.

While the moment is trending positive, there are still many current pandemic-related challenges facing ELPs and their students. Visa appointment wait times, while improving

overall, are still very long in many countries, and many embassies still only see students through emergency appointments. Many students still have to delay or cancel their study plans. Beyond the pandemic, there are also potential regulatory impacts that could hurt schools. The [Build Back Better Act](#), the massive social spending bill that would assess new fees on higher education institutions related to their international student enrollment, is still pending in the Senate.

We at EnglishUSA will, as always, monitor issues affecting ELPs and will continue to advocate on their behalf. We encourage you to share your thoughts and questions about any of the above topics on EnglishUSA's [Engage Forum](#).

Daryl Bish is the Assistant Director and PDSO at the University of Florida English Language Institute. He has extensive experience as a teacher, program recruiter, and administrator, having taught in university and community college programs. His master's degree is in Curriculum and Instruction, with TESL Certification. He has served as the NAFSA IEP Network Leader, a CEA site reviewer, and is currently Chair of the Advocacy and External Relations Committee on the EnglishUSA Executive Board.