News



Members of the class of 2025 are seen at Fordham University in the New York borough of the Bronx during commencement ceremonies May 17, 2025. (OSV News/Chris Taggart for Fordham University)

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Amid the Trump administration's crackdown on foreign student visas, several Catholic universities contacted by OSV News said they are actively seeking to support affected students.

"Our international students, scholars and their families are important and vital members of our campus community, and we will continue working to ensure that they are welcomed and supported at Notre Dame," the University of Notre Dame in Indiana told OSV News in an emailed statement May 29.

Santa Clara University said in a May 30 statement to OSV News, "We are highly concerned and troubled that the State Department has chosen to halt the interviews required for international students to obtain visas during this crucial admission period for our incoming classes, creating uncertainty for our international students and our admissions process." The California Jesuit university added that it "continues to support newly admitted and current international students during this process."

The Trump administration revoked Harvard University's ability to accept foreign students May 22 — a move currently being battled in the courts, while the Department of Homeland Security later gave the school 30 days to prove it satisfies visa program requirements. The administration then ordered U.S. embassies throughout the world to pause further appointments for student visas, while noting that social media vetting of applicants would be expanded. Previously scheduled appointments will still proceed, although no new applications will be considered.



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio testifies at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington May 20, 2025, on President Donald Trump's State Department budget request. (OSV News/Reuters/Jonathan Ernst)

CBS News reported it had viewed a copy of the May 27 cable from Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who indicated the measures would remain in place "until further guidance is issued."

In a May 28 statement, Rubio said the State Department would partner with the Department of Homeland Security "to aggressively revoke visas for Chinese students, including those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields."

"We will also revise visa criteria to enhance scrutiny of all future visa applications from the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong," said Rubio.

Foreign students in the U.S. numbered more than 1.1 million during the 2023-24 academic year, and — according to the nonprofit NAFSA, the Association of International Educators — boosted the nation's economy by $43.8 billion.

In many cases, particularly at large research universities, international students pay higher tuition rates at the schools they attend, according to the American Council on Education.

Fordham University — which counts more than 1,800 international students among its total student body of 17,000 — has created a dedicated webpage with extensive information for those impacted by the administration's new policies on immigration, research, financial aid and other concerns.

The webpage directs students, faculty and staff who are in danger of immigration arrest, detention or deportation to call the university's public safety department, which in turn will connect them with university resources.

"If necessary, Fordham will provide you with support, including connecting you with pro-bono legal consultation" — a free initial session with an attorney — "to assist you in evaluating any given emergency," the webpage notes.

The school encouraged international students, faculty and staff to carry their passport, visa stamp, nonimmigrant status certificates "and any other relevant documents with them."

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Regarding "undocumented students," Fordham said that "since 1841, we have kept faith with the vision of Archbishop John Hughes, who founded Fordham to serve immigrants and their families." The 19th-century Irish-born Hughes — nicknamed "Dagger John" — led the New York Archdiocese in addition to establishing the school.

Fordham included a link to a separate resource page for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students, who arrived as children without permanent legal status

and are now adults.

Fordham also specifies protocols for responding to law enforcement requests. It said those approached should ask for the officer's name, identification number and agency, and then direct the request to the university's public safety department. That department in turn will, along with the university's legal counsel, obtain and verify the relevant judicial order or subpoena before responding.

"Unless law enforcement officers are responding to a lawful request, Public Safety will not allow them on campus, nor share any student or employee information with them," said the university.

Fordham noted its procedures "are grounded in the Jesuit tradition of being people for others."

"We hold to the Ignatian principle of care for the whole person and respect the dignity of every individual, including their right to feel safe wherever they may be on campus," the university said.

As a member of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, a higher education coalition that counts close to 600 university presidents and chancellors, Santa Clara University called on the Trump administration to reverse its policy on foreign student visas.

The California university pointed to a May 28 statement from the alliance, "urging the country's leadership to resume the visa-interview process, and to prioritize policies that fortify America's longstanding role as educator and incubator of so many of the world's leaders in innovation, religion and spirituality, and democratic and civic institutions."

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