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Federal Government Transition Update - 5.30.25 [1]

May 30, 2025 by Natalie Barry [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

State Department Pauses New Student Visa Interviews

The State Department said in a consular cable on May 27 that it will temporarily pause scheduling new student (F-1) and exchange visitor (J-1) visa appointments at U.S. embassies and consulates as it develops new social media screening and vetting guidance, reports [3] the *New York Times*. The suspension does not appear to apply to previously scheduled interviews. The directive cites several executive orders, including *Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats* [4] and *Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism* [5], as justification for the new protocols. The State Department has not officially discussed the pause, and its duration is unclear. The State Department previously issued a consular cable on March 25 directing diplomats to scrutinize the social media of new visa applicants, including those critical of the U.S. and Israel, reports [6] the *New York Times*. CU is closely monitoring this issue.

State Department Statement on Revoking Chinese Student Visas

The Secretary of State issued a statement [7] on May 28, which says the State Department will "aggressively" revoke visas for Chinese students, including those "with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields." The Department will also "revise visa criteria to enhance scrutiny" of future visa applications from China and Hong Kong. About 277,000 Chinese students studied in the U.S. last year, reports [8] *Politico*. It is unclear how many Chinese students could lose their visas or not be admitted into the U.S. to study under the new policy. CU is closely monitoring this issue.

Executive Order on Scientific Integrity

The White House released a new executive order, *Restoring Gold Standard Science* [9], on May 23. The order allegedly seeks to restore public trust in science. Federal agencies are directed to align new and existing programs and activities with "Gold Standard Science" principles, defined as research that is reproducible and transparent; subject to unbiased peer review; clear about errors and uncertainties; skeptical of assumptions; collaborative and interdisciplinary; accepting of negative results as positive outcomes; and free from conflicts of interest. The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy is tasked with issuing guidance within 30 days and reporting on implementation progress within 60 days. For more information: Executive Order [9], Fact Sheet [10].

Colorado Joins Lawsuit on NSF F&A Rate Cap and Grant Terminations

Colorado joined a coalition of 16 states in a lawsuit [11] on May 28 against the National Science Foundation (NSF) over the 15 percent indirect cost rate cap and the termination of grants related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the request of the Colorado Attorney General, CU Boulder, CU Denver, Colorado State University, and UNC provided declarations that were used in the lawsuit.

NSF has paused the implementation of the 15 percent F&A cap rate through June 13 when a court hearing for the higher education associations' lawsuit is scheduled.

DoD F&A Rate Cap Update

The Department of Defense (DoD) outlined [12] its intent to implement a 15 percent indirect cost rate cap on new awards to universities earlier this month. The memo instructs the agency to “develop and publish formal policy guidance,” within 21 days - which is June 4. While formal guidance has not been published, some institutions have reportedly had the 15 percent cap imposed by the DoD effective immediately. The national higher education associations have received guidance that the rate cap is not currently in effect and will not be until formal guidance is published.

DHS Publishes List of “Sanctuary Jurisdictions Defying Federal Immigration Law”

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released [13] a list this week of sanctuary jurisdictions as directed in last month’s executive order, *Protecting American Communities From Criminal Aliens [14]*. Each sanctuary jurisdiction will be formally notified of its non-compliance by DHS. Cities and counties received this designation based on several variables, including “compliance with federal law enforcement, information restrictions, and legal protections for illegal aliens.” The list is organized by state, county, and city. It names numerous Colorado counties and cities, as well as the State of Colorado.

Finally, federal agencies began sending Congress additional details on the White House’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget request late this afternoon, reports *Politico*. CU’s federal team is beginning to analyze the details, which provide additional clarity on the federal administration’s funding priorities for the fiscal year that begins on October 1, 2025. We will provide funding details on the many federal education, research, and other programs CU cares about early next week. As a reminder, this is the administration’s request to Congress, but it is lawmakers that will decide how to appropriate federal funding.

We understand these potential changes are of concern to our campuses during this time of unpredictable change at the national level. The Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are actively monitoring developments and are committed to keeping you informed. In this time of change, all that you do and will continue to do for CU means more than ever. Our team is working closely with the President and Chancellors as well as the Colorado congressional delegation. We encourage you to contact your campus leadership with questions. Please visit the CU System Federal Transitions Update page for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

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