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Federal Government Update - 11.20.26 [1]

November 20, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

We will not send an update next week in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Federal Court Vacates DHS Rule To End Duration of Status Admissions
A federal judge vacated [3] on Nov. 16 a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) final rule that would have ended duration of status admissions for international student and exchange visitors and implemented a new fixed admissions system. The rule will not take effect unless another court pauses or overturns the federal court's order to vacate. CU's campuses urged DHS to rescind the rule when it was proposed last year.

Federal Court Temporarily Blocks New CPT Guidance
A federal judge issued a preliminary injunction [4] on Nov. 17 that blocks the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from enforcing new guidance on Curricular Practical Training (CPT) announced by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) in August 2026. SEVP's guidance sent through two broadcast messages significantly narrows the eligibility for international students to participate in the CPT program.

ED and State Urge Universities to Protect Research from Foreign Interference
The U.S. Departments of Education and State sent a joint letter [5] to U.S. university leaders on Nov. 17 urging them to protect federally funded university-based research and development from foreign interference, including unauthorized technology transfer, intellectual property theft and foreign influence and exploitation. Universities were urged to be aware of gifts and contracts from countries of concern appearing on U.S. government watch lists. CU federal relations shared the letter with legal and finance departments for awareness.

Higher Education Associations Comment on DHS Proposed Rule to End Deference
The American Council on Education (ACE) submitted comments [6] on Nov. 13 on behalf of seventeen higher education associations, including the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the Association of American Universities (AAU), to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on a proposed rule [7] that would eliminate deference for visa extension petitions. The new policy would require U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to make a new eligibility determination each time an extension petition is filed, including for H-1B visas. The associations said eliminating deference will exacerbate visa processing slowdowns.

ED Opens New Investigations into Teacher Prep Programs
The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced [8] on Nov. 13

four new investigations into teacher preparation programs at universities and state education agencies in New York, Maryland and Minnesota. OCR is opening investigations based on reports that these institutions "provide sex or race-specific recruitment, support and financial opportunities for candidates in violation of civil rights laws."

House Democrats Elect Leadership

U.S. House Democrats nominated on Nov. 18 Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) to be House Speaker for the upcoming Congress, reports [9] *The Hill*. Notably, Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) was unanimously elected [10] Assistant Speaker, the No. 4 position in House leadership. This will make Neguse the highest-ranking Colorado lawmaker in modern history. As reported last week, Senate Republicans elected Sen. John Thune (R-SD) and House Republicans elected Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) to lead their caucuses. Senate Democrats will hold their leadership elections next month.

The Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are actively monitoring developments at the federal level. We are working closely with the President and Chancellors, as well as the Colorado congressional delegation to champion CU priorities. We are committed to keeping you informed. Please visit the CU System Federal Updates and Actions page for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

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Federal Weekly Updates [11]

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