WASHINGTON, D.C.-The number of international students enrolled at selected major U.S. universities has increased since last year's September 11 terrorist attacks, but the number of international scholars and researchers at those universities has declined, according to survey results released today by the Association of American Universities (AAU), an organization representing 62 leading North American research universities. The survey also found an increase in visa delays and denials for international students and scholars.

The results come from a joint survey on visas for international students and scholars conducted in October, 2002 by AAU and NAFSA, the Association of International Educators. NAFSA released overall results of the survey; AAU announced results of the responses submitted by AAU institutions.

Results from the AAU portion of the survey showed that collectively across 20 major U.S. research universities, international student enrollments increased by four percent—from 35,345 in 2001 to 36,656 in 2002—but the number of scholars and researchers dropped by 11 percent from 8,771 to 7,842. Visa delays for international students rose from 134 to 357, while delays for scholars rose from 561 to 644. Visa denials for international students increased from 168 to 247 and for scholars from 42 to 60.

"I am pleased that our survey results show that international student enrollments have continued to rise since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks," said AAU President Nils Hasselmo. "But the reduction in the number of international researchers and scholars at the institutions we sampled is a matter of concern."

Hasselmo said AAU will continue to monitor the international student and scholar visa situation. "We hope the one-year decline in international scholars at these 20 AAU universities is not part of a broader trend," he said. "It would be unfortunate if national policies inadvertently impaired our country's longstanding capacity to attract outstanding scholars and students. Those individuals have contributed significantly to our research and education enterprise and to our economy," he said.

Hasselmo said he hoped the increase in visa delays would disappear as the federal government implements more efficient methods of processing visa applications. AAU
will share the survey results with the Administration and Congress with the goal of helping inform public policy decisions.

*For more information on the AAU portion of the joint survey, contact Matt Owens at AAU at 202.408.7500. For more information on the overall survey, contact NAFSA at 202.737.3699 ext. 253.*

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**Summary Results of the AAU Survey on International Students and Scholars Visas**

AAU and NAFSA conducted a joint survey on international student and scholar visas in October 2002. A total of 482 U.S. colleges and universities were surveyed, including all 59 of the AAU member universities in the United States. A total of 77 institutions submitted responses, including 20 AAU universities.

The results described here are only from the 20 AAU universities that submitted responses; these results do NOT include responses from non-AAU institutions (which are available from NAFSA at 202-737-3699.) This subset of survey results offer a preliminary indication of the situation that has developed at U.S. research universities under the visa screening process that has been in place since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

**STUDENT VISAS:**

The survey respondents reported that they:

- enrolled a **total** of 36,656 graduate and undergraduate international students in fall 2002, an increase of 1,311 (4%) students over fall 2001.
- enrolled 27,978 international **graduate** students in fall 2002, an increase of 919 (3%) students over fall 2001.
- enrolled 8,648 international **undergraduate** students in fall 2002, an increase of 392 (5%) students over fall 2001.
- issued 12,894 **State Department I-20 forms** to potential international students in fall 2002, a decrease of 627 (3%) forms issued to potential students compared with fall 2001.
- reported that **visa delays** that caused a student to miss the start of fall 2002 classes rose from 134 (1.0%) out of 13,521 State Department I-20 forms issued in 2001 to 357 (2.8%) out of 12,894 I-20's issued in 2002, an increase of 223 students experiencing delays, or a 179% increase.
- reported that visa denials rose from 168 (1.2%) out of 13,521 State Department I-20 forms issued in fall 2001 to 247 (1.9%) out of 12,894 I-20's issued in fall 2002, an increase of 79 students, or a 154% increase in denials.
Some institutions provided details on the students they enrolled, and on the reasons for the delays or denials. This fragmentary data is not definitive, but provides some sense of the experiences of these research universities and their international students.

**Delays** -- some institutions provided details on the consequences of 41 of the 357 students who missed the start of fall 2002 classes due to a visa delay. In 12 cases, a delay in scientific research was the consequence of the visa delay; in 11 cases, the consequence of a visa delay was a financial cost to the student; in 10 cases, the consequence was a loss of revenue to the institution; and in 8 cases the consequence was the student choosing to study in another country.

**Denials** -- some institutions provided reasons for 189 of the 247 students who missed the start of fall 2002 classes due to a visa denial. The most commonly reported reasons for an international student visa denial were inability to prove intent to return (78 students), inability to prove sufficient financial support (48 students), and national security reasons (31 students).

**Delays and Denials** -- some institutions provided details on information that State Department consulates gave to some of the 604 international students who were either delayed or denied a visa: 1 student was given a timeline by the consulate for the issuance of the visa, but was still waiting for the visa after the timeline passed and 11 of the students said that a consulate informed him/her that there would be an indefinite delay.

**Country of Origin** -- some institutions provided details on the country/region of origin for 207 of the 604 students who missed their fall 2002 start due to a visa delay or denial: 103 students (50%) were from China, 7 students (3%) were from Russia, and 63 students (30%) were from Muslim/Arab countries. Institutions reported that 34 (16%) of students were from other countries.

Some institutions provided a breakdown of 19 of the 103 cases involving a delay or denial for Chinese students: in 15 cases, delays were higher than those in fall 2001, in 3 cases, delays/denials were the same, and in 1 case, denials were lower.

Some institutions provided a breakdown of 18 cases of the 63 cases involving a delay or denial for Muslim/Arab students: in 16 cases, delays/denials were higher than those in fall 2001 and in 2 cases, delays/denials were the same.

Some institutions reported additional details on some of the 604 students who were either delayed or denied a visa:

33 were students continuing his/her studies from the previous academic year or summer term and 161 were first-time students at the institution.

161 of the students were male and 73 of the students were female.
107 of the students’ primary field of study was full-term, non-scientific field; 31 of the
students’ primary field of study was a scientific field other than basic science; 30 of the
students’ primary field of study was basic science; 4 of the students’ field of study was
intensive English language program; and 1 of the students’ primary academic field of
study was short-term, non-degree program.

SCHOLAR VISAS:

The survey respondents reported that they:

- reported that a total of 7,842 international scholars/researchers on J visas
  participated in U.S. programs in fall 2002, a decrease of 929 (11%) scholars over
  fall 2001.
- issued 4,391 State Department IAP-66 or DS-2019 forms to potential
  international scholars in fall 2002, a decrease of 625 (12%) scholars over fall
- reported that 644 international scholars missed their start dates for fall 2002 due
to delays in visa issuance, an increase of 83 (15%) scholars over fall 2001.
- reported that 60 international scholars missed their start dates in fall 2002 due to a
  visa denial, an increase of 18 (43%) scholars over fall 2001.

Some institutions provided details on the scholars they enrolled, and on the reasons for
the delays or denials. This fragmentary data is not definitive, but provides some sense of
the experiences of these research universities and their international scholars.

Delays -- some institutions provided details on the consequences of 41 of the 644
international scholars who missed their start dates for fall 2002 due to a visa delay. The
most commonly reported consequences for scholars missing their start date were a delay
in scientific research (14 scholars), a financial cost to the scholar (6 scholars), campus
jobs left unstaffed (6 scholars, and a major conference or other important meeting missed
(5 scholars).

Denials -- some institutions provided reasons for 29 of the 60 cases that scholars were
denied a visa for fall 2002: 18 of the cases involved an inability to prove intent to return,
10 of the cases involved inability to prove sufficient financial support, and 1 case
involved national security concerns.

Delays and Denials -- some institutions provided details on information that State
Department consulates gave to some of the 704 international scholars who were either
delayed or denied a visa: 9 of the scholars were given a timeline by the consulate for the
issuance of the visa, but were still waiting for the visa after the timeline passed and 6 of
the scholars said that a consulate informed him/her that there would be an indefinite
delay.

Country of Origin -- some institutions provided details on the country/region of origin
for 44 of the 704 international scholars who were either delayed or denied visas: 24
scholars (55%) were from China, 11 scholars (25%) were from Russia, and 2 scholars (5%) were from Muslim/Arab Countries. Institutions reported an unknown country of origin for 7 scholars (16%).

Some institutions reported **additional details** on some of the 704 scholars who were either delayed or denied a visa:

24 were first-time scholars at the institution and 8 were scholars continuing his/her research or academic objective from the previous academic year or summer term.

28 of the scholars were male and 6 of the scholars were female.

25 of the scholars’ primary academic area of research/expertise was a scientific field other than basic science; 11 of the scholars’ primary academic area of research/expertise was basic science; and 6 of the scholars’ primary academic area of research/expertise was full-term, non-scientific field.