



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.
President

May 29, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

By putting robust health protocols in place, we believe that the University of Notre Dame can reopen safely with in-person classes on August 10.

As useful as distance learning may be, it is no substitute for the growth, intellectual and spiritual, experienced when students interact on campus with faculty and fellow students, in the classroom and beyond. For Notre Dame, an important ingredient of that experience is contributed by students from abroad who share their own culture and history with their American counterparts.

Unfortunately, as you know, one of the causalities of the pandemic has been the timely processing of student visas. I recognize that some embassies and consulates have begun to schedule appointments. However, many of these, especially in China, are not scheduled until October or November, several months after our classes begin.

Approximately 400 international first-year students and graduate students who Notre Dame expected to enroll have been seriously delayed. Some academic departments will lose more than half of their incoming cohort of graduate students if visa appointments are not scheduled in the next few months. This will affect research and the diversity and quality of thought in the classroom.

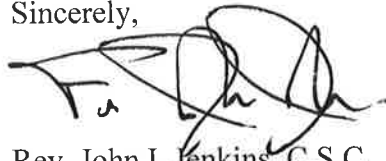
Further, we will have no Fulbright Scholars on campus this fall unless the situation is rectified. Notre Dame is one of America's leading Fulbright universities, both in sending Americans abroad and hosting foreigners here. I ask that you help us in continuing the storied success of public diplomacy that the Fulbright program has come to represent.

In addition, the presence of international students on American campuses is a major ingredient in the success of local economies and the nation's overall fiscal health. It is estimated that a 25% decline in international student enrollment this fall would result in a loss of approximately \$10 billion and 114,000 jobs.

I know that your department, more than others, has endured sharp budget cuts, as well as the pandemic's awful impact on State Department personnel, especially those overseas. Combined with international demand for quality American higher education, it is no wonder there are visa backlogs.

I can assure you that the University of Notre Dame and other institutions will wholeheartedly support efforts to expedite student visas, to include requests for congressional support for the State Department in this regard. With the timely enrollment of international students, American universities can join the State Department in its mission to advance the interest of the American people, their safety and economic prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John I. Jenkins", written over a horizontal line.

Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.
President