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# BUILDING CLARITY AND CONFIDENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

*Academic Year 2025-2026 Insights and Initiatives*

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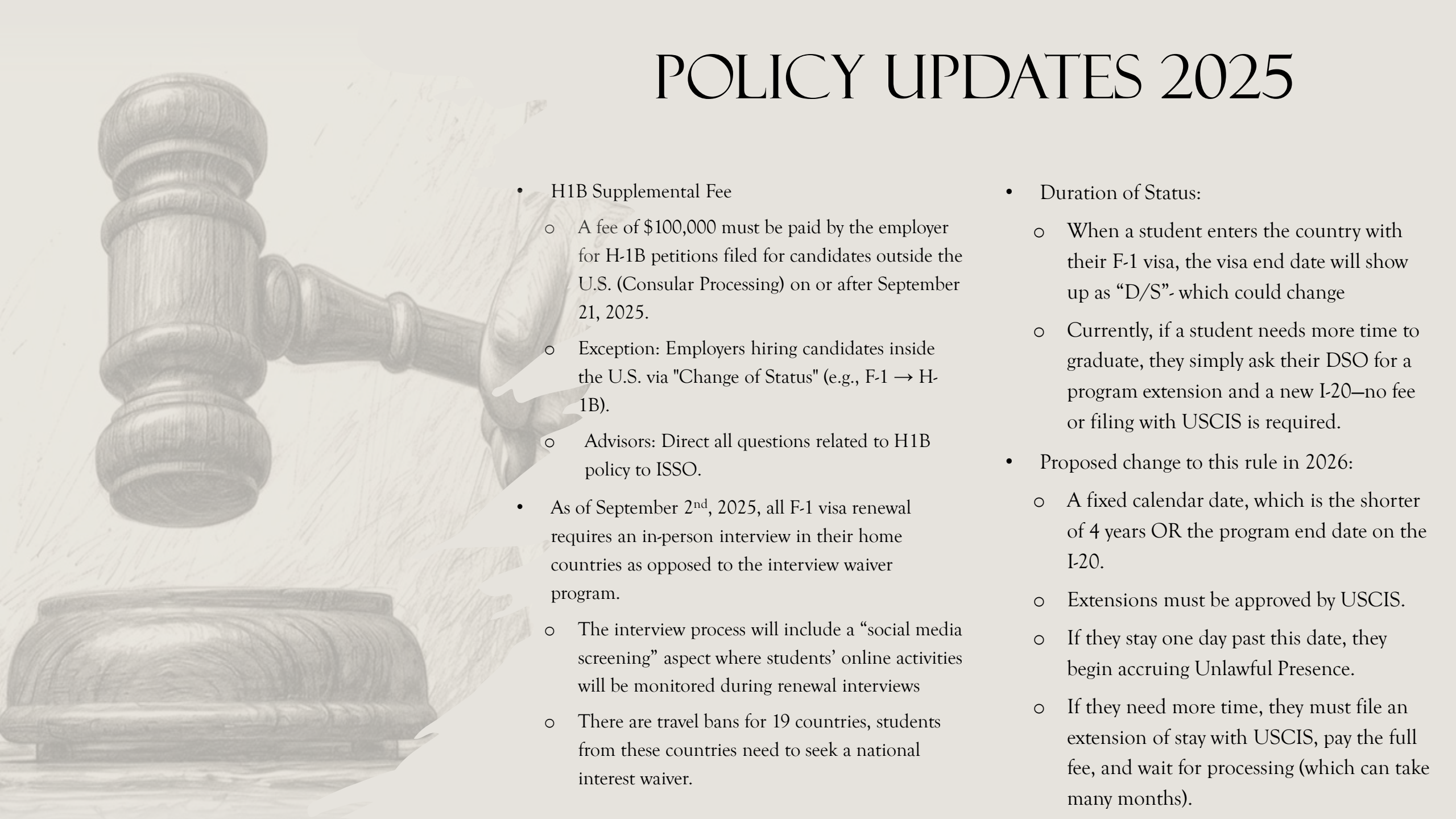
*Aki Vivekanandan*

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# FOCUS POINTS

- *Policy Updates*
- *Who We Serve*
- *International Student Engagement Profiles*
- *Pathfinder*
- *Advising Support*
- *Workshops/ Offerings*
- *Opportunities to Collaborate*

# POLICY UPDATES 2025

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- H1B Supplemental Fee
    - A fee of \$100,000 must be paid by the employer for H-1B petitions filed for candidates outside the U.S. (Consular Processing) on or after September 21, 2025.
    - Exception: Employers hiring candidates inside the U.S. via "Change of Status" (e.g., F-1 → H-1B).
    - Advisors: Direct all questions related to H1B policy to ISSO.
  - As of September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, all F-1 visa renewal requires an in-person interview in their home countries as opposed to the interview waiver program.
    - The interview process will include a “social media screening” aspect where students’ online activities will be monitored during renewal interviews
    - There are travel bans for 19 countries, students from these countries need to seek a national interest waiver.
  - Duration of Status:
    - When a student enters the country with their F-1 visa, the visa end date will show up as “D/S”- which could change
    - Currently, if a student needs more time to graduate, they simply ask their DSO for a program extension and a new I-20—no fee or filing with USCIS is required.
  - Proposed change to this rule in 2026:
    - A fixed calendar date, which is the shorter of 4 years OR the program end date on the I-20.
    - Extensions must be approved by USCIS.
    - If they stay one day past this date, they begin accruing Unlawful Presence.
    - If they need more time, they must file an extension of stay with USCIS, pay the full fee, and wait for processing (which can take many months).

# GUIDING PRINCIPLE

*Support international students with clarity, intention, and consistency as they navigate uncertainty, hidden barriers and cultural adjustment.*

## Why this principle?

Many students arrive with high investment and unpredictable pathways.

Clear next steps build confidence and reduce overwhelm.

Consistent messaging across our team strengthens trust and engagement.

WHO WE SERVE

# VULNERABLE POPULATION: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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Across institutions, international students often navigate multiple layers of uncertainty that shape their engagement.

- Immigration-related unpredictability affects confidence and long-term planning
- Cultural adjustment makes career expectations and norms unfamiliar
- Hidden barriers around networking, job search language, and employer expectations
- Emotional and cognitive load that can lead to hesitation, not lack of motivation
- High financial investment paired with unclear pathways after graduation

# THE SUFFOLK INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Suffolk international students have a unique profile shaped by their pathways, motivations, and campus experiences.

Many international students choose Suffolk because Suffolk opened a door:

1. Merit scholarships not offered by other institutions.
2. Fellowships and on campus leadership opportunities.
3. Being the only US institution that offers a program they're looking for
4. Location and access to opportunities

International Student Profile:

- Strong motivation
- Uneven familiarity with US career norms

International Student population Fall 2025:

- Graduate Students: 252
- Undergraduate Students: 499
- Total enrolled international students: 761

INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT  
PROFILE

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PROFILE AT SUFFOLK

| <p>Autonomous Engagers<br/><i>High Autonomy, High Initiative</i></p> | <p>Aspiring/ Guided Engagers<br/><i>High Motivation, Low Direction</i></p> | <p>Hesitant/ Disengaged Engagers<br/><i>High Potential, Low Confidence</i></p>                      |
|--|--|---|
| <p><i>Initiate contact early</i></p>                                 | <p><i>Ambitious and not sure when or where to start</i></p>                | <p><i>Delay seeking help</i></p>  |
| <p><i>Seek opportunities proactively</i></p>                         | <p><i>Need guidance on where to find opportunities and engage</i></p>      | <p><i>Need psychological safety before action (high context, warmth and validating support)</i></p> |
| <p><i>Ask questions and confident using resources</i></p>            | <p><i>Can become autonomous with guidance and structure</i></p>            | <p><i>Passive engagement</i></p>  |
| <p><i>Often model success behaviors for peers</i></p>                | <p><i>Highly responsive to consistent messaging</i></p>                    | <p><i>Thrives with low barrier invitation and warm follow up</i></p>                                |

# TRI-LENS FRAMEWORK

| Profile Group              | SDT Lens (Motivation)<br>The why  | SCCT Lens (Beliefs)<br>The how  | Cultural Adjustment Lens<br>(Phase) The when (U-curve)                                  |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Autonomous Engagers        | <i>Intrinsic Motivation</i><br>Needs for Autonomy & Competence are met.                                 | <i>High Self-Efficacy</i><br>"I'm capable of navigating this system."   | <i>Mastery Phase</i><br>Comfortable navigating local culture and can operate within it. |
| Aspiring / Guided Engagers | <i>Structure-dependent Motivation</i><br>Want the result (job) but need the roadmap to feel Competent.  | <i>High Outcome Expectations, Moderate Efficacy</i><br>"I know networking works, but I don't know <i>how</i> to do it."<br>(regulatory vulnerability) | <i>Recovery Phase</i><br>Past the shock and ready to learn but still need a "guide."    |
| Hesitant / Disengaged      | <i>Inhibited Motivation (Uncertainty driven)</i><br>Lack of relatedness/ belonging leads to withdrawal. | <i>Low Self-Efficacy</i><br>"I cannot succeed here." (fear of rejection and regulatory vulnerability)   | <i>Crisis / Culture Shock Phase</i><br>Paralyzed by the cultural misalignment.          |

# PATHFINDER: INTENTION

Target population: Recent Alumni and current enrolled international students (2698 sends)

Open rate for issues 1 and 2 is at 46%

Student/ alum features: 5

At the end of Spring 2026, we will look at engagement metrics to understand the impact of this initiative.

Pathfinder was created using a theory supported approach and it's meant not to be an information dump. It's meant to be a psychologically safe messaging system. It primarily exists to:

- Reduce overwhelm
- Interpret complex info through narrative communication
- Create predictable guidance
- Highlight international student narratives
- Unify departmental messaging for international students

This supports the interventions that could be effective for aspiring and hesitant engagers.

# ACADEMIC YEAR 2025- 2026

## **Fall 2025: The experimental phase**

This semester was about observing engagement patterns, testing what resonates, learning how students interpret our messaging, and understanding what *aspiring and hesitant engagers* need to move toward greater confidence and autonomy.

## **Spring 2026: The consistency phase**

Now that the structure is clear and the patterns are visible, Pathfinder will shift from experimentation to dependable rhythm.

Each issue will carry forward the same intention: organic/ narrative guidance, cultural interpretation, and psychologically safe messaging that students can rely on throughout the semester.

*Goal: Create stability and consistency at a time that lacks any predictability.*

Going forward, hopefully with your incredible insight and voices featured in it. This only works if it is a career center initiative and not an individual's initiative.

# PATHFINDER: A CAREER CENTER INITIATIVE

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## **We need your expertise in:**

- Brainstorming ideas for upcoming issues
- Highlighting student and alumni voices
- Your own brief (or long) insights (I'd love to feature the main piece from one of you if you have any space within your Spring 2026 workload)
- Unifying our messaging during a time like this can resonate deeply with our global student population.
- Understanding what worked/ didn't work within the past three issues

If you have any thoughts, comments or insights please share them.

CPT & OPT CHEAT SHEET FOR  
ADVISORS

INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT  
ADVISING  
SUPPORT

# EQUITY AND ACCESS ADVISING

Students can be referred to equity and access advising for:

- Understanding U.S. and global hiring trends that impact international students.
- Planning internships and work experiences with CPT/OPT framework timeline planning.
- Exploring in depth employers and companies that could sponsor students.
- Navigating uncertainty with clarity, intention, and next steps: (especially when they have very limited time to plan) building career strategy via equitable frameworks
- Supporting students who feel dejected and overwhelmed about career future by exploring as many resources as possible.
- Integrating AYCP, Networking Culture, and Pathfinder into enhancing student advising

## CPT/OPT Awareness:

- More expanded understanding of CPT/ OPT
- In depth focus on timeline planning for CPT/OPT
- Communicating CPT/ OPT to employers
- Self advocacy strategies for employers

Equity and access advising for international students complements industry advising by addressing the global and cultural dimensions of career strategy.

## DSO (DESIGNATED SCHOOL OFFICER)- ISSO ADVISING

Students should be referred to ISSO for:

- CPT authorization steps and documentation
- OPT and STEM OPT applications, rules, and timelines
- Visa status questions, travel signatures, and legal requirements
- Case-specific or employer-specific immigration issues
- Any situation requiring an official regulatory interpretation

### **Regulation Expertise**

ISSO can advise on CPT, OPT, STEM OPT, F-1 visa and occasionally H-1B visa related questions

ISSO defer to immigration attorneys when students have questions about other visa types and immigration pathways.

ISSO is the authoritative source of immigration guidance.

# RAPID FIRE SCENARIOS

1. ~~ISSQ~~ Internship offer starts next Monday. Can you tell me if I'm allowed to begin working before CPT is approved?
2. ~~Equity and Access Advising~~ I started to reach out to employers because I don't know how to explain that I need sponsorship later. What should I say?
3. ~~ISSQ~~ I accept a remote internship from my home country this summer, does it still count for CPT?
4. ~~ISSQ~~ OPT was approved for the fall, but now the employer wants me to extend to winter break. Can I keep working?
5. ~~Equity and Access Advising~~ I'm choosing between two internships. One is with a U.S. startup that doesn't sponsor. The other is with a multinational company in my home country. Which one is smarter for OPT?
6. ~~ISSQ~~ OPT is still pending after graduation, can I stay in the U.S. while I wait?
7. ~~Equity and Access Advising~~ I don't know how to build relationships in the U.S. without feeling transactional. How do people actually do this?

# WORKSHOPS & PROGRAMMING

# PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIPS

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- Multiple CPT/ OPT workshops for international students to learn about Handshake and GoinGlobal (ISSO Partnership)
- INTO Career Workshop (Fall 2025) → International Student Career Lab (Spring 2026)
  - 2 workshops will be offered (INTO and ISSO partnership)
  - Goal is to eventually create a workshop series for international students- frequency dependent on need
  - 2 Drop-In sessions will also be offered (one at INTO Lounge and another at the ISSO Lounge)
- Activate Your Career Plan (Partnership with as many people as possible 😊)
  - Offered for up to 20 international students in the Spring
- Networking Culture workshop in Spring 2026: (Partnership with ISSO, CC team and CE team)
  - Generalized information on networking culture
  - Invite to all CC ADs and CE team to help design the career fair prep portion of this workshop.
- American Job and Internship Search: (Partnership with ISSO)
  - Detailed and information heavy workshop offered once a semester to support students in their job/ internship search
  - Once a semester in the Fall and Spring
- Open Avenues Foundation (Partnership with CC team)
  - Two project cycles in the Spring (Super beneficial for international students unable to obtain internships)- Feb and March

# OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE

# OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE

| Pathfinder   | Advising  | Workshops/ Partnerships  |
|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Share your own insights</i></li> <li>2. <i>Identify/ elevate student voices</i></li> <li>3. <i>Share your feedback about what works/ doesn't work</i></li> <li>4. <i>Opportunities to be as involved as you would like to be</i></li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Share your insights about what international students in your appointments need to feel supported</i></li> <li>2. <i>Please share what resources you need from me</i></li> <li>3. <i>Please provide your feedback in how you think I can help</i></li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Share insights on how your programs have supported your students</i></li> <li>2. <i>Collaboration opportunities on Network culture workshop and AYCP</i></li> </ol> |

# REFINED GUIDING PRINCIPLE

*When we bring clarity, intention, and consistency together, we don't just support students. We become the kind of team they can trust to navigate uncertainty with them.*

THANK YOU!

*Questions or Reflections?*