

November 4, 2024

RICHARD HUGHEY

Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and Global Engagement

**RE International Travel Policy**

Dear Richard,

The Academic Senate has reviewed your request for consultation on the new International Travel Policy. The committees on International Education (CIE), and Research (COR) have responded.

First, in the absence of any explanatory material, the main question is: What is the need for these requirements? It is unclear if the proposed policy is only for UCSC, or if this responds to a push from UCOP. If for only UCSC, what problems have UCSC travelers experienced that this would resolve, and why now?

That said, we considered the proposed policy from the perspective of both students and faculty traveling internationally. The Senate has a number of concerns, centered around the additional and poorly defined burden it would apparently place on international travel. Specifically, requiring the registration of “*all University-related international travel*,” and then requiring that travel to certain destinations receive prior approval after special review, including by Global Engagement’s Global Travel Security Manager and a new International Travel Advisory Committee. All this, on pain of penalties including “forfeiture of reimbursement of travel expenses” and “disciplinary action.”

The proposed policy would put certain countries in “high risk” and “very high risk” categories. Additional oversight to travel to “very high risk” places seems reasonable, although the number of campus members going on university business to such troubled places as Afghanistan, North Korea, and Ukraine (all of which currently fall in the latter category) are probably vanishingly few. If the policy focused only on such destinations, the additional workload might also be accomplished without creating a new committee and bureaucracy process. The “high risk” category, corresponding in part to the State Department’s “reconsider travel” advisory status, currently includes countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, and China. However considering just China, we note that UCEAP offers six study abroad programs there, many of our international students come from there, and may return for internships and the like, and UCSC administrators, faculty, and staff go there quite regularly. The proposed policy apparently would not require faculty and staff to obtain approval for travel to such a “high risk” destination (only registration), but would require undergraduate and graduate students to do so (even international students who come from “high risk” nations).

Further, the version we reviewed would further define as “high risk” any travel to a country “subject to Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions.” This raises the question of what such sanctions have to do with the policy’s stated purpose of supporting travelers’ health, safety, and security. Further, this is a complex and uncertain category. The government’s OFAC itself

[explicitly states](#) that it does not have a “country list.” It has a list of [sanctions programs](#), applying to a range of countries and subnational territories (e.g., Hong Kong, Cuba, West Bank), as well as transnational problems (Cyber, Rough Diamond Trade), and in at least one case a region (“Balkans-Related Sanctions”).

Overall, however well-intended, we feel the proposed policy as written stands to mainly create additional uncertainties, obstacles, and in some cases burdens—including on those who would be asked to serve on the new International Travel Advisory Committee. We strongly question the need for this novel and additional form of bureaucracy: in particular at the current time, when we are all working intently to *streamline* our process and reduce unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, and to focus and *reduce* marginally necessary demands on staff time and senate service.

Finally, we wonder if having to navigate an additional bureaucracy could create at least some level of chilling effect on students and others who might otherwise participate in UCEAP programs, our own Global Seminars (which already go through a vetting process), and other forms of international travel. The Senate also wonders whether such a policy could in any way deter international students choosing to study at UCSC, or for graduate students to complete their research in a timely way when international travel is required.

We also offer the following observations related to how this policy would function in practice:

Re: §II - Definitions: This definition excludes travel for outside consultancies or work engaged on behalf of other institutions or companies unless such work is performed in conjunction with a sponsored University project; travel that does not meet any of the above criteria, such as personal travel, tourism, family visits, etc. It is important to note that it is not uncommon for employees to combine university-related travel with personal or non-university business travel within the same trip, in particular during summer months, in juggling family and university responsibilities.

This policy may need clarification to address how it handles trips that include both university and personal/non-university segments under a single travel document (e.g., airline ticket, hotel booking) or where personal travel is in a “high-risk” area while university activity is in low/moderate risk area. It would also be good to clarify if registration of a trip to a low-risk area is still needed if no university funds are applied, such as an invitation to speak at a conference for which the host provides air travel and accommodation.

Re: §V.E: Principal Officers may appeal decisions for proposed travel made by the International Travel Advisory Committee and the Vice Provost of Global Engagement to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. Is this *sua sponte* review or is there an appeal process that will be described later? Is there going to be an appeal form?

Re: §IV.F.1: Final Travel Decisions and Appeal - The Vice Provost of Global Engagement will make final travel decisions based on recommendations of the International Travel Committee and in consultation, when appropriate, with other campus leaderships. Will the appeals process be outlined? Does the traveler petition the VPGE? Is there a time limit?

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback, and thank you again for the opportunity to opine on the proposed policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew McCarthy", written in a cursive style.

Matthew McCarthy, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

cc: Diane Lallemand, Director, Administrative Policy & Records  
Camilo Gomez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Nirvikar Singh, Chair, Committee on Research  
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate