

Dear International Students and Scholars,

We all have learned in recent weeks and days that the global response to contain the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered what we used to call business as usual. As you may have seen in the [Chancellor's message](#) to the campus, California Governor Newsom's '[Stay at Home](#)' order, and Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti's '[Safer At Home](#)' order announcements, we are required to stay inside our residences and immediately limit all movement outside of our homes. As a result, many campus services that require in-person interactions have moved to remote work settings, including those at the Dashew Center.

The most recent and immediate changes to the Dashew Center operations are as follows:

- **Mail**

Dashew Center staff will not be in the office to receive mail and will only accept requests via email/electronic submission. Please do not send mail to the Dashew Center as no one will be in the office to receive it.

- **Front Desk Services**

- o Email: [oissassi@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:oissassi@saonet.ucla.edu) (for non-visa-related inquiries)
- o [Virtual Dashew Center Front Desk](#): available Monday through Friday, 9AM – 11:30AM, and 1:30PM – 4PM, to schedule advising appointments and for general inquiries.

- **J-1 Visa Service**

- **Appointments:**

- o Please contact the Dashew Center Front Desk staff through the [Virtual Dashew Center Front Desk](#) to schedule appointments with a J-1 Counselor.
- o Advising will only be offered via phone or Zoom.

- **F-1 Visa Services**

- **Appointments:**

- o Please contact the Dashew Center Front Desk staff through the [Virtual Dashew Center Front Desk](#) to schedule appointments with F-1 Counselors.
- o Appointments with F-1 Counselors will only be offered via phone or Zoom.

- **OPT/STEM OPT Extension Requests:**

- o The Dashew Center is no longer able to accept OPT applications by mail. We will continue to process applications received on or before 3/20/2020, and will send them to USCIS on your behalf.
- o **An updated OPT application submission process will be announced by noon on Monday, 3/23/2020 on our [COVID-19 Updates](#) page.**

- **Travel abroad while an OPT application is pending with USCIS:** We expect to receive definitive guidelines from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on this topic soon. We will keep you posted via [COVID-19 Updates](#) page as we find out more.

- **Communications with the Dashew Center:** We need your help to reduce the phone and Zoom traffic and to effectively respond to your needs. Email remains our preferred method of communication during this unprecedented time. Please see our [contact](#) page for appropriate email addresses assigned to each unit at the Dashew Center.
- **Temporary suspension of visa services at all U.S. Embassies and Consulates:** Please see this [announcement](#) by the State Department.

I encourage you to visit our [COVID-19 Updates](#) page regularly for updates on the latest changes pertaining to our services, updates by local and federal agencies, travel restrictions, and visa processing.

We understand your concerns and frustration during this difficult and challenging time. While we expect delays in services and advising due to our working remotely and a high volume of inquiries, I want to assure you that the dedicated team of professionals at the Dashew Center are here to assist you as they work remotely. We appreciate your patience and assure you that we will respond to you as soon as possible.

Please take care of yourselves and prioritize your health and the health of those around you. Stay home and save lives.

Sincerely,

Sam Nahidi  
Director