

## ***Press Release***

**Wednesday, June 1, 2005**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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### **SURA Joins Visa Reform Initiative**

**Washington, DC** – The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) recently joined a group of 40 leading academic, science and engineering associations urging the U.S. government to accelerate its efforts to reform the visa process for international students, scholars and researchers.

The effort is aimed at relieving changes put in place after 9/11 that have made it difficult for bona fide international students and scientists to enter the U.S. Led by the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the coalition has outlined six recommendations to address what the group statement referred to as the “misperception that our country does not welcome these international visitors, who contribute immensely to our nation’s economy, national security, and higher education and scientific enterprises.”

Jerry P. Draayer, SURA President and CEO, signed the statement on May 18 and said, “Attracting the best scientists and students has been essential to our nation’s research community, especially our DOE facilities like Jefferson Lab that define the very forefront of science worldwide. We need to restore balance to our security measures that will allow U.S. economic and scientific leadership to remain premiere.”

The coalition recommendations are to:

- Extend the validity of Visas Mantis security clearances for international scholars and scientists from the current two-year limit to the duration of their academic appointment;
- Allow international students scholars and scientists to renew their visas in the U.S.;
- Renegotiate visa reciprocity agreements between the U.S. and key “sending” countries like China, to extend the duration of visa each country grants citizens of the other;
- Amend requirement that lead to frequent student visa denials;
- Develop a national strategy to promote academic and scientific exchange and encourage international scholars to pursue higher education and research opportunities in the U.S.; and,
- Reject a proposed U.S. Department of Commerce regulation to require that export licenses be obtained for international scientists and engineers to use equipment required to conduct unclassified, fundamental research in the U.S.

The coalition statement states that the misconceptions caused by these barriers “must be dispelled soon, or we risk irreparable damage to our competitive advantage in attracting international students, scholars, scientists and engineers and ultimately our national global leadership.”

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*The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit [www.sura.org](http://www.sura.org).*