

September 29, 2025

WELCOME TO A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR AT HT

As the new academic year starts, we want to welcome you to HT. Student organizations (ASA, CSA, SASA) are preparing for orientations to welcome new and returning international students to campus this fall.

Because of the many restrictive F-1 immigration policies, there are only 35 new international students this Fall 2025. With the returning international students, HT has a total of 152 students from abroad. These 152 students come from 16 different countries.

This academic year, I encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities that HT has to offer. From meeting new friends to having conversations with those who think differently from you. Also, you might consider exploring leadership opportunities that exist within our student organizations. One key objective of student leadership goals is to build strong relationships with faculty and academic advisors.

Whether this is your first semester or you are a continuing student, we are excited to welcome you to HT this fall.



SUMMER 2025 STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sujal Pandey, a computer science major, and his team won first place at the Summer 2025 Organized AI Hackathon. The name of Sujal's project is **MedGuide AI**. This is an AI-powered medical app assistant that analyzes health reports and provides clear, safe explanations using LangGraph, RAG, and agentic workflows. Congratulations to Sujal.



Bishaka Gahire, a biology major at HT, was voted the **July 2025 Employee of the Month at West Oak Nursing Home**. This summer, Bishaka worked as a Nurse providing patient care and assisting other healthcare professionals. Several of her patients wrote letters of testament to her compassion for the job. They said that she has plenty of “care and love” for her patients. Congratulations to Bishaka.

AFRICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION ELECTION RESULTS

We extend our deepest congratulations to Qudus Ganiyu, Skyy Pratt, and Antwoine Cummings on being elected as the Student Body Senior Class President, Senior Class Vice-President, and Junior Class President, respectively, for the 2025-2026 academic year.

These accomplishments are a testament to your leadership qualities and hard work. Both of you are committed to serving the entire student body. Your election is a show of the respect that your peers have for you.



Senior Class President:
Qudus Ganiyu



Senior Class President:
Qudus Ganiyu



Junior Class President:
Antwoine Cummings

F-1 VISA PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has proposed new immigration policies that will change how long international students can stay in the US, when they can transfer to another school, and what happens after graduation. These are proposed policies and, if approved, may go into effect before the end of the year 2025.

1. End of “Duration of Status” – Fixed Stay Limits

F-1 visa students are admitted in the United States for “duration of status” (D/S). This means that students are allowed to stay in the U.S. for as long as they are pursuing a course of study and taking classes on a full-time basis.

Proposed Change: Students would be admitted for a specific time period for up to 4 years, which would match the program end-date on their I-20 form.

No longer will the University’s DSO be able to extend a student’s END DATE to the I-20 if the student needs additional time to complete the academic program. Instead, the student will have to submit an extension of stay request to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or leave the country to renew the visa.

2. Restrictions on School Transfers and Program Changes

Currently, F-1 students are eligible for a SEVIS transfer after attending a school for **one semester** as long as they have maintained legal F-1 status and have been admitted by the “transfer-in” school.

Academic suspension is an enforced, temporary leave from the university. Students on suspension are not able to register for classes, therefore, cannot maintain F-1 status. OIP is required to report the suspension in SEVIS. Students are advised to depart the U.S. immediately upon being suspended.

Proposed Change:

- Undergraduates: According to the proposed rule, F-1 students will not be permitted to transfer schools until they have completed their **first academic year** of the program. Also, F-1 students cannot change their educational objectives, such as changing the major or changing the level from bachelor's to master's.
- Graduate Students: According to the proposed rule, F-1 students will not be permitted to transfer schools until they have completed their first academic year of the program. Also, F-1 students cannot change their educational objectives, such as changing the major or changing the level from bachelor's to master's.

3. No More “Program Stacking” or Repeating Degrees

F-1 students currently are allowed to pursue back-to-back degrees at the same academic level, especially at the master's level.

Proposed Change:

If an F-1 student has completed a program at one education level, for example a Bachelor's degree, they can begin their next program at a higher education level, such as Master's. They cannot pursue degrees at the same educational level or at a lower educational level.

This regulation is in response to the use of second degrees for working opportunities like the CPT. Students will have to either enter another level of study or decide to apply for the OPT if they wish to continue working in the US.

4. OPT and Shorter Grace Periods

F-1 students can apply for OPT up to 90 days before and up to 60 days after the expected program completion date.

Proposed Change:

- The OPT grace period after the completion date (graduation) will shorten from 60 days to 30 days. This gives the students less time to find work or switch to another status.

Next Steps

These are still a proposed rules. These changes are significant and will likely be opposed by universities and non-profits.

If approved, implementation can take 2–3 months to finalize.
Current F-1 status recipients are still under current rules.

The OIP office is closely monitoring these events and will continue to provide updates on these proposed policies

NOTE: This information is provided as a courtesy of the OIP and is for informational purposes only. It should not be considered legal advice