

## **10/21/24 [AllUnit] MSP's concerns re. the new travel policy and its implementation**

Dear Colleagues,

MSP's concerns re. the new travel policy and its implementation 1 message MSP To: All Unit Email List Dear Colleagues, Mon, Oct 21, 2024 at 2:35 PM The MSP has expressed strong concerns to the administration over the revised “University of Massachusetts Travel Policy,” released by the Board of Trustees in April of this year, along with its confusing roll-out on our campus.

We have heard loud and clear from many, many members that this policy and its implementation have dramatically increased burdens and created a chilling effect on their prospects for future international engagement. While we recognize that the University must comply with federal mandates, the policy appears to be an enormous overreach on the part of the President’s office.

Under the policy, UMass employees traveling to any of the 87 countries that meet the “TARMAC criteria” are not allowed to bring University devices or access University systems remotely. Many designated countries—including India, Israel, and Mexico—fall outside the usual State Department short list. There is currently no mechanism by which travelers can request mitigation measures to be applied and allow access from any of the designated countries. How are we meant to check email while attending conferences or conducting fieldwork, whether we are gone for a weekend or for a year? And the University has stated that even personal travel must be registered and approved!

The MSP calls upon the administration to fix this mess so that we can do our work. We expect the VCRE and VCIT to expeditiously clarify the details of the policy and the implementation, and to ensure a reasonable, low-overhead, low friction mechanism for our members to be able to work remotely while traveling to research sites.

We further call upon the entire administration to bring transparency and reasonableness to this process: Who is the TARMAC committee? By what process did they arrive at criteria where nearly half the countries in the world were declared hazardous to University information systems?

We expect a swift resolution to these concerns. And, moving forward, we expect the University to embrace an approach to compliance that maximizes support for, and minimizes disruption to, our international research, teaching, and engagement.

In solidarity,

Marc Liberatore and Sigrid Schmalzer, MSP Co-Presidents