



**U.S. Department of State**  
**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs**  
**Private Sector Exchange**



January 8, 2024

Dear Professor:

Welcome to the U.S. Department of State's BridgeUSA Exchange Visitor Program! This is the start of an exciting adventure. During your time in the United States, you will engage in research, teach, and collaborate with your American colleagues. You will make new connections and help develop and maintain linkages between research and academic institutions in the United States and abroad. Since 1949, thousands of scholars from around the world have come to share their language, culture, and customs with their American colleagues and the broader local community. Your participation in this exchange program fosters a greater understanding between our two countries and works towards peaceful relations throughout the world.

Your U.S. sponsor is your first point of contact throughout your stay. Their information is identified on your Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Program (J-1) Status. If you have any questions about your program, need assistance of any kind while you are here, or if something just does not feel right, immediately contact your U.S. sponsor. It is their responsibility to help you with any questions or concerns you may have. Their emergency telephone contact number can be found in your program orientation materials, and is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We encourage you to add this phone number to your contact information.

If you have concerns and/or issues that your U.S. sponsor has not resolved, or you find you cannot reach your sponsor, please contact the Department of State through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline 1-866-283-9090, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or by e-mail at [JVisas@state.gov](mailto:JVisas@state.gov). We also encourage you to add both this number and the email address to your contact information. Your sponsor and the Department of State are here to ensure your success and safety on the program.

We want you to have a meaningful and successful experience. We hope you build strong relationships with new colleagues and develop long-lasting friendships and academic relationships while learning about American customs, values, and culture. As exciting and enriching as international exchange can be, there can also be challenges. The Department of State's concern for your health, safety, and welfare includes your mental health. There are many resources available to help deal with mental health issues. Please reach-out to <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help> for immediate help. BridgeUSA also has other available resources on our website, [www.j1visa.state.gov](http://www.j1visa.state.gov), for you to check out.

We are pleased that you made the decision to study in the United States and hope you enjoy your stay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Pasini".

Rebecca A. Pasini  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Private Sector Exchange