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Feds raid Northern Virginia university

By [Daniel de Vise](#)

Immigration authorities raided a little-known Northern Virginia college Thursday, seizing computers and documents and leaving a population of approximately 2,000 mostly Indian students in limbo.

[A letter](#) posted to the Web site of the [University of Northern Virginia in Annandale](#) states that agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other federal agencies arrived at the campus Thursday morning and took “many items, such as computer hardware, equipment, and paper documents.

“We at UNVA were very surprised at the events that occurred yesterday,” said the university’s chancellor, David Lee, in the letter. He urges students to ignore the rumor mill and continue attending classes, which apparently will go on. A meeting for concerned students was scheduled for 10 a.m. today.

The web site states UNVA is “a major international university”; according to an account in the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#), it serves a population of about 2,000, most of them Indians whose presence in the United States hinges on their educational status.

Some of these students are not pleased.

Erina Rajbhandari said in an e-mail she enrolled in January, has attended class regularly, done all her homework and otherwise “followed all the rules that an international student is required to follow.”

“If UNVA will close, I would lose so much that I have worked for,” she wrote. “My parent’s hard-earned money will go to waste, the time and effort I have expended to get A in all my classes will all go in vain.”

Rajbhandari states that “I have not seen anything illegal going on in the school. It is true that the administration at UNVA is not perfect, but this does not mean they violated the law. [As] for me, I followed all the rules, regulations and laws.”

Students fear they will either be deported or have to start their education over at another school.

Pavan Kumar Kura said in an e-mail, “If I need to transfer to [another] university, [that] means I need to start from the first step of my master’s. I cannot pay [the] tuition fee again.”

[A letter posted to the ICE Web site](#) instructs students that they may either continue study at the university or seek transfer to another accredited institution. UNVA’s own accreditation is shaky, according to the Chronicle account.

“Officials from ICE’s Student and Exchange Visitor Program served UNVA with a notice of intent to withdraw UNVA’s authorization to admit foreign students,” Cori W. Bassett, a spokeswoman for ICE, said in a statement. “UNVA students should call the SEVP Response Center at 703-603-3400 for guidance.”