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VISAS from cover

second or third attempt," Driscoll wrote.

However this year, the process was increasingly challenging.

Several factors led to delays in visa approval or denials. Once the visa pause was lifted it was increasingly difficult for students to schedule their interviews.

"Some of our incoming students were denied their visa attempt, but the majority needed to defer the attendance because there was not an appointment available by the start of the fall term," Driscoll wrote.

Many also faced challenges this year after a new layer of social media screening was put in place. Students were required to make all of their social media accounts public in order to be looked at.

"Students who received blue (approval) or yellow (administrative processing) slips were also given a white slip, requiring them to submit all their social media handles for additional security screening," Mwangi wrote.

Not only did it lead to more denials, but many students are not comfortable with public accounts.

"I didn't put all of them like the ones that I use the most, and my Instagram account was private," sports journalism graduate student Giulia Zoli said. "I hated putting it on public."

Mwangi furthered this sentiment.

"Social media screening also adds extra pressure, making many students more cautious about how they express themselves online, hence limiting freedom of expression as international students," she wrote.

Even after obtaining their visas, students still faced challenges while travelling.

"At the border, students also faced tighter inspections compared to previous years," Mwangi wrote. "Altogether, these changes led to fewer F-1 visa approvals and greater uncertainty for international students."

IMPACT ON QU STUDENTS

Quinnipiac students from a variety of countries experienced these challenges first-hand.

Mwangi, from Kiambu, Kenya and first-year business analytics major Grace Kanengoni from Zimbabwe both received their visas at the end of July.

Kanengoni noted that "the visa process has been easy in the past years," but not anymore. This year "in Kenya, the number of approvals was one third of the average number of F-1 approvals in the other years."

"I understand the government's need to protect its borders, but the current process can feel overwhelming and discouraging to international students who sacrifice a lot financially in this entire process of attaining USA education and then end up getting denials because of political affiliations rather than academic abilities," Mwangi wrote.

For Zoli, coming to Quinnipiac from Brazil, changes occurred after her visa was already approved. When going to have her visa printed, she was informed of the changes to social media screening, delaying her approval process.

Prior to obtaining a student visa, Zoli had a work visa approved, however some of her coworkers were unable to obtain theirs after the country was impacted.

Brazil faced challenges as a result of the Trump administration's actions.

"The Trump administration, they put some embargoes on Brazil," Zoli said. "They put like taxes in retaliation for us prosecuting our former president, and one of those were making the process a bit more difficult for us to get any type of visa in the beginning of the year."

This came not as a surprise to Zoli, but rather an upset.

"The Trump administration, they're very bold," Zoli said. "They do whatever they want with whoever they want."

Driscoll ensures that through any of these challenges, the OISS is here to help and guide students.

"The Office of International Student Services (OISS) and International Admissions remain committed to supporting our international students every step of the way," Driscoll wrote. "While visa policies and procedures may shift, thousands of international students continue to receive F-1 visas and begin their studies in the U.S. every year. We remain optimistic and confident in our international Bobcats' ability to join us on campus and thrive."

But while Quinnipiac employees remain optimistic, students are still uncertain.

"Honestly there is nothing Quinnipiac can do about the visa challenges," Kanengoni wrote. "It feels like we are the last group of international students because it's now hard or impossible to get the student visa."

RECYCLING from cover

tween 2005 and 2014, these programs went from covering 29% of American communities to 80%. The popularity of single-stream has led to increased participation in recycling, but has also led to increased contamination.

Contamination occurs when non-recyclable items and garbage are mixed in with recyclable ones, making sorting more difficult and possibly causing the whole container of materials to be sent to the landfill. Contamination makes around 15-25% of recyclables unusable.

Excess food or liquid, hazardous materials such as batteries, diapers, or paint and plastic bags are all common contaminants. According to Hine, a pizza box is a good example of a usual contaminant.

"It's covered in grease, and that's just going to lead to it being unable to be recycled because it has food waste soaked into it," Hine said.

Broken glass is also a contaminant, which is hard to sort out when all recyclables are thrown into one container and then tossed around and compacted in trucks.

Some college campuses that use single-stream recycling have programs to encourage the separate collection of bottles by students.

It's easier to avoid contamination if "you have just one sort of product that you have to take care of and it would be way more profitable for you, because everyone knows, there's a boatload of bottles," Hine said.

Previously, Quinnipiac had such a program, partnering with the EyeRecycle organization to encourage students to make bottle returns.

EyeRecycle provided the university with collection boxes, and then students had to collect the bottles. EyeRecycle picked them up for full redemption value. There were a few cardboard collection boxes placed around campus, including one in the dining hall and one in the gym.

According to Sarah Lawson, an associate professor of biology who was involved with EyeRecycle, the program ended last fall because they weren't collecting enough bottles to make the process worth it. She said they likely needed more collection centers, more awareness and more student participation.

Hine, who contributed to the bottle collection process during an Earth Week event, agreed.

"I was literally on the verge of tears collecting the bottles…I was so upset because basically nobody brought their bottles, so I'm just not sure if the awareness was there," Hine said.

Lawson said that bringing back EyeRecycle could be a good idea if we could commit to it.

"If we were really investing in recycling with EyeRecycle, we could recycle almost 100% of our cans and plastic bottles, but would not be able to recycle glass or tin," she said.

Lawson did stress, however, that single-stream is inefficient but also hard to change, so it might be better to focus on reducing our use of single-use plastics rather than trying to recycle them or change the system.

"As QU becomes more sustainable," she said, "I would argue that our time and energy is probably better spent on reducing the waste we use, instead of recycling." She suggested using fewer plastic bottles in the dining hall and encouraging students to eat less red meat to reduce our carbon emissions.

Hine mentioned that another issue Quinnipiac students face when trying to recycle is a lack of depositing sites.

"In addition to indoor bins, we have outdoor collection points, including larger recycling dumpsters strategically placed near residence halls, parking areas and high-traffic locations," Woodward said. "This ensures that both small daily items and larger recyclable materials can be properly collected and diverted from landfills."

This is not the case for all students. While everyone has recycling bins in their dorms, there is no larger recycling dumpster in the Hill Circle parking lot, causing most students living in the surrounding dorms to just throw all their recyclables in the trash.

"There are recycling opportunities in the laundry rooms at the Hill and the Village," Woodward said, but students are either unaware they exist or find them too inconvenient to use.

One student living in The Village Residence halls knew they existed, but thought students were only supposed to use them for the disposal of laundry-related materials, of which there are few.

"I don't know if we can dump the (recycling) bin in our room into (the laundry) one," Riley Hahofer, a second-year health science major, said. "I don't know what one could use that for in the laundry room anyway."



TYLER MIGNAULT/CHRONICLE

All American Waste dumpsters in the Hill Circle parking lot are missing recycling dumpsters.

The recycling bins in The Village Residence halls have bottle and can lids, meaning only one bottle can go into the bin at a time. If students were aware of the recycling bin there, they would have to put their items in one by one. When it comes to dumping out their blue recycling bins, the dumpster is still the closest option.

According to the university's STARS report, a self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance, submitted on March 1, 2025, Quinnipiac scored a 2.75/8.00 on the Waste Minimization and Diversion category. The report claimed the university was able to divert 20.7% of waste from the landfill by recycling, composting, donating or re-selling it in 2024.

For reference, in 2018, the national recycling rate was 32%, as reported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The current national goal of the EPA is to increase this rate to 50% by 2030. While Quinnipiac's 20.7% diversion rate is commendable, it could be higher, and it is still below the national average.

Single-stream recycling, when available, does make it easier for students to contribute to recycling. As evidenced by the struggles of the EyeRecycle program, sorting out different recyclables may lower participation levels and add an additional barrier to recycling.

However, with contamination rates as high as they are, we must confront the inefficiency that comes with our use of single-stream recycling and consider whether the ease is worth it.