



# KENYON COLLEGE OPTS FOR MORE IMMIGRATION INVOLVEMENT

## Kenyon College

Kenyon College is one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges. With about 1,600 students and just over 200 professors, the curriculum at this beautiful hilltop campus is rooted in the traditional liberal arts and sciences. The college offers students top programs of study, close collaborations with faculty and a welcoming community

Michelle Foster started her journey with visa processing at Kenyon in the office of the provost, a position akin to vice president of academics. Because so many immigration cases at Kenyon involve faculty members, the Provost suggested that the immigration function of the college move to his office. Michelle took on more responsibilities with immigration cases quickly as a result. .

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Michelle started learning the ropes, training on H-1B visas, which made up the majority of visas that Kenyon processed early on. While in training, Michelle appreciated the in-depth and step-by-step material on H-1Bs. However, she recalls feeling the pressure of the rigorous visa approval process and the many things that could go wrong. From that realization, she understood the value of having someone on her side to help share the responsibility. Michelle was promoted to Assistant Director of HR for benefits, and worked in tandem with the director of HR to monitor visas in process with the College and their immigration counsel, and began preparing new visas for incoming staff and faculty. Today, Michelle is the associate director of human resources and is the key contact for visa processing at Kenyon College.

When she first joined HR, she remembers talking to the director about her concerns regarding the rigorous visa process. While Kenyon had previously been working with a law firm, the costs proved to be high. She recalls that even an hour-long call to find out where they were in the process amounted to a hefty bill.

In addition, there was a lack of clarity and transparency when working with the law firm. Michelle was often in the dark when it came to cases. "We never knew what was going on in the process because the law firm didn't proactively reach out to update us during the various phases," she says.

"I think that we increasingly need transparency, and technology can provide that."



## A CLEAR PATH FORWARD

Experiencing a lack of consistent communication with the previous law firm, it was important to find an alternative immigration management system that was more open. Both Michelle and her colleagues wanted to be more involved in the process. Envoy is exactly what she was looking for. "We can be more involved in the process," she says, "but we're not completely responsible for the process. And the cost is less burdensome." The accessibility and affordability of Envoy's cloud-based approach to immigration helps her manage expectations and saves her time.



## ACADEMICS WHO WANT ANSWERS

After joining Envoy, Michelle was thrilled to learn about the usefulness of the Communication Center. Unlike the turnaround time she experienced with the law firm, with Envoy, she says, "we get an answer, usually within the hour." Michelle jokes that the foreign national employees she works with are largely academics, which means they may be more inquisitive than most. Understandably, her employees want to be informed of what is going on, and the responsiveness from attorneys via the Envoy Communication Center helps her get those questions answered quickly.