

April & May 2008

General Information

Congratulations Graduates!

Congratulations and best wishes to our international students who are expected to graduate this May or August. We are very proud of you, and we look forward to hearing how you will use your skills in Christian leadership to change the world!

May:

Jenise Allen
Leonike Nijssen
Towera Nyirenda

August:

Mira Ingemann
Joyce Kiplagat
Fabio Correa
Olubunmi "John" Oloruntoba

Spring & Summer Birthdays

Congratulations and blessings to the following students who have birthdays in the upcoming months, and belated birthday wishes to Hoi Chung "Rufina" Fung, who celebrated her birthday in March!

April: Susan Sebastian

May: Ivan Lyashenko

June: Leonardo Ferreira
Jenise Allen
Haakon Sengsvoll
Beatriz Viera
Yue Niu
Rudolph Gomez
Mija Lee

July: Shinn-Rong Chung
Moses Jangam
Varsha Sherring

August: Fabio Correa
Yuliya Paslavska
Mira Ingemann
Younghyeok Yun

OISS Director Away from May 23 – May 26

Please note that Leeanne Johnson will be attending a conference from Tuesday, May 23 – Friday, May 26. This means that immigration requests cannot be processed on these days. Kindly mark your calendars and plan accordingly. Thank you!

ISO Board Positions & Spring Elections:

At the end of the Spring semester the International Student Organization (ISO) will hold elections to appoint new board members for the 2008-2009 academic year. Currently, there are four ISO board positions in total: President; Vice President; Treasurer; and Secretary. If you have a servant heart and a strong desire to assist others, please consider this potential calling to serve your fellow students as an ISO board member. Tuition scholarships are granted to ISO board members for the time and service they provide. A special "Garden Party" will be held on Friday, May 2 at noon where the candidates for the various board positions will have the opportunity to say a few words regarding their skills, experiences, and desires to serve. **This is a terrific way to get involved with the international student and Regent communities, to learn and develop important leadership and organizational skills, and especially to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ!** Please check your email for more details regarding the upcoming ISO election.

Photos from 2007-2008 ISO Events:



Potluck Party



Christmas Party

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General Information

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- Spring & Summer Birthdays
- OISS Director Away from May 23 – 26
- ISO Board Positions & Spring Elections
- 2008 International Festival
- Congratulations SIFE Team
- OISS Trip to Williamsburg, VA
- Important Tax Reminder

Important Immigration Information

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- Travel Signature Request Deadline
- Attention All F-1 Student--Check Your I-20 Completion dates
- Students Who are Graduating/ Completing Studies this May/ August
- Students Who will Transfer Out of Regent/Attend Another U.S. Institution
- Students Who will Leave Regent After Spring, 08 Without Completing Their Degrees
- New OPT Regulations
- May Graduates Who Applied for Post Completion OPT

*Presented by
Office of International Student Services
Regent University
201 Student Center, 226-4130
www.regent.edu/oiss*

2008 International Festival

Congratulations and sincere thanks to all of you who participated in this year's spectacular International Festival, which was held on Saturday, March 29. This year's festival received an overall rating of "excellent" according to the festival surveys from our guests! Your hard work, long hours, careful planning, fellowship, and teamwork really paid off, and we really hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as our guests did. Some students are already talking about their plans & ideas for next year's festival! We are blessed by the diversity and culture you bring to Regent and the surrounding community, and we greatly appreciate everyone's involvement in the festival, however great or small it might have been!

Photos from the 2008 International Festival:



Additional photos from the festival can be found at the links below:

--From Sorin Petan:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/25232130@N04/sets/72157604335102416/>

--From Andrey Kovalev:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/7302137@N04/sets/72157604333849936/>

Regional SIFE Competition

Congratulations to Regent's SIFE team (Students in Free Enterprise) on their success at the Regional Competition in Philadelphia this April! This year's award-winning SIFE team included presentations from two of our own international students, *Hanisha Besant* (UG, Psychology) and *Yuliya Paslavska* (MBA). The SIFE support team also included *Feyi Alayande* and *John "Johncy" Rajan*. Congratulations on your great success and best wishes for the national competition in Chicago!

For a full write-up on the event, see the article at http://www.regent.edu/news_events/?article_id=178&view=full_article&preview=true

OISS Trip to Williamsburg, VA:

Looking forward to the summer? With the large number of activities held in the spring semester (ISO Trip to Washington D.C., International Festival, Graduation Dinner, Graduation Rose Sale, etc.) the OISS is looking forward to organizing our trip to Williamsburg during the summer. Please check your emails this summer for details and plan to join us!

Important Reminder! Deadlines and Mailing Address for the FEDERAL 8843 and 1040NR/1040NR-EZ Forms:

► For F-1 and J-1 students who were employed and earned taxable wages (money earned from employment, internships, or assistantships)—AND for students who received taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds, the 8843 should be filed together with the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms, and the filing deadline was: April 15, 2008.

► For F-1 and J-1 students who received non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds, the 8843 form should be filed together with the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms, and the filing deadline is: June 16, 2008.

► For F-1 and J-1 students who did NOT receive any taxable or non-taxable wages, income, scholarship/fellowship/grant funds in 2007, but were physically present in the United States in 2007, the 8843 form should be filed, by itself, and the filing deadline is: June 16, 2008.

►The Mailing Address for the FEDERAL 8843, 1040NR, and 1040NR-EZ form is:

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215

Registrar's website at:
www.regent.edu/admin/registrar/studentforms.cfm.
The OISS Travel Signature Request form can be found here:
www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm
Please see the OISS webpage entitled "Departing the U.S." for more details:
<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/departing.cfm>

Important Immigration Information

Change of Address Reminder

All F-1 and J-1 students, please be reminded that you are REQUIRED to report any address changes BOTH to the Registrar's Office AND to the Office of International Student Services **within 5 days** of the change. Please do not hesitate to contact the OISS if you have any questions. *Special Note for Graduates on OPT: Students who will graduate and remain in the U.S. for OPT should report any address changes to the Office of International Student Services ONLY, and not to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office no longer maintains your records once you graduate, but the OISS must continue to maintain your address for immigration purposes/SEVIS.*

Travel Signature Requests & Deadline for Summer Travel

All F-1 and J-1 students and dependents who need a "recent" signature on your I-20s or DS-2019s (one that will not be more than 12 months old by the time you will reenter the U.S.), please be reminded that you MUST submit your I-20/DS-2019 Travel Signature Request form **at least 2 WEEKS prior** to your departure date. Students who fail to meet this deadline will need to leave the OISS your I-20/DS-2019 with a completed express mail envelope where we can send you the form once we have time to process your late request. The forms will be sent at your expense. **All students will need to stop by the Registrar's Office to request a "Certification of Enrollment" which must be attached to the OISS Travel Signature Request form.** The Enrollment Certification will show your enrollment status for each semester you've been enrolled at Regent, and that is something the OISS must check before we can sign your I-20/DS-2019 for travel. The Certification of Enrollment request form can be found on the

Attention ALL F-1 Students--Check your I-20 Completion Dates

All F-1 students should check the date by which you are expected to complete your studies on Page 1, Section 5 of your most recent I-20. If the completion date on your current I-20 is May or August, 2008, and you will not complete your degree this May or August, you MUST apply for an "F-1 Program Extension" and a new I-20, **at least 30 days BEFORE the completion date listed on Section 5 of your current I-20.** If you qualify for an F-1 Program Extension, a new I-20 will be issued to you. You will need to submit new financial documentation before a new I-20 can be issued. **Failure to apply for an extension at least 1 month prior to your completion date can cause you to be in violation of your F-1 status, ineligible for any employment benefits, etc.** Applying for a timely F-1 Program Extension is YOUR responsibility as an F-1 student, so please take care of this important matter as soon as possible. F-1 Program Extension applications are available at the Office of International Student Services, and on our website www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm

Students Who are Completing Their Degrees/Studies this May/August

F-1 Students: Please be reminded that you must depart the U.S. within 60 days from the date you complete your degree if you are not transferring to another school, beginning a new degree program at Regent, applying for OPT, or applying for a change of status. For students who complete their degree requirements by may, the term end-date date of 5/2/08 will be reported in SEVIS, and you will have 60 days from this date to depart the U.S. Also, please

note that any on-campus employment authorization at Regent will end on 5/2/08 as well. **Please contact the OISS if you have any questions.**

J-1 Students: Please be reminded that you must depart the U.S. within 30 days from the time that you complete your studies if you are not transferring to another school, applying for Academic Training, or applying for a change of status. In addition, please note that any on-campus employment authorization will end on the date you complete your studies. **Please contact the OISS if you have any questions.**

Students Who will Transfer Out of Regent or Attend Another U.S. Institution after Graduation

F-1 and J-1 international students who are planning to transfer out of Regent must first complete a "Request for Transfer Out" form so that your SEVIS record can be released from Regent and your new school can issue you a new I-20/DS-2019. International students who will graduate from Regent and will attend another U.S. institution for a new degree program must also complete the "Request for Transfer Out" form in order to transfer your immigration status from Regent to the new school. **For F-1 students**, the "Request to Transfer Out" **MUST** be submitted to the OISS **within 30 days after** you complete your degree at Regent or within 30 days after the program end-date on your I-20, whichever comes first. **For J-1 students**, the request **MUST** be submitted at **least 2 weeks BEFORE** you complete your studies or at least 2 weeks **BEFORE** the end-date on your DS-2019, whichever comes first.

Students Who will Leave Regent after Spring, '08 Without Completing their Degrees:

All F-1 students who will not complete the degree listed on their I-20 and will not return to Regent after the Spring 2008 semester are **REQUIRED** by USCIS to apply for approval to cease attendance from the Office of International Student Services (OISS) **BEFORE** they leave Regent. To comply with this requirement, you must complete a "Request for

Withdrawal Form", which is available at www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm. This includes students who are withdrawing, taking a leave of absence, or just returning home. Students who are authorized by the OISS to withdraw are given 15 days to depart the United States. **Students who fail to comply with this requirement are NOT eligible for the 15 day grace period, must depart the U.S. immediately, and may experience immigration problems in the future.** If you have any questions, please contact the OISS as soon as possible.

New OPT Rules

The USCIS published entirely new OPT rules, which took effect on Tuesday, April 8, 2008. Major changes that will affect F-1 students at Regent are as follows:

--Students can now apply for OPT up to 90 days **PRIOR** to their program completion date, and up to 60 days **AFTER** their program completion date.

--Those on post-completion OPT are now required to be employed in order to maintain their lawful F-1 immigration status. One may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT, and this is a **MAJOR** change to note.

--H-1B Cap: The OPT employment authorization (and F-1 status) will be extended for those on post-completion OPT who are the beneficiaries of timely filed H-1B petitions that request a start date of October 1 for the following fiscal year.

Another major change, which will not impact so many students at Regent is as follows:

--Students in the "STEM" fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics will be able to apply for total of 29 months of OPT instead of 12 months.

Please continue to check your email messages for revised OPT related materials that will be updated by the OISS over the next few weeks as a result of these important regulatory changes.

Attention May Graduates Who Applied for Post-completion OPT:

Critical I-20 Expiration Information

If you will not graduate by the completion date that is listed on your OPT I-20, remember that you **MUST** apply for a program extension at least 30 days prior to the completion date. **Failure to do so will result in the loss of your lawful F-1 status and OPT.**

Expiration of On-Campus Employment Authorization

Once all of your degree requirements have been met by the 5/2/08 term end-date, you can no longer work at Regent under the benefit of “on-campus” employment. You must wait for your EAD to arrive so that you can work at Regent under the post-completion “Optional Practical Training” benefit as a graduate of the University. Please note that engaging in unauthorized employment is a serious violation of the F-1 status that will result in the loss of your lawful immigration status and possible deportation as explained on page 2 of your I-20. Thank you for your attention to this important matter!

OPT Application Information

OPT applicants should be checking for mail from USCIS. The mail will either contain an “I-797 Notice of Action” or it will contain a “Request for Additional Evidence”. The Notice of Action will tell you that your application was received and is being processed. If you receive a “Request for Additional Evidence”, you must read it very carefully and respond promptly. Please feel free to contact the OISS for assistance. ► **Please be reminded to send the OISS a copy of your EAD as soon as it arrives.** ◀

Travel Information for OPT Graduates

Please be reminded that F-1 graduates are advised NOT leave the U.S. after graduation until you receive your EAD. If you do, your pending OPT application may be considered to be “abandoned”, and you may not be able to return to the U.S. in F-1 status. If you wish to travel and return to the U.S. to engage in OPT after your EAD card has been processed, you must have the following items for a smooth re-entry:

1. Valid Passport
2. Valid F-1 Visa
3. Valid I-20 endorsed for travel by the OISS on “page 3” **within the past 6 months**
4. Valid EAD card with current employment dates
5. Letter of Employment from your employer including your salary and dates of employment.

F-2 dependents will need the following items for a return to the U.S. after a departure while the F-1 is on post-completion OPT:

1. Valid Passport
2. Valid F-2 Visa
3. Valid Dependent I-20 endorsed for travel on “page 3” **within the past 6 months**

4. Copy of F-1’s OPT I-20 endorsed for travel **within past 6 months**
5. Copy of the F-1’s valid EAD Card
6. Copy of F-1’s Letter of Employment from the employer including salary and employment end dates.

Remember that after graduation, regulations allow you to re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status to “resume” employment, so proof of employment is critical for a smooth reentry. Also, remember that your lawful F-1 status will end **60 days** after the end-date on your EAD, so you must depart the U.S. by that date if you haven’t applied for a change of status or have not been issued an I-20 to pursue a new degree at another U.S. institution.

Reporting Responsibilities While on OPT

You must send a copy of your EAD to the Office of International Student Services as soon as you receive it. You must also report any **address changes**, **immigration status changes** (to H-1B, etc.), **name changes**, or **interruptions in employment** to the OISS **within 10 days!** In addition, one may no longer accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any post-completion OPT, so it is important that you remain employed while on post-completion OPT. Please be mindful of these important responsibilities for maintaining your lawful F-1 status during your OPT period. Failure to do so could cause serious problems for you in the future.

Additional Photos from the 2008 International Festival:

