

September 2008

General Information

Welcome New

International Students

For the Fall, 08 semester, the OISS was pleased to welcome eleven new international students to the Regent community from the following nine countries: Canada, China, Egypt, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uganda. Our new students will study: Divinity, Education, Government, Law, and Psychology. Please help make our new students feel at home by greeting them with a warm Regent welcome when you see them on campus and at various events.

International Student Statistics

Here are some interesting statistics from the tentative/unofficial OISS enrollment reports that were run on 9/4/08, before the Add/Drop deadline:

--There are approximately 173 on-line and on-campus foreign nationals registered for classes this fall from approximately 55 countries (including U.S. Permanent Residents).

--There are approximately 92 on-campus foreign nationals (including U.S. Permanent Residents) representing approximately 41 countries.

--The top 6 countries represented by on-line and on-campus foreign nationals are: Canada, India, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, & United Kingdom, with equal representation from the last 3 countries listed.

--The top 7 countries represented by on-campus foreign nationals are: Canada, India, China, Ghana, Russia, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, with equal representation from the last 3 countries listed.

Job Opening in the OISS

The OISS will be hiring a new Graduate Assistant to work approximately 20 hours per week starting around November or December. A two year commitment, ability to drive a car/van, and web site experience is preferable. Training of approximately 2-3 hours/week may begin as early as September. If you are interested, please contact Leeanne Johnson at 226-4130.

Working Hard to Serve You

The OISS staff has been working hard to develop new programs and services to assist our international students with their special needs. Many of these new services were developed as a direct result of the feedback we received from the international student population. Some of the new programs and initiatives that were implemented by the OISS over the past year include:

--The development of a comprehensive "International Student Survival Guide" to assist our new students with immediate arrival needs.

--The creation of a special "International Student Arrival Checklist" to help new students get settled as smoothly as possible.

--The implementation of an expanded 3-day Fall International Student Orientation program with one day devoted to getting the students settled with a shopping trip and escorts to local banks and cell phone providers.

--The development of a comprehensive International Student Orientation Booklet.

--The creation of a Pre-Arrival Information Packet to inform and educate new students about pertinent matters prior to their home country departures. (The packet will be completed this fall.)

--The development of special outreach efforts to non-F-1 and J-1 foreign nationals who may benefit from the services provided by the OISS & the ISO.

--The development and implementation of an Outgoing International Student Survey to help assess how well the OISS is meeting the needs of our international students.

--The development of Fall and Spring Information Sessions to keep our F-1 and J-1 students informed and educated about immigration rules, responsibilities, and benefits.

--The partnering with CEM to offer information sessions for Regent staff who work in the area of international admissions with the development of special materials to assist them with the important work that they do.

--The partnering with CEM to create a special webpage for international applicants, which explains the admission and I-20 issuance process.

--The partnering with Student Housing in an effort to have a furnished Village apartment available for new international students with families.

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-Attention F-1 & J-1 Students
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General OISS Information

The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is located in 201 Student Center and is open all year long except during official University holidays. **Please feel free to call or stop by the office anytime between 2-5 p.m. Monday - Friday** if you have questions regarding any F-1 or J-1 immigration matters, or the services available to you through the OISS. Your questions, concerns, and suggestions are important to us because we are here to serve you. **Please note that morning meetings (between 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.) are available by appointment.** Please call the office ahead of time in order to schedule a morning appointment, and thank you for helping us to serve you better!

Office Staff

Leeanne Johnson: 226-4130
Director of International Student Services
(ljohnson@regent.edu)

Leah Taylor: 226-4951
OISS Graduate Assistant
(leahtay@regent.edu)

Office Hours & Location

Location: 201 Student Center
Phone: (757) 226-4130
Fax: (757) 226-4100
Walk-in Hours: 2-5 p.m., Monday-Friday
--Morning meetings are available by appointment.--
<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/>

Introducing the New ISO Board

Congratulations and thanks to our new 2008-2009 International Student Organization (ISO) Executive Board members. We look forward to your creative contributions to this new school year and greatly appreciate your dedicated service to others!

- *Varsha Sherring, President, DCom*
- *Hanisha Besant, Vice President, UGPsych*
- *Alejandro Arana, Treasurer, MA Gov*
- *Yohane Kina, Secretary, UGDIV*



Congratulations

International Student Leaders

Congratulations to **John “Johncy” Rajan** on his election as a Senator representing GLE on the Council of Graduate Students (COGS); to **Yohane Kina** on his election to Regent Undergraduate Council (RUC) as a Senator representing the Religious Studies program; and to **Stuart Hiddema** on his appointment to the Historian position for the Student Alumni Ambassadors. We are proud of you and appreciate your service to others!

September Birthdays

Congratulations and blessings to the following on-campus international students who have birthdays in September:

*Manuela Asamoah
Shemei Hewitt
Hannah Mathew
Anica Mulzac*

*Marina Kuzmina
John Rajan
Lemuel Williams
Joshua Markas*

Announcing New Births

Congratulations and blessings to the proud parents of **William Alexander Ekema Ekofo** and **Enkh-Yvelle Abigail Ganbaatar**. We are delighted to welcome them into the Regent community!



“God has blessed us with the arrival of our son William Alexander Ekema Ekofo, born on June 28, 2008.”

--Billy & Karen Ekofo

“Our baby girl Enkh-Yvelle Abigail was born on June 19, 2008 at 2:28 a.m. She was 8.58 pounds, and 20.6 inches long. Abigail is very beautiful. Her first name means a blessing of peace, and her English name means Father’s joy. We are thankful to God for this little bundle of joy and for His faithfulness. Friends, thank you very much for your prayers!”

--Javkhaa & Skye Ganbaatar



Weekly Emails from OISS & Student Responsibility

The weekly email messages from the OISS contain important immigration information that all F-1 and J-1 students with I-20s and DS-2019s are responsible for knowing, so these students are expected to read the messages each week. **If you are an F-1 or J-1 international student and you are not receiving the weekly email messages from the OISS, please contact Leanne Johnson immediately at: ljohnson@regent.edu.** Thanks very much, in advance, for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Message from the ISO (International Student Organization)

"Greetings from ISO to all International students! We are so excited about the upcoming Fall semester as ISO has fun and exciting events lined up for you every 3rd Friday of the month. Be sure to check out our new website for the latest news from ISO.

ISO's Summer Events:

ISO planned a movie night at the Greenbrier Mall during the month of July for those students who were still on campus. Over 15 students, along with their family members, had a memorable evening watching the movie, 'Indiana Jones,' while eating dinner provided by ISO at Greenbrier's Cinema Cafe. Later, many shopped at the Mall and had to be literally hauled off to the shuttle waiting to whisk them home.

In August, ISO organized a 'Welcome Reception' for the new international students by hosting an evening of games and movie! ISO also hosted its first International Worship Chapel for the Fall semester, which featured Dr. Corne Becker as the guest speaker.

Upcoming Events for September:

ISO is planning a new and exciting event for the 3rd Friday of September! So, please mark your calendars and RSVP as soon as possible when the invite is sent out. The event will be held after 5pm on Friday, 19th September. ISO will keep you posted about the event.

New Fall Office Hours for ISO Board Members:

--Hanisha Besant, Vice President:

Tuesday 5-6:20pm, & Wednesday 5-5:40pm

--Yohane Kina, Secretary: *Wednesday 10am-12pm*

--Varsha Sherring, President: *Wednesday 3-5pm*

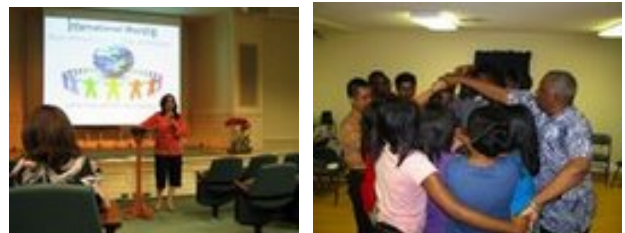
--Alejandro Arana, Treasurer: *Thursday 2-4pm*

You are welcome to drop by the ISO office, which is located in Student Center 135, during these office hours and meet with our board members to discuss any matter concerning ISO.

You are also welcome to attend our board meetings provided you inform us ahead of time of your attendance by sending us an email at iso@regent.edu. The ISO board members meet every alternate Monday of the month from 5-6:30pm in SC 135.

Have a blessed Fall Semester.

ISO Board. "



International Student Organization (ISO) List Serve

Students who are not receiving email messages from Regent's International Student Organization (ISO) and would like to be included on that list serve should send an email to: ISO@regent.edu. Please include your name and phone number.

Message from Dr. Wendi Santee, New Director of Student Life

Hello. My name is Dr. Wendi Santee and I am the new Director of Student Life. I am so happy to be here at Regent University and to be working with such fine students as yourself. Some of my areas of responsibility include student health insurance, student disabilities and accommodation requests, and working with student organizations and student leadership. I am excited about this year and I look forward to getting to know each of you as the year goes on. If you have any questions about anything I can help you with, please don't hesitate to ask. My office is located on the second floor of The Student Center in the Student Services Suite, and my phone number is 226-4867. You are also welcome to stop by just to say hello. I'd love to visit with you and get to know you. God bless you and have a great semester!

Upcoming Events

OISS Welcome Reception for New & Returning International Students

Monday, September 8, 5 p.m.

Regent Library Balcony (2nd Floor)

All new and returning international students and their families are cordially invited to this special Welcome Reception at the Regent Library Balcony where we will introduce our new international students from the Spring, Summer, and Fall, 2008 semesters, and the 2008-2009 ISO Executive Board. We look forward to seeing our returning international students as well. Refreshments will be served! (The reception will begin at 5 p.m. and will last for several hours, so please attend even if you cannot arrive at 5 p.m. or must leave early.)

OISS Fall Trip to Monticello

Saturday, October 11,

8:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. (approximate times)

The Office of International Student Services is planning a free trip for international students to Monticello, the home of President Thomas Jefferson, in the mountains of Charlottesville, Virginia. The OISS will cover the cost of the tickets to tour the home and the transportation; but each student will need to bring a lunch. Spaces are limited and are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. (Requests for family member attendance will be considered if space allows once all students have had a chance to reply. This particular trip is not recommended for children under 10 years of age.)

Students who wish to attend the trip should send an email message to Leah Taylor (leahtay@regent.edu) by noon on Monday, October 5th. The bus will leave from the following locations at the following times:

--Departing Regent Village, East Shuttle Stop, at 8:30 a.m. promptly.

--Departing Regent Commons, Bldg. 1117, at 8:45 a.m. promptly.

Additional information will be provided through email messages for those students who reply by the deadline, so be sure to check your Regent email carefully!

Upcoming Information Sessions

F-1 Student Optional Practical Training (Mandatory for all F-1 students who plan to apply for OPT this fall)

- *Thursday, September 18, 3:00 p.m.*

LOCATION: Room 252, Student Center Building

All F-1 students who are planning to apply for OPT this fall must attend one of three OPT sessions offered this semester where OPT applications will be distributed and the application process will be explained. F-1 students cannot apply for OPT this fall without first attending one of the three sessions offered. OPT applications must be submitted to USCIS within 60 days after your academic program completion date. F-1 students who are not applying for OPT this semester but are interested in learning more about this benefit are welcome and encouraged to attend any of the sessions offered this fall. Sessions will start on time, so please do not be late. Attendance will be taken.

Life After OPT (for F-1 Students)

- *Friday, September 26, 4 p.m.*

LOCATION: Room 112, Student Center Building

Local Immigration Attorney, Mr. Art Serratelli, will discuss various immigration options for F-1 students after post-completion OPT, including the H-1B status, TN status, R-1 status, etc. We look forward to seeing you there!

Important Immigration Changes & Information

Proposed & Final Immigration Changes for F-1 & J-1 Students & U.S. Institutions

The OISS has created a special page on our website which addresses the many new immigration changes that have either been proposed or finalized in the past several months through government memos, regulations, and new versions of SEVIS. All F-1 and J-1 students are encouraged to read the information, which can be found on the “Immigration Regulation Updates” page of the OISS website.

Regent University J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Designation Approved for 2 More Years

U.S. institutions that participate in the U.S. State Department’s Exchange Visitor Program are required to apply for re-designation every two years. The OISS had the responsibility of filing Regent’s re-designation application in April and we are pleased to announce the University’s approval, which will allow us to sponsor J-1 Exchange Students for 2 more years! In addition to many reporting responsibilities for the government, the university is required to maintain a minimum of 5 Exchange Visitors per calendar year. Currently, Regent only receives Exchange Visitors from Handong University in Korea through the Law School, so the minimum requirement has been difficult to maintain. However, the Law School is in the process of developing another exchange with Shantou University in China, which should help us in the future with this important State Department requirement.

Attention all F-1 & J-1 Students

Please review the special handouts called “Maintaining Lawful F-1 Status” and “Maintaining Lawful J-1 Status”, which are available in the OISS and on the OISS website. All F-1 and J-1 students are strongly advised to read the appropriate handout (F-1 or J-1) carefully each semester and are

encouraged to contact the OISS if you have any questions. Thank you!

Mandatory SEVIS Reporting

This message serves as a reminder to all F-1 and J-1 students (with Regent-issued I-20s and DS-2019) about the University’s government reporting responsibilities. All U.S. institutions are required to report the following information to the USCIS (U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services) through the electronic data reporting system called “SEVIS” (Student Exchange Visitor Information System):

- When a student enters the U.S. with an I-20 for initial attendance but fails to register with the school within 30 days;
- Whether the student has enrolled at the school, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO (OISS), or failed to enroll;
- The current address of each enrolled student;
- The start date of the student’s next term or semester;
- A change of the student’s or dependent’s legal name or U.S. address;
- Any student who fails to maintain status or complete his or her program of study;
- Any student that has graduated early or prior to the program end date listed on the SEVIS I-20;
- Any disciplinary action taken by the school against the student as a result of the student being convicted of a crime; and
- Any other notification request made by SEVIS with respect to the current status of the student (such as CPT, OPT, etc).

If you have any questions about the SEVIS reporting, please do not hesitate to contact the OISS.

DEADLINE to Request I-20/DS-2019 Travel Signatures for Fall Break Travel

Please note that the deadline to request a travel signature on your I-20/DS-2019 for Fall Break travel is **Friday, October 3, or two weeks before your departure, whichever comes first.** Each travel signature is valid for 12 months at a time, so check to see if you have a travel signature and make sure that it will not expire before the date you will return to the U.S. For a complete list of everything you will need for a smooth reentry into the U.S. after a temporary departure, please read the OISS webpage entitled, “Departing the U.S.”. **This page should be read several weeks prior to your departure.** If you have any questions or would like the OISS to check your documents, be sure to visit the office several weeks before you go.