January/February, 2010

General Information

OISS Hours & Staff Information
The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is here to serve Regent’s international student population throughout the year. Walk-in hours (with no appointment necessary) are from 2 – 5 p.m., Monday–Friday during the Fall and Spring semesters. Morning assistance (between 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.) requires an appointment. If you need to meet with the OISS staff between 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., please call the office ahead of time so we can arrange a time to meet with you. Thank you for helping us serve you!

Office Staff
J. Leeanne Johnson
Director
352-4130
ljohnson@regent.edu

Olumuyiwa Okunlola
Graduate Assistant
352-4951
olumoku@regent.edu

Spring, 2010 Orientation & New International Students
The OISS had a particularly challenging time getting our brand new international students oriented and settled this semester because the University did not re-open from Winter Break until the first day of classes! We had to offer a very condensed version of our Orientation on the first day of classes with some extended events offered throughout the month of January. Despite these unique challenges we are grateful that all six of the orientation participants rated the program as “Very Helpful”. Regent’s six new international students are from the following five countries: Brazil, Canada, India, Philippines, and South Korea. Three of our new students transferred from other U.S. institutions, two are on a short-term exchange from Handong University in South Korea, and one is pursuing a one year degree program. Here are some comments from the new students about the Orientation:

“Thank you for taking the time to help us. As new students on campus, having an orientation was very helpful—very informative and very helpful.”

Thank you for all the kindness and support from everyone at Regent! So glad to be here to be a part of this unique Christian University.”

“The orientation was long and I suggest that for next semesters it should be for 2 days not one day. The overall benefit outweighs the time spent. It was really helpful.”

G.A. Position Opening in the OISS
The OISS will be hiring a new Graduate Assistant to work approximately 20 hours per week starting around May. A two year commitment, ability to drive a car/van, and web site experience are preferable. Training of approximately 5-10 hours/week may begin as early as February. If you are interested, please contact Leeanne Johnson at 352-4130 or by email at ljohnson@regent.edu.

Topics included in the January/February, 2010 OISS newsletter are as follows:

General Information:
--Office Hours & Staff Information
--Sp. 2010 Orientation & New Students
--G.A. Position in the OISS
--Feature Article from V. Sherring
--January & February Birthdays
--Regent’s IEW Celebration
--IEW Photo Contest Awards
--Weekly Email Messages from OISS
--Important Tax Filing Information

Immigration Information:
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--ISO Board Positions & Elections
--News from ISO
--Reminder About Online Credit Restrictions
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--Spring, 2010 SEVIS Reporting
--F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations
--Program Completion Forms
--Immigration Information Sessions
--Gearing Up for SEVIS II

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events:
--OISS Special Events
--American Student Fellowship

Presented by:
Office of International Student Services (OISS)
Regent University
201 Student Center
757-352-4130 / www.regent.edu/oiss
Walk-in hours: 2 - 5 pm, Monday – Friday
Feature Article by Outgoing Student, Ms. Varsha Sherring

Each semester the OISS invites our outgoing students and expected graduates to prepare a few paragraphs about their experiences at Regent and in the United States. Here is this month’s feature article from Ms. Varsha Sherring, who is expected to complete her PhD in Communication this May.

“My name is Varsha Sherring and I am pursuing my doctoral degree in Communication Studies from Regent University.

I arrived in Virginia Beach 4 years ago along with my husband Ajay, and with two suitcases each - actually not even that! Our bags were misplaced by the airlines when we had been rerouted from the city where our journey to the US commenced: Mumbai, India. We had been stranded in Mumbai for 3 days due to unprecedented floods in the city, which had caused the airports to shut down. Miraculously, we were rerouted and allowed to travel on the very first day after the airports reopened whereas many stranded passengers awaited their turns to find seats on planes. Upon our arrival in Virginia Beach, after a long circuitous rerouted journey, we discovered that our bags had not exactly travel with us, so we were left with just items in our carry-on luggage to survive until our bags arrived.

Clutching our few worldly possessions, we entered our awesome yet bare Regent Village apartment. As we explored the place that we were going to call home for the next five years, we felt the tiredness and the stress of the past days creeping in along with the worrying thoughts about how we were going to manage for the next few days without our bags! But then we saw something in our bedroom made us forget all our worries. It was a bed that OISS had placed in our apt in anticipation of our arrival! Nothing else in the world was as vital for us that day than having a bed to sleep on after 5 days of ceaseless travel and stress. They had even graciously provided us with a small basket of essential amenities for our comfort.

Later, upon my further interaction with OISS and its members, I found that anticipating and providing assistance to new international students is just one of the things that OISS specializes in. OISS also found out about our needs when we were furnishing our new apt and worked very hard to meet those specific needs. OISS not only helps during the transitional time of every international student but continues to provide assistance, counsel, and encouragement during the entire time that the student is at Regent. While it is at school that we get equipped to fulfill our academic and spiritual goals, it is at OISS that we get equipped to handle a new country and culture. Without the love, care, and wisdom provided by OISS, our time at Regent would not have been half as awesome as it has been. Thank you OISS!”

January & February Birthdays

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

Kola Aiyedogbon
Jonathan Ayee
Olumuyiwa Okunlola

Jeffery Alli
Jae Hwa Shin
Sarah Purnell

…and to those who will celebrate their birthdays in February:

Elizabeth Anderson
Edward Ogalo

Kangming Ma
Natalya Popko

Regent’s International Education Week (IEW) Celebration

During the week of November 16-20, 2009, Regent University’s Office of Student Services sponsored an International Education Week (IEW) celebration. IEW is a joint initiative between the U.S. Departments of State and Education to help promote the importance of international education and exchange. There were approximately 200 online and on-campus international students enrolled at Regent for the Fall term. Those students represented about 60 countries in total. Various offices and student organizations participated in the IEW celebration, which included a transformation of various resident hall apartments into different countries for the “Culture in the Commons Event”; an international student panel discussion called “International Insights into the U.S.”; various Cultural Display Tables; a Photo Contest; a Ping Pong Tournament; and an International Bake Sale. Several information tables and sessions were also included as a part of IEW. The University Bookstore also sponsored a “Native Garb Day”, and the Regent Ordinary prepared special foods from India for their “Taste of the World” event. This year’s celebration enabled our students to “See”, “Connect”, “Lead” and “Learn” in such fun and creative ways with other parts of the world; and we are very grateful to everyone who participated. Photos from this year’s IEW celebration can be found here:

http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/InternationalEducationWeek.htm
IEW Photo Contest Awards
The OISS was delighted to receive 20 student and staff submissions for our first-ever IEW Photo Contest! The theme for this year’s contest was “God’s Global Grandeur & Goodness” and the submissions represented various countries including England, Israel, Italy, Kuwait, Nigeria, Scotland, and the United States. The judges were not only impressed by the beautiful images but by the moving captions that were submitted as well. Here are the winners for the 2009 IEW Photo Contest:

STUDENT WINNERS
► 1st Place: Heidi Livingston, “Her Eyes Were Watching God” (School of Undergraduate Studies)
► 2nd Place: Olumuyiwa Okunlola, “Alone, but Never Alone” (School of Divinity & School of Education)
► 3rd Place: Ashley Livermon, “Only a Glimpse” (School of Undergraduate Studies)
► Special Recognitions: Caroline Leal, “Reflection of His Beauty” (School of Undergraduate Studies); Emilie Leal, “An Everlasting Covenant” (School of Undergraduate Studies)

FACULTY/STAFF WINNERS
► 1st Place: Scott Pryor, “The Hope of the Resurrection” (Law School Professor)
► 2nd Place: Scott Pryor, “The Beauty of God’s Faithfulness” (Law School Professor)
► 3rd Place: Marty Dignard, “Ancient Splendor” (Writing Center Director)

Weekly Email Messages from the OISS & Student Responsibility
The weekly email messages from the OISS contain important immigration information and reminders that all F-1 and J-1 students with I-20s and DS-2019s are responsible for knowing, so all F-1 and J-1 students are expected to take a minute 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 Leeanne Johnson immediately at: ljjohnson@regent.edu. Thank you, in advance, for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Important Tax Filing Information
► Watch Your Mail for Important Tax Forms (W-2s & 1042S Forms):
All students who were employed in 2009 or who received scholarship funds in 2009 will need to file a U.S. federal tax return (and possibly a Virginia state tax return) this spring. The filing deadline will be mid-April for those who were employed and earned taxable wages (money earned through employment, internships and assistantships) in 2009. The filing deadline will be mid-June for those who received non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds in 2009. Students who worked in the United States at any time during the year 2009 should be receiving some tax forms in the mail (or via the internet) from their employers by the end of January. The type of forms that you might receive are called “W-2” forms. Students who received scholarship or fellowship grant funds in 2009 might receive a 1042S form, but these forms will not be issued until mid-March. These important forms will be needed for your United States tax filing, so please watch for them in the mail and keep them in a safe place. Many more details will be provided in the March, 2010 OISS newsletter.

► Tax Filing Assistance Software Purchased by OISS for International Students:
As many of you know, the OISS purchases a special international student tax filing software each year that our international students can use for a low cost of $15 per person. The software is called “CINTAX Complete International Tax Preparation Software”. The $15 software fee is waived for new students who attended the Fall, 09 International Student Orientation because the cost was included in the orientation fee. Regent staff members are not qualified/permitted to assist students with their individual tax filing/forms, so be sure to take advantage of the special software which the OISS has purchased for your use. The software was created especially for foreign citizens who are unfamiliar with U.S. tax filing procedures. International students will be able to register for the CINTAX passwords at the front desk of the Student
Services Office (201 Student Center) in mid-March. The software company is still sending the school information about this year’s software program and the Payroll Office has until mid-March, 2010 to mail the 1042S forms, which many of you will need to file your taxes. Checks for the software passwords should be made payable to “Regent University”. Please read your email messages in February & March for further details. (If you do not want to use the CINTAX software, another alternative is to hire an off-campus international tax specialist/consultant to assist you with your tax filing obligations as a foreign national in the U.S. The cost for such assistance may start at around $100-$150.)

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events

OISS Special Events
The OISS has organized some Special Events for the Spring term, such as a trip to Colonial Williamsburg & Jamestown on April 10; Monthly Shopping Trips; and Information Sessions on “Returning Home”, “Money Saving Tips”, and Common Questions About American English”. Click here for the entire schedule, which was mailed to all students in January:
http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/iss_news_cal.cfm

Getting Involved & American Student Fellowship
As some of you know, there are many offices on campus that provide activities and services that help to foster international and American student fellowship and friendship. One office that offers such opportunities is the Office of Community Life. Director Roger Cheeks organizes special off-campus outings each semester for all students at Regent (such outings include the Festival of Lights trip and the trip to MacArthur Center Mall). The Office of Community Life also offers all students the opportunity to work side-by-side and to serve the community through special volunteer service events. Other offices offer social, cultural, and spiritual-type fellowship events for American and international students, such as the programming that is done by the Resident Assistants in the Regent Commons (Student Housing). The Director of Student Life, Ms. Carolyn Hughes, oversees intramural sports events, such as soccer, flag football, basketball, ping-pong, etc. The Office of Student Life also oversees the many Student Organizations that exist at Regent in order to foster student community, fellowship, & leadership. The OISS encourages all international students to participate in these many special offerings at Regent. Getting involved with the larger campus community and your fellow American students will greatly help to enhance your overall experience in the United States. For questions about these activities and events, please

►8843 Forms (Statement for Exempt Individuals & Individuals With a Medical Condition) Must be Filed by All F-1 & J-1 Students Who Were in the United States in 2009:
ALL international students who were physically present in the United States during the year 2009 are expected to complete an 8843 Form “Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals With a Medical Condition”—whether or not you received any U.S. income, scholarship, or grant funds. For students who received U.S. income, scholarship, or fellowship grant funds, the 8843 should be filed with the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms. For students who did not receive any type of U.S. income, scholarship, or fellowship grant funds in 2009, the 8843 form should be filed by itself. The 8843 form can be completed through the special international student tax filing software (called CINTAX), which was purchased by the OISS.
contact the appropriate Directors or Offices on the next page:

- Mr. Roger Cheeks, Director of Community Life, 352-4486, rogeche@regent.edu
- Ms. Carolyn Hughes, Director of Student Life, 352-4867, chughes@regent.edu
- Regent Commons Office, 352-4890

Spring, 2010 “Taste of the World”

Each month, the Regent Ordinary and the Office of Community Life host an event called “Taste of the World” in the Regent Ordinary where special foods are featured from various world regions. International students also contribute to this event by arranging cultural display tables outside the Ordinary for visitors to enjoy. Such displays have included maps, books, posters, post-cards, soccer/football/hockey jerseys and other clothing items, arts, crafts, toys, etc. If you are interested in sharing items from your country/world region this Spring, please contact Mr. Roger Cheeks at 352-4486 or rogeche@regent.edu at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Here is the rest of the “Taste of the World” schedule for the Spring, 2010 term:

- **Middle East:** Thursday, February 11
- **Africa:** Wednesday, February 17
- **Port of Call: Caribbean:** Wednesday, March 10
- **Asia:** Wednesday, April 14

ISO Board Positions & Spring Elections

Towards the end of each Spring semester, the International Student Organization (ISO), along with Regent’s other student organizations, will be holding elections in order to appoint new board members for the 2010-2011 academic year. There are five ISO board positions in total: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Public Relations Officer. 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. On Tuesday, March 30, the current ISO board will hold a special “Garden Party” where the candidates for the 2010-2011 board positions will have the opportunity to campaign/say a few words regarding their experiences and interests in the positions in which they wish to run. This is a terrific way to get involved with the international student and Regent communities, to develop important leadership skills, and to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ. For more information about the ISO board positions, visit the ISO constitution at this link: [https://regent.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Student%20Organizations/ISO/about/home.htm](https://regent.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Student%20Organizations/ISO/about/home.htm); or you can contact the current ISO board at iso@regent.edu.

News from the ISO

Here are some of the International Student Organization events for Spring, 2010:

- **Every Thursday:** Game Nights, Student Center Lounge, 9 – 12 p.m.
- **March 30th:** Garden Party/Graduate Appreciation
- **April 2nd:** ISO Board Elections
- **May 8th:** Rose Sale
- **May 14th – 15th:** Washington DC Trip

Coffee-House for Haiti! Come on out to a fundraising event put on by COGS and supported by the ISO on Saturday, January 30 from 7-9pm in the Regent Ordinary. It is called “Saturday Night Live” and it is a time where students and professors can showcase their talent. The cover charge for the event is just one toiletry item. Free coffee will be served the baked goods will be on sale, with all proceeds going to United Christians for Haiti. Come support this effort and make a difference in the lives of the Haitian people!

Also, we would like to announce the ISO board office hours for Spring. You are welcome to come and see any of the board members and get your issues addressed.

- **Enoch** - Monday – 1:30 to 3:30 pm
- **Muyiwa** - Monday - 10 am to 12 pm
- **Frieder** - Friday - 9 to 11 am
- **Wole** - Thursday - 10 am to 12 pm
- **Lemuel** - Wednesday - 4 to 6 pm

Please feel free to email us at iso@regent.edu.
Important Immigration Information

Important Reminder About the Online Academic Credit Restriction
Please be reminded that USCIS regulations do not permit F-1 student visa holders to count more than one online class or three online credit hours per semester toward the full-time status requirement. If you had a semester where you tried to take more than one online class or more than three online credit hours to count toward your full-time status requirement, it is important that you contact the OISS immediately. The sooner the matter is addressed, the better off you will be. J-1 students are not permitted to count any online credits toward the full-time status requirement.

Change of Address Reporting Reminder
To report a change of address, ALL currently enrolled F-1 and J-1 international students must follow the important instructions included below to maintain lawful immigration status:

- During web-registration periods at the start of each term, all students are required to confirm or enter their correct addresses in Genisys during the web-registration process before they can register for classes. The U.S. address that you enter/confirm in Genisys during web-registration is the address that Regent will report to the government in SEVIS. It is your important responsibility to make sure your current U.S. address is listed correctly in Genisys during web-registration periods.

- If your address changes during the middle of the semester/outside of a web-registration period, you must report the new address to TWO separate offices WITHIN 5 DAYS of the change: the OISS AND the Registrar’s Office. Students can still use Genisys to report the new address to the Registrar’s Office outside of web-registration periods, and should use the “Information Change Form” on the OISS website to report the change to the Office of International Student Services.

Important Note: Failure to report a change of address to Regent in a timely manner is considered to be a violation of your immigration status, so please take care of this important matter!

Spring, 2010
SEVIS Reporting
As a reminder to all F-1 students with I-20s, please note that all U.S. institutions are required to report the following information to the USCIS (United States Citizenship & Immigration Services) through the electronic data reporting system called “SEVIS”:

- When a student enters the U.S. with an I-20 for initial attendance but fails to register with the OISS within 30 days;
- Whether the student has enrolled at the school, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO, or failed to enroll;
- The current address of each enrolled student;
- The end date of the current university term, and the start date of the next required term or semester;
- Any student who fails to maintain status or complete his or her program of study;
- A change of the student or dependent’s legal name or U.S. address;
- Any student who 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 change of major, CPT, OPT, etc).

F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations
Employment is considered to be the rendering of services for compensation--financial or other. The five general types of employment options available to F-1 students who have maintained lawful F-1 status are: On-campus Employment, Curricular Practical Training, Optional Practical Training, Severe Economic Hardship Employment, and Internships with International Organizations. F-1 students are generally not eligible to work off-campus until they have been lawfully enrolled for at least 1 full academic year and are also not permitted to work off-campus without prior written approval on the I-20 from the OISS, or without an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) from USCIS. CBN does not have a contractual agreement with Regent University and is therefore considered to be “off-campus”
employment, which requires prior written approval. Dependants in F-2 status are NOT permitted to work in the U.S. under any circumstances. In addition, F-1 students are not permitted to engage in any type of “self-employment.” Working in the U.S. without proper authorization is a serious violation of your F-1 status which can lead to deportation as explained in section 12 on page 2 of your I-20. If you are interested in working in the United States, we look forward to seeing you at our Information Session entitled “Overview of Employment Rules & Options for F-1 Students” on Friday, February 19th at 12 p.m. (SC, 252).

Program Completion Forms Needed from May Graduates
All F-1 and J-1 student visa holders who are completing their studies at Regent or graduating in May, 2010 are required to complete the OISS Program Completion Form for immigration purposes at least 45 days prior to their program completion date. The form is needed by the OISS by mid-March so that we can update your SEVIS record and prepare accordingly to assist you with any post-graduation immigration needs, such as a transfer of your immigration status to a new school for a higher degree level, or a recommendation for post-completion OPT or Academic Training. The Program Completion Form can be found at this link on the OISS website:

http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm

OISS Immigration Information Sessions for the Spring, 2010 Semester
The OISS Spring, 2010 Information Session Calendar was mailed to all students in January. It is also located on the OISS website under “Newsletters and Information Sessions”. All times and dates for the Spring, 2010 sessions are included. May, 2010 F-1 student graduates who wish to apply for OPT should check the calendar for the OPT session dates and details. The same goes for J-1 students who are planning to apply for Academic Training this spring. F-1 students who wish to apply for Curricular Practical Training for a mandatory internship will also need to attend a CPT session this spring.

Upcoming sessions for the month of February are as follows:

► F-1 Student Optional Practical Training (OPT)
  • Friday, February 12th, 12 p.m., 252 Student Center

► Overview of Employment Rules & Options for F-1 Students
  • Friday, February 19th, 12 p.m., 252 Student Center

Gearing Up for SEVIS II!
Over the past couple of years the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has been developing a replacement program for SEVIS, called “SEVIS II”. SEVIS stands for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. Originally SEVIS II was supposed to have been implemented during the Fall, 2009 term, but the project has been delayed. According to the SEVP reports at the conference the OISS Director attended in November, it appears as if the government “may” be ready to start implementing the first phase of SEVIS II this coming Spring or Summer and the second phase of SEVIS II in the Fall of 2010. Some of the major changes with SEVIS II will include a paperless system where students will no longer be issued I-20s or DS-2019s; and the issuance of Immigration Identification Numbers (IINs) to all F-1 and J-1 students, spouses, and dependents who are 14 years old and above. Through the IINs F-1 and J-1 students will have electronic access to their SEVIS records and will be responsible for updating certain items in their records, such as address changes. For now, nothing is final or set in stone, and there are many details that have not been ironed out or conveyed yet; so please stay tuned—and check your OISS emails and newsletters carefully—for important developments with SEVIS II that will affect you!