General Information

The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is located at 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 Monday-Friday 2-5 p.m. if you have questions regarding any F-1 immigration matters, or the services available to you. Your questions, concerns, and suggestions are important to us because we are here to serve you. Morning meetings between 9 a.m. – noon are available by appointment, so please call the office ahead of time in order to schedule a morning appointment. Thank you for helping us to serve you better!

Office Staff:

Ms. J. Leeanne Johnson  Ms. Brinda Patel
Director, PDSO, RO  New Graduate Assistant in Training
(757) 352-4130  (757) 352-4951
ljohnson@regent.edu  brinpat@mail.regent.edu

Welcome New Student, Alise!
The OISS welcomed one new international student to the Regent campus for the Spring 2013 semester. Alise Krapane is from Latvia and will be studying Government. Please help to offer a warm Regent welcome to Alise when you see her on campus!

Email Messages from the OISS & Student Responsibility:
The email messages, sent biweekly by the OISS, contain important immigration information and reminders that all F-1 students with I-20s are responsible for knowing, so all F-1 students are expected to take a minute to read the messages each week. If you are an F-1 international student and you are not receiving the biweekly email messages from the OISS, please contact Leeanne Johnson immediately at: ljohnson@regent.edu. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Greeting from New OISS G.A., Brinda Patel!

Hello! My name is Brinda Patel. I am an international student from Mumbai, India. I have a bachelor’s degree in nutrition from Long Island University, NY. I love to teach and came to Regent University to pursue a career in elementary education. I am excited and honored to be a part of the OISS family and serve as the Graduate Assistant. I enjoy meeting new people and learning about new cultures. I look forward to meeting you. Please feel free to stop by the OISS in the Student Center; if I can be any help to you or just to say hi. Have a wonderful semester :)
Outgoing Student Messages

Flora Khoo, M.A., December 2012
Graduate:

“I am the Lord God who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.’
Is 48: 17

I am thankful for how God has seen me through the entire master’s degree program in journalism. I have experienced His Presence, Provision and Peace every step of the way. He has proven Himself to be reliable and showed me that His plans are better than mine. I looked forward to what God has in store for me as I take the next step in the Optional Practical Training.

‘To the man who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness.’
Eccles 2:26”

Alicia Angelica Panganiban, May 2012, MDiv Candidate:

“Guess Whose Territory The Good Lord Has Expanded!”
Congratulations to Gedeon & Nicole Mbaicornonde who welcomed their first ever born child, a baby girl: Eliana Nerambaye Mbaicornonde. Eliana was born at Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News, Virginia, on November 1, 2012 at 05: 08 am E.T. She weighed 9 lbs, 1 oz and measured 21.15 in. Baby Eliana is mighty strong and healthy; she was declared vigorous at birth and precocious two weeks later. Papa is the happiest man on earth right now; mam is still recovering. Thank you for your prayers, encouragements and support of all kinds. May the Lord bless and keep you all! (NOTE: Gedeon was the OISS G.A. who graduated in December 2012. His farewell message was included in the November/December 2012 Newsletter.)

To my fellow international students, life here in the campus can be difficult and lonely especially if you are coming from a family and community of faith that is close and warm. But we overcome these challenges as we rely on God’s grace not only to see us through and provide for everything, but also to make all things beautiful even amidst adverse situations. We look not on ourselves nor on anyone else but to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He who called us to be here at Regent is faithful. Hold on and partner with the Holy Spirit as you embrace the beauty of being here. Our goal is not only to learn and get straight A’s. Yes, we can accomplish that while being in our mission here. Seek to serve the community by judging no one but by fully accepting and appreciating God’s masterpiece to every person you’d encounter in the hope that others may be transformed as they experience God’s unconditional love through you. After all our vision for coming here is to transform the world for Christ...and it starts right here.”
Free Tutoring on Grammar & Writing Skills:
Is English your 2nd Language? If you are an advanced beginner to intermediate speaker of English and you would like to work on your Grammar and Writing skills, contact DeAnna Day: deanday@regent.edu. I am a Graduate student in the Adult TESOL program and as part of a class project; I will offer free tutoring to one student. We will be working on grammar and writing skills. I will need to meet at least 5 times for an hour or more with the student. It can be on the Regent campus or somewhere convenient for you. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Cold Weather Tips for Students from Warmer Climates!

January and February are usually the coldest months for us here in Virginia, so here are some tips on how to stay warm:
--Wear layered clothing like long sleeved t-shirts under your sweaters/sweatshirts, and wear “long-johns” or tights (thin pants) under your jeans/slacks.
--Mittens are more effective than gloves that leave your fingers isolated. A hat and scarf will keep you warm as well!
--Wool socks and long “knee highs” (socks) will keep your feet and legs nice and warm.
--Longer, insulated coats that cover your bottom are much warmer than shorter, lighter jackets.
--For those who have trouble keeping their hands and feet warm, you can buy “hot pads/hand warmers” in places like Wal-Mart & Target. The hot pads can usually be found in the sporting goods/hunting sections of the store (and sometimes near the check-out lines). The hot pads can be used in your gloves, boots, and pockets to help keep you warm. Once you open them, they will stay heated for about 6-8 hours. They cost about $1 - $2 and they are also GREAT for skiing!
--For those of you who get very cold at night while sleeping, you can buy a “hot water bottle”, which will keep you warm in bed! A hot water bottle can be filled with hot water that will stay warm for many hours.
--Keep your blinds/curtains open in the day time so the sun can heat your room, and keep them closed at night to keep out the cold/wind/draft.
--Use lip balm to protect your lips from chapping and hand/body lotions to keep your skin moist in the dry heat.
--Drink nice warm drinks like tea, coffee and hot chocolate with marshmallows (an American favorite!). Hot “apple cider” is another American favorite this time of the year! It is a nice apple drink with a cinnamon flavor. Hot apple juice is good, too!
--You can use a vaporizer to help reduce the dry winter air and sore throats that go along with it.
--A temperature converter can be found here: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/currentstudents.cfm

Important Tax Filing & 8843 Information:

►Watch Your Mail for Important Tax Forms (W-2s & 1042S Forms):
All students who were employed in 2012 or who received scholarship funds in 2012 will need to file a U.S. FEDERAL tax return (1040NR or 1040NREZ), and possibly a Virginia STATE tax return, this spring. The FEDERAL filing deadline will be mid-April (April 15, 2013) for those who were employed and earned taxable wages (money earned through employment, internships and assistantships) in 2012. The FEDERAL filing deadline will be mid-June (June 17, 2013) for those who received non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds in 2012.
►Students who worked in the United States at any time during the year 2012 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 2012 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. The FEDERAL tax return must be filed before the STATE tax return. Many more details will be provided in the March, 2013 OISS newsletter.

►Tax Filing Assistance Software Purchased by OISS--Register at FRONT DESK of Student Services Office in mid-March:
As many of you know, the OISS purchases a special international student tax filing software each year that our current international students can use to complete their FEDERAL taxes for a low cost of $30 per person. The $30 software fee is waived for new students who attended the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 International Student Orientations. The name of the software has changed and is now called “GLACIER Tax Prep.” Regent staff members are not qualified/permited to assist students with their individual tax filing/forms/questions, so be sure to take advantage of this 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 GLACIER Tax Prep 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, 2013 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”, or you can pay by cash. Please read your email messages in February & March for further details. (If you do not want to use the GLACIER Tax Prep software, another alternative is to hire an off-campus international tax specialist/consultant, like H&R Block or Liberty Tax Filing, 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.)

► 8843 Forms Must be Filed by ALL F-1 & F-2 Students & Dependents Who Were Physically Present in the United States in the Year 2012:

ALL international students & dependents who were physically present in the United States during the year 2012 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. (The 8843 is used by the Internal Revenue Service to track the physical presence of international student visa holders in the U.S. for future tax filing purposes and must be completed by ALL F-1 students & dependents who were physically present in the U.S. in 2012.)

► For students who received U.S. income, scholarship, or fellowship grant funds in 2012, the 8843 form should be filed ALONG WITH the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms by April 15, 2013.

► For students who did NOT receive any type of U.S. income, scholarship, or fellowship grant funds in 2012, the 8843 form should be filed BY ITSELF by June 17, 2013.

The 8843 form can be completed through the special international student tax filing software (called “GLACIER Tax Prep”), which was purchased by the OISS, but it is a simple and basic form you can complete on your own in a few minutes. The 8843 form can be found on this page of the IRS website: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf

Getting Involved & American Student Fellowship:

There are many offices on campus that provide activities and events that help to foster international and American student fellowship and community. One is the Office of Student Activity and Leadership (OSAL). Director Roger Cheeks and Assistant Director Jamie Brennan organize special off-campus outings each semester for all Regent students, called “Regent Goes to Town”. In addition, OSAL coordinates “Game Nights” and Intramural Sports (soccer, football, basketball, etc). OSAL also oversees the many Student Organizations that exist at Regent in order to foster student fellowship, community, & leadership. Other offices offer social, cultural, and spiritual events for American and international student fellowship, such as the programming that is done by the Resident Assistants (R.A.s) in the Regent Commons (Student Housing).

Another office, Campus Ministries, offers students the opportunity to work side-by-side and to serve the community through special volunteer service events called “Regent Serves”. The OISS encourages all international students to participate in these many opportunities available 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 opportunities, please contact the appropriate Directors/Offices:

- Mr. Roger Cheeks, Director of OSAL, 352-4486, rogeche@regent.edu
- Ms. Jamie Brennan, Assistant Director of OSAL 352-4928, jamibre@regent.edu
- Dr. Richard Kidd, Director of Campus Ministries, 352-4840, rkidd@regent.edu
- Regent Commons Office, 352-4890
Spring 2013
“Global Cuisine @ the Ordinary”:
Approximately one Wednesday a month the Regent Ordinary and the Office of Student Activities & Leadership (OSAL) sponsor an event called “Global Cuisine @ the Ordinary”. Ethnic foods are featured from various countries/world regions and students are invited to share music and items from their home countries for a cultural display. Photos from previous events can be found on this web page: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/TasteoftheWorld.htm

Here is the remaining “Global Cuisine @ the Ordinary” schedule for the Spring 2013 semester:
February 13: Black History Month: Senegal (West Africa)
March 13: Ireland
April 10: Asia

The Forge Training Program:
May 12-26, 2013
“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” Prov. 27:17

Join participants from a variety of countries for two weeks of spiritually rich, Biblically centered fellowship at The Forge Christian Life Training Program in Charlottesville, VA this May. Participants will gather around the theme: The Kingdom of God and the Human Heart, How God Makes His Realm Real in Ours. God desires to bring the rule of his heavenly kingdom to bear in 21st century America and around the world. That’s why Jesus told us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in the Heavens.” But how does the Lord do that and what is our part in the process?

This conference will address these questions and give us practical tools to experience living in this heavenly kingdom. As one previous Forge attendee described the program, “I feel like I’m in heaven, I don’t want this to end.” The program is hosted by Hope Builders International. The conference cost is $600 including room and board. Some sponsorship help will be available. More information, conference news and an application form can be found at www.forgelife.org or by writing to Lance Thollander at: lance@hope-builders.org.

Important Immigration Information

Important Reminder About the Online Academic Credit Restriction:
Please be reminded that federal immigration regulations do not permit F-1 student visa holders to count more than one online/distance education class or three online/distance education credit hours per semester toward the full-time status requirement. If you had a semester where you tried to take more than one/distance education online class or more than three online/distance education 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.

Important Note: For immigration purposes any course/credits that do not require a student’s physical attendance for course completion are considered to be “distance education” courses/credits.

Change of Address Reporting Reminder:
To report a change of address, ALL currently enrolled F-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
Important Note: Failure to report a change of address to Regent in a timely manner can result in immigration problems for you, so please take care of this important matter!

Spring 2013 SEVIS Reporting Reminder:
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 SEVP (Student Exchange Visitor Program)/DHS (Department of Homeland Security) 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 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 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 through SEVIS with respect to the current status of the student (such as change of major, CPT authorizations, OPT recommendations, etc).

Students who violate their immigration status are not eligible for any grace periods in order to prepare for departure from the United States and are expected to depart the country immediately. If you have any questions, please contact the OISS.

F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations:
Employment is considered to be the rendering of service for compensation--financial or other. The five general types of employment benefits available to F-1 students who have maintained lawful F-1 status are: On-campus Employment, Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), 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. Dependents 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 immigration 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 15 at 12 p.m. (SC, 252).

Spring 2013 OISS Immigration Information Sessions:
The OISS Spring 2013 Information Session Calendar was mailed to all students in January. It is also located on the OISS website under “Newsletters and Information Sessions”: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/iss_news_cal.cfm

All times and dates for the Spring 2013 sessions are included. May 2013 F-1 student graduates who wish to apply for OPT should check the calendar for the OPT session dates and details. 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 months of January & February are as follows:

► F-1 Student Optional Practical Training Employment Benefit (Mandatory for all F-1 students who plan to apply for OPT this Spring)
  - Friday, January 18, 12:00 p.m.
  - Thursday, February 07, 1:00 p.m.

► Overview of Employment Rules & Options for F-1 Students
  - Friday, February 15, 12:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Room 252, Student Center