January - February 2014

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 Monday-Friday, between 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  Graduate Assistant
(Until 2/4/2014)  (Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays)
(757) 352-4130  (757) 352-4951
ljohnson@regent.edu  brinpat@mail.regent.edu

►After Leeanne’s departure from Regent on 2/4/2014, please send your immigration questions and requests to:
--Carolyn Hughes, Executive Director of Student Services
chughes@regent.edu, AND
--Jamie Brennan, DSO & Assistance Director
Office of Student Activities & Leadership (OSAL)
brennan@regent.edu

Library Book Club with International Students:

Message from the University Library: “Greetings International Students!
The Library Book Club invites you to participate in our lively discussions about literature from around the world. This month, we are reading Pulitzer Prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake about the immigrant experience, clash of cultures, and tangled ties between generations. You may join us on Jan. 30th at noon in person or in Google+ Hangouts. For more information, please see the Library blog. Happy reading!”

Welcome New Student, Son Tung!

The OISS was delighted to welcome 1 new international student to the Regent campus for the Spring 2014 semester. Son Tung “Samuel” Vu is from Vietnam and will be studying Law. Please help to offer a warm Regent welcome to Samuel when you see him on campus!

January & February Birthdays!

Congratulations and blessings to the following students who are celebrating their birthdays in January and February:

Ezekiella Sam-Amaga
Meng-Fei Li

Cold Weather Tips!

The OISS has added a new handout on “Cold Weather Tips” to our office website, among several other new handouts to help assist with your adjustment to the United States. Click here to view the new handouts: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/currentstudents.cfm.

Topics included in the January-February 2014 OISS newsletter are as follows:

General Information:
--Office Hours & Staff Information
--Library Book Club
--Welcome, Son Tung!
--January-February Birthdays
--Cold Weather Tips
--Outgoing Student Messages
--Cold Weather Tips
--Email Messages from OISS
--Update from Career Services

Important Tax Filing & 8843 Information:
--Watch Your Mail
--8843 Forms
--Tax Filing Assistance Software

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events:
--Getting Involved & Student Fellowship
--Spring 2014 “Global Cuisine @ the Ordinary”

Important Immigration Information:
--Important Reminder About Online Credit Restriction
--Change of Address Reminder
--Spring 14 SEVIS Reporting Reminder
--F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations
--Spring 2014 Information Sessions

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
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. If you are an F-1 international student and you are not receiving the biweekly email messages from the OISS, please contact Leanne Johnson immediately at: ljjohnson@regent.edu. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Update from Career Services:
“Regent University Career Services has expanded our online global resources for our students and alumni. We now have access to Goinglobal -- a database that provides H-1B employment resources, country specific guides, employer directories for over 100,000 multinational organizations in a variety of industries. Come and set-up an appointment with a Career Services Coach to learn more about this tool and our other career resources to launch your career platform. Visit your Career Services Office at Student Center (SC) 218, www.regent.edu/cs or call us at 757-352-4926.”

Important Tax Filing & 8843 Information:
► Watch Your Mail for Important Tax Forms (W-2 & 1042-S Forms):
All students who were employed in 2013 and/or received taxable scholarship funds in 2013 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, 2014) for those who were employed and earned taxable wages (money earned through employment, internships and assistantships) and/or received taxable scholarship funds in 2013. The FEDERAL filing deadline will be mid-June (June 16, 2014) for those who received non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds in 2013.

► Students who WORKED in the United States at any time during the year 2013 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 TAXABLE scholarship/fellowship/grant funds in 2013 might receive a “1042-S form”, but these forms will not be issued until mid-March. (According to Regent’s Business Office, no 1042-S Forms will need to be issued by Regent this year but some of you might receive a 1042-S if you are receiving taxable scholarship funds from other agencies/organizations.)

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. More important details will be provided in the March, 2014 OISS newsletter. This is just a heads-up on what to look for in your mail!

► 8843 Forms MUST be Filed by ALL F-1 Students & F-2 Dependents Who Were Physically Present in the United States in the Year 2013:
ALL F-1 international students & F-2 dependents who were physically present in the United States during the year 2013 are expected to complete a FEDERAL 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 & F-2 dependents who were physically present in the U.S. in 2013.)

►For students who received U.S. income and/or taxable scholarship funds in 2013, the 8843 form should be filed ALONG WITH the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms by April 15, 2014.

►For students who did NOT receive any type of U.S. income, or any taxable scholarship funds in 2013, the 8843 form should be filed BY ITSELF by June 16, 2014.

The 8843 form can be completed through a special international student tax filing software (called “GLACIER Tax Prep”—see next message for details), 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:

►Tax Filing Assistance Software:
As many of you know, the Student Services Office has purchased a special international student tax filing software (GLACIER Tax Prep) in the past that our international students have used to complete their FEDERAL taxes. This year, F-1 students--who have lived in the United States for 5 years or less--will be able to apply for a password directly from the software company, so Student Services has not purchased the software this year. The name of the software is called “GLACIER Tax Prep.” Regent staff members are not qualified/permitted to assist students with their individual tax filing/forms/questions, so please consider taking advantage of this special software. The software was created especially for foreign citizens who are unfamiliar with U.S. tax filing procedures. Information about the GLACIER Tax Prep’s Individual License can be found on this web page:
http://www.arcticintl.com/gtp_individual.asp

The cost for the individual use is $34. (NOTE: If you do not wish 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.)

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events

Getting Involved & 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. In July, 2012 the University’s international programming (including the International Student Orientations) was transferred from the OISS to OSAL. For the activities/events offered by OSAL, please check the weekly Regent Upcoming Events (RUE) on Wednesdays, or visit the OSAL website found here:
http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/student_activities_and_leadership/home.cfm Other Regent offices offer social, cultural, and spiritual events for student fellowship, such as the programming that is done by the Resident Assistants (R.A.s) in the Regent Commons (Student Housing), Campus Ministries also 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 programs and activities, 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
- Mr. Jason Peaks, Director of Campus Ministries 352-4295, jasope1@regent.edu
- Regent Commons Office, 352-4890
Spring 2014
“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 2014 semester:
February 19 (Black History Month): Senegal (Rwanda)
March 19: Bermuda
April 16: Tajikistan

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

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. Your U.S. address should be listed as your “Permanent” address in Genisys. It is each student’s important responsibility to make sure your current U.S. address is listed correctly in Genisys during web-registration periods.

►If your address changes OUTSIDE of the web-registration periods/during the middle of the semester or summer, 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 OISS:
http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/information_change.cfm
►For questions on how to update your address in Genisys, please contact the Registrar’s Office: 757-352-4038.

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 in a timely manner!

Spring 2014 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).

► All F-1 students must make sure you have your correct addresses listed in Genisys at all times and that you are enrolled full-time by the first day of classes every semester without exceeding the online credit restriction. 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**. Students who violate their immigration status may have problems obtaining a visa to visit the United States in the future and may likely experience problems/delays at U.S. Ports of Entry if a visa is granted after a status violation. 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/authorizations 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” unless they have Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization. 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, please contact Carolyn Hughes (chughes@regent.edu) or Jamie Brennan (jbrennan@regent.edu) after 2/4/2014.

**Spring 2014 Immigration Information Sessions:**

The OISS Spring 2014 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](http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/iss_news_cal.cfm)

Please contact Carolyn Hughes in Student Services at chughes@regent.edu for any questions you might have about the remaining sessions listed for Spring 2014.