

January/February, 2009

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 (for those who do not have an appointment) 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. Please see the important reminder below regarding the OISS Director's Medical Leave in January. Thank you for helping us serve you!

Office Staff

J. Leanne Johnson
Director
352-4130
ljohnson@regent.edu

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

OISS Director's Medical Leave:

This notice serves as a reminder from several OISS email messages that the OISS Director, Leanne Johnson, will be **out of the office for a Medical Leave from Wednesday, January 14, 2009 until early February**. All F-1 and J-1 student visa holders were advised to plan accordingly and to submit their immigration requests to the OISS before the December 12, 2008 deadline so that all requests could be processed before Leanne's leave. For non-immigration related assistance during Leanne's absence, please contact Ms. Carolyn Hughes, Assistant to the Vice President for Student Services, at 352-4103 or chughes@regent.edu.



NEW International Student Handbook Now on OISS Website:

NEW

If you haven't done so already, be sure to review the NEW International Student Handbook which was created especially for you! The handbook can be found at this link on the main page of the OISS website under "Feature Information": <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/> During her year and a half in the OISS, Leah Taylor (previous OISS GA), worked hard to research and compile this comprehensive new resource guide. Just a few of the topics included in the handbook are as follows: U.S. Culture, Culture Shock, Housing, Transportation, Dining, Banking & Check Writing, Staying Connected, etc. *The OISS truly hopes you find the new handbook useful, and we welcome your feedback.*



Topics included in the January/February, 2009 OISS newsletter are as follows:

General Information

- Office Hours & Staff Information
- OISS Director's Medical Leave
- NEW International Student Handbook
- Weekly OISS Emails
- January & February Birthdays
- Student News & Announcements
- Farewell from Leah Taylor
- Greeting from Olumuyiwa Okunlola
- Office of Community Life
- Car Buying Assistance
- Important Tax Filing Information (Tax Forms, Tax Filing Software, & The 8843 Form)

Immigration Information

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- On-Line Academic Credit Restrictions
- Change of Address Reporting Reminder
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- F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations
- Warning About Voice-Over Work at CBN
- Program Completion Forms Needed from May Graduates

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- Student Runner-Up, Ms. Emily Hervey
- Staff Runner-Up, Ms. Crystal Walton

Getting Involved

- ISO Board Positions & Spring Elections
- OISS Immigration 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

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 Leanne Johnson immediately at: ljohnson@regent.edu. Thanks very much, in advance, for your prompt attention to this important matter.

January & February Birthdays:

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

*Kola Aiyedogbon
So-Young Ahn
Jonathan Ayee
Rachel Blisson*

*Nian Huang
Yohane Kina
Olumuyiwa Okunlola
Sarah Purnell*



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

*Elizabeth Anderson
Michael Brown
Andrey Kovalev*

*Kangming Ma
Edith Prakash
Yujie Yao*

Student News/Announcements for the OISS Newsletter:



Students who would like to submit special news or announcements to the OISS newsletter can do so by completing the special Newsletter Submission Form, which has been added to the OISS website. Such news may include the **birthday** of a family member who is here in the U.S. with you, the **appointment to a certain position on campus** (such as COGS senator), news about a **special award, the birth of a child, etc.** The form can be found on this page of the OISS website: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/iss_news_cal.cfm

Farewell Message from OISS GA Leah Joy Taylor:

Hello my international family! I've enjoyed the time spent with you, and have been glad to serve you however I could. I will miss this unique opportunity to enjoy so many cultures in one place! However, I am excited about completing this time of training and moving on to my next season. Some of you already know what I'll be doing, but for those of you who don't let me tell you why each day I have a bigger and bigger smile on my face! After I complete my MBA in the School of Global Leadership and Entrepreneurship, I am going to begin work with a human rights organization in India. Then in May, my fiancée and I are getting married! I am very happy about these future steps and I look forward with joyful expectation to all that the Lord has in store. I know that God has wonderful plans for all of you, and I am privileged to have met you!



Welcome, Muiyiwa!

Hello, my brothers and sisters, I am heir to this wonderful opportunity to serve you all. If my experience in the U.S. has taught me anything it is that having the extra eye to look out for you as an international student is a great blessing. I am honored to serve in that capacity at the Office of International Student Services. I have just completed my second semester in the School of Divinity, and I begin my joint degree with the School of Education this spring. I am looking to the future with anticipation because God is full of surprises and I trust that He will use me in this position to help you make your stay here as comfortable and as smooth as possible. I also hope I can be a good example of diligence and integrity for the sake of every one of you who identifies and rejoices with me over this position. For all your hearty congratulations, thanks and God bless you all.



Message from Mr. Roger Cheeks, New Director of the *OFFICE of COMMUNITY LIFE*

“The Director of Community Life serves to enhance student involvement through programs, student organizations, leadership opportunities, and experiences for students that allow for the practical application of what is learned in the classroom and as the key facilitator of community life for on-campus, online and commuter students. My key functions include development of a vibrant community life among university students with an emphasis on student learning and character development. The department's mission is to assist Regent students to mature as Christians, to become critical thinking citizens, and *to enhance the growth of student character, spirituality, personal well-being, and leadership skills.*”

--Roger Cheeks, Director of Community Life ~
rogeche@regent.edu 757-352-4486.

(Special Note: Some of the recent programs and activities sponsored by the Office of Community Life include the trips to the Neptune Festival and Holiday Light Display at Virginia Beach; the Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration at the Regent Ordinary; and the coordination of various community volunteer opportunities. For questions, please contact Mr. Cheeks at the number provided above.)

Car Buying Assistance:



Mr. Chuck Laird is an area entrepreneur and member of Kempsville Presbyterian Church. For years he has assisted area international students with the car buying experience. If you are considering the purchase of a car and would like some good tips and assistance in knowing what to look for in a car, what to watch out for, and the pricing of a car, please feel free to contact Mr. Laird. He can be reached by phone at 481-0268 or by email at: csljr@verizon.net.

Important Tax Filing Information:

► Watch Your Mail for Important Tax Forms (W-2s and 1042S Forms):

Students who worked in the United States at any time during the year 2008 should be receiving some tax forms in the mail from their employers over the next several weeks. The type of forms that you

might receive are called “W-2” forms. Students who received scholarship or fellowship grant funds in 2008 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 U.S. tax filing deadline is not until mid-April and many more details will be provided in the March, 2009 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 \$10 per person. The software is called “**CINTAX Complete International Tax Preparation Software**”. The \$10 software fee is waived for new students who attended the Spring, 08 and Fall, 08 International Student Orientations 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 early March. The software company is still sending the school information about this year's software program and the Payroll Office has until mid-March, 2009 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 check your email messages in February 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 around \$100-150.)



► **8843 Forms (Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals With a Medical Condition) Must be Filed by All F-1 & J-1 Students Who Were in the United States in 2008:**

ALL international students who were physically present in the United States during the year 2008 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 2008, the 8843 form should be filed by itself. **The 8843 form can be completed through the special international student tax filing software (CINTAX) which was purchased by the OISS.**

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, contact the current ISO board at iso@regent.edu.

OISS Immigration Information 
Sessions for the Spring, 09 Semester:

The OISS Spring, 09 Information Session Calendar is included in this newsletter mailing and has been added to the OISS website under “Newsletters and Information Sessions”. All times and dates for the Spring, 09 sessions are included. May, 2009 graduates who wish to apply for OPT this spring should check the calendar for the mandatory OPT session dates and details. Upcoming sessions for the month of February are as follows:

- **F-1 Student Optional Practical Training (OPT)**
 - Friday, February 6, 12 p.m., 252 Student Center
 - Thursday, February 12th, 3 p.m., 252 Student Center

- **F-1 Student Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**
 - Friday, February 19th, 3 p.m., 252 Student Center

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events



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 2009-2010 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. Toward the end of the spring semester, the current ISO board will hold a special “Garden Party” where the candidates for the 2009-2010 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



Important Immigration Information



Warning about Form I-515/ 30 Day Admission Notice:

Any students who recently reentered the United States and received an I-515 at the Port of Entry should contact the OISS **immediately**. An I-515 allows you to stay in the United States for 30 days only and must be processed immediately. If you have an I-515, please call the OISS (352-4130) to arrange an immediate appointment and bring your passport, I-20/DS-2019, I-94 card, and the I-515 with you. Failure to take care of this in a timely manner could result in serious immigration problems including your inability to continue your studies at Regent.



Important Reminder to All Students About the On-line Academic Credit Restrictions:

Please be reminded that USCIS regulations do not permit F-1 student visa holders to count more than one on-line class or three on-line credit hours per semester toward the full-time status requirement. **If you had a semester where you tried to take more than one on-line class or three 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.



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 web-registration periods, 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, 09 SEVIS Reporting:

As a reminder to all F-1 and J-1 students with I-20s and DS-2019s, 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 start date of the student's next 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 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.** 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 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 “Employment Rules and Options for F-1 Students” on Friday, March 6 at 12 p.m. (SC, 252)

Warning About Voice-Over Work at CBN:



Please be reminded that the on-campus employment benefit does NOT cover work done/services provided at CBN. If a company/organization normally pays/reimburses a person for a service they provide, such as the case with the voice-over work at CBN, then that is considered to be employment from an immigration perspective, even if the person is only given a gift card instead of a pay check. **F-1 and J-1 student visa holders do not have employment authorization to assist with voice-over work at CBN as a part of the “on-campus” employment benefit and should not participate in voice-overs unless they have**

discussed the details with the OISS and have received prior written authorization for off-campus employment to cover this type of work. Failure to consult with the OISS can result in a serious violation of your lawful immigration status, so please be mindful of this critical matter.



Program Completion Forms Needed from May Graduates:

All F-1 and J-1 student visa holders who are graduating in May, 2009 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 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. The Program Completion Form can be found at this link on the OISS web site: <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm>

OISS Newsletter Article Contest Student Runner-Up

“Home”
by Emily Hervey



When meeting someone for the first time, the second or third question is almost always, “Where are you from?” For me that answer may vary based on who I’m talking with and how much they actually want to know. I could claim I am from Walla Walla, Washington, my most recent place of residence, or Arizona where my parents currently live (despite never living there myself). For someone more internationally minded I might say Punta Arenas, at the tip of South America, and comment on how I was the first American to be born that far south. Chile was the longest time spent in one place, but many memories have faded after leaving at a young age. If my new acquaintance is at all

OISS Newsletter Article Contest Faculty/Staff Runner-Up:

“Collision of Reflections” by Crystal Walton



interested, it might not feel right to leave out California, where my parents are from and I've lived more than once, and perhaps Kazakhstan, which was “home” for over three years while growing up. But no one place feels truly like “home.” It's a more mobile, ever-changing concept, which I experience in bits and pieces when around family or others who share a similar background of growing up around the world.

Legally, I'm an American citizen, despite having spent the majority of my life in other countries. Culturally, I'm a chameleon, blending in to various cultures, but never fully a part of any. I have memories of singing the Chilean national anthem, dancing the cueca, and eating empanadas on September 18. I remember celebrating Thanksgiving, even in years on the other side of the world from the US, where turkeys were not available. And then there were the two New Year's Days, the biggest holidays of the year in Kazakhstan. For Russians the New Year began on January 1st, as they welcomed Grandfather Frost and decorated a tree that had nothing to do with Christmas. Kazaks celebrated Nauriz on March 22, the beginning of Spring, with the nomadic yurts set up in the center of the city, generous servings of “bishparmak” to be eaten with your fingers, enough tea to fill the Caspian Sea, and a blackened sheep's head presented to the most honored guest. These holidays are all part of my culture, yet every year a significant day will pass by and those around me will never think twice. Why would Americans know about a Chilean Independence day? Why should Kazaks remember pilgrims surviving on a continent they'd never visited? But on those days I remember when I was in *that* “home.”

My international experience has done much to define who I am. It has broadened my worldview and allowed me to relate others from many cultures, often in sharing the experience of being foreign. But one thing I frequently notice crosses all cultural barriers is sharing the love of God. Just as the Bible states there is neither Jew nor Gentile; our faith trumps many other differences, for we “are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household” (Ephesians 2:19). When surrounded by others worshipping God, even in languages I don't understand, I catch a glimpse of what I know will be my true home forever. While moving from place to place, I have become much more aware of how temporary “home” is while on this earth. And I'm reminded that heaven will be more international than anything else I've ever known, with people from every place I've ever called home.

Is it possible to return to a life in America, I wondered, and view the world from the same perspective? My plane ride home was internally turbulent as I sifted through the reflections of my time in Africa. Beneath the layers of excitement from new experiences, I sensed the presence of something tucked quietly and yet imminently in my heart. Recounting the moments of my short stay in Malawi, I began to ask why is it that at the culmination of an amazing journey I am struck by a feeling that I cannot explain. Perhaps it is because the beauty of God's creation had absolutely taken my breath away. Words fail to justly describe the scenes that captivated my eyes in this foreign land. Perhaps it is because my world was suddenly confronted with the vast numbers of children who know no other life than one bounded by the confinements of impoverished dreams marked by realities of ragged clothes, pervasive disease, and chronic hunger. And yet these very children's faces still find smiles to share with me. Perhaps it is because I have seen the life present within the depths of their eyes, searching earnestly for truth and clinging to the unspoken hope of believing they are loved. Perhaps it is because I find myself reckoning with the inescapable conviction that I would shortly be returning to a rich and abundant life of which I enormously take for granted. The precepts of my missions textbooks and classroom instruction suddenly collided with the experiences of reality. A faceless crowd envisioned during generalized prayers for the nations was now colored with memories of distinct faces of people whose hands I have shaken, laughter I have heard, and whose lives have unknowingly touched mine. My preconceived agenda of expecting to change lives was strikingly met with the realization that it was my own life, indeed, that was changed. I realized then the origin of this pressing feeling in my heart – as God expanded the borders of my heart, I sensed the beckoning of a call to view the world through the eyes its Creator and to submit myself to the fingerprints of a life changed forever.