

March, 2009

General Information



Important Student Housing Notice:

A friendly reminder from Regent University Student Housing that non-students may not reside in campus housing assignments (in Regent Commons or Regent Village). For this reason, international students who are graduating this May or are currently on post-completion OPT must vacate their campus housing assignments no later than July 31st, 2009. If this applies to you and you have not already submitted a notice to vacate by July 31st, 2009 please contact Ryan Brown, Director of Student Housing, at rbrown@regent.edu or 352-4898 as soon as possible.

Time to Spring Forward:



Daylight savings time is just around the corner, which means the days are about to get longer! Don't forget to turn your clocks forward one hour before bedtime on Saturday, March 7th!

International Student Handbooks:



Printed copies of the newly created International Student Handbook are now available for pick-up at the Office of International Student Services (OISS). The handbook will serve as a helpful resource guide for your entire stay in the U.S. and includes information on American Culture, Culture Shock, Banking & Money Management, Shopping, Dining, Transportation, etc. For those who have not done so already, we are requesting that all visa holders stop by the front desk of the Student Services Office (Student Center 201) to collect your free copy as soon as possible.

New Health Insurance



Procedures--Waiver Requests Now Required Each Fall Term:

Beginning Fall 2009, all international students who do not wish to be charged for the University Student Health Insurance plan (AETNA) will be required to apply for a Health Insurance Waiver and must provide proof of acceptable health insurance which meets the university's requirements to the Director of Student Life at the beginning of every fall semester. Current pricing and details regarding the AETNA plan can be found online at: http://www.regent.edu/admin/busoff/student_insurance.cfm More details regarding the Health Insurance Waiver Request process will be included in the April/May OISS Newsletter. This requirement is being implemented to assist international students by confirming health care coverage at the start of each academic year. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Wendi Santee at 757-352-4867.

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- Attention May Graduates
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Presented by:

**Office of International Student Services (OISS)
Regent University
201 Student Center**

(757) 352-4130 / www.regent.edu/oiss

Walk-in hours (No appointment necessary): 2-5p.m., Mon-Fri.

March Birthdays



Congratulations and blessings to the following students who have birthdays in March:

Feyisara Alayande
Nobue Kunito
Robin Evans Mulima
Sorin Petan

Stuart Hiddema
Chelsea Thoms
Gooreka Okahaabwa
Elvia Damaris Salinas

Congratulations UGs



Congratulations to the following undergraduate students for continued outstanding academic achievement and recognition in the Fall, 2008 Regent University Dean's List:

Hanisha Besant, Psychology
Frieder Dappen, Government

H-1B Related Information Available in the OISS:



The OISS has some leftover information packets from the Information Session on "Life After OPT" (H-1B Temporary Worker Visas, TN and R-1 status), which was presented by Mr. Art Serratelli, Esq. in the Fall, 08 semester. Please stop by during office walk-in hours (2-5 p.m.) if you would like to collect a packet for yourself.

Spring Break & the OISS:

While the Spring Break is scheduled for Monday, March 2 – Sunday March 8, all University offices, including the OISS, will remain open. **Our walk-in hours (without an appointment) are from 2-5 p.m.** Morning hours are reserved for appointments. For some of you, this may be a time to take a break from your busy schedules, for others it is time to take a trip and relax. Whatever you plan to do during this time, please know that the OISS staff is available to assist and to answer any questions you may have.

Tax Filing Information & Assistance



► 8843 Forms Must be Filed by All F-1 and 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" for the FEDERAL government --regardless of whether or not you received any U.S. income, scholarship, or grant funds in 2008. (The 8843 form 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 and J-1 students who were physically present in the United States in 2008.) The 8843 form can be completed through the special international student tax filing software called "CINTAX", which was purchased by the OISS especially for your use. (See page 3 for details on how to apply for a CINTAX password.) **However, the 8843 is a very simple and basic form that you should be able to complete on your own in just a few minutes without CINTAX.** Failure to file the 8843 form could potentially result in problems with any future applications for U.S. Permanent Residency or Citizenship. You can go to the IRS website and print and complete the form yourself: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf; or you can apply for a CINTAX password in the Student Services Office (SC201) to assist you with the 8843 form completion. **Please see page 3 for the 8843 filing deadline and mailing address.** You can also visit www.irs.gov for details.

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



Students who worked in the United States at any time during the year 2008 should have received some tax forms in the mail from their employers. One form that you might have received is called the "W-2" form. The W-2 shows how much money you earned in 2008 and how much money was withheld in taxes. Other students who received scholarship or fellowship grant funds in 2008 are likely to receive a 1042-S form. The 1042-S shows

how much money you received in 2008 and how much money was withheld in taxes (if applicable). The W-2s were mailed in January, but the 1042-S forms were not mailed until late-February.



► W-2 Forms, 1042-S Forms, and 1040NR/NR-EZ Forms:



Students who received a W-2 form or a 1042-S form in the mail may need to file a 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ for FEDERAL tax filing purposes and can use the **CINTAX** software to assist them with the filing of those FEDERAL forms. **The CINTAX software will help you determine whether or not you need to file a 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ and which of the two forms you should use.** See the message called “Interesting Statistics....” on page 4 for last year’s refund details!



► Tax Filing Assistance Software Purchased by OISS for International Students:

The OISS has purchased a special tax filing software which our international students can use for a low cost of \$15 per person. The software is called “**CINTAX Complete International Tax Preparation Software**” and will assist you with the filing of the FEDERAL 8843 and 1040NR/1040NR-EZ forms. (CINTAX does not assist with STATE tax filing.) The **CINTAX** software was created especially for foreign citizens who are completely unfamiliar with U.S. tax filing procedures. **The \$15 software fee is waived for new students who attended the Spring, 08 or Fall, 08 International Student Orientation because the cost was included in the orientation fee.** Regent staff members are not permitted/qualified to assist students with their individual tax filing, forms, and questions, so be sure to take advantage of the **CINTAX** software which the OISS has purchased for your use. 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. This may cost approximately \$100-150. Some companies that assist with tax filing include:

- H&R Block: (757) 523-2356
- Liberty Tax Filing: (757) 467-5020
- Jackson Hewitt Tax Service: (757) 523-2500

► Importance of Photocopies:

All students should make a photocopy of each tax form that you complete for your personal records before you mail them to the IRS and the Virginia Commissioner of Revenue. You should keep the copies for at least 3 years and use them as examples for after you graduate/return home because you may need to file taxes at that time. **Students who complete a STATE Income Tax Return** will need to make an additional photocopy of the completed 8843 and FEDERAL Income Tax Return (1040NR or 1040NR-EZ) to mail along with your STATE return. This is important! (Details on Virginia STATE tax filing are on page 4.)

► Deadlines & Mailing Address for the FEDERAL 8843 & 1040NR/1040NR-EZ Forms:



► For F-1 and J-1 students who were employed and earned taxable wages (money earned through employment, internships and assistantships)-**AND for students who received taxable scholarships, fellowship or grant funds:** The 8843 form should be filed together with the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms, **and the filing DEADLINE is April 15, 2009.**

► For F-1 and J-1 students who received non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds: The 8843 form should be filed together with the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ forms, **and the filing DEADLINE is June 15, 2009.**

► For F-1 and J-1 students who did NOT receive any taxable or non-taxable wages, income, scholarship/fellowship/grant funds in 2007, but were physically present in the United States in 2008: The 8843 form should be filed, by itself, **and the filing DEADLINE is June 15, 2009.**

SPECIAL NOTE: If you are uncertain about whether you received taxable or non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds, then it is best to file your taxes by the April 15, 2009 deadline.

► The **Mailing Address** for the FEDERAL 8843, 1040NR, and 1040NR-EZ forms is:

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215

CINTAX Software Password Registration —FRONT DESK, Student Services Office



Starting Friday, March 6th:

Passwords for the special international student tax filing software (**CINTAX**) will be available at the **front desk** of the Student Services Office (201 Student Center) starting on Friday, March 6 after 1 p.m. For NEW students who attended the Spring, 08 or Fall, 08 International Student Orientations there is no cost to use **CINTAX** this year. The cost for all other international students is \$15. Checks for the **CINTAX** software passwords should be made payable to: “Regent University”.

Students who are not in the local/Virginia Beach Area and cannot apply for a **CINTAX** password in person must:

--Send an email to Leeanne (ljohnson@regent.edu) to note their intention to purchase a **CINTAX** password;

--Make the \$15 check payable to “Regent University” and note on the check that it is for “**CINTAX**”.

--Mail their \$15 check to: OISS, Attn: Leeanne Johnson; Regent University, SC 201; 1000 Regent University Drive; Virginia Beach, VA 23464.

► Interesting Statistics from Last Year on FEDERAL Tax Refunds from IRS:

According to reports received from **CINTAX**, there were approximately 25 Regent students who completed FEDERAL tax returns through **CINTAX** last year. 16 out of 25 students received a “refund” from the IRS, and the average refund amount was approximately \$248!!! *How will YOU spend your refund this year?*



► Virginia STATE Tax Filing Information (Form 760/760PY)

Students who were employed in 2008 and received taxable wages (money earned from employment, internships, or assistantships), and students who received non-taxable wages (including money received from scholarships, grants, fellowships, dividend funds, etc.) would need to complete the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ before they can determine whether or not they will need to file a Virginia STATE Income Tax Return. Rules regarding Virginia STATE tax filing were provided by the Virginia Beach Commissioner of Revenue’s Office and are as follows:

Residents (including dependents and students) must file an individual Virginia STATE income tax return if:

- Single, & Virginia adjusted gross income is \$11,250 or more
- Married, filing a joint or combined return, and total Virginia adjusted gross income for both spouses is \$22,500 or more
- Married, filing a separate return, & Virginia adjusted gross income is \$11,250 or more

Virginia adjusted gross income is your federal adjusted gross income (which can be found on the FEDERAL 1040NR/1040NR-EZ income tax return once you complete that form) plus any Virginia additions, minus the Age Deduction and any Virginia subtractions. Complete lines 1-9 of Form 760 to compute your Virginia adjusted gross income. Virginia adjusted gross income does not include standard or itemized deductions, the child and dependent care expense deduction, personal exemptions, or other deductions from income.

Nonresidents with income from Virginia sources are subject to the same filing requirements as residents. This means that the filing threshold for a nonresident is determined by Virginia adjusted gross income computed as a resident (see line 10 of Form 763), including income from all sources. The filing threshold for a nonresident cannot be based solely on income from Virginia sources.

Part-Year Residents are also subject to the same filing requirements as residents. In computing Virginia adjusted gross income for a part-year resident (see line 10 of Form 760PY), the Virginia subtractions include the subtraction for income received while living in another state.


Special Note: If you worked in Virginia and had Virginia withholding you should file a return to get all of your withholding back, even if you are under the filing threshold.

For students who live in Virginia Beach, the 760/760PY Virginia STATE Income Tax Forms should be mailed with a copy of the 8843 and a copy of your complete FEDERAL Income Tax Return (1040NR/1040NR-EZ) to this address:

Commissioner of Revenue
2401 Courthouse Drive, Bldg. #1
Virginia Beach, VA 23456-9002

► The STATE Tax Filing DEADLINE is: May 1, 2009 ◀

For more information you can go to the Virginia Department of Taxation website @ <http://www.tax.virginia.gov/index.cfm>

► **Assistance with STATE Tax Filing** 
Assistance for the STATE Income Tax Filing can be obtained through the Virginia Beach Commissioner of Revenue's Office at: 2401 Courthouse Drive Building #1 in Virginia Beach. The office is open from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. and the best time to go for assistance is early morning. For further questions, please call: 385-4483.

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events

“I-Connect”: Coming Soon to the OISS Near You...

Do you enjoy helping others? Are you familiar with the Regent campus? Do you know your way around the area? Are you interested in meeting friends from around the world and serving as a peer mentor? If these questions apply to you, YOU may be the perfect person for the new I-Connect program (International Connection), which is coming soon from the OISS! Check the April/May newsletter for more details.



OISS Information Session: Overview of Employment Rules & Options for F-1



Students, Friday, March 6, 12:00 p.m., Room 252, Student Center

Employment is considered to be the rendering of services for compensation—financial or other. Working in the U.S. without proper authorization, and/or for more hours than permitted, are serious violations of the F-1 status which can lead to severe consequences, such as deportation. All F-1 international students who are considering employment in the U.S. are encouraged to attend this session, which will cover the five types of employment options available to them as well as the rules and regulations for working in the U.S. If you are interested in working in the U.S. we look forward to seeing you at this session! *Special Note: Self-employment is not permitted for F-1 students, and F-2 dependents are not permitted to work in the U.S. under any circumstances.*

OISS Trip to Williamsburg-- Saturday, March 21:



The OISS will be sponsoring a trip to Colonial Williamsburg this March which will be free to all Regent international student visa holders!

Williamsburg is located in the middle of Richmond and Virginia Beach and is about 1 hour away by car. Spaces are limited and will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please be sure to check your weekly/Friday emails from the OISS for more details. The trip is open to students first and foremost. Any remaining spaces will then be advertised for family members. **The date for this trip is Saturday, March 21.** If you are interested in attending, please email Leanne at: ljohnson@regent.edu.

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. A possible Public Relations position may added to the board for next year as well. 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, April 14** 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 and 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. **The election for the 2009-2010 ISO board positions will be held on Tuesday, April 21.** For more information, contact the current ISO board at iso@regent.edu.

News & Events from the International Student Organization (ISO)



► Helpful Tips from ISO:

International students face many hidden challenges that are often overlooked. For some, English as a second language is a major challenge, whereas, for some making new friends in a new environment seems to be the most intimidating thing possible. However, Regent University provides many tools to aid such students.

Studying in a new system can be overwhelming. Many international students complain about the amount of reading material that has to be covered. One helpful tool provided by Regent are speed-reading lessons provided by the Center for Student Development (CSD). The monthly newsletter sent out to all students provides information about when and where these sessions are held.

Furthermore, studying can be a lot more fun and meaningful if there is a rapport between you and your professor. Professors have a wealth of experience and knowledge, and by God's grace, we have excellent professors who are ever willing to help. The office hours of your professors are usually mentioned in your course syllabi. Do take time to visit them and discuss issues with them. Paying close attention to what your instructor says helps a lot in taking notes and understanding the key aspects of your course material.

Where making friends are concerned, remember that the International Student Organization (ISO) is always there for you. We are here to build community, help you socialize in a comfortable environment, and encourage spiritual as well as academic growth. ISO is more like a family than an organization. We genuinely care for our members and are constantly working towards making Regent a great experience for Internationals. If you would like to submit a prayer request, you can do so in the ISO suggestion box located outside the ISO office. You can also join ISO on Facebook. For more information and events organized by ISO, visit www.regent.edu/iso

► Other News from ISO & Upcoming Events:



- 1) **ISO Constitution Changes:** ISO is working hard on updating its constitution. All "Regular Members" will be voting online for the changes in a few weeks.
- 2) **ISO Chapel, Friday, February 27, 2009:** Our next ISO chapel will be held on **27th February, Friday from noon to 1pm in the Library Auditorium.** Craig von Buseck will be ISO's special speaker. Craig is Ministries Director for CBN.com. His passion is to share the truth of the Gospel through the media and he will be sharing a message titled 'Acts to Preach the Gospel'. Craig will also lead in a time of prophetic ministry. So if you want a word from God, be there with your friends and family!

3) **Spiritual Diversity Celebration, April 1, 2009:**

Mark your calendars for the biggest cultural event of the year! The "Spiritual Diversity Celebration" will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. ISO and COGS will join forces in coordinating this campus-wide event which will feature an International Worship Service; Global Fashion Show; and Cultural Presentations from various international students. This is a great opportunity for you to present your country and your culture to the entire Regent community! **If you are interested in participating in the fashion show, in the chapel, and/or in presenting your country through a power point presentation, please Email us by Friday, 6th March at iso@regent.edu.** Prizes will be awarded for the best costumes and presentations!!!



4) **Spring, 09 ISO Board's Office Walk-in Hours:**

Monday: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Varsha Sherring
Tuesday: 5 – 6 p.m., Hanisha Besant
Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Yohane Kina
Thursday: 2 – 4 p.m., Alejandro Arana
Friday: 5 - 6 p.m., Hanisha Besant

Thank you and look forward to seeing you at the chapel and Spiritual Diversity Celebration!

From ISO Board
2008-2009

Feature Article by Olumuyiwa Okunlola-- First Year Divinity & Education Student from Nigeria:



"Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are"

For this short piece I have adopted the words from a story used by Booker T. Washington in his Atlanta Exposition address where he encouraged first those of his race and then those of white race to consider what opportunities they might discover if they pursued friendship with each other. Booker T. Washington stands out for me as a man unwilling to let current conditions keep him from accomplishing what he knew was right. I am especially drawn to this idea of looking for opportunities to build bridges in the community where you are located. Another wise person said it this way, "Bloom where you are planted."

For me this opportunity came in an unexpected way. The week after I arrived in the US in 2003, I was knocked out by the Malaria parasite which has been hiding in my blood stream waiting for the opportune time to strike. Because I did not realize it was malaria, I ended up spending a few nights in the hospital. In the middle of one of those nights I was awakened by a nurse at the hospital who thought it necessary to let me know how she had been praying to meet an international student. She gave me her address and phone number and said I could call and come over to visit, or even go to church with them. At that time I thought it was strange but a few weeks later I braved the waters and called to indicate that I would like to go to church with her and her family.

That was the beginning of a wonderful community connection that has gotten stronger with time. I was unofficially adopted into this family and their home became the place I would run to when I wanted to get away from the pressures of school. They had a big country yard and I enjoyed helping with the care of the extensive yard. It was also fun to plop down on the couch in the Hill room and play video games with youngest of my host brothers. My host mother passed away because of Cancer on Good Friday of 2006. It was a sad time for all of us in the family but she was one of those people whom you had no doubts would be welcomed into the kingdom of God. Throughout her life she invested in so many people including me and at her death, even my host dad was fascinated to find out how many people she had touch by her kindness and generosity.

Looking back on the first night we met, I realize that I had two options—I could put down my bucket where I was and be refreshed by the peoples and circumstances around me or I could retreat in to my shell and hope to survive four years of college. I can say without a doubt today that I am glad I put my bucket down. As an international student, the challenges of adjusting to a new country, paying for a good education, and coping with a challenging education system might drive you to retreat into your shell. I encourage you to plant your feet firmly where you are and cast down your bucket and draw refreshing water from new friendships and new relationships. Cast down your bucket where you are and drink of the streams of connection and community. I think you will find the water tastes much better than you thought it would.”

Important Immigration Information



Attention May Graduates-- Program Completion Forms & On-Campus Employment:

All F-1 and J-1 students who will graduate/complete their degree programs in May must complete a “Program Completion Form” and submit it to the OISS by **March**

31, 2009. This form is available online at: www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm
F-1 and J-1 students who will complete their degrees in May, please note that your “on-campus” employment benefit and authorization will end on the last day of the Spring, 09 term, which is May 1, 2009. Please communicate your last day of work with your supervisor and sign the Resignation/Termination form to end your employment. The May 1, 2009 program end-date will be reported to USCIS through SEVIS. Those who are graduating and planning to work at Regent after May 1, 2009, as a regular or temporary employee of the University (and not as a degree-seeking student) will need to visit the Human Resources Office after you receive the EAD for post-completion OPT. You will need to complete a new I-9 “Employment Eligibility Verification” form or to update any existing I-9 forms that you submitted as a student. You will also need to show proof of proper employment authorization. For F-1 students, that would be the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) you receive when you apply for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT employment authorization allows you to work anywhere in the United States (including Regent) in a position that is “directly related” to your major field of study. Please contact the OISS for any questions you might have about this important matter.

Attention All F-1 Students-- I-20 End-Dates & Program Extensions:

Please check your F-1 program completion date (section 5) on your most recent I-20. If, for any reason, you will not complete your degree by the date listed there, **you must apply for a “Program Extension” at least 30 days before the end-date listed on the I-20.** If you qualify for an extension, a new I-20 will be issued to you with a revised program end-date. For the extension application, you will need to submit paperwork from your academic department, and you will need to show recent financial documents. **This will take several weeks to prepare, so please plan accordingly.** Students who do not request an extension at least 30 days **before** the program end-date on their I-20 could fall out of lawful F-1 immigration status and may not be able to complete their degrees. Application packets for “F-1 Program Extensions” are available at the OISS and on-line at: www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm
Please take care of this important matter as soon as possible. For questions, please call LeeAnne Johnson at 352-4130.

