

November/December 2009

OISS Newsletter

General Information

Congratulations Graduates:



Congratulations to the following international students who are expected to complete their degrees this Fall:



Hanisha Besant
Bachelor of Science

Andrey Kovalev
Master of Divinity

Nobue Kunito
Master of Art

Yujie Yao
Master of Education

While we are sad to see you go, we are proud of your achievements and appreciate your many valuable contributions to the international student and Regent communities. We wish you well in your future endeavors and look forward to hearing about the various ways in which you will be *Changing the World* as Christian Leaders! God bless you.

Farewell to Our Fall 2009



Handong Exchange Student:

The OISS would like to offer a fond farewell to our Exchange Visitor who attended Regent this year from Handong University in South Korea, **Ms. Bohyun "Abigail" Kim**. Ms. Kim was an active member of the international student community who participated in many activities and made many friends during her exchange at Regent. We will miss her kind and gentle presence on campus very much and pray for abundant blessings in all of her future endeavors.

Announcing the OISS

IEW Photo Contest:



In anticipation of International Education Week (IEW), which will be held from November 16 – 20th, the OISS is holding a special photo contest called "*God's Global Grandeur & Goodness*". Regent students, staff, & faculty are invited to submit a maximum of two photos per contestant. Winners will be announced during the first day of International Education Week on

Monday, November 16 with a \$50, \$40 and \$30 gift certificate available from Pier 1 Imports for the top 3 student winners and recognition for the top 3 staff winners. See the homepage of the OISS website to view a copy of the Photo Contest poster: www.regent.edu/oiss.

Fall 2009 OISS Monticello Trip:



On Saturday, October 24, OISS G.A., Olumuyiwa Okunlola, and several international students enjoyed a trip to Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson in the mountains above Charlottesville, Virginia. Despite the rainy weather everyone enjoyed exploring the lovely house and grounds, and the beautiful fall foliage! Included below are some comments on the trip from two student participants:

- "It was a good experience to get acquainted with American History and historical people in the season of fall with beautiful foliage. I was refreshed by the nature and the trip. Thank you for arranging this!"
- "I would definitely recommend this to international students as it is an extravagant place to experience the beauty of fall and to learn a little about a VIP."

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Feature Articles from Outgoing International Students:

The OISS enjoys receiving articles from our international students on their experiences at Regent and in the United States. Here are some feature articles from three of our students who are expected to complete their degrees or studies this Fall:



Ms. Nobue Kunito...



I am Nobue Kunito. I am enrolled in the MA counseling program. I grew up in Osaka Japan in a Buddhist family. It used to be my morning routine to offer the first scoop of the steamed rice at the altar, light the incense, and ring the bell to tell my deceased grandparents that their food is ready.

In my search for the meaning of life, the Lord saved me in my second year of college. He then led me to work for Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons thorough educational projects. Through my struggles of living in a war-torn country, I learned that the fruitfulness of the ministry is not dependent upon ministry skills but on the wholeness of the person and his/her ability to relate to others. I am grateful for the training I received at Regent. My internships in a male prison and a local non-profit counseling center have been wonderful learning experiences. I feel more equipped to help people in their journey to be the person God created them to be.

While being in Virginia Beach, I was glad to see sakura (cherry blossom) and find good sushi restaurants, but I missed Japanese toilets, which wash and blow-dry your bottom!

Master of Science Candidate, Fall 2009

Mr. Andrey Kovalev...



My name is Andrey Kovalev. I came to study at Regent from St. Petersburg, Russia in August 2006. Three and a half years of studies have passed very quickly. There were many challenges and many blessings along the road. Even though I had gained some insights on American culture

from my interactions with missionaries and friends while I lived in Russia, the actual exposure to the reality was sometimes surprising and overwhelming. Most international students have similar experiences when they come to study in America: different food, different pace of life, different language, customs, manners, etc.

For me, the most shocking (in a positive way) cross cultural difference was the diversity of American society. In Russia, we have many ethnic groups and nationalities. However, in general, the Russian society seems to be more homogeneous and uniform. Here in the United States, I could observe diversity in all aspects of life: cultural, racial, political, religious, etc. I was especially impressed to see how people respect other's opinions, traditions, and language, even those that are very

different from their own traditions. Of course, even in America once in a while I could see expressions of intolerance, but those usually were rare exceptions.

Speaking about religious diversity, I believe that Regent University is quite unique, even for America. Here one can meet people from all different Christian backgrounds: Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, etc. In spite of all their differences, students pursue education and spiritual growth focusing on things that they have in common, not on things that cause divisions and quarrels. This kind of blend creates a very special atmosphere of unity and common purpose. That is one of the major lessons I have learned during my study period at Regent University.

Master of Divinity Candidate, Fall 2009

Ms. Bohyun "Abigail" Kim...



**"Three Months at Regent:
Experiencing the LORD
Who watches over the aliens."
(Psalm 146:9)**

Hello! My name is Abigail Kim, and I am a visiting student from Handong International Law School, South Korea. I began to have interest in the exchange program at Regent University in the summer of 2008, when I participated in the International Law and Human Rights program in Strasbourg, France. During that time, I started to reflect on the fact that God let me study law, not Korean law, but that of the United States, and His good purpose was to let me serve people-- including American people--through law. However without being equipped enough to use the tool properly, I cannot serve people properly. Actually for one like me who was born, grew up, and finished my whole education in South Korea, there are certain limitations to learning American law. Since I need to overcome these limitations, and I thought that the exchange program would help me out with this, I applied to the exchange program with Regent University to learn American law in the American context, in America, with American people.

In three months of staying at Regent, I have experienced the LORD who watches over the aliens. (Psalm 146:9) God has watched over me by providing love and help through many people. I have received so many blessings through professors, students, OISS, ISO, church family, international students, Law school Women's Bible Study group, classmates, and friends. Professors and students were so gracious to me, not only because of the fact that I came from Handong. but they recognized me as one of the body of the Christ. They poured out love to me out of brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ. All the time, I felt that I did not deserve it and that it was so abundant; but at the same time, I started to recognize that it was God who poured the blessing to me through these people for the purpose of giving the blessing to others through me. Thus I decided to receive the blessing with thanks. Thank you so much!

In my classes, I have been so challenged and blessed by all my classmates. They seemed to be driven by one purpose: to learn and absorb the material. They contribute to the class to make it to move into certain directions. I have always been so thrilled to be in the classes and to be one of them. Due to my

language barriers, my personal character, and the cultural difference which causes me to refrain from speaking out, I have not been an active participant in my classes so far. I was challenged by many professors to speak out and grab the opportunities in the class room. Still it is difficult for me, but I would like to take the challenges with a grateful heart and hope to overcome the difficulties during my stay at Regent.

I would like to take this opportunity to give my thanks to all. Without the help of many people God provided in my life, I could not imagine what my life would be like. In Grace Episcopal Church, which I am attending, I was so encouraged and got help from the pastors and church members to keep going on the path given to me. Through the OISS, who became a friend to international students, including me, I have got so much help starting from settling down to grocery shopping. Thanks to their help in providing a home-like atmosphere to international students, we are able to keep concentrating on our studies. Thank you so much. Thanks also to ISO and other international students. I got comfort from them. Through the fellowship in the Law School Women's Bible Study group, I have accountable fellows to help teach me to grow up in Christ like Maria at the feet of Jesus. Thanks to my class mates, I have been inspired, challenged, and have gotten help to study. Lastly, thanks to my friends I got energy to go back to study after having time together to eat great food, talk, and have fun! Without their being with me and their help, I would not live like this. Thank you so much! Love you and Bless you so much!"

Fall, 2009 Handong Exchange Student



November & December Birthdays:

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

November

Alexander Berry
Abera Dewo
Faith Chilongo

Misha Joseph
Sofia Justiniano
Victoria Graves

December

Augustina Amakye
Alice Wanguhu
Alicia Panganiban

Hanisha Besant
Richard Helsby
Timothy Lim

Driver's License Extensions for December Graduates:



Here is some helpful information from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for students who are completing their degrees and whose licenses might be expiring soon:

► Students with OPT Authorization: If you have been approved for OPT and have the Employment Authorization Document (EAD), you can be issued a DMV document (driver's license) that expires when the EAD expires. You'll need to bring the following to the DMV:

- Valid passport / F-1 visa / I-94 card
- I-20 (even if it's expired)
- EAD
- Proof of VA residency
- Proof of SSN (If you have been issued one)

Special Note: If an individual has been recommended for OPT but has not yet been approved (and has not received the EAD) he/she will need to make a request for the 60-day extension and then when the EAD is obtained he/she can request an extension of the license until the expiration date of the EAD.

► Students without OPT: If you have not been recommended or approved for OPT, but need to request an additional 60 days extension for your license/ID card based on successful completion of studies, you may request an extension by presenting the following:

- Valid passport / F-1 visa / I-94 card
- I-20 (even if it's expired)
- Proof of successful completion of studies (Letter from the registrar's office)
- Proof of VA residency
- Proof of SSN (If you have been issued one)

University Holiday Closing:



Please note that the University (including all offices) will be closed for the holidays from Thursday, December 24, 2009 through Friday, January 1, 2010. Please plan accordingly and be sure to submit all immigration requests (including travel signatures) before the December 4 deadline (see details on page 4).



Reminder: OISS Director Away November 10–13:

Please be reminded that OISS Director, Leeanne Johnson, will be away for a conference from November 10th – 13th, 2009. Immigration requests cannot be processed on these days, so please plan accordingly. Thank you!

Reminder: End of Daylight Saving Time!



“Fall Back” & “Spring Ahead”:

On November 1st, Daylight Saving Time will end and the days will become much shorter. On Saturday, October 31st, everyone in the eastern part of the U.S. will turn their clocks back one hour to return to Eastern Standard Time (EST) before they fall asleep. Don't forget to move your clocks back one hour on Saturday night (for example, from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m.) or else you will be 1 hour early for everything on Sunday! In the Spring, we will all “Spring Ahead” by turning our clocks ahead one hour.

Upcoming Events & Information Sessions



See website www.regent.edu/oiss for the International Education Week (IEW) Events: November 16 – 20

Information Session Cancellation: “F-1 Student Optional Practical Training (OPT)”

- Thursday, November 12, 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Room 252, Student Center

This session has been cancelled due to an Immigration Conference the OISS Director must attend. If you were planning to attend the session, please contact Leanne Johnson (ljohnson@regent.edu), and she will be happy to meet with you individually. Thank you!

Monthly Shopping Trip *(RSVP Required)*

- Friday, November 20, 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

DEPARTURE LOCATION: Student Center Shuttle Stop

The OISS is offering its final shopping trip for the Fall, 2009 semester on Friday, November 20. **If you would like to join this trip, please send your RSVP to olumoku@regent.edu or call 352-4951 before Friday, November 13.** Spaces are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Thank you!

Community Life Office’s Thanksgiving Dinner,



Thursday, November 27, 1 p.m.:

For the second year in a row, the Office of Community Life will sponsor a special Thanksgiving Dinner for on-campus residential students and their families. The dinner will be held in the Regent Ordinary at 1 p.m. on Thursday, November 26 (Thanksgiving Day), and there is no cost to attend. All you need to do is to send an RSVP, by calling 352-4927, by Monday, November 23, 2009.

Immigration Information



Attention ALL

F-1 Students/Expiring I-20s:

Please check the program completion/I-20 expiration date, which is listed in Section 5 on Page 1 of your current/latest I-20. There are two dates listed there: the date that your studies began, and the date by which you are expected to complete your studies. If the completion date in Section 5 of your I-20 is December, 2009 (or sooner) and you will NOT complete your degree by that date, you **MUST** apply for an I-20/F-1 Program Extension at least 1 month prior to the completion date on your I-20. Application packets are available on the OISS website. Failure to submit the request for an F-1 Program Extension by the deadline can result in the loss of your lawful F-1 status and ability to complete your degree at Regent. **It is YOUR responsibility as an F-1 student to apply for a timely I-20/Program Extension, so please take care of this important matter immediately.**

Attention F-1 Students Who Will Not Graduate & Will Not Return to Regent after the Fall, 09 Semester:

All F-1 students who will not graduate and will not return to Regent after the Fall, 2009 semester are required to notify the OISS for immigration purposes before you leave Regent. You will need to submit the immigration form called “Request for Approval to Withdraw, Cease Attendance, or Take a Leave of Absence.” **Failure to complete this form can result in serious immigration problems for you in the future.** Students who terminate their studies prior to graduation and who notify the OISS in advance, will have 15 days to depart the United States. Students who terminate their studies without notifying the OISS are considered to be in violation of their immigration status. These students are NOT entitled to the 15 day grace period, will need to depart the U.S. immediately, and will likely experience immigration problems with any the future visits to the U.S.

DEADLINES for I-20/DS-2019

Travel Signature Requests:

Please note that the deadline to request a travel signature on your I-20/DS-2019 for Thanksgiving Break travel is **Wednesday, November 11, or two weeks before your departure, whichever comes first.** The deadline to request a travel signature for Christmas Break travel is **Friday, December 4, or two weeks before your departure, whichever comes first.** Each travel signature is valid for 12 months at a time, so check to see if you have a travel signature and make sure that it will not expire before the date you will return to the United States.



Departing the U.S. Soon?

For a complete list of everything you will need for a smooth reentry into the United States after a temporary departure of 5 months or less, please read the OISS webpage entitled, "Departing & Reentering the United States". <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/departing.cfm> This page should be read several weeks prior to your departure. If you have any questions or would like the OISS to check your documents before you go, feel free to stop by the OISS between 2-5 p.m. Students who will need to apply for a new F-1 or J-1 visa should read this page of the OISS website carefully and should make their appointment as soon as possible for the earliest date possible to help insure that the visa will be processed in time for your return trip to Regent: <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/documents/F-1..J-1VisaHandout7.24.09.pdf>

It is important to note that the embassies will be operating on limited days and hours during the holidays and that it may take longer than usual for the visa to be processed. Please plan accordingly!



Proposed Changes to the J-1 Student Immigration

Regulations:

In September 2009 the U.S. Department of State published some "proposed" regulations for the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. The comment period for these proposed changes will end on November 23, 2009 and an "Interim Final Rule" or a "Final Rule" will likely be published after that. **J-1 students are advised to check their emails and the OISS newsletters for updates on this important matter.** Here are some of the major changes to the J-1 regulations that have been proposed by the State Department:

--Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers will be required to undergo a criminal background check in order to have SEVIS access.

--The Health Insurance requirements will be raised considerably for all Exchange Visitors, spouses, and dependents.

--Employment information will be collected on the accompanying spouse and dependents of the J-1 Exchange Visitor.

--The use of photocopied DS-2019s may be prohibited.

--The deadline for a program sponsor (university) to report any changes in an Exchange Visitor's circumstances (program of study, address changes, etc.) might change from 21 days to 10 days.



Change of Address Reporting Reminder:

All F-1 and J-1 students please be reminded that, outside of web-registration periods, you are **required** to report any address changes BOTH to the Registrar's Office AND to the Office of International Student Services **within 5 days** of the change. Please do not hesitate to contact the OISS if you have any questions. The online OISS Information/Address Change Form can be found here: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/information_change.cfm