

September 2009

General Information

Welcome New International Students!



For the Fall, 09 semester, the OISS was pleased to welcome ten new international students to the Regent community from the following eight countries: Bolivia, Canada, India, Peru, Philippines, Spain, South Korea, and Ukraine. Our new students will study: Communications, Divinity, Global Leadership & Entrepreneurship, Law, and Psychology. Please help make our new students feel at home by greeting them with a warm Regent welcome when you see them on campus and at various events!

General OISS Information



The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is located in Room 201, Student Center and is open all year long except during official University holidays. Please feel free to call or stop by the office anytime between 2-5 p.m., Monday-Friday if you have questions regarding any F-1 or J-1 immigration matters, or the services available to you through the OISS. Your questions, concerns, and suggestions are important to us because we are here to serve you. Please note that morning meetings (between 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.) are available by appointment. Please call the office ahead of time in order to schedule a morning appointment, and thank you for helping us to serve you better!

Office Staff:

Leeanne Johnson, Director
352-4130

ljohnson@regent.edu

Olumuyiwa Okunlola, Graduate Assistant
352-4951

olumoku@regent.edu



Office Hours & Location:

Location: 201 Student Center

Phone: (757) 352-4130

Fax: (757) 352-4100

Walk-in Hours: 2-5 p.m., Monday-Friday
(Morning meetings are available by appointment.)

International Student Statistics



Here are some interesting statistics from some tentative OISS enrollment reports that were run before the official Add/Drop deadline:

--There are approximately 197 on-line and on-campus foreign nationals registered for classes this fall from approximately 62 countries (including U.S. Permanent Residents).

--The top 4 countries represented by on-line and on-campus foreign nationals are: Canada, South Africa, India, and Nigeria.

--There are approximately 80 on-campus foreign nationals registered for classes this fall from approximately 42 countries (including U.S. Permanent Residents).

--The top 6 countries represented by on-campus foreign nationals are: Canada, India, Ghana, Nigeria, Philippines, and Russia (with equal representation from the last 3 countries listed).

Introducing the New ISO Board



Congratulations to the 2009-2010 Executive Board of the International Student Organization (ISO). We look forward to your contributions this year and greatly appreciate your dedicated service to others!

- *Enoch Charles, President, MDiv*
- *Olumuyiwa Okunlola, Vice President, MDiv & MED*
- *Oluwole Oladele, Treasurer, MA Gov*
- *Frieder Dappen, Secretary, UG Gov*
- *Lemuel Williams, Public Relations, MA Psy*

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General Information

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Regent University
Office of International Student Services
201 Student Center
Phone: 757-352-4130
www.regent.edu/oiss

Office Walk-In Hours: 2 - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday

September Birthdays

Congratulations and blessings to the following on-campus international students who will celebrate their birthdays this September:

Shemei Hewitt

Bohyun "Abigail" Kim

Marina Kuzmina

Hannah Mathew

Anica Mulzac

Rebecca Whittaker

Lemuel Williams



Working Hard to Serve You



The OISS staff has been working hard to develop new programs and services to assist our international students with their special needs. Many of these new services were developed as a direct result of the feedback we received from the students we serve. Some of the new programs and initiatives that were implemented by the OISS **over the past year** include:

--The development of a comprehensive **International Student Handbook** to assist current students with their transition to Regent and the United States.

--The development of a **new program called "I-Connect"** to assist new students with their initial transition and to help foster international friendships.

--The addition of **several new web pages**, including the "International Food Store & Restaurant Guide", the "Temperature Converter", the "Map of Nearby Shops, Restaurants & Banks", and the "International Student Profile" pages.

--The creation of a "**Special Events Calendar**" with programs and activities to assist and support current students.

--The creation of a **Pre-Arrival Information Packet** to inform and educate new students about pertinent matters prior to their home country departures.

► **Other initiatives that were developed and refined over the past 2 years** include:

--The development of a comprehensive **International Student Survival Guide, Packet, & Checklist** to assist our new students with immediate arrival needs.

--The implementation of an **expanded 3-day Fall International Student Orientation program** with one day devoted to "Getting Settled" (which included a shopping trip and escorts to local banks and cell phone providers); and the development of a comprehensive **International Student Orientation Booklet**.

--The development of **special outreach efforts** to newly admitted non-F-1 and J-1 foreign nationals who may benefit from the services provided by the OISS & the ISO.

--The development of **Immigration Information Sessions** to keep our F-1 and J-1 students informed and educated about immigration rules, responsibilities, and benefits.

--The partnering with the Central Enrollment Management office in the development of **special materials** to assist international admissions staff with the important work that they do.

--The partnering with CEM to create a **special webpage for international applicants**, which explains the admission and I-20 issuance process.

--The development and implementation of an **Outgoing International Student Survey** to help assess how well the OISS is meeting the needs of our international students.

Weekly Emails from the OISS & Student Responsibility



The weekly email messages from the OISS contain important immigration information that all F-1 and J-1 students with I-20s and DS-2019s are responsible for knowing, so these students are expected 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. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Important Health Insurance Reminder/NEW Procedures This Fall:



Beginning Fall 2009, all F-1 and J-1 international students who do not wish to be charged for the University Student Health Insurance plan will be required to apply for a health insurance waiver at the beginning of every fall semester. ****This applies to all students who might have received a waiver from the University in the past as well.**** Pricing and plan details for the Regent health insurance plan can be found [online](http://www.regent.edu/admin/busoff/student_insurance.cfm) at:

http://www.regent.edu/admin/busoff/student_insurance.cfm
Students seeking a health insurance waiver should first contact the NEW Director of Student Life, Ms. Carolyn Hughes, at chughes@regent.edu **no later than September 9**. (Carolyn Hughes has replaced Wendi Santee.) In the message to Ms. Hughes, students must include detailed information about the alternative health insurance coverage, including a summary of benefits stating overall coverage maximum and deductibles. In addition, the alternative coverage must include medical evacuation and repatriation. Students who are granted a waiver will be notified by email from Ms. Hughes within 2 weeks. Once approved by Ms. Hughes, students must **then** submit the online Waiver Request Form to the Regent Business Office in order to have your student account credited for the Student Health Insurance Plan for which you would have been charged. **If you have questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Carolyn Hughes at 757-352-4867.** This is just a follow-up reminder to the many messages which were sent to all international students in the Spring semester and in the Summer.

Upcoming Events



OISS Cookout/ Welcome Gathering



Wednesday, September 9, 5:00 p.m.

(RSVP/Replies Needed by Wednesday, September 2)

The OISS cordially invites our international students, spouses, and children to our Fall, 09 Cookout, which will be held on **Wednesday, September 9 at the Regent Ordinary Patio**. The cookout will include games and activities, such as volleyball, badminton, and soccer. This will be a great



opportunity for all new and returning international students to meet, and we are looking forward to seeing all of you there. If you plan to attend, and if you haven't done so already, it is very important that you reply with the total number of family members that will join you by Wednesday, September 2. The RSVPs are necessary for the food orders. Thank you!

OISS Fall Trip to Monticello Saturday, October 17,



8:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. (approximate times)

DEPARTURE LOCATION: To Be Determined

Don't miss this special opportunity to visit the home of President Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States and founder of the University of Virginia. President Jefferson's home is located in the mountains of Charlottesville, Virginia; hence the name "Monticello", which means "little mountain". October is a perfect time to escape from campus and to enjoy the beautiful fall foliage of Virginia. **If you would like to join this trip, please send your RSVP to olumoku@regent.edu or call 352-4951 by Friday, October 2**. Spaces are limited and are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Non-student family members will be invited if space permits but will need to pay the full-price of the ticket (\$20/adult & \$8/child ages 6-11).

Upcoming Information Sessions



Maintaining Lawful F-1 Immigration Status



- *Thursday, September 3, 12:00 p.m.*

LOCATION: Room 252, Student Center

This session will highlight student responsibilities for maintaining lawful F-1 immigration status while in the United States. Benefits of the F-1 status and important travel procedures will also be discussed. All F-1 students are encouraged to attend this session as an important reminder of their student immigration responsibilities.

F-1 Student Optional Practical Training (Mandatory for all F-1 students who plan to apply for OPT this fall)



- *Thursday, September 17, 12:00 p.m.*

LOCATION: Room 252, Student Center

All F-1 students who are planning to apply for OPT this fall must attend one of three OPT sessions offered this semester where OPT applications will be distributed and the application process will be explained. F-1 students cannot apply for OPT this fall without first attending one of the three sessions offered. OPT applications must be submitted to USCIS within 60 days after your academic program completion date (term-end date). F-1 students who are not applying for OPT this semester but are interested in learning more about this benefit are welcome and encouraged to attend any of the sessions offered this fall. Sessions will start on time, so please do not be late. Attendance will be taken.

Important Immigration Information



Attention all F-1 Students with I-20s



Please review the OISS handout on “Maintaining Lawful F-1 Status”, which is included with this newsletter for all F-1 students. **The handout was updated recently on 8/13/09.** This handout, and other helpful immigration information, can be found on the OISS website at: www.regent.edu/iss All students in the F-1 immigration status are strongly advised to read this handout carefully each semester and are encouraged to contact the OISS if you have any questions. Thank you!

DEADLINE to Request I-20/ DS-2019 Travel Signatures for Fall Break Travel



Please be reminded that all requests for an I-20/DS-2019 travel signature must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to your departure date. Students who are planning to depart the U.S. for Fall Break and who are needing a recent travel signature must submit their request by **Friday, October 2, or two weeks before your departure, whichever comes first.** Each travel signature is valid for 12 months at a time, so check (page 3 of the I-20 and the bottom right corner of the DS-2019) to see if you have a travel signature and make sure that it will not expire before the date you will return to the U.S. For a complete list of everything you will need for a smooth reentry into the U.S. after a temporary departure, please read the OISS webpage entitled, “Departing the U.S.”. **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, be sure to visit the office several weeks before you go.

Mandatory SEVIS Reporting



This message serves as a reminder to all F-1 and J-1 students (with Regent-issued I-20s and DS-2019) about the University’s government reporting responsibilities. All U.S. institutions are required to report the following information to the USCIS (U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services) 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 school within 30 days;
- Whether the student has enrolled at the school, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO (OISS), or failed to enroll;
- The current address of each enrolled student;
- The start date of the student’s next term or semester;
- A change of the student’s or dependent’s legal name or U.S. address;
- Any student who fails to maintain lawful immigration status or complete his or her program of study;
- 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 CPT, OPT, etc).

If you have any questions about the SEVIS reporting, please do not hesitate to contact the OISS.