September 2014
General Information

General OISS Information:
The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is open to assist students all year long except during official University holidays. Please feel free to stop by the office if you have questions regarding any F-1 immigration matter, or the services available to you, call the office ahead of time in order to schedule an appointment. Your questions and concerns are important to us because we are here to serve and assist you!

OISS Staff:
Heidi Decker, MA, SEVIS PSDO, OISS Director
(757) 352-4130 • hdecker@regent.edu
Brinda Patel, BS, OISS Graduate Assistant
(757) 352-4951 • brinpat@mail.regent.edu

Office Hours & Location:
Location: 201 Student Center
Walk-in Hours: 2-5 p.m., Monday-Friday
Appointment hours: 9-12 p.m. Monday-Friday

Three-Fold OISS Mission:
Although the OISS supports international students on many levels, our primary mission is three-fold:

- We provide vital services that support the F-1 immigration and adjustment needs of Regent's international student community;
- We educate and advise the University faculty, staff, and students on F-1 immigration rules, procedures, and benefits; and
- We maintain University compliance with government regulations and reporting requirements.

OSAL & International Programming:
The Office of Student Activities & Leadership (OSAL) now coordinates the International Student Orientation as well as all other on-campus & international programming. For the many exciting 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
We encourage you to get involved on campus, make friends, serve others, stay active, laugh often, and balance your studies with extra-curricular activities!!

OISS Welcomes New Director, Heidi Decker!
Heidi has more than 20 years of experience in the field of education as an instructor, advisor, trainer, director, and counselor. She has worked in international education at public and private universities in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Oregon, and Utah. She has also lived and worked in Russia and Costa Rica and understands the challenges and joys of living abroad. Heidi received her BA in Mathematics and her MA in Counseling and Student Personnel Services from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Heidi enjoys advising international students on the intricacies of US immigration regulations and helping them acclimate to American life. In her free time, Heidi enjoys outdoor activities and follows current events around the world. Heidi loves to travel any chance she can; some of her favorite places are Norway, Peru, Costa Rica and Croatia.

The September 2014 newsletter contains
Information about the following topics:

General Information
- General OISS Information
- Three-Fold OISS Mission
- OSAL & International Programming
- OISS Welcomes New Director

Immigration Information
- Updated Forms & Handouts
- International Student Orientation
- OISS Welcomes International Residency Students
- SEVIS & Address Reporting Reminder

Congrats, Students!
- August & September Birthdays
- Student Leaders

Medical Emergencies & Health Insurance
All international students are required to have valid health insurance while in the United States for your own health and financial protection. Health emergencies can be unexpected and extremely costly. Since you took the effort to purchase your health insurance, take time to learn how to use it before you have a health crisis. Make a plan, write it down, and keep it in a convenient place.

1. In case of a medical emergency, where is the closest hospital emergency room and how will I get there?
2. In case of an illness (non-life threatening), where can I see a doctor? How can I make an appointment?
3. How much should I pay? How do I submit a claim to my insurance company?
4. Are there any requirements of where to go or what procedures can be done? Where’s my insurance card?

Presented by:
The Office of International Student Services (OISS)
201 Student Center 757-352-4130 • www.regent.edu/oiss
Office Walk-In Hours: 2-5 p.m., Monday – Friday
Fall 2014 International Student Orientation:
The Student Services staff was delighted to welcome sixteen new on-campus international students to campus for the Fall 2014 semester! The new students hail from these countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Bermuda, China, Croatia, Honduras, Jamaica, Malaysia, Norway, Romania, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, & Ukraine. Please offer a warm Regent welcome when you see our new students on campus!

Quotes from some Orientation participants:
“I really enjoyed the schedule and the people conducting it were very nice.”
“Staff members are very energetic and awesome. They are ready to support us”
“Orientation was very helpful”

OISS Welcomes International Residency Students to Campus:
By the end of the Fall 2014 semester, the OISS will have welcomed at least 10 international residency students to campus. These students are enrolled in online degree programs from their home countries but are required to come to campus for at least once week each year for their studies, so they require I-20s and must be processed and registered in SEVIS for each on-campus residency.

Fall Break!
Regent University will be closed from October 13-October 19 for Fall break. Now is the time to make plans if you want to travel! Plane tickets within the U.S are at their cheapest right now for that time period. If you are leaving the USA for the Fall break, you should get a travel signature on your I-20 if its been longer than six months. No new signatures are necessary if you will stay in the United States.

Get-away suggestions: The amazing changing colors of Fall will be most dramatic from the Smokey Mountains National Park in Tennessee through the Adirondack Mountains in New York. Close by, we have the Shenandoah National Park which is open to hiking and camping. For a beach trip, Florida is still a good option for warm sunshine & water. Washington DC is only a 4 hour drive, and the Smithsonian museums are FREE to the public and the metro makes transportation around the city very easy. Amtrak trains run from Norfolk to Washington, DC, New York City, or Boston for $40 - $90 each way.

Congrats, Students!
August & September Birthdays:
Congratulations and blessings to the following on-campus international students who turned another year older and wiser in August, and to the students who will turn older and wiser in September:

August Birthdays:  
Deborah Arnett  
Christopher Norgbey  
Son tung Vu

September Birthdays:  
Anh Vu “Vince” Le Hoang  
Saffire Bose  
Vanja Bule  
Keum Seong Jeong  
So Heon Park

Congratulations, Student Leaders!
Congratulations to the following students who will serve as Student Leaders this year:

Tao Tang, COGS Senator/Secretary for Robertson School of Government
Jonatas da Silva, Resident Assistant for Residence Life
Christopher Norgbey, COGS Senator, School of Divinity
Arun Daniel and Brian Gitonga, COGS Senator, School of Business & Leadership
Kasturi Bhattacharjee, COGS Senator, School of Psychology & Counseling

“Christian leadership to change the world”!
Hurricane Preparedness:
In order to prepare for and respond to any possible evacuation orders from the local government, all international students are reminded to do the following:

1. **MAKE evacuation PLANS with friends or family.** The university will take students to a shelter if an evacuation is ordered, but students should first try to make their own arrangements. You will be more comfortable staying with friends or family than at a group shelter. You may also want to evacuate on your own even if the government does not order an evacuation and you will need to make your own arrangements for a voluntary evacuation.

2. **SIGN-UP for emergency notifications** from the university by going to “Regent Alert” once you log into the “MyRegent Portal”.

3. **CHECK your Regent email address—several times a day—and NOTE** that the Regent-coordinated evacuation transportation will leave PROMPTLY at the established time and from the established location noted in the email messages. Remember that it is CRITICAL for all students and their family members to arrive on time. (The Regent Commons will likely be one of the departure locations.) You can also check for any possible voicemail messages/instructions on the OISS Director’s phone: 757-352-4130.

4. **NOTIFY the OISS—as soon as possible—of the address and phone number where you will be staying if you and your family will NOT be taking the Regent-coordinated evacuation transportation to a shelter. Stay in touch with OISS by email.

5. **ALERT your family members and friends in your home country—ahead of time**—that you may not be able to connect with them for several days (in the event of possible power outages and downed phone lines.)

6. **HAND-CARRY** your immigration documents & other important items/records with you in a waterproof folder/container. Such items/records would include, but are not limited to, the following: passport, I-20, I-94 card, immunization/medical records, insurance card, medications, and emergency contact information (including the phone number and email address of the OISS Director: 757-352-4130/ hdecker@regent.edu)

7. **AFTER the storm**, please do not attempt to return to campus until the University announces it is open. Announcements will be posted on www.regent.edu and on the inclement weather hotline, 757-352-4777. Announcements about re-opening are not always distributed through the “Regent Alert” system.

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**Hurricane Information:**
► Here are some important websites for you and your families to review—NOW—for emergency preparedness:
http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/hurricane_default.asp
http://vaemergency.com/
http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes

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**International Student Statistics:**
Here are some interesting statistics from some tentative Fall 2014 enrollment reports:

-- There are about 247 online and on-campus foreign nationals (including foreign nationals who are U.S. Permanent Residents) registered for classes this fall from approximately 67 countries.

  -- The top 3 countries represented by online and on-campus foreign nationals are: South Africa (#1), Nigeria (#2), and India (#3).

  -- There are approximately 130 on-campus foreign nationals registered for classes this fall from approximately 55 countries.

  -- The top 3 countries represented by on-campus foreign nationals are: India (#1), Jamaica (#2), and Nigeria (#3).

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**We Want To Hear From You!**
~ Newsletter contributions are welcomed from students & spouses

The OISS always welcomes newsletter contributions from our international students and their spouses. If you would like to send us a few paragraphs about how you spent your summer vacations, some interesting observations/experiences you’ve had in the United States, or how you celebrate certain holidays/traditions in your home countries, we would LOVE to hear from you!! We are also very interested in hearing about any honors/awards our international students have received.

► The OISS newsletter submission form can be found here:
http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/documents/Newsletter AnnouncementSubmissionForm_000.pdf

**Please contribute today!!**
Immigration Information

Immigration Handouts & Forms:
Check the OISS website for updated immigration handouts and forms.

► All students in F-1 immigration status should review the handout on “Maintaining Lawful F-1 Immigration Status” which can be found on the OISS website, each semester and should contact the OISS if you have any questions. Thank you!

SEVIS Reporting Reminder:
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. Please contact the OISS if you have any questions.

Change of Address:
To report a change of address, ALL currently enrolled F-1 international students must follow the important instructions included below to maintain lawful F-1 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 before they can register for classes. The U.S. address that you enter 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 during the semester, please update it immediately in Genisys.

► For questions on how to update your address in Genisys, please contact the Registrar’s Office: 757-352-4038

Obtaining your I-94:
In the past, the U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) would staple a small white or green paper card into your passport as your admission record to the U.S. The process is now completely electronic and you must obtain your I-94 Arrival/Departure Record online at: http://i94.cbp.dhs.gov Please print this document and keep it with your passport. You will need it for employment, social security card, driver’s license and other applications. The I-94 paper cards may still be issued to those who arrive by land from Canada or Mexico.

► Information Session:
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Thursday, August 28, @ 1 pm
Friday, September 12, @ 1 pm
Thursday, October 2, @ 3 pm
252 Student Center:
All F-1 students who are planning to apply for OPT this Fall must attend one of three information sessions where OPT applications will be distributed and the application process will be discussed. All other F-1 students are invited to come learn about OPT as well. For students who are graduating in December, the OPT applications must be received by the USCIS within 60 days of your academic program completion date (the official university Term End date). It takes the USCIS approximately 3 months to process the applications.
(Details about OPT can be found at: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/employment.cfm)

► Information Session:
Maintaining Lawful F-1 Immigration Status
Friday, September 19, 12 p.m.
252 Student Center:
This information 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. We look forward to seeing you there!

I-20 Travel Signature Request for
for Fall Break Travel:
F-1 students who are planning to depart the United States for Fall Break and who need a recent travel signature on page 3 of their I-20 must submit their request by two weeks before their departure. Each travel signature on page 3 is valid for 12 months. Make sure it will not expire before the date you will return to the U.S. If you don’t have a signature, or you need a new travel signature, the request form can be found here:

► For a complete list of everything you will need for a smooth reentry into the U.S. after a temporary departure (5 months or less), please read this OISS webpage called “Departing & Reentering the U.S.”: