

February 2012



General Information

OISS, Government Reporting, & Staff Information:

OISS Director, Leeanne Johnson, who serves as the University's PDSO and RO, will be focusing her efforts this Spring on some important government reporting projects (F-1 Recertification application, J-1 Re-Designation application, Spring SEVIS Reporting, etc.). **As a result Ms. Liz Boyd** (Assistant to the Interim Exec. Director of Student Services) **will greet all international students this Spring and will assist with all non-immigration related questions during our regular office walk-in hours from 2 – 5 p.m., Monday–Friday.** Ms. Boyd will refer all immigration questions to OISS Director, Leeanne Johnson. Morning immigration assistance (between 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.) will require an appointment with Ms. Johnson, so if you need to meet with her between 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., please call/email Leeanne to arrange a time to meet. Thank you for your important cooperation this Spring! (See page 5 for more details.)



Office Staff

J. Leeanne Johnson **Gedeon Mbaiornonde**
Director, PDSO, RO **New Graduate Assistant in Training**
 (757) 352-4130 (757) 352-4951
ljohnson@regent.edu gedemba@regent.edu

Spring, 2012 Orientation & New International Students:



Our new international students experienced a difficult transition this semester because the University did not re-open from Winter Break until the first day of classes. The OISS offered a very condensed version of our Orientation on January 2 and 3 (the first day of classes), while the students were still quite jet-lagged. Some extended events were offered throughout the first week of classes. All of the orientation participants rated the overall event as "Very Helpful". Two of Regent's four new international students are short-term exchange students from Handong International Law School (HILS), one is a graduate student in Divinity & Counseling, and the other is an undergraduate in Interdisciplinary Studies. Here is what two students had to say about the Orientation:

"Very helpful. It helps you feel welcome. Very spirit-service oriented."

"It was very helpful. Very detailed. Gives you very important information about the rules and regulation that we international students have to follow."

January & February Birthdays:

Congratulations and blessings to these on-campus international students who are celebrating their birthdays in January & February! *Esther Kestle, Yu-Ying "Nina" Hsiao, Ezekiella Sam-Amaga, Chanleakhena "Lina" Sophat and Andrey Kovalev!*



Email Messages from the OISS & Student Responsibility:

The email messages, sent biweekly by 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 biweekly email messages from the OISS, please contact Leeanne Johnson immediately at: ljohnson@regent.edu. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.



Topics included in the February 2012 OISS newsletter are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| General Information: | Immigration Information: |
| --Office Hours & Staff Information | --Reminder About Online Credit Restriction |
| --Sp. 2012 Orientation & New Students | --F-1 Program Recertification & New Procedures for OISS Assistance |
| --January & February Birthdays | --Change of Address Reminder |
| --Biweekly Email Messages from OISS | --Spring, 2012 SEVIS Reporting |
| --David Jimenez Farewell Message | --F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations |
| --Gedeon Mbaiornonde Self Introduction | --Spring, 2012 Immigration Information Sessions |
| --Cold Weather Tips | |
| --Important Tax Filing Information | |
| --Farewell, David! | |

Getting Involved & Upcoming Events:

- Spring, 2012 OISS Special Events
- Campus Ministries & Intl. Prayer
- Getting Involved & American Student Fellowship
- International Student Organization (ISO) Update
- Passport Around the World



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

Farewell Message from OISS



G.A., David Jimenez

“Hello friends,

As one season starts and other finishes, the season of working for the OISS has come to a conclusion to me. A great season indeed, a season where I got learn a lot from my superior, as well as to get to know the international community a little bit better; a season of activities, fun and also hard work. In this season, I got to learn a lot from Ms. Leanne, which got me acquainted with the domestic way to do work; it was a great privilege and honor to work under her supervision.

Also, I learned from the people that I served with, Charissa Reyna, a great colleague and friend. In the same manner, I was very blessed to get to know all of the new international students that came after me, and that I was able to help in some way or another.

My time serving in the OISS has been a great time, a time of learning, working and making new friends. I hope I have been able to help you all and that if anytime you need something that I can help with, do not hesitate to come to me and ask; if I know the answer I will help with, if not, I will point you where to go. Many blessings to you all and have an incredible time in Regent; it is God’s purpose that you are here!”

David Jimenez

Greeting from New OISS G.A., Gedeon Mbaiornonde



“Hi! I greet you with the word Peace. May the Peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ guard your hearts and minds (Philippians 4: 7)! My name is Gedeon Mbaiornonde; I was born and raised in Chad (Africa). I am currently

enrolled in a joint-degree program at Regent University’s Schools of Government and Divinity. I am humbled, honored and grateful for the opportunity I am given to serve you through the Office of International Student Services (OISS) as one of the OISS Graduate Assistants. I will be working on Thursdays in the afternoon and on Fridays most of the day for the time being. Please, feel free to stop by at the OISS in the Student Center; if I can be of any help to you or just to say hi. May the Good Lord richly bless and keep you in all your undertakings (See Philippians 1: 3-6 & 1Thessalonians 5: 24)!”

Cold Weather Tips for Students from Warmer Climates!



January and February are the coldest months here for us in Virginia, so here are some tips on how to stay warm:

--Wear layered clothing, like long sleeved t-shirts under your sweaters/sweatshirts, and

wear “long-johns” or tights (thin pants) under your jeans/slacks.

--Mittens are more effective than gloves that leave your fingers isolated. A hat and scarf will keep you warm as well!



--Wool socks and long “knee highs” (socks) will keep your feet and legs nice and warm.

--Longer, insulated coats that cover your bottom are much warmer than shorter, lighter jackets.

--For those who have trouble keeping their hands and feet warm, you can buy “hot pads/hand warmers” in places like Wal-Mart & Target. The hot pads can usually be found in the sporting goods/hunting sections of the store (and sometimes near the check-out lines). The hot pads can be used in your gloves, boots, and pockets to help keep you warm. Once you open them, they will stay heated for about 6-8 hours. They cost about \$1 - \$2 and they are also GREAT for skiing!

--For those of you who get very cold at night while sleeping, you can buy a “hot water bottle”, which will keep you warm in bed! A hot water bottle can be filled with hot water that will stay warm for many hours.



--Keep your blinds/curtains open in the day time so the sun can heat your room, and keep them closed at night to keep out the cold/wind/draft.

--Use lip balm to protect your lips from chapping and hand/body lotions to keep your skin moist in the dry heat.

--Drink nice warm drinks, like tea, coffee and hot chocolate with marshmallows (an American favorite!). Hot “apple cider” is another favorite this time of the year! It is a nice apple drink with a cinnamon flavor. Hot apple juice is good, too!



--A temperature converter can be found here: <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/currentstudents.cfm>



Important Tax Filing & 8843 Information:

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



All students who were employed in 2011 or who received scholarship funds in 2011 will need to file a U.S. FEDERAL tax return (1040NR or 1040NREZ), and possibly a Virginia STATE tax return, this spring. The FEDERAL filing deadline will be **mid-April** (April 17, 2012) for those who were employed and earned taxable wages (money earned through employment, internships and assistantships) in 2011. The FEDERAL filing deadline will be **mid-June** (June 15, 2012) for those who received non-taxable scholarship, fellowship, or grant funds in 2011. Students who worked in the United States at any time during the year 2011 should be receiving some tax forms in the mail (or via the internet) from their employers by the end of January. The type of forms that you might receive are called “W-2” forms. Students who received scholarship or fellowship grant funds in 2011 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 FEDERAL tax return must be filed before the STATE tax return. **Many more details will be provided in the March, 2012 OISS newsletter.**



► Tax Filing Assistance Software Purchased by OISS--Register at **FRONT DESK** of Student Services Office in **mid-March**

As many of you know, the OISS purchases a special international student tax filing software each year that our current international students can use to complete their FEDERAL taxes for a low cost of \$15 per person. Graduates on post-completion OPT can use the software for a cost of \$25 per person. The \$15 software fee is waived for new students who attended the Fall, 2011 and Spring, 2012 International Student Orientations. **The name of the software has changed and is now called “GLACIER Tax Prep.”** Regent staff members are not qualified/permitted to assist students with their individual tax filing/forms/questions, so be sure to take advantage of this 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 **GLACIER Tax Prep** passwords at the **FRONT DESK** of the Student Services Office (201 Student Center) in mid-March. The software company is still sending the school information about this year’s software program and the Payroll

Office has until mid-March, 2012 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”, or you can pay by cash. **Please read your email messages in February & March for further details.** (If you do not want to use the **GLACIER Tax Prep** software, another alternative is to hire an off-campus international tax specialist/consultant, like H&R Block or Liberty Tax Filing, to assist you with your tax filing obligations as a foreign national in the U.S. The cost for such assistance may start at around \$100-\$150.)

► 8843 Forms **Must** be Filed by **ALL F-1 & J-1 Students & F-2/J-2 Dependents Who Were Physically Present in the United States in the Year 2011**

ALL international students & dependents who were physically present in the United States during the year 2011 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**. (The 8843 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 & dependents who were physically present in the U.S. in 2011.)

► For students who received U.S. income, scholarship, or fellowship grant funds, the 8843 form should be filed along with the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ tax forms by April 17 or June 15, 2012.

► For students who did NOT receive any type of U.S. income, scholarship, or fellowship grant funds in 2011, the 8843 form should be filed by itself by June 15, 2012.

The 8843 form can be completed through the special international student tax filing software (called “**GLACIER Tax Prep**”), which was purchased by the OISS, but it is a simple and basic form you can complete on your own in a few minutes. The 8843 form can be found on this page of the IRS website:

<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,id=244931,00.html>

Farewell, David!

As the creator of our new office logo, David Jimenez was one of the most talented G.A.s to ever bless the OISS. From his keen computer skills, to his amazing artwork and posters, David never ceased to amaze me and my colleagues in Student Services with his awesome creativity. David’s fine eye for detail also served as a valuable asset to the OISS with his careful review of our many office forms and publications. Many new students were blessed and fortunate to be welcomed and greeted by his kind and friendly spirit. We are going to miss David’s valuable contributions to the OISS and we can’t wait to see how he will “change the world” with his multi-talents and his delightful personality!

--Leeanne Johnson, OISS Director



Getting Involved & Upcoming Events



Spring, 2012 OISS Special Events

The OISS has organized some Special Events for the Spring term, such as some Workshops and Information Sessions on “I Love LibGuides” and “Returning Home”. Visit this page for the entire schedule, which was mailed to all students in January:

<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/documents/Spring2012.pdf>

campusministries & International Prayer

Dear International Students, Campus Ministries would love to hear from you! We are looking for any international student who would be willing to share a little about their country and then pray for it in University Chapel. **University Chapel is every Wednesday at 12pm in the Main Theatre.** Please contact me if you are interested in participating by emailing jpeaks@regent.edu. Thank you very much. Jason Peaks.

Getting Involved & American Student Fellowship



There are many offices on campus that provide activities and events that help to foster international and American student fellowship and community. One office is the **Office of “Community” Life**. Director Roger Cheeks organizes special off-campus outings each semester for all Regent students, called “Regent Goes to Town”. Mr. Cheeks also offers students the opportunity to work side-by-side and to serve the community through special volunteer service events called “Regent Serves”. In addition, the Community Life Office coordinates Game Nights and Intramural Sports (soccer, football, basketball, etc). Other offices offer social, cultural, and spiritual events for American and international student fellowship, such as the programming that is done by the **Resident Assistants (R.A.s) in the Regent Commons (Student Housing)**. The **Director of Student Life**, Ms. Carolyn Hughes, oversees the many Student Organizations that exist at Regent in order to foster student fellowship, community, & leadership. The OISS encourages all international students to participate in these many opportunities available at Regent. Getting involved with

the larger campus community and your fellow American students will greatly help to enhance your overall experience in the United States. For questions about these opportunities, please contact the appropriate Directors/Offices:

- Mr. Roger Cheeks, Director of Community Life, 352-4486, rogeche@regent.edu
- Ms. Carolyn Hughes, Director of Student Life, 352-4867, chughes@regent.edu
- Regent Commons Office, 352-4890

International Student Organization (ISO) Update



When the 2010-2011 ISO Board had difficulty finding enough students to run/serve on the ISO Board for the 2011-2012 academic year, they devised a “resolution” which would allow a couple of international students to receive “**ISO Ambassador Scholarships**” to carry out some basic duties of the ISO and to organize the ISO elections for the 2012-2013 academic year. Unfortunately, the two students the 2011-2012 Board recommended for the ISO Ambassador Scholarships declined the offer due to their busy schedule/another scholarship they were receiving. (The 2010-2011 Board found that many international students already had tuition scholarships, or they were very busy juggling dual degree programs or families here in the U.S.)

So, in an effort to try to assist the international students keep their “student organization” (ISO) going, the Office of International Student Services (OISS) offered to hire/employ a student to carry out some basic ISO duties for the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 terms in the form of an “**ISO Ambassador G.A.**” position. Only one student applied for the ISO Ambassador G.A. position for the Fall term and that student (Padmakshi “Paddy” Parkhe) graduated at the end of that semester. In addition, only one student applied for the ISO Ambassador G.A. position for the Spring 2012 term, but had to withdraw the application due to a demanding academic schedule. In the Fall term, Paddy sent a message to 10 different students to assess their interest in serving on the ISO Board for the 2012-2013 academic year. According to Paddy, 5 students had not replied after 2 inquiries, 1 student was not interested because of a full tuition scholarship, 2 students were still praying, 1 student was interested but didn’t have the time, and only 1 student was “very interested”. Paddy also organized a Potluck Dinner and a Christmas Caroling event, but both events had to be cancelled due to a very low response (RSVP).

International students who have the time and are interested in trying to resurrect this **student-lead, student-driven organization (ISO)** for the 2012-2013 academic year can contact Ms. Carolyn Hughes, Director of Student Life (chughes@regent.edu/352-4867), for details on how that process would work. Information about ISO and the constitution can be found here: <https://regent.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Student%20Organizations/ISO/about/home.htm>

Spring, 2012

“Passport Around the World”:



Approximately one Wednesday a month the Regent Ordinary and the Office of Community Life sponsor an event called “Passport Around the World”. Ethnic foods are featured from various countries/world regions and students are invited to share music and items from their home countries for a cultural display. Photos from previous events can be found on this web page:

<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/TasteoftheWorld.htm>

► Here is the “Passport Around the World” schedule for the Spring, 2012 semester:

January 11:	Australia
February 8:	Black History Month (Emphasis on Nigerian Foods)
February 14:	Valentine Day Chocolate Fest
March 14:	Bahamas
April 11:	Far East

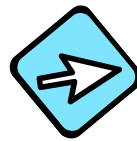
Important Immigration Information



Important Reminder About the Online Academic Credit Restriction:



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



F-1 Program Recertification Notice (Issued to Regent University on November 30, 2011)

As a result of the F-1 program Recertification notice that Regent University (the OISS) received on 11/30/2011 from the U.S. government--and because the Spring term is the busiest time for the office as it is--**it will be more important than ever before for all international students to:**

- 1) Adhere to the office “walk-in hours” (2-5 p.m.) and to visit directly with Ms. Liz Boyd;
- 2) Submit any immigration requests by the established deadlines; and
- 3) Note that your messages and inquiries may require a longer response time than usual from the OISS.

Information about the recertification process was included in the September, 2011 OISS newsletter: *“In October, 2008 the USCIS passed a new regulation that now requires all schools with F-1 programs to apply for “recertification” every 2 years. The actual process began about a year ago with many schools being selected within the past 6 months. Regent could be selected for recertification any day now and that project will significantly increase the workload of the OISS. The recertification is a major project of paramount importance to all schools because a school cannot sponsor F-1 students or issue I-20s if the application is not approved and the school is not recertified. Because of the amount of work involved with the recertification application, all schools will have 6 months (with no exceptions or extensions) to complete the recertification application and are strongly advised by the government to begin the process “immediately” after being selected. If a school does not meet the 6 month deadline, or if it fails to receive recertification, that will result in severe consequences including the automatic loss of a school’s F-1 program, immediate loss of access to SEVIS, and the government transferring the students to other certified schools. Please continue to check the messages from the OISS for important updates about the recertification process.”*

The OISS will likely have to file the University’s J-1 program “Re-designation” application in the spring term while we will still be juggling the F-1 program “Recertification” application, the Spring SEVIS enrollment reporting, OPT apps. for graduates, travel signature requests, etc. Your patience and understanding is greatly appreciated as we strive to meet your needs and these important government requirements!

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 a web-registration period, 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, 2012 SEVIS Reporting Reminder:

As a reminder to all F-1 students with I-20s, please note that all U.S. institutions are required to report the following information to the SEVP (Student Exchange Visitor Program)/DHS (Department of Homeland Security) 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 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 end date of the current university term, and the start date of the next required 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 through SEVIS with respect to the current status of the student (such as change of major, CPT authorizations, OPT recommendations, etc).

Students who violate their immigration status are not eligible for any grace periods in order to prepare for departure from the United States and are expected to depart the country immediately. If you have any questions, please contact the OISS.

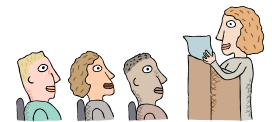
F-1 Student Employment Rules & Regulations:



Employment is considered to be the rendering of service for compensation--financial or other. The five general types of employment benefits available to F-1 students who have maintained lawful F-1 status are: *On-campus Employment, Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), 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. 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 immigration 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 "Overview of Employment Rules & Options for F-1 Students" on **Friday, February 17 at 12 p.m. (SC, 252)**.

Spring, 2012 OISS Immigration Information Sessions:

The OISS Spring, 2012 Information Session Calendar was mailed to all students in January. It is also located on the OISS website under "Newsletters and Information Sessions":



http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/iss_news_cal.cfm

All times and dates for the Spring, 2012 sessions are included. May, 2012 F-1 student graduates who wish to apply for OPT should check the calendar for the OPT session dates and details. The same goes for J-1 students who are planning to apply for Academic Training this spring. F-1 students who wish to apply for Curricular Practical Training for a mandatory internship will also need to attend a CPT session this spring. Upcoming sessions for the month of February are as follows:

► **Overview of Employment Rules & Options for F-1 Students**

- Friday, February 17th, 12 p.m., 252 Student Center

► **J-1 Student Academic Training (AT)**

- Friday, February 24th, 12 p.m., 252 Student Center