

September 2011

General Information

International Student Orientation:

The OISS was delighted to welcome twenty one new international students for our Fall, 2011 International Student Orientation! The new students hail from these countries: Austria, Bahamas, Bermuda, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana/United Kingdom, Hong Kong/United Kingdom, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Russia, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, and Vietnam. 100% of survey respondents rated the overall orientation as "Very Helpful" (70%) or "Helpful" (30%). Here are some comments from the new students about the orientation:



"There is no way an international student could survive without this orientation."

"It was brilliant and it made the process of settling in very easy."

"Thank you so much for your services, concern and all you've done to get me here and make this transition as smooth as possible. It was extremely helpful! God bless."

"It was very informative; helped to relieve a lot of stress I had about coming."

Here is a breakdown of the new students by degree level: 6 Undergraduate students, 10 Graduate students, 1 Juris Doctorate student, and 4 Doctoral students. Please help to offer a warm Regent welcome when you see our new students on campus!



Fall, 2011 International Student Orientation Photos



The September 2011 newsletter contains information about the following topics:

General Information

- International Student Orientation
- General OISS Information
- Job Opening in the OISS
- International Student Statistics
- Congratulations Tim
- August & September Birthdays
- Wedding Bells Ring for Graduates
- Farewell from Charissa Pajaron
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Upcoming Events & Info. Sessions

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Immigration Information

- Mandatory Recertification Apps.
- Attention All F-1 Students
- Deadline for Travel Sig. Requests
- Mandatory SEVIS Reporting
- Change of Address Reporting Reminder
- Intensified Compliance Efforts & I-94s

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

General OISS Information:

The Office of International Student Services (OISS) is located at 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.** if you have questions regarding any F-1 immigration matters, or the services available to you. Your questions, concerns, and suggestions are important to us because we are here to serve you. **Morning meetings between 9 a.m. – noon are available by appointment**, so please call the office ahead of time in order to schedule a morning appointment. Thank you for helping us to serve you better!



Office Staff:

Leeanne Johnson, Director, PDSO & RO

(757) 352-4130 - ljohnson@regent.edu

David Jimenez-Cardenas, Graduate Assistant

(757) 352-4951 - davijim@regent.edu



Office Hours & Location:

Location: 201 Student Center

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

(Morning meetings are available by appointment only.)

Job Opening in the OISS!

A 10 hour per week G.A. position is available in the OISS! This position will manage the ISO storage unit, coordinate the airport pick-ups for the Spring, 2012 arrivals, and organize some activities/events for the Fall and Spring semesters. The successful candidate must have a valid Virginia driver's license. Preference will be given to candidates who have an automobile since driving is necessary for the storage unit work. If you are interested, please send your resume, cover letter and list of at least 3 references to Leanne Johnson (ljohnson@regent.edu).



International Student Statistics:

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

--There are about 350 online and on-campus foreign nationals (including 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), Republic of Korea (#2), and Canada (#3).

--There are approximately 95 on-campus foreign nationals (including U.S. Permanent Residents) registered for classes this fall from approximately 37 countries.

--The top 4 countries represented by on-campus foreign nationals are: India (#1), Canada (#2), Mexico & Russia (tied for #3)



Congratulations, Tim, NAAE Contest Winner!

Congratulations to **Timothy Lim Teck Ngern** who won the 2011 Student Essay Contest for the North American Academy of Ecumenists (NAAE)! There is only 1 winner per annum for this prestigious national competition for graduate and doctoral students....*Way to go, Tim!*



August & September Birthdays:

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

August:

Deborah Arnett

Nelia Nyaruwata

September:

Olcay Balıtatlı

Michelle Bello

Anh Vu "Vincent" Le Hoang

Padmakshi Parkhe



Wedding Bells Ring for Recent Graduates!

The OISS extends its warmest congratulations to our recent graduates:

Alex Berry, Enoch Charles, and Frieder Dappen who all tied the knot during recent wedding ceremonies in Germany, India, and the United States! Alex married Heather Watkins in San Juan Capistrano, California. Enoch married Stephanie Grace Jeyaraj in Bangalore, India. Frieder married Deanna Desrosiers in Germany. Congratulations also to former MBA student from several years ago, **Joshua Markas**, who will marry Kasturi Bhattacharjee on September 9 in Kolkata, India. May the Lord continue to bless you and your loved ones.

Farewell Message from Charissa Reyna (OISS Graduate Assistant from Fall, 2010 – Summer, 2011):

"It was a wonderful experience working for Leanne, serving the international students of Regent University. I am deeply saddened with the end of my term working for the OISS but extremely excited for what the Lord has in store for me as a fresh MA Counseling graduate, now ready to face the world of work! May the Lord bless us all as we faithfully pursue the desires He has placed in our hearts and do our part in changing the world."

(The OISS farewell message to Charissa can be found in the May, 2011 Newsletter at this link:

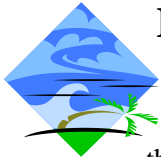
http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/iss_news_cal.cfm)



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## --Students in Service--

### New Student, Andreas Bienert, Helps Hurricane Victims:



*Andreas Bienert* barely stepped foot on the Regent campus, as a new international student, before he was already out assisting the victims of Hurricane Irene here in Virginia!

Here is his reflection on this rare and rewarding service opportunity:

*“Working with Operation Blessing: On Monday, September 29th, I had the great privilege to partner with Operation Blessing - Disaster Relief Services, a non-profit organization that partners with the city of Virginia Beach whenever natural disasters strike the nation. Being a Regent Student, I received an invitation for volunteer work from the school and simply thought that it was a great opportunity to reach out to the city and helping others wherever there is need. Leaving campus bright and early in the morning, three groups of us visited several different locations, where we were mostly involved in cleaning up tree damage in people’s yards. It was a blessing to simply step out of my ordinary schedule and do something, that I believe, Christ has called us all to do. After the hurricane hit Virginia Beach, I was blessed to have power and no damage at all where I live. Operation Blessing serves in communities where people cannot afford to pay professionals to remove fallen trees from their roofs. As Regent students we are called to Christian Leadership to Change the World. Well, and the world includes Virginia Beach. It was a blessing to be involved, carry a smile, and serve where there was need!”*

### Thank You Big Brothers/Big Sisters & Orientation Aids!



The OISS would like to thank all of the international students who volunteered to serve as Big-Brothers/Big-Sisters to our incoming international students and to the Student Leaders—campus-wide—who assisted with our Fall, 2011 International Student Orientation. Three cheers for the following students who kindly volunteered their time and service:

**Big-Brothers/Big Sisters:** *David Jimenez-Cardenas, Andrey Kovalev, Timothy Lim, Abigail Oduro, Alicia Panganiban, and Padmakshi Parkhe.*

**Airport Pick-Up & Meal Escorts:** *Rebecca Faucette, James Fry, Feylyn Lewis, Timothy Lim, Leila Mills, Nelia Nyaruwata, Abigail Oduro, Angelique Payne, Pedro Powell, Victoria Thompson, Patrick Thorman, and Rachel Wilmot.*

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Working Hard to Serve You:



The Office of International Student Services (OISS) has been working hard to develop new programs and services to assist our international students with their acclimation to Regent. Many of these services were developed as a 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 2 years include:



--The creation of a special **resource guide for the American roommates** of our international students.

--The partnering with other offices on the **development of special resources for our international students.** (A helpful guide on “Money Management Tips for International students”, a special International Student Resource Guide from Student Housing, and a wonderful brochure from the Psychological Services Center (PSC)).

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

--The addition of **several new office web pages**, including “Car Buying & Driving in Virginia”, “International Food Store & Restaurant Guide”, “Temperature Converter”, and the “International Student & Alumni 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 help reduce culture shock and educate new students about pertinent matters prior to their arrival at Regent.

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



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

--The implementation of an **expanded 3-day International Student Orientation program** with one day devoted to “Getting Settled”; and the development of a comprehensive **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.

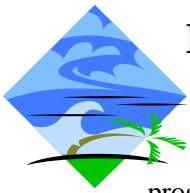


--The development of **Immigration Information Sessions** to keep our F-1 and J-1 students informed about immigration benefits and responsibilities.

--The partnering with the Central Enrollment Management (CEM) office on the development of **special forms and materials** to assist international admissions staff with the important work that they do.

--The partnering with CEM on the creation of a **special webpage for international applicants** which explains the admission and I-20 issuance process, and the creation of entirely new **Financial Certification Forms.**

--The development and implementation of an **Outgoing International Student Survey** to help assess how well Regent’s international student needs are being met.



Hurricane Evacuation Survey & Reminders

In August, the international students who were enrolled in on-campus degree programs were asked to reply to the annual Hurricane Evacuation Survey that was sent by email from the OISS. The survey results indicate that approximately 10 international students would need Regent to bus them and their family members (15 in total) to a hurricane shelter in the event the local/Virginia Beach area should be ordered by government officials to evacuate. According to the responses, approximately 40 international students and family members had an alternative place to go or friends with whom they could stay in the event of a mandatory evacuation. **► In the event of any possible emergency evacuations, all international students are reminded to do the following things:**



--Check their Regent email address--several times a day--and note that the Regent-coordinated evacuation bus(es) 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 (352-4130).

--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 used by the University to a shelter.

--Let your family members and friends in your home country know—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.)

--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/ljohnson@regent.edu)).



--After the storm, please do not attempt to return to campus until you receive an official update from Regent that indicates the campus is open.

► Here are some important websites for you and your families to review for emergency preparedness:

- <http://vaemergency.com/>
- <http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/hurricane.s.html>
- http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/hurricane_default.asp

Upcoming Events & Information Sessions



Maintaining Lawful F-1 Immigration Status

Thursday, September 8, 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION: 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.

Cultural Adjustment Session

Friday, September 9, 12:00 p.m.
LOCATION: 252 Student Center

Mr. Jeff Anderson, Distance Education Producer at Regent and Adjunct Professor at Tidewater Community College, will discuss the cultural, language, and academic challenges that international students face and ways to minimize and overcome them. Mr. Anderson has also provided services to Regent's international students as an ESL instructor, paper editor, and driving instructor! (Information about culture shock can be found on pages 5-8 of the International Student Handbook found here:



<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/InternationalStudentHandbook.cfm>)

OISS Cookout/ Welcome Gathering

Thursday, September 15, 5:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Regent Ordinary Patio

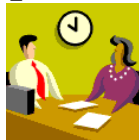


This is a reminder to all students who submitted their reply/RSVP for the Fall, 2011 OISS Cookout by the August 31 deadline. **The Cookout will be held on Thursday, September 15 at the Regent Ordinary Patio** and will include food provided by the OISS. This will be a great opportunity for all new and returning international students to meet, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone there!

Overview of Employment Options for F-1 Student Visa Holders

Friday, September 23, 12:00 p.m.

LOCATION: 252 Student Center



Employment is considered to be the rendering of services for compensation—financial or other. Working in the United States 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 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! Details can be found here: <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/documents/F-1EmploymentOptions2-18-11.pdf> [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.]

Immigration Information



Mandatory 6 Month F-1 Program Recertification Applications Now Required by the U.S. Government Every 2 Years:

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.**

Attention all F-1 Students with I-20s:



Please review the OISS handout on “Maintaining Lawful F-1 Status”. This handout, and other helpful immigration information, can be found on this page of the OISS website: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/immigration_info.cfm All students in F-1 immigration status are asked 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 Travel Signatures for Fall Break Travel:



Please be reminded that all requests for an I-20 travel signature must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to your departure date. Students who are planning to depart the United States for Fall Break and who are needing a recent travel signature must submit their request by **Friday, September 30, or two weeks before their departure, whichever comes first.** For enrolled students, each travel signature is valid for 12 months at a time. Check **page 3** of your I-20 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. The request form can be found here:

<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/iss/onlineform.cfm>

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 called, “Departing & Reentering 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 Reminder:



This message serves as a reminder about the University’s government reporting responsibilities. All U.S. institutions are required to report the following F-1 student 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).

Please contact the OISS if you have any questions about the SEVIS reporting.

Change of Address 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.

Reminder About Intensified Immigration Compliance Efforts & I-94 Cards:



As a reminder from last year, and as a result of increased immigration compliance efforts that are being implemented by the U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS), **all international students are advised to have their original I-94 Arrival-Departure Record with them at all times.** In the past, students have been advised to carry the I-94 card with them when they were traveling (by bus, by train, or by airplane); but as a result of heightened efforts and recent incidents, students are now being advised to have the original card in their possession at all times. Here is the actual regulation regarding the I-94 card (referred to as the certificate of alien registration) found at INA § 264(e): "Every alien, eighteen years of age and over, shall at all times carry with him and have in his personal possession any

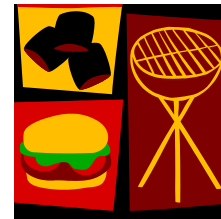
certificate of alien registration or alien registration receipt card issued to him pursuant to subsection (d). Any alien who fails to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall upon conviction for each offense be fined not to exceed \$100 or be imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both." At a conference OISS Director, Leeanne Johnson, attended last May, several immigration attorneys and some DSOs reported that students were having particular problems without an I-94 card at airports, bus stations, and train stations. Other problems were reported near the Canadian and Mexican borders. As reported at the conference, and from the perspective of the Border Patrol Officials, visitors to the U.S. are subject to removal/deportation if they do not have documentation to show they are in the United States legally. Please be advised of this important notice which is a reminder from last year!

REMINDER

For all students who submitted their reply or RSVP to the OISS by the August 31 deadline:

OISS

Welcome Cookout



Thursday, September 15, 2011

at 5:00 p.m.

Regent Ordinary Patio

Please join the OISS as we welcome new and returning international students to the Regent University family!

See you there!



Hard at Work!



Lunch Break!



Campus Tour



Dr. Alfred Rovai, Academic Affairs



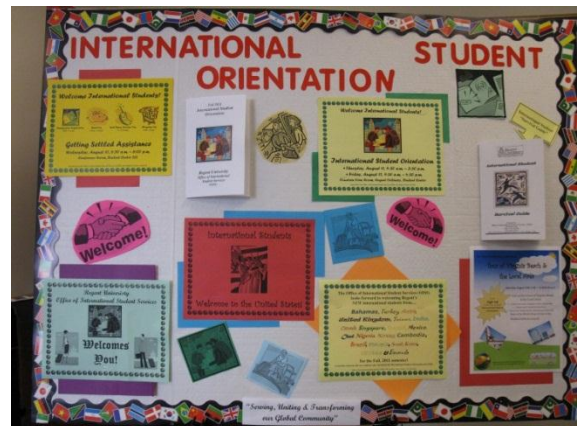
Listening Up!



Bowling Night Out



Local Tour & Beach Trip



So Glad To Have You!