



# Discussion of Trends & Issues with SEVP Director Canty

May 31, 2017

## NAFSA2017



**ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
& EXPO**

Expanding  
Community  
Strengthening  
Connections

May 28 - June 2 • Los Angeles, CA USA



# Agenda & Process

- Introduction and opening remarks of Director Canty
- Quick review of the list of priority issues/recommendations developed by attendees and NAFSA leaders in yesterday's open meeting
  - You'll be asked to choose "most important" so need to see whole list
- Closer review of each priority issue/recommendation
- Polling – is the issue: (1) **the most important**; (2) **very important**; (3) **somewhat important**; (4) **not very important** for you?
- NAFSA staff will provide SEVP a list of all issues discussed yesterday, the priority issue list, and the polling information

# Rachel Canty: Acting Deputy Assistant Director

- Acting Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) of SEVP, effective May 15
- Former DAD, Louis Farrell, moved to National Security Investigations Division
- Acting Director Canty has served as Chief of SEVP's External Operations for the past five years and will continue in this role
- She has been with DHS since 2001 and previously served as the Acting Assistant Director of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Policy from 2011 to 2012

# List of Priority Issues/Recommendations

- I-17 Adjudication Delays
- Updating Program of Study Information on I-17
- SRC response times and quality of responses
- 5-month out of country rule
- CPT guidance
- Interagency interpretation of shared regulations
- SEVP Field Representatives
- Data in SEVIS
- Kudos to SEVP on Webinars, Help Hubs, DSO addition processing times

# I-17 Adjudication Delays

## **I-17 Adjudication Delays**

- Long I-17 adjudication times with a locked I-17 prevent other update and recertification submissions
- Anxiety when CED is approaching and school administrators receive notices that imply PDSO may not be on top of things

### *Recommendations*

- Don't send letters to president when failure to apply for recertification is caused by pending I-17 updates
- Separate I-17 update from recertification updates
- Describe the process online (e.g. SEVP will push back CED, etc.)

# Updating Program of Study Information on I-17

## Updating Program of Study Information on I-17

- Schools are uncertain about what constitutes a “program of study” that has to be updated on I-17 and why such updates take so long

### *Recommendations*

- Provide clear guidance on program of study updates
- Provide extra time to respond to RFI/RFE
- Clarify expected processing times, and publish actual processing times
- For new programs that are within the same degree level and same 2-digit CIP code previously approved on the school's I-17, allow I-20s to be issued while adjudication is pending

# Improve SRC response times and quality

## Improve SRC response times and quality of responses

- Can the SRC provide better indication of the regulatory basis of their requests or decisions, including for correction requests?
- The technical Help Desk side of the SRC sometimes goes beyond the technical scope and responds to policy questions or questions about interagency matters, such as USCIS filing.
- Processing times for data fix corrections vary greatly; can they be better standardized?



# 5-month out of country rule

## 5-month out of country rule

- The “temporary absence” provisions are outmoded
- For example, they do not adequately provide for: (1) PhD students working on dissertation abroad, (2) master students completing required “capstone” abroad, or (3) OPT students whose US employer who stations them abroad for 5+ months

### *Recommendation*

- Analyze the rules with stakeholder input
- Identify what can be changed by policy, and propose new regulations if necessary



# CPT Guidance

## **CPT guidance**

- Can you provide updates on SEVP's development of guidance on Curricular Practical Training?

### *Recommendations*

- Solicit significant stakeholder feedback on the role of experiential learning in the modern educational environment, while developing draft guidance or new regulatory language

# Interagency interpretation of shared regulations

## Interagency interpretation of shared regulations

- Many benefit and compliance issues depend on interagency cooperation, and sometimes an agency may interpret a shared regulation differently than SEVP

### *Recommendations*

- SEVP take the lead in engaging with partner agencies as well as stakeholders on shared policy/procedural questions
- For example, can SEVP take the lead in defining what constitutes a “higher educational level” for purposes of USCIS adjudicating an OPT application?
- Additional guidance and training for USCIS and CBP

# SEVP Field Representatives

## SEVP Field Representatives

- Field Reps are often very noncommittal when asked a question
- Some Field Rep responses are inconsistent with school's understanding of law or policy

### *Recommendations*

- Revisit Field Rep job description and goals; Focus less on “here to help you” messaging
- Seek nationwide feedback from stakeholders on value Field Reps can bring
- Uniform process for Field Reps to get policy answers from SEVP HQ
- Consistency in Field Rep training
- Less monolithic approach - customize to needs of schools and SEVP (e.g., new, established, F, M)



# Data in SEVIS

## Data in SEVIS

- SEVIS data anomalies after SEVIS releases
- CLAIMS – SEVIS interface issues, e.g., OPT data

### *Recommendations*

- Don't run automatic jobs after any SEVIS change unless there's been thorough testing
- SEVP take the lead in working with USCIS on CLAIMS – SEVIS interface
- A web page that lists known issues, reports on status of resolution, and links to standardized work-around steps

# Kudos to SEVP

## **Kudos to SEVP – Thank you for:**

- Your excellent and frequent webinars
- Help Hub and Study in the States content
- Publishing draft policy guidance for stakeholder comment
- Providing advance notice and communications
- Greatly reducing processing time of DSO additions
- Providing M-1 guidance on Study in the States

# We didn't address your issue(s)?

- Submit them to IssueNet  
*Report an Issue :*

<http://issuenet.nafsa.org>

(indicate “for SEVP Director”)

