



Of Course It's Worth It!: Analyzing the Big Challenges and Great Opportunities of the J Exchange Visitor Program

NAFSA Region III-New Orleans, LA
October 29, 2010

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REVISED 10.24.2010



J Exchange Visitor Program: Challenges & Opportunities

Introduction and Background

- ❖ International students and families brought approximately **\$17.6 billion** last year to US economy (2008-09).
- ❖ They brought **\$68 million** to Arkansas; **\$119 million** to Louisiana; **\$178 million** to Oklahoma; **\$1.22 billion** to Texas; (2008-09).
- ❖ Become political, governmental, and business **leaders** in their home country.
- ❖ **Add** to cultural and educational experience of schools and local community
- ❖ **Learn** about the great things of the USA, and incorporate it.



About the J Exchange Visitor Program. . .

- **Purpose** – Implement the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (Fulbright-Hayes Act) of 1961. The objective is “to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange”.



About the J Exchange Visitor Program. . . (cont.)

Responsible Agencies

1) Department of State’s (DOS) Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

2) Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Has specialty visa with various categories to meet the school’s international educational exchange needs.



What the Exchange Visitor (EV) J Program Means to Rice University

- ❖ Last year we had 661 scholars in total (various visas).
- ❖ We utilize the following categories of EV program:
Exchange students, Short-Term Scholars, Research Scholars, Professors, Student Intern, and Specialist
- ❖ As of today, Rice *currently* has **128 active** J scholars and **48 J students**. In the last *12 months* we had **317 J scholars** and **93 J students**.
- ❖ Allows us flexibility in research projects and other scholarly / study exchanges.



How Does an Institution Establish and Maintain a J Program?

- **Designation Application**– Requires commitment from the school and clarity in areas of need. Cost: \$1748
- **Re-designation:** - Done *usually* bi-annually (sometimes annually). Cost: \$1748



Where Is There Information on Establishing and Maintaining a J Program?

- **Guide for Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers** – Provides information on J regulations, use of SEVIS as it relates to EV program, and FAQs.
- **Department of State Website:** Many additional resources for administering the EV program.



What are Unique Challenges of Maintaining a J Program?

- **Annual Report** – July each year.
- **Maintaining DS-3036:** - On-going. Regulations under 22 CFR Part 62.
- **Insurance Requirement:** - Including Medical Evacuation and Repatriation. How does a school insure compliance?
- **Orientation:** - Pre-Arrival, Arrival; On-going



What are Unique Challenges of Maintaining a J Program? (cont.)

- **Programming**– Cultural offerings.
- **Tracking and Reporting:** - Different SEVIS program than F-1 SEVIS.
- **Validations and Other Time-Sensitive Monitoring:** - Some must be done manually.
- **Extensions and Transfers:** - Timing crucial



What are Unique Challenges of Maintaining a J Program? (cont.)

- **Maintenance of Status for EVs**– Constant education.
- **Training Opportunities:** - Newsletters, E-mails, Other communication
- **Confusing Laws:**
Example:
 - Two-year home residency requirement.
 - 12-month bar
 - 24-month bar



What are Unique Challenges of Maintaining a J Program? (cont.)

- **Waiver Information** – Policy on advising EVs on the 212(e).
- **Reciprocity:** - Are you sending out US students and scholars?
- **In-House Records / Financial System:** - HR system vs. Student record system.
- **Updates of Offers:** - Timing crucial



What are Unique Challenges of Maintaining a J Program? (cont.)

- **Advising on Transfers** – Requires sufficient communication between “transfer in” and “transfer out” institutions.
- **Advising on Travel When It Involves a Transfer:** - Usually requires clarification of priorities.
- **Subject Field for Transfer:** - Must be in same program, even if the academic department is different.



What are Unique Challenges of Maintaining a J Program? (cont.)

- **Communication With the Department of State:** - Sometimes easier than DHS, but not as easy as before.
- **Payments Via Pay.Gov:** - Must register for this.
- **Adequate Staffing for Maintaining Proper Monitoring:** - Monitor progress and welfare.



What are *Opportunities* That Could Be *Challenges* in a J Program?

- **Flexibility:** – Can accommodate various levels of research programs. Clear guidelines and policies need to be in place and articulated.
- **Expands International Exchange:** - Short term student study programs.
- **New J Student Intern:** - Broad capacity. Labor intensive.



What are *Opportunities* That Could Be *Challenges* in a J Program? (cont.)

- **Expands Scholarly Opportunities:** Limited challenge. Ex. Faculty come to US institutions on sabbatical to conduct research.
- **Multiple Entries for Long-Term International Collaborations:** - Challenge is keeping track of a scholar who is an active EV when spending time abroad.



Key Steps for an Institution Considering an Application for an EV Program

1. Must have commitment from Office of President, Office of Provost, Deans, etc.
2. Form appropriate ad-hoc committee to initiate EV Designation application. Maintain group for compliance decisions.
3. Information found on the Department of State website:
http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges/j-1_visas.html



Overall Summary

- ❖ **What is gained with the EV Program?** – Research (and research \$\$), educational, cultural exchange. Enhances the undergraduate and graduate educational experience.
- ❖ **What are the weaknesses?** – Must have infrastructure in place to manage compliance. Not all understand the importance of internationalization.
- ❖ **What are the opportunities?** – Expand institution's influence through internationalization to its community. International opportunities increase for faculty and students.
- ❖ **What are the threats?** – Costs of properly maintaining an EV program. Not meeting compliance.



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Questions & Discussion

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