

Region III Newsletter

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Report on Region III Conference

-- Michele Stelljes, Past Region III Chair



Imagine you are standing before a fifth generation of colleagues, 50 years from your first professional meeting as an association, and imagine what it would be like to look over that group and see the variety of backgrounds and witness their responses to the vision your generation was lead by. Dr. Joe Neal did not have to imagine, he had the rare experience of giving a 50 year encore performance as he opened the Region III 50th Anniversary Conference held in Corpus Christi, Texas. From Dr. Neal's opening remarks, to the final wrap up, Region III experienced the depth and breadth of our profession's rich variety and warm friendship. Harriet Fulbright, the unofficial ambassador of International Exchange, delivered an inspiring message that set the tone for the days to come. Kien Pham, Director of the Vietnam Education Foundation gave a stirring personal message of his journey from penniless refugee, to foreign student, White House Fellow, successful business leader, to leader of the first US government agency dedicated to rebuilding Vietnam's intellectual infrastructure through educational exchange. Both speakers held out a challenge to our generation of international educators to embrace the opportunity we have to make a difference in the world. What a privilege we have to be able to make that difference on our own campuses.

A CD is available of the plenary speeches, the regulatory sessions, and about 120 photos of the conference. An order form is available on the Region III website.

We celebrated our network of Region III colleagues and volunteers, who through the years are the life of NAFSA, we had classic good times local arrangements team of volunteers, threw a great conference. Evaluations applauded Millie and the team for pulling off one the Region's best conferences ever. Also Jane Dunham for Chairing the 50th celebration committee, Margie Kidd for compiling and editing the Region III history, Beverly Heyen and Julie Sinclair for producing and directing an all-star cast in the "Nifty Fifties", John Singleton for orchestrating our first ever 5K Dia de Los Muertos Dash, Adria Baker for chairing the special recognition project, Rebecca Crowell for stepping into the Development position and exceeding all expectations for our best exhibit and sponsorship group ever, the William J. Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, University of Arkansas for underwriting our opening Plenary, David Ware and Associates for offering a made-to-order pre-conference workshop and Amy Makyama and the Art Institute of Houston for our grand and delicious 50th Anniversary cake. [continued on page 2]

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Report on Region III Conference, continued.

A 50th Anniversary is a great opportunity for reflection, but it is not a rest stop – we have much to do in our post-September 11 world. Let's embrace the spirit of the past with renewed commitment to today and the days to come. We believe that international education and exchange is fundamental to the future of civil discussion, mutual understanding and global partnership. As I think about how we, as individuals, achieve these lofty goals, I think the method is summed up well by Kien Pham "Leadership and making a difference might be the headline, but what I have done in life has one simple commonality: I listen to my heart and I do what's right"

As I enter the last year of a three year term, I have to thank everyone for the privilege and great pleasure of working with the team and the members at large to make Region III all that it can be. NAFSA is a volunteer association and a great leadership training ground, Our Region is especially blessed with an abundance of talented, dedicated and tireless volunteers. Dan Erickson takes the Chair and the conference leadership in January. Dan will do a great job. He brings a depth of experience and commitment to international student programming, campus and community leadership that has inspired me. I want to congratulate Julie Sinclair as Chair Elect-Elect and all the incoming members of the Region III team. Let's thrive in 2005!

Looking Ahead...

-- *Millie Slaughter, Local Arrangements Chair*

I hope that everyone who attended the NAFSA Region III Conference in Corpus Christi enjoyed the sessions provided and took advantage of some of the interesting sites in the downtown area. Or, at least took a walk along the seawall! I would like to give a huge thanks to all the volunteers who gave up some of their time during the conference to help out in the many areas needed so that the conference would run smoothly. Thanks to the Region III Team Members and the presenters for providing such excellent sessions for conference participants. Special thanks to Past Chair, Brenda Robati, for taking care of the PDP Workshops and scholarships and Chair Elect, Dan Erickson, for handling the Silent Auction and certificates. The biggest thanks goes to my partner and Region III Chair, Michele Stelljes. With her leadership, guidance, and new ideas (5K Run, chocolate fountain, anniversary cakes, and regulatory CDs) this conference was a huge success and the comments from participants were overwhelming.

I hope that new, and old, NAFSA members in Region III will consider volunteering for the Bi-Regional Conference that will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado next November. If interested, please email me at millie@tamuk.edu. The conference will be held at The Broadmoor Hotel and is ranked a Five-star, Five Diamond hotel and resort. The Broadmoor Hotel has eleven restaurants and fifteen boutique shops located throughout the property. Visit their website and learn about the Broadmoor Story: http://www.broadmoor.com/page.asp?id=broadmoor_story. Plan your visit for Colorado Springs by visiting the "Top 10 Things to Do in Colorado Springs" at http://www.broadmoor.com/page.asp?id=around_town&subcat=24.

Team News

Region III Welcomes New Team Members!

-- Dan Erickson, Region III Chair

Congratulations Julie Sinclair! Region III Chair-Elect! I first met Julie Sinclair on a beat up old bus in rural Northern China in 1987 on the way to tour a tractor factory with about 30 other teachers. From that first day onward I have known Julie to be an adventurous, positive, capable person with a great sense of humor. She will bring those characteristics to the Chair-Elect position as she serves the membership of Region III. She continues in that great tradition of Oklahoma "Wonder Women" Region III Chairs which have included Brenda Robati, Regina Henry, Mary Ann Kelley, and Millie Audas.

Julie has been with Oklahoma City University for eight years, and is currently Director of the International Admissions Office which oversees admissions, recruiting, and immigration services for international students. She is originally from New Mexico, and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in German from the University of California, Davis, and a Master of Public Administration in International Management from the Monterrey Institute of International Studies. Julie first decided on a career in international education while studying abroad in Germany during college. She was teaching English for one year in Changchun, China, when I first met her. Julie has been on the team as Oklahoma State Representative during 1992-1993, and as the Region III ADSEC Representative this past year. She is currently a mentor in the NAFSA Academy for International Development. Julie will never run short of creativity and we imagine that Region III will be treated to more musically productions similar to her famous "Sevis Psychosis".

Effective January 1, 2005 seven new members joined the Region III Leadership Team.

ADSEC Representative: Albert Salinas, Director of International Admissions and Student Services at Texas A&M-Kingsville, will begin his term as ADSEC Rep, taking Julie Sinclair's place as she moves to Chair-Elect. Albert was on the Local Arrangements Committee in Corpus Christi and was everywhere during the Conference.

COMSEC Representative: Olga Greico, Program Coordinator at the University of North Texas' International Welcome Center, will be taking Rebecca Brown's place as COMSEC Rep. We are looking forward from gaining from Olga experience.

CAFSS Representative: Penny Lyons from Southern Arkansas University will join us as CAFSS Rep. Penny is an enthusiastic part of the team, but we will miss Jalal Daneshfar from the University of Central Oklahoma who has held the position the past two years.

TechSIG Representative: No one has bigger shoes to fill than Robert Soulliere, Texas Christian University, who will be replacing Jane Dunham as TechSIG Rep. We will not try to total up the years of service Jane has given to Region III and NAFSA. Let it be understood how much we all appreciate the help she has given each of us. Robert did a great job at Corpus Christi making sure presenters had what they needed and that everything worked right.

North Texas Representative: Robert Crosier, Director, Texas Tech University Office of International Student and Scholar Services, has been called back into service as North Texas Representative. Texas Tech men always answer the call. We thank Kristine Combs of West Texas A&M for her hard work these past two years, especially working with Kristalina Karabunarlieva, South Texas Rep, to put on the largest state conference NAFSA has ever seen.

Louisiana Representative: Louisiana is lucky to have Michele Sadlier, Assistant Director for Study Abroad at Tulane University, coming on board as State Rep. During her two years as Louisiana Rep, Alea Morelock Cot did an incredible job especially in the area of advocacy with help from Janice Thomas and others. They have really been able to get the ear of state officials and have given International Education a much higher profile within the State.

Development: A special word about Development: Rebecca Crowell agreed to rejoin the team late this past summer and did a wonderful, wonderful job. Even though she is not coming in new, but has already been on the job for five months, we need to acknowledge what a great job she did organizing and carrying out that responsibility. Rebecca, of course, is a Past-Chair, class of 1999.

Thank you so much to Millie Slaughter and the local arrangements team for a great job in Corpus Christi and for making all of our presenters, guests, and conference attendees feel so welcome.

Of course, a huge thank you goes to all of our ADSEC session chairs and presenters. We had an incredible variety of topics this year, and I know all of us who attended the sessions received valuable information and training that will be of great benefit in our jobs.

As always, Region III proved that we have an incredible wealth of knowledge represented in our session chairs and presenters. We had several unique sessions this year that provided attendees with cutting edge, practical knowledge. Dr. Pornthip Chalungsooth and Dr. Greg Schneller from the University of Arkansas presented the results of their research project from a NAFSA grant. They focused on linguistic tools to help international students and those who work with them communicate about students' mental health concerns. Norhan Rahmat and Olga Grieco from the University of North Texas gave an informative session documenting the whereabouts of the large group of Malaysian students from the 1980s, as well as giving updates on the Malaysian education system. Audra Johnston and Michael Freeman from the University of Arkansas presented lots of helpful information on using the internet to give greater service to clients. They gave attendees many useful, cost-effective ideas for appointment scheduling, on-line chats, and electronic bulletin boards. Region III's Robert Watkins deserves an especially big thank you for chairing and/or presenting in two sessions!!

Region III has such tremendous resources when it comes to credential evaluation, and we always appreciate the great sessions from staff of the credential evaluation agencies in Region III. Dr. Linda Jahn, Director of International Academic Credential Evaluations, Inc., and Robert Watkins from UT Austin gave an excellent session with updates on the educational system of France. Global Credential Evaluators was well represented in two sessions. Michael and Ronda Ringer presented a useful session on helpful websites and how to recognize diploma mills. Margaret Donaldson, session chair, and Susan Ringer, presenter, gave a great "how-to" session on evaluating transfer credit and calculating GPAs.

We were also pleased to welcome credential evaluation colleagues from outside Region III. Kevin Rolwing from World Education Services gave a great session on academic credential documentation issues and provided many useful resources. Marybeth Gruenewald from Educational Credential Evaluators presented an excellent session with Chair, Robert Watkins, on "Negotiating the gnarly knots" of Nigerian diplomas. They definitely win the award for the "Most Creative" session title!

Finally, I would like to say what a pleasure it has been serving you this year as ADSEC representative. Please feel free to call on me if I can be of any assistance to you in locating resources or sharing ideas (or writing humorous rap tunes!). I look forward to seeing you next year in Colorado Springs.

As we begin the spring semester, I want to take a few lines to reflect on the NAFSA Region III conference in Corpus Christi which was one of the best I have attended. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Region III, looking back and recognizing those who have made this such a strong NAFSA region. We also spent time looking to the future and the changes it holds for all NAFSA members as we go through restructuring.

I especially want to thank and congratulate those from ATESL who presented sessions at the conference. The four sessions we had were excellent and well received by those who attended them. The first ATESL session was "Next Generation TOEFL-Coming in 2005!" with Erin DeSouza as chair and presenter. Next was "Unlimited Ideas on a Limited Budget: Programming for every season of the year!" with Mathelda Molina as chair and presenters Stephanie Simmons Blackwelder and Nancy Kinsel. The third ATESL session was "How One IEP Plays Survivor in Uncertain Times" with Julie Blevins as chair and Kathy Cardott as the presenter. Our final ATESL session was "Benefits Derived from the CEA Self-Study Process" with Joy Tesh as the chair and presenter.

As you can see from the sessions, not only is getting through these difficult times a big challenge facing intensive English programs, but we have to be ready for changes. A new TOEFL is coming. Some of you are going through or have already gone through CEA accreditation, a difficult but very worthwhile process. I found it encouraging that everyone seemed so willing to share and help their colleagues.

Shortly after returning from the conference, I received an e-mail from Maureen Burke, the national NAFSA ATESL Chair, to the regional ATESL representatives. In it, she wanted to give us an update on ATESL in the context of NAFSA's restructuring. To quote part of her message, she wanted to inform us that, "The majority of time is now being spent on the new structure and a transition plan for ADSEC, ATESL, SPA, **Ns** OSEAS to be blended into the new Knowledge Community entitled Recruitment, Admissions and Preparation (RAP)." She then describes some of the issues and concerns. She concludes by saying, "So, please reassure the ATESL folks that we are doing the best we can to be sure that we have a strong voice within the association. I have faith that the new Knowledge Community will work for us as all of the principals have been sensitive to each others needs as we move forward to a transition. Our working group will be meeting in Philadelphia in mid-November to work on transition. Any feedback you have from ATESL folks or others, please send my way. The more I can take to our meetings and to the Strategic Task Force, the better."

In the last issue, I asked you to send me your names and e-mail addresses so that it would be easier or us to communicate. Unfortunately, I only heard from one person which makes for a short list even if I include myself. I would still like to hear from you, so take a few minutes and send me your thoughts and addresses.

Thanks and I hope you all have a great holiday season. I know that many of our teachers are involved in TESOL rather than NAFSA, so please share this information with your teaching colleagues and encourage them to participate at the NAFSA conference, too.

I welcome your suggestions and comments and anything you think we should pass on to our colleagues.

Hello, Region III SECUSSAns! As I write this, another semester has drawn to a close, and my thoughts are turning towards preparations for what lies ahead in the spring. I hope that you all are as excited about upcoming events as I am.

First, a big thank-you to everyone who attended the regional conference in Corpus Christi! The setting was lovely, and I sense the conference was a great experience for so many of you. I especially want to extend my heartfelt thanks to those of you who took the time to deliver presentations. Your talent and expertise were greatly appreciated, as evidenced by the glowing comments from session participants. I hope to see more of you present at the bi-regional conference in Colorado Springs in 2005.

That's right – Colorado Springs! We will be hosting our next conference with region II in a gorgeous location. If the beautiful scenery isn't enough to entice you to attend, just think of what you'll be able to learn with twice the knowledge and expertise being presented at this conference. I'm really looking forward to fresh perspectives and a time for rejuvenation in Colorado. I hope you are, too, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Also, watch for announcements about your upcoming state meetings. A state meeting is a great opportunity to network and learn, without having to spend a lot of time away from the office or expend money from tight travel budgets. State meetings typically happen in the spring. Look for listings on the region III website.

As always, I'll put in my plug to encourage you to get involved or to propose a session for a state or regional meeting. If you are new to the field and hesitant about presenting on your own, please contact me, and I'll see if I can help you locate a co-presenter. It can be scary to give your first presentation, but once you've done it once, you'll be on the road to becoming a "regular!"

I'm also always happy to hear your suggestions regarding education abroad in region III. Being the SECUSSA representative means just that – representing your points of view and concerns. Please feel free to contact me any time to let me know what's on your mind.

2 YEAR

Two-Year Institution Report -- Reginald Cooper, Two-Year Institution Representative

The Region III conference was great! Two-year institutions owe a big "THANK YOU!" to Michael Freeman and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville for sponsoring a reception for us. The reception provided a great opportunity to meet and greet other conference attendees from two-year institutions in a comfortable relaxed atmosphere. If you did not attend, you missed an opportunity. Thank you Michael and the U of A for recognizing the two-year folks in Region III!

If you attended the Region III conference in Corpus Christi, you know how exciting it was and that it was a great success. Congratulations to the local arrangements team for a great job and thank you for the long hours and hard work. This was a great showcase for the Fiftieth Anniversary. If you did not attend, you missed a great opportunity to enhance your professional knowledge, see or meet some great colleagues and friends and have a great time.

I hope you will start thinking about presenting at the 2005 conference. It is not too early to start making plans and getting a proposal together. One way to enhance the image of two-year institutions is to showcase some of the things that are happening on the two-year campuses. If you have done something different or new please consider completing a proposal to present. The more active we become as a group, the more recognition we will receive and the more respect we will earn. Please contact me at any time to share your ideas or concerns or if you need to talk with a colleague my e-mail address is: rcooper@sautech.edu.

Oklahoma State Report -- Tammy Newell, State Representative



Oklahoma was pleased to see the large number of newcomers at the state meeting held in Corpus Christi, TX in late October. One of the hi-lights that came from this state meeting was the level of interest in advocacy at the local and state level. In addition to the advocacy that we all practice everyday with our students, we plan continue to seek ways to promote advocacy in Oklahoma.

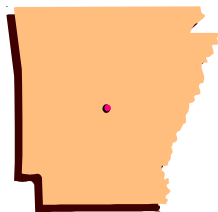
Our state meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3 at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City. Look for more information regarding the state meeting to be sent out later this month. We will plan to address advocacy, current immigration issues relating to both incoming international students and study abroad students. If you have any particular issues you would like addressed please contact Tammy Newell at tammy.newell@oc.edu.

Texas State Report



Mark your calendars! The Texas State Meeting will be held on February 28, 2005 at The University of Texas at Arlington. For more information: www.nafsa3.org

Arkansas State Report



Arkansas International Student Leadership Conference

--- Sue Marlay

*Associate Dean/Director, International Student & Scholar Services,
Arkansas State University*

In May 2004, Sue Marlay, Director of International Student and Scholar Services at Arkansas State University, and her Thai graduate assistant, Dilok Phanchantraurai, were awarded a \$2,000 COOP Mini-Grant from NAFSA for the Arkansas International Student Leadership Conference. Members of the conference committee, which included Katherine Vlassek, Henderson State University; Wayne Garner, Southern Arkansas University; Suzanne Lee, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; Michael Freeman and Cornell McClellan, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville; Lisa Shoemake, University of Central Arkansas; Nicky Boyd, Harding University; and Sue and Dilok, met at Harding University in Searcy, AR on July 20. During this meeting, committee members planned the conference program and allocated responsibilities for different aspects of the conference.

On September 17 and 18, 2004, fifty-five international students from thirteen colleges and universities throughout Arkansas attended the weekend leadership retreat at Harding University. These students, who represented thirty countries including the U.S., participated in informational sessions and group activities designed to highlight American values and leadership techniques. The sessions and plenaries included such topics as strategic leadership, leadership styles, time and stress management and American values and ethics. Both the facilitators and the program format assisted students in networking and developing skills they could apply to their leadership roles on campus.

It is the view of the committee members that the conference was wildly successful. The written and the verbal feedback indicate that the participants thoroughly enjoyed the conference and greatly benefited from their experience. All of the students who attended said that they would be interested in participating in a similar conference in the future. The committee has tentatively planned the next leadership conference for fall 2006.

Save the Date!

**The Arkansas State Meeting will be held on April 22, 2005
on the University of Central Arkansas campus.**

Louisiana State Report



-- Alea Morelock Cot, State Representative

Louisiana was well-represented at the NAFSA Region III Meeting in Corpus Christi. Almost 30 members attended the State meeting, a number of them being newcomers to NAFSA. Welcome; it's great to have you on-board!!

At our State meeting, members discussed the up-and-coming issues of interest for 2005. These include: developing procedures with the local Social Security offices to assist our international students; specific training on J-1's and taxes; general tax compliance issues; waivers of non-resident fees by some public institutions; and SEVIS fee questions in relation to post-doc researchers. As always, we are challenged to keep up with fast-moving federal regulations and changes in state policies.

We also discussed the intention of the Louisiana Board of Regents to hold another International Education Symposium this May. LaNAFSA members will be asked for their help in this endeavor. It was very exciting to hear the support and enthusiasm for this conference that was expressed by fellow NAFSANS from Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma. I have agreed to join the Region III Advocacy Committee chaired by Adria Baker so that we can share Louisiana accomplishments and move forward our advocacy efforts as a Region. We hope that members of Region III outside of Louisiana will be able to attend our May symposium. We promise to keep you informed. We will be updating the Louisiana page soon to include more information about last year's symposium and updates on the planning for this year's forum.

Finally, it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as the Louisiana State Representative for the last two years. The most rewarding part for me has been the friendships and warm collegiality that I have experienced through NAFSA. What a fantastic group of hard-working, fun-loving folk! I am so honored to be able to continue to serve in a new capacity on the Advocacy Committee.

I am pleased to welcome Michelle Sadlier, Assistant Director for Study Abroad at Tulane University, as the new Louisiana State Representative. Michelle is very excited about her opportunity to serve and I know we all look forward to working with her for the next two years! Michelle, you can look forward to working with colleagues who possess great energy, enthusiasm, and dedication. Good luck!

Advocacy Corner: Advocacy Efforts in Region III

-- Adria Baker, Texas State Whip

Are advocacy efforts for international education making any difference at all? Absolutely YES! In fact this month, Congress approved a bill that increased funding for international education and exchange programs. I am convinced that it was the result of NAFSAs responding the Advocacy Alert requests and the easy on-line letter-faxing capability. Thank you to all of you who responded!

Advocacy Committee Update: As you may recall, in early 2004 the Region III team approved a proposal for the establishment of a new Region III Advocacy committee. Although there were no funds that could be allocated, that did not stop Region III in moving forward in breaking new ground in terms of advocacy. Under the creative mind and dedication of **Michele Stelljes**, and the hard work of **John Singleton**, funds have been raised for advocacy. **John** organized the first NAFSA Fun Run fundraiser. It was an unforgettable event to walk along Corpus Christi's seawall, see the beautiful ocean, and enjoy the company of fellow NAFSAs. This event creates a blueprint for other NAFSA events like it, and I truly want to acknowledge and thank **John** and **Michele** for making funds for advocacy possible for Region III!!!

The first Advocacy Update meeting was held on Sunday, October 31st. Attendance included NAFSA members from all four states, all sections, past chairs, national leadership, leaders of partnering international associations, and NAFSA Central staff. We discussed the following:

- 1) Background of the Region III Advocacy Committee and what has been accomplished to date.
- 2) All money raised for advocacy will be equally divided between the four states in Region III. Since the advocacy needs for each state are unique, there will not be a requirement to use the money for subsidizing a trip to Congressional Education Day, as was in the original proposal. NOTE: \$3650 were raised for advocacy at this conference, resulting in \$912.50 for each state to use as they work to tackle their most urgent advocacy needs. There will be an accountability system in place for requests for funding advocacy projects.
- 3) Create a focus and strategic plan so that a system is in place to deal with specific issues. A.) Some issues could be decided through a resolution from Region III. B.) Most issues will be dealt with through national NAFSA leaders, who are have a system in place to handle the needs.
- 4) Advocacy is a never-ending process. We cannot raise awareness of the realities of international education one time and believe that it will just stay in the forefront of policymakers. Clearly, they are constantly balancing many priorities, and international education usually is not the most urgent issue.

If you are interested in being on the Advocacy Committee please let me know. We will begin communicating with all members by the first of the year, so that you can begin to enhance international education in your state.

On a different note, I wish to commend the 60+ universities and colleges in Texas who presented copies of the state House Resolution 143 (which encourages international education exchange in Texas) to their presidents or key officials at their schools. At Rice University, for example, the presidents of the international student clubs, as well as study abroad leaders, officially presented the original copy of HR 143 to our new president. This allowed all parties the unique opportunity to discuss the importance of international education, which served as a significant tool in raising its awareness on campus with key decision-makers.

Finally, I wish to thank all of you for allowing Region III to do groundbreaking work in advocacy. We will do all we can to pave the road so that others might benefit from our efforts, but most importantly, international bridges can continue to be built through sending US students abroad and bringing international students and scholars to Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas!

Advocacy, continued

Inaugural Dia de Los Muertos Dash at the Region III Conference in Corpus Christi

-- John Singleton, Dash Coordinator

The 50th Anniversary of Region III kicked off with a run/walk along the beautiful Corpus Christi Bay sea wall. Over 90 NAFSANS and another 110 members of the Corpus Christi community participated in the event, with NAFSA proceeds going exclusively for advocacy efforts among the 4 states within Region III.

The event, co-sponsored by Roger Soler Sports of San Antonio, was the idea of Region Chair Michele Stelljes, who thought it might be a creative way to begin the conference in healthy fashion. From the number of participants from within NAFSA that completed the walk, many in Halloween or Dia de Los Muertos costume, this kick off was evidence that NAFSA Region 3 is "fit at fifty."

Many of the delegates from the Overseas Educational Advisors Office, the US State Department, and local NAFSANS mixed it up with Corpus Christi's best crop of runners, and even if the professional organization was no match for the Corpus elite, still fun was had by all. By record, at least 7 past Region III Chairs, as well as future chairs Dan Erickson and Julie Sinclair, participated in the event.

With over \$1200 dollars raised in the event, further efforts for advocacy within Region III will be augmented. Over the 2004 year, Region III enjoyed a very successful year in helping shape a international education policy, both at the state and national level. Both the financial and leadership contributions that have gone toward this effort will be furthered by the fun run, and kudos to all those in Region III who helped make this possible.

Regardless of the climate and the altitude, we will bring this same attitude to Colorado Springs next year, and hope that "Dia De Los Muertos" is the name only in spirit. A special thanks goes to Roger Soler Sports and all of the volunteers that participated from their end. From our side, special thanks goes to Millie Slaughter and her army of local volunteers.

NAFSA Participants who placed in 5k at Corpus Christi:

Womens

<u>Age</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>
20-24	Michelle Dawson	3rd
25-29	Gwen Roemer	1st
40-44	Brenda Robati	1st
45-49	DeDe Long	2nd

Mens

<u>Age</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>
30-34	Bongani Mikorongo	3rd
35-39	Michael Swift	2nd

Immigration Update

IMMIGRATION

-- Laura Hammons & Jim Nesmith, CIPP-RRs

This year's conference had a number of wonderful regulatory sessions such as those on undocumented aliens, 212(e) and advisory opinions, change of status, P/DSO issues, regulatory and consular updates. We appreciate all of you who presented and encourage those of you with interest to consider now what you might be able to contribute to next year's conference. Several of the presentations can be found on the NAFSA Region III website at <http://www.nafsa3.org/>. Another great first this year was the recording of the regulatory sessions on a single CD, giving some of you opportunity to attend other sessions of interests, and allowing you to take the regulatory sessions home with you.

The NAFSA Region III Team and the 50th Anniversary Committee did a fantastic job in helping us to celebrate the region's anniversary, and more than anything, this year's conference gave Jim and I the opportunity to reflect on why we do what we do. Most of us are in this field because we truly believe in international education and get pure joy from being a part of the process of bringing together international and US peoples for cultural and educational exchange. Although it seems that each year our responsibilities under the law increase and the time we have available to be involved with internationals on a personal level decreases, we believe that to truly help our students and scholars, we must take the utmost of care to meet those responsibilities and to stay up-to-date with the latest immigration information. Not to commit to these efforts can result in serious and sometimes catastrophic hardships for our students/scholars and can even jeopardize our programs. Even when we do everything right, the end result can still be extremely frustrating with lengthy data fixes, visa delays, and other problems which seem to arise in spite of our best efforts. Despite the difficulties, Jim and I continue to relish the opportunities we have to assist student/scholars achieve their dreams. When that happens, everyone wins and the goals of international education exchange are fully realized. As CIPP-RRs, we have the added pleasure of helping you help your students/scholars in meeting their goals. With that, we provide here some information that we hope will aid you in keeping up with the ever changing federal regulations.

USCIS District Office News:

InfoPass. For those in the San Antonio district, USCIS has now moved to the use of the InfoPass system. Student/scholars need to be sure to make an appointment utilizing this system before visiting. To find more information on InfoPass go to <http://infopass.uscis.gov/>.

Updated Contact Information. We also have updated contact information on many of the district offices, so please contact Laura (cipp@tamu.edu) for the latest version if you didn't pick up the updated handout USCIS District Information for your district office at Corpus Christi. District Handouts include the following districts: Dallas, El Paso, Memphis, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, and San Antonio.

Immigration Update, continued.

USCIS Texas Service Center News:

Updated forms. A new form I-102 was published by USCIS on 7/7/2004. Older versions of the form are no longer accepted. To keep up-to-date on the latest form changes see <http://uscis.gov/graphics/newforms.htm>.

COS and OPT approvals not showing in SEVIS as “Approved”. We have received a number of reports that OPT and changes of status that are approved by the Service Centers are not reflecting the approval in SEVIS. We would suggest you monitor these closely and request data fixes when necessary.

Removal of the Standardized Request for Evidence Processing Timeframe. On November 30, 2004, USCIS published a proposed rule (<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/04-26371.htm>) eliminating the required 12 week response time and allowing USCIS to set a time limitation based upon the complexity of the evidence being requested. The rule would also remove most provisions of the regulations that require issuance of a Request for Evidence (RFE) or Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID), thus allowing adjudicators to immediately deny a clearly ineligible application. Comments to this proposed rule must be submitted by January 31, 2005.

Adjustment of the Appeal and Motion Fees to Recover Full Costs. Another proposed rule (<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/04-26370.htm>) was published the same day, November 30, 2004, raising the fee for appeals and motions to reopen to \$385.00. Previously the fees were \$110 for each option. Comments on this rule are due before December 30, 2004.

Address Change for Certain Immigration Filings. USCIS published a notice recently that individuals filing certain applications (I-485, I-765, I-131) with USCIS should mail their forms directly to the Chicago Lockbox instead of submitting them to their District Office. Please note that this does NOT apply to those filing Form I-765 to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) based on F-1 or J-1 visa status, such as Optional Practical Training [category (c) (3) (i)], J-2 work authorization [category (c) (5)], or employment authorization based on Economic Hardship [category (c) (3) (iii)]. For more information about this notice see <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/04-25679.htm>.

Texas Service Center-NAFSA Liaison Meeting Solicitation for Questions. In early 2005 NAFSA hopes to meet with the Texas Service Center for its quarterly liaison meeting. If you have any concerns or questions you would like to have addressed during this meeting please email them to cipp@tamu.edu with subject line “Questions/Concerns for TSC-NAFSA liaison meeting.”

Consular News:

Visa Delays/Denials. On November 22, 2004, NAFSA launched a new online visa delay/denial web-based questionnaire to enable members to report visa delays/denials caused by non-Mantis cases. Visa delays caused by security advisory opinion requests should still be in a separate web-based system. Reporting both types of cases is important to enable NAFSA to monitor the types and numbers of visa delays/denials. For more information on both of these processes and to access these questionnaires, visit <http://www.nafsa.org/visadelay>.

Immigration Update, continued.

Visa Processing Times. The Department of State's web site has added a feature to allow you to check the estimated waiting time for nonimmigrant visa appointments and processing wait times at a particular embassy or consulate (http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_wait.php).

USICE SEVIS News:

SEVIS Fee. On November 1, 2004, SEVP made available to students and exchange visitors the option to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee locally using the Western Union Quick Pay™ service. This option is available in any country where Western Union offers its Quick Pay service. Detailed payment instructions, including instructions on how to complete the Quick Pay form, are posted on ICE's SEVIS web site at http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm.

SEVIS Release 4.14. SEVIS Release 4.14 is due to be implemented on January 7, 2005. Highlights include the addition of the SEVIS F/M recertification fields/functions, ability for P/DSOs to correct educational levels on Active records, printing of the subject/field remarks on the DS-2019s, section 212(e) information, effective date of J transfer, a new alert to notify of initial J records 15 days beyond the program begin date, and much more.

SEVIS Terminations for Failure to enroll. On November 1, 2004, SEVIS began automatically terminating Active SEVIS records 90 days after the Next Session Start Date for those who had not been registered. Although, notices reported that this would NOT affect students on OPT, we have been recently getting reports from several institutions that certain OPT records have been automatically terminated. Those records affected include those where the program end date was in the future, but where the student had not been registered within 90 days from the date noted in Next Session Start Date field.

For example, a student may have graduated in May 2004 and began a period of 12 months OPT from May 15, 2004, through May 14, 2005. The student's last registration event would have reflected a Current Session End Date of 5/15/2004 and a Next Session Start Date of 8/30/2004. If the student's program end date in SEVIS was listed as December 18, 2004, and had not been shortened to reflect the May 2004 graduation, the student would have been terminated in SEVIS on November 29, 2004.

This is occurring because SEVIS is looking for certain criteria in utilizing this automatic termination function. If the program end date is in the future, SEVIS will begin looking for a registration event even if an OPT event is pending or approved. If the record has not been registered, the SEVIS record will be terminated 90 days after the Next Session Start Date. If the program end date is in the past, with OPT pending or approved, SEVIS will not be looking for a registration event, and the event will left unaffected.

Because of this, we recommend that all P/DSOs who have not made a practice of shortening programs to check the records for those students on OPT. If you do encounter records that have been terminated in error please report this to the SEVIS Help Desk and request a data fix. If you have a large number of records that will need correction, the SEVIS Help Desk has been providing P/DSOs with a spreadsheet which will allow them to report all these errors with one ticket number. We know that SEVIS is aware of this issue, but we are not sure at this time how they plan to address it. Unless noted otherwise by SEVIS, we recommend that you begin

Immigration Update, continued

to utilize the shorten program function to shorten the program end dates for those students who have graduated. Students on OPT, who have not graduated, should continue to be registered in SEVIS until completion.

Employment Based News:

There has been a flurry of activity in the H-1B arena. First the cap was reached on the first day of the fiscal year. Then, Congress included some significant changes, some really welcome and some really bad news, to the H-1B program in the Fiscal 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill, including an exemption foreign nationals from the cap if they had Master's or higher degrees from a U.S. institution. Here's the details:

H1-B Cap reached — proposed regulation. On October 2, 2004, USCIS Service Centers started rejecting H-1B petitions filed for cap-subject employment beginning on or after that date. On November 23, 2004, USCIS published an official notice in the Federal Register that the FY2005 H-1B cap had been reached on October 1, 2004. The notice also temporarily suspended e-filing of H-1B petitions and included information on procedures for handling H-1B's filed before October 1, 2005. A copy of that notice is included can be found at <http://frwebgate1.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WAIIdocID=287692354786+0+0+0&WAIAction=retrieve>.

Omnibus Bill The good, the bad and the really stinko. Congress included some very interesting changes to the H-1B program in the FY 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Legislation. As with all legislation, the implementing regulations will be critical to the interpretation and application of the new provisions. This is a laundry list of those provisions:

The Good - ** Aliens who have earned a Master's or higher degree from a U.S. institution of higher education are exempt from the cap, with a numerical limitation of 20,000 per year. ** The DOL is required to provide four wage levels in governmental surveys to determine prevailing wages. Where an existing survey has only 2 levels, 2 intermediate levels may be created by (actual language of the bill) "dividing by 3, the difference between the 2 levels offered, adding the quotient thus obtained to the first level and subtracting that quotient from the second level." ** DOL must consider an employer to be in compliance with regulations if the employer has made a good faith effort to comply with regulations, notwithstanding a technical or procedural failure to meet such requirements. The devil will be in the regulatory details on this part. ** If an employer can establish that the manner in which the prevailing wage was calculated was consistent with recognized industry standards and practices to pay the prevailing wage and is subsequently found to have violated prevailing wage requirements, it will not be assessed fines or penalties for the violation.

The Bad - ** Reinstates the training fee as a permanent fixture and raises it from \$1,000 to \$1,500. The good news is that universities and colleges are still exempt the fee. ** The bill provides expanded authority for DOL to initiate investigations but more clearly defines reasonable cause that an employer is not in compliance with regulations and requires personal certification by the Secretary of Labor that reasonable cause exists.

The really stinko - ** Employers will now be required to pay 100% of the prevailing wage. Until now, only 95% was required. ** The bill added a new \$500 fraud fee which applies to everyone, including universities

Immigration Update, continued.

and colleges. The fee applies to employers filing an initial petition for an H-1B and applies only to the principal alien, i.e. dependents applying for H-4 status are not subject to the fee.

Other Employment-based News:

Some confusion resulted from USCIS's announcement of the expansion of its Direct Mail Program for I-485's. The requirement to submit I-485's to the Chicago lockbox facility does not apply to employment based applicants, only to family-based, diversity lottery and a few other unique categories. Employment based applications and related documents (I-485, I-131, I-765) still go to the Regional Service Center having jurisdiction over the place of employment. . These changes will *not* affect I-765s filed by F and M students, J exchange visitors, or other nonimmigrants.

New ETA-9035. The DOL announced the requirement of filing a new version of the Labor Certification Application for H-1B petitions. For those of us who file our ETA-9035's electronically on the DOL website, the new version is already incorporated therein. This new procedure is a result of changes relating to H-1B's for Singapore and Chile and the necessity to distinguish between standard H-1B's and those for Singapore and Chile.

Change, Change, and More Change: How Do We Keep Up?

It seems almost impossible to keep up with the large number of regulatory changes that occur on a daily basis, and by the time this newsletter is published, several other news pieces may have been published. There are a multitude of resources available, but few as comprehensive and reliable as those provided by NAFSA. We encourage you to make use of the wonderful NAFSA resources by going to www.nafsa.org/sevisresources and www.nafsa.org/practice. Check it daily!

As always, we enjoy serving you, and we hope to see you all at the upcoming State Meeting or at National Conference!

Interested in serving on the NAFSA Region III Team as Newsletter Editor?

The Region III Team is seeking to fill the Newsletter Editor position for the 2006-2007 term. If interested, please contact Teri Albrecht at:
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Development DEVELOPMENT

-- *Rebecca Crowell, Development Chair*

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