

Region III Newsletter

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Letter from New Chair-Elect



Dear fellow NAFSANS:

I regret that I was unable to be with you at the Region II and III NAFSA Conference. A statewide travel freeze, notwithstanding, I needed to remain in Louisiana to participate in my institution's recovery efforts. As you can imagine, there is still much work to be done.

I know that my colleagues in both regions worked hard to put on a very successful bi-regional. So, I congratulate all of you who labored to make this idea a reality. Judging from the number and breadth of sessions and activities, I trust that all participants benefited from the professional development opportunities provided by this conference. More importantly, I am sure that all of you benefited from re-connecting with your colleagues and developing new collegial relationships within and across our two regions.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Region III NAFSANS for electing me chair elect-elect. Please know that I will do everything to continue the very fine legacy of strong Region III leadership. And, I look forward to serving you, the members of Region III.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not use this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all my NAFSA colleagues and to your institutions for the wide outpouring of support that you have provided to us and to our students and scholars who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. I am so very proud to be a part of this great association and to have you as my colleagues.

Again, congratulations on a very successful conference.

Warmest Regards,
Janice M. Thomas, Ph.D.
Director, Office of International Students & Scholars
University of New Orleans
NAFSA Region III, Chair elect

2005 Bi-Regional Conference

Silent Auction was a Huge Success!

-- Julie Sinclair, Chair, Region III

The silent auction in Colorado Springs combined bi-regional traditions. Region II's tradition of state baskets was added to the annual silent auction done by Region III. A special thanks goes to the state representatives who put together such great baskets!

Region III raised \$1150 through this year's silent auction, which will go towards future conference scholarships for newcomers.

Thanks to everyone who donated and purchased the state baskets and other wonderful items!

Exhibitors Enjoyed Bi-Regional Conference

-- Rebecca Crowell, Development Chair

WOW! Is all that can be said for the terrific turn out from the exhibitors at the bi-regional conference in Colorado Springs. Fifty-five exhibitors including NAFSA were showcased in the exhibit hall. The exhibitors appreciated the two regions meeting together, and it didn't hurt that the location was the Broadmoor Resort.

The conference bags were sponsored by: Academic Programs, Pinnacle Insurance, and World Wide Education Services, Inc. With their generous contributions we were able to provide the conference bags to each conference attendee. T. W. Lord sponsored two of our coffee breaks.

Thanks to all who continue to support Region III!



2 YEAR

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

The Region II – Region III conference was wonderful! The surroundings in the Colorado Mountains set the stage for a conference filled with great interaction and a full slate of informative sessions. Two-year institutions were represented well this year with regard to session proposals and presentations. If you attended the conference, you know how exciting it was and that it was a great success. 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 in the mountains.

An informal Two-Year Institution Forum was scheduled to solicit member input regarding NAFSA's restructuring. In the new structure, there is no place for Two-Year Institution representation. Several regions have retained a place for Two-Year Institution representation, but that place does not exist in the national structure. Following an outcry from two-year representatives and members, a task force has been formed with representation from each region. Our region is in the fortunate position of having the task force chair as our representative. Rebecca Crowell is our representative and is doing a great job for us. Several good ideas were generated by attendees from both Region II and Region III. Stay tuned for new developments.

I hope you will start thinking about presenting at the 2006 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 and focusing on issues specific to the two-year campus. 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.

Education Abroad Report

-- Charla Bailey, Education Abroad Representative

EDUCATION ABROAD

Greetings fellow SECUSSA/Education Abroad members!

In looking back at 2005, we had a wonderful conference in Colorado Springs with Region III! This was a great opportunity to collaborate on presentations and interact with folks outside the region as well as within our region. A big THANK YOU to those who submitted and presented sessions. The evaluations were very positive and we had great representation of study abroad topics.

Looking ahead to 2006, there will be several meetings and conferences available. State meetings will be coming up, typically held in the spring. Watch for upcoming announcements regarding specific state dates. These meetings are good opportunities to interact in a smaller group and gain professional training in closer locations, which is always good regarding institutional time and budget expenditures.

Montreal will be host to our annual conference May 21-26. There will be a plethora of excellent speakers, sessions, and opportunities to network all in "The City of Festivals".

Our Region III conference will be held in November in Little Rock, Arkansas. We are such a fun region and this is an excellent opportunity to see familiar faces and meet new folks in addition to learning new and confirming current professional practices. And Little Rock is a beautiful location to boot! Specific information will soon be on the region III website at <http://www.nafsa3.org/>.

I encourage all of you to get involved with NAFSA by submitting a session proposal, volunteering with a conference or serving in a leadership position. We all have information and talents to share, whether they are new ideas or refresher updates. If you have any questions regarding how you can do this or would like more information, please feel free to contact me. As your SECUSSA/Education Abroad representative, I would love to hear from you regarding session topic ideas, general information for NAFSA, etc. Feel free to email me at: cbailey@tlu.edu.

Intensive English Program Report

--- Dave Burns, *Intensive English*

Program Representative

INTENSIVE ENGLISH

As you can see, we are no longer ATESL. Under the NAFSA reorganization, we are a part of the RAP group. However, Region III still wants us to have a distinct voice and is continuing our representation under the title "Intensive English Program Rep."

One of my concerns as your rep has been that we would get overlooked in the NAFSA reorganization. Thankfully, Region III has made it clear that they want to address the needs and interests of those in English as a second language programs and they want us to have representation. Julie Sinclair of Oklahoma City University is the current Chair of Region III and she is very supportive of not only our concerns, but also our importance to NAFSA. We are grateful to her for her support.

This is my last update as your rep. Mathelda Molina of ELS Language Center in Houston is your new rep for Intensive English Programs. Mathelda is especially knowledgeable about SEVIS in regards to intensive English programs. She has a lot of experience and is the person I go to with my tough questions. I think you will be pleased to have her representing us.

Thanks to those of you who presented at the Region III and Region II Bi-regional conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and thanks to those of you who were able to attend. The setting was incomparable and we were provided with good sessions. I hope we will continue to have strong representation in NAFSA conference sessions.

I want to thank you all for letting me represent you these past two years. It was an educational and rewarding experience and I hope I have made a worthwhile contribution, even if only a small one. NAFSA Region III is an impressive region. I encourage all of you to get involved with this organization and to help further and increase awareness of the importance of international education.

International Student & Scholar Advising Report

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR

-- Claudia "Penny" Lyons, International Student & Scholar Advising Representative

The Bi-Regional Conference in Colorado Springs was truly an event to remember. Unfortunately, there were no snowstorms outside, but there was a lot of excitement inside the Broadmoor Hotel complex with over 500 NAFSAs in attendance. This was a wonderful venue to host a conference of international educators with the beautiful Rocky Mountains as a backdrop to set the stage.

Through collaboration with my counterpart in Region II (Barb Seekins) we were able to coordinate our efforts to seek great sessions, rank them for the conference, and assess the results. Of course, we were able to use email to our advantage since the distance between our campuses prevented face to face meetings except for mainly the pre-conference meeting. Thank goodness for modern technology!!!

There were plenty of Student and Scholar Services (former CAFSS) sessions available during the conference. A wide variety of session topics included: SEVIS RTI and other SEVIS issues, institutional recertification, FERPA and other legislation issues, taxes, student orientation, CPT, advising, student employees, and many more.

I am looking forward to Little Rock for the 2006 Region III Conference. Now is the time to begin thinking about sessions because time really flies and the next conference is just around the corner. Let's get started early and have the best conference ever!!!

Get in the Expertise Profile Database

Now is the time to enter your profile in NAFSA's expertise database. Don't let the "word" expertise make you think this is only for experts. You have valuable skills and knowledge that are important to the region and NAFSA at large.

Take a few minutes to complete your Expertise Profile to showcase your skills and experience. You will have the opportunity to indicate your general areas of skill (e.g. budget management, writing/editing, strategic planning, etc.) and your experience in international education (e.g. marketing, credential evaluation, student/scholar orientation, area studies program management, etc.)

Expertise Profiles will be searched by the Nominations Committee and chairs of committees, knowledge communities, regions, subcommittees, and task forces to identify potential committee/team chairs and members. You will be considered for positions requiring the combination of skills and experience you include in your profile. Both longer term and shorter term positions come up throughout the year, so please update your profile on-line as needed to keep it accurate and complete.

Advocacy Corner



An Offer You Can't Refuse: Easy Options With Effective International Outcomes

-- Adria Baker, Chair, Region III Advocacy Committee

NAFSA identified advocacy as a top priority again this year. Each of us have been called by our association to be an advocate for important issues affecting international education. But, what really is an “advocate”? Webster defines an “advocate” as: “1-One that pleads the case of another. 2-One that defends or maintains a cause or proposal”.

NAFSA provides various easy options, allowing us to be international education advocates:

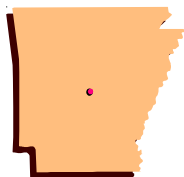
- 1) You can join NAFSA's Advocacy Centered Team (ACT), which allows you to learn about advocacy alerts before the rest of the NAFSA membership. Further, it targets people by their zip codes. When issues arise where your specific legislator is involved, you as a constituent will be more effective in your response. To be come part of this group, register at: http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy/join_nafsas_new_advocacy
- 2) You can join Region III's Advocacy Committee.
- 3) You can write a Quick Advocacy Tip for one of the bi-monthly tips. (To read previous tips, visit: <http://www.nafsa3.org/advocacy/advocacy.asp>. To participate on either option #2 or #3, please contact: Adria Baker; email: abaker@rice.edu; telephone: 713-348-6095.
- 4) You can easily participate in the NAFSA Advocacy Alerts by periodically visiting and following the prompts from: http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy. Be sure to add 3-4 sentences (at least) as a personalized paragraph at the beginning of each letter.
- 5) You can stay tuned on how you can have fun, and at the same time, raise funds for Region III to send someone to represent your state at the next Advocacy Day.
- 6) Finally, in speaking of Advocacy Day. . .the year 2006 was designated by the Senate as the “Year of Study Abroad”. We hope to have a more visible presence on Capitol Hill this year and you are personally invited to participate in what is hoped to be NAFSA's largest ever Advocacy Day event. Advocacy Day, which will be held on March 29-30, 2006, provides you with the opportunity to travel to the nation's capital to meet with your Members of Congress, or their staff members, on issues related to international education and exchange. You can help raise awareness of the importance of a comprehensive strategy—which would include government, higher education, and the business community—to establish education abroad as an integral component of U.S. undergraduate education, with a focus on diversity in participants and destinations.

Advocacy Corner, cont.

Additionally, NAFSA encourages you to “Bring a Buddy” – to reach out to your colleagues on your campus and in your state to encourage new members to participate. Many members are intimidated by going into these meetings alone, so bringing a buddy from your campus and/or your state will help members by having a colleague to accompany them to their meetings. Bringing a buddy along with you can also help lower costs by sharing hotel rooms, transportation cost to and from the airport, etc.

This year, NAFSA focuses advocacy efforts on the following three issue areas: 1) Study Abroad, 2) A U.S. International Education Policy, & 3) International Student and Scholar Access

To register for Advocacy Day, please visit [www.nafsa.org/advocacy day](http://www.nafsa.org/advocacyday) <<http://www.nafsa.org/advocacyday>> . All registration forms must be received by February 28, 2006. (NOTE: Information on Advocacy Day was taken from NAFSA’s website.)



Arkansas State Report

-- *Audra Johnson, Arkansas State Representative*

I am honored and excited to be selected as your new state representative for Arkansas. I also wish to express Arkansas’ appreciation to Lisa Shoemake, our outgoing state rep, for her service in this position. Our state meeting will be held Friday, April 21, at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. We are looking forward to gathering and growing our group of Arkansas NAFSAns, and to sharing some encouraging and educational time together! Arkansas members will be receiving more information via e-mail in the near future.



Texas State Report

-- *Bob Crosier, North Texas State Representative & Maggie Pinson, South Texas State Representative*

It was great to see so many Texas NAFSAns at the Bi-Regional Conference in Colorado Springs in November. This was an extremely successful conference with the special advantage this year of comparing regional traditions with our colleagues in Region II.

The NAFSA Texas State Meeting will be on Monday, February 20, 2006, in College Station. Training workshops will be available on Tuesday, February 21. This will be a valuable opportunity for professional development as well as seeing old friends. For more information, go to <www.nafsa3.org>. We’re also looking forward to having a large Texas contingent at the Annual Conference in May in Montreal.

We officially welcome Maggie Pinson of UTMB Galveston as the new Texas Co-representative, and we again thank Kristalina Karabunarlieva of the University of Houston for her two years of meritorious service as a Texas representative on the Region III team.



Oklahoma State Report - - Sunny Garner, Oklahoma State Representative

We have an eventful day planned for the Oklahoma State NAFSA Meeting hosted at Oklahoma City Community College in Oklahoma City on February 23, 2006. Our own Julie Sinclair, Chair of Region III, will begin the business meeting with updates from the National and Regional NAFSA level. Julie Sinclair from Oklahoma City University (OCU) is an instrumental part of the NAFSA Team and we are privileged to have her in Oklahoma. As the outgoing Oklahoma State Rep, Tamara Newell from Oklahoma Christian University (OC) has a unique perspective and will speak about her experiences and thoughts for the future for international education. We will announce the appointment of Tim Huff from Oklahoma State University (OSU) to serve as the Oklahoma NAFSA Representative for Advocacy Day March 29th and 30th, 2006, in Washington, D.C. As the outgoing Advocacy Day Representative, Jalal Daneshfar from the University of Central Oklahoma will discuss the advocacy issues he encountered in the last year.

The morning sessions include topics for developing legislation, language schools and study abroad. A special thanks to Douglas Stump, P.C., Brenda Robati (President of The Language Company), Gerry Auel (OSU) and John Osborne (OC) for the morning sessions. A great appreciation is offered to our guest panel including Citizenship and Immigration Service representative Tommie Nicholas, immigration attorney Douglas Stump and Social Security Administration Representative Lisa Hardin who will share their expertise and experience with NAFSAns regarding international students.

Advocacy is a concern for NAFSAns nationwide and remains a hot topic in Oklahoma. We are so fortunate to have Dr. Adria Baker from Rice University, the Region III Advocacy Chair, present the afternoon session about the most recent changes and NAFSA involvement in advocacy. Dr. Adria Baker has provided a unified effort for NAFSAns to develop strategy and take part in international student advocacy and we offer special thanks for her attendance.

I would like to recognize Dr. Tom Karman from Oklahoma Baptist University for processing registration for the State Conference, the NAFSA planning Committee and Oklahoma City Community College planning Committee. Thanks to Tim Huff for maintaining the State of Oklahoma website, providing the online registration format and notifying Oklahoma NAFSAns electronically. Thanks to Ms. Regina Henry (OSU) who continues to provide fellow NAFSAns with leadership. Thanks to Robert Soulliere for notifying Region III members electronically of the Conference.

We have an exciting year ahead and with so many dedicated NAFSAns, we are sure to meet challenges and entertain new ideas. We can all participate in NAFSA and support our international students and fellow international educators. As a team, we can look at developing ideas and expand our knowledge while promoting international student advocacy and awareness.

Immigration Update

IMMIGRATION

-- Laura Hammons & Jim Nesmith, CIPP-RRs

It was a whirlwind fall 2005, filled with both tragedy and extraordinary displays of generosity. We continue to wish the best for those in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita-affected areas. As our sister institutions re-open and continue to recover, let's keep them in our thoughts and offer our hand of support. The Bi-Regional Conference in Colorado Springs was a terrific success. It was a wonderful experience to collaborate with other CIPP-RRs and student/scholar advisors from Region II and the outcome of that collaboration was a series of wonderful sessions and workshops from SEVIS Help Desk Tours, Port-of-Entry issues, and dealing with the fright of 212(e) determinations. A number of the session presentation materials can be found at the Region III website (<http://www.nafsa3.org/>) under the Regulatory Updates link. The F-1 Update Session collected a handful of questions, some of which were answered during the Update, some answered by CIPP-RRs following the session, and others have been passed along to the appropriate federal agencies. We hope to post those responses to the website in the near future. Thanks to all of you who presented!

In immigration land, changes continue to be the norm. Of importance to many in Region III has been the response of NAFSA, USCIS and SEVP following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. They have all been very responsive in trying to assist schools and students affected. NAFSA has done a wonderful job of compiling this information on their website at http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/nafsa_responds_to_hurricane. Other news follows:

USCBP News:

US-VISIT continued expansion. USCBP announced on September 26, 2005, the scheduled expansion of biometric entry procedures to additional land border ports of entry with Canada and Mexico, with a planned completion date of December 31, 2005. For more details visit <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4858>.

USCIS News:

Updated forms and fees. USCIS has increased fees and updated forms this fall. Updates can be found at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/newforms.htm>.

Recent news. Other Texas Service Center (TSC) updates can be found on the Region III Regulatory Updates webpage under the F-1 Update presentation and the August 29, 2005 TSC-NAFSA Liaison Summary. Although, TSC was unable to attend the Bi-Regional Conference they did respond to pre-submitted questions and provided a number of I-765 tips and hints.

How to request a replacement EAD. We receive a number of questions each year regarding lost EADs. If an EAD is approved, does not reach the applicant, yet is not returned to the Service Center, TSC will require that the applicant file for a replacement EAD. An Inter-I message some months ago provided guidance that an I-695 form could be filed to replace a lost EAD. Please note that this is **not** the appropriate form. According to TSC, the I-695 is an old form for asylees that is no longer in use. To file a replacement EAD, have the applicant file a new I-765 noting "replacement" as reason for filing. They will also need to submit a new fee, new pictures and a copy of the previous application.

Immigration Update, continued.

Biometrics fee. We have also received a number of questions regarding the new fee for biometrics that is required for the I-765 application. USCIS does not explain who needs to pay the biometrics fee on their website, but note that this is not required for F-1 or J-2 applicants, unless they file the application electronically. This fee is normally required for adjustment of status applicants filing I-765s. The I-765 form notes: "If your application requires a biometric services fee for USCIS to take your fingerprints, photograph or signature, you can use the same procedure above to confirm the biometrics fee."

USDOS Consular News:

New visa procedures and policies for TCNs in Mexico. The U.S. Embassy in Mexico announced that beginning October 17, 2005, a Third Country National (TCN) who wishes to apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate in Mexico must make the interview appointment on-line via a new web site. Also announced are specific policies on who is and is not eligible for TCN processing in Mexico. Visit <http://www.visa-usa.com.mx/default.aspx> for more information.

Student Visas and Immigrant Intent. A September 28, 2005, DOS cable provides guidance for consular officers on how to interpret the immigrant intent provisions when adjudicating student visa applications. The cable can be found at http://www.nafsa.org/_/Document/_/september_28_2005_dos.html.

USICE SEVP News:

SEVP has moved-new mailing address for I-515As and other mailings. SEVP has recently announced a move to their new location. Effective December 12, 2005, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will relocate to the Chester Arthur Building (CAB). The SEVP mailing address as of this date is:

425 I Street N.W.
Room 6034
Washington, D.C. 20536

Be sure to update your I-515A and other SEVP mailing addresses. You can continue to reach SEVP at the same phone number, fax number and email addresses:

Phone: 202.305.2346 / FAX: 202.353.3723

For general inquiries: SEVIS.Source@dhs.gov / For technical questions: Toolbox.SEVIS@dhs.gov

The SEVIS Helpdesk can continue to be reached at the same number and email: 800.292.4829 or SEVIShelpdesk@eds.com

Immigration Update, continued.

NAFSA-Government Liaison Summaries. Summaries of NAFSA calls with DHS and DOS regarding SEVIS are posted at: http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/get_sevis_information/nafsa_sevis_resources#SEVISliaison. The most recent summary posted (with a technical focus) is from October 2005.

Web-based DSO training. SEVP also made available an online training for DSOs. The training can be viewed online at: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/schools/index.htm>. Note that NAFSA is aware of a number of discrepancies in the training program vs. common DSO practice and/or regulations. These are being discussed within NAFSA and will be brought to the attention of SEVP for clarification.

SEVIS Release 5.1. SEVIS 5.1 was released on December 6, 2005 and includes the ability for some PDSO corrections. These include

- .. Change from Canceled status to Initial status for 15 days after the record was canceled.
- .. Change from Active status to Initial status for 15 days after the record was changed to status providing there are no requests on the record except for change of status.

The system will be enhanced to allow the PDSO to correct an F-1 student's program end date allowing an additional 15 days after the current program end date to record an extension. The program end date may not exceed 1 year beyond the current program end date. The system will allow a PDSO or DSO to correct a student's record from Canceled or Completed status to Terminated status. These options will be listed under the **Corrections** menu on the *Student Information* screen. More information on the 5.1 release, including a series of training slides, can be found at: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/schools/index.htm>.

We hope to see some of you at the upcoming NAFSA Texas State Meeting in Aggieland, College Station!

Message from Laura Hammons

Region III colleagues,

It has been my pleasure to serve you as the Region III CIPP-RR for student issues these past two years. On January 29th, I left my position as Program Coordinator in the International Student Services at Texas A&M and began a new position as Senior Administrative Coordinator in the Office of Admissions and Records at Texas A&M, working with graduate and international admissions. I am excited to announce that Maka Hutson, Immigration Advisor from UT Austin, has graciously agreed to take over my role on the team and is excellently equipped to serve you.

With the change in NAFSA structure, the CIPP-RR (Committee on Immigration Policy and Practice Regional Representatives) position has recently become a subcommittee of the Policy and Practice Committee and has been renamed Regulatory Ombudsmen/women. Maka, then, will serve as the Region III Regulatory Ombudsperson for student issues. She can be reached at: maka@austin.utexas.edu.

I would like to thank you all for your support during these past two years. As colleagues and as friends, I will miss working with you. I hope to see you at future NAFSA conferences. My email address of <lhammons@tamu.edu> should remain the same.

Best wishes,
Laura R. Hammons