

## Region III Newsletter

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## Letter from Chair

### Region III Comes Back to Arkansas

-- Julie Sinclair, Region III Chair



After an amazingly successful bi-regional conference in Colorado Springs, we return this year to Region III, specifically to Little Rock, Arkansas. The Colorado conference proved to have many cross-cultural opportunities, combining the traditions of two regions and bringing us a group of twenty overseas advisors.

This year's regional conference will be November 7-9, 2006, at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock. We will surely have outstanding sessions, great exhibitors, and fun events to offer. Our off-site event will be held at the new Clinton Library. Of course, we can't forget one of the highlights – the Peabody Hotel's famous flock of ducks and the daily duck march.

Our region has certainly had its share of challenges in the past twelve months. Chief among those were hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which greatly impacted many of our colleagues and students. Many of you hosted students from affected institutions. The Region III team and members are committed to providing assistance to our colleagues and students in any way that we can. We plan to offer travel grants for conferences and also special training. All ideas you have are also welcome. We want our colleagues to know that we truly care and are standing with them as they rebuild their institutions and their lives.

In this newsletter we have updates from our state and Knowledge Community representatives, information about the conference and session proposals, as well as updates on advocacy and immigration. A huge thank you goes to all who contributed articles, and especially to our new Newsletter Editor, Lisa Tauferner!

## Development/Sponsorship

-- 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 International, 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!

# 2006 Region III Conference

## Flock to Little Rock for the Region III Conference

-- Sue Marlay, Local Arrangements Co-Chair

Arkansas NAFSAs extend a warm welcome to everyone in Region III. We are delighted to host this year's regional conference in Little Rock from Tuesday, November 7 through Thursday, November 9.

Little Rock has really come into its own over the last two years with the opening of the Clinton Presidential Library in the downtown area. The ever-expanding River Market District boasts many shops, restaurants, pubs and pavilions for special events. Museums within blocks of the downtown hotels include the Old State House Museum, the Historic Arkansas Museum, the Museum of Discovery, Central High School Museum and the Arkansas Arts Center. There is now a complimentary trolley that connects many hotels with the River Market and the Clinton Presidential Center. For those so inclined, the newly developed hiking trail along the banks of the Arkansas River offers an opportunity for a much-needed stretch after a long day of conference sessions.

The venue for this year's conference is The Peabody Little Rock, Arkansas' only "five-duck" hotel. Located in the heart of downtown, the Peabody offers unsurpassed luxury and well-appointed guest rooms. Its world-class Capriccio Grill serves excellent pasta and seafood, not to mention the best steaks in the city. Elegant ballrooms and meeting spaces, a state-of-the-art fitness center, and the ever-so-famous Peabody ducks complete the experience.

We look forward to treating everyone to an outstanding conference experience this fall.

### Submit Your Session Proposal

The heart of every conference is the wonderful array of sessions given by our members, you! This year's conference in Little Rock promises to be another great one. Little Rock is on the banks of the Arkansas River, and our conference theme this year is "Old River: New Currents in International Education". We encourage you to talk to colleagues at other institutions and come up with an innovative session idea.

Some of these "new currents" include the addition of new areas of international education to NAFSA, specifically the Knowledge Communities of International Education Leadership and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship. We would like to have at least one session reflecting each of these new KCs at the regional conference. This is also the "Year of Study Abroad", so we hope to see many excellent sessions highlighting new currents in study abroad.

The Peabody Hotel in Little Rock "bills" itself as the only "5 Duck Hotel" due to its resident flock of ducks in the hotel fountain. In honor of the ducks, we will have a contest for the most creative duck, poultry, or waterfowl themed session title. The winning chair and presenters will receive a fun prize. Update on "un-duck-umented aliens" perhaps?

The Early Bird deadline is May 30<sup>th</sup>. The chair and presenters of a session submitted by the early bird deadline and accepted for the conference will each receive a 10% discount on the early conference registration fee. **The final deadline for submission is June 30<sup>th</sup>.**

To submit a session proposal, go to the following links:

To create a session: <http://nafsa3.org/conferences/regional2006/sessions/createchair.asp>

To edit information already submitted: <http://nafsa3.org/conferences/regional2006/sessions/chairlogin.asp>

# Region III Conference

## Art for Advocacy

Advocacy is an important part of the mission of NAFSA and of Region III. We are fortunate to have Adria Baker from Rice University as the Region III Advocacy Chair. She has done a tremendous job in promoting and coordinating advocacy efforts and giving our members training on how to do advocacy. A huge “thank you” from the Region to Adria! Adria was recently selected as NAFSA’s first ever Advocate of the Year.

Two years ago Region III hosted an advocacy fundraiser in Corpus Christi, a highly successful 5k fun run. Those funds have allowed the region to send one representative from each of our 4 states to Advocacy Day in 2005 and 2006. That means Region III was 100% represented in Washington D.C.

At this year’s regional conference we will hold another fundraising event called “Art for Advocacy”. There is so much creative talent among our Region III members. We encourage you to contribute an original work of art, such as a drawing, painting, sculpture, quilt, or photograph for this event. You can also ask artists you know if they would like to contribute a piece. All funds will go for future advocacy efforts.

So, pull out that paintbrush and dust off those colored pencils! This will surely be a great event!

## Fall Regional Conference Workshops Announced

The following CEP workshops have been announced for the NAFSA Region III November Conference in Little Rock:

- Foreign Credential Analysis (12 hour)
- F-1 Regulations for Beginners (8 hour)
- F-1 Regulations: The Second Step (8 hour)
- Pathways to Permanent Residency (8 hour)
- Development and Management of Education Abroad Programs (8 hour)
- Half day home grown ESL workshop (4 hour)

Region III is excited to be offering these workshops and we encourage everyone to consider taking advantage of this opportunity for important professional development.

## Region III Conference Silent Auction

-- Janice M. Thomas, Region III Chair-Elect

It’s not too late to begin thinking about the silent auction and what you will bring. Region III has a strong tradition of fundraising to provide direct support to our members. You will recall that the silent auction has become one of region’s most successful fundraising events. This year we are pleased to announce that half the proceeds will again support newcomer scholarships and half will support hurricane relief grants for our colleagues in areas affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

# NAFSA news

## **'Whipping' Up Support for International Education**

(From NAFSA.news: Vol. 11, No. 13 ; April 10, 2006)

On March 29, during NAFSA's Advocacy Day, NAFSA President Mariam Assefa presented Adria Baker with the first Advocate of the Year Award.

Assefa lauded Baker for five dedicated years of work to keep international education front and center on the agenda of the state government in Austin as well as the Texas congressional delegation. Assefa noted that in her role as state whip, Baker has "consistently 'whipped' her colleagues to write letters in response to NAFSA action alerts; and as a result, her state has consistently generated significant letters to Congress."

Last year, Baker successfully spearheaded her state's effort to secure passage of an international education policy resolution and then encouraged and assisted her colleagues to do the same in their respective states (see *California, Louisiana, Texas, Nevada: Putting Their States on the International Education Map, International Educator, November/December 2005*).

As the chair of the Region III Advocacy Committee, Baker engaged in creative advocacy activities by organizing fundraiser to help the region send participants to Advocacy Day. She also works with NAFSA to recruit new members to participate in the whip network, and frequently serves as a presenter on grassroots advocacy at various conferences.

As a result of her continued efforts on behalf of international education, Baker was recently invited by the director of the Texas Homeland Security to join the Critical Infrastructure Protection Council as it addresses the REAL ID issue. As the first recipient of this award, Baker has set a high standard for those who will follow.

## **NAFSA IssueNet Helps Shape Public Policy and Advocacy Strategy**



NAFSA has a powerful new tool in pulling together input from its members to help inform, educate, and shape strategy. Take a look for yourself at [http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory\\_information.sec/get\\_help\\_with\\_your\\_issue/issuenet](http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/get_help_with_your_issue/issuenet) NAFSA members are invited to submit issues related to problems caused by government regulations and policies. Help determine NAFSA's advocacy agenda. "When you submit your issues to NAFSA using IssueNet, you are helping to shape the way things get done in the federal government," says Lawrence Bell, NAFSA Vice President for Public Policy and Practice.

The site gives an opportunity to read about "Hot Issues" and instructions on reporting problems and issues caused by government regulations and policies. It also shows you exactly what happens to your input and how it is used to help our students.

IssueNet can only be a useful instrument when we make the commitment to use it to help our students and bring problems out into the open. Advocacy can effect change.

# NAFSA news

## Montreal Conference Coming Quickly

The NAFSA Annual Conference and Expo will begin May 21<sup>st</sup> and is just weeks away. With a theme of “Advancing Our International Commitment” and being located in one of the most beautiful, cosmopolitan, French cities in the world, the 2006 Conference will be unforgettable. J’ai le grand plaisir de vous inviter à visiter la ville magnifique de Montréal! If you cannot be in Paris in April, make sure to be in Montreal in May. Log on to [http://www.nafsa.org/annual\\_conference](http://www.nafsa.org/annual_conference)

## Bonjour!

Once again, the LAT (Local Arrangements Team) will be sponsoring a **Student Mentor Program** for student attendees. In order for this program to be a success, we rely on the assistance of professionals as yourselves to take a student under your wings and help them navigate the conference. The time commitment is minimal. There are two planned sessions at the beginning and at the end of the conference, and in between those two times we hope that you will be able to help students identify events that could be of value to them. I will match you up as best I can based on your and their backgrounds.

If you want to participate, please e-mail me at [andrew.lang@plattsburgh.edu](mailto:andrew.lang@plattsburgh.edu) with:

1. Your name & 2. A brief statement about your professional background.

Times for the two planned events are below, and you will receive more details closer to the conference. I am also going to try to do the match up before the conference starts and ask that the students send you a brief e-mail introducing themselves before the Matching Meeting.

Merci et à bientôt,

Andy Lang, Student Mentor Chair

### PLANNED SESSIONS FOR STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAM

Student/Mentor Matching Meeting - Tuesday, May 23rd, 8-9 a.m. (Palais des congrès, room TBA)

Student/Mentors Gathering - Thursday, May 25th, 5:45-6:45 p.m. (Le Centre Sheraton, room TBA)

## Restructuring in the Region

In the past few years NAFSA has undergone a major restructuring. Part of this effort was the creation of five Knowledge Communities (KC's) and fourteen networks. One of the great challenges for each NAFSA region has been how to transition to this new structure. Region III has made a few changes to the titles of the regional team members, but all of the previous sectional areas are still fully represented.

The first decision of the team was to do away with acronyms. Three of the Knowledge Communities represent areas that are already familiar: Admissions, Recruitment, and Preparation; Education Abroad, and International Student and Scholar Services. The sectional representatives on the Region III team are now Admissions (formerly ADSEC), Intensive English Programs (formerly ATESL), Education Abroad (formerly SECUSSA), International Student and Scholar Advising (formerly CAFSS), and Campus and Community Programming (formerly COMSEC). Each of these areas is critically important in international education, and we are committed to continuing their representation on the team. Having descriptive titles for these team positions will help newcomers to NAFSA and to the region identify the team members that work in their areas. We will also continue to have a Two Year Institution Representative.

NAFSA also has two Knowledge Communities that represent new groups within international education, International Education Leadership and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship. These areas will be represented by current team members. Our Past Chair, Dan Erickson, will be the contact person for International Education Leadership, and our Chair-Elect, Janice Thomas, will be the contact person for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship. If you have questions about these new KC's, please contact Dan or Janice. The full team list is available at [www.nafsa3.org/team.asp](http://www.nafsa3.org/team.asp)

Another change is in our government liaison positions. These were formerly called "CIPP-RR's" (Council on Immigration Policy and Practice – Regional Representative). They are now called "Regulatory Ombudspersons". This was a national change affecting every region. An Ombudsperson is literally one who "negotiates with the government". We have two "Regulatory Ombudspersons" for student issues and for scholar and employment issues. They are our regional liaisons for the USCIS Texas Service Center. As such they perform an invaluable service to the region but also carry a heavy load. They should be contacted only for direct case intervention issues.

For general questions about immigration regulations, please consult NAFSA's Advisor Manual, knowledgeable colleagues in the region, or our International Student and Scholar Advising Representative, Penny Lyons.

## Enter the Skills & Experience Profile Database

Region III has a great tradition of raising leaders from big and small institutions. All that has been required has been a willingness to be involved. NAFSA is trying to encourage members to log on and register on the (Skills and Experience Profile) Expertise Profile site at [http://www.eseries.nafsa.org/ScriptContent/member\\_expertise.cfm](http://www.eseries.nafsa.org/ScriptContent/member_expertise.cfm) so that the regions will have a pool of resources to contact and draw from. But our problem is that Region III'ers do not like to call themselves experts. They like to think of themselves as folks that have just picked up on a few things along the way.

Well, log on and register anyway! Get In It! That's the motto of the Leadership Development Committee's new (Skills and Experience Profile) Expertise Profile, a way for you to indicate your skills and interest in serving the association. Don't be shy. Take two minutes and log on to [http://www.eseries.nafsa.org/ScriptContent/member\\_expertise.cfm](http://www.eseries.nafsa.org/ScriptContent/member_expertise.cfm) .

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 online as needed to keep it accurate and complete.



## Two-Year Institution Report

-- Reginald Cooper, Two-Year Institution Representative

Hello colleagues and fellow NAFSAns!

Preparations are well under way for the Region III conference to be held in Little Rock, Arkansas. I hope you are making plans to duck in and meet with your friends and colleagues at the Peabody. As a group, two-year institutions were nicely represented with regard to session presentations at the Colorado Springs Bi-Regional Conference last year. I hope we will continue to do as well, or better, this year.

If, for some reason, things did not come together for you last year, Little Rock can be your opportunity. You may have something different or a new spin on something common. In either case, share what you are doing with the rest of us. We need you to showcase some of the things that are happening on the two-year campuses. If you have a desire to be a presenter, please complete 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.

I hope to see you in Little Rock for the Regional Conference because this is the best way for us to stay current so our students will have access to a well-informed resource and ally on campus. This one-stop resource for current information, best practices and collegial resources is the best buy on the market. Even if the campus attracts only a small number of international students, that one, two or ten students need to have a well-informed resource and ally on campus. Please contact me at any time to share your ideas, concerns or if you need to talk with a colleague - [rcooper@sautech.edu](mailto:rcooper@sautech.edu). I am looking forward to two-year institutions' regional participation.

## Education Abroad Report

-- Charla Bailey, Education Abroad Representative

Greetings Region III Members! Spring has sprung and summer is quickly approaching - another academic year has flown by. I hope it was a successful one for you.

This year is an exciting one for Education Abroad as it has been deemed "The Year of Study Abroad" by the U.S. Senate. This is the perfect time to create or enhance awareness and excitement about education abroad on your campus and community. A Year of Study Abroad Network has been established on the NAFSA website at: [http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge\\_community\\_network.sec/education\\_abroad\\_1/year\\_of\\_study\\_abroad\\_3](http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/education_abroad_1/year_of_study_abroad_3). A link of monthly themes has been created to spur discussions and sharing of information about vital areas surrounding education abroad. A second link is available for resources, ideas, initiatives, and facts associated with the respective themes. I highly encourage you to check out and contribute to the website.

In addition to sharing information via the internet, the regional conference in the fall will be a wonderful opportunity for professional development in person. The meeting will be held November 6-9 with workshops the first day and a half. The Education Abroad workshop, "Development and Management of Education Abroad Programs" will be offered. I hope to have many education abroad sessions throughout the conference as well. We can't do that without you! If you are interested in sharing what you do on your campus, an idea in which you are particularly interested, a general discussion topic, etc., please consider proposing a session. The session proposal deadline will be May/June and will be announced on the regional website at <http://www.nafsa3.org/> along with other conference information.

If you have any questions about any of the above or other topics, please feel free to contact me at [cbailey@tlu.edu](mailto:cbailey@tlu.edu). Have a great summer!

## **Intensive English Program Report-**

-- Mathelda M. Molina, Intensive English Program Representative

Howdy from your new IEP representative!

I am the International Student Advisor for ELS Language Centers / Houston and the Sevis Coordinator for ELS Language Centers. ELS Language Centers / Houston is affiliated with the University of Saint Thomas in Houston, Texas. In February, the Region III Team met at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas to plan our November conference. The Peabody is a nice hotel and the orchestrated arrival and departure of the ducks to and from the hotel pond is reason enough to start planning to attend the upcoming conference as well as proposing a conference session.

During the last several years, Intensive English Program representatives have participated with less frequency at the regional level due to the decreased number of students coming to the United States for English study. We IEPs are one of the smaller, if not the smallest, groups within NAFSA, but we have a very important role to play and it is up to us to keep a strong presence. Nancy Kintsel, the Center Director of our Oklahoma Center, and I will present a half-day ESL workshop at the Regional Conference in Little Rock, about which we will have more details to share as the conference approaches.

One of my colleagues, Jeff Hutcheson, Center Director of our Nashville Center, shared with me the information on a new amendment which is now in the Senate, the purpose of which is to "reduce the fee imposed on aliens participating in short-term study programs, permit certain courses to be considered recreational in nature, and require accreditation of certain language programs for aliens." If passed, this will be an enormous benefit for IEPs. I look forward to communicating with all of you, so please feel free to contact me at Mmolina@els.edu or (713) 521-2030. Please help me to be an effective IEP representative. Remember that we are all in this together.

## **International Student & Scholar Advising Report**

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

Dear Region III NAFSAs,

As your KC-ISSS (formerly CAFSS) representative, I am looking forward to the upcoming regional conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. We will need sessions dealing with taxes, orientation, programs, advising and counseling, medical issues, OPT, and CPT, although any session proposal will be considered.

With the new NAFSA organization system there are some changes in my title as well as my role. The Knowledge Community (KC) for which I am responsible is the ISSS (International Student and Scholar Services in Region III). If you would like to present a session of a regulatory nature (which does not involve government representatives) then it will fall under the KC-ISSS jurisdiction according to the new NAFSA role differentiation guidelines. Regulatory sessions that involve having government representation are the responsibility of the Regulatory Ombudsperson.

Additionally, my role is to mentor and provide regulatory assistance in areas that are not case-specific such as questions about forms, change of status, OPT, CPT, etc. Please feel free to contact me (ph 870-235-4082; clyonssaumag.edu) and should I not know the answer, I will refer your question to someone else.



# Advocacy Corner



--Adria Baker, Chair, Region III Advocacy Committee

## MAKING A *WORLD* OF DIFFERENCE THROUGH ADVOCACY

**In recent years, NAFSA has increasingly emphasized advocacy.**

Why? Because promoting international education through planned advocacy efforts is the best avenue to progress our field.

Why has funding by Congress for international education exchange consistently increased each year? Why has the Gilman Scholarship increased significantly? Why was this year named by Congress “The Year of Study Abroad” and last year in honor of teaching foreign languages? Why have the visa security clearances become a shorter process with visas *mantis*? Why do F and J visa holders get to “jump the line” at U.S. Consulates, over other nonimmigrant visa applicants? Why are universities exempt from the H-1B cap and certain H-1B fees? The answer to all of the above questions is that we, as international educators, have educated Congress about our needs through effective advocacy campaigns.

Region III has made wonderful strides in advocacy efforts, and these efforts have been recognized by NAFSAs throughout the nation. This year, four Region III NAFSAs were partially funded by Region III to attend Advocacy Day 2006. Stay tuned for responses from these participants in the next *Interchange* and read about ways that you can help raise money to send another delegate(s) from each state next year.

**What are examples of Region III taking a lead in advocacy?** Two Region III states have an international education policy (Louisiana and Texas), and two others have begun their plans to strategize and create one for their state (Arkansas and Oklahoma). Once all states in Region III have recognized international education policies, we will be able to encourage other regions, through a friendly challenge, to follow suit.

The recent meetings of Association of Metroplex International Educators (AMIE in Dallas/Ft. Worth area), the Oklahoma State Meeting, the Houston Forum for Advisors to Internationals, and the upcoming Arkansas State Meeting all have included advocacy training in their meetings. Members of Region III continue to add to the bimonthly distributed Advocacy Tips list (<http://www.nafsa3.org/advocacy/advocacy.asp>), respond greatly to the Advocacy alerts, and many members have joined the Advocacy Center Team (ACT - [http://www.nafsa.org/public\\_policy.sec/grassroots\\_advocacy/join\\_nafsas\\_new\\_advocacy](http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy/join_nafsas_new_advocacy)).

Just a few weeks ago, Texas NAFSAs positively and quickly mobilized a strong educational/advocacy response when the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) changed their laws. The surprising change would not allow non-immigrants to apply for a driver’s license. Due to this quick and massive response, the DPS not only reversed their decision in two days, but they are also executing a public service/customer service plan to reach out in communication with the higher education community.

**Thank you, Region III, for “making a *WORLD* of difference”, literally.** Some ways you can do “armchair advocacy” from home include: 1) Join the ACT ([http://www.nafsa.org/public\\_policy.sec/grassroots\\_advocacy/join\\_nafsas\\_new\\_advocacy](http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy/join_nafsas_new_advocacy)), and 2) Check the “Take Action” screen ([http://www.nafsa.org/public\\_policy.sec/grassroots\\_advocacy](http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy)) periodically. At your institution, make a point to meet your designated government relations liaison to see how you can partner to promote international education. For questions, do not hesitate to call me at: 713-348-6095, or email me at: [abaker@rice.edu](mailto:abaker@rice.edu).

## Update on Recovery Katrina/Rita Recovery Efforts

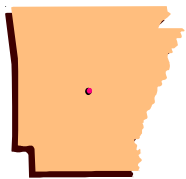
Eight months after the storms, many Gulf Coast institutions are in varying stages of recovery. Some institutions in New Orleans, such as Xavier and Dillard Universities, are holding classes and housing students and staff in area hotels. Southern University of New Orleans is operating out of a FEMA trailer campus. Most of the buildings on the University of New Orleans campus are operational, but a few key academic and administrative buildings are still not in use. Only one dormitory is available and promised FEMA trailers for students are still not operational.

Tulane University is using cruise ships to house some students and staff. The LSU Health Sciences Center has partially returned to its New Orleans location after operating out of Baton Rouge, with staff staying in ships on the mighty Mississippi. All institutions have seen a decline in enrollment with about 80-85 percent of the student body returning for the spring semester. Several intensive English programs (IEP) have folded and the remaining IEP programs have seen significant decline in numbers.

The biggest challenge for schools in Gulf Coast Region is recruitment. Convincing prospective students and sponsoring agencies that institutions are operational and viable in "Hurricane Alley" remains a tall order, even for schools outside of New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The second largest challenge is housing—especially in New Orleans. Rents for the few remaining apartment complexes that have managed to open have skyrocketed. It is not unheard of to find two bedroom apartments going for 1400-1600 per month. It is common for four or five students to share a studio or one bedroom apartment. Many students and university employees are commuting upwards of two hours or more each way on a daily basis to get to campuses in New Orleans.

The third biggest problem is funding. Almost all universities in New Orleans have cut back on staff and some have cut or will be cutting academic programs. Financial problems are not just limited to New Orleans schools. Other institutions which hosted large numbers of displaced students, faculty and staff and/or served as relief staging grounds are also facing severe financial shortfalls. Thus statewide, the higher education budget for 2006-2007 looks bleak. Nonetheless administrators and policy makers are committed to rebuilding efforts and remain confident that higher education in Louisiana will rebound.

## Arkansas State Report



-- Audra Johnston, Arkansas State Representative

Exciting things are happening in Arkansas! The Natural State is looking forward to hosting the regional conference this November in Little Rock at the fabulous Peabody Hotel (Arkansas' only "five-duck" hotel), and we hope to see you all there! In the meantime, we held our state meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup> at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. Region III Chair Julie Sinclair joined us for the day, and our focus was on building advocacy for international education and exchange in Arkansas.

Two NAFSAns from Arkansas were in attendance at the recent Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. DeDe Long from the University of Arkansas and Andrew Faulkner (Arkansas State Whip) from the University of Central Arkansas attended, and are excited about having the opportunity to talk with our representatives in D.C. about important international education and exchange issues within our state.

Some familiar faces have been returning, and we are glad to welcome Dr. Susan Rinehart back to Arkansas, in her new position as Director of International Student Programs at Henderson State University.

Sue Marlay from Arkansas State University has the following update on what is happening at ASU:

"Arkansas State University (ASU) has made considerable changes in the structure and administration of international education on the ASU campus over the past year.

In early 2005, the University decided to consolidate all aspects of international education at ASU into the Office of International Programs (OIP) with Sue Marlay, formerly the Director of International Student & Scholar Services, as Director of International Programs. The first order of business was to hire David Wick as ASU's first-ever Study Abroad Adviser. Shortly thereafter, the OIP hired an International Student Adviser to take over some of Sue's responsibilities. Andrew Bleignier now holds this position and he is responsible for all F-1 advising, programming for international students and the OIP newsletter.

On July 1, there were two significant changes in international education. The University closed the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) because of a continuous decline in enrollment. At the same time, ASU moved international admissions, both graduate and undergraduate, into the OIP under the direction of Beth Ephlin, the newly appointed International Admissions Coordinator. In early April of this year, the OIP will welcome Ronda McGrew, an ASU graduate with work experience abroad, as its new secretary.

The members of the OIP staff look forward to meeting Region III NAFSAns at the Little Rock conference in November. They will all be on hand to help with local arrangements."

I look forward to seeing all of you in Little Rock this November.

## Texas State Report



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

### Howdy from College Station!: Texas State Meeting a BIG Success

Thanks largely to the efforts of a terrific and enthusiastic local arrangements committee, the NAFSA Texas State Meeting held at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in College Station, Texas on February 20 and 21, 2006 was a BIG success even by Texas standards (everything in Texas is BIG!) The A&M Memorial Student Center, where the meeting and NAFSA Professional Practice Workshops were held, was a gorgeous facility that easily accommodated three concurrent sessions of three presentations each.

The three sessions included a tract of regulatory training and updates, a tract on international student/scholar advising issues, and a tract on study abroad and ESL. The Texas International Credential Evaluators (TICE) met concurrently with the Texas State Meeting so there was plenty of "Recruitment, Admissions, and Preparation" (formerly ADSEC) training available as well.

Several sessions from the meeting merit a special recognition. Katy Lane's "Share the Love of International Education" was most frequently mentioned as the meeting highlight in meeting evaluations. Katy, a study abroad advisor at A&M, also presented this session at the NAFSA Bi-Regional Meeting in Colorado Springs in November, 2005.

Other sessions receiving "honorable mention" included the F-1 Update presented by Maka Hutson, UT Austin, UT Austin's John Sunnygard's presentation on the "Lincoln Commission," "The F-1 OPT Obstacle Course" presented by Claudia Hernandez and Todd Chiscano, Southern Methodist University, and "When Bad Things Happen: Tips for Surviving Emergencies Involving International Students" presented by Bill Taylor and Gisela Lin, both from A&M.

The crowning all meeting session was the panel discussion chaired by Suzanne Droleskey on "Texas A&M's 'Community of Respect' Grant," an impressive collaborative effort to build a positive environment for internationals within the Bryan/College Station community.

Please join me in thanking the following members of the local arrangements committee for making this one of the best Texas State Meetings ever: Olga Catalena, Nancee Crowder, Christine Frank, Laura Hammons, Myra Kretzschmar, Katy Lane, Debbie Lindke, and Cory Shafstall.

(continued on next page)

I must acknowledge the past South Texas Rep, Krystalina Karabunalieva from the University of Houston, for sharing her excellent materials and experience from past meetings, as well as current North Texas Rep Bob Crosier, Texas Tech University, for staying calm and keeping us on track. Finally, Michele Stelljes, Baylor College of Medicine, as NAFSA PPW liaison should be commended for staffing our workshops without breaking the budget and for filling me in on NAFSA central procedures.

The next Texas State Meeting will be held at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas during February or March of 2007. Dates, cost and other details will be shared at the earliest opportunity.

## Oklahoma State Report

-- Sunny Garner, Oklahoma State Representative

Sixty-three international educators and presenters were in attendance on February 23, 2006 for the Oklahoma State NAFSA Conference. The state meeting began with Julie Sinclair, Region III Chair from Oklahoma City University, providing National and Regional NAFSA updates. Tammy Newell, outgoing State Representative from Oklahoma Christian University, spoke to attendees about her unique perspective of the qualities of international educators. The acronyms for UNIQUE include: U: unity, N: know-how, I: integrity, Q: quality, U: understanding, and E: energy. Jalal Daneshfar from the University of Central Oklahoma gave outgoing thoughts on advocacy as last year's representative for Advocacy Day. As Oklahomans, we are so fortunate to have such dedicated individuals involved in international education.

For Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., it was announced Tim Huff from Oklahoma State University would be representing the state on March 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Tim Huff has been a longstanding NAFSA directly involved in international student advocacy.

The morning sessions included "Hot Topics in ESL-an Open Discussion with Questions and Answers Concerning Language Schools" with Ali Robati, "Meeting the Challenge of 2006-The Year of Study Abroad" with Gerry Auel and John Osborne, and "Overview of Developing Legislation" presented by Douglas Stump. A special thanks to all of the outstanding presenters. An expert panel gave insight into regulations, legislation and government operations. Tommie Nicholas from the USCIS Oklahoma District Office spoke about the latest trends and updates regarding international students. Douglas Stump, immigration attorney and professor, presented an informative session on immigration with his expertise and experience. Lisa Hardin from the Social Security Administration spoke about requirements and trends she has encountered regarding international students. The guest panel was instrumental in providing vital information to attendees.

Dr. Adria Baker, Region III Advocacy Chair from Rice University, provided attendees with a captivating presentation on advocacy during the afternoon session. Dr. Baker discussed how the process of developing a unified effort for advocacy begins and gains momentum at the state level. Dr. Baker demonstrated how a state resolution can provide the foundation for a wide range of international issues that may arise. Dr. Baker's presentation was one of the highlights of the State Conference and Oklahoma formed an Advocacy Committee after her presentation. Recognition is given to Dr. Baker for volunteering her time and expertise to benefit Oklahoma. In the near future, Oklahoma NAFSAs will collaborate to create an Oklahoma State Resolution to present to the state Congress and Legislators. Many NAFSAs and international students recently attended International Awareness Day at the Oklahoma Capitol on March 28<sup>th</sup> to show their involvement with education in Oklahoma. Currently, international students pick Oklahoma as the 20<sup>th</sup> ranked state in the nation to pursue higher education.

A special thanks to Dr. Tom Karman from Oklahoma Baptist University for the excellent job he provided serving as Registrar for the NAFSA State Conference Committee, and the Oklahoma City Community College Conference Committee. We appreciate our sponsors The Language Company and Macori, Inc.

## Immigration Update

-- Maka Hutson & Jim Nesmith, Regulatory Ombudspersons

Dear fellow NAFSANS,

This has been a spring of changes in CIPP-RR world. First of all, we are not CIPP-RRs any more but Regulatory Ombudspersons. We now have national recognition and are members of a national subcommittee of the Policy and Practice Committee. Second, Maka Hutson from The University of Texas at Austin started her term as the Regulatory Ombudsperson on student issues. We would like to thank Laura Hammons for her outstanding service as CIPP-RR. Maka hopes that she can serve the Region with as much enthusiasm and excellence as Laura did.

With all the changes still very new, we are gearing up for the Regional conference in Little Rock, Arkansas in November. We hope you will join us at the beautiful Peabody Hotel to discuss the latest updates in immigration policy and practice. We would like to invite you to submit a session proposal. This year we would like to highlight the following immigration-related topics: working with Saudi students, F1 basics for IEPs, ICE/FBI investigations, issues on traveling to Mexico, and crisis management.

In other news, the regulatory section of the Region III Website (<http://www.nafsa3.org/>) has been updated with the "F-1 Update" presentation from the Texas State Meeting on February 20, 2006, and there are plans to post some other helpful information there in the near future. If you have ideas of how we might make this section of the Region III website more useful for the work that you do, please email your suggestions to Maka ([maka@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:maka@austin.utexas.edu)). Finally, we would like to provide you with a summary of recent immigration updates that might be of interest.

### **USCIS News:**

#### ***Texas Service Center-NAFSA Liaison Meeting Summary***

In March 2006, NAFSA met with the Texas Service Center for its quarterly liaison meeting. The summary of questions & answers has been posted at <http://www.nafsa3.org/> under *Regulatory Updates*.

### **DPS Update:**

#### ***Changes in Texas Driver's License Issuance***

On February 10, 2006, the list of approved documents for issuing driver's licenses in Texas was changed, and DPS was unable to issue driver's licenses to F, J and H visa holders who did not have a Texas ID or EAD. This did not affect renewals of driver's licenses. Thanks to NAFSANS' advocacy, DPS will now accept a foreign passport with a valid visa or I-94 card. We have been told that it is an exception subject to change, so stay tuned for any further updates.

### **US DOS Consular News:**

#### ***Visa validity after a break in studies***

A December 28, 2005, DOS cable provided information about the validity of F/M visas after a break in study. The cable states that if a student takes a break from studies and is outside the U.S. for more than 5 months, "the F-1 visa is subject to cancellation and should not be used, even though it remains valid on its face". Students are advised to apply for new visas before re-entering the U.S. to resume their studies. The cable can be found at: [http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory\\_information.sec/regulatory\\_document\\_library.dlib/government\\_agency\\_resources\\_1/dos\\_cable\\_on\\_validity](http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/government_agency_resources_1/dos_cable_on_validity)



## **Immigration Update, continued.**

### ***DOS Extends Initial F and M Visa Filing Window to 120 Days***

A February 9, 2006 U.S. Department of State (DOS) cable instructs consular posts that persons applying for initial-entry F-1, F-2, M-1, and M-2 visas may now be issued these visas up to 120 days before the program start date as listed on their I-20s. The prior policy was to issue these visas no more than 90 days prior to the F or M program start date. The cable can be found at: [http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory\\_information.sec/regulatory\\_document\\_library.dlib/government\\_agency\\_resources\\_1/dos\\_extends\\_initial\\_f-1](http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/government_agency_resources_1/dos_extends_initial_f-1)

Please note that it has also been announced that the 30-day window for entering the U.S. with a new I-20/DS-2019 is expected to change to a 45-day window, but this change has NOT been effective yet. Students should still be advised that they can only enter the U.S. 30 days prior to the start date of their programs.

### **US ICE SEVP Update:**

#### ***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](http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/get_sevis_information/nafsa_sevis_resources#SEVISliaison). The most recent summaries posted (with a policy focus) are from December 2005 and January 2006.

#### ***SEVP Technical Conference Calls with the Educational Community***

SEVP now posts technical conference calls summaries on their web site at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/index.htm>. The most recent summaries posted are from January and February 2006.

#### ***SEVIS I-901 Fee Transfer Capability***

On February 12, 2006, SEVP announced an enhancement to the SEVIS I-901 fee processing system. The new system release includes an automated process for transferring I-901 fee payment information for students and exchange visitors from one SEVIS ID to another and recording the transfers in the SEVIS database. The enhancement will provide SEVP with the capability to issue an updated Form I-797 receipt reflecting the fee payment transfer to the requested SEVIS ID. For more information regarding the new transfer capability, please see <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/faq7.htm>

**SEVIS Release 5.3** is scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY2006. This is a system maintenance release (no user impact).

**SEVIS Release 5.4** is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2006. It includes additional SEVIS Alerts and Lists, as well as functionality to support the latest professor and J scholar program regulations.

As always, we enjoy serving you, and we hope to see you all at the upcoming National Conference in May!