

Region III Newsletter

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Letter from Past Chair



2006: The Year of the Duck

The year 2006 disappeared quickly, but it was a year I will never forget. It was an honor to serve Region III as chair and in 2007 to continue to serve as past chair. 2006 brought wonderful state conferences, the national conference in Montreal and, of course, our regional conference at the

Peabody Hotel in Little Rock.

The Region III conference was well-attended with over 380 registrants and 125 workshop participants in our five pre-conference workshops. The variety of sessions was amazing, and over ninety individuals gave their time as session presenters. "Waddle We Do to Prepare for Avian Flu" and "Don't Quack for Me Argentina: an Update on Argentine Credentials" tied for the "Most Fowl Session" award with the most creative duck-themed titles. "Marketing on the Cheep" tied for second place in this contest and was also selected for presentation at the upcoming national conference in Minneapolis as the Best of Region III. Once again, a huge thank you goes to all of the session chairs, presenters, and workshop chair, presenters and table moderators.

A personal highlight for me was serving as Honorary Duck Master in the Peabody duck parade. I do not believe I will ever top that!

Again, I also want to thank each member of the Region III team who worked so hard this past year not only to put on a great conference but also to do all of the work throughout the year that benefits our members.

As we move into 2007, the Region will be under the outstanding leadership of our new chair, Adria Baker, and chair-elect, Bob Crosier. I know that you will all give them your full support as you have done for me. Thanks again, Region III. You are the best!

Julie Sinclair

Region III Past Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As the incoming Chair to Region III, I look back over my shoulder to reflect on the great work over the last 50+ years of the many incredible colleagues who have paved the way to make Region III - *by far* - the **greatest group of international educators** in NAFSA. I am honored to be chair of the **greatest region** in NAFSA, and take the reigns knowing that it is only with the help of each member, and the support, wisdom, and work of past leaders, that I am able to do what is necessary.

That said, I want to especially acknowledge the tremendous work of **Julie Sinclair**. She has shown tremendous leadership, and has graciously taught and supported me in so many ways. Julie, not only has captured the respect of all of her colleagues for her excellence in leadership and work, she has made it truly enjoyable and fun for everyone. She can now add to her list the following titles: 1) "Past Chair", 2) "Head Quacker", and "Queen of Fun and Excellence"! Thank you, Julie, for all you do for international educators!

Each year, the chair relies strongly on the Region III team members who lead key functions in the region. Please take time to acquaint yourself with these great leaders by visiting: <http://www.nafsa3.org/team.asp>. Feel free to offer the team members your volunteer help, if you wish to get more involved in the region, as well as use them as resources, if/when you need it. Thank you, Region III team members, for your volunteerism and dedication!

Volunteer opportunities: In an effort to move Region III forward as a key group of leaders in international education excellence, I am appointing "point people" to help. As you may know, NAFSA went through a restructuring about three years ago. The point people will help Region III to bridge our practical needs, with NAFSA's new structure. Their current key positions with NAFSA national leadership will keep us connected at the regional level. Please contact them directly, if you would be interested in volunteering and helping them (which would be a great way for you to step up into leadership in the future).

DeDe Long (dslong@uark.edu) will serve as Chair of the Advocacy Committee.

Dan Erickson (daniel@latech.edu) will be our Knowledge Community (KC) and Networks resource person.

John Singleton (j.singleton@tcu.edu) will be our Membership Committee liaison.

Julie Sinclair (jsinclair@okcu.edu) Leadership and Professional Development resource person.

Additional key volunteer needs: Two positions on the team require a team of assistants. Please consider volunteering in one of these capacities:

- 1) **Assistant Registrars (AR) – Regina Henry** (regina.henry@okstate.edu) has been an amazing asset to Region III for years, and a wonderful person to know. She has lots of fun jobs that can help her, especially in the fall and during the conference in Austin. Please consider contacting Regina to serve as a Region III AR.
- 2) **Technical Support Assistants (TSA) – Robert Soulliere** (r.soulliere@tcu.edu) dedicates a great amount of time being our TechSIG Representative. If you consider yourself a "techie" in any way, please offer your services to be a part of Robert's team. He particularly needs TSAs around the fall and at the conference.

Please be a part of Region III by getting involved and connected with our leaders. There is always room for you! Finally, mark your calendars to come to the next regional conference in Austin, Texas, which will be November 3-6, 2007. For information on the upcoming national conference in Minneapolis, MN, visit: http://www.nafsa.org/annual_conference/frommers_destinations

Best wishes for a great 2007!

Adria Baker

Regional Conference

2006 Regional Conference

Little Rock Conference Highlights

-- Sue Marlay and Lisa Shoemake, Local Arrangements Co-Chairs

Once again this year, Region III conference participants had the opportunity to work hard and to play hard. And that they did!!!

Halfway through the pre-conference workshops in Little Rock, there was a welcome reception, in the Riverview Room of the Peabody Hotel, featuring the music of a local bluegrass group, the Acouticatz, refreshments, and time for NAFSAns to meet new colleagues and to reconnect with old ones.

The conference officially opened the following noon with a plenary luncheon and a motivational guest speaker, Tererai Trent. Tererai, who addressed the group on behalf of Heifer International, shared her life story. She explained Heifer's mission, "sharing the gift," and how Heifer helped her to come to the U.S. to secure a bachelor's degree. Tererai went on to tell NAFSAns the importance of their work in assisting international students who, like herself, arrive in the U.S. and need the support that international educators can and do provide them. The day ended with an all-conference dinner at the hotel that included the annual silent auction, the art for advocacy sale and a hilarious performance by Region III's NAFSA players.

The following day was not "all work and no play" either. In addition to attending the many conference sessions and the business luncheon, conference participants took time to watch the famous Peabody Duck Parade led by Julie Sinclair in her role as assistant duck master. NAFSAns ended their day at the Clinton Presidential Library which was open only to them and their guests. Their time at the library was a feast for the mind, the body and the soul. Participants raved about the library's exhibits, the buffet and the piano and saxophone duo, Wine and Roses.

This year's conference was a memorable one in the tradition of Region III conferences: informative yet truly enjoyable.

Silent Auction & Art for Advocacy

A very special "thank you" goes to Olga Grieco, from the University of North Texas, for the incredible work she did on the "Silent Auction" and "Art for Advocacy" at the Little Rock conference! An additional appreciation goes out to the many people who donated things to sell at the auction, as well as the volunteers who helped Olga! Thank you for contributing to helping promote international education in our region.

As you know, the money raised at the "Silent Auction" supports travel grants for first-timers to a Region III conference. This year, money was also raised through "Art for Advocacy" to pay for the registration fee at NAFSA's "Advocacy Day", held in Washington D.C. in March. Our goal is to encourage sending representatives from each state in Region III to participate in this important event. (For more on Advocacy Day, visit: http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy/advocacy_day_2007).

Olga worked many hours behind the scenes getting the donations organized and labeled, and then tirelessly ran the entire program. Thank you, Olga, for giving to the Region, and thank you to those who donated and volunteered. Your efforts are making a WORLD of difference!!

2006 Regional Conference

Regional Conference

Exhibitors Enjoyed Regional Conference

-- *Rebecca Crowell, Development Chair*

"Way to go!" and "Region III Rocks!" were just a few comments that the exhibitors and sponsors wrote on their evaluation forms. Thirty-three exhibitors attended our conference in Little Rock and nine companies helped make it all possible through sponsorship. The exhibitors and sponsors were invited to participate in all events, especially the opening reception in their honor.

The exhibitors and sponsors were recognized during the Plenary Luncheon. A PowerPoint presentation cycled through their ads during lunch. The conference attendees had an hour to visit with the exhibitors, during the Exhibitor Highlight Hour before the conference sessions started. The exhibitors really appreciated this new format.

Sponsorship is an important part of our conference. I would like to express a hearty **THANK YOU** to the following companies:

Academic Programs International (API) for the sponsorship of the conference bags

AMA & Associates for a coffee break

ELS Language Centers for the name badge holders

The Language Company for the entertainment at the Clinton Library

Macori, Inc. for the Business and Award Luncheon

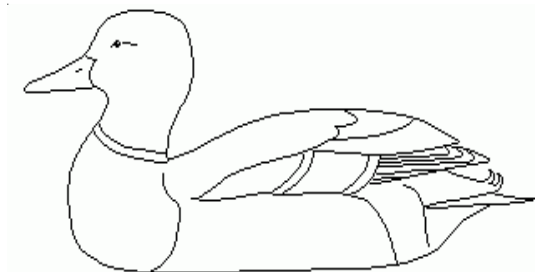
Pinnacle Student Insurance for the sponsorship of the Breakfast Buffet and the Conference Bags

SDR Educational Consultants for the Breakfast Buffet

Student Resources for the All Conference Dinner, Breakfast Buffet, and a coffee break

Trawick International for the Plenary Luncheon

Thanks to all who continue to support Region III! See you in Austin!



2 YEAR Two-Year Institution Report

-- Reginald Cooper, Two-Year Institution Representative

I hope you ducked in for the Region III Conference because was great! There were a variety of sessions that included something for everyone. Even with no sessions proposed as two-year focused; there were plenty of other interest areas for us to attend. If you were not able to attend the conference this year, we missed you and hope to see you next time. If you attended the conference, you know how exciting it was and that it was a great success

Michael Freeman and his group at The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville sponsored a breakfast to all of us affiliated with two-year campuses. It was a wonderful! The food was very good, the fellowship was top notch, and the view brought everything together. Thank you Michael and UAF for all you do for the two-year institutions. Your contributions make us feel special.

Over the past year, a place has been created for two-year institutions at the national level. It is not what we had, but it is a giant leap forward in comparison to what we received in the new structure. We now have a Member Interest Group, the Two Year College Institution Interest Group (TYIIIG). With this development, we will be able to have functions similar to what we had under the old structure. If you have not received information regarding the discussion group, please send me an email at rcooper@sautech.edu and I will forward the links to you.

I hope you will start thinking about presenting at the 2007 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.

I am ending my term on the team as the two year representative. I have enjoyed being on the team and working for the interests of two-year institutions. Starting in January, we will be represented by Diana Klinghagen, Academic Counselor and International Student Services Coordinator at Tulsa Community College. After talking with Diana and meeting with her in Little Rock, I know we are in great hands.

EDUCATION ABROAD

Education Abroad Report

Greetings and Happy New Year Region III Education Abroad folks! As we start the new year, it is time for the saying, "Out with the old and in with the new".

My term as your regional representative has ended and Sandy Crosier at Texas Tech University will be your new representative. Sandy brings a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience to the position and I encourage you to work with her in strengthening the Education Abroad section. Her email is sandra.crosier@ttu.edu. Sandy has also included a paragraph in this article.

It has been a pleasure getting to know and working with so many of you. I have been impressed with the high number and quality of the education abroad sessions at the past regional meetings. I encourage you to continue your involvement and look forward to seeing you at future conferences.

-- Charla Bailey, Past Education Abroad Representative

I am very excited to be on the team again as the Education Abroad representative. It is especially exciting as the numbers of us in Region III seems to be growing. Charla has done an excellent job of soliciting session proposals. The sessions at the past two Region III meetings have been impressive and there have been some times when we had to choose between two excellent sessions which were offered at the same time. There are many exciting issues these days in study abroad and I hope we continue to have many session proposals as well as opportunities for training. I look forward to working with all of you!

—Sandy Crosier, Education Abroad Representative

International Student & Scholar Advising Report

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

A large number of the Knowledge Community International Student and Scholar advisors gathered in Little Rock at the Region III Conference to not only watch the marching ducks, but to attend informative sessions pertaining to their field of employment. A wide variety of sessions were presented including the topics of diversity, undocumented students, optional practical training, orientation, institutional risk, international cooperation, influenza, educational leadership, and virtual consulting. Also, there was a legislative update session. As times change, topics tend to mimic the atmosphere of current affairs in international education.

Over the past two years, many of you have called with questions about issues in the KCISS area. Being from a small state-supported school, I deal mainly with F-1 type students. Even after over two decades of working with international students, it still amazes me how many new scenarios I hear each year. If I did not know all of the answers to your questions or problems, then I referred you to someone who had the specific expertise.

This is the second time that I served on the team and now my term has expired. Being on the team has truly been a rewarding experience. It has been my privilege to serve you as a member of the Region III Team and I am still available, if needed, to assist you with F-1 immigration questions.

Intensive English Program Report

INTENSIVE ENGLISH

--- Mathelda M. Molina, Intensive English Program Representative

We all had a great time in Little Rock this past fall enjoying a great conference, a good hotel and wonderful food. The marching ducks were the highlight of our breaks. Thank you to all who participated and attended.

IEPs were well represented in both presentations and attendance. The sessions were very informative and I hope that most of you left the conference with a lot of your questions and issues resolved.

All of the IEP sessions had excellent reviews. Presentations at this year's conference included *The A to Z of Meeting IEP Students' Needs*; *TOEFL Ibt: Reactions to the New Test. What's New in 2006*; *Sevis for Intensive English Programs*; *Measuring the Impact of Our Programs: An Assessment of Student Outcomes on Multiple Program Types*; *Geese Learning to Quack: Research on Second Language Learning*. "The A to Z of Meeting IEP Students' Needs" was selected as one of the "Best of Region".

In February, the Region III team will meet in Austin, Texas, to plan the 2007 Regional Conference under the leadership of our new chair, Dr. Adria Baker. As most of you already know, we will meet in Austin in November and in Merida, Mexico in 2008 for our annual regional conference.

I encourage you to begin preparing now to attend and participate, both at the Regional and National Conferences. May is around the corner and that is when our National Conference takes place in Minneapolis. We will be contacting you this coming spring for your presentation proposals for our Regional Conference.

If there is any way that I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at mmolina@els.edu.

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.

Admissions Report

-- Kristalina Karabunarlieva, Admissions Representative

It happened so that I joined the Team just a couple of weeks before the conference. As I have not taken part in the strenuous process of planning and coordinating conference sessions, I can only write this report from the standpoint of an observer and admirer of a job well done by my colleagues.

The 12-hour workshop "Foreign Credential Analysis" chaired by Jean Ringer attracted 19 professionals; it helped the new to the field admissions officers and recruiters develop conceptual tools for the evaluation of foreign credentials, proper placement of applicants and international transfer credits. Behind the joyful duck-themed titles, we were pleased to discover exceptionally strong, thorough, and highly professional papers accompanied by great handouts and invaluable resource materials.

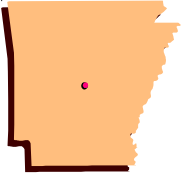
The great news this year was the increased mobility of presenters looking for exposure to different regions. Understandingly, the variety of presenters drawn to the NAFSA III "flock" in Little Rock is an added benefit for the conference attendees, especially the ones who cannot afford both AACRAO and NAFSA's membership fees in order to remain informed and up-to-date in their professional fields. From the seven admissions-related sessions, four had been delivered by presenters out of Region III!

The conference attendees were able to choose from a variety of topics: country-specific sessions featuring the educational systems of Turkey, Mexico, Argentina, hot topics like Bologna 3-year bachelor degrees, and the East and West Africa fake educational credentials, as well as sessions providing us with invaluable resources for our everyday work as admissions officers.

I also enjoyed the different styles and paste of the presenters: the relaxed and confident presentations and chairmanship of the seasoned NAFSAns/AACRAOns as Jane Ringer, Linda Jahn, Bridget Canty, Linda Kosene, and James Mayers, the contagious enthusiasm and resourcefulness of the young Peggy Bell Hendrickson, Shelby Cearley and Ann Rahmat, the detailed papers of Linda Cook, and Kurt Baumbach.

I have never observed such consistency in quality of the presentations: all sessions, without exception, have been positively evaluated in terms of content, presentation, and handouts. The sessions were very well attended, with an increase of cross-sectional attendance, especially study abroad officers, eager to gain better understanding of the quality and the variety of study abroad programs offered nowadays. I observed an increased interest in understanding the transfer credit process, especially for short-term study abroad programs. I hope we can offer a workshop or at least a session on this topic at the next conference in Austin.

Kudos to the conference organizers who considered and took care of all the details which were so important to the seamless flow of the conference: no technical glitches, timely delivery of the session evaluations, enough room space, and a comfortable environment.



Arkansas State Report

-- Audra Johnson, Past Arkansas State Representative

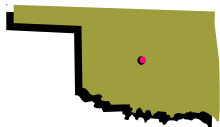
We were thrilled to welcome Region III to the Natural State for a “ducky” regional conference at the Peabody Little Rock! Many kudos are due to our local arrangements co-chairs, Sue Marlay of Arkansas State University and Lisa Shoemake of the University of Central Arkansas, and to our “adopted Arkansan” chair, Julie Sinclair of Oklahoma City University.

In our state gathering during the conference, Arkansas NAFSAns welcomed new attendees from various areas of the state and talked about advocacy, professional development opportunities, and student leadership training plans.

Andy Faulkner from University of Central Arkansas, who serves as the Arkansas State Whip, updated us on advocacy efforts and how more Arkansas NAFSAns can get involved in advocacy. We voted to contribute \$500 toward sending a first-time attendee from Arkansas to NAFSA’s annual Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C.

David Wick from Arkansas State University is serving as the Region III coach for the NAFSA Academy, and encouraged new professionals in the field to enroll in the next Academy cohort. Wayne Garner from Southern Arkansas University talked about plans for the next Arkansas International Student Leadership Conference.

David Wick will also serve as the Region III Arkansas State Representative, and please welcome him at the next state and regional conferences. Our 2007 Arkansas State NAFSA Meeting will be hosted by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on April 6, 2007. See you there!



Oklahoma State Report

-- Sunny Garner, Oklahoma State Representative

The Region III Conference in November was a great success and Oklahoma NAFSA’s were well represented, including Newcomers. As the new year is upon us, we are planning the State of Oklahoma NAFSA Conference in early spring. The University of Central Oklahoma has offered to host the event and we plan to have informative speakers and an expert panel. Advocacy is a continuing topic we hope to expand on in 2007. It is an exciting year for international education and we hope to see you at the Oklahoma State Conference.



Texas State Report

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

Texas State Meeting Scheduled for Monday, March 5, 2007 and NAFSA Professional Practice Workshops, Tuesday, March 6, 2007 at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas

Local arrangement chairs Claudia Hernandez and Todd Chiscano, both International Student Advisors at SMU, are working hard to provide Texas international educators with a “Mustang” welcome to the Southern Methodist University campus on March 5, 2007 for the annual NAFSA Region III Texas State Meeting. Effective January, 2007, Samantha Spence, Director, ESOL/International Student Services, North Lake College, in Dallas will become our newest North Texas State Representative. Samantha is already jumping in to help plan the meeting at SMU. And, Bob Crosier, Director, International Student and Scholar Services, Texas Tech University and our outgoing North Texas State Representative, has also been a great help in the initial planning stages of the meeting. I can’t thank them enough for their time and enthusiasm in pulling the upcoming meeting together.

A call for Texas State Meeting session proposals will go out in the next few days. We encourage session proposals in all international education fields and will select and offer those that address today’s burning issues in student and scholar advising, study abroad, teaching learning and scholarship, recruitment admissions and preparation, community college and ESL program issues, and more. Our plan is to provide three concurrent sessions offering a choice of topics and one or two all meeting sessions covering material that is critical for all meeting attendees. Back by popular demand will be a panel of government representatives including Department of Homeland Security, Social Security Administration, and Texas Department of Public Safety. And, new this year based on feedback from the 2006 Texas State Meeting at Texas A&M University at College Station, we will offer some break out sessions for various interest groups to discuss their “instant issues.”

In addition to hosting the Texas State Meeting, Southern Methodist University will also host the presentation of three NAFSA Professional Practice Workshops on Tuesday, March 6, 2007 from 8 am to 5 pm: “F-1 Regulations for Beginners,” “F-1 Regulations-The Second Step,” and “J-1 Regulations for Beginners.”

We hope the 2007 Texas State Meeting and NAFSA Workshops will meet the needs of Texas international educators and provide stimulating benchmarking and networking opportunities. To print a flyer, download a session proposal form, and register on-line for the Texas State Meeting and NAFSA Professional Practice Workshops visit: <http://www.utmb.edu/international/nafsa/default.htm>

Immigration Update

IMMIGRATION

-- Maka Hutson and Madhuri V. Kumar,
Regulatory Ombudspersons

Dear fellow NAFSANS,

Changes continue to happen in the immigration world, and we as Regulatory Ombuds try to stay on top of them to help the membership navigate new laws, regulations and policies, as well as resolve individual cases pending with USCIS. We are very excited to have the online tool for case resolution that was recently introduced by NAFSA. Members are encouraged to log in to www.nafsa.org/issuenet and click on *Get Liaison Help*. The tool allows Reg Ombuds to forward cases to USCIS, as well as collect information for NAFSA's advocacy in the future.

Another change is that this past summer Madhuri V. Kumar from UT Southwestern Medical Center started her term as the Regulatory Ombudsperson on employment and scholar issues. Maka Hutson continues her term as the Regulatory Ombudsperson on student issues. Madhuri and Maka look forward to serving the Region to the best of their ability and are excited to be part of the Regional Team.

The Regional conference in Little Rock, Arkansas was a huge success. We hope you found the regulatory sessions informative with the latest updates in immigration practice and policy including H1B cap, PERM updates and "what goes where" due to bi-specialization.

We will see each other next at our state meetings in the spring. This is a great venue to start as a NAFSA presenter, if you've never presented at a NAFSA conferences before. We would like to invite you to submit a session proposal; please watch for the proposal forms to become available online very soon.

Finally, we would like to provide you with a summary of recent immigration updates that might be of interest.

USCIS Update

Texas Service Center-NAFSA Liaison Conference Call Summary. In August 2006 NAFSA conducted a conference call with the Texas Service Center in lieu of its quarterly liaison meeting. The summary of questions & answers has been posted at <http://www.nafsa3.org/> under *Regulatory Updates*.

Updated USCIS Forms. On April 1, 2006, the USCIS updated multiple forms, including the following: I-129, I-140, I-539 and I-765. On August 28, 2006, USCIS updated Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing. Prior versions of the I-907 form are not accepted by USCIS. A listing of the most recently revised forms can be found at <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm>

USCIS Discontinues Local Production of EADs. As of September 1, 2006, USCIS has discontinued local production of Form I-688B. Applicants whose I-765s have been pending over 90 days can still make an InfoPass appointment with a local USCIS office and request an interim EAD, but it will be produced by a Service Center and mailed to the applicant. Read the USCIS notice on the issue at

http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/government_agency_resources_1/uscis_to_discontinue

Immigration Update, continued.

F/M Reinstatement Applications. Beginning October 30, 2006, F-1 and M-1 reinstatement applications are to be filed locally (as is done currently) but will be processed by California Service Center or Vermont Service Center, depending on where the student is engaged in studies. See USCIS notice on the issue at http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/fees_forms_and_processing/f_m_reinstatement_filings

US CPB Update

Anticipated changes from Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision Statement. The anticipated change that would allow F-1 students to enter the U.S. 45 days prior to the Program Start Date of the I-20 has not been effective yet. This provision will not go into effect until DHS issues regulations implementing this change.

List of CBP POEs available online. CBP now lists contact information for its ports of entry on its web site at <http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/ports/>.

US ICE SEVP Update

SEVIS Release 5.4. SEVIS Release 5.4 was implemented on November 17, 2006 and the DHS notice has been published in the Federal Register. It will not contain changes in the F SEVIS use, but will include additional correction functionalities (still limited to PDSOs), additional SEVIS Alerts and Lists, and departure information from ADIS (Arrival-Departure Information System). The main change in SEVIS Release 5.4 is the implementation of the 5-year rule for J professors and researchers. See the list of SEVIS Release 5.4 anticipated changes:

http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/government_agency_resources_1/anticipated_sevis_release_2

SEVI Hits at Consulates and POEs. Students whose SEVIS status is Active or Initial and who have valid immigration documents sometimes experience a delay in visa issuance or entry to the U.S. due to a SEVI Hit as a result of a previously terminated record. If a student is experiencing repeated problems with re-entry, DSOs can e-mail SEVI at toolbox.sevis@dhs.gov or sevis.source@dhs.gov to remove the hit. Information to be included in the e-mail: student's name, DOB, SEVIS ID, airport and date when student entered the U.S.

SEVP Transfer Advisory. SEVP has published an advisory on transferring F-1 records between schools. The advisory instructs DSOs not to transfer terminated and completed records and states that students can only apply for reinstatement at the transfer-out school. NAFSA has asked SEVP for clarification of this guidance since local USCIS offices continue to advise DSOs that terminated and completed records can and should be transferred, and reinstatement applications should be filed by transfer-in schools. SEVP is looking into the issue and will issue additional guidance on the topic. Read the full text of the SEVP transfer advisory: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/f_1_transfers.htm

Immigration Update, continued.

New URL to Access SEVIS. As of September 1, 2006, DSOs can access SEVIS at the new URL <https://egov.ice.gov/sevis>. SEVIS users accessing the old URL were redirected to the new address until October 31, 2006. Be sure to update your bookmarks!

NAFSA-Government liaison summaries. Summaries of NAFSA calls with DHS and DOS are posted at www.nafsa.org/sevp. The most recent summaries posted are from August 23 and September 27, 2006 with topics too numerous to list here.

New SEVIS User Manuals available. **New SEVIS RTI User Manual for Form I-20 is available for P/DSOs;** version date of March 31, 2006: Volume II covers Form I-20 processes. Download manuals at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools/sevis.htm>

New SEVIS RTI User Manuals for J Exchange Visitors are also available for RO/AROs; version date of December 29, 2005:

Volume I covers SEVIS passwords and updates to Forms DS-3036 and DS-3037

Volume II covers Form DS-2019 processes

Download manuals at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/about/sevis.htm>

DSO Training Course. Online training for DSOs available at SEVP web site: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/outreach.htm#>. DSOs, especially those who are new to the field, are strongly encouraged to go through the online training.

Release 5.4 Training Slides. Training slides from telephone trainings conducted by SEVP in October 2006 are available online at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/outreach.htm#>. DSOs and AROs who did not have an opportunity to go through the telephone training are encouraged to study the slides for the information presented in the training.

Employment-based Immigration

H-1B Cap Reached for FY 2007. USCIS announced on June 1, 2006 that it has received a sufficient number of H-1B petitions to meet the congressionally mandated cap for fiscal year 2007 (FY 2007). The “final receipt date” for H-1B petitions subject to the FY 2007 annual cap was May 26, 2006. The additional cap of 20,000 for graduates of U.S. masters and higher degree programs was reached on July 26, 2006.

USCIS Memo on “Permanent Employment”. USCIS issued a memo on March 2, 2006, addressing the issue of permanent employment for EB-1 Outstanding Professors and Researchers. The guidance clarifies that adjudicators should not deny a petition if the contract or offer letter does not contain a “good cause for termination” clause. The petitioning employer may demonstrate that an employee in a research position will have “an expectation of continued employment.” Read the full text of the memo at

http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/government_agency_resources_1/uscis_memo_on_showing

As always, we enjoy serving you, and we hope to see you all at the upcoming state meetings in spring 2007!