

NAFSA Region XII Southern District Newsletter (May 2010)

Announcements from the Southern District Team

This month, thousands of international educators will flock to the NAFSA 2010 Annual [Conference & Expo in Kansas City](#). If you are one of the lucky ones to attend, take advantage of the opportunities available at the conference. Visit the [Expo Hall](#) to gather resources and to make new contacts. The exhibitors are ready to inspire and entertain you (and to give you some cool free stuff, too!). [Plan out your session attendance](#) to explore new ideas and new areas of interest (don't limit yourself to just regulatory sessions!). Maybe you want to learn about how to use film in orientation programs, or how to create community-based programs, or how to get involved in advocacy efforts. Allow yourself time to explore these topics, and challenge yourself to learn about other topics that might even scare you (like, how to create a paperless office!).

NAFSA conferences ground us in our professional knowledge, but they also ground us in our community of peers. NAFSA is not all work and no play. From the [receptions to the plenary sessions to the off-site tours](#), there are plenty of opportunities for you to enjoy time with colleagues "off the clock." There's always a lot to learn at a conference, but don't forget to make some new friends and to pick up some new ideas along the way!

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Community College Update

The [Sunday Times reports](#) on the second-year successes of the [U.S. Department of State's Community College Initiative Program](#), which was developed following the first U.S. University Presidents' Summit on International Education, in January 2006. The program is run by the [U.S. Community Colleges for International Development \(CCID\)](#). A State Department representative stated, "...one goal of the program is to more deeply involve community colleges in international education and build such experience at a greater number of two-year institutions."

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Education Abroad Update

Did you know that you have access to a team of education abroad professionals who are ready to answer your questions about student visas around the world? Well, you do when you report an issue or get liaison help with NAFSA's [IssueNet](#)! When you report your questions to IssueNet, NAFSA staff and dedicated volunteers respond with links to existing resources and provide you with the most up-to-date information!

IssueNet is open to everyone in the field. Log-in is necessary but NAFSA membership isn't required. From the log-in page, click on "Report an Issue" and on "Education Abroad." (Under General Problem/Issue Type, please select Visa/Passports for Students Going Abroad when reporting EA Foreign Visa issues.) You can also see what happened to your input and view archives of issues reported on the [IssueNet Monthly Update](#).

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International Scholar Update

H-1B petitions continue to be slowed by a lengthy prevailing wage process. Nationally, most prevailing wage determinations are taking 4-10 weeks, with 8 weeks most common. Although redeterminations had been taking only 1-2 weeks, that process has slowed as well, sometimes taking 6 weeks now.

As of April 1, cap-subject employers may file H-1B petitions for Fiscal Year 2011. Beneficiaries of cap-subject petitions may begin employment as of October 1, 2010. If advising international students or scholars working in private industry, it is best if the employer files now, since it is unclear when the 65,000 cap will be reached.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a document addressing the automatic extension of F-1 student status in the United States for certain students with pending or approved H-1B petitions (indicating a request for change of status from F-1 to H-1B) for an employment start date of October 1, 2010, under the Fiscal Year 2011 H-1B cap. The Q&A is available on [the USCIS website](#).

USCIS announced that it will not extend the period in which it temporarily accepted H-1B petitions filed with uncertified Labor Condition Applications (LCAs). Please see [the USCIS website](#) for additional information.

The Application for Travel Document (Form I-131) has new filing instructions. See [the USCIS announcement](#) for details.

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International Student Update

L.A. PIER (Professional International Education Roundtable)

Friday, June 18 | 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM | University of Southern California | RSVP to hanna.lee@csun.edu
Please email suggestions for discussion topics to Rebecca Peterson at rebeccjp@usc.edu.

Leave of Absence—Gray Areas Defined, Sort of...

Unfortunately, current immigration regulations and the SEVIS functions do not address all the different Leave of Absence (LOA) scenarios of our students. With the delay of SEVIS II, and the anticipated "Leave of Absence" functionality, DSOs have been creatively thinking of ways to report LOAs in SEVIS. Questions from DSOs sparked a conversation between Policy and SEVIS Help Desk. As a result, SEVP has provided internal guidelines to SEVIS Help Desk. Here are the instructions that Help Desk received on 04/08/2010—courtesy of Keith (last name unknown), SEVIS Help Desk:

After having a conversation with Policy concerning "Authorized early withdrawal" status correction request to active status, we will be implementing a new requirement. Moving forward when you receive a correction request to set a record from terminated to active status...and the termination reason is "authorized early withdrawal," a letter is required from the user. After you have completed your initial research and you have determine the student will be returning within in the required 5 months, please RFI the user with instructions to fax a letter explaining the student will begin class at the next available session. The letter must include a date in which the session date is within 30 days of the correction request. Per Policy, the Help Desk will not honor data fixes for students who are returning to the U.S for more than 30 days prior to the next session start date. This letter will represent our adhering to the guidance provided by policy.

Q: Can a Correction Request be requested more than 30 days prior to re-entry to the U.S.? Some school officials are asking via CR that the record be set to Active status for the purpose of renewing the VISA but the student will not be re-entering the U.S. for about 4 months.

A: No—we will continue with the current practice that the correction request can be done only up to 30 days before the date of the student's return, which must be for the purpose of re-enrolling in classes. The date of re-entry should not be more than 30 days before the next session start date either. We understand and hope some of the issues surrounding this may change with SEVIS II, as students will be able to take a leave of absence but not be Terminated in SEVIS.

H1B Cap Gap Extension Functionality in SEVIS

On April 26, 2010, a SEVIS Note was emailed to all P/DSOs reminding us of the following:

Please limit the use of the Cap-Gap Extension functionality "filed." It is not appropriate in all instances. If a student's OPT ends after June 1 and the DSO uses the "filed" function in SEVIS, the employment end-date will change to June 1. Please also do not use the Cap-Gap Extension functionality "waitlisted," as there should be no petitions waitlisted this fiscal year. Should you make this mistake, contact the SEVIS Help Desk immediately to have the employment end-date in the student's SEVIS record returned to the correct date.

Reminder: Southern District Workshop: "F-1 Student Advising for Beginners"

The Southern District invites you to attend a workshop on "F-1 Student Advising for Beginners." This NAFSA professional practice workshop is designed for beginning international student advisers with up to 15 months of experience. Registration is now open and available via [Survey Monkey](#). A full workshop description can be found on the [NAFSA Events & Training website](#).

Date: Friday, July 23
Time: 8:00am - 5:00pm
Place: The Claremont Colleges, Claremont, CA

Registration Fee:
\$250 for NAFSA members
\$275 for non-NAFSA members

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Recruitment, Admissions & Preparations Update

The NAFSA Annual Conference at the end of this month has lots of interesting offerings related to Recruitment, Admissions & Preparation (RAP). For a complete list of sessions offered under the RAP Knowledge Community, visit the [Conference Website](#). Here are just some examples of what you'll find in Kansas City:

- *Back to Basics: International Recruitment Strategies*
- *Finding a Common Language*
- *Transatlantic Credit System Comparisons*
- *Standardized English Language Proficiency Exams*
- *Tools for International Admissions Officers*
- *Update on the Educational System of Iraq*
- *Educational Systems of Russia, Georgia, and Uzbekistan: Common Roots, Diverging Evolution*

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Questions? Contact Your District Team

Your Region XII Southern District Team members are ready to assist you. If you have specific content area questions, please contact the appropriate District Team representative from our [District Team member roster](#).

From your friends on the Region XII Southern District Team