

NAFSA Region XII Southern CA District Newsletter

(November 2014)

Announcements from Southern District Team

Greetings Southern California District!

SoCal District Team Updates

Congratulations and welcome to our new SoCal District Chair-Elect, Darren A. Grosch of OTIS College of Art and Design. And a sincere thank you to our members rotating off the Team in 2015 for their dedicated years of service and contributions to the District: Joan Cerera (International Scholar Rep), Hanna Lee (Past Chair), Laura Macchia Amescua (Registrar), Olga Piro (International Student Rep), and Amy Yan (Community College Rep). Nominations and elections for these positions will be announced in forthcoming emails. To see all members of the SoCal District Team and to view position descriptions, please visit the [SoCal District website](#).

Bi-Regional Travel Grant Awards

Travel Grants are available annually for Regional Conferences. The SoCal District, through the support of Region XII, was able to award over \$6,500 to 12 outstanding applicants to help offset the cost of attending the 2014 Region I & XII Bi-Regional Conference in Portland, Oregon. In addition, applications for NAFSA National Conference Registration Grants will be announced in late March 2015.

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Education Abroad Updates

Ideas for Local Education Abroad Events?

The Education Abroad After Work Gathering in October had a great turnout – about 25-30 colleagues from several L.A. area colleges and organizations attended. We'd like to plan another similar event in the spring. If you have ideas for location or theme, please email nsd04747@pomona.edu.

Webinar: Who Should You Call? Collaborations Between Education Abroad and Media Relations Offices

December 9, 2014

Successful collaborations between an education abroad office and their media relations counterparts on campus are crucial for maintaining a calm and unified response in the midst of crises. When these offices work well together, it allows the education abroad office to direct its energy towards crisis response instead of press response. Who will you call when a crisis arises? [More information](#).

Workshop on Intercultural Skills Enhancement and Conference

February 4-6, 2015, Winston-Salem, NC

WISE is a practitioner's conference focused on helping faculty leaders, program coordinators, student advisors, and other faculty and staff develop the knowledge and skills they need in order to help study abroad students, including international students who "study abroad" in the U.S. or another country, develop intercultural skills and awareness. [More information.](#)

AIEA Annual Conference

February 15-18, 2015, Washington, DC

This year's Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) Annual conference focuses on [Leading Global Learning: Envisioning New Paradigms.](#)

IIE Open Doors 2014 Data Released

The Institute of International Education (IIE) has released its [Open Doors 2014](#) report. The report shares comprehensive information on international students and scholars at U.S. institutions and U.S. students abroad.

Ebola Resource Page for Education Abroad

Wondering how to advise students and develop an institutional response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa? Check out NAFSA's [Ebola Resource Page for Education Abroad](#) for more information on other institutions' responses, news articles, and resources for travelers.

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International Student Updates

Updates from the 2014 Bi-Regional Conference/Portland

- Want to avoid an RFE for OPT applicants to explain how the employment is related to coursework? USCIS advises DSOs to add remark on OPT recommendation in SEVIS that student intends to pursue employment in major field of study.
- Wonder why students receive RFEs for documents already submitted with an I-539? USCIS explains that it's not uncommon for documents to get separated from an application during processing from initial receipt in the Phoenix or Dallas lockbox, and forwarding to the service centers. Advise your students to comply with all RFEs, no matter how redundant they may seem.
- Do you advise your students to file IRS Form 8843-Statement of Exempt Individuals and Individuals with Medical Conditions, regardless of whether or not they are filing a tax return? All nonimmigrants are required to file that form, and while there are no legal or monetary penalties for not doing so, a nonimmigrant who later applies for permanent residency or other USCIS benefits and had never before filed Form 8843 could be denied benefits.

Second Round of SEVP Field Representatives Deployed/SEVP Field Reps in Action

On November 17, SEVP announced that 14 new field reps have been deployed and schools can expect to hear from their designated representative very soon. Read the news release as well as "key success stories" from the first class of reps here: <http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/sevp-deploys-new-class-field-representatives-work-us-schools-hosting-international> For even more examples of the field representatives' work to date, read the "SEVP Field Representatives in Action" document found here: <http://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2014/fieldRepCaseExamplesNov2014.pdf>

UC San Diego Extension Welcomes Group of Mexican Learners under the U.S./Mexico's Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation and Research held by Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto Last Year.

This advisor is proud to announce that this week my institution will welcome 50 Mexican nationals for a short-term English language course sponsored under Mexico's Proyecta 100,000 initiative, which complements President Obama's 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative. The participants are students and teachers ranging in age from 18 to 61, and for many this will be their first time travelling to the U.S. or even outside their own cities and towns.

Our entire department and campus is excited to be a part of this initiative to promote broader access to quality post-secondary education for traditionally underserved demographic groups and to expand educational exchanges, increase joint research on education and learning, and share best practices in higher education and innovation between our countries.

Southern District Team Tenure Ends

It has been my pleasure to be your International Student Representative these past two years!

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International Scholar Updates

December Visa Bulletin

- The India EB-2 priority date holds at February 15, 2005 and the EB-3 priority date moved forward a little from last month December 1, 2003;
- China EB-advanced by under a month to January 1, 2010 and the EB-3 priority date advanced five months to June 1, 2010. Fast forward advancement could continue in January, DOS warned last month that retrogression could come as early as February.
- The priority date for Philippines, Mexico and "Rest of World" EB-3s advanced five months to November 1, 2012 and rapid movement is expected to continue for the coming months.

USCIS Update on H-1B and L-1 Site Visits

Top officials from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) participated in an October 9, 2014 meeting with an American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) commute on immigration benefits. One key topic discussed during that meeting was the current state of the H-1B and L-1 Administrative Site Visit and Verification Program (ASVVP).

<http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/directorates-and-program-offices/fraud-detection-and-national-security/administrative-site-visit-and-verification-program>

J Subpart A Rule Resource Page (NAFSA)

The Department of State has published a final rule in the [Federal Register](#) revising Subpart A of 22 CFR Part 62, which governs the Exchange Visitor Program. See more at:

http://www.nafsa.org/Find_Resources/Supporting_International_Students_And_Scholars/ISS_Issues/Issues/J_Subpart_A_Rule_Resource_Page/

Executive Actions on Immigration

On November 20, 2014, President Obama announced his long-awaited changes to the immigration system. None of the changes will take place immediately, and some hoped-for changes like recapture of lost EB numbers and counting only principals towards the 140,000 EB cap were not included in the new policy. See more: <http://www.uscis.gov/immigrationaction>

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Community College Updates

Updates from the 2014 Bi-Regional Conference/Portland

USCIS Updates

1. USCIS takes longer the 90 days to process OPT requests. Please remind students when they apply for OPT.
2. USCIS will deny students' requests (I-539 reinstatement or I-765 employment) if they use different names from the one in their passports. Please remind students who have changed their names.
3. All documents submitted to USCIS must be translated into English and the translation must be certified.
4. All documents submitted must be clear and legible. Otherwise, requests/petitions can be denied.

Paperless Office

1. Scan documents to PC instead of mass storage
2. Scan passport information page and visa page or other required documents with an iPod or iPhone during check in.
3. Use a clear clipboard to press documents to be scanned for a high quality document.
4. Do not save documents in shared drive for data security. Use USB.
5. Save documents with student college ID.
6. Use software to guarantee multipage documents quality, for example, use Ex Turbo Scanner
7. Consider jpeg to conserve storage space.
8. Document image and management software: NOLIJ, ISSM, Terra Dotta, Supasis.
9. Provide on-line workshops. (I'll find out what A & R uses to store e-files and create a section for the ISC files.)
10. Presenter suggested to buy an ID scanner from Amazon at \$30. It can be used for check-in, walk-in, and appointments.

E-files

1. Create web forms which are fillable on-line, example, application, request forms
2. E-newsletters (software to generate newsletter at price of \$100 with a 30-day free trial)
3. Email notifications

When Mistakes Are Made: Dealing with Advising Error

Mistakes are part of business and they happen. When error occurs, remain calm. Don't rush to apologize to students.

1. Never play blame game. There is no judgment.
2. Tell student that you need time to resolve it and you will do some research to find the best way to solve the problem.
3. Consult with you colleague, PDSO, attorneys you trust; call your region peer for different perspective to help you find another solution.
4. Discuss the scenario in the office and avoid the same mistake from happening in future.
5. Create standardized quality control checklist.
6. Stamp all appointments and documents received.
7. Develop a buddy system in your office. Have a second advisor review or proof read any requests that go to USCIS.
8. Create a small contingency fund for the cost of mistakes. For example, refiling reinstatement, OPT etc.

9. Don't let paper mountain grow. Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed.
10. Schedule time at the end of each day to review your advising notes and paperwork. Give opportunities to catch errors or follow up on complex advising situations. At University of Oregon, ISSS has the policy to save 1 hour before office close each day for all advisors to focus on reviewing potential possible errors made during the day.
11. Create system in place to stream line priorities.
12. Be open and flexible.
13. It is also important to know when DSOs can band the law and policy.

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International Enrollment Management Updates

The Challenge of International Recruitment Travel

While many of you were attending the wonderful, by all accounts, Bi-regional Conference some of us were recruiting international students for our institutions. With the desire to increase International enrollment there are many who will be traveling for international recruitment for the first time. The trips are often very demanding including only enough time to travel from city to city between events and appointments. Here are some simple tips to stay healthy and sane on the road.

1. Visit your doctor before travel. Get medical advice before your trip, about what you need to do to prepare. Some doctors may even prescribe medicine in case you need it.
2. Arrive a day early if you can – a extra day can help you get used to the time change and be well rested before going to work. Sleepy or sickly recruiters are not as effective so it is worth it for your institution to make the additional investment.
3. Get plenty of sleep. The desire to explore in evenings or the pressure of keeping up with emails make it tempting to stay up late, but you will be happier overall if you are rested.
4. Bring water and snacks with you on busy days. It is easy to miss a meal or to be in a spot where drinking water is not readily available, having water and snacks with you will help keep you going.
5. Do something to disconnect and relax. There is often some time in the evenings and on travel days to read, play games on your phone, or get to know a colleague who is traveling with you. Recruitment travel can feel like a 24/7 job if you do not something that you find relaxing.

I know many of you have more tips on traveling or other aspects of International Enrollment Management and I would love to hear about them. Please email me at njensen@occ.cccd.edu.

Keep updated on NAFSA trainings related to International Enrollment Management.

http://www.nafsa.org/Attend_Events/In-Person/Learning_Opportunities_Related_to_International_Enrollment_Management/

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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 California District Team
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