

# NAFSA REGION III

# Interchange

Arkansas  
Louisiana  
Oklahoma  
Texas

## June 2012 NAFSA Region III Newsletter

### Message from the Chair —Claudia Graves



Puerto Rico is around the corner and with that, the planning to bring you the best conference is in full swing. If you haven't registered for Puerto Rico yet,

please do so now in order to get the special registration rate of \$250.00. Remember, this year our registration fee includes all meals and your ticket to the wonderful off-site event at El Casino.



If you have not checked out the Bi-Regional website yet, please do so: <http://www.nafsa.org/PR2012>

If you want to volunteer for Puerto Rico, there is always a way to do so. Our Bi-Regional team has identified Lianne Thompson as our Volunteer Coordinator. Lianne will work with all subcommittees and find something for you to do. You

can reach Lianne at: [ltompson10@atu.edu](mailto:ltompson10@atu.edu). Unfortunately, we will not be able to waive any registration fees for our volunteers, but your name will appear in our conference program in order to show our gratitude. Our session proposal this year is very competitive. Big thanks to all our Knowledge Community Representatives who are working daily with Region VII counterparts to select the best sessions. I have no doubt the schedule will bring the best of the best and will make this conference worth every second of your time.

In addition to planning for Puerto Rico, I am happy that many Region III members have submitted their applications to be part of the team. I am incredibly proud that such amazing professionals are interested in serving the organization and giving back to the field. An email with the new team members will come out by August, so stay tuned!

In addition to our team members' positions, Region III has committed its support to the Academy for 2013. A big thanks to Shelby Cearly, our Academy IX coach, who continues to represent our Region so well. Congratulations to all academy participants for having Shelby as our coach, and we look forward to seeing you in San Juan.

The call for nominations for Chair Elect will be coming our

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## Message from the Chair (cont.)

very soon, and I am confident that we will have the best nominees. Our Chair Elect in 2013 will serve our Region as the 2014 Fort Worth Conference Chair. Remember, you can nominate yourself or nominate a colleague who will be a great chair. Of course, we need every one of you to vote, so don't forget to carry out your NAFSA civic duty during the elections.

In addition, I wanted to thank Adria Baker for leading our Region during Advocacy Day. This year I am proud to say that every person who was part of Advocacy Day in Washington D.C., as well as those who wrote to President Obama, made a difference. Even

though there is so much work left to do in order to achieve comprehensive immigration reform, I am excited that we are making a difference as international educators. The temporary policy allowing undocumented young people to apply for work authorization is just a step forward in the right direction. Please make sure to visit [connectingourworld.org](http://connectingourworld.org) to find out what NAFSA is doing to change and connect our World. My goal as the Chair was to encourage every team member to have a more active role during our conference preparation. I could not be more grateful that every team member is going beyond the call of duty to make

this happen. Thank you to my wonderful team. The hard work still lies ahead of us, but with you we will make this the best conference ever!



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## Message from the Past—Chair — Samantha Slaight

One question that I often hear is, "What is RAC and what does it do?" When I became a RAC member, I also wondered what it was and what part it played in the interaction between NAFSA National and the regions. Well, after my second tenure as a part of RAC, I believe that I now have a better idea of what RAC is and its function. First, RAC is the acronym for NAFSA's Regional Affairs Committee. Once one becomes a Past Chair for their Region, they also become a member of RAC. RAC is the main communication mode between NAFSA national and the regions. The RAC members provide training for the region's Chair Streams and regional liaisons as well as conveys the concerns of

the Chair Stream and the region back to NAFSA national. Each January, the current regional past chairs become the RAC. They meet at the Washington Leadership Meeting (WLM) where they begin work on their own portfolios and the RAC work plan. This work plan consists of objectives left over from the past RAC work plan as well as the introduction of new objectives brought forward by the new RAC members. Then, those members work on this plan that facilitates NAFSA's goals and the goals of the regions for the duration of the year. They meet monthly through conference calls and then come together once more at the national conference. All in all, the process is to help the regions and NAFSA to

have a better understanding of the needs of NAFSA membership and how they can be better served. Now that my part in RAC is coming to a close, I can honestly say that NAFSA is an amazing organization that is solely dedicated to its members and non-members as well.

I feel privileged to have been a part of the RAC and I hope that NAFSA continues to work through this small though extremely important committee within the NAFSA organization. Finally, if you have concerns or ideas that you would like for me to relate to NAFSA National, I encourage you to contact me and I will be happy to do so.

## Puerto Rico Conference Update — Sue Marlay

San Juan could be called the Miami Beach of the Caribbean, with high-rises and resorts towering over beautiful beaches. Or it could be called the New York of the Caribbean, because it is a major commercial center. Or it could be called a historian's delight, with 16<sup>th</sup>-century fortresses and colonial plazas. Whatever others call it, from October 14<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup> this year, San Juan will be a NAFSA's dream because the Region III/VII bi-regional conference will take place there.

This year's conference hotel is the **Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel & Casino**, San Juan's newest hotel. The Sheraton is just a few minutes by taxi from the Luis Munoz Marin International Airport and five minutes by taxi from Old San Juan. Conference rates, which include a buffet breakfast and complimentary Wi-Fi access, are \$189 for a single, \$209 for a double, \$229 for a triple and \$249 for a quad. The \$20 charge for each additional guest in the room covers the cost of the buffet breakfast. Like all of the resort hotels in San Juan, the Sheraton adds an 11% government tax and a 14% Hotel Service Fee to the room rate.

A credit card is required to reserve the room. Guests may cancel their reservation at no charge up to 24 hours prior to arrival. A non-refundable deposit of one-night's fee will be charged 24 hours prior to arrival and applied to the guest's bill. Conference rates at the hotel are offered through September 19, based on availability. After that date, reservations will be subject to prevailing rates and availability. To be sure of having a room during your stay at the conference, reserve your room

today at: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/booking/reservation?id=1203149142&key=1DA5D>

Nearly all of the conference events will be held in the Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC), the largest and most technologically advanced convention center in the Caribbean, just steps away from the Sheraton Hotel. This year's conference includes several pre-conference workshops, a wide range of conference sessions and an extensive poster fair. On Monday, October 15, just prior to the first session, there will be an orientation for newcomers and an Introduction to Puerto Rico for all interested participants. Later that afternoon, everyone is invited to the Opening Reception, which will take place on the outdoor terrace of the PRCC overlooking the harbor and the beautiful city of San Juan.

Your conference registration includes all of this plus coffee breaks throughout the conference, two lunches and a fabulous closing celebration in Old San Juan. Registration for the conference is already open at: <http://www.nafsa.org/nafsaregions/default.aspx?id=32043>

**The Early Bird registration fee is good through September 19 but the deadline to register for pre-conference workshops is September 1.** So register early to get the lower rate and to reserve a place in your preferred workshop.

Traveling to San Juan couldn't be simpler. AirTran, American, Delta,

United and US Airways all have daily flights to San Juan from the mainland. Regions III and VII have negotiated special fares with both American and Delta Airlines. Discounted flights with American can be arranged by calling 1-800-433-1790 or by booking on-line at [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com), using the **Promotion Code 54H2BU**. Discounted flights with Delta can be arranged by calling 1-800-328-1111 or by booking on-line at [www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com) using the **Group Meeting Code NM8QW**.

There is both taxi and shuttle service from the baggage claim area of the airport terminal building to the Sheraton Hotel for roughly \$25 and \$18 respectively. Remember that no passport is required for travel to Puerto Rico from the U.S. mainland. Some form of government-issued identification will suffice for boarding flights to and from the island.

A trip to San Juan is an opportunity to experience a new culture with the convenience of stateside travel. Though Spanish is the primary language, English is widely spoken in hotels, shops and restaurants. Many cellphone plans include service to Puerto Rico with no additional charge. There is no need for an adaptor or a convertor to operate various electrical appliances there. And, it is safe to drink the water, to order drinks with ice or to eat unpeeled fruit and vegetables. Best of all, the people are very friendly and eager to share the treasure of their island with you.

It's no wonder, then, that San Juan will be a NAFSA's dream this coming October. Let it be your dream too.



Fort El Morro,  
Puerto Rico

*Do you have an  
open position in  
your office?  
Submit your job  
postings for our  
weekly e-mailing  
to [laura-  
semenow@utulsa  
.edu](mailto:laura-semenow@utulsa.edu)*

## Education Abroad Liaison Report—Laura Moix

### Education Abroad Tools: EA Visa Help

This online tool, [EA Visa Help](#), allows study abroad professionals to submit questions and get help from NAFSA's Consular Affairs Liaisons on specific visa issues for U.S. students and faculty studying abroad. You don't need to be a member to use EA Visa Help—all you need is a NAFSA log in. The more information and the more submissions you register, the easier it is to identify systemic problems and find solutions.

### Education Abroad Tools: Collegial Conversations

Collegial Conversations are a great way to learn more about the education abroad field at no cost. You do not need to be a member of NAFSA to join in the discussion. These conversations cover a variety of topics, from visas to health & safety to professional development, and can be found on the [Resources section](#) of the current NAFSA website.

### Preview of New NAFSA Website in Houston

For those that were able to attend the national conference in Houston, NAFSA conducted some beta-testing of the new website. I signed up and was able to take a sneak-peek at the new, streamlined site and am happy to report that it is tooled much more toward professionals in the field and will make finding knowledge areas, current topics and upcoming events much simpler! They did not give a launch date, but I am hopeful it will not be much farther off.

### Call for 2013 Conference Proposals

Are you looking to be a part of the 2013 NAFSA Annual Conference in St. Louis? Submit your session or workshop proposal today! All [session and workshop proposals](#) must be submitted through the [online proposal system](#) by August 1, 2012. Looking to submit a poster proposal? We'll start taking poster submissions later this summer and they'll be accepted until December 10. To increase your chances of being selected, read the Annual Conference Committee's tips on [Developing a Session or Workshop Plan](#) and [Instructions for Submission](#).

Stay tuned for a video tutorial on how to successfully submit a proposal.

### In Legislative News: DHS Announces Deferred Action Policy for DREAM-Eligible Students

On June 15, the Obama administration announced that it would end the deportation of undocumented students who would be eligible for relief under the DREAM Act. Read the Department of Homeland Security [memorandum](#), President Obama's [speech](#), and [NAFSA's statement](#) and [practice guidelines](#). The Connecting Our World grassroots advocacy community has been instrumental in urging the administration to resolve the plight of undocumented students and to undertake much-needed comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration policy. Join us in [thanking the president and Homeland Security Secretary Janet](#)

[Napolitano](#) for this important action.

As a reminder, the DREAM Act will give eligible students, who have been raised in the United States and educated in our schools, the opportunity to attend college and begin the long process of legalizing their immigration status (and hopefully experience more fully the benefits of studying abroad!).

### Advocacy: Connecting Our World



Join NAFSA's new Grassroots Community on Connecting Our World. On Connecting Our World, we believe in creating a better world through international education. We are a **community of individuals taking action** to support public policies that strengthen and expand international education.

Sign up today at [http://www.nafsa.org/public\\_policy.sec/grassroots\\_advocacy/](http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy/) to get the inside scoop on how international education changes lives, impacts your community, and shapes our global future. As part of the online community, you'll stay informed on the issues, like the Simon Bill and the easing of travel restrictions to Cuba, and join other International Education professionals in taking action by sending messages to Congress and the White House to support opportunities for living and learning across borders.



## Intensive English Programs Liaison Report—LaTasha Charbonnet Gonzales

As a first timer at the NAFSA 2012 Annual Conference & Expo in Houston, TX, I was completely excited (and perhaps just a little overwhelmed) at all of the offerings at the conference, as both an instructor and an administrator of an intensive English program. Presentations, such as "Using YouTube to Stimulate Original Writing and Speaking in English Language Learners" and "Muslim Students in Academic Life: Expectations, Challenges, and Networking," provided wonderful information to share with other instructors. In the session about YouTube in the ESL classroom, the presenters shared strategies and lesson plans to incorporate YouTube and original videos in the language classroom. The presenters demonstrated how students can add their own written dialogue to videos, how instructors and students can download videos from YouTube, and how students are less able to plagiarize using YouTube videos.

In addition, the "Intensive English Programs Member Interest Group" was definitely a crowd pleaser. Mrs. Marie-Claude Svaldi, Assistant Director of ESL Institutes & Academic Placement Department at the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission

(SACM), gave a very frank and honest discussion regarding SACM-supported students studying in IEPs. Mrs. Svaldi discussed SACM's expectations regarding *Ramadan*, absences, English proficiency standards for those students still in Saudi Arabia, and rules pertaining to students being able to transfer and obtaining Financial Guarantees. Mrs. Svaldi also provided answers to other very important questions and those can be found here: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=33048>.

The star session for IEPs at the conference was undoubtedly "Hot Topics in SEVIS and Visas for Intensive English Programs (IEPs)," moderated by Cheryl Delk-LeGood, Director of the Intensive English Program at Georgia State University and president of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP), along with Homeland Security officials Diane Curry and Link Powers. The focus of this presentation was on SEVP's new requirements of IEPs to be accredited, including stand-alone programs (which must apply for individual accreditation) and university-run programs (which in theory are accredited by the regional or national accrediting agency

of the university). Homeland Security officials explained that university-run programs will have to provide letters from the university and the regional/national accreditor that confirm the accreditation of the IEP. This discussion, however, is still on going as both SEVP and IEPs argue their sides regarding accreditation from the university's regional/national accreditor. More information about this issue can be found here: [http://www.aaiep.org/news/show/58/in\\_the\\_news:\\_recent\\_press\\_regarding\\_the\\_accreditation\\_act\\_and\\_regionally\\_accredited\\_institutions](http://www.aaiep.org/news/show/58/in_the_news:_recent_press_regarding_the_accreditation_act_and_regionally_accredited_institutions).

Other highlights of the conference included the plenary address by Nobel Peace Laureate and Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee, networking in the EXPO Hall, joining and talking with members of the Intensive English Programs MIG and English Language Training and Administration (ELTA), and meeting and planning with fellow Region III and VII NAFSANS.

Overall, the 2012 NAFSA conference was a great experience for first timers like myself. I took away many things to implement in my

**Want to join  
the Region III  
Team?  
Contact a  
current team  
member! Check  
out open  
positions at  
[nafsa.org/  
regioniii](http://nafsa.org/regioniii)**

program as well as additional information to share with my colleagues in the different departments in the Division of International Education.

I am definitely looking forward to the upcoming conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico in October! I hope to see everyone there!



## Louisiana State Report—Kristy Magner

The Louisiana NAFSA constituency held its state meeting on March 30, 2012 at the Baton Rouge Community College. Thanks to Stephen Smith at the International Student Services Office for doing such a wonderful job hosting us and to everyone who helped make the conference a success!

The morning program provided an opportunity for all of us to hear what is happening around the state with our colleagues and their respective institutions during the institutional update segment of the

program. Marina Pereira, [from International Admissions at Louisiana State University](#), then summarized her trip to Washington, D.C. for Advocacy Day and strongly encouraged our members to go. Additionally, we learned about other ways to get involved with NAFSA. Dana Criswell talked about La Semilla, which is a College Fair for Latino Families that she is developing with some other people in New Orleans. Finally, Monika Olivier, President & CEO of the Baton Rouge Center for World Affairs, spoke

about the BRCWA's involvement with the community and international events.

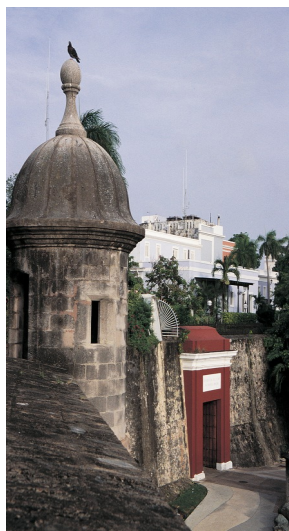
Following lunch, we broke into groups by knowledge community. Thanks to David Ware and Kathleen Gasparian of Ware/Gasparian for each of their presentations.

Thanks also to Loveness Schafer, Associate Director of International Services at Louisiana State University, and Marina Pereira, from International Admissions at Louisiana State

University, for facilitating breakout sessions.

In other Louisiana news, I'm excited to announce that Karen Lee, Associate Director at Xavier University, will be taking over in January 2013 as the Louisiana State Representative on the Region III team. I am confident that Karen will do a great job. Finally, I look forward to seeing many of you at the RegionIII/RegionVII Bi-Regional Conference in Puerto Rico this October!

***Volunteers are needed for Puerto Rico!!! Volunteer TODAY!***  
***Contact Lianne Thompson at: [ltompson10@atu.edu](mailto:ltompson10@atu.edu).***



Garita San Juan,  
Puerto Rico

## Texas State Report—Kelli Anderson and Krista Tacey

Howdy Region III Colleagues!

We are happy to report that Texas offered another great meeting this year at Austin College in Sherman. We had a strong representation from our Texas colleagues as well as a few friends from our neighboring states. Many of the session presentations and handouts are available on the Texas page on the NAFSA Region III website, so if you weren't able to attend, check them out!

Many thanks to our sponsors,

workshop trainers, session presenters, and of course, all of the attendees for helping make the meeting so wonderful. Special thanks to **Ashlee Flinn, Truett Cates,** and the **Austin College** team for ALL they did to make the meeting possible and for being such great hosts.

Our famous Texas hospitality was in full force at the annual conference in Houston, and it was great to see so many of you there.

It's been an honor to serve as

your Texas Liaisons the past two years. The great news is that **Krista** will be continuing on the Region III Team as Treasurer, and **Amanda Brinlee** who served as our Texas State Registrar will be the new South Texas Liaison! The position of North Texas Liaison is currently still open but we hope to have the position filled before the regional conference in Puerto Rico.

Thanks, and have a great summer!

## Arkansas State Report— Lianne Thompson

Greetings from Arkansas! I have enjoyed being able to meet and communicate with so many of you in my first year as Arkansas state Liaison. I hope to see many of you in Puerto Rico in October. If you are trying to cut costs for your institution consider rooming with a colleague from another university! You can also apply for a first timer scholarship. These two money saving ideas could save your institution \$800 per person!

### State Meeting

This year's state meeting was held on April 13th at Hendrix College. Dr. Leonard Mukasa the Chief Epidemiology Officer from the Arkansas TB Control Program provided information about tuberculosis and explained changes in testing. We will no longer be using the TB skin test (which often resulted in false positives) and will begin to use a more accurate and timely test: the T-SPOT or the QuantiFERON-TB Gold (QFT). For more information about TB or the new testing procedures you may contact, Leonard Mukasa Leonard.Mukasa@arkansas.gov Phone: 501-280 -4106

Elaine Kimbrell Senior Associate from David Ware & Associates also visited to speak with us about updates in the immigration field and what to do if you are chosen for a site visit from DHS. Please visit David Ware & Associates for the most up to date immigration information: <http://david-ware.com/immigration-information> The next state meeting will be held at University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Friday April 12th.

### Important Knowledge Community Updates ISSS

Texas Service Center (TSC) recently provided some additional guidance about OPT.

1. If a student wishes to withdraw their OPT the TSC would like to ask the DSO not to withdraw it if it has already been approved. The student must keep the EAD card and work part time until they can work full time.

2. A student who applies for post-completion OPT before his or her program end date and fails to complete the requirements for his or her

program and the employment authorization application has not been adjudicated by USCIS, the student may withdraw the application by notifying the Service Center where the application was filed. The DSO should also withdraw the recommendation for OPT in SEVIS. If the employment authorization application has already been approved, the DSO should extend the student's program end date to the appropriate date. The student may work part time while enrolled in courses to complete the requirements for his or her program and full time during breaks and vacations. After successful completion of all the program requirements, the student may work full time.

3. The TSC would like you to add "Seeking employment within in a related field of study" in the SEVIS system so the statement will show up on the I-20.

### EA

If you are a Study Abroad Professional and have specific questions about visa issues for U.S. students and faculty studying abroad take a look at

this helpful online tool: EA Visa Help

### Arkansas Achievements and Honors

Congratulations to Gloria Flores Passmore, Associate Director of Recruitment and Sponsored Student Programs, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville for her recent recognition by the Institute of Education. Arkansas Tech University is proud to have achieved their highest Spring enrollment this 2012 with an increase from 316 last spring to 341! Congratulations to Peter Gess, Director of International Programs, Hendrix College, who was awarded by the Institute of International Education the 2012 Andrew Heiskell Award for International Partnerships. Congratulations to Pamela D. Moore, PDSO and International Students Advisor, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, who received Advisor of the Year award presented by the UAPB Office of Student Involvement.

## Message from the Chair-Elect —Diana Klinghagen

It was wonderful to see so many Region III people at the NAFSA Annual conference in Houston. And even better, to see so many newcomers!

I hope to see you at our Bi-Regional conference in Puerto Rico. For those that

are newcomers to a regional conference, please don't forget to come to the Newcomer's Orientation at 2:00 pm on Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. Not only will it be informational, but we have planned a fun schedule. You won't want to miss it!

All newcomers may apply for the Glenn Freeman First Timer Scholarship. There are 15 scholarships of \$250. Please go online to [www.nafsa.org/pr2012](http://www.nafsa.org/pr2012) and click on Travel Grants and Scholarships to apply. The deadline is July 16, 2012 for applications. The

scholarships will be distributed at the Newcomers Orientation. See you all in Puerto Rico!



## **Immigration Report— Regina Henry, Regulatory Ombudsperson/Students Kathleen Gasparian, Regulatory Ombudsperson/Scholars and Employment Meg Morgan, KCISSS Liaison**

Hello, everyone. It has been an eventful six months since the December newsletter. We have tried to provide you with a good overview. You can find detailed information in the regulatory section of the NAFSA.org website and pages accessed via the provided links. We hope you find this information helpful. – Regina, Kathleen and Meg

### **UPDATES**

#### **Regions III/VII Bi-regional Conference**

Preparations continue for the upcoming bi-regional conference in Puerto Rico, October 14-18. Members from both regions are working together to provide a great conference. In the immigration area workshop personnel are getting finalized, government sessions arranged and ISS session proposals reviewed. Make your plans now to attend.

Conference information:

<http://www.nafsa.org/nafsaregions/default.aspx?id=31567> .

### **U.S. Department of Labor**

#### **PERM FAQ Update Concerning Fractional Year Values**

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) posted a new FAQ on

entering fractional year values in Section H, Item 8-C of ETA Form 9089. If the employer will accept an alternate combination of education and experience and the acceptable number of years is other than a whole number, DOL advises to round up and enter a whole number then use Section H, Item 14 to provide the actual number of years and months.

DOL FAQ: <http://www.foreignlaborcert.dol.eta.gov/faqsanswers.cfm#jobreq4>

#### **Supervised Recruitment**

DOL has indicated in recent months that they will be expanding supervised recruitment. A notice that a case has been selected for supervised recruitment must be taken very seriously. A pattern and practice of not complying with supervised recruitment can debar an employer, attorney, or agent from filing PERM applications for up to three years. But, having a case selected for supervised recruitment is not the end of the world. It just requires careful compliance with DOL notices and requests.

DOL FAQ: <http://www.foreignlaborcert.dol.eta.gov/faqsanswers.cfm#jobreq4>

### **U.S. Department of State**

#### **Fee Changes**

Effective April 13, 2012, the Department of State raised the fees for most nonimmigrant visa applications and decreased the fees for immigrant visa applications. The new fee for student and exchange visitor visas is \$160. The new fee for petition based nonimmigrant visas like H-1B is \$190.

#### **Priority Dates (Visa Numbers for Permanent Residency)**

The Department of State has sent priority dates on a roller coaster ride. In the past six months, we saw priority dates in the second preference employment category for nationals of India and China rocket forward to 2010 and then become unavailable. The Department of State has stated that there will not be visa numbers available for these categories until October 2012 when the new fiscal year begins. It has also just been announced that priority dates in all chargeability, second preference will be retrogressing to July 1, 2009 in the July 2012 visa bulletin. This is an unprecedented EB-2 backlog. It is uncertain where the priority dates will fall in October 2012, but the Department of State has announced that they will try to return to the 2010 priority dates



## Immigration Report—Cont.

for India and China as soon as possible. It is expected, but not guaranteed, that all chargeability will return to current in October as well.

.DOS Visa Bulletin: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin\\_1360.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html)

### Confucius Institutes

DOS issued a directive to all J-1 sponsors regarding interactions between campus Confucius institutes and EVP participants. When reviewing the information be sure to use the May 25<sup>th</sup> revision of the original directive.

DOS directive: <http://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Guidance-Directive-2012-06-Confucius-Institutes.pdf>

NAFSA summary: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=32794>

### Changes to DS-7002 (T/IPP)

On June 6, 2012 DOS published a Federal Register notice proposing changes to the DS-7002. This is the Training/Internship Placement Plan (T/IPP) required in J-1 Trainee, J-1 Intern and J-1 Student Intern categories. Most of the changes clarify existing requirements with the notable exception of the expansion of sponsor and site supervisor certifications. Public comments on the proposed changes will be accepted until July 6, 2012.

NAFSA page of changes,

instructions, comparisons:

<http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=33156>

### Broadcast Letter to EVP Program Sponsors

On May 21<sup>st</sup> Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchange Robin Lerner broadcast a letter to all J-1 programs that her office will be reassessing the objectives and mission of the Exchange Visitor Program. Some general priorities were listed, with more information expected later.

<http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=32899>

### U.S. Study Website

Government agencies continue to add to the information available through the Study in the States website. The site combines information from several agencies to provide resources for students and schools.

Study in the States website:

<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)**

### Field Representatives Unit (FRU)

SEVP has created a Field Representatives Unit (FRU) to interface with Designated School Officials (DSOs) and other SEVIS stakeholders. Representatives will be assigned to a certain geographical area and will conduct training for DSOs, answer questions, conduct site visits, attend conferences and assist with SEVIS II. The FRU plans to hire a total of 60 field representatives. Available positions will be announced through SEVIS in coming months. SEVP has indicated that one of the preferred applicant pools will be current DSOs. There was some discussion at the NAFSA Annual conference with more details to come. February NAFSA liaison call: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/Default.aspx?id=31948>

SEVP Fact Sheet: <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/field-rep-unit.pdf>

### Recertification

The SEVP Recertification staff continues to review the certifications of hundreds of SEVIS-approved schools. At the recent Annual Conference it was noted that the current recertification cycle has been going on for two years, so some of the first schools recertified

*Continued on next page*

## Immigration Report—Cont.

are approaching their second recertification requirement. In response, SEVP indicated that all schools will be checked before a second cycle is begun. SEVP recertification instructions: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools/recertification/>

### SEVIS I Release 6.10

In April SEVP implemented SEVIS Release 6.10. The release dealt with a number of F, J and batch issues.

NAFSA summary page:: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=32794>

### SEVIS II

SEVIS II implementation is currently set for 2014. According to Ann Balough, SEVP, a new timeline will be announced at the end of the current cost review, probably September/October. In the meantime SEVIS II project team members divide their time between development and training. They provided demonstrations and tutorials in the DHS Pavilion at the recent NAFSA Annual Conference. The plan is to have these tutorials available on line in the near future. SEVP has set up a series of webinars to demonstrate SEVIS II functions. See the schedule and register at the link below.

SEVIS II webinars: <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

### [webinars](#)

### OPT STEM List

On May 12, 2012 DHS announced expansion of the OPT STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) list. A DHS-designated STEM degree is one of the criteria needed for F-1 graduates to obtain an additional 17 months of work authorization after the initial OPT period, for a maximum of 29 months of OPT. According to DHS, “[t]hese reforms reflect the Obama administration’s ongoing commitment to promote policies that embrace talented students from other countries, who come to study in our finest colleges and universities and enrich the nation by allowing highly skilled foreign graduates to extend their post-graduate training in the United States and work in their field of study upon graduation.” New fields include pharmaceutical sciences, econometrics, quantitative economics, several veterinary fields, environmental science, and many others. See the complete list on the ICE website. ICE STEM list: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>

**U.S. DHS - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

### Texas Service Center (TSC)

The TSC staff is very helpful in correcting names, dates of birth, and citizenship on OPT receipts

and EADs. When these errors come to your attention please send your message to [TSC.Schools@dhs.gov](mailto:TSC.Schools@dhs.gov). In most cases the correction is processed in a few days. The message should include the student’s name, SRC# and a short explanation of the problem.

TSC reminds advisors when recommending OPT to include a sentence in # 7 on the SEVIS screen to reflect how the employment is related to course work. It is suggested that a statement such as “seeking employment in the field of ...” be added. A few schools have received RFEs because this statement was missing.

### ELIS Launched

As of May 22, 2012 the USCIS Electronic Immigration System (ELIS) is available to B-1/B-2, F, J and M applicants whose petitions require using the Form I-539. Applicants and legal representatives set up a reusable account through which they can submit and track USCIS applications. ELIS will provide USCIS receipts, notifications and up-to-date status information. Use of the system is optional for now.

A downstream impact is that original I-20 and I-94 documents will not be included in applications, just a scanned copy. Originals will not be

## Immigration Report—Cont.

returned. A temporary procedure has been set up to allow petitioners to get their approval documents stamped at a local USCIS office.

USCIS Fact Sheet ELIS I-539 and SEVIS I-20: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/Default.aspx?id=32979>

Submitting Form I-20/DS-2019 with I-539: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/Default.aspx?id=32992>

### ELIS Webinars

USCIS is providing webinars to view the different features of USCIS ELIS and ask questions about the new system. The next webinars are June 28 and July 12. Any interested parties may participate. To register: Email the Public Engagement Division at [Public.Engagement@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Public.Engagement@uscis.dhs.gov) no later than the day before the session. In the Subject line indicate the webinar date:

- For the June 28 webinar, reference USCIS ELIS – June 28
- For the July 12 webinar, reference USCIS ELIS – July 12

In the body of the email include your full name and the organization you represent. You will receive an email confirmation with additional details about how to participate in the webinar you selected.

USCIS indicates that recordings of the webinars will be available the day after each presentation.

### I-797 Changes

On April 2, 2012, USCIS began issuing certain notices of action (I-797C) on plain bond paper. Now, receipt notices, biometric notices, and appointment notices will be issued on plain paper. Approval notices will still be issued on the security-enhanced paper (green paper with wavy lines).

### Administrative Error Procedure

USCIS has established an expedited process for review and correcting certain decisions where there was clear error on the part of USCIS. The process is limited to a very narrow scope of cases, essentially matters in which USCIS denied a matter on the grounds of failure to respond or failure to attend an interview, and the applicant has clear evidence that a response was submitted, or a change of address was submitted but not processed by USCIS. The customer can contact the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at 1-800-375-5283 to request that an expedited service request be created if it is within the expedited criteria.

USCIS announcement and instructions: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=30e001e301b76310Vg>

[nVCM10000082ca60aRCRD&vgnextchannel=68439c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=30e001e301b76310Vg)

### Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

TPS is a temporary immigration benefit that allows qualified individuals from designated countries who are in the U.S. to stay here for a limited time period. A country may be designated for TPS based on certain conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from being able to return safely, or in certain circumstances, the country's government from being able to handle their return adequately. A TPS country designation may be based on on-going armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country. In general, eligibility for TPS requires demonstrating one is a national of a designated country, was physically present in the U.S. on a certain date, has maintained continuous residence in the US, and has timely registered for the benefit.

In the past six months, there have been a number of TPS developments:

- Nationals of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, who already held TPS had the opportunity to extend their status.

## Immigration Report—Cont.

- Nationals of Somalia have the opportunity to either extend their TPS status or apply for TPS status. If a national of Somalia already has TPS, the re-registration period is open until July 2, 2012. If a national of Somalia does not already have TPS, and can demonstrate that they have continuous residence in the US since May 1, 2012, she can apply for TPS until October 29, 2012.
- Nationals of Syria also have the opportunity to apply for TPS. The registration period is open until September 25, 2012, and the applicant must be able to demonstrate continuous residence in the U.S. since March 29, 2012.

The TPS statute explicitly provides that a non-immigrant alien is not required to relinquish status to obtain TPS and that TPS is not inconsistent with the granting of non-immigrant status. Thus, obtaining TPS may be a good idea as a back-up plan, but it is also wise for an individual to maintain non-immigrant status as long as possible as well. However, if an individual has both TPS and a non-immigrant status, travel outside of the U.S. may jeopardize TPS status. USCIS TPS information: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/>

[uscis/  
menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac8924  
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vgnextoid=848f7f2ef0745210VgnV  
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channel=848f7f2ef0745210VgnVC  
M100000082ca60aRCRD](http://uscis/menuitem/eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=848f7f2ef0745210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=848f7f2ef0745210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD)

### Special Student Relief – Syria

On April 3, 2012 DHS published a notice providing Special Student Relief (SSR) for F-1 students from Syria. This benefit allows expanded work authorization options on- and off-campus, and reduced course load options for those who obtain a SSR work authorization.

Regulatory background for SSR: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=27303>

ICE Fact Sheet: <http://www.ice.gov/news/library/factsheets/syrian.htm>

NAFSA summary regarding Syria SSR: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=31929>

## COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

### Deferred Removal Processes

Per Executive Order, as of June 15, 2012 certain undocumented young people will be considered for relief from U.S. removal processes for two years, subject to renewal, and can apply for work

authorization during that period. The Order does not grant legal status. Approval will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Basic criteria:

- Less than 16 years old when brought to the U.S.
- Resided in the U.S. continuously for at least the last five years and present on June 15<sup>th</sup>
- Currently in school, graduated from high school, obtained a GED or are honorably discharged veterans of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States
- Have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, multiple misdemeanor offenses, or otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety
- Not above the age of thirty

USCIS and ICE have 60 days to put necessary procedures in place to carry out this policy change.

NAFSA summary: <http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=33256>

ICE FAQ: <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/faq-deferred-action-process.pdf>



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USCIS FAQ: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=f2ef2f19470f7310VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchan=el=f2ef2f19470f7310VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD>

### RESOURCES

- NAFSA.org Regulatory Information page: <http://www.nafsa.org/regulatoryinformation/default.aspx>
- NAFSA Adviser's Manual and the Government section of NAFSA.news
- Protocols for resolving case issues and contacting your KCISSS rep or RegBuds <http://www.nafsa.org/nafsaregions/default.aspx?id=22155>

- SEVP policy, regulation and recertification questions: SEVP Response Center (Mon – Fri, 7am – 5pm EST) 703-603-3400 or [SEVP@dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@dhs.gov)
- SEVIS technical questions: SEVIS Help Desk (Mon-Fri, 8am – 8pm EST) 800-892-4829 or [SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com](mailto:SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com)
- Urgent SEVIS technical issues: [Toolbox.SEVIS@dhs.gov](mailto:Toolbox.SEVIS@dhs.gov)

## Development News — Jane Clarke

I hope everyone had a fabulous time in Houston catching up with old friends and making connections with new colleagues. Throughout the conference, members of both Region III and Region VII kept busy visiting exhibitors while handing out information about the upcoming Bi-Regional conference in wonderful San Juan, Puerto Rico.

As you know Regional conferences rely on the support and participation of exhibitors, sponsors and advertisers. Exhibitor

registration is now on both the Region III and Region VII websites. What a great opportunity for you to promote your programs, services, etc. to two Regions within the same conference! Reaching colleagues from Region III (Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma) and Region VII (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Puerto Rico) in one great location makes great business sense!

Leigh Poole (Region VII) and I would like to invite you to join us in San Juan, PR for

what we anticipate will be a stellar conference. Multiple sponsorships and advertising opportunities are available, too. For further information visit either the Region III or Region VII website. If you would like to speak about a specific sponsorship or advertising opportunity, please feel free to contact me (Jane Clarke) or Leigh Poole at [nafsa.puertorico.2012@gmail.com](mailto:nafsa.puertorico.2012@gmail.com).

See you in Sunny San Juan!



El Yunque Rainforest,  
Puerto Rico

**Have you  
checked out  
the Region's  
website?  
Go to:**

**[nafsa.org/regioniii](http://nafsa.org/regioniii)**

***Sign up for the  
Region III  
e-mailing list!  
For subscription  
information, go  
to [nafsa.org/  
regioniii](http://nafsa.org/regioniii) > about***

### **About NAFSA Region III**

Region III is one of NAFSA's 11 geographic regions. Each region is governed by an elected chair and a team of representatives from the various NAFSA professional sections and educator groups. Region III is comprised of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Within Region III there are over 900 institutions that are approved by the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to accept international students and scholars. The largest number of institutions is in Texas with 592 institutions, then Oklahoma with 120, Louisiana with 103 and Arkansas with 90. As a Region, we are also very strong in our number of NAFSA members with Texas having 492, Oklahoma 99 and Arkansas and Louisiana 81 each for a total Regional membership of 736. Our membership is very active on the local, regional and national level. Many Region III members hold or have held leadership positions at the national level. Region III is also very strong in issues relating to advocacy to advance international education. We are proud to say that all four states have passed resolutions in their Congress and/or Senate in support of advancing international education.



### **The Region III Team 2012**

- Chair: Claudia Graves
- Past Chair: Samantha L. Slight
- Chair-Elect: Diana Klinghagen
- Treasurer: Liz Branch
- Intensive English Programs Liaison: LaTasha Charbonnet Gonzales
- Conference Planner: Sue Marlay
- Conference Planner Apprentice: Gloria A. Flores Passmore
- Development Chair: Jane Clarke
- Admissions Liaison: Catherine Roueche-Herdman
- Regulatory Ombudsperson - Student Issues: Regina Henry
- Education Abroad Liaison: Laura Moix
- Two-Year Institution Liaison: Sunny Garner
- International Student & Scholar Advising Liaison: Meg Morgan
- Registrar: Elle Shroyer
- State Liaison – Arkansas: Lianne Thompson
- State Liaison – Louisiana: Kristy Magner
- State Liaison – Oklahoma: Stephen Lanier
- State Liaison – North Texas: Kelli Anderson
- State Liaison – South Texas: Krista D. Tacey
- Regulatory Ombudsperson – Scholar and Employment Issues: Kathleen Gasparian
- Communications Liaison (& Newsletter Editor): Laura Semenow

### **Questions? Contact Region III Team members!**

**You can find their contact information at:**

**<http://www.nafsa.org/regioniii> >  
about > team leadership!**