START USING ISSS WEBSITE TO GET INFORMATION!

The International Student and Scholar Service section has been updating its websites not only to be more student friendly, but also to have information immediately available to students. Our counselors are very busy throughout the year and we are now start preparing for the Spring 2015 Semester. For this reason you may find it difficult to speak with an advisor. Our website is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. For most of you, optional practical training and curricular practical training will be your main concerns as you get ready to graduate this coming spring in May or prepare for a summer internship in June. Making use of our practical training site will speed up your own preparations and help you to get the application submitted to your counselor in time so that you will be able to send it out in a timely manner. Also, take a look at the travel website which has a lot of helpful information on how to get a visa and what the requirements are. In the near future, we plan to have other pages updated.

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR “R” NUMBER AND SEVIS “N” NUMBER

We really need your “R” number and your “N” number listed when you send us emails. Most of you are doing a good job complying with this request, but a significant number of you are still forgetting to do so. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

GOOD NEIGHBOR SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Deadline for submission of the Good Neighbor Scholarship application for the 2015-2016 academic year will be 5:00 p.m., Friday, February 27, 2015. Information and application forms for the 2015-2016 academic year will be made available at the ICC and in the International Line Newsletter in January of 2015, respectively, once this office has received the official notification with information from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in Austin, Texas. This information should be available to interested western hemisphere student applicants about the third week of January 2015. Notice: This scholarship program is constantly under review and could be discontinued at any time. You are strongly urged not to rely on this award as a means to finance your studies. Students must submit their application in person and dispense it into a lockbox and afterwards sign a "Receipt Sheet."

What's in the I-Line?

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WATCH OUT FOR ANY SCAMS THAT CHEAT YOU OUT OF MONEY!

Please be particularly careful regarding so-called travel agencies which promise to offer you cheap air fares during the holiday season. Also, be aware of any scams from people who claim to represent the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or from those who claim that they can help you with your immigration problems and applications to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). These people are likely committing fraudulent and illegal activities and are most likely trying to steal your identify information, such as your social security number. Just use common sense. If it is too good to be true, then it probably is. It is best to always rely on your designated international student counselor at the ISSS, if you should have questions.

MARGARET MCNAMARA MEMORIAL FUND GRANTS FOR WOMEN

This grant is for women from developing countries currently enrolled at accredited universities in the U.S. Women students should go to the MMMF website to read the information to see if they qualify for this grant. Submission of applications for women studying in the United States has already opened. The deadline for submission of applications is January 15, 2015. See www.mmmm-grants.org. Note: In the last seven years, two Texas Tech international women students have each received this grant.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS AT THE ISSS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR

The Office of International Affairs and Texas Tech University will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday from Thursday, November 27 thru Friday, November 28, 2014. Students will return to class beginning Monday, December 1, 2014. In addition, Texas Tech University and the OIA will be closed for the Christmas-New Year’s Holiday from Monday, December 22, 2014 thru Thursday, January 1, 2015. The OIA staff will return to work on Friday, January 2, 2015. New international students coming in for the start of the Spring 2015 Semester are strongly advised to arrive in Lubbock no later than Monday, January 5, 2015. For more pre-arrival information, please click here.

PLEASE WELCOME CATHY CHEN AS OUR NEW ISSS COUNSELOR

Cathy Chen has taken over as an international student counselor at the International Student and Scholar Services. Cathy has served as the immigration support specialist for the past few years, but will now assume the functions as a Designated School Official (DSO), and thus, will be able to sign I-20 documents for F-1 students. She will deal with students whose last names start with A thru F.

TIDBITS AND THINGS

- It is taking 90 days to process the EAD cards for optional practical training.
- Early registration for classes for the Spring 2015 Semester will start on November 6, 2014.
- All students on OPT and CPT are required under law to inform the ISSS of any change of address in 10 days as well as to update your current employer address here in the United States.
- Go to www.cbp.gov/I94 to get a copy of your last I-94 form.

Bottom Line Good Advice for all international students! Make certain that you I-20 is signed for reentry. If not, you most likely will receive an I-515A for incompletion inspection when you reenter at the port of entry. You will be given only a 30-day admission to the U.S. and you will have to see your counselor and afterwards send your newly endorsed I-20 with your I-94 card and passport copy to the SEVP Office in Washington, D.C. where your records will be reviewed and then stamped for D/S on the I-94. If you are working, you will need to do this quickly, or you can be terminated on SEVIS and, thus, prevented from working at your current job.