NEW SIGN-IN SYSTEM TO BE INITIATED THIS MONTH!

The International Student and Scholar Service section will be installing a new system next week which should help counselors to meet with students more quickly so that they don’t have to wait as long. Students will be able to state, when they sign-in, what their purpose is for seeing a counselor and the counselors will be aware of when the student arrived and how long a student has been waiting in the reception room. We hope that this new system will help relieve some of the buildup and backlog of students waiting to see counselors. We want to emphasize, however, that students should be here at their scheduled time and that “walk-in” students will only have ten minutes to see a counselor.

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

We are asking all students to include their student ID “R” number and their SEVIS “N” number in their email messages, especially when they are dealing with immigration issues. It makes it so much easier to more quickly look up and locate a student, particularly if we have their “R” number. It is also just as helpful to have a student’s SEVIS “N” number, which is located just above the bar code on the I-20.

DROPPING CLASSES

This is the time of the semester that students think about dropping classes just before the twelfth class day of the semester. Remember that if you are enrolled in the minimum number of hours, you must replace that class which you are thinking of dropping. Graduate students generally must be enrolled in 9 hours total and undergraduate students must be enrolled in 12 hours in almost all situations, and especially for students just beginning their academic program at Texas Tech. Also, don’t forget to remain enrolled full-time for the duration of the semester while you are a student. Remember, withdrawing from a class on the last day of the semester is the same as having never enrolled in that class to begin with! You will fall out of status.

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT WITH A COUNSELOR

We want to remind everyone now that the semester has begun that you need to make an appointment with an international student counselor whenever you have something important to discuss, this includes new students as well as continuing students. You must make an appointment with your counselor, or come in during walk-in times.
SEVIS REGISTRATION TO BE SEPTEMBER 18-22, 2014

The ISSS will be conducting SEVIS registration for the Fall 2014 Semester. Keep in mind that ISSS counselors will not see students during this time, except for emergencies or particularly urgent situations. Thank you for your understanding.

CLEAR YOUR ACCOUNT WITH SBS WHEN TRANSFERRING OUT

We hope it won’t happen, but if you should end up transferring out of Texas Tech to another university at the end of this semester, we ask that you please remember to clear your Student Business Services account when you do. Otherwise, you may be charged the Student Health Insurance Fee next year and not know about it. If you do not clear your account, you may suddenly find a collection agency coming after you. Really!

SCHOLARSHIP AND MAKING GOOD GRADES

We’ve had several students come to our office during the year and complain that they lost their scholarship because they made poor grades! These students want to know how they can get money for payment of their now out-of-state tuition costs, because they have not budgeted for it. Unfortunately, there is nothing that we can do for you if you fail or make low grades in the classroom and as a result you lose your scholarship that allows you to pay in-state tuition. Remember, also, that you have to be enrolled in and complete at least 12 credit hours every semester as a regular undergraduate student and 9 for Graduate student (there are exceptions but not for academic performance issues). Dropping below 12 hours, even when you are not performing well, is not allowed under the F-1 regulations.

AFTER YOU GRADUATE AND COMPLETE YOUR PROGRAM

You have 60 days to either 1) apply for optional practical training; 2) get into a new program or level; 3) apply for a change of status; or 4) return to you home country. Note that we encourage students to actually apply for optional practical training up to 90 days before their program completion date.

IT’S TAKING 90 DAYS TO PROCESS THE EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENTS FOR OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Students who are graduating in December of this year are encouraged to apply for optional practical training the last week of September up through the first two weeks of October this semester. The government agency (USCIS) is taking almost 90 days to process these work cards (EAD) for OPT. Get your application in now so that you won’t have to wait so long and possibly miss employment opportunities. It takes time so please, it is important that you plan accordingly. To learn about OPT and how to apply, visit our web site at http://www.iaff.ttu.edu/main/isss/optstudents.asp. We have a video workshop posted on this site with step by step instructions.