Welcome to the Capstone!

The staff of the Office of International Student Services (ISS) extends a warm welcome to all new and transfer international students, faculty, and staff, as well as those returning to the University.

ISS is a unit of the Division of Student Affairs, which reports directly to the Dean of Student Life and Activities. The Office offers various services and programs including immigration advisement, financial counseling, academic advising, intercultural activities, and personal counseling. Additionally, the Office tracks and monitors international students and distributes information on United States policies and other important issues, which impact upon international students, faculty, and staff.

All foreign nationals in the United States must abide by rules and regulations governing their immigration classifications. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the primary government agency, which regulates foreign nationals in this country. It is our responsibility and commitment to provide you with the best advice and assistance we can offer as you adjust to USCIS regulations. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that you remain in compliance with all regulations pertaining to your immigration status. We strongly encourage you to visit the Office regularly to receive advice and information. The staff is sincerely interested in providing quality services to you. We welcome your comments, ideas, and suggestions.

### Important Tax Information

Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the United States government tax authority, has strict regulations governing the taxation and reporting of payments made to non-U.S. citizens. As a result, Howard University (the “University”) may be required to withhold U.S. income tax and file reports with the IRS in connection with payments made by the University to foreign students who receive financial aid, scholarships, fellowships, awards, and/or compensation for services performed. The University may also be required to report any payments to the IRS.

To make the necessary tax decisions, the University will collect appropriate information from you through the GLACIER Online Tax Compliance System. At some time during September 2009, all foreign students and scholars will receive an e-mail (through their Howard University e-mail address) containing a password and instructions on how to access GLACIER. Once you receive your password and instructions, you must complete the information in the GLACIER System immediately. For additional information, please contact Ms. Brenda Baskerville, Associate Controller at 202-806-2368.

### OISS Web Site

OISS has redesigned and updated its website. Detailed information on student (F-1) and Exchange Visitor (J-1) visa classifications is presented. Additionally, information on the classifications currently supported by the University are available on this site. The classifications include H-1B1; “O,” “TN” and permanent resident. Application packages, forms and handouts are all online and can be downloaded. Registration forms are also available and can be completed online. Information explaining the University’s rules, policies and procedures when addressing any of these classifications is also available. To access the web site, go to www.howard.edu/internationalservices

The full online service will be available on September 1, 2009.
Maintaining Legal Status

As an F-1 student or J-1 scholar, you were admitted to the United States for “duration of status” (D/S on the white I-94 card in your passport). This means you are permitted to stay in the U.S. as long as you maintain your status by fulfilling the requirements of being an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor. Keep in mind that there is an important difference between an F-1/J-1 visa and F-1/J-1 status. The visa is a stamp placed in your passport by a United States embassy or consulate and is granted for entry purpose only. F-1/J-1 status is granted when you enter the United States and is regulated by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Even if your visa is valid, you can lose your legal F-1 student status if you do not comply with immigration laws regulating your stay in the United States. The following regulations are extremely important. Penalties for violating these regulations will result in your having to take any of the following actions: (1) applying for reinstatement, (2) voluntarily leaving the U.S., or (3) deportation.

Overview of Government Regulations You Must Follow in Order to Maintain Your Legal Status:

* Maintain a valid passport at all times, unless exempt from passport requirements.
* Work with or attend the University that the USCIS authorized.
* Complete an official immigration transfer whenever you change educational institutions. Persons in F-1 status must complete an immigration transfer within 15 days of the beginning of classes of your first semester at the new school. J-1 exchange visitors must be associated with the University for which authorization was given.
* Complete a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters, that is, 12 hours per semester for undergraduate students and 9 hours per semester for graduate students. If at any time you need to withdraw from a course or leave the current employment, advice and permission must be received before taking action.
* Apply for an extension of your program if you cannot complete your degree by the ending date listed in item five on your Form I-20. You must apply for program extension 30 days prior to the expiration date.
* Obtain a new Form I-20 or DS-2019 whenever you make a change in degree levels, majors or programs.
* Work off-campus (F-1) only if you have first received authorization from the Office of International Student Services and or the Immigration and Naturalization Service. On campus work is limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during the semester or full time (more than 20 hours per week) during the summer and official school breaks. A J-1 exchange visitor must receive authorization to work from his/her program sponsor or the Responsible or Alternate Officer at the University.
* Request a travel endorsement on the back of the Form I-20 or DS-2019 from the Office of International Student Services or Program Sponsor before leaving the United States.
* Report change of address immediately to the Office of International Student Services, program sponsor and the Office of the Registrar.
Cultural Adjustment

Adjusting to a new environment can be a difficult experience for newcomers. Adapting to a new culture will take time and energy. Variations in climate, geography, food, politics, educational system, language, and the general way of life can overwhelm the newcomer.

Some tips on cross-cultural adjustment are provided in this section. The advisors in the Office of International Student Services and the professional staff at the University Counseling Center are available and qualified to assist you in your adjustment to this new culture and educational environment, Howard University. They will also be willing to discuss any feelings of discomfort or concerns.

The Office of International Student Services encourages you to join the different student clubs and organizations to help you meet new friends and to participate in various extracurricular activities that may help you relax and feel at ease in your new environment. The University offers a wide range of activities, programs, and social and special interest clubs and organizations.

Cultural adjustment takes time and patience. It does not mean that you fully assimilate into the new culture and forget your own culture. Assimilation into your new environment means learning to understand the new culture as well as holding on to yours. You will notice similarities as well as differences. Learning to adjust accordingly to the differences and to understand that there will be certain aspects you cannot change in your new environment, can only serve to enhance your experiences here in the United States.

Some Tips on Cross-Cultural Adjustment

1. Listen and observe: The new culture will have roles and norms that may be unfamiliar to you. Therefore, listen to verbal communication and observe non-verbal communication carefully and try to put them in the proper context.
2. Ask questions: You cannot assume that you always know what is going on or that you always understand some communication. Most Americans will be very helpful to you if you need an explanation of something. You may need to rephrase a question, check the meaning of something, or repeat what you have said.
3. Try not to evaluate or judge: You will see many things that are different from your own culture. It will be a normal reaction to label everything as good or bad in comparison with your own culture; try to avoid this. Most customs, habits, and ideas, are simply different from what you have known before, try to get more information before you label things.
4. Try to emphasize: Try to put yourself in the other person’s place and look at the situation from that person’s perspective. There are very different cultural perspectives of the same situation.
5. Openness and curiosity: To experience a new culture and to learn from it, it is important to be open to new experiences, to try new things, to be curious about the way things are done in a new place. The more you explore, the more you learn.
6. Sense of humor: It is very likely that you will make mistakes as you explore a new culture, and if you can laugh at them yourself, it will help you learn, and other people will respond with friendliness.
7. Anxiety and frustration: Learning to function in a new culture is not easy, and it is natural to feel anxiety and frustration. If you recognize that these are a normal part of the experience, you may be able to deal with them more effectively. Your sense of humor and openness will also help.
8. Become involved: The more you put into the experience, the more you will learn from it. You should make an effort to meet people, from friendships, get involved in activities, and learn about the people and their culture.

This article was adapted from information published by the International Scholar & Students Office of the United States International University.

Managing Your Finances

To adjust to your new life in Washington, D.C., please use your money wisely. Prioritize your wants and needs. Make sure that you have enough money for books, linen, winter clothes, etc. Items such as stereos, designer clothes, and cars may be purchased after your basic needs are met. If you know that you will have some type of financial need in the future, please speak with an advisor who will assist you with your budget concerns. Plan carefully before you begin spending your money.
Returning & Transfer Students Beginning New Programs

New, returning of transfer students must have a file in the Office of International Student Services. Students must present their new Form I-20, Form I-94, passport, and financial documents to the Office immediately upon arrival on the campus. Transfer students must present copies of their previous Form I-20(s) and transcript, which must include the Spring 2009 semester. Please speak with one of the International Student Advisors for additional information.

Transfer Credits

Students transferring from accredited institutions in the United States and overseas are usually considered for advance credits. However, these credits are only awarded if they are equivalent to courses offered at Howard University. Students with Advanced General Certificate of Education (GCE) levels with grades A, B, C and D are awarded credits in the College of Arts and Sciences. The School of Engineering, College of Fine Arts among others may consider awarding credits based on academic performance. The same procedure applies to students transferring from international universities and/or colleges. Because one of Howard’s goal is academic excellence, the university is very careful in awarding credits from all institutions.

International Students are Being Tracked and Monitored

Effective January 2003, all institutions of higher education who have enrolled as international students or exchange visitors are required by federal law to register in the Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS). The system is designated to track and monitor international students, exchange visitors, their dependents and their activities in a “real time” mode while in the United States. This means that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services must be informed of all changes, updates or actions undertaken by students, exchange visitors and their dependents immediately after the changes occur. We cannot stress enough the importance of remaining in legal status. (See page 2, Maintaining Legal Status). When in doubt, please contact an advisor in the Office of International Services.

Opening a U.S. Bank Account

You are eligible to open a bank account without a U.S. Social Security Number. Financial institutions may have different procedures, but you should be able to open an account with proof of your identity, citizenship, and Internal Revenue Service Forms W-7 (Request for Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) and W-8 (Certificate of Foreign Status). You are required to file the W-7 and W-8 within 60 days of opening your account.

Most Common Immigration Classifications Used by the Howard International Community

The ISS is designed to carry out the following immigration functions on behalf of the University. Please contact this office if you need additional information or to seek advice on other options that are available.

B-1/B-1 (Visitor) Status
This immigration status is issued to persons coming to the United States for brief periods to conduct business or visit for pleasure. Persons holding this status are not allowed to be employed and cannot register as full-time students. Anyone with this status who wishes to seek employment or a degree status must obtain a new immigration status. International persons will find the H-1 immigration classification most appropriate for employment, while the F-1 classification would be most appropriate for full-time study.

Immigration Classifications continued on page 5
F-1 (Student) Status
The F-1 immigration classification is designated to facilitate international students enrollment in United States educational institutions. The vast majority of the 623,805 international students in the United States hold F-1 status. F-1 status holders are admitted to the United States for duration of status (D/S). This means that international students in F-1 status may remain in the United States legally to complete their studies as long as they register full-time each semester and maintain valid immigration status. Full-time undergraduate students must register for at least twelve (12) credit hours while graduate students must register for nine (9) credit hours each semester.

J-1 Status (Exchange Visitor)
The J-1 exchange visitor program is administered by the United States Department of State to promote international cultural exchanges. J-1 exchange visitors can be students, professors, or research scholars. All program participants must adhere to and uphold the general interests of this exchange visitor program. Employment of Exchange Visitors is strictly regulated and can only be authorized by the sponsoring organizations. Many J-1 visa holders are subject to a two-year foreign residency requirement and are not allowed to change from this immigration classification while in the United States.

H-1B Non-Immigration Worker
This visa category is used by companies and organizations to employ foreign nationals who qualify as persons in “specialty occupations.” H-1B regulations require that positions should be filled by H-1B temporary workers who must have a minimum educational level of a bachelors degree. The potential H-1B employee must possess the degree required for the position. H-1B status can be extended up to six (6) years.

Permanent Resident Status
Permanent resident status confers on foreign nationals the right to establish permanent residence in the United States and work without sanctions and time limitations. There are several ways through which one can obtain permanent resident status. Among them are employment base and family-base.

Note: Persons holding other visas, are encouraged to visit the Office of International Student Services to discuss the rules and regulations governing their status.

SEVIS Reminders
All international students and exchange visitors are reminded that they are required to share in the responsibility of maintaining accurate records at the University. These responsibilities include the following:
• Report all changes in their status to the Office of International Student Services (OISS) immediately after the change occurs.
• Changes of addresses are of special interest to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). All changes in addresses must be reported to DHS ten days after a change in address occurs.
• Students who graduate and/or change the level of degree program must report these changes to OISS.
• Students cannot withdraw from school and remain in the United States (U.S).
• Failure to register full-time, twelve credit hours for undergraduates and nine credit hours for graduates, will result in a violation of your legal status in the U.S.
• Part-time enrollment must be approved by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
• International students are prohibited from working off-campus without prior permission from USCIS or OISS for exchange visitors.
• Students are reminded to report to OISS upon return from any travel outside of the U.S. to present their travel documents (passport, Forms I-20, and I-94) in order to update their records.
• All graduating students must visit OISS before graduation for an exit interview to ensure that your records at the University and in SEVIS are properly completed. This will prevent incidences of misinformation or difficulties in the future.
Top Ten Majors of International Students:

1. Biology
2. Medicine
3. Electrical Engineering
4. Finance
5. Economics
7. Accounting
8. Dentistry
9. Chemical Engineering
10. Systems & Computer Science

Additional Facts:

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<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
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Glossary of Immigration Terminology

The following are commonly used immigration terminology:

**DHS:** Department of Homeland Security

**USCIS:** United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

**SEVIS:** The Student and Exchange Visitors Information System (SEVIS)

**Non-immigrant:** A person who enters the United States for a temporary period

**Immigrant:** A person who enters the United States as a legal permanent resident or become one while in the United States

**COS:** Change of Status

**DSO:** Designated School Official—the person the school has indicated to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services who will act on its behalf with the F-1 program.

**PDSO:** Principal Designated School Official. The person the school has indicated to the USCIS who will act the principal official on its behalf

**Visa:** The stamp in the passport of a non-immigrant allowing him/her to apply for admission into the United States

**Status:** The legal classification held by nonimmigrants while they are in the United States.

**Form I-94:** Arrival/Departure document issued to all non-immigrants upon arrival into the United States.

**D/S:** Abbreviation of “Duration of Status.” It permits an individual to legally remain in the United States to complete his/her program for the dates listed on the Form I-20 and the Form DS-2019

**Form I-20:** Immigration form issued to students on F-1 visas

**Form DS-2019:** Immigration form issued to J-1 Exchange Visitors

**F-1 Status:** Full-time students who are sponsored by parents, relatives or other sources

**J-1 Status:** Full-time students, faculty and researchers who are sponsored by governments and other sponsoring organizations or agencies

**B-1/2 Status:** Tourists entering the United States for a temporary visit

**EAD:** Employment authorization document issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

**Foreign National:** A term used by the United States government to refer to non-U.S. citizens

**Alien:** A term used by the U.S. citizens present in the United States

**In-Status:** A person is said to be in-status if he or she abides by all of the regulations issued by USCIS

**Out-of Status:** A person is said to be out-of-status if he or she does not abide by all of the regulations issued by the government.

**Overstay:** In the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, nonimmigrants who remain in the United States beyond their authorized period of stay are classified as in “Overstay Status.” For those with D/S on their Form I-94, overstay describes those who stop performing the duties of their status. For example, a F-1 student who is not attending school. Severe penalties were established for such infractions.

**Port of Entry or POE:** The first place a nonimmigrant is inspected in the United States by the U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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**Removal of International Student Immigration Hold**

All students, who are not permanent residents or citizens of the United States of America will be subject to an “Immigration Hold,” (IHold) which will prevent them from registering. To remove the hold, students must report to the Office of International Student Services. This Office must collect pertinent information from you as required by U.S. federal laws. Please bring all of your immigration and financial documents and your passport to the Office immediately. The Office is located in Room 119 of the Blackburn University Center.

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**Food for Thought**

Life is made made up, not of great sacrifices or duties, but little things, in which smiles and kindness and small obligations, given habitually, are what win and preserve the heart and secure comfort.

*Sir Humphrey Davy*

Great merit, or great failings, will make you respected or despised; but trifles, little attentions, mere nothings, either done or neglected, will make you either liked or disliked in the general run of the world.

*Lord Chesterfield*
OISS Staff

To better serve international students, faculty and staff members, the Office of International Student Services has divided the staff’s advising responsibilities as follows:

Grace Ansah, Ph.D.
Director
All Classifications
Staff, and faculty H-1 and Permanent Residency
Monday to Wednesday-Open Door Policy, Otherwise-Appointments

Wilma Hosten, Ph.D.
Associate Director
Staff and faculty H-1
J-1, F-1 Law, Dental, Medical, English as Second Language
Open Door Policy

Peter Ugbong, M.A., J.D.
Assistant Director
J-1 Students, faculty and staff, F-1 Graduate Students
Advisor to International Organizations. Monday, Wednesday and Friday-Open Door Policy
Tuesdays and Thursdays-Appointments

Karen Epps
Assistant Director
F-1 Undergraduate Students
Monday, Wednesday and Friday-Appointments. Tuesdays and Thursdays-Open Door Policy

Ayedeji Rotimi
Systems Analyst
Open Door Policy

In an effort to facilitate the schedules of our clients, we recommend that our clients make appointments. It is usually not necessary to wait for a particular advisor. Please state your needs and allow a member of our staff to decide on who else can best serve your needs.

ISS Office Hours

The operating hours of the Office of International Student Services are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm. The Office is not open on weekends or holidays. Students, faculty and staff members in non-immigrant status are encouraged to submit requests for service at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance.

We recommend that our clients make appointments where possible to prevent unnecessary delays. In an effort to facilitate the schedules of our clients and to better manage the workload of the Office, we will endeavor to accommodate emergencies.

Shopping Trip to Potomac Mills

The Howard University International Pals (IPals) will co-sponsor a shopping trip to Potomac Mills Mall in Dale City, Virginia, on August 29, 2009. Potomac Mills is one of the largest shopping outlets on the east coast and has a variety of stores. Students will have an opportunity to shop for clothes, shoes, bedding, housewares, and electronic. A bus will depart from 4th and Bryant Streets, N.W. at 9:00a.m and will return to the same location by 6:00p.m. The cost for transportation is $15.00 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the Cramton Auditorium Box Office.