



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT NEWSLETTER

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Happy New Year

Happy New Year! Feliz Ano Novo! Bonne Annee! Shinnen Omedetou! Bon Ianne! Bonn ane! Dewenati! Ekwu Odun tutun! Mogizi Rwebangira! Frohes neues Jahr! Hercliche Neves Jahr! Afrihyia Pa! Melkam Gena! Nakutakia Mwaka Mpya Yeenye Furaha Na Baraka Tele! Gelukkig Nieuwjaar! Felice Anno Nuovo! to all new and continuing students, faculty, and staff. The staff of the Office of International Student Services (OISS) extends a warm welcome to all new and transfer international students, faculty, and staff, as well as those returning to the University this semester.

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

All foreign nationals in the United States must abide by rules and regulations governing their immigration classification. 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 in understanding the regulations. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that you remain in compliance with all regulations pertaining to your immigration status. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in serious penalties. We strongly encourage you to visit the Office on a regular basis to consult with an advisor and pick up a newsletter or an update of current information. The staff is sincerely interested in providing quality services to you, therefore, we welcome your comments, ideas, and suggestions.

International Student Enrollment Increased by 7.0% in 2007/08

According to *Open Doors 2008* annual report on international academic mobility, published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) with support from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions increased by 7.0% in 2007/08 to a total of 623,805. It is important to note that 55% of international students were male and 45% female. The enrollment of new international students, (i.e., enrolled for the first time at a U.S. institution) increased by 10% to 173,121 students. The report stated that this large increase in new enrollment suggests that the total number of international students in the U.S. will continue to increase in the future.

At the undergraduate level, international students comprised 1.6% of the total U.S. higher education enrollment of 15,348,881 and at the graduate level, 10.6% of the total U.S. higher education enrollment of 2,609,119. International graduate students enrollment continues to exceed international enrollment (44% of the total compare to 39%). Although there are over 620,000 international students in the U.S., there still comprised only 3.5% of total U.S. higher education enrollment of 17,958,000 and contributed over \$15.5 billion to the U.S. economy in 2007/08. Hence, there is considerable room for U.S. institution of higher education to accommodate more international students on their campuses.

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International Student Newsletter

This newsletter is published by the Office of International Student Services, Division of Student Affairs, Howard University. It reports on U.S. policies and issues which impact upon international students, faculty, and staff.

Contact Information:

Office of International Student Services
Rm. 119, Blackburn University Center
Howard University
2400 6th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20059
Tel: 202-806-7517
Fax: 202-806-9194

E-mail: gansah-birikorang@howard.edu

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor in Chief
Grace Ansah, Ph.D.

Immigration Editor
Peter A. Ugbong, M.A., J.D.

Program Editor
Wilma Hosten, Ph.D.

Staff Editors
Karen A. Epps
Ayedeki Rotimi

Students, staff, and faculty are invited to submit articles for publication. The next issue will be published on March 1, 2010.

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As in past years, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines were popular among international students in the reporting period, with 40% of all international students enrolled in these fields. These fields were especially predominant at the graduate level, where 53% of international students were enrolled in these field, and at the doctorate institutions 47% of international students were studying in these fields. However, Business and Management, as well as Engineering continue to be the top two fields of study chosen by international students.

Over the past 10 years, Howard University international population continues to decline. For the reporting periods 2007/08 and 2008/09, the University enrolled 923 and just over 600 international students, respectively. For additional information, visit <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org>.

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 their proper context.

2. **Ask questions.** You cannot assume that you will always know what is going on or that you will 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 empathize.** 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 will 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 to 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 anxious and frustrated. 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, form 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.

Food for Thought

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

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/J-1 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.

Removal of Immigration Hold

All new and transfer international students, as well as former students returning (FSR), will be subject to an immigration hold which will prevent you from registering. To remove the hold, students must check with the Office of International Student Services (ISS). Information will be collected and copies made of your immigration documents, as required by U.S. federal law. To prevent delays in your registration, please visit the office, which is located in Suite 119 of the Blackburn University Center. Please bring all your immigration documents (I-94, Form I-20/DS-2019, and Passport) with you.

Office Hours

The operating hours of the Office of International Student Services are Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Office is not open on weekends. In an effort to facilitate the schedules of our clients and to better manage the workload of the Office, we have decided to follow the schedule below:

Grace Ansah: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays -- Appointments

Peter A. Ugbong: Mondays and Fridays -- Open Door Policy; Wednesdays -- Appointments

Wilma Hosten: Open Door Policy

Karen Epps: Monday, Wednesday and Friday -- Appointments; Tuesdays and Thursdays -- Open Door Policy

Ayedeji Rotimi: Open Door Policy

We will endeavor to accommodate emergencies.

Financial Aid & Scholarship Sources

FinAid: The Financial Aid Information Page: a comprehensive Internet guide to financial aid, contains sections pertaining to foreign students coming to the United States and U.S. students going abroad.
<http://www.finaid.org/>

Financial Aid from the U.S. Department of Education: visit the department's World Wide Web site available resources.
http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/

Foundation Center: 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 938, Washington, DC 20036, Telephone: 202-331-1400.

International Students Organization in America: maintains a useful financial aid web page located at:
<http://www.isoa.org>

Margaret McNamara Memorial Fund: World Bank Volunteer Services, The World Bank, 1818 "H" St., NW, Room G-1000, Washington, DC 20433, Telephone: 202-473-8751, Fax: 202-676-0419

Eligibility: Women only

Deadline: February 28, 2010

NAFSA: Association of International Educators: maintains a useful financial aid web page located at:
<http://www.nafsa.org/students/funding.html>

Online Directory of Scholarships and Grants: useful financial aid web page located at:
<http://scholarships.kachinatech.com/>

Organization of American States: Department of Fellowship and Training Program, Washington, DC 20006, Telephone: (202) 458-3900.

PEO International Peace Scholarship Fund: Philanthropic and Educational Organization for Women, 3700 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312, Telephone: 515-255-3153
Eligibility: Women only; full time candidates for the MA or Ph.D. at U.S. Universities

Eligibility Deadline: 12/15/09

Application Deadline: 01/31/2010

Peterson's Education Center on the World Wide Web: publishes a variety of books and directories, and they are listed on this Web site.
<http://www.petersons.com>

Phelps-Stokes Fund: 10 East 87th St., New York, NY 10128 (for African Students).

The College Board Online: the College Board's World Wide site, offers college search, general advice, and ordering information on useful publications.

<http://www.collegeboard.org>

The National Association of Financial Aid Administrators: maintains a web page that lists financial resources for international students located at:

<http://www.finaid.org/finaid/focus/itl-stud.html>

The National Science Foundation: publishes a selected list of fellowships and other support opportunities for Advanced Education for United States Citizens and Foreign Nationals, 1993 edition (National Science Foundation). NSF 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230, Telephone: 703-306-1234.

United Nations: Fellowships Section, Office of Technical Cooperation of Development, United Nations, New York, 10017.

World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program: The World Bank, 1818 H St., NW, Room G-1000, Washington, DC 20433, Telephone: 202-473-6849

Eligibility: Women only. Candidates for MA or Ph.D. in development related fields.

Deadline: February 2, 2010

Xerox Technical Minority Scholarship Program, Xerox Corporation, Corporate Employment and College Relations, Xerox Square-026, Rochester, NY 14644.

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. **When in doubt, please contact an advisor in the Office of International Student Services.**

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. Other schools and colleges such as School of Engineering, College of Fine Arts and others may consider awarding credits based on academic performance. The same procedure applies to students transferring from international univer-