



Minutes PIER Meeting

Wednesday, 06/13/2007

1:30PM – 3:00PM
National University

I. Welcome

- ❖ Chair Olga Piro welcomed everyone to the final PIER meeting of 2006-2007 and thanked National University (Eric Abutin & Melissa Diaz) for hosting the meeting and New Professionals Workshop this past February.

II. Traditional Introduction of PIER Members

- ❖ In keeping with tradition, all the members in attendance introduced themselves by name and institution.

III. PIER Business

- ❖ Membership: Olga Piro on behalf of Hao Nguyen
The application has been updated. Online submission is preferred. We encourage you to renew your membership in the summer. The fee is \$15 and \$20 for applications received after December 1, 2007.
- ❖ Treasurer: Eric Abutin
We have \$494.03 in checking and \$36.52 in savings.

IV. Proposed Changes to Member Access to Website & Updates

- ❖ Sections of the website may be password protected for PIER Members only. A majority of the members present at the meeting raised their hands in approval.
- ❖ The Advisor's Corner has been updated with information on reinstatement, the local USCIS office, directions to the Tijuana Consulate, etc.

http://piergroup.org/advisor_corner.htm

V. New USCIS Fee Schedule

- ❖ USCIS has approved a fee hike effective July 30, 2007. Forms that will be affected include I-102, I-539, I-765, etc. More information can be found here:

http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/fees_forms_and_processing/uscis_fee_schedule_effective

VI. NAFSA Conference Highlights

Richard Yien, Scripps Research Institute

Workshop #10: J Regulations-Advanced

- ❖ DOS provided a letter to NAFSA with a chart for eligibility bars:

http://www.nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/sevis/dos_guidance_on_j_professors

- ❖ J-2 is subject to both bars

- ❖ For J-1, the clock begins when entering the U.S.
- ❖ SEVIS may eventually include an OUT-OF-COUNTRY function for J-1.

Interim Final J Trainee and Trainee Intern Regulation:

http://nafsa.org/regulatory_information.sec/regulatory_document_library.dlib/sevis/final_j_trainee_and_trainee

Other notes

- 1.) **It's ok to transfer a terminated record** as long as the new school is willing to assist with reinstatement. This was addressed at F-1 Update and the SEVIS Q & A (Olga mentioned Susan Geary, SEVP, cautioned that the rule has not been officially published, and that the SEVIS FAQ should be updated soon).
- 2.) At the POE, primary inspection does not have access to SEVIS.
- 3.) Visa denial rates by country are now listed on the Department of State website.
- 4.) The U.S. Embassy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia is closed. The only available visa post for Saudi Arabian students is in Riyadh.
- 5.) Immigration Reform Act: Possible F4 visa category and OPT for 24 months.

Dulce Dorado, UCSD

Celebrating International Women's Day: A Campus Collaboration

- ❖ Panelists from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire discussed a celebration/ceremony they have for students.
- ❖ Good way to bring together different campus offices, faculty and staff to support an event celebrated in many countries.

Study Abroad and International Student Offices: Collaboration!

- ❖ Look for ways your office can collaborate with other offices on campus for programming ideas and services.
- ❖ Dulce used the example of how UCSD partakes in International Student Week. (this year it's November 12-16).
- ❖ Mentoring activities benefit both student and staff.

From LPs and CDs to MP3s: Understanding Today's Student Technology

- ❖ Be aware of how students use technology such as podcasts, blogs, YouTube, and social networking sites (Myspace, Facebook), and how these new technologies can help connect us to our students.
- ❖ Examples: Giving writing exercises via blogs or providing a way to connect with faculty/staff via the social networking site Facebook.

Jessica Keith, Cal Tech

Video: Experience Living with 6 International Women

- ❖ Presenter lives with 6 international women. A preview for her upcoming video was shown.

Olga Piro, UCSD Extension

Poorly Worded, Ambiguous Regulations Are Par for the Course: Developing Policies When F&J Regulations Aren't Clear

Session Web Page: www.issss.umn.edu/nafsa

- ❖ Preambles of the regulations are often more clear/specific about the purpose of the regulation, so read and understand those to help you decide how to interpret/apply the regulation

F-1 Update

- ❖ *Bi-Specialization of Service Centers* - Change of Status applications should be sent to the service center nearest the student's residence. Reinstatement applications should be sent to the service center nearest the school.
- ❖ *Discontinuance of locally-produced EAD's* - If an EAD application takes longer than 90 days, student needs to use InfoPass to schedule an appt. at the local district office, and that office will then make an inquiry to find out the status of the EAD.
- ❖ *SEVP has reversed it's stance on transferring terminated records* - Terminated records can once again be transferred to a new school provided the new school agrees to assist the student with reinstatement. Contact the new school to confirm before transferring the record.
- ❖ *Removing Termination Flags* - Call the SEVIS Help Desk to remove flags for non-adverse terminations (such as authorized early withdrawal). Adverse terminations should remain flagged.
Report terminations and glitches by CLAIMS to NAFSA's Issue Net.
- ❖ *ICE – Compliance Enforcement Unit (CUE)* - Develops leads from 3 databases: US VISIT, SEVIS, and NSEERS. Since 6/03, 68,000 leads have led to 270 arrests.
- ❖ *Correct mailing address for I-515A is on SEVP and NAFSA websites: **SEVP: Attn: Form I-515A Processing Team/Chester Arthur Bldg./425 I St. NW, Ste. 6034/Washington DC 20536.*** If student is travelling within 30 days, fax forms to 202-353-4625
- ❖ *Immigration Reform Act (Pending)*
 - 1.) New F4 and F5 status (one for online programs, other ?)
 - 2.) OPT will extend to 24 months
 - 3.) Off-campus work will be okay

Consular Offices and Visa Acquisition

- ❖ The validity period of a visa is determined by either the period listed in the reciprocity tables by country, or the length of time on the I-20, whichever is shorter.
- ❖ Qualifying for a visa requires convincing consulate officer of intent to return to the home country, not just showing ties.
- ❖ Consular officers can't see SEVIS program start and end dates, or I-20 remarks, but this will change soon. If you have a student whose visa is pending for further info, fax the student information page from SEVIS to the consulate.

- ❖ Abby Rupp, DOS, said that although they won't second-guess a student's choice of school, the student must be able to explain why they chose that particular school and it has to fit in to their stated plans.
Interesting Note: If school choice is such a pertinent factor in the issuance of the visa, why then are students allowed to transfer schools immediately upon entering the U.S.? Shouldn't this alert DHS that the student's stated intent when applying for the visa and entering the U.S. was fraudulent?
- ❖ Students may apply for a new visa even if their current visa is still valid, and if the student has been enrolled in school within the last 12 months, the new visa can be expedited.

SEVIS Q & A

- ❖ 5.7 Release due late June will include:
 - Full OPT field edit prior to adjudication
 - Student Search without selecting status
 - Message Board
 - Omitting 2nd search step from Student Major Selection
 - Ability to enter a past program end date
- ❖ SEVIS Feasibility Study is underway to determine if SEVIS can keep up with our demands or consider development of a SEVIS-Next Generation database. There have been 53 system upgrades to the current system since it was implemented in 2003.
- ❖ Will change termination status to be used only for negative reasons (i.e., expulsion)

Michael Dietz, ALI

Surviving in the U.S. Without a Social Security Number

Session Web Page: international.cua.edu/ssn.cfm

VII. Announcement of 2007-08 PIER Board members

- 4.) Chair:Melissa Diaz, National University
- 5.) Chair-Elect: Karla Macias, UCSD
- 6.) Membership: Hao Nguyen, UCSD
- 7.) Secretary: Kasey McCarthy. Gemological Institute of America
- 8.) Treasurer: Richard Yien, Scripps Research Institute
- 9.) Webmaster: Michael Dietz, American Language Institute

VIII. Closing