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This is the Weekly ISSS Newsletter that we send out every Friday. It includes very important immigration updates that you must be aware of, as well as information about events happening on campus and in the area.

Are you a part of a student organization and want to see your event advertised to your fellow students? Please send the details and/or flyer to ISSS@albany.edu.

Important ISSS Announcements
- Reminder: Public Comments on Proposed D/S Policy Close October 26th
- Immigration Art (Immigration Attorney) Coming Virtually on October 27th!
- Save the Date: International Celebration December 12th
- OPT/CPT Workshop Schedule - Next Workshop on Monday, 10/19
- Career Services Seeking Undergraduate Peer Career Advisors
- Volunteers Needed for Focus Group Sessions

Upcoming Events
- Prepare for the Academic Job Market: Effective Cover Letters
- Let’s Talk- on Zoom!
- Unique Careers in Science Panel
- Benefits of Graduate School Webinar
- Virtual conversations on Mental Health with UAlbany International Students, Participants Needed
- Graduate Students Seeking International Students for Research Survey
Reminder: Public Comments on Proposed D/S Policy Close October 26th

Many of you may have seen reports regarding the DHS proposed rule to eliminate duration of status (D/S) for F students and J exchange visitors, as well as dependents of both published on Friday, September 25, 2020.

This new rule is a “proposed” rule, meaning it has not yet taken effect. When a rule is proposed, it enters a 30-day public comment period, after which comments must be reviewed by the federal agency (e.g. DHS ICE). Only after that may a final rule be published. This proposed rule does not immediately impact you or your status at this time.

As part of our continued commitment to our international students and their continued well-being, the University at Albany in coordination with the SUNY system is evaluating this new rule and will respond to advocate for the needs of our students. Other advocacy groups across the nation are also preparing a response. We will communicate any updates to students by email.

If you would like to read an overview of this proposed rule, you can find a summary on NAFSA’s website here.

Students are allowed to submit comments to this proposed rule for DHS-ICE to review. This may be a good way for you to advocate for yourself and fellow international students. Comments may be submitted through the Federal Register’s website by clicking the blue “Comment Now” button: https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=ICEB-2019-0006. Comments must be submitted by October 26, 2020.

If you are interested in submitting a comment, below we have compiled some of what we consider the most salient issues for our students and suggested rationale to include in your comments. You may comment on other issues within this proposed rule as well, and you may also comment on how these changes would directly impact you and/or your studies in the U.S.:

1. Admitting F and J students for a fixed time period - 2 or 4 years: The current system of I-20 and DS-2019 extensions, which is managed by P/DSOs and A/ROS in ISSS and sponsor agency offices, is the most efficient and effect method as these professionals are in the best position to determine added or subtracted time necessary to complete a degree in collaboration with academic department advisors and faculty.

2. Requiring students to officially petition to DHS for extension of stay for continued study: This change would cause an undue burden on F and J students including cost, time, travel restrictions and possibility of denial. ISSS staff burdens would include recommending and supporting hundreds of USCIS applications for extension every single year.

3. Shortening the grace period from 60 to 30 days for F-1 students: While some F-1 students may be able to return home prior to the end of a 60 days, many have either applied for and are waiting for OPT approval, a process taking 3-4 months, or are waiting to begin a new academic program at an approved institution, which can take more than 30 days to complete.

Regardless of when, how, and if this proposed rule takes effect the ISSS office will continue to support you and advocate for your needs. If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to reach out.
Immigration Attorney Art Serratelli is back to offer advice on employment and immigration options after F-1 status (H1b, Green Cards and more!)

Tuesday, October 27th

Virtual Webinar: 5:00pm-7:00pm on Zoom. Message or email ISSS@albany.edu for Zoom meeting details.

Virtual 30 Minute Consultations (1 on 1): appointments available 9:30am-12:00pm, 1:00pm-4:00pm. Email immigration.art@gmail.com your name, preferred communication contact (phone, Skype, etc...) and availability to schedule (please use email Subject Line UAlbany Consultation Request, October 27)
Save the Date: International Celebration December 12th

This virtual event is for summer and fall 2020 graduating students and their families. More information to come.
OPT/CPT Workshop Schedule- Next Workshop on Monday, 10/19

Our next OPT workshop is on Monday, October 19th at 3:30pm.
Zoom Meeting Link: https://albany.zoom.us/j/91609997602

We encourage all students applying for OPT to attend one of the scheduled live OPT workshops on Zoom to ask questions and hear the latest information. You can find a full schedule on our website here: https://www.albany.edu/isss/assets/OPT_CPT_Flyer_Fall_2020.pdf

But if you want a refresher, or your schedule is packed right now, you can also view a full recording on the OPT Request instructions page of our website, click on Read More below.

Career Services Seeking Undergraduate Peer Career Advisors

Our Peer Career Advisors (PCA) are recognizable UAlbany leaders and role models with transferable skills valuable in all industries.

Each semester, we aim to recruit students with a desire to help their peers in a meaningful way. During the first semester, PCA Trainees enroll in a 3-credit course where they:

- Train to become a student representative/PCA for the Office of Career and Professional Development
- Increase their professional skills including communication, time management, and how to deliver constructive comments
- Become proficient in using platforms such as Handshake, LinkedIn, and UAlbany Career Advisory Network (UCAN)

After successfully completing the training course, students will be fully prepared for their future role as a PCA. Trained PCAs, will conduct resume and cover letter critiques, and provide entry-level career guidance while earning three academic credits.

Undergraduate students can apply on Handshake for the Spring 2021 Peer Career Advisor Trainee position until applications close on November 4, 2020 at 11:59 pm. Click "Read More" below to apply.

Volunteers Needed for Focus Group Sessions

Facilities Management is working on its Master Plan for the University. In preparation for developing this plan, they have engaged an outside consultant agency that wants to host Virtual Focus Groups with students. These groups will include on- and off-campus students and domestic and international students to ensure they have a full understanding of the student experience. The purpose of the focus group is to identify sensitivities and areas of preference and concern, assess general interest and preferences.
With that, Residential Life is looking for students to participate in the sessions. They will host the sessions on:
  • Tuesday, October 27, 2020, from
    o 5:00 PM to 5:45 PM
    o 5:50 PM to 6:35 PM
    o 6:40 PM to 7:25 PM
  • Wednesday, October 28, 2020, from
    o 5:00 PM to 5:45 PM
    o 5:50 PM to 6:35 PM
    o 6:40 PM to 7:25 PM

Please email Tremaine Harris at tharris1@albany.edu with session date and time you wish to join.

Upcoming Events

Prepare for the Academic Job Market: Effective Cover Letters

Wednesday, October 21 2020 at 1:00 PM EDT
In this interactive workshop, you will learn the key principles of writing an effective cover letter that will impress search committees. You will have an opportunity to begin sketching out a plan for using those principles and be invited to work further on your cover letter with an ITLAL consultant.

Let's Talk- On Zoom!

The Virtual Let's Talk service is a way to engage in a brief 15-20 minute consultation with a CAPS clinician. A secure zoom meeting will be available Monday through Friday 1:00-3:00pm when classes are in session. Click Read More below.
Unique Careers in Science Panel

Scientista is hosting a Unique Careers in Science Panel on Wednesday, October 21st at 5pm. Please join us for an engaging discussion with expert scientists who chose nontraditional paths and learn about alternative career opportunities. Our panel includes representatives from NIH administration, science policy, business development, and clinical public health laboratories who will be sharing their stories and answering questions about their professions.

Read More

Benefits of Graduate School Webinar

Wednesday, October 21 2020 at 4:00 PM EDT
Join the Graduate School at the University at Albany for one of our informative webinars focused on the benefits of going to graduate school. Please register in advance.

Read More

Virtual conversations on Mental Health with UAlbany International Students, Participants Needed

Graduate Students Seeking International Students for Research Survey
The Suicide Prevention Center of New York and the University at Albany are hosting two virtual conversations with international students to learn about the unique challenges you face, how you seek to address those challenges, availability and use of on- and off-campus mental health services and resources, and barriers to accessing these services. We are looking to schedule these conversations on days and times that are convenient for you. Click "Read More" to participate and share your availability. You will receive a $10 Starbucks gift card for participation. Any questions can be directed to Brett Harris at bharris@albany.edu.

Hung-Bin Sheu, Xinyun Xu, and Taylor Karnilaw are conducting a study on what would promote better cross-cultural adjustment and well-being among international/IELP students in the U.S. This study is approved by UAlbany (IRB#: 20X222). We would like to invite you to participate in this study by responding to an anonymous online survey, which takes approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. To access the survey, click Read More below. Feel free to contact us at hsheu@albany.edu if you have any questions.

Unsubscribe

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