Friday, November 30, 2018

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1. Greetings!

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.

2. Important Announcements

Sign Up to be an International Buddy!

Do you want to be a buddy for new international students? We are recruiting buddies for Spring 2019 now. Please find more information and sign up through this link:
International Celebration December 6th- Registration Has Closed

The Center for International Education and Global Strategy will host a ceremony for graduating international students, study abroad students who are graduating, departing exchange students, and scholars who are returning to their home countries at the end of the semester.

Registration has closed. For students who have registered, remember that the event starts at 2:30pm in the Campus Center Ballroom on Thursday, December
6th.

Students must arrive and be checked in by 2:15pm. Please dress in casual attire.
A reception in Assembly Hall/Fireside Lounge will immediately follow the ceremony.
OPT and CPT Workshops

ISSS offers weekly workshops for off-campus employment—both for OPT and CPT. No reservation is required. If you are graduating in December, the OPT filing period opens September 20th. Students are encouraged to apply for OPT as early as possible because it can take USCIS 3-5 months (or longer) to process a request for OPT. Please view the schedule here.

CPT and OPT Workshops

Fall 2018

CPT Workshops

- Tuesday, 9/11, 2:30-3:30pm, SL G05
- Thursday, 10/11, 10:30-11:30am, SL G05
- Friday 11/9, 4:00-5:00pm SL G05— for Master’s of Computer Science students
- Wednesday, 11/14, 2:00-3:00pm, SL G05
- Monday 11/26, 10:00-11:00am, SL G05
- Monday 12/3, 3:00-4:00pm, SL G05

OPT Workshops

- Thursday, 9/6, 3:45-4:30pm, SL G05
- Wednesday, 9/19, 12:00-1:00pm, SL G05
- Monday, 9/24, 10:00-11:30am, SL G05
- Friday 10/5, 4:00-5:00pm, SL G05
- Tuesday, 10/16, 3:00-4:30pm, SL G05
- Friday, 10/26, 10:00-11:30am, SL G05
- Thursday, 11/1, 1:00-2:30pm, SL G05
- Thursday, 11/15, 10:00-11:30am, SL G05
- Tuesday, 11/20, 11:00am-12:30pm, SL G05
- Friday, 11/30, 3:30-5:00pm, SL G05
- Wednesday, 12/5, 2:00-3:30pm, SL G05
- Friday, 12/14, 10:30am-12:00pm, SL G05

Other Important Dates

- Wednesday, September 12th: Job and Internship Fair, SECU Arena
- Thursday, September 20th: First day USCIS may receive OPT requests from December 2018 graduates
- Tuesday, December 18th: Program end date for December graduates
- Friday, February 15th, 2019: Latest OPT start date for December graduates to request. All OPT applications for December graduates must be received by USCIS before this date.
**Travel Signature Days**

Every F-1 and J-1 student must have a valid travel signature on their I-20 or DS-2019 in order to re-enter the United States after travelling outside. These travel signatures are usually valid for 1 year while you are a full-time student, though we recommend getting your I-20 or DS-2019 signed every 6 months.

Usually, travel signature requests take 5-7 business days. On our special travel signature days, however, we will sign the I-20 or DS-2019 on the spot. View the schedule here: [https://www.albany.edu/isss/assets/flyer_fall_2018.pdf](https://www.albany.edu/isss/assets/flyer_fall_2018.pdf)

**Reminders about On-Campus Employment and MOUs**

As students prepare for a new semester, we ask that students who are applying for on-campus positions under a MOU review our website here: [https://www.albany.edu/isss/85536.php#mou](https://www.albany.edu/isss/85536.php#mou) and information sheet on MOUs here: [https://www.albany.edu/isss/assets/Information_Regarding_MOUs.pdf](https://www.albany.edu/isss/assets/Information_Regarding_MOUs.pdf).

Please note that not every state agency has a MOU with UAlbany (for example, to the best of our knowledge as of this date there is no MOU with NYS ITS). Furthermore, not every position or every student meets the requirements and/or conditions of the MOU (for example, some MOUs are for specific academic programs). If the conditions of employment are not classified as on-campus through an existing MOU, an international student needs off-campus work authorization prior to beginning the employment.

**Winter Office Closures**

ISSS will be closed on Christmas Day (12/25) and New Years Day (1/1). Between December 19th-January 2nd, the Science Library building will be closed to students, and therefore in-person walk-in advising will be unavailable. Staff will still be available over phone (518-591-8172) and email
(ISSS@albany.edu) during our normal hours over that time period (excluding federal holidays and weekends). Students who need travel signatures for winter break should plan to attend one of our travel signature days because the office will not be accessible while the building is closed.

3. Other ISSS Updates and Events

SEVIS Fee Increase
Effective Spring 2019, the University SEVIS fee will be $135 per semester. F-1 and J-1 international students are charged the SEVIS fee each term they are a registered student (fall, spring, and summer terms included).

Writing Center International Student Peer Tutors

Need help with your writing? Did you know the UAlbany Writing Center has three international students here to help international students on their writing? Their schedules are below. To schedule an appointment with a tutor, please call 518-442-4061 or visit the Writing Center in Humanities 140. Take advantage of this great resource! For a schedule, pick click here: https://www.albany.edu/issss/assets/Writing_Center_Hours.pdf

University No Smoking/Tobacco Free Policy Effective January 2019

The University will become tobacco free in January 2019, which means smoking and other tobacco use will be prohibited on campus. For additional information on this new policy, please click here: https://www.albany.edu/tobaccofree/FAQs.shtml#q12
Cessation Resources (i.e. programs to help students quit smoking) are available through the University and community. A list of resources is available here: https://www.albany.edu/tobaccofree/resources-for-students.shtml. Counseling and
Psychological Services will also have a Cessation Group to help students quit smoking/other tobacco usage. For more information, please contact Dr. Brain Freidenberg at bfreidenberg@albany.edu

4. University at Albany Events

Click Here for a full list of upcoming UAlbany events!

**Therapy Dogs**
Friday, November 30 1-3pm
State Quad’s Student Success Center - 2nd floor of Whitman Hall
Take another “PAWS” before finals begin. Come and de-stress with the therapy dogs before final exams begin. Receive tips on how to prepare for your exams.

**CDO: First 5 Minute Workshop**
Friday, November 30 3-4pm
Massry Center for Business (BB121)
So the past semester we have covered, Firewalls, Linux, Windows, Networking, and routers. So what do you do when you sit in front of a machine? This week we learn what to do.

**Last Program in the Well-Being Lunch Series**
Sponsored by CAPS, this lunchtime well-being series is designed to help students manage stress and promote their personal well-being.

### The CAPS Lunchtime Well-Being Series

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**Location**
Campus Center Student Success Center, located on 1st floor of CC adjacent to stairscape leading down to Niko’s Cafe and Star Ginger.

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**Holiday Vegan Dinner**

Tuesday, December 4 7:30 - 9pm  
Humanities 123 (Main Campus)

Hosted by Albany Outreach for Animals  
Join us as we celebrate the holidays, by music, cupcake decorating, and enjoy a feast full of vegan entrées. Anyone can bring vegan snacks, entrées, and refreshments. Everyone is welcome to join.

Click here to RSVP: [https://myinvolvement.org/event/2938243](https://myinvolvement.org/event/2938243)

**Zen Zone**

Wednesday, December 5 11am - 1pm  
Campus Center’s Student Success Center, CC165A

Stop by the Campus Center’s Student Success Center and get in the ZEN ZONE before finals. We will have several stress relief stations including FREE massages, a trail mix making station, a stress ball making station, and an art station. We hope to see you there.
5. Capital District Events

Annual Holiday Greens Show
Thursday, November 29 - Sunday, December 2 from 12-5pm
Historic Hart-Cluett House, 57 2nd St Troy, NY 12180
Cost: $10

Every year, The Rensselaer County Historical Society with the expert inspiration and decoration talents of The Van Rensselaer Garden Club together present the Annual Holiday Greens Show in the Hart-Cluett House. The lavish show is a Troy holiday tradition that transforms 12 rooms of the 1827 Federal-style Hart-Cluett House into a green winter wonderland. The Holiday Greens Show has been the community’s signature holiday event since 1956 and inspired Troy’s celebrated Victorian Stroll. In the tradition of historic holiday celebration, members of the Van Rensselaer Garden Club incorporate fresh evergreen trees, greens and flowers to create an interactive experience that warms hearts, brightens eyes and fills the air with the fresh aromas of winter woods. As you wander through the house, you can sense the grandeur and elegance Troy held as one of America’s most prosperous cities in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Holiday Greens Show offers an enchanting historic atmosphere in which communities and families come together in the traditions of holiday joy and cheer. Purchase tickets at www.rchsonline.org.

Great Train Extravaganza
Sunday, December 2 10am-4pm
New York State Convention Center, Empire State Plaza Albany, NY 12242
$7/adult
Highlights include:
Dozens of vendors offering new and used trains for sale, plus parts, clothing, memorabilia, photographs, and accessories.
Numerous exhibitors showing off all kinds of pieces of railroad history and artifacts.
Several operating model railroads in N, HO, and O gauges, LEGO, and larger.
A Roaming Railroad that will take you on a ride around the Empire State Plaza Concourse.
For more information, call (518) 668-9892 or email trains[at]gtealbany.com

Taste NY Holiday Market
Sunday, December 2 11am-4:30pm
New York State Museum, 222 Madison Avenue Albany, NY 12230
Celebrate the holiday season at the New York State Museum’s 5th Annual Taste NY Holiday Market! Stroll through the halls of the Museum while shopping and sampling “made in New York” food and beverages from dozens of vendors, including hand-crafted beer, wine and spirits, cheese, chocolate, apple and maple
products, and other edible goodies. Cooking demonstrations will be held throughout the day, and living historians in period attire will share recipes from the past. Be sure to visit the Chocolate Dipping Fountain presented by Price Chopper and We Do Fondue!

For more information, please call 518-474-587 or visit: http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/programs/taste-ny-holiday-market

The event is free to attend.

Albany Holiday Tree Lighting and Fireworks Festival
Sunday, December 2 1-6pm
Empire State Plaza Albany, NY 12210

Glory in the grandeur of the lighting of the official New York State Holiday Tree, December 2, at the Empire State Plaza Tree Lighting and Fireworks Display. The event is free to attend.