Want your photo to appear? Email it to ISSS@albany.edu

Table of Contents

1. Greeting

2. Important Announcements

- ISSS Seeking Graduate Assistant for Fall 2018-Spring 2019 Academic Year
- ISSS Travel Signature Days-- TODAY from 2-4pm!
- Have you applied for OPT yet?
- Academic Writing in English for International Graduate Students Course- Register for Next Semester!
- ISSS is looking for Volunteers to be Flag Bearers!
- USCIS Updates Language Related to STEM OPT, Employer-Employee Relationships, and Third Party Placements
3. Other ISSS Updates and Events

- Information on the SEVP OPT Portal
- Taxes Reminder: File your 8843 by June 15th.
- Research Assistantship for Native Arabic-speaking students
- Volunteer Translators Needed- Pashto, Dari, and Arabic Speakers
- Refugee Family Strengthening at USCRI (U.S.Committee for Refugees and Immigrants)

4. University at Albany Events

- Zen Zone @ The Success Center
  - Senior Appreciation Night
  - Senior Gala
- Class of 2020 Halfway There Fair
  - Language Exchange Cafe
- Applying to Grad School Workshop
  - Food for Finals
  - AdvisingPlus tutoring

5. Capital District Events

- Hudson River Sightseeing Cruise of Albany
  - 19th Annual Albany History Fair
- How to Get Your Stuff Together Workshop
  - Scrabble and Chess Night
  - Salsa Night

1. Greetings!

This is the Weekly ISSS Newsletter that we send out every Friday. It includes very important 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

ISSS Seeking Graduate Assistant for Fall 2018-Spring 2019 Academic Year

The International Student and Scholar Services Office is seeking applicants for a graduate student assistant position for the Fall 2018-Spring 2019 academic year. Preference is given to a student who will be available for paid training in mid-August. Benefits include a $12,000 stipend and health insurance.

To be eligible, a student must be a registered graduate student at UAlbany and expected to take a minimum of 6 credits in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019.

The work obligation is 20 hours per week during the appointed period. Work during vacation periods will be discussed with a supervisor. A work schedule will be agreed upon no later than the end of the first week of class each semester. Availability during summers to continue work as a student assistant is preferred.

GAs are responsible for a variety of tasks, including assisting ISSS with document processing requests; planning, facilitating and assisting with programs such as off-campus trips, International Education Week, Orientation, and Graduation Week special activities; creating the weekly newsletter; and supporting the international student community.

To apply, please email your resume and cover letter to ISSS@albany.edu and confirm that you intend to be a registered student (minimum 6 credits) for the Fall 18-Spring 19 academic year.
Travel Signature Day- TODAY from 2-4pm!
Your I-20 or DS-2019 must be signed every year while you are a full-time student so that you can re-enter the United States after travel. Usually, ISSS requests 5-7 business days for travel signatures. But on our special travel signature days, you can get it signed on the spot.

Friday, February 9th, 2:00-4:00, Science Library G-05
Friday, March 9th, 2:00-4:00, Science Library G-05
Friday, May 4th, 2:00-4:00, Science Library G-05
Thursday, May 10th, 2:00-4:00, Science Library G-05
Friday, May 18th, 2:00-4:00, Science Library G-05

Bring your I-20 or DS-2019.

Travel signatures are valid for one year for most full-time students. If you are uncertain if your signature is still valid, check with an ISSS advisor.
Have you applied for OPT yet?  

Students applying for OPT are required to attend one of the below mandatory workshop sessions. As of now, it is taking USCIS 90 days or longer from the date they receive your application to process the request. The USCIS estimated processing times for an OPT application range between 3-5 months. Students who are applying for CPT are strongly encouraged to attend a workshop as well. Below are the dates of workshops for Spring 2018. No pre-registration is needed for the workshops.

### CPT and OPT Workshops

#### Spring 2018

**CPT Workshops**
- **Friday, 3/2,** 10am-11am, SL G05  
- **Monday, 3/12,** 4pm-5pm, SL Basement Classroom H  
- **Wednesday, 4/4,** 3pm-4pm, SL Basement Classroom H—intended for first semester MS CSCI students  
- **Thursday, 4/19,** 11am-12pm, SL G05

**OPT Workshops**
- **Friday, 2/23,** 4pm-5pm, SL Basement H  
- **Thursday, 3/8,** 10am-11am, SL G05  
- **Monday, 3/19,** 3pm-4pm, SL Basement H  
- **Tuesday, 3/27,** 11am-12pm, SL G-05  
- **Friday, 4/13,** 3pm-4pm, SL Basement H  
- **Wednesday, 4/25,** 1pm-2pm, SL G05  
- **Thursday, 5/3,** 3pm-4pm, East Campus, George Education Center C4  
- **Tuesday, 5/8,** 10am-11am, SL G05  
- **Thursday, 5/17,** 9am-10am, SL G05

**Other Important Dates**
- **Saturday, 3/17:** Beginning of OPT filing season with USCIS for May 2018 graduates  
- **Wednesday, 3/21:** Job fair and Internship Fair, 12pm-3pm, SEFCU Arena  
- **Thursday, 4/19:** Program end date for May graduates  
- **Friday, 5/4:** Latest OPT start date for May graduates to request. All OPT applications for May graduates must be received by USCIS before this date.
Academic Writing in English for International Graduate Students Course-
Register for Next Semester!

Are you a graduate student who wants to sharpen your writing skills? Do you want to know more
about writing standards regarding research papers? Do you want to learn how to commit to a
research project writing?

ETAP 500 is designed specifically for international graduate students and their focus on writing in
academic discourse settings. Students will have a chance to engage in a series of graduate-level
writing projects such as argumentative essays, critical reviews, and research papers. Students will
receive a scaffolding guidance from the instructor and complete an actual research paper of their
own interest at the end of the course.

For further information and registration number, do not hesitate to email the instructor of the class
at lzalaltdinova@albany.edu,

the secretary at bbrunner@albany.edu or ETAP advisors at etappcn@albany.edu.

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ACADEMIC WRITING IN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Class Hours: Monday 01:15-04:05 PM
Class number: 9020

Instructor: Liya Zalaldinova
For permission numbers email the instructor at l.zalaldinova@albany.edu,
the secretary at bbrunner@albany.edu or ETAP advisors at etappcn@albany.edu

Course Description

Designed specifically for international graduate students, this course introduces the conventions of academic literacy by engaging students in a series of graduate-level writing projects such as argumentative essays, critical reviews, and research papers. Students will first explore the processes of academic writing by analyzing and evaluating sample academic papers and scholarly articles, and then will move on to produce their own written work by employing strategies such as drafting and revising as well as providing and responding to constructive feedback.

Writing projects will also focus on the fundamental aspects of an academic research paper (e.g., introduction, literature review, and citing sources) enabling students to produce a research paper on their topics of interest.

Through assigned readings, classroom discussions, writing assignments, and peer reviews, students are expected to develop an awareness of writing for scholarly purposes and to gain confidence in providing feedback to other students’ written work.
ISSS is looking for Volunteers to be Flag Bearers!

Are you going to graduate this May? Do you want to be a flag bearer carrying a country’s flag at the commencement ceremony? Please Email jzhang6@albany.edu as soon as possible!

The Responsibilities:

1. Being a volunteer of flag bearer, in addition to attending the undergraduate or graduate commencement ceremony, you are agreeing to attend the International Celebration on May 16th at 2:30 p.m. at the Campus Center Ball Room (please RSVP here: https://goo.gl/LF2ou4). (Please note: All flag bearers must be cleared by the Registrar and Judicial Affairs before their selection is final).

2. You will be asked to participate in a flag bearer rehearsal, prior to the commencement ceremony, Time and Location TBD. The rehearsal is REQUIRED for all flag bearers. Several alternates have also been chosen, so if you do not attend this rehearsal an alternate will be chosen to carry the flag of your country.

3. If you agree to carry the flag, the University will be relying on you be on time on the day of the ceremony: **8:30a.m on May 20th, 2018 for undergraduate ceremony**

   **Or 3:30p.m. on May 18th, 2018 for the Master’s Ceremony**

   If you do not arrive on time, an alternate will be asked to carry the flag.

The Privileges:

1. You will have special seating in the front row at Commencement ceremony, so your family and friends will know where to find you.

2. Your name will be printed in the Commencement program as a flag bearer.

3. We will provide seating in the “priority seating” area for up to four of your family members and guests.

USCIS Updates Language Related to STEM OPT, Employer-Employee Relationships, and Third Party Placements

It has recently come to our attention that USCIS has made updates to their webpage “Optional Practical Training Extension for STEM Students (STEM OPT),” particularly as it relates to the
STEM OPT employer-employee relationship and third party locations or clients. ISSS is providing the below information as a courtesy update to students.

This is **not** a regulatory change, but rather signals a possible change in policy interpretation by USCIS. Policy and procedure can change (and changes frequently), so the following is also subject to further updates and changes. However, it is worth noting that policy changes can have future impacts, including but not limited to impacting future applications for benefits through USCIS. If you feel these updates may relate to you and your current employment situation, we recommend you bring this information to the attention of your employer and/or your employer’s attorney(s) for further discussion and evaluation.

You may read USCIS’s updated webpage [here](#): You may also read some history on the policy related to third party sites on NAFSA’s website, [here](#).

A few key updates include:

- “a STEM OPT employer may not assign, or otherwise delegate, its training responsibilities to a non-employer third party (e.g., a client/customer of the employer, employees of the client/customer, or contractors of the client/customer).”
- “under no circumstances would another F-1 student on OPT or a STEM OPT extension (who is undergoing training in their own right) be qualified to train another F-1 student on a STEM OPT extension.”
- “Moreover, the training experience must take place on-site at the employer’s place of business or worksite(s) to which U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has authority to conduct employer site visits to ensure that the employer is meeting program requirements. This means that ICE must always have access to a student’s worksite; if the student is sent to different worksite locations as part of the training opportunity, ICE must be able to access such worksite locations. For instance, the training experience may not take place at the place of business or worksite of the employer’s clients or customers because ICE would lack authority to visit such sites.”

### 3. Other ISSS Updates and Events

**Information on the SEVP OPT Portal**

On March 23⁴, 2018, SEVP (the government office which runs SEVIS) is expected to launch an OPT
portal which students on OPT can access to view and update certain information in SEVIS. Please note this is a new system, and updates may be frequent as both students and advisors become accustomed to the system’s capability.

For information on how to use the Portal and what to expect, please click here.

**Taxes Reminder: File your 8843 by June 15th.**

ALL F-1 and J-1 students must submit an 8843 (even if you had no income) to the IRS by June 15, 2018.

Please go to: [https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf), to obtain form 8843. For questions, please contact ISSS.

**Research Assistantship for Native Arabic-Speaking Students**
The Center for Technology in Government (CTG) is seeking two graduate assistants for a short-term opportunity during the late Spring and/or Summer 2018. Applicants must be native speakers in Arabic and full-time students at UAlbany. Students will be involved in an evaluation of e-government services provided in Arabic. The Research Assistant will collaborate in assessing website services, as well as the back office organizational structures. To apply, please send an email with your CV/resume indicating also your available during the evaluation time-frame to CTG Program Assistant Jillian Palmer at jmpalmer@ctg.albany.edu

**Volunteer Translators Needed- Pashto, Dari, and Arabic Speakers**
The Refugee Community Health Partnership program is seeking Arabic, Dari and Pashto speakers to volunteer to translate, particularly in work with refugee populations. Most volunteers are needed on Mondays between 9am-12:30pm. Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to contact Carlie Thompson (c.thompson@ta-cr.org, 518-449-5155).

**Refugee Family Strengthening at USCRI (U.S.Committee for Refugees and Immigrants)**
The goal of our new program is to strengthen refugee and immigrant relationships with skills training and employment support for long-term relationship success and economic self-sufficiency. We want to help families and individuals achieve their goals and be successful in the U.S., both financially and psychosocially
Our hope is that clients take the communication skills they will learn in the Relationship Enhancement trainings to discuss a variety of problems they face when moving to a new country, whether within the home or the community at large.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro into RE Skills</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
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<td>Expression</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
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<td>Problems Solving</td>
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<td>Family Stress &amp; Conflict Management</td>
<td>Self Change</td>
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<td>Helping Other’s Change</td>
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<td>Conflicting Management</td>
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<td>Coaching</td>
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<td>RE &amp; Financial Literacy</td>
<td>Exploring Differing Values</td>
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<td>Budgeting</td>
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<td>Problem Solving and Dialogue</td>
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Participants will be required to take three surveys throughout the program. Each survey taken will result in a gift card awarded. The gift card amounts are $10 for the first, $15 for the second, and $40 for the third. A $10 raffle will be given out at each class.

The program is open for individuals, families, and couples. Open to all foreign-born residents regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or immigration status. If under 18, they will need a parent’s permission.

For further questions, please contact:

**Somayeh Rashidi**  
Program Coordinator (RFS)  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants  
991 Broadway, Suite 223  
Albany, NY 12204  
refugees.org/albany  
p/ 518-459-1790, ext. 8007  
f/ 518-459-1876
4. University at Albany Events
Click Here for a full list of upcoming UAlbany events!

Zen Zone @ The Success Center
Friday, May 4 1-3pm
Student Success Center @ Whitman Hall/State Quad
Stop by 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.

Senior Appreciation Night
Friday, May 4 3-5pm
New Business Building 007

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE OUR SENIORS WHO ARE GRADUATING

FRIDAY, MAY 4TH | 3-5 PM | BB007
FREE PIZZA, WINGS, CAKE, AND DRINKS WILL BE PROVIDED!

YOUR STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE AT WORK
Senior Gala
Saturday, May 5 @7-10pm
The State Room 100 State Street. Albany, NY
The UAlbany Programming Board has collaborated with Student Association to bring the Class of 2018 a night to remember! Music and a four-course meal will be provided. There will be a cash bar so please remember to bring your State ID! This event is exclusive to seniors who are 21+. All registered participants are required to take the transportation provided. Buses will transport students from Collins Circle at 6:30 p.m. and will arrive back to campus approximately 11:30 p.m.
Again, this event is 21+.
RSVP Here

Class of 2020 Halfway There Fair
Monday, May 7 @11am-2pm
Lecture Concourse in front of LC01
Join Orientation and Transition Programs as we celebrate the Sophomore Class reaching their halfway mark towards graduation! Connect with resources, enjoy light refreshments, and FREE Giveaways. All students in attendance will be entered into a FREE Raffle for a chance to win UAlbany Apparel. 2 Years Down, 2 To GO! All are welcome to stop by to celebrate this accomplishment!

Language Exchange Cafe
Tuesday, May 8 8-9pm
Humanities 133
Come join JSA's language exchange! You can practice your Japanese speaking skills or your English speaking skills! Our weekly event is open to all UAlbany students of any language level. We hope to see you soon!

Applying To Grad School Workshop (Last One!!)
Wednesday, May 9 @4:30pm-5:30pm
Lecture Center 06
Food for Finals 2018

Thursday, May 10 8:30pm-10:30pm
Small Fountain by Campus Center
Please join us in celebrating the end of the year with a late night BBQ! Food will be served by campus staff, faculty, and administration!

AdvisingPLUS tutoring schedule

AdvisingPLUS offers weekly tutoring in a number of subjects to help undergraduate students with their academic success. Attend these tutoring sessions to help you get that A!

Full schedule is available here.
5. Capital District Events

Hudson River Sightseeing Cruise of Albany
Saturday, May 5 @1-2:30pm
Dutch Apple Cruises, 141 Broadway Albany, NY 12202
Click here to buy tickets ($20)

Enjoy a narrated scenic trip on the Hudson River on our Sightseeing Cruise of Albany! Cruise begins boarding at 12:30 p.m., departs at 1:00 p.m. and returns at 2:30 p.m. Round trip cruise departs from 141 Broadway, Albany, NY 12202 and cruises South to Van Weis Point. Hudson River Historian narrates about Albany and the Hudson River. Full cash bar & snack bar available with items for purchase! Cruise is rain or shine. There are no cruise ticket refunds, no exceptions. For more information please email us at info@dutchapplecruises.com.

19th Annual Albany History Fair
Sunday, May 6 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Historic Cherry Hill, 523 1/2 South Pearl Street Albany, NY
(518) 434-4791

Join us on Sunday, May 6 from noon-4 pm for World War I: The Albany Homefront - The 19th Annual Albany History Fair. This year’s event will will offer an unrivaled slate of activities - all free of charge. One of the event’s key offerings will be an original play presenting the Cherry Hill family’s own tragic experience of the war - live actors in the historic house will portray the Albany family’s experience "at home" while a virtual reality component will bring to life the story of their son and brother, Herbert Rankin, at sea. On the grounds, there will be reenactors, crafts, trivia games, period music, period-inspired food, and much more!

The fair is free and open to the public.
This event is supported by a grant from Humanities New York.

How to Get Your Stuff Together Workshop
Wednesday, May 9 @6:30-8pm
ACCA Community Education, 90 McCarty Ave, Building 3 Albany, NY 12201
$15
This empowering workshop will focus on the essentials of how we can get your life together by organizing your time, energy & money, as well as deploying those resources wisely, group activities and have an open discussion with others for networking, advice, new ideas and to empower each other to GET OUR LIVES!!!

Each How to GYST workshop that NWR hosts is different based on our guests. Some workshops we speak more about relationships, setting boundaries and how to let go of what is no longer serving us; some workshops we emphasize more on decluttering our space, mind and how to use our time wisely....Check it out! This is a great interactive workshop where we network, learn and empower each other! Your insights and compassion encourages others in the group to succeed and boosts their self-esteem!!

Register at nwralbany . org

Scrabble & Chess Night
Thursday, May 10 @6:30pm
Clifton Park - Halfmoon Public Library, 475 Moe Road Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-371-8622
Come out for an evening of word-building fun playing Scrabble® or a challenging game of chess with your friends and neighbors. Anyone age 17 and up is welcome to attend. Registration is requested for this program and can be made online, in-person or by phoning the Library at 518-371-8622.

Salsa Night
Friday, May 11, 2018 - 6:30 PM
Proctors Theatre, 432 State Street, Schenectady NY 12305
Come out to Proctors for Salsa Dance night with Alex Torres and his Latin Orchestra! Feel the Havana heat and prepare to salsa!
Featuring sizzling Salsa music by Alex Torres and His Latin Orchestra, a half hour dance lesson for all levels of experience, authentic Cuban food provided by Carmen’s Café and dancing all night long. Dance Lesson provided by Dance Fire Studio & Fitness.
Everyone is welcome to the esta - the rhythm is gonna get you!

The $35 admission includes:
Dance lesson
Live entertainment
Light Cuban fare
You'll enjoy samples of: black beans, white rice, plantains, Cubano sandwiches, mini empanadas (meat), mini empanadas (veggie), flan, and housemade sodas.