April 30, 2021

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International Student Academic Continuity- Fall 2021

It has been determined that the University at Albany will continue to provide academic continuity plans to overseas-based international students (new and continuing) unable to return to the U.S. for the fall 2021 semester. The University will therefore continue the process of working with undergraduate students through CIEGS and Academic Advisement Services while graduate students will need to work with Graduate Education/academic departments for scheduling assistance. As the University transitions back to in-person instruction, fully remote/online schedules will be limited to overseas students unable to return to the U.S. for the upcoming semester due to circumstances beyond their control, such as inability to obtain a visa, impeding timely travel for fall semester classes, or travel ban impositions. Because fully remote/online schedules will be limited, all other international students should expect that their course schedules will include in-person instruction in Albany this Fall. Graduate students may be able to make other arrangements if approved by their academic department.

ISSS is aware that DHS has released guidance for academic year 2021-2022; this guidance is currently under review. Thank you for your patience.

U.S. Department of State Grants National Interest Exception Waiver to F-1 and J-1 Students

On April 26th, the U.S. Department of State granted a national interest exception waiver to F-1 and J-1 students travelling from China, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, the Schengen Region, United Kingdom and Ireland. This waiver exempts F-1 and J-1 students from the travel restrictions that prevented certain individuals from traveling directly to the U.S. from those countries.

The announcement states that: “Students with valid F-1 and M-1 visas intending to begin or continue an academic program commencing August 1, 2021 or later do not need to contact an embassy or consulate to seek an individual NIE to travel. They may enter the United States no earlier than 30 days before the start of their academic studies.”

New students entering the U.S. on an initial I-20 with an August 15, 2021 start date may enter starting on July 16, 2021 (the date listed as the earliest date of admission on the I-20).

Clarification is being sought on whether continuing students returning to the U.S. from these countries/regions may seek entry 30 days before the start of Fall classes (classes start August 23,
2021; 30 days prior is July 24, 2021) or if they may enter before then.

Clarification is also being sought on whether F-1 students on OPT qualify for this exemption.

When entering the U.S., students must have a valid I-20/DS-2019 (continuing students must have a travel signature from within the past 1 year of re-entry); a valid F-1/J-1 visa; a valid passport (with 6 months validity remaining); and proof of a negative COVID test or COVID recovery.

ISSS will continue to update students as the situation develops. More information can be found on NAFSA’s website here: https://www.nafsa.org/regulatory-information/covid-19-restrictions-us-visas-and-entry#nieniv

ISSS Seeking OA Applicants for Fall 2021 Orientation
ISSS is seeking Orientation Assistants to assist with welcoming our new students by acting as peer mentors, guides, and facilitating events and activities throughout the week. ISSS hosts a New International Student Orientation program every Fall and Spring semester. This program provides a warm and information reception for new international students. A successful applicant must have a friendly, helpful, and understanding attitude toward new students and be able to work with a culturally diverse group of students.

We are planning both in-person and virtual events as a part of our Fall 2021 International Orientation. Applicants must plan to be physically present in Albany between August 15-August 21.

If selected for the position you must be enrolled in Fall 2021 to be hired.

Orientation Assistants will be paid $12.50 an hour for approximately 10-12 hours of work.

Applications are due by Monday, May 17 at 12:00pm (noon) EST.
To apply, click here: [https://forms.gle/9rfVmMPr8mZwCwx86](https://forms.gle/9rfVmMPr8mZwCwx86)
ISSS has purchased Sprintax tax software to help international students and scholars to file their 2020 federal tax return. Tax returns are now due on May 17, 2021. To obtain a Sprintax tax code, please email isss@albany.edu. Please include the following information in your email: first & last name, student ID number, and the name of your employer.

If you were not employed, please go to: https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf to obtain form 8843.

Sprintax is now also approved by the IRS for E-Filing of Non-Resident Tax Returns with the IRS. For more information, ask Sprintax or view their announcement here: http://blog.sprintax.com/nonresident-federal-tax-efiling-live/

**Employment Workshop Schedule- Last Spring OPT Workshop on 5/6/21**

**OPT Workshop- Last of Spring Term**  
Thursday, May 6 at 3:30pm  
Join Zoom Meeting:  
https://albany.zoom.us/j/92385213502?pwd=bTJRb1A4bnBJUEJwTXVXSFVYQ2FpZz09  
Meeting ID: 923 8521 3502  
Passcode: 477838

In order to meet the scheduling needs of students during remote learning we will also offer recorded versions of these workshops on our website to make them easily accessible if you are unable to attend a live workshop (click here: https://www.albany.edu/isss/87855.php#workshop).
ISSS Buddy Program-- Volunteers Needed to Help New Students in Fall 2021

Want to help welcome new international students to the University, learn about a new culture, and participate in fun events and activities?

ISSS is seeking current students to volunteer as "Buddies" to welcome new international students in Fall 2021. This program pairs current students with new students to promote cultural exchange and help welcome new students to UAlbany.

To volunteer, please register here: https://forms.gle/MUqk7p9afsj3qipN9
Giftcard Raffle for Research Study on ALL UAlbany International Students

You are asked to participate in a research study led by Dr. Angie Y. Chung, Ph.D., a Professor of Sociology at the University at Albany and a team of researchers and students (IRB study number, 20X251). Any international undergraduate or graduate student who is entering the U.S. with a visa and currently enrolled at the University at Albany as an IELP student, freshman, transfer, inbound study abroad or exchange student, or graduate student age 18 and over is qualified to participate in the study. [Please note: This Spring 2021 survey is separate from the Fall 2020 survey/ interview you may have heard about so please feel free to complete this survey and enter into the raffle again.]

The primary aim of this study is to examine how COVID-19 has impacted the viewpoints, daily routines, and academic/ career plans of international students on campus, in the U.S. and abroad. We will also provide an aggregated summary report of our findings to university offices in order to identify best ways to assist international students during this time. The survey is anonymous and voluntary.

All participating students will be entered into a raffle for one of three $25 gift cards (Amazon, Doordash, Korean BBQ Chicken restaurant giftcard) if completed before March 31, 2021. Winners will be contacted around that time.

Please feel free to contact Professor Chung at aychung@albany.edu or any team member if you have any questions or concerns. If you have any concerns regarding the research or your rights as a participant, you may also contact the Institutional Review Board at rco@albany.edu or 1-866-857-5459.

Here is the link to the survey and a QR code.

https://albany.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8qWZPzFNVdUK0se

Cultural Connections Multicultural Festival 5/4

The Multicultural Fest is coming up soon on May 4th! Everyone's free to participate! You can show off traditional clothes, food, music and more. Or just come and enjoy the festival!

Please register using the Google Form.

Join on May 4 at 2pm. Meeting ID 969 4517 1578, Passcode 316178
#GETVAXXEDUALBANY

Daily, 12-3pm | CC West GO Desk
Anyone over the age of 16 is eligible to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. You can learn more at our information table in the Campus Center daily from 12 PM to 3 PM

Read More

2021 President’s Forum on Health Disparities

April 30th, 11am-2:20 on Zoom
The President’s Forum on Health Disparities is a signature event supported by UAlbany’s highly distinguished National Institutes of Health (NIH) S21 Award, entitled “The Endowment for Community-Based Health Disparities Research and Training.” At the Forum, leading nationally recognized researchers and community leaders will share their experiences and scholarly work related to health disparities to both our research community and campus partners.

The Forum provides a unique opportunity for health disparities researchers and students to acquire the most current concepts and methods needed to address health disparities and achieve health equity.

Read More

Mindful Mondays

Join a CAPS Group for Support & Community
Join CAPS every Monday from 4:00-4:30pm for an intentional moment to relieve stress, connect with yourself, and refocus your mind. Join via Zoom with Meeting ID 942 5908 1084 and Passcode UAMindful. The only requirement is to be on time so that we can all enjoy the meditation distraction free together.

CAPS is offering a wide range of groups this semester, please click Read More to see the full list and identify groups that fit your needs. New groups include "What's Going On- A virtual group to process 2020 and beyond" and the "Men and Masculinities" group. There's also a graduate student group; LGBTQ+ group; women of color group, coping during COVID group, and more.

Local Hiking Locations

Group Fitness Schedule
Check out Outdoor Pursuits, local parks, nearby and virtual hiking trails, and more!

Bollywood Zumba, Core Blast, HIIT, Group Strength, Pilates and More!

Serendipity Spring Show

Friday, April 30 2021 at 4:00 PM EDT to 5:30 PM EDT in Campus Center Auditorium.

Serendipity is the first and only all-female a cappella group at UAlbany. We are dedicated women of various ages, majors, and personalities who all love to sing!

Difference Between Undergraduate and Graduate Webinar 5/5

Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 4:00 PM until 5:00 PM (Webinar).

Life as a graduate student can be very different from life as an undergraduate. Come join some of our current UAlbany students to learn how things changed for them. To register, click Read More.
Unsubscribe

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