

INTERNATIONAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER

Spring Semester, 2005

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPRING FESTIVAL

The International Spring Festival recently brought together student groups to display the many cultures right here on our campus. The events included the following:

Six teams competed in the CISO Soccer Tournament held March 19 & 20. Winners:

- 1st Place: Japan - Rising Sun
- 2nd Place: Pakistan - Tigers

Students from Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and Japan went to an International Fair at Phillips Prep School on March 8th to share their cultures with the students and parents.

The International Cultural Party on March 25th was hosted by the Indian Student Association and CISO. Held in the Student Center Lobby, there was lots of games, dances, food and fun.

Cultural Exhibits were displayed April 7 and 8 in the Student Center Lobby. Student groups representing India, Japan, Malaysia, MSA?? Nepal, Pakistan, United States, and Vietnam shared cultural exhibits with

the students, faculty and staff. Winners of the Cultural Exhibit competition were:

- 1st Place: Pakistan
- 2nd Place: Vietnam
- 3rd Place: India

Fifty elementary students from Brazier Elementary came as a field trip to enjoy the cultural exhibits. The local television stations also sent reporters to film the event.

Even the buffet lunch this year was the best ever and was enjoyed by many of our university students, faculty and staff.

The Talent and Fashion Show featured competition performances from Student Associations from India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam. Non-competing performances were performed by two Persian students and from the Korean Student Association.

Talent Show Winners:

- 1st Place: Japan
- 2nd Place: India
- 3rd Place: Nepal

Fashion Show Winners:

- 1st Place: Japan
- 2nd Place: India

3rd Place: Pakistan

Points were given for attendance at CISO meetings and for participation in each of the Spring Festival Events for the Overall Spring Festival Spirit Award. Overall Spirit Winners:

- 1st Place: Pakistan
- 2nd Place: India
- 3rd Place: Vietnam

Winners of the Spring Sports Night were recognized as follows:

- Basketball: African Allstars
- Racquetball: Abhishek Madas
- Volleyball: Vietnam Student Organization
- Badminton:
 - Singles: Sharath
 - Doubles: Chris & Jason
- Table Tennis: Abhishek Madas

Thanks to our Emcees for the evening, Vikram Siddamsetty and Tiffany Williams, who had a very difficult task of trying to keep the performances running smoothly and to be heard above all the audience noise.

A special thanks to all of our Spring Festival participants. Please be sure to mention a word of thanks to all of our faculty judges. Competition was fierce and the judges had a very tough job in selecting winners.

Judges:

Cultural Exhibits:
Dr. Philip Theodore, Director,
Campus Recreation
Dr. Dale Adams, Vice President,
Student Affairs
Dr. Robert Shearer, Assistant to
USA President
Dr. Anh-Vu Phan,
Mechanical Engineering

Talent Show:

Dr. Carl Cunningham,
Minority Affairs
Mr. Harold Pardue,
Computer Science
Mr. Joey Robertson, SGA President



FALL 2004 PRESIDENT'S LIST

Heather J Adamus
Elin K Andersson
Nicole Baab
Kristin L Bachman
Veronika Bobakova
Kim Courchesne
Tam C Do
Yogesh Dwivedi
Nina Fleck
Evan J Fowler
Saori Fueta
Yuko Hatanaka
Masaru Hirashita
Habtekiros T Kahssay
Rai S Khan
Megumi Kimura
Erin M Kinnear
Yutaka Kunisato

Yuichiro Kushida
Alexandria V Lewis
Mizusa Masuda
Ayaka Matsushita
Thorsten Meffert
Jyotsna R Mentreddi
Ana M Montes Ulldemolins
Maria F Morales Davaus
Anja K Muller
Aya Nakamura
Thanuja P Nakandala
Dominika Nemcovicova
Piyush Neupane
Mihoko Noguchi
Tsubomi Odashima
Chihiro Oishi
Shun Okada
Yuko Okamoto
Astrid Palkowitsch
Javier I Perez
Nannan Qiu
Ali Rbaibi
Sabrina Rigo
Jia Rui
Mariano Ruiz
Minami Sato
Christian H Schmitt
Rima M Shuayto
Ayano Sugiyama
Marcela Vernaza
Angela M Villa
Natalia Villamizar
Haifei Wang
Zheng Wang

FALL 2004 DEAN'S LIST

Rizwan Ahmed
Tatjana Aland
Kayedion M Andrews
Sevinc Y Arbatli
Katsuhiko Aso
Tania G Bayne
Maria L Carlino
Alberto A Chavez
Chaitanya Chenimilla
Shoko Chida
Christophe J Dumeet
Florence O Edi

Sanaa Elkhatabi
Basil Farah
Wasim Farooque
Takuya Fujihara
Yu Fukasawa
Shilpa Gadde
Lusine Gasparyan
Shova M Gurung
Yumi Hatakeyama
Takehide Hayashi
Kayoko Higashi
Kana Hirukawa
Iraj M Hossain
Makiko Inamura
Chiharu Iwama
Klara Jarova
Kohei Kanki
Vijesh V Karkera
Ai Katagiri
Noriko Kawabata
Shehzad K Khattak
Kazuaki Kitamichi
Kenta Kobayashi
Andrea Kurekova
Man H Lam
Akena S Larubi
Dimitra Lazarou
Seng Ai Liaw
Ching-Yao Lin
Juan E Loo
Craig D Martin
Kensaku Matsumura
Anna Miyatsuka
Azusa Miyazaki
Regulo A Moy
James M Muisyo
Sadeepa L Munasinghe
Adriana M Murayama
Chu Guan Nah
Kibo Nakano
Tae Nakashima
Nhan L Ngo
Khoa H Nguyen
Sayo Onodera
Aki Oshima
Katarina Palenikova
Ivana S Pejatovic
Julio C Ruiz
Eiichiro Sakairi

Katrin Schoettler
Juraj Sekera
Bakhtiar Shirani
Saad M Siddiqui
Silvia Sosnarova
Jens U Stolze
Yuka Sugahara
Yukie Takeda
Kai J Teoh
Nagisa Tetsuka
Nagisa Tojo
Michelle Toth
Ha T Tran
Trang M Tu
Saori Uchiyama
Thanh K Vuong
Caecilie K Werner
Tatsuya Yamazaki
Sayaka Yoshii
Kazunori Yoshimi
Claudia Zimara
Maria Zivcicova



IMPORTANT IMMIGRATION CHANGES

Now, more than ever, it is important that all F-1 students be aware of and abide by all immigration requirements.

You must register as a full-time student no matter what. The only exception is a well-documented medical condition or graduation

during that particular semester. If you are graduating, you must notify us to take less than a full course load at the beginning of your final semester. If you are not a full-time student and do not meet the reasons above, you will be reported to INS as out of status. No exceptions.

If you are allowed to drop a course, you must also fill out the proper paperwork with the Registrar. Failure to officially drop the course with the university will result in an F on your transcript.

Under the new regulations, anyone out of status for more than 5 months is not allowed to apply for reinstatement with INS. Thus, your only option would be to return to your home country.

If you are out of status, our office cannot provide you with good-standing letter.

If you are going home for a visit and sitting out a semester, you are not to re-enter the United States more than 30 days prior to the start of the next term. If you re-enter the country before this time, you are jeopardizing your immigration status.

New students trying to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the start of their I-20 will be returned home and their visas cancelled. Do not let this happen to any of your friends who will be joining us in the future.

If you are visiting a country other than your own, you may need to obtain a visitor's visa. Most Embassies have web pages regarding current visa requirements and forms.

Let the Office of International Services know when traveling outside the US to verify your documents.

Anyone required to attend Special Registration with INS must leave the U.S. at the designated airports listed by Immigration and have their departure documented. It is not enough just to surrender your I-94 card. Failure to follow the procedures set out by INS at your special registration will keep you from being allowed back into the U.S. It has happened to some of our students already--don't let it happen to you too.

If traveling inside the U.S., take your passport, I-20 and I-94 with you. Any officer of the law can ask for your immigration documents. If you have a car, it would also be a good idea to keep a copy of your passport/I-20/I-94 in the glove box with your car registration.

Check your passport and I-20 expiration dates. Passports should be renewed six months before expiration as processing time can be several months.

Your I-20 must be extended before the expiration date. Unless you have compelling reasons or a documented medical problem, we will not be allowed to grant the extension. Suspension or dismissal from the University does not allow you to apply for an extension.

If you are transferring to another school, notify our office for the proper INS notification. We do not want to transfer you out in SEVIS until you are registered for classes and 100% sure you will be staying there.

If you move, please notify us of your new address within 10 days so we may report the change. These are very difficult times and as always we are working to assist you in all ways possible.

STUDENT HAPPENINGS

Congratulations to Yogesh Dwivedi, recently named the USA Engineering Student of the Year.

Ariel Chavez was awarded the American Society of Civil Engineering Student of the Year Award. Kudos to you, Ariel.

We are proud that husband and wife team, Sharif M A Bhuiyan and Jesmin Farzana Khan have both been admitted to the Ph.D. program in Electrical Engineering at University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Congratulations to all of you who are graduating this semester—your hard work has finally paid off. Now get out there and find those great jobs, whether here in the U.S. or back home. And let us know your success stories so we can share them here.

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

You must apply for your post-completion practical training (OPT)

before your graduation. You are no longer able to apply for the card after graduation.

As processing time varies from 80 to 160 days, we recommend you apply early. Your application must be received and noted by immigration prior to your graduation date, so don't wait until the week before graduation to apply.

When you apply, you will select a date to begin your employment period which can be as late as 60 days after graduation.

You **cannot** travel outside the United States while your EAD is pending or you forfeit the privilege. You must remain here during the processing time.

Travel while on your OPT is risky even after you receive your card. There is no guarantee that you will be allowed back into the U.S.

You cannot postpone your graduation to delay applying for your OPT. You must apply when you finish your coursework even if the job market is low.

You may receive an additional year of OPT after proceeding to a higher degree. This means one year upon completion of your bachelors and another year upon completion of masters. Same applies to masters and doctoral degrees.

If you begin a new program while on your Optional Practical

Training, the remaining time on your EAD is cancelled.

In order to be approved for Curricular Practical Training (CPT), you must register for a one-hour internship class. See us regarding CPT approval, even if it is in the middle of a semester. It is our understanding that intern hours may be added at any time.

POINTS OF INTEREST

You must file a form 8843 with the Internal Revenue Service each year, even if you did not make any money. Forms are available at International Services and must be sent in each year by June 1. If you file income taxes, the 8843 is sent with your tax return by April 15.

The Student Health Services recently held a Health Fair for all students. There were lots of free samples and free health tests not covered by insurance. Watch for these every Spring.

FALL TUITION PAYMENT CHANGES

Very, VERY IMPORTANT—Make sure you read the new Payment Policy and Deadline schedule for Fall semester. You may view the policy on the university web page and through your PAWS registration.

If you do not pay at least 50% of your tuition and fees by August 8th, you will lose your schedule!!!

Also, registration has already begun for Fall semester!! Be sure to check your PAWS and get your classes early.

SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES

Effective October, 2004, F-1 students are not eligible for Social Security Cards or re-print of cards without current work authorization. New students cannot apply unless they have on-campus jobs.

Graduate students are eligible as the stipend is considered on-campus work.

Students approved for CPT or OPT must show proof of the authorization in order to apply.

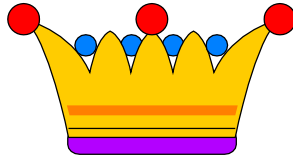
Come by the office before applying for Social Security cards as we must give you a letter verifying your eligibility.

While we understand that cell phone and credit card companies want social security numbers, the numbers are only issued for actual work, not for identification. You can get an Alabama driver's license without a social security number.

These changes are the result of governmental regulations and we have no control over the issuance of Social Security cards.

GREEN CARD LOTTERY

You can get information on the DV Lottery at the official BCIS website of www.bcis.gov. Don't forget to pay attention to the deadlines and nationalities restrictions



HOMECOMING WINNERS

Our congratulations to Basil Farah who won Homecoming King recently. Maryam Baghaei was in the top runnings for Queen. We are proud of you both.

NEED A RIDE???

Baptist Campus Ministries is still running their regular ride assistance to Wal-Mart. Pick-up is at Four Seasons, the campus post office, and the dorms.

Call their office 344-5904 for more information regarding the scheduled times.

IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

The International Services Newsletter is now available on the International Services site <http://www.southalabama.edu/intnatsrv/> so you can view it at any time.

We will not be mailing the printed copy of the newsletter to everyone but will instead be

sending you an e-mail to your university e-mail address when the newsletter is on the web site.

We hope you are all checking your university e-mail address regularly as this address is used often for any official notices by the university.

YOUR HELP WANTED AND NEEDED

Fall Semester 2005 is just around the corner, and as always, your help is needed to assist with new student orientation and with pick-up and temporary housing of these students as they arrive on our campus.

These things are an important service that we provide to our students and means a commitment on your part if you choose to help. It is also a very rewarding experience for you to help out your new fellow students and make new friends.

Please come by the Office of International Services and let us know if you want to be a part of this important service.

HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE

Be sure to see Kelley Lynd in Enrollment Services (Admin. 255) for any questions you have about your student health insurance.

It is important that you understand the coverage limits and the best way

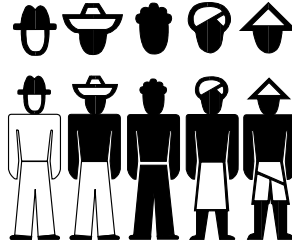
to use the insurance. She will assist you in filing claims and understanding your benefits.

There will be some changes in your international student health insurance beginning in the Fall. Be on the look-out for information regarding these changes.

Unfortunately, these changes will also include a fee increase. The increase was to have taken effect last semester, but Dr. Stearns of Enrollment Services absorbed those increases.

STUDENT DISCOUNT CARDS

CISO has again sponsored the Student Discount Cards available in International Services. Stop by and take advantages of the savings.



C.I.S.O. ELECTIONS

A BIG THANK-YOU to this year's CISO officers for all their hard work and dedication.

President: Maryam Baghaei
Vice-President: Basil Farah
Secretary: Rinku Shah
Treasurer: Maryam Yazdanshenas
Webmaster: Farzam Bayat

Elections for next year's officers of the Council of International Student Organizations will be held very soon.

If you are interested in running for an officer of CISO, please contact Brenda at the Office of International Service.

CISO can use everyone's support at the meetings, whether participating on behalf of a student organization or not.

If you are interested in getting your fellow countrymen and women active in CISO, please come to the CISO meetings or see Brenda. We would like to see every country actively represented on this campus.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

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