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GPS News

Office of the Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies

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Proposed Changes in Federal Immigration Rules Will Change the Way We Work

As of October 2001, there were 1,425 non-immigrant graduate international students studying at UH. That's 20% of our total graduate student population. International students impact all aspects of the University's mission including teaching, research and even community outreach.

Although some changes are not finalized, the proposed regulations are bound to have far reaching effects on our community. Admission decisions may have to occur earlier in order for students to get proper authorizations to travel and enter the U.S. With the implementation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the INS could be notified of a student's under-enrollment within hours. Other regulations, including strict time limitations for degree completion, restrictions on areas of research, denial of requests for extensions, difficulty in receiving social security cards and driver's licenses, strict monitoring of full-time status etc., make university attendance increasingly challenging for foreign nationals. On the other hand, the new changes will also eliminate past abuses by some of these students.

The Offices of International Admissions and International Student and Scholar Services are proactively seeking ways to make international students' admission and attendance bearable while keeping students (and the University of Houston) compliant with these new rules and regulations. Plans include the purchase of new computer systems and software as well as training sessions for all departments- something I encourage everyone to attend.

Ultimately, it's the individual student's responsibility to be aware of and to follow these new rules, but it's incumbent that all administrators and staff, as well as faculty, be aware of these changes. Business as usual regarding international students is a thing of the past.

Marco J. Mariotto, Dear
Graduate & Professional Studies

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Special points of interest:

- Current UH data indicates that, despite the probable changes in INS regulations, the number of international graduate applications is up from this time last year.
- Approximately 51% of all graduate students on assistantships at UH last fall were international students on temporary visas.
- Each year international students add approximately \$11 billion to the U.S. economy. (IIE, Open Doors, 2001).

Did you know . . .

A student with F-1 or J-1 visa status who works more than 20 hours per week on campus while school is in session has engaged in unlawful employment and violated his or her visa status. For example, an international student is not permitted to have a part-time (20 hours per week) assistantship and work an extra five hours a week in the cafeteria or the bookstore. (There are limited exceptions to the 20 hour per week limit.)*

A school which permits a student or scholar to engage in unlawful employment on campus is in violation of the law and subject to fines and other sanctions imposed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). If the school controls the visa documents and the school controls the paychecks, then INS may find that the school had "constructive knowledge" of the unlawful employment as well as the power to prevent it.

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*Anyone with questions concerning an international student's eligibility to work or study at UH should contact the Office of International Student and Scholar Services at extension 3-5065.

Orientation Reminder

All Colleges and Departments must offer new student orientations.

All students on F-1 and J-1 visas must attend the international student orientation offered by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (3-5065).

To assist in preparing for orientation, departments can order copies of the *Know-It-All Guide for Graduate Students* from the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (Aly Britton 3-9088).

"We're Operating Under Very Different Guidelines"

The tragic events of September 11 that sent the United States into an uproar has undoubtedly had an immense impact on our educational system. Since the event, strict regulations and policies have been enforced and surveillance on the governing of foreign students has increased. According to Attorney General John Ashcroft, "allowing foreign students to study here is one of the ways we convey our love of freedom to foreign students who will one day return to their countries and take on leadership positions. However, we can no longer allow our hospitality to be abused." Following this lead, the University of Houston's Office of International Student and Scholar Services has adopted new strategies, suggested by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Justice, and U.S. Department of Education.

Anita Gaines, director of the Office of International Student Scholar Services and a long-time foreign student advocate, states, "it is vitally important for faculty and staff to know that we're operating under very different guidelines." On January 30, 2003, it is mandated that education facilities report to the INS all aspects pertinent to a student's enrollment. Some of these areas include the start date of the student's next term or session; a student's failure to enroll; a student dropping below a full course of study without prior authorization, and all other academic activities regarding the student.

Despite the many changes, Anita remains an optimist about the matter. "I hope that over time as we get accustomed to and normalize these changes, the needs and interests of international students will continue to be an important aspect of the services this university provides to its students."

Having worked in the Office of International Student and Scholar Services for 23 years, Anita is heavily involved in international education and immigration matters at UH and nationally. Anita has served as Chairperson of the advising section of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Southwest Regional Vice President of Phi Beta Delta among many other accomplishments.

For the past several years, the Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange has ranked the University of Houston in the top twenty in the nation for foreign student enrollment. In order to keep faculty and staff informed of the upcoming changes, the Office of International Student and Scholar Services will be hosting seminars, sending out written material, and updating their web site periodically. Anita states, "the more they [faculty and staff] know, the better they will be able to insure that the needs of the international students are met."



Anita V. Gaines,
Director

Office of
International Student
and Scholar Services

By Alneyon F. Britton



Student Profile: Cheng Peng Masters Student in Architecture

"I am very proud of this project," Cheng Peng says, pointing at the design he submitted for the International MLK Memorial design competition. Peng is a masters student in the Hines College of Architecture. He continues, "it allowed me to explore issues of psychology and space, which interest me a great deal." He admires the work of architects Louis Kahn and I.M. Pei for its attention to psychology, and the focus of his own portfolio upon the effect of space on the psyche reveals a curiosity that has yet to be dulled in his many pursuits.

In his design for the King Monument, Peng chose materials based upon their physical qualities and their ability to communicate the equality that was the impetus of King's life. The black granite used for the walls in his design would blur the images of visitors. Looking at the walls, visitors would not see themselves but shadowy likenesses, an illusion that captures King's promise of a single human community, ignorant of racial differences. To complement this effect, Peng designed glass walls to hold King's writings. As people read his work, they are conscious of others doing the same on the opposite side of the wall, making reading itself a unifying activity. By his careful selection of materials, Peng succeeds in creating metaphors of image, substance, and form that express the singular accomplishment of King's life.

Cheng Peng received his B.A. in Architecture from the University of Tianjin, which boasts one of China's premier architectural programs. But even before his formal education began, Peng attributes his predilection to architecture and its particular challenges to the traditions and cultural landmarks of his home city, Hang Zhou. He says, "Hang Zhou was one of the ancient capitals of China and it remains an environment of traditional Chinese culture. When I was young, my fascination with the old Chinese drawings and my father's engineering made it clear to me what I wanted to do."

After gaining his graduate degree, Peng plans to work several years in the United States to gain work experience before returning to China, where he will start his own company and no doubt, design structures that will interact with and move upon the psyches of those who inhabit them.

By Paul Klinger

Office of the Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies

Fall 2001			
Number Graduate Student Appointments (GSA) Compared with Number of International GSA by College			
College	Total GSA	# Int'l. GSA	% of Total
ARCH	12	6	0.50
CLASS	386	52	0.13
BUS	91	60	0.66
EDU	87	15	0.17
ENGR	297	233	0.78
HRM	17	13	0.76
LAW	0	0	0.00
NSM	472	313	0.66
OPT	24	16	0.67
PHARM	21	16	0.76
GSSW	16	1	0.06
TECH	5	3	0.60
TOTAL	1428	728	0.51

*Only international students on temporary visas are included in the International GSA count.

Get visa types and their restrictions at:
www.uh.edu/intservices/visaclas.htm

Deadlines

Graduate Assistantship Appointments

(for Summer 2002)

July 30

Final graduate student audit reports sent to colleges

(for Fall 2002)

July 24

Electronic Submission of GA Appointment Workbooks

August 26

GATF Exception Requests

Common On-Line Application

All Departments must offer the common on-line application to prospective students by **fall 2002** for the **fall 2003** admissions cycle. Contact Janet Fleming for more information.

Registration for LCC 6034

September 9–13

International students who do not successfully pass the TSE or SPEAK and who hold TA or TF titles, must register for this course.

Degree Objective Reporting Procedure (ORD Runs)

(for Fall 2002)

September 18

Requests for U.S. Baccalaureate Degree Equivalency for Foreign Programs

September 23

Departments who regularly admit students from a foreign program that requires special admission should submit requests to the Graduate and Professional Studies Council (GPS 2012, c/o Janet Fleming).

Submission of CBM 003 Forms

October 14

Requests for course changes, additions, and deletions should be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies at GPS 2012.





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Gene Gillis on Out-of-State Tuition Exemptions

The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies gets a lot of questions about tuition exemptions. They're handled by the bursar's office, so we asked Gene Gillis (the bursar) this question, and here's his response:

"There is no single all-inclusive list of waivers which is available. There are different types of waivers which are available to out-of-state and foreign students. Some of these waivers are legislated waivers and some may be local such as the GATF.

The best place to read about various waivers which have been legislated, i.e., RA/TA waivers, is in Vernon's Code. In particular, I would refer you to Vernon's Code, Chapter 54 (Tuition and Fees).

<http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/edtoc.html>

I warn you though, the reading here is in legalese and nearly everyone tries to interpret it according to his own 'wishes.' If there are any specific questions I would be happy to try and answer them based on my experience in SFS.

Another website which provides a good general picture, without the legalese, is found at a website called *College for Texans*

<http://www.collegefortexans.com/paying/finaidtypes.htm>

This site is easy to read and understand. **A word of caution:** I have found that many waiver situations which seem 'cut and dried' to the person wanting it are not necessarily so when we get into the particulars and when we have to go to the Coordinating Board for interpretations. I hope this helps."

*The mission of the
Office of
Graduate and Professional
Studies
is to
cultivate and support
academic excellence
in
graduate and professional
education
at the
University of Houston.*