

# International Student & Scholar Services



international student and scholar updates

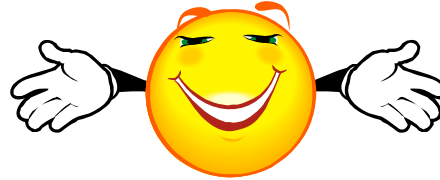
Published monthly by International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS), the International Services Newsletter brings you updates on immigration rules and regulations, university services and programs, and conveys opportunities for campus and community involvement.

FEBRUARY 2008

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## WELCOME BACK!



### FOREIGN ADDRESS IN GOSOLAR

If you have a U.S. address in the 'permanent' address field in GoSOLAR, please change it **immediately**. All F-1 and J-1 students are required to report their foreign address to the federal government, and at Georgia State it is reported via your 'permanent' address in GoSOLAR. The address cannot be a P.O. Box, and cannot be inside the U.S. We will start placing holds next week on students' records with domestic addresses in this field.

### IMMIGRATION UPDATES



#### A. NO ADVISING DATES -

February 8 - NRA VITA Workshop

February 20, 21, 22 - GAIE Regional Conference

February 29 - 10:00AM—12:00PM—Mandatory Staff Development

#### B. OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

If you are planning to **graduate in May or August** and apply for OPT, make sure you attend an Employment Workshop held weekly by our office (schedule available in our office and on our [website](#)). Your OPT application will **not** be accepted until you have attended one of the workshops. If you attended an employment workshop more than a year ago, you should attend another one this semester since immigration regulations have changed since then.

- If you are a May graduate, we strongly recommend that you apply in our office as soon as you are sure that you will complete your degree this term, and at the very latest two weeks before the end of the semester (April 21st for May graduates). Applications are now being accepted. Homeland Security will deny any late applications.
- Please be sure you will complete your program when you apply for OPT. If you fail to complete all your courses, it is very difficult to rescind the OPT before the date it starts and impossible once the start date has passed.
- We will begin processing OPT applications for those completing their degree in the summer starting April 7th.
- Traveling while on OPT without proof of employment will cancel the OPT and prevent you from re-entering the US. Renewing your visa while on OPT is extremely risky. Keep these things in mind when planning your travels.

#### C. ENROLLMENT ISSUES

- (1) **Incompletes** - If you get an incomplete one semester, you still need to be enrolled for full time credit the following semester because credit for incompletes does not roll over to the next semester.
- (2) If you are planning to be absent from school or study abroad for one semester, please see an advisor. You will need to get special authorization from our office to remain in active status in SEVIS.
- (3) If Summer will be your last semester you will need to take at least 6 credit hours to be considered full time. If you will need fewer credits in order to graduate, then you need to turn in our Reduced Course Load Request Form before the beginning of the semester.

#### D. TRAVELING OVER SPRING BREAK OR SUMMER?

Be sure to come by our office at least two weeks prior to your trip for a signature on your I-20, and allow 5 days for processing. Our form has changed and you will need to submit proof of enrollment. You should also check out the government website with travel information for international students for the latest on what to expect at the port of entry: [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/fag\\_f2.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/fag_f2.htm).

OFFICE  
HOURS

MONDAY  
—  
FRIDAY

8:30AM—5:15 PM

Walk-In  
Advisement  
Hours

**Monday**  
10AM—12PM  
1:30AM—4PM

**Tuesday**  
1:30PM—4PM

**Wednesday**  
10AM—12PM  
1:30AM—4PM

**Thursday**  
1:30PM—4PM

**Friday**  
10AM—12PM  
1:30AM—4PM

Website:

[www.gsu.edu/iss](http://www.gsu.edu/iss)  
404.413.2070 Phone  
404.413.2072 Fax

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## INSURANCE UPDATE



Everyone who has paid for international student insurance this term should now be in the Pearce and Pearce system. Therefore, your information should be available on the Pearce and Pearce website: [www.studentinsurance.com](http://www.studentinsurance.com). Temporary ID cards are available through the site, as well as claim forms and benefits information. Please contact our office if you have paid for insurance this semester, but do not appear to be in the Pearce and Pearce system. If you are enrolling your child or spouse for insurance **open enrollment ends of February 8, 2008**. If you have your own insurance and would like to get your insurance charge waived then you have to submit a waiver request available online at the Pearce and Pearce site. Please note that your policy information will be requested when you apply for the waiver. **The waiver deadline is February 15, 2008**. Instructions for logging on to the Pearce and Pearce system are on our website at [www.gsu.edu/iss](http://www.gsu.edu/iss). Call us at 404.413.2070 if you have any questions.

## OUT-OF-STATE TUITION WAIVER DEADLINE



To apply for an out-of-state tuition waiver from International Services for summer term 2008, please apply before the Friday, April 7 deadline. Applications for fall term 2008 will be due on Friday, June 16. Applications are available now from the front desk. Remember that these are given out to students with severe economic need who are within two terms of graduation. For more information and the application form, call or come by the International Services office.

## CULTURE SHOCK WORKSHOP

Do you have culture shock? Are you curious about the symptoms of culture shock and how to fight them? Please join us for a lunch and learn workshop to find out more about this condition and how it affects international students.

**Who:** All new and returning international students and scholars

**When:** February 12, 12-1 pm

**Where:** 248 Sparks Hall (Map Room)

Lunch will not be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own lunch to eat during the workshop.

Please contact Brittany Polat at [bpolat@gsu.edu](mailto:bpolat@gsu.edu) with any questions. See you there!

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The following positions are now accepting applications:

- **GRA Position in International Services** Applications/resumes are now being accepted in International Services for the international student orientation GRA position. You must be a graduate student with at least one full year left in your program, and available to begin work May 6, and have excellent communication and organizational skills. It is a twelve-month GRA position that includes a tuition waiver for summer, fall and spring terms. The application and job description are available from the ISSS front desk, and the deadline for submitting applications/resumes is Friday, February 29, 2008.
- **VISA Leaders needed for Fall 2008** Do you need leadership experience for your resume? Looking to make new friends and help out new international students at Georgia State? Then maybe being a VISA Leader is the experience for you! VISA leaders play a vital role at international orientation by welcoming the new international students, giving campus tours, showing them the 'inside scoop' on how to get around Atlanta, and assisting with the advising and registration processes. VISA Leaders for fall are paid \$300, and go through a three-day FUN training course. If you are interested, please contact Jasmine Shi in ISSS. Applications are available from the ISSS front desk.

## TAX WORKSHOP

Tax reporting season is almost here! Students employed on campus should have recently received a W-2 from Georgia State University. Students with tax treaties and scholarships will receive their 1024-S forms via an email from Georgia State University's tax compliance officer, Ivan Ivanov, by mid-February.

### A. Federal Taxes

Federal taxes can be filed using CINTAX, tax software designed specifically for international students that is provided **free** by Georgia State University. If you are an international student (F-1 or J-1) that did not work in 2007, you are still required to file a tax form with the federal government. Information about CINTAX and how to access it is on our website under 'Tax Information.'

### B. Student Tax Workshops

The tax workshops to complete your state tax returns will begin in late February. The full schedule of workshops is listed on the [ISSS website](http://www.gsu.edu/iss). Please remember the reporting deadline is April 15th and ALL F-1 and J-1 students must file a form.

FEBRUARY 2008

### STAFF

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## CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES



**Don't Hibernate! Recreate!** See the state of Georgia, the Southeast and even the country with Touch the Earth! Recreational Services invites you to learn an outdoor skill, meet new people and have fun traveling. For more information about outdoor trips click [www.gsu.edu/~wwwrec/touch](http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwrec/touch) or call 404.413.1772.

**International students CAN study abroad!** To find out how, call 404.413.2529 to sign up for a Globe Trekker Seminar. You can also visit the Study Abroad website at <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwoia/StudyAbroad/index.htm>.



**Thank you Spring VISA Leaders!** International Services would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the student VISA Leaders who served during international student orientation this spring. They play a huge part in helping welcome and orient our new international students to Georgia State, Atlanta and the USA. **THANK YOU** to: Florentina Alexandru, Arefeen Chowdhury, Coumba Sene, Beatrix Ohienmhen, Shanzhen Luo, Samit Shrivastava, Carla Dams, and Zhen Guo.

### International Spring Festival - March 31-April 4, 2008

The International Spring Festival is an annual Georgia State tradition where international students celebrate and present their cultures to the University community. ISAC is the organizing body for the series of week-long events, and members from all 16 international associations participate and perform in the various activities. The main events will include a Parade of Flags, International Fashion Show, Food Tasting, International Marketplace, International Movies, and more exciting events. Please email Heather Housley (ISAC Advisor) at [heatherh@gsu.edu](mailto:heatherh@gsu.edu), if you would like to get involved in the planning of these and other exciting events during the Festival. They still need volunteers!



**Let's go to Washington D.C.!** The dates for this year's ISAC trip to Washington D.C. are May 8-12, 2008. Plans are still being finalized, but as soon as the cost and details are confirmed, ISSS will inform you of where, when, and how to register for this wonderful trip!



## TOP 10 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

| Ranking | Country        | Number of Students |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|
| 10      | Côte d'Ivoire  | 24                 |
| 10      | United Kingdom | 24                 |
| 9       | Nigeria        | 26                 |
| 8       | Japan          | 26                 |
| 7       | Colombia       | 29                 |
| 6       | Taiwan         | 31                 |
| 5       | Vietnam        | 43                 |
| 4       | Canada         | 46                 |
| 3       | South Korea    | 113                |
| 2       | India          | 142                |
| 1       | China          | 222                |



*The highest result of education is tolerance.*  
- Helen Keller