

The International Student newsletter is always available on line at: www.utpa.edu/oias

The time is quickly approaching for the beginning of the Fall 2009 semester. We trust that you have had a good summer and are ready to begin your studies again. Many have also stayed here during the summer and have continued their studies and others are making final preparations for traveling to UTPA and beginning their studies.

Whatever your situation we want to welcome you and remind you of a few things:

Communicating with the OIAS

- When you communicate with the OIAS we ask that you:
 - only send your e-mails to the following general office address: intladvise@utpa.edu
 - only call the following number: (956) 381-2922
- E-mails to personal e-mail addresses of the staff and phone calls to direct lines may cause a delay since staff may be away from their e-mail or office for a period of time.
- Please be assured that the OIAS staff is trained to handle most of your needs or can reach someone for help if needed



International Medical Insurance: Time to Submit Waiver Forms. Deadline September 16

- Medical insurance is automatically billed every semester to all students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents (only exception is for Mexican nationals)
- For those students who have their own medical insurance that meets or exceed minimum requirements of coverage, the OIAS will accept waivers only until Wednesday, September 16.
- No refunds may be requested after September 16

Waiver forms are available in the OIAS and also on the website at www.utpa.edu/oias

Changes in international student medical insurance policy



- **If you are a continuing student needing to waive medical insurance for summer II please come by the OIAS office to fill out a insurance waiver request form.**
- Insurance cards alone are no longer acceptable as proof of medical insurance; you will be required to bring documentation from the insurance company stating your name, dates of coverage and amounts of coverage
- Most U.S. policies do not cover medical evacuation and repatriation of remains and therefore even if you waive the major medical portion of the coverage you will still charged a small amount for these two items. *(Note: UTPA employee insurance does not cover repatriation and medical evacuation)*
- Emergency loans will now cover the required medical insurance that is provided by the university carrier

Please check your fall semester bills!

Are there errors on your bill?



Sometimes errors occur on your semester bill. It is a good habit to check your bill before paying it. Things to check for:

- Have you been billed correctly for medical insurance? If you have been billed incorrectly contact our office immediately. After the first week of classes we cannot remove charges
- Were you charged non-resident tuition incorrectly?
- Were you double-billed on any items?
- Any corrections must be done with the appropriate office and done immediately

Time to Submit “Less than Full Course Study Authorization Forms”

- Immigration only permits part-time study under very limited conditions
- SEVIS requires the OIAS to report any student who is enrolled less than full-time without prior approval from our office
- any doctoral or graduate student that will be enrolled in less than full-time study must also submit to our office an authorization form before the beginning of classes and must do so every semester; do not depend on someone else to do it for you, or your departments; it is your responsibility failure to do so requires us to terminate your status in SEVIS (no exceptions!!!)



Update Your Address

- If you are moving or have moved over the summer, you are required to change your address with the OIAS in order that we may notify immigration.
- Any changes to this information must be updated in our office and in the Office of the Registrar within 10 days of the change.
- Address updates will be reported by our office to SEVIS by the University, within 10 days, which fulfills your legal obligation to report your change of address with the Department of Homeland Security.



Study Abroad & International Students



Remember that any international student who participates in a UTPA study abroad program during the Fall or Spring semesters will automatically have their immigration status terminated

- **This means the following:**
 - a new application for admission will have to be submitted to international student admissions as a returning student
 - a new I-20 will have to be issued
 - a new SEVIS fee will have to be paid
- if your visa has expired you will need a new visa
- any time accumulated in F-1 status will be lost; this will effect CPT & OPT applications
- Participating in Study Abroad during the summers will not affect your immigration status

Change in Status & SEVIS

It is vital that you communicate any changes in immigration status as soon as possible to the OIAS. This means that if you change from an F-1 to an H-1B (or other visa type), filing the I-485 for adjustment of status to that of a legal permanent resident, or any other changes that effect your F-1 status. SEVIS does not receive these updates since it is operated by USICE (immigration and Customs Enforcement) and other immigration agencies do not communicate with it.

You must inform the OIAS and prove your new status to us so that we can terminate your record in SEVIS for lawful reasons (no status violation)

If you do not inform us SEVIS may automatically terminate your record due to a violation of immigration law. Such terminations are reported to USICE agents for investigation and appear on alert screens for visa officers. This can result in accidental arrest or denial of visas.

Are your turning age 21?



If you are in the visa category of a dependent child (under age 21) then one of your parents would be a primary visa holder. This includes children classified as F-2, J-2, H-4, L-2, E-2, R-2, TD, etc.

Federal immigration law requires you to change your status BEFORE you turn 21. If you fail to do so you will be in violation of the law and be illegally in the U.S. If you have any questions please make an appointment to talk to one of our staff members

Summer 2009 Employment Information

On-Campus Employment

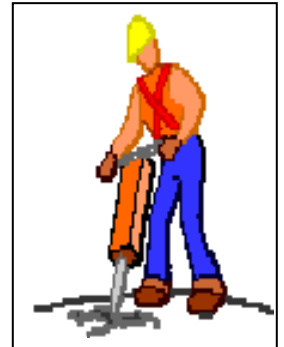
This was sent out in our last newsletter but just as a reminder:

On-Campus Employment (Full-time)

- Continuing international students are permitted to work over 20 hours per week during the summer vacation
- This is permitted between the dates of May 11 and August 28.
- New students are limited to 20 hours per week

Please be aware of this date and make your supervisors aware of that date.

Any violations will result in the termination of your F-1 status and employment. It is your responsibility to monitor the number of hours that you work and not that of the OIAS or your supervisor.



Office Visits in the Coming Weeks

- Friday, August 28, our office will be closed until 2:00 pm due to the International Orientation for new students.
- We are asking that current students do not visit our office during the first week of school as we will be attending the needs of all the new students and time will be extremely limited; I-20's can be signed if you visit us in the middle of September
- Please try and do not arrange visits to our office from 12:00-1:00 as that is the normal lunch hour for our staff. If you come to the OIAS during those hours you may not find an advisor present.



Summer Reminders

Officially Hurricane Season begins June 1 through November 1, 2009

Are you prepared?

Emergency Contact Info

Call: 1-866-967-2626

The following number will provide you "updated" information regarding campus closures, and other pertinent information in the event a hurricane threatens the Rio Grande Valley.

HOTLINE:(956) 292-SAFE (7233)

If UTPA classes need to be cancelled or the campus needs to be shut down, you will receive an **official notification from the President's Office or the Office of University Relations** via e-mail, Bronc Notes and through the following Web sites – UTPA Police (www.utpa.edu/police), the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (<http://ehs.utpa.edu>) and UTPA's main Web site (www.utpa.edu). For those who do not have access to the Internet, the Safe Hurricane Preparedness Hotline (956/292-7233) will be available to provide you with the latest information.

Study requirements during the summer

- If you are a *continuing student* remember that there are no study requirements for the summer. Relax and enjoy your summer.
- If you are a *new student* beginning this summer, you are required to be enrolled full-time 6 hours freshman; 4 hours graduate.
- Do not drop any classes without speaking with your International Student Advisor, if you have questions come to our office first.

General Reminder

We are here to advise you. Most students get in immigration trouble when they assume they can do something and do not talk to us. Those students who stay in contact with us and are careful with their immigration status are rarely in trouble. Please take the time to talk with us. It can save you a lot of problems and headache.

We invite you to participate with us. If you need information or have ideas for future activities contact **Maria Fernanda Garza** at intladvise@utpa.edu

We are located on the Learning Assistance Center 156, (956) 381-2922 Office, (956) 381-2281 Fax,



STEM

If you are currently on STEM you have to report to us every six months.
Failure to do so could automatically terminate your status.

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