Visa and Immigration Services
ISSUE 2, SPRING 2016

VIS Connect

Visa and Immigration Services (VIS) extends a warm welcome to all new and returning Stony Brook International Students! As part of our commitment to providing international students with the highest level of expertise in immigration services, we bring you VIS Connect! This semi-annual newsletter is meant to keep you apprised of opportunities, changes within Federal Regulations, and upcoming events.

COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

Whether you are a newly enrolled or a returning student, a new semester means new challenges and new goals; maybe even a new environment, new friends and a new culture. Transitioning into a new routine or environment always presents challenges that can be both exciting and difficult. This is especially true if you are far from home.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) recognizes these challenges and provides assistance to many international students like you. Some international students have a clear idea of what their concerns are before seeking help; while others simply feel that some things are not going as well as they hoped. Either way, CAPS is here to help, offering free and confidential services to enrolled students.

Although counseling is not a common practice in many countries and cultures, in the United States it is increasingly used as a tool for dealing with personal stress and difficulties. Meeting with a professional counselor at CAPS, allows you the opportunity to discuss concerns and problems with someone in a safe, friendly environment. All racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientations, and age differences are fully respected.

Students can now call Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and speak to a licensed mental health counselor anytime, day or night. To do so, call CAPS at (631) 632-6720; if it is after regular business hours, press 2 to speak with a counselor. To contact CAPS After Hours directly 24/7 call (855) 509-5742. You will be connected with a licensed mental health counselor who is familiar with our campus community and local resources.

VIS ADVISOR CASELOADS

Caseloads are distributed by the first letter of the student’s family name.

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**ON CAMPUS & OFF CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT**

Employment is any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit.

"On-campus" employment is any form of work for the university or research foundation that provides goods or services to students. These jobs include working in the student union, library, recreational center, dining halls, and in academic and administrative departments. Note, Stony Brook Hospital is not considered on-campus employment.

No special authorization is required for F-1 students to work on-campus, as long as the employment doesn’t exceed 20 hours/week during the fall and spring semesters. If you wish to work on campus and don’t already have a Social Security Number, you must submit the SSN Authorization Letter request in accessVIS, uploading a copy of your offer letter.

“Off-campus” employment requires authorization such as CPT or OPT before engaging in any form of paid or unpaid employment (which may include volunteering). As an F-1 student, you are prohibited to work until you have received permission in the form of an I-20 or Employment Authorization Document (EAD). It is important that you speak with your International Student Advisor before engaging in any form of employment or volunteer work.

**MAY GRADUATES REQUESTING OPT**

F-1 students graduating in May 2016 may begin applying for Post-Completion OPT in accessVIS as of February 20, 2016. Requests for OPT may be submitted up to 90 days prior to completing your academic program, but no later than July 1st.

Students applying for OPT must attend an OPT Workshop. The OPT Workshop schedule is listed below, as well as at www.stonybrook.edu/visa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPT Workshop</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 3</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 10</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 25</td>
<td>11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 2</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 8</td>
<td>2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 7</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 25</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 3</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Wang Lecture Hall 2</td>
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“*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character--that is the goal of true education.”*  

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**LAST SEMESTER OF STUDY**

Students may be eligible for part-time enrollment if less than a full course load is needed to complete their academic program during their final semester at SBU. To request authorization to drop below full-time, students must login to accessVIS and complete the Part-Time Enrollment form before the last day of the add/drop period. If part-time enrollment is authorized, the student MUST graduate at the end of the term in which they engaged in a reduced course load—failure to do so could jeopardize the student’s status.

**IMPORTANT:** Requests for Part-Time Enrollment for the Spring 2016 semester must be submitted in accessVIS by no later than February 5th.