Division of Student Affairs

International Student and Scholar Services

2012/13

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Prepared by

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Director

International Student & Scholar Services

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1. Departmental Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission
The International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office provides support to international students and scholars engaged in academic activities at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). ISSS serves as the primary campus resource on immigration matters pertaining to the F and J visa programs and ensures university compliance with federal regulations established for these visa categories. We facilitate cultural adjustment/transition and meaningful interactions between international students/scholars and the university community and advocate on behalf of international students, scholars, and their accompanying dependents. We collaborate across the university to advance the recruitment, enrollment and retention of international students. We serve as a resource for university-wide international education efforts and initiatives.

Vision
ISSS will be the central point of contact for resources, support, advocacy and guidance pertaining to international students and scholars at FAU. ISSS will be a resource and a partner to the university-wide community for immigration issues related to foreign nationals studying and working at FAU, international education efforts, cross-cultural communication, diversity initiatives, and culturally enriching programs.

Core Values
ISSS supports the core values of the Division of Student Affairs.

Core Programs & Services
ISSS provides immigration advising and assistance with transitioning to life in the U.S. and at FAU for international students, scholars, and their accompanying dependents. Below is a list of primary services/programs:

■ Compliance, Reporting, & Record Maintenance
  o Submit recertification and re-designation documentation to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State (DOS) in order to continue operating the F and J visa programs
  o Perform all required periodic and event-based SEVIS reporting
  o Liaise with appropriate units within the Department of Homeland Security
  o Monitor Exchange Visitor Program activity
  o Inform students, scholars, and the university community of compliance requirements and immigration updates

■ Services for incoming (new) students and scholars
  o Preparation and issuance of initial I-20s for newly admitted undergraduate students; temporary assistance with issuance of I-20s on behalf of the Graduate College
  o Preparation of DS-2019 forms (all categories)
  o Pre-arrival information and communication
  o Mandatory new student check-in upon arrival in the U.S.
  o Mandatory immigration orientations for all new international students at FAU
  o Information sessions and activities to facilitate understanding of health and wellness issues and cultural adjustment
  o Check-in process for J-1 Scholars & Interns
- **Services for current students & scholars**
  - Updates & information on immigration responsibilities and upcoming changes in immigration regulations
  - Workshops/seminars pertaining to immigration issues, employment, tax responsibilities for international students/scholars
  - I-20/DS-2019 document preparation
  - Employment information and authorization (curricular practical training, optional practical training, economic hardship, etc)
  - Travel and re-entry
  - Medical insurance requirements (Scholars)
  - Social security and tax information
  - Driver’s License information
  - Cultural adjustment and personal concerns
  - Letters confirming enrollment, status, and/or tuition amounts

- **Other support services and programs**
  - Departmental information related to international students and scholars
  - Workshops and information sessions on hiring foreign nationals at FAU (in collaboration with the General Counsel’s office)
  - Forms and guidelines for inviting international visiting scholars and interns through the J Exchange Visitor Program
  - Information about diversity and multicultural opportunities on campus
  - International Education Week & Festival of Nations
  - Multicultural Student Advisory Group (International Student Advisory Subcommittee)

2. **ISSS Staff – Organizational Chart***

*Farley Leiriao has left the position and it is currently filled on an interim basis.*
3. **Signature Accomplishments for 2013/14**

ISSS sponsored five students to attend the Florida International Leadership Conference in February 2013. FILC is a state-wide conference for international and returning study abroad students. The conference focuses on helping students incorporate their international experiences into their leadership development.

Hosted the first FAU cohort of exchange students from Brazil as part of the Brazil Science without Borders higher education initiative. These students receive full funding from the Brazilian government to study in the U.S. for one year. After returning to complete their degree in Brazil, they are eligible to apply for additional funding to study full graduate degree programs at FAU.

Received approval to implement the Pathway for Academic Readiness (PAR) Program, the first ESL Bridge Program for Conditional Admission at FAU. The purpose of the program is to provide students who meet academic qualifications for acceptance to the university but need additional language training a pathway into completing an academic program at FAU. This program allows for additional avenues to recruit qualified international students.

4. **Review of 2011/12 Goals and Objectives**

   a) Increase participation in ISSS-sponsored programs
      
      Outcome: Partially completed
      
      **Welcome reception** attendance increased from 187 in 2010/11 to 196 in 2011/12 (4%).
      
      **Goal for 2012/13:** Increase attendance by 15% (115 in fall and 100 in spring)

      International Coffee Hour – was a new program initiated in 2011/12. An average of 20 students participated for a total of 8 coffee hours (161 students total).
      
      **Goal for 2012/2013:** We will continue hosting eight events but will increase attendance to an average of 25 (25% increase) students per event. The number of eight coffee hours is adequate, so we will maintain the number but intend to have higher participation for the events. Also, at least two coffee hours will be facilitated by members of the faculty.

   b) Establish a fail-proof system for regulatory and SEVIS compliance, including a streamlined process of informing the Senior VP about compliance.
      
      Outcome: completed.
      
      SEVIS reporting compliance, record review, student/scholar communications are completed on time and are now part of the ISSS work plan on a yearly basis. As a result of the internal audit and our internal reviews, we have added new components to our compliance plan for the following year.
Goal for 2012/2013: Transition from FSA Atlas to SUNAPSIS, a new SEVIS batch and compliance software which will also allow ISSS to more towards paperless files and processes.

5. Relationship to the FAU Strategic Plan:

The goals and accomplishments of ISSS fit well within several goals/objectives/strategies of the newly developed 2012-2017 FAU strategic plan:

Goal 1: Enrich the Educational Experience, Objective E (Create and maintain campus life programs and experiences that support student success)
ISSS supported this goal in several ways:
- Created and implemented a new International Coffee Hour Series
- Updated the ISSS handbook
- Developed the International Friends Program (whose members mentor and support incoming international students)
- Advised the International Student Organization – newly established in 2011/12
- Supported international students in Broward by sending an advisor for bi-weekly office hours and training a new staff person in Davie to become DSO
- Increased participation in ISSS sponsored programs (and will continue this effort in 2012/13)

Goal 1: Enrich the Educational Experience, Objective 1: Enhance the quality of undergraduate education; Strategies A1 (Attract best qualified students) and A6 (Support STEM initiatives)
- ISSS supported this goal objective by researching and identifying avenues to attract international students who are academically qualified and receive financial support to study in the U.S., primarily in the STEM fields (examples: Brazil Science without Borders; scholarship programs – to be compiled – for students from Libya, Chile, Ecuador, and other countries that support U.S. study in STEM)

Other ISSS accomplishments such as hosting the FAIE conference and having staff serve in leadership position with national associations also support other strategic plan items such as community engagement and increased visibility of FAU regionally, nationally and internationally.

6. ISSS Data and Relationship to Goals/Strategic Plan

ISSS experienced a very small increase of 1.3% in total numbers of J and F non-immigrant students served compared to last year’s 14% increase. The numbers were general flat across the various categories. The total number of full-time enrolled students decreased by 5% (from 625 last year to 593 this year), but the number of scholars increased slightly. We also had a larger number of students on OPT (125) and a slightly larger number of new students joining FAU (120 in 2012/13 vs. 111 in 2011/12). This means that we had more students in the pipeline for graduation and the small increase in new students was not enough to offset the number of
students who graduated and went on to pursue OPT. Given the small variations in numbers, the conclusion is that the levels of activity with F and J visa holders were similar to the previous year.

**SEVIS Data for F-1 Students and J-1 Exchange Visitors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F SEVIS DATA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU Initial (fall start)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU Active/Enrolled</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU Active/OPT</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU Subtotal</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEI Initial</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEI Active</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEI Subtotal</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU Total F-1 SEVIS records</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J SEVIS DATA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interns</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students non-deg (exchange)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students degree (sponsored)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-2 dependents</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAU J Program Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL F and J</strong></td>
<td>875</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp; J Active degree seeking</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>-4.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;J Students (degree &amp; exchange)</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>-5.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• FAU Initial – initial entry I-20s issued for students accepted for the next fall semester
• FAU Active/Enrolled – active SEVIS records for students who are currently enrolled and maintaining a full course of study. This number estimates very closely the actual number of F-1 degree seeking students at FAU.
• FAU Active/OPT – active SEVIS records for students who graduated and are completing their period of authorized post-completion employment (Optional Practical Training -- OP)
• J-1 Scholars and J-1 interns: not enrolled as students; conducting research, teaching, internships, etc.
• J-1 Non-degree students: exchange students who attending FAU for a limited period of time
• J-1 sponsored students: degree seeking students who are funded/sponsored by government

The international F and J student/scholar population represents 83 countries. The top 10 countries are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Office Statistics

Student contacts (includes partner campus contacts): decreased slightly from 10,225 to 10,207 (2%) even though we served more students/scholars than in the previous years. More students are now making use of the online fillable forms and can submit requests via email. It is also possible that students communicate directly with an advisor and not just through the front desk.
Therefore, in 2012/13 ISSS will add two new office statistics: tracking the email inquiries sent to the general ISSS account and the individual advisor phone calls/emails with students/scholars.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front-desk Sign-in Log (all walk-ins)</td>
<td>2755</td>
<td>3795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front-desk Phone Calls</td>
<td>6935</td>
<td>5948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Appointments</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,225</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,207</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance at ISSS workshops decreased slightly, possibly due to the fact that many students have already completed the mandatory Employment/Practical Training (PT) Workshop in the previous year. Also, we reach out regularly with updates, news, and reminders via website, email, and social media as appropriate. Therefore, we have more avenues of distributing the information. However, we will examine our advertising and outreach strategies for 2012/13 so that we can increase our attendance and offer the types of workshops and information that our international students and scholars desire to have.

**Workshop Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment workshops</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online employment workshop module</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration attorney workshops</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax workshops</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>183</strong></td>
<td><strong>156</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Orientation</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>278</strong></td>
<td><strong>285</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ISSS Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Receptions (fall/spring combined)</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ISSS/IFP events/gatherings</td>
<td>(N/A)*</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFP Coffee Hours</td>
<td>(N/A)</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival of Nations (estimated)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some events were held, but data on attendance was not recorded on a consistent basis and therefore was not reported for 2010/11. IFP Coffee Hour series was a new initiative for 2011/12.

7. **Goals for 2012/13**

a) **Update and improve the International Student Orientation Program**

In 2011/12, we included ice-breakers, activities with the peer mentors, and information on health/wellness but we did not measure the effectiveness of these changes due to unexpected staff changes and absences following the fall 2012 orientation program. As a result of our annual planning meeting, orientation improvement will be an overarching ISSS goal for the
entire staff/team: To completely revamp the format and some of the content of the orientation with the goal of addressing the immigration issue in the larger context of cultural adjustment instead of just providing the immigration content with a few additional resources such as health and wellness. The new orientation will include a pre- and post-survey to assess what information is known, new, and valued as essential. The format will also change to include the essentials of immigration matters, sections on becoming involved, maintaining health and well-being, and navigating the academic resources available to students. We will also launch a new, more interactive presentation format using newer technology (PREZI).

b) **Participate in homecoming** by adding a tailgating experience for international students, led by the ISO and IFP, with at least 30 international students, exchange students, and returning study abroad students participating (will plan the event with OIP).

c) **Increase the number of International Peer Mentors to 18 in Boca and at least 20 overall.**

d) **Develop assessment tools to measure satisfaction and the quality of the international student experience, and use this year as the baseline for this survey.**

c) **Develop a resource guide for sponsored student agencies** (this was a team goal for 2011/12 that I will take on for this year). This will require collaboration with the AVP of Enrollment Management and the Graduate College, and it will be a concrete step for assisting the university with increase in full-paying out of state (international, in this case) students.

d) **Implement the PAR program** (in collaboration with other units) – if the program is approved (this goal will be 2012-2014).

8. **Budget Summary**

ISSS received the following funding sources for 2012/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E&amp;G Expense</td>
<td>8000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E&amp;G OPS</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S OPS</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S Festival of Nations</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;S International Friends Program</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ISSS has additional funds as follows:

- Auxiliary                   | $3000 (estimated) |
- Foundation                  | $42,000          |

We anticipate about $13,500 in annual office expenses – in excess of $8,000 assigned through E&G funds. The OPS funding is sufficient to fund one GA for the academic year, which will be essential for implementing the goals related to student activities and increased involvement and participation.

9. **Assessment Update**

ISSS currently has three outcomes in the 2011/12 assessment database. They were submitted for review on June 5, 2012:
Outcome 1: International students will successfully adjust to their new academic environment within their first year of attendance.
Outcome 2: Investigate options for including international recruitment within the university’s enrollment management plan:
Outcome 3: Continue developing the International Friends Program.

Strategies, measurements, and improvement plans were entered for each of the outcomes in the university database. In 2012/13, we plan to create and start administering surveys pertaining to quality of survey and student satisfaction.

10. Contributions within the department to University, Divisional, and Professional committee, initiatives, and projects

Required Training
- A new DSO was trained to provide services in Broward (Amy Parker-Schwartz; she completed the F-1 for Beginners Workshop during the FAIE State Conference)
- Supported Farley Leiriao’s participation in the FAIE State Conference, and completion of the F-1 Intermediate Training Workshop
- Resumed university-wide DSO training/retreat in June 2012
- Edyta Klimczak and Marjorie Strachan were added as AROs for the Exchange Visitor Program; Edyta completed the J-1 for Beginners training in June 2012

Professional Development
- M. Metianu serves on NAFSA’s national leadership team as the Regulatory Practice Coordinator for the ISSS Knowledge Community
- M. Metianu and E. Klimczak attended NAFSA Annual Conference in Houston, TX (May 2012)
- All full-time staff members and graduate assistants attended the State FAIE Conference (Feb. 2012)

Participation in Divisional & University Events (some examples)
- ISSS along with the International Student Organization (ISO) and the International Friends Program (IFP) participated in Homecoming festivities (Parade and window decorating)

Committee Assignments:
- M. Metianu: Student Insurance, International Education Task Force, Student Crisis Awareness, SAGA Days
- M. Strachan: Staff Development
11. Executive Summary

Office Overview

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is a department within the Division of Student Affairs. ISSS provides international students, scholars, and interns with immigration advising and assistance as they transition to life in the U.S. This office is accountable – on behalf of Florida Atlantic University (FAU) -- for record maintenance and reporting to SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) in compliance with Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of State regulations. Currently we are responsible for serving over 1000 international students and scholars as well as other non-immigrant students who seek admission or are currently enrolled at FAU.

ISSS handles an average of 1100 monthly contacts from various constituencies and provides services across FAU through a team of professionals who are trained as designated school officials (DSO) and responsible/alternate responsible officers (AROs). These are government functions/titles assigned by the university to individuals who have access to government data for the purpose of immigration compliance. ISSS has four full-time staff members (Director, Associate Director, Coordinator, and Program Assistant) and two Graduate Assistants. ISSS has liaisons on the Northern Campuses (Assistant Director of Diversity Services) and Broward Campuses (Associate Director of Multicultural Services). As Principal DSO and RO, the ISSS director oversees SEVIS-related activities for two DSOs in the Graduate College and two DSOs in the Intensive English Institute. All ISSS staff members engage in training and professional development to ensure accurate delivery of services and governmental compliance.

The scope of the office goes beyond immigration advising, upholding rules and regulations, and ensuring compliance. It is also an office where students, scholars, and interns can connect with the campus community, get involved with campus activities, and add to the university’s internalization efforts. International students who are engaged in campus life and receive sound immigration advice are more likely to persist, graduate, and become alumni boasting their positive experiences globally as FAU alumni. ISSS helps international students, scholars, and interns adjust to American life and integrate in the FAU campus culture.

Activity Highlights

Our goal is to provide the international campus community with the skills, assurance, and support necessary to have a fulfilling university experience. To achieve this goal, ISSS offers an array of program and services, such as: pre-arrival information and immigration orientation, individual advising sessions, workshop series on immigration, employment, and tax issues, international celebrations (International Education Week, Festival of Nations, International Coffee Hour Series), and opportunities to make connections to FAU students, faculty and staff International Friends Program.

Connecting with students prior to arrival at FAU and ensuring 100% attendance at immigration orientation has been a highlight activity in the past year. In addition to the pre-arrival guides sent after admission to FAU, students also receive immediate communication regarding required orientations and check-in. Employment workshops are held several times each semester, and we invite well-established immigration attorneys to hold immigration information sessions at no cost to FAU or the students. ISSS supports FAU in its efforts for encourages campus internalization by celebrating International Education Week (IEW) each fall.
semester and the Festival of Nations (FON) each spring semester. IEW is recognized by the U.S. Department of State. Past FAU IEW celebrations featured an annual banquet at the FAU Presidents home, workshops, and entertainment. The Festival of Nations has a long-standing history at FAU featuring FAU international students and international focused student groups performing dances, plays, and fashion displays highlighting various regions of the world. While ISSS provides guidance, this event is organized by students for students and is filled with various activities, such as food tasting’s, movies, and lectures bringing the world to the FAU campus.

ISSS communicates with the FAU constituencies through email, website, MyFAU announcements, Facebook, and flyers/brochures. The department uses direct student feedback and evaluation forms to assess the success of its programs. Annual data and statistics are available in the annual ISSS report submitted to the Senior VP for Student Affairs.

**Upcoming Initiatives**

ISSS initiatives reflect strategic developments within the Division of Student Affairs as well as university-wide efforts for international education, and support an efficient system of delivering services and supporting international education at FAU. Some of our 2011/12 initiatives include completing the transition towards a primarily paperless office; developing a guide for sponsored student organizations (i.e., governments sponsoring students for U.S. study; U.S. and international organizations sponsoring U.S. study such as Fulbright, U.S. AID, etc.); supporting enrollment and recruitment initiatives that attract quality international students in the STEM areas and other programs important to the university’s strategic plan; and further developing the student intern program through the J-1 exchange visitor program.