Aloha Students,

We hope you are enjoying your academic and cross-cultural experiences this fall semester 2004. For some of you who may be graduating in December, this may be both a sad and happy time for you. We in the ISS wish you the best as you pursue future endeavors. For our continuing students, just hang in there for a few more weeks of writing papers and studying for finals. There is light at the end of the fall semester tunnel – and it’s called WINTER BREAK!

Having just experienced the Thanksgiving Holiday, I realize that there is much to be thankful for and will dedicate this article to the 6 reasons for which I give thanks:

1. **Technology** – Thank goodness for email and web site technology, offering us a paperless and timely manner to keep our students informed. Fall 2004 has seen several regulatory changes on which we have updated you through the ISSUH-list and the ISS web site. Keep up-to-date by reading your “hawaii.edu” email from ISS and periodically checking out the ISS web site (www.hawaii.edu/issmanoa).
2. **In-house Expertise** – ISS advisers study regulations that affect the status of our F-1 & J-1 international students, discuss interpretations & applications of regulations as a team, confer with colleagues and representatives of federal government agencies, and attend conferences of our professional association to get the most up-to-date information to advise international students. ISS clerical staff contributes to team development of new data management and business procedures to promote efficiency and maintain clean data. Thank you Martha, Ray, Sandy, and Danita & Dan for your endeavors in doing a good job!
3. **Volunteers** – I can’t believe our good fortune to be blessed with two wonderful student volunteers! Thanks to Dr. Richard Brislin, Professor in College of Business, for referring Farzana Nayani from Canada to the ISS. Farzana is pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication and is working with ISS staff to revise an ISS evaluation tool that will be administered to all international students in early spring semester 2005. Thanks also go to the College of Education’s educational foundations course that brought us in contact with Jennifer Iwasaki from Hawaii. Jennifer recently completed the Master’s in Educational Foundations and will begin the Ph.D. in Educational Foundations in spring 2005.

(to be continued on page 2)
Jennifer originally met with Martha Staff and Linda Duckworth in spring 2004 to conduct qualitative research on the administration of a student services unit focusing on international students. From that initial rapport grew Jennifer’s desire to volunteer in the ISS. Jennifer is working on two projects: developing a health & wellness resource page for the ISS website and assisting with a December 2004 international alumni fund-raising drive for the June Naughton ISS Endowed Scholarship Fund. Thank you Farzana & Jennifer!

4. **ISS student interns & student assistants** – I would like to thank the fall semester 2004’s team of interns & student assistants for their wonderful work in the ISS:

**INTERNS:**
- Stephanie Schroeder, Germany – Coordinator of the ISS Mentor Program
- Miyung Park, Korea – Front Desk
- Asami Matsunaga, Japan – Front Desk
- Su-Tak Lei, Macau – Front Desk
- Patrick Lee, Canada – Front Desk
- Jessica Choi, Korea – School of Law Intern

**STUDENT ASSISTANTS:**
- Suping Cheng, Taiwan – Information Technology
- Jacinta Yeong, Macau – Data processing
- Karen Michael-Mikel, Malaysia – Graduate Assistant

5. **ISA** – We are all so thankful for the many wonderful endeavors of the International Student Association, 34-member strong in fall 2004. Thank you for all the wonderful activities and community service you organized for the international student community this semester! As an adviser to ISA, I have observed you making great strides towards learning leadership skills as you create & implement fun activities to help the adjustment of international students. Special thanks to the executive committee: Long Ngan, President, Hong Kong; Peter Thaveepolcharoen, Vice President, Thailand; Yuka Yamada, Secretary, Japan; Nicky Tantiphongkul, Treasurer, Thailand; and Yuria Kura, Public Relations, Japan. I also want to thank my wonderful team of ISA advisers: Heyse Ngan, MBA candidate, Hong Kong and June Naughton, retired ISS director, USA. THANKS to ISA!

6. **June Naughton** – I am really thankful for this special person. She holds many titles, such as Retired Director of ISS, mentor to international students, professional in the field of international education, and creator of the June Naughton ISS Endowed Scholarship to help international students meet their educational goals. And even though retired, I see June in her role as senior adviser to the ISA at weekly ISA meetings, doing such things as loaning out her cooking stoves and pots to support the ISA’s International Cuisine event on November 12, 2004. This event packed room 412 of the Student Services Building with hungry students & staff and delicious cooking smells representing Thai, Mexican, Japanese, and Singaporean foods – cooked and prepared by ISA members right before our very eyes! June also helped meet, greet, and problem-solve with new students at the beginning of fall semester – when so many of our new students need assistance. Her smile welcomes us all and helps the ISS remember what we are all about. Thank goodness for June.

Perhaps my reflections of the past semester will help you remember those people or organizations or things for which you are thankful. If so, remember to say thank you.

On behalf of the ISS, I wish you good health, good studying, and hopeful happiness as you look forward to your graduation and/or the upcoming break.
The US regulatory environment continues to change at a rapid pace. Here is a quick overview of recent changes impacting students.

Social Security Agency (SSA) Procedural Changes:

The SSA administers the nations’ retirement pension system. However, over several decades, use of the Social Security Number (SSN) by other public and private agencies—such as drivers licensing agencies, telephone companies, and universities—became the norm. The widespread misuse of the SSN is now strongly linked to the growing problem of identity fraud. Thus, there are broad efforts to restrict use of the SSN for purposes unrelated to employment.

Until October 2004, all F-1 students were eligible to obtain a SSN based on eligibility for on-campus employment. Upon obtaining the SSN, the student was not required to actually engage in employment. However, as of October 13, 2004, only those F-1 students who have a firm job offer are entitled to receive a SSN.

The SSN procedural change required new university procedures. The ISS, Student Employment and Cooperative Education and Graduate Division have recently developed the standard verification letter an F-1 student needs to obtain prior to applying for the SSN. The job offer verification must first be initiated and signed by a UH hiring unit, and second, signed by the ISS. Detailed information on the new verification procedure is posted on the ISS website.

Note that F-1 students with a previously issued SSN are not impacted by these changes. However, a student who has lost their SSN card and need to obtain a duplicate may be required to provide new documentation. Note also that the new SSN procedures currently apply only to F-1 students. J-1 students may visit the ISS to obtain the “old” SSN letter.

SEVIS News:

New SEVIS Fee: As of September 1, 2004, the long-expected “SEVIS fee” was implemented. The SEVIS fee is a one-time $100 fee for F-1 and J-1 visa-holders that must be paid prior to obtaining a visa to study or do scholarly activity in the US. The funds collected will be used exclusively to operate the DHS SEVIS system. Ironically, schools will not receive any part of the SEVIS fee, even though the school officers carry the largest burden for creating records, updating, and reporting in SEVIS.

The SEVIS fee is waived for most continuing students who were already F-1 or J-1 students prior to 9/1/04. However, if a student leaves the US for 5 months or more, he or she would be required to pay the SEVIS fee prior to returning to the US. Additionally, a continuing student who is “out of status” for 5
months or more must pay the SEVIS fee in order to reinstate to student status in the US. Additional information on the SEVIS fee is available on the ISS website.

**UH SEVIS Compliance Needs:**
SEVIS greatly changed the business practices and increased the workload at the ISS. Over the past two years, the ISS has been chronically challenged by a chronic shortage of IT resources dedicated to SEVIS. ISS is finally acquiring software that will create more efficient reporting and data management functions. Training and implementation of the new software begins December 6. It is not known how long conversion to the new system will take and what the impacts on ISS staff will be, however.

**Employment Regulations:**
F-1 students are reminded that federal regulations limit on-campus employment to 20 hours during the academic year. Any F-1 student working for more than 20 hours per week is “out of status”. The University has several different types of payrolls, and there is no one office monitoring a student’s total hourly workload. It is a student’s responsibility to stay within the federal limits. If the ISS becomes aware of an on-campus employment violation, it is reportable in SEVIS and could have serious consequences, now or in the future. Graduate students whose curricular requirements dictate working more than 20 hours per week need to obtain a practical training employment permit and will need to file an Overload form with the Graduate Division.

**H1-B Visa News:**
F-1 students who wish to remain in the US to work after F-1 Optional Practical Training, or after completion of an advanced degree have benefited in the past several years by the H1B visa program. However, this year the H1B program allocation, or “cap,” was reduced dramatically (to 65,000) and the all H1B visas for fiscal year October 1, 2004-September 30, 2005 were used by October 1. The H1B application period for October 2005-September 2006 will begin April 1, 2005, and it is anticipated that the cap may again quickly be reached. Thus, the window of opportunity for F-1 students to change to H1B status has narrowed and may require considerable advance planning. The ISS held an H1B workshop on November 12, featuring immigration attorney Maile Hirota. Since the workshop, the H1B Visa Reform Act of 2004 has been passed by Congress and signed by President Bush. One highlight of the bill is that an additional 20,000 H1B visas will be available exclusively for foreigners receiving masters or higher level degrees from a US university. This should provide considerable relief; note also that institutions of higher education remain exempt from any quota on H1-B hiring.

Happy Holidays!
Fulbright to Full-Life
- by Dr. Ray Allen, International Student Advisor

Ave Rannik has come to Hawai`i from a far place, Estonia, her home country in Eastern Europe. Asked why she chose to study at the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa (UHM), Ave replies that it has the best English as a Second Language program (taught in the Second Language Studies Department) in the world with a “highly renowned faculty.”

Hatsumi Takemura has come to Hawai`i from a much closer country, Japan. An interest in Hawaiian religious culture brought Hatsumi to our university.

Both students are in Hawai`i through the Institute of International Education (IIE), which administers the Fulbright Student Exchange Program. The program’s purpose is to enable international students to study in the United States at universities that offer programs in their academic interests.

Both Ave and Hatsumi have developed strong impressions of Hawai`i since arriving here. For Ave, it’s a “wonderful” place. “Here you can meet people from so many different countries and ethnicities. This diversity is so enriching and has enabled me to enlarge my world understanding. In addition, people who live here are very friendly and open.” For Hatsumi, Hawai`i’s landscape has left deep impressions. “The landscape of Oahu, in which artificial brightness and natural beauty stand in sharp contrast, is impressive to me.”

Future plans for Ave and Hatsumi include research and teaching. Ave would like to be a teacher of English in her native Estonia. In addition, she also wants to get involved in teacher training programs, and may, eventually, even study for a Ph.D. Hatsumi, on-the-other-hand, wants to become a researcher in Religious Studies.

Both have had, and are having, a positive experience living here. Says, Ave, ”My experience in Hawai`i has been very good. I feel very blessed to live and study here.” Ads Hatsumi, “I am grateful to the Fulbright Program for giving me a chance to study in this wonderful environment. I would like to make the most of this golden opportunity.”

The future for both Ave and Hatsumi appears as bright as Hawai`i’s light and as promising as its rainbows. The Fulbright program has offered both international students an opportunity to the full-life unique to Hawai`i that many of us enjoy, while studying, living, and working in “Paradise.”

Note: For more information about the Institute of International Education, For more information about the Institute of International Education, please check out the IIE web site at www.iie.org .

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Processing Your Documents
- by Danita Dumadag-Hugh, ISS Secretary

We hope your holidays as well as your educational plans meet up to your expectations during this winter break. To ensure this, we would like to help you maintain your F-1/J-1 visa status by updating you on the procedures and policies listed below.

Reduced Course Load
- Submit ISS Reduced Course Load form completed by student and department advisor in advance of registering part time or dropping to part time.
- Submit unofficial transcript
- Pickup new 3rd page of I-20 in 10 working days

Program Extension of I-20/DS-2019
- Submit Program Extension form completed by student and department advisor at least 30 days before completion date listed on current I-20 or DS-2019
- Submit verification of funding for extended time period.
- Pickup new I-20/DS-2019: in 10 working days

Leave Of Absence/Complete Withdrawal Forms
- It is very important that you make an appointment with an ISS Advisor.
- Bring forms/documents to your ISS appointment.
- Forms will be signed at the time of appointment only.

Other Services & Processing Times
- Corrections or changes in level of study, major, funding or dependent information on I-20/DS-2019: 10 working days
- Certification Letters: 10 working days.
- Work Permits: 10 working days
- Travel signatures: 24 hours service.
- I-20s that indicate “Initial” on item # 3 require a new updated I-20 certifying, “continued attendance”: 3 working days
- Review of alternative health insurance: 5 workings days
- Transfer form + other certification forms: 10 working days

ISS Helpful Advice
- If you have any questions regarding emails that are sent to you by ISS, bring the email to ISS. This will help the ISS understand your questions and your service needs.
- To prevent any delays in processing your request, make sure your health insurance and visa documents are updated.