Aloha!

All of us at ISS hope you are finding ways to realize your academic goals and involve yourself in campus or community activities to help promote adjustment – not only for yourself, but also for others. As I note at orientation, research indicates that involvement promotes adjustment. So, get involved! Two of my updates feature student involvement to better our world community and our campus community. Thank you to all the students who strive to make our place – in the world and at UH Manoa – a better place!

My article will feature four updates:
1. Reminder of Important Changes in Health Insurance Procedures
2. Offerings of Hope – Tsunami Relief Efforts by Student Organizations
3. Congratulations to ISA for International Night 2005!!!
4. Evaluate ISS Services for a Chance to Win Bookstore Gift Certificate

Reminder of Important Changes in Health Insurance Procedures
Here is a reproduction of the email forwarded to the ISSUH email list on 03/15/2005.

March 15, 2005

TO: International Students
FROM: Dr. Linda Duckworth, Director
SUBJECT: Changes in ISS Health Insurance Procedures

Effective April 26, 2005 (first day of registration for fall 2005 for continuing students), ISS health insurance procedures will change from a manual procedure to an automatic billing procedure. As you know, University of Hawai‘i policy requires international students to document adequate health insurance coverage with the ISS each semester enrolled. Currently, ISS procedures involve manually placing a ‘health insurance’ registration hold on each student and (continued on page 2)
requiring the student to either purchase the UH-sponsored health insurance coverage (HMSA) or prove alternative adequate health insurance coverage in order for ISS to manually remove the registration hold to allow students to register for courses. These procedures will soon change for F-1 students.

New Procedures for F-1 Students:
- The ISS will no longer place health insurance registration holds nor serve as an insurance purchasing site for F-1 students.
- Effective April 26, 2005, a health insurance fee will appear on the bill for tuition and fees at the time of registration for F-1 students only. The health insurance fee will equal the cost of one semester (or one summer term) of coverage of the basic UH-sponsored health insurance plan, which is currently HMSA.
- If you are an F-1 student and do not receive a health insurance fee on your fall 2005 registration bill, this may reflect a problem with your F-1 student status. Please contact the ISS, if this happens.
- F-1 students can continue to request approval of alternative health insurance. Please see information below on “Alternative Health Insurance Approval.”

Procedures for J-1 students:
- Health insurance procedures will not change for J-1 students. The ISS will continue to utilize a registration hold for J-1 students sponsored by the University of Hawaii. J-1 students can continue to purchase UH-sponsored health insurance in the ISS.
- A health insurance fee will not appear on the bill for tuition and fees.
- J-1 student health insurance procedures will not change, since J-1 students have various sponsors and these sponsors are required by the U.S. Department of State to monitor health insurance compliance of their sponsored J-1 students.
- J-1 students can continue to request approval of alternative health insurance. Please see information below on “Alternative Health Insurance Approval.”

Alternative Health Insurance Approval:
- Students may continue to request approval for alternative health insurance coverage by submitting required documentation of adequate alternative health insurance to the ISS by the stated review deadline each semester.
- If approved for F-1 students, the health insurance fee will be waived.
- If approved for J-1 students sponsored by the University of Hawaii, these students will not need to purchase the UH-sponsored health insurance plan.
- This procedure remains in effect for all F-1 students and all J-1 students whose DS-2019s were issued by the University of Hawaii. J-1 students, who are sponsored by organizations other than the University of Hawaii, such as East West Center, Institute of International Education, etc., will continue to interact with their J-1 sponsors for health insurance compliance.
- Graduate Teaching & Research Assistants: Procedures will not change for GAs. Please submit documentation of adequate alternative health insurance, including copies of one’s PNF showing a research or teaching assistantship contract for the next semester and a recent pay stub showing payroll deduction for health insurance.
- NOTE: If an F-1 student fails to meet the alternative insurance review deadline, the health insurance fee will remain on the student’s bill and the student will need to
purchase the UH-sponsored plan for that semester or term.

- **Deadline:** For continuing students with a fall 2005 registration payment deadline of July 15, 2005, the “Request for Alternative Health Insurance” form must be filed with the ISS **no later than July 1, 2005.** [See ISS web site www.hawaii.edu/issmanoa and click on the following links: students, current students, medical insurance, alternative health insurance. This form will be updated prior to April 26, 2005.]

**FAQ:** The ISS will post an FAQ (frequently asked questions) regarding health insurance on the ISS web site by March 31, 2005 and will notify you of the posting **via** the ISSUH email list.

These new procedures have been designed with input from international students and colleagues in international education. A review of peer and benchmark institutions indicated a practice of similar procedures used to monitor health insurance compliance.

UH Mānoa will pilot the implementation of new health insurance procedures for F-1 students beginning with UHM’s fall 2005 registration, with the intent for other UH campuses to follow. These new procedures are being implemented with the support of the Office of the General Counsel, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the UH Student Insurance Committee, the UH Bursar’s Office, University Health Services, the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Cashier’s Office.

We ask for your support during this transition. Thank you.

**Offerings of Hope** – As a result of the daily news we received covering the growing devastation of the December 26, 2004 tsunami in southeast Asia and the email from Martha Staff, Assistant Director, announcing the tragedy and ISS’ willingness to help, a small group comprised of students, ISS staff, and a community organization came together to make a difference.

At our one and only face-to-face meeting during the 1st week of spring semester, it was quickly decided that we could best organize a six-day Tsunami Relief Fundraiser at the Campus Center. Duties were quickly divided up among the organizing committee: logistics, marketing, and publicity.

The building of momentum was phenomenal – starting with two students sitting at a donation table and growing to ten to twelve students calling out to all their professors and friends and yes, tourists, to make a donation; starting with green ribbons to pin on people’s shirts for making a donation of ‘loose change’ and growing to include big German chocolate bars (donated by Stephanie Schroeder, an ISS intern from Germany) and homemade brownies and
jewelry in exchange for bigger donations; starting with $0.00 to our first big donation of $500 from June Naughton, retired director of ISS and current adviser to ISA; starting with involvement from ISS, Atherton YMCA, and the International Student Association and growing to include the Thai Student Association, Fulbright students, The Surf Club, and professor Bob Lipske and his students in Outreach College’s NICE program; and, finally, starting with a heart-breaking flyer designed by Long Ngan, VP of ISA and growing to interviews by journalism students who write for the campus student newspaper, Kaleo.

Donations totaled $7,000.00 and were distributed to UNICEF, Project HOPE and OXFAM. Mahalo to Martha Staff for coordinating this effort on behalf of ISS; Long Ngan, VP of ISA and Peter Thaveepolcharoen, President of ISA for coordinating ISA members to staff the donation table; Stephanie Schroeder, ISS intern coordinator of Mentor Program; Bamrung, President of the Thai Student Association; the following Fulbright Students: Kiran Sagoo, Naoko Mochizuki, Hatsumi Takemura; Mike Nakao, resident manager of Atherton YMCA; and Andrew McCrow, resident of Atherton YMCA. This collaborative effort helped bring hope to the tsunami-effected regions of Southeast Asia, and I greatly enjoyed being a part of this endeavor to try to make a difference.

Congratulations to ISA!

International Night 2005 – ISA’s annual cultural extravaganza held this past Friday night in a filled-to-capacity Campus Center Ballroom was a feast of visual, musical & special sound effects.

This year’s theme: “Divided by Oceans, United by Heart” is a reflection of what ISA recently observed when students from around

the world came together during a fundraiser at Campus Center to offer hope to countries affected by the Dec. 2004 tsunami. ISA hoped to demonstrate unity through diversity throughout the entire evening’s activities. And I think they succeeded!

The ISA dream team designed an around-the-world tour with three ISA student leaders, Anna, Peter & Long (APL), backpacking through ten countries. After arriving at each destination, APL would ask a local person about the local culture – and be invited to a live cultural performance. This year, we learned about the cultures of the Philippines, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Okinawa, Cuba, Tahiti, Vietnam, Korea, China & Hong Kong.

HIGHLIGHTS: Fast-paced, sexy Salsa dancing closed out the first half of the show and brought a loud roar from the audience. ISS staff members Ray and Linda and the new VCAA and his daughter joined many others in the group Salsa lesson during intermission. (I felt like I was warming up for a fun-run!) For the Tahitian Dancers, all that needed to happen was to open the curtains for another loud roar from the audience – and then the drumbeat started and the audience was mesmerized. Everyone was moving to the Hong Kong Rap beat of Charles, Heyse, and Long. I heard that the Candle Dance with ISS staff Danita and Linda, along with ISA adviser June and students, gave people “chicken-skin” (goosebumps) – which led into the grand finale, with everyone singing “We are the World” while waving green (for UHM) glow sticks!

What a night! I think the saying is true – ISA ROCKS!
Evaluate ISS Services for a Chance to Win Bookstore Gift Certificate!

- Gentle Reminder — ISS Needs Your Input! Please take a few minutes to complete a short questionnaire that you can pick up at the ISS* or print from this link: http://www.hawaii.edu/issmanoa/Forms/survey.pdf
- Exchange your completed survey at the ISS office for a chance to win a $30 gift certificate from the UH Bookstore!
- Drop off times: 8:30am - 3:30pm, Monday to Friday.
- Deadline: Friday, April 1st.
- MAHALO!

Immigration Regulations – SPRING UPDATE
by Dr. Ray Allen, International Student Advisor

There have been recent changes in the regulations affecting international students’ stay in the U.S.

The following non-immigrants must pay the SEVIS Fee –

1.) Non-immigrants in the U.S. seeking to change their status to F-1, J-1 and any other status must pay the SEVIS Fee of $100. For example, if F-2 spouses of students want to change their status to F-1, they would have to pay the SEVIS fee. However, J-1 participants in exchange visitor programs sponsored by the Federal government and/or J-1 participants in exchange visitor programs sponsored by the Federal government identified by a program number starting with G-1, G-2, or G-3 do not have to pay this fee.

2.) F-1 non-immigrants applying for reinstatement of student status, who have been out of student status for more than five months must pay this fee.

3.) F-1 non-immigrants who have been absent from the U.S. for a period more than five months, who were not working towards completion of curriculum in authorized overseas study, and who now wish to re-enter for a new F or M program of study in the U.S. must pay this fee.
For students considering the H1-B Visa:

Please note that in addition to the normal H1-B cap on the number of H1-B visas granted in the U.S. per year, there has been an additional 20,000 exemptions from the cap granted for aliens effective March 8, 2005. This should greatly relieve the shortage of the H1-B visas projected for the current year.

These 20,000 visas will not last long, perhaps only a few days, and persons interested in obtaining an H-1B should begin the application process immediately. H1-B petitions for the next fiscal year can be sent in as early as April 1, 2005, but cannot be effective for employment before October 1, 2005.

For students applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) who wish to travel outside the U.S.:

Students can leave the U.S. and reenter to search for employment if their post-completion OPT is pending, if they have an OPT receipt from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and their OPT has not yet been approved (they have not yet been issued an Employment Authorization Document - an OPT work authorization card).

Students can also leave if they have received the EAD (OPT work authorization card) and have an offer for work or are resuming employment in an existing job. Please note the following: Students must carry documented proof that they have an offer or are resuming employment. If OPT has been approved and students travel abroad before they get a job or a job offer, their OPT ends, and they cannot reenter the U.S.

For students planning to travel outside the U.S.:

Students planning to travel outside the U.S. must first come to the ISS office before departure to have reentry signatures put on the 3rd page of their I-20s. In addition, ISS letters requesting the U.S. State Department for renewals of F-1 visas can be given to those students requiring such renewals. Processing time is three days for an I-20 or DS 2019 signature and ten days for a letter.
In spring 2003, a group of graduate students in Linguistics started the Language Documentation Project (LDP). Its goal is to increase awareness of dying or endangered languages around the world and to identify, recruit and train students who will then contribute to language conservation via documentation. The ISS helped recruit students interested in language documentation both last year and this year.

Last fall, I nominated the UHM Language Documentation Project for a national award. Recently, we received word that it won the 2005 ETS/TOEFL “Partners in Excellence Award,” which provides a small cash grant to strengthen the project. Additionally, Project Director Valerie Guerin, a PhD student from France, will receive travel funds to present a summary of the LDP at a major conference for international educators to be held in May in Seattle, Washington.

Recently I sat down to talk with Valerie and two other international students who are current members of the LDP. Tracy Tang is from Taiwan and is pursuing a master’s degree in Linguistics. Matias Gomes, from East Timor, is pursuing the bachelor’s degree in liberal studies, combining his interest in second language study and ESL. My goal was to learn more about this innovative project and the students involved in it. Here is a summary of my interview with these students.

**Tracy’s Story:** I grew up speaking a combination of “Truku”, which is an ethnic minority language, and Japanese. Yes, Japanese in Taiwan! I started to learn Mandarin at age seven in school. My grandfather, who is a senior pastor and self-taught linguist, encouraged me to do my graduate study at UHM because it is famous in the field of linguistics. Some years ago, he started to translate the Bible into Truku. You might be interested to know that much of the interest in Taiwan in conserving Truku has been stimulated by the Christian community there. In 1995, the Taiwan government adopted a new policy and implemented programs to support the conservation and revival of minority cultures.

When I found out about LDP, it was a natural fit. So I joined the project in its first semester, spring 2004. I am fortunate to be able to document our “Truku” language, which is recognized as quite endangered. There are about 30,000 Truku people today but the number of actual speakers is unknown. My dream is to help introduce Truku to the scholarly community and to contribute to the progress of documenting Truku. More importantly, however, is to know that my work can strengthen the identity of Truku young people. So much of our minority cultures have been lost in a depressing history. Working on the LDP has made me realize that our
endangered languages are beautiful, and they can be revitalized. This experience gives me strength and confidence.

**Matias’ Story:** I came to UHM on a scholarship in 2003, and joined the LDP in 2004. The East Timor scholarship program is bringing about five students each year to UHM, and now there are about twenty of us here! My native language is called “Ema,” although my father speaks another tribal language called “Mambae.”

Ema is spoken by about 80,000 people on the East Timor Island. There are only three books about Ema at present, two written in Indonesian and one in French. There are no Ema dictionaries, so in the LDP I am working on documenting basic vocabulary and on understanding and explaining the way the language works. By the way, the official languages of East Timor are Tetun and Portuguese.

East Timor was under Portuguese control for nearly 500 years, from the 1500s. There was also a frightful period under Indonesia control, when that nation invaded and seized control of us in the 1970s, even in the face of international and UN condemnation. East Timor has only just become independent in May 2002, so we have a very new democracy.

For the LDP, I also decided to record some Ema funeral chants. These songs are very unique, and they are also improvised. They speak of and acknowledge the life of the person who died. Altogether, I collected seven songs, and one of them you can listen to on our LDP website. I want people to hear the sounds. The expression in the voice and tones implies much meaning.

My study of Ema has increased my pride in my culture, and it moves me to share and preserve it. These insights are my best experiences so far. My dream is that in the near future we will be able to find more funding to develop our study of barely documented languages. There is so much work to be done! Some of the languages have only seven or eight speakers left.

**Valerie’s Story:** I come from France and my language is not endangered at all! However, during my study I have developed a great interest in linguistic description, particularly for languages that may be dying or are undocumented. As a doctoral student in linguistics I wanted to come to UHM because of its international reputation in this field. I hope to be able to do my doctoral research on a language of Vanuatu. There are about 110 endangered languages there so there is a wealth of material.

I am the second director of the LDP. Meylysa Tseng, another graduate student, was the original LDP project director. I really love this project, and I find it is a wonderful experience to come to the LDP workshops every Saturday. First, we have an hour of instruction, and then an hour of project work. I am constantly amazed to see such a diverse group of people, all helping each other so well. The feel in that room every week is so synergistic, so energizing!

Since we are distributing our information on a website, we need to understand how to harness technology to best advantage. My dreams include obtaining funding to develop an archive. For example, we have some rare and unique sound files such as Matias’ songs, but no truly safe way to store them. Building such a repository could be a resource, not only for linguists and the LDP, but also for the Music Department, the Art Department, as well as to the numerous language centers on campus. I hope that the LDP project will continue to attract committed volunteers. I feel that the twenty students that we now have involved in
our project are really helping the international community. I encourage everyone to take a look at our LDP website, [www.ling.hawaii.edu/~uhdoc/](http://www.ling.hawaii.edu/~uhdoc/) to see our work. We are very proud of the LDP, and we are very happy to have recently won the “Partners in Excellence Award.”

ISS Intern Receives Multiple Awards

Things couldn’t be better for German student Stefanie Schroeder, ISS Intern and current Coordinator of the ISS Mentor-Mentee program. Stefanie has recently received two competitive awards from her department, Travel Industry Management. The TIM International Award of Excellence and the J. Willard & Alice S. Marriott Foundation each provide her with recognition and some welcome cash! Additionally, Stefanie has been selected for a dream resort-hotel internship this summer in Bora Bora, French Polynesia. The ISS staff wishes Stefanie “toutes nos felicitations” as well as “bon voyage!”

Stefanie(center)with parents
ADDRESS UPDATES
by Danita Dumadag-Hugh, ISS Secretary

USCIS requires that international students update their new U.S. address within ten days of moving. To check/update your address:

1. Login myuh portal
   <http://myuhportal.hawaii.edu>

2. Click “Quick Links” (the box on the top right)
   Choose “Academic Services”

3. A new window will pop out. Under Personal Information,

4. Click View/Update My Address(es) and Phone(s)