Dear Students,

We hope your semester is off to a good start. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new students and extend wishes to those of you who will be graduating soon. We are busy in the OISS with many activities and events many of which are outlined in this newsletter.

**Best Wishes for a good semester,**

Julie

Julie M. Williams, Director
Office of International Student Services

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**OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING**

On February 4th and 5th CPT/ OPT workshops were held. For students who missed the workshop the PowerPoint is available online at http://www.iusb.edu/~oiss/employmentcurrent.shtml.

March, April, May and June are the busiest OPT months for the government. It is important that you apply as soon as possible for OPT especially if want to begin work in May or early June. While the dates for May graduates OPT appointments have passed, you can still contact the international office to make an appointment to see Vivian to process your OPT application.

For students graduating in June or August and students looking to do internships and other work assignments in the summer, there will be a CPT/OPT workshop in early May.

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**H-1B WORKSHOP**

On February 12th Attorney Tom Arkell who specializes in immigration and employment law, presented the third annual H-1B workshop. He discussed the H-1B process and the responsibilities of the employer and employee. For those who were unable to attend, the international office has copies of the H-1B information handout.

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**OISS WEBSITE**

Indiana University South Bend has been transitioning its websites to a new template. Soon the OISS website will also have this new look. While some of the links and information will move, all the information that was available will remain the same. If there is additional information that you believe the OISS should have available on our website, please send us an email message at oiss@iusb.edu.
OISS NEWS

OISS STAFF NEWS

VERA OUT OF THE OFFICE

Many of you have noticed that Vera has been out of the office since December. On December 11th, Vera gave birth to a baby girl named Isabella Faith Williamson. She will return to the office on February 23rd.

JULIE TRAVELING

Beginning late February, Julie will be out of the country for her annual admissions tours of Southeast Asia. She will be out of the office from February 19th—March 13th. Admissions decisions and transcript evaluations will be in suspense while she is away.

TAXES

Taxes are due on Wednesday, April 15th.

OISS will be offering free tax preparation workshops on February 13th and March 6th. The workshops are full.

Even if you do not have taxable income, the OISS highly recommends that you file the 8843 tax form. While there is no financial penalty for filling out the form, to fulfill federal regulations, you must file the 8843 form.

Students who earned more than US$3,300 last year (2008) will need to file Federal Tax forms. If you earned less than US$3,300, you only need to file the tax forms, if you want the money taken from your wages to be returned to you. Students will also need to file Indiana or Michigan or other state tax forms, depending on the state(s) in which you lived last year.

From February until May, the federal forms 1040NR, 1040NR-EZ, 8843, and Indiana IT-40PNR, & CT-40PNR tax forms and instructions are available to download from the OISS website. The forms may be accessed at http://www.iusb.edu/~oiss/taxes.shtml. Michigan tax forms are available at www.michigan.gov/treasury.

If you do taxes on your own, please make sure that you fill out the correct forms. Students who have been in the United States for less than 5 years must fill out the 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ and the 8843 form. Be wary of tax software; many are not designed for people in the United States on visas. The software you use should be asking you to indicate your visa status and ask you other questions about your immigration status. If the software does not, it is not designed to help F-1, J-1, etc. students. If you have been in the U.S. for more than 5 years, you will fill out the 1040 or 1040EZ because you are considered a U.S. resident for tax purposes.

***Remember your employer should not be (withholding) taking Social Security Tax (FICA) from your paycheck. ***

If your employer has been removing FICA from your paycheck, please visit the OISS as soon as possible.

If you have questions, please stop by the OISS. The OISS can assist you with the 8843 form. We are unable to assist students with other tax forms. Please do not wait until the last minute.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Dear Advisor,

I am graduating in May and I want to spend more time in the United States traveling and sightseeing before I go home. Do I have any time to stay in the U.S. legally? I would like to travel for about 3 months.

Sincerely,

Traveling Student

Dear Traveling Student,

How many days you are allowed to stay in the U.S. depends on your visa type. If you are here as a J-1 student, you can only stay in the U.S. for 30 days after your graduation or program end date. If you are an F-1 student you can stay in the U.S. for 60 days after your graduation or program end date. There is no way to extend this time. Please contact the OISS about other options available.
Are you in an international/culture club not listed below? Please contact Vivian at vyamoah@iusb.edu or call the OISS to be included in the April 2009 newsletter.

ISO CORNER

International Food Fest April 11th

Mark your calendars. The International Food Fest has become a tradition at Indiana University South and in the South Bend area community. The International Food Fest allows international students at IU South Bend to share their food, traditions, and dancing with the campus and city communities. There will be food, music, dancing and a fashion show. There will be almost 15 countries represented. Last year, over 300 students, faculty, staff and community members came to the Food Fest.

The event is organized by the IU South Bend International Student Organization (ISO). The food is made by IU South Bend international students with the help of friends and relatives who reside here in the Michiana area.

Do you cook? Can you dance? Do you like to pose? Help organize? Then sign up to help with the Food Fest. Email iso@iusb.edu for more information and to help. Please check out the ISO website www.iusb.edu/~iso for more information. Food submission deadline will be early in March. Check emails for more details.

WORLD CULTURE AND AMERICAN CULTURE

MARDI GRAS/CARNIVAL

Colorful exciting celebrations with music, singing, dancing and food happen all over the world. One such celebration that happens in the U.S. and other countries is Mardi Gras or Carnival. Carnival is a festival season—associated mostly with Roman Catholic countries or areas- which usually occurs during February and March. The date it begins depends on the country. According to Encyclopedia Britannica and others, the carnival involves public celebrations, circus-like parades and public street parties. People also dress up or masquerade during the celebrations.

The world’s longest and biggest carnival celebration is held in Brazil; however, many regions worldwide have large popular celebrations, such as Carnival of Venice in Italy, Carnival of Santa Cruz de Tenerife in Spain, Carnival of Barranquilla in Colombia, Torress Vedras Carnival in Portugal, New Orleans Mardi Gras and the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival in the Caribbean.

We will look at this celebration in the U.S. and Brazil.

Brazil

The Brazilian Carnival is held four days before Ash Wednesday (the day of fasting and repentance that marks the beginning of Lent). It normally starts on the Friday before Ash Wednesday and finishes on Ash Wednesday. Most Brazilian offices and businesses close for the week of carnival. The 2009 Carnival will be from February 20 through 24.

The Brazilian Carnival is a combination of European, Native American and African elements. Furthermore, participation and costumes vary from one region of Brazil to another. For example, in the southeastern cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, organized parades led by samba schools vie for prizes on the "sambodromo" open stage and only samba-school affiliates participate in the shows. Meanwhile, smaller cities often have no public manifestations but they promote balls in recreational clubs. The northeastern cities of Salvador, Porto Seguro and Recife have organized groups parading through streets, and watchers are also welcome to dance, following the "trio elétrico" floats through the city streets.

New Orleans, United States

Carnival celebrations, referred to as Mardi Gras, were first celebrated in the Gulf Coast area of the United States, but now occur in many other states in the U.S. Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Louisiana is one of most world-known carnival celebration.

The New Orleans Carnival season officially starts on Twelfth Night (January 6th), which occurs 12 days after Christmas. Mardi Gras day (also known as Fat Tuesday) in 2009 is on Tuesday.
HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance bills were posted to student accounts on January 30th. Health insurance cards will be mailed to the OISS. Students will receive an email when their card is available for pick – up.

Temporary cards may be printed from the Aetna Student website http://www.iusb.edu/~oiss/

healthcurrent.shtml. Remember to confirm with Aetna that the doctor or hospital you are going to is in-network. If you have any questions about health insurance and what is covered by the school plan, please come in to speak to Vera or Vivian.

WORLD CULTURE AND AMERICAN CULTURE (CONT.)

February 24th. It is the last day of the Mardi Gras Carnival season. Mardi Gras day falls on a different day each year, but it is always 46 days before Easter. Rex, the King of Carnival, selected the official Mardi Gras colors and assigned meaning to them in 1892. Purple stands for justice, green for faith, and gold for power.

The first New Orleans Mardi Gras parade was held on February 24, 1857 by the Krewe of Comus. They began the tradition of presenting a parade with floats and following it with a ball for the krewe and their guests. Almost all of the Mardi Gras parades begin with the King and Queen leading the parade. They are followed by many floats, which carry the members of the krewe. The most common gifts thrown from the floats include strings made of plastic colorful beads, doubloons (aluminum or wooden dollar-sized coins usually impressed with a krewe logo), decorated plastic throw cups, small inexpensive toys, and stuffed animals. Many of these items become collectibles each year.

ENGLISH GONE CRAZY? MAD?

HOMONYMS, HOMOPHONES, HOMOGRAPHS OR MY

What can be more confusing than two words that have the same spelling, similar pronunciations or totally different meanings? Well the English language has a number of these and they are known as homonyms. Dictionaries and encyclopedias differ on their classification of homonyms, homophones and homographs. Some contend that homophones and homographs are a subset of homonyms. Others define them as three separate categories. Below are the definitions for homonyms, homophones and homographs from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary. You decide for yourself.

Homographs: “one of two or more words spelled and pronounced alike but different in meaning.”

watch – to look
watch – clock on wrist

Homophones: “one of two or more words pronounced alike but different in meaning or derivation or spelling”

scent – fragrance or smell
sent – past tense of send
cent – 1/100 of money

Homographs: “one of two or more words spelled alike but different in meaning or derivation or pronunciation.”
present – a gift or to give (rhymes with pleasant)
present – here (rhymes with resent)

Now for the fun part. Some examples of homonyms, homophones and homographs.

He rose and picked a rose.
The sewer went down the sewer.
I accept that everyone will be here except Tim.
The bow-legged man bowed and shot a bow from the bough of a tree.
The bass player liked to eat bass.
The wind winds the watch we watch.
A dessert was deserted in the desert.
Calendar of Events

January
6th—International Student Orientation
12th — First Day of Class spring semester
ISO Welcome Party**

February
4-5th—CPT/ OPT Workshop
6th—OPT Appointments
9th—OPT Appointments
10th—OPT Appointments
13th—Tax Workshop
13th—ISO Valentine's Day Celebration
18th—OPT Appointments

March
6th—Tax Workshop
International Food Festival Recipes Due
15th—22nd— Spring Break
28th—no classes

April
11th—International Food Festival
15th—U.S. Taxes Due

Office of International Student Services

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REMINDERS

See International Office before traveling out of country
International Food Festival April 11th
Taxes Due—April 15th
Keep all I-20s. Do not lose or destroy them.