

BA-PIER Meeting
Thursday, February 21, 2013
Minutes taken by Kim Bryant <kbryant2@cca.edu>

Intrax, San Francisco

- *I. Brief Welcome by Acting Chair, Dolly Balangitao*
- *II. Welcome by Jenefer Johnson, Center Director of Intrax San Francisco*

Info on Intrax

- Exclusively ESL
- Between 200-400 students
- Rolling enrollment, with a new session starting each week
- Questions from attendees:
 - o Do they have conditional admittance agreements? Yes, and they are always looking to develop more.
 - o Do they do TOEFL? Yes, they do it once a month (IBT). Also do TOEIC testing once a month.
 - o Any job openings at Intrax? No full-time currently.

III. Introduction of Attendees

All attendees introduced themselves (name and institution).

IV. Positions Available

USF ISSS Director position was posted yesterday

Job openings listed in the NAFSA Region XII weekly newsletter:

- Berkeley International Office has several openings
- System-wide UC Education Abroad Program (Based near Santa Barbara)
- Director, International Office Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
- Global Support Coordinator, UC Hastings College of Law
- Undergrad Admissions, UC Riverside
- ESL Language Centers, Honolulu
- NC State University

V. Announcements

NAFSA Region XII Northern District Spring Conference

- Thursday, March 28, 2013 at Santa Clara University from 8:30-3:00
- Schedule should be up very soon
- Early-bird registration ends March 15

2013 NAFSA Region XII Conference in San Diego

- November 3-8, 2013 at the Town and Country Hotel and Resort (same place it was at 3 years ago)
- People interested in volunteering for the conference can contact:

- o Yasue O'Neil – Palomar College: yoneill@palomar.edu
- o Mia Scavone – Mira Costa College:
<mailto:miscavone@miracosta.edu><miscavone@miracosta.edu>

Congratulations to Eva Hu, Susan Sermeno, and Arthur Levine!

- Newly elected NAFSA Northern District representatives.
- Each new representative introduced himself or herself and explained their duties.
- o Susan: ISSS chair – biggest job is to get conference sessions in the ISSS area
- o Eva: secretary – takes meeting minutes, helping with prep for district conference and regional conference
- o Arthur (not present): Community College liaison, has already reached out to Community College people, asking for questions/problems

Conditional Admissions and International Students: Report of highlights from February 13th SEVP/DHS Webinar followed by discussion based on report findings.

- They don't want schools conditionally accepting students and then starting in an ESL program, b/c it impacts OPT, other benefits (e.g. if a student's I-20 says "history" and they study ESL for a year, they could technically be eligible for OPT
- Long-running practice to issue I-20s this way.
- Said they may publish guidance around April, will have a window for people to submit comments/questions, then will publish guidance on Study in the States
- People had concerns about the impact issuing an ESL-only I-20 would have on a student's

ability to get a visa

- At some schools that don't have an ESL program, students get an I-20 just from the ESL school, and the community college international office issues a letter for students for the student to take to the visa interview that says as soon as they complete the ESL, they're already accepted to the CC. The only piece missing is the ESL.

- SEVP mentioned that "short-term" programs are ok, but what counts as "short-term" isn't defined.

How often does everyone look at Study in the States? -Not often.

NAFSA website good place to go for information, updates, resources.

VII. Open Discussion (Erica Delgado of Intrax)

What constitutes a legitimate excuse versus excessive, and how we can communicate to students what our policy is related to staying in status with health issues (or reported health issues) and how each advisor is handling attendance in relation to SEVIS reporting? Example: student brought in a doctor's note each week, with somewhat suspicious reasons, but the notes were from real doctors.

- If the medical issue is more short-term, ask student to work with their doctor, longer-term will work with a student to do an RCL.

- Ask the doctor to confirm in the documentation that it is inadvisable for the student to be full-time

- Issue of doctor/patient confidentiality, so can't force doctor to state the medical specifics of the situation

- Schools can use their own attendance policy

- Reduced course load - Tough on pregnancy – there has to be some kind of complication or a note from the doctor that states – "In my medical opinion it is not advisable for this person to attend full time..."

Do people look at comments on Transfer-In form? Does it affect whether you accept a student or not? Consensus was no.

VIII. Open Q&A and/or Announcements not covered

Now that they're not stamping I-20s, is anyone having problems with DMV?

- Some people are having trouble.

What about when they stop issuing I-94s? When are they going to stop issuing I-94s? No one was sure.

- It was noted that CBP is still stamping DS-2019s.
- Also depends on port of entry – different POEs doing different things

Question about DMV – Student was given a letter saying their I-20 needed to be “updated”?

- Could have been that they weren’t registered in SEVIS yet.
- Suggestion to print out a new I-20 that shows “continued attendance” and give a letter confirming attendance. That has worked for some schools.

When a COS is pending and you defer the student to next term are you supposed to send the new I-20?

- No.
- Sometimes once it’s approved, they’ll note the correct start date on the I-20.
- Some schools don’t print out new I-20 when they defer

If there’s a student who’s in a status that allows full-time study, do you defer to the start of the next start term or defer on a monthly/shorter-term basis?

- Schools do both of those things, schools have different policies
- Once it’s approved, do you change start date? Some schools do, some don’t

For COS, which is faster? ELIS or paper?

- People felt that ELIS is faster.

Can you do an E-2 to F-1 using ELIS?

- Not sure.

Question about ELIS – There’s a student who’s J-1 until July 1st, if they approve it before July, will they give her an approval notice with an approval date before July?

Someone mentioned problems with COS not showing in SEVIS record, but they were able to look it up with WAC number.

Someone else noticed that COS filed on ELIS aren’t showing up in SEVIS.

Anyone have students from Iran having trouble getting currency? Can a student file for economic hardship now if he’ll have been here for an academic year in June?

- Yes.

Several people noted problems with erroneous RFEs? E.g. student applied for post-completion OPT, was an engineer, and was asked for proof of her international business degree.

- Several other examples were mentioned.
- Who to contact? Some people use the “EAD email address.” Exact email address wasn’t given.
- Is there still a CSC Regional Ombudsperson? Kathy Shek.

“IOC” numbers – when people submit through ELIS, they were getting those numbers instead of WAC numbers.

Problems with students in low-level English courses, go home, take the TOEFL, and submit very high scores.

- Possibly fraudulent scores.

Dependent questions: What to do if a student has more than one wife or wants to bring in mother & father?

- Discussed B visa as an option.

For new students, how do you “check students in”?

- Attendance letter says they have to bring documents to office to check in.
- Put a hold on their record for the next semester’s registration.

Banner schools are able to place a hold.

- Email to students who don’t attend orientation, tell them they can’t be registered in SEVIS until certain things are done
- Email with threat of termination and reinstatement instructions – that gets them in.

Do people make copies of immigration documents for new students?

- No – students fill out form with all that information and volunteers verify the information when students are filling out the forms.
- Lots of schools still make copies of documents.

When students are stuck in administrative Processing – any advice?

- Some people are seeing them more so with students who apply late/at the last minute.
- The consulate won’t tell you anything about the reason why or how long it’ll take.

IX. Next Meeting: Thursday, June 20, 2013 at USCS in Santa Clara