



February 2021 BA-PIER Meeting

Thursday, June 17th, 2021 01:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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Agenda

- I. **Welcome**, Becky Petrow, BA-PIER Chair (10 min)
- II. **Vendor Presentation**, Brandon Tague, SpanTran Evaluation Services (20 min)
- III. **SEVP Presentation**, Tiffany Coyne, SEVP Field Representative (30 min)
 - A. SEVP Updates
 - B. Pre-Submitted Questions
 - C. Q&A
- IV. **Roundtable Discussion** (40 min)
 - A. Introductions/Orientation Brainstorm in Breakout Rooms
 - B. Pre-submitted questions/discussion topics
- V. **Other Business** (20 min)
 - A. Review Member Feedback
 - B. Officer Nominations and Elections
 1. Chair
 2. Vice Chair
 3. Secretary
 4. Treasurer
 5. Communications Officer
 - C. Next Meeting: Thursday, December 2nd, 1:00-3:00pm on Zoom
 1. Possible Port of Entry tour in November/December

SEVP Pre-Submitted Questions

- **SEVP guidance on new F1 Students**
 - New or Initial F and M students who were not previously enrolled in a program of study on March 9, 2020, will not be able to enter the United States as a nonimmigrant student for the 2021-22 academic year if their course of study is 100 percent online. A new student should be allowed to enter the United States if they are engaged in a hybrid program, with some requirement for in-person learning. Consistent with this restriction, DSOs should not issue a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," for a student in new or Initial status who is outside of the United States and plans to take classes at an SEVP-certified educational institution that is operating fully online.

- **Our institution has submitted an operating adaptation to SEVP stating that we offer a hybrid modality of classes. As such, we are permitted to accept new international student from abroad, provided that they enroll in at least one face to face class. For students that entered this way for our Spring 2021 semester, when we operated under the same guidelines, in their NEXT semesters, are they required to continue at least one face to fact class or can they, like students who were present after March 9, 2020, continue to maintain their status even if they are taking 100% online courses.**
 - No, they are not eligible to take 100% online courses in subsequent terms as this eligibility does not apply to them. The only exception would be if your campus were to close back down or go 100% remote due to state or local requirements in response to changing pandemic status in your area. Then you would need to inform SEVP of this change by submitting a new adaptation plan.

- **During COVID, our institution allows for instructors to drop students from classes very late into the semester, with an "EW" excused withdrawal. If a student is enrolled in 12 units for most of the semester, but then drops below 12 units one day before the end of the semester, do we still terminate the student's record for unauthorized drop below full course?**
 - Dropping below full course of study was discussed in the COVID FAQs on page 10 in regards to school cancellation of classes, technical, and medical reasons only. At this point, all students should be maintaining full course of study unless there is a medical reason for them to drop below full time as your campus has likely already adjusted the curriculum delivery and are not cancelling courses on the students mid term at this point. Students should maintain a full course of study to the extent possible. If a student is unwilling to take online courses or participate in other alternate forms of study as provided in the school's procedural adaptation plan to SEVP, they should request a temporary absence and be terminated for Authorized Early Withdrawal.

- **Can a student submit a medical RCL request AFTER they have dropped below 12 units? Are DSOs required to deny the medical RCL if it hasn't been requested before the drop occurred?**
 - (iii) *Reduced course load.* The designated school official may allow an F-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study as provided in this paragraph (f)(6)(iii). Except as otherwise noted, a reduced course load must consist of at least six semester or quarter hours, or half the clock hours required for a full course of study. *A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the DSO will be considered out of status.* On-campus employment pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship is deemed to be part of the academic program of a student otherwise taking a full course of study.

- **Student entered the USA as a new Initial for Spring 2021, had an in person class. Same student is now continuing for Fall 2021, are they required to take an in person class or can they take all online? Our schools instruction has been reported as still primarily online.**
 - Yes, if your adaptation plan has not changed since you began accepting new initial students (aka you have not been required to shut down campus) then students who were in new or initial status are not covered by the guidance and can't be 100% remote as stated in the BM.

Additional Questions for SEVP

- How can we work with immigration officers to better share the benefits of community college for international students who have already completed a bachelor's degree from outside the U.S.? (We have heard of more students getting visa denials because they think the student should be studying at a 'lower level'.)
- If the student is in the last semester of the program and is going to graduate ->enrolled with less than full course- Do we need to leave a remark that the student is in the last semester and enrolled less than full course load in the students record.
- What is the DOS doing to reduce the backlog of visa appointments?
- When can we expect embassies and consulates to resume normal visa processing?

Roundtable Discussion Topics/Questions

- Our institution has submitted an operating adaptation to SEVP stating that we offer a hybrid modality of classes. As such, we are permitted to accept new international student from abroad, provided that they enroll in at least one face to face class. For students that entered this way for our Spring 2021 semester, when we operated under the same guidelines, in their NEXT semesters, are they required to continue at least one face to fact class or can they, like students who were present after March 9, 2020, continue to maintain their status even if they are taking 100% online courses.
- How are you handling in-person student activities and community building this Fall? Anything still remote? What about food?
- Orientation Ideas. What worked for you and what didn't work for virtual orientations?
- Returning to Campus
- Student Engagement
- Students in the last semester with less than full course load.
- Has anyone received an OPT approval using the online I-765 application yet?
- Does your institution work with a third-party recruiting agency? If so, who and how is that going?
- Covid-19 requirements for students