BA-PIER Meeting
Thursday, February 17th, 2022, 1:00pm-3:00pm
Link to Zoom Recording

BA PIER February 2022 Meeting Minutes

I. **Welcome & Introductions**
    ○ BA-PIER officer update
        1. **Manasi Devhar-Mane has stepped down from Co-Vice Chair position**
        2. **Leandro Pena Di Vittorio email is no longer active so we are going to assume he has also stepped down**
        3. **Other officers will take on Vice Chair duties for remainder of the term**
    ○ No newcomers! Invite your colleagues

II. **Breakout Rooms**
    ○ How are your current enrollments looking?
        1. **Enrollment is slowly picking up or remaining steady**
    ○ How are you engaging your students?
        1. **Vday event- in person hot chocolate and cookies**
        2. **Mandatory check in/lunch**
        3. **Student game nights- once a month, virtual**
        4. **Zoom orientations**
        5. **Canvas page (online resource hub) for students inside and outside the US shared by Renee Savage created by Sara Proctor**

III. **Roundtable Discussion**
    ○ **Poll:** Filling Form I-765 ONLINE- What percent of your F-1 students are applying for OPT online?
        Results
        a) **100% - 45% (9/20)**
        b) **Most students- 30% (6/20)**
        c) **A few students- 10% (3/20)**
        d) **None- 15% (2/20)**
    ○ **Poll:** In-Person vs. Remote Meetings- Would you prefer to attend the June 16th meeting in person?
        Results
        a) **Yes- 18% (4/20)**
        b) **No- 23% (5/22)**
        c) **Not sure yet- 59% (13/2**2)

- **Poll:** BA-PIER Membership Fees -Should we continue collecting $5 for lifetime membership?
    - **Results**
        - a) **Yes- 67% (12/18)**
        - b) **No- 11% (2/18)**
        - c) **Unsure/Undecided- 225 (4/18)**
- **Poll:** Who's Going to NAFSA?
    - **Results**
        - a) **Yes - 35% (7/20)**
        - b) **No- 50% (10/20)**
        - c) **No, but i'll participate virtually- 15% (3/20)**
- Poll: Fall 2022 Procedural Adaptations -Is your campus resuming normal operations?
    - **Results**
        - a) **Yes, fully in person- 36% (8/22)**
        - b) **No, but increased in person classes- 9% (2/22)**
        - c) **Don't know yet- 55% (12/22)**
- **Pre-submitted topics:**
    1. Re: Ba-Pier membership fee - where do I pay?
        - a) **TBD- Apply Pay/PayPal**
    2. I would like to get some pulse on how many percent of your F-1 students are now applying for OPT online instead of paper and how you are adjusting your advising.
        - a) **See poll results**
        - b) **Some advisors have taken screenshots of the USCIS online app to show their students**
    3. Any good tips about uploading photos for online OPT application?
        - a) **US travel state has a tool- https://www.csueastbay.edu/cie/f-1-students/employment/cpt-curricular-practical-training.html**
    4. Return to campus - how has it been?
    5. Does your institution offer post-secondary certificates and support OPT applications based on certificates? If so, would you support an OPT application for a post-secondary certificate that would require less than one year to complete (e.g. 20 units), if the student has otherwise met the one year in F-1 status requirement?
        - a) **West Valley- removed certificates for I-17 as too complicated with smaller requirements**
        - b) **CSUEB and Santa Rosa Jr College allows OPT after certificates but the certificates require at least 2 semesters of full time enrollment to be I-20 eligible.**
    6. Current practice/policy regarding change of status advising and assistance
        - a) **San Mateo- refer to lawyer**
        - b) **St. Marys- encourages travel, documents in writing regarding risks**

          c) Students in status's that don't allow study, what are your procedures
              (1) Have them reapply to the university/college

7. Practice/policy regarding recommending reinstatement vs travel for status violations
   a) **Travel is still faster option. It was difficult in the thick of the pandemic but easier now.**

8. Visa denials - what advice can we offer to students who are being rejected at their visa interviews besides "try again"?
   a) **Will offer them a mock interview- St Mary's**
   b) **Annie Yu - Refer students to https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html**
   c) **Evergreen Valley College- send useful YouTube videos**
      (1) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YMANidBj6U**
      (2) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7wbxo3N53g**

9. Have any other schools had issues with applications submitted with agent created student emails? We've had a couple different agents (India and China) submit applications as the student/for the student with an email they created and manage. We realized this was not an accurate email when a student contacted us and said the agent wasn't releasing their I-20 to them. Does anyone have creative ideas of how to verify email addresses are reaching students and not agents? We found that the agents are responding as the student from those fake emails. We also do not have any relationship with these agencies.
   a) **Use school issued email address as well as personal email on file if possible**

○ **Member Announcements** (jobs, campus updates, etc.)
   1. **Monica Sinha- name change Northwestern Polytechnic University is now San Francisco Bay University**

○ **Share Tips & Tricks:**
   1. Tableau- organize and present data. It's free. Upload excel sheet to create graphs/charts!
   2.

IV. **SEVP Presentation,** Tiffany Coyne, SEVP Field Representative (30 minutes)
○ **SEVP Updates**
   1. **Annual User Verification deadline is March 2, 2022 for PDSO's**
      a) **If you are still getting reminders, you may have additional campuses to do the verification for**
   2. **Policy Guidance from March 2020 is in place until end of Spring 2022**
   3. **Permanent change in allowance of electronic signatures on I-20's by PDSO/DSO.**

a) **Feedback- SSA rejections, other govt departments. SEVP reaching out to other govt offices to inform them of the permanent change.**

b) **I-17 still requires wet signatures. Make sure its wet signature or looks like a wet signature. Permanent change does not extend to this form.**

4. **Special Student Relief- Study in the Studies has info for students from the approved countries and instructions for benefits.**

○ **Pre-submitted Questions:**

1. The extension of the COVID-19 guidance issued by SEVP is due to expire at the end of this academic year. Have there been any discussions about possibly extending this guidance beyond the 21-22 academic year? Have there been any discussions about revising the online class rule for F-1 students?

   a) **As of December, it was mentioned that in Feb (now) they were looking at the possibility of extending guidance from SEVP Leadership. Don't know what the results are but hoping for announcement from SEVP in the next month or two**

   b) **Has been no discussion regarding revising the online requirement outside of the COVID guidance**

2. Prediction for Fall 2022: Are we expecting to go back to pre-COVID policy and only count one or 3 units of online classes towards the full-time requirement?

   a) **See above answer**

3. Recertification processing time: Last year, we have seen some schools complete recertification done in one week. For example, the University of Richmond submitted recertification on 9/15/2020 and was approved on 9/22/2020. Also, the University of Louisiana Monroe submit recertification with 5 programs added (69 pages of evidence). It was approved in 2 days – submitted 10/29/2020, approved 10/31/2020 (on a Saturday). This discussion can be found in the NAFSA discussion board.   Our school recertification has been pending for 6 months. SEVP Response Center told us that it could still take up to 2 years. Please explain the reasons for such an inconsistency in the school recertification process when SEVP changes a $1,250 fee.

   a) **Isn't the practice unfortunately. SEVP employees were working only on updates and recertifications while getting into the groove of working from home. Processing times are not posted or guaranteed.**

   b) **When fees were implicated they expanded team by 13 people**

○ **Additional Questions**

1. SEVP isn't emailing students their SEVP Portal login email. Also student's who have had a previous OPT resulting in previous access to the SEVP Portal can't seem to log in. SEVP had provided "work around" instructions a while ago but those aren't working. Do you have any workarounds?

   a) **This is a known issue and all you can do at this time is call the SRC for assistance on both issues**

2. SEVIS alert list- having items from years and years ago. Can we remove those items?

        a) **Can't correct records without evidence so unless you have documentation of what the decision was, SRC won't be able to update record**

3. Student's entering the USA and SEVIS Port of Entry list isn't updating? Any recommendations for not allowing those initial students to fall through the crack?

        a) **Don't depend on that data, have a school issued enrollment report to cross check**

4. Can we request SEVP to add email addresses to reports run in SEVIS?

        a) **Contact the SEVP Technical Team with your suggestions.**

SEVP Technical Team Contact

SEVIS TECHNICAL FEEDBACK TEAM Assists with SEVIS functionality problems, batch issues and suggested system improvements: SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov

SEVP Portal Issues: SEVP Portal issues can be sent to the email address above. If DSO's want to know what has been previously addressed, they can be aware of planned changes to the system that could affect their accounts. Find upcoming and past enhancement release information here: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/learn-more/sevp-portal-enhancements.