

Cabrillo International Student Newsletter

SPRING 2010

HAVE YOU MOVED?

DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS WITH ADMISSIONS AND RECORDS/WEBADVISOR AND EMAIL ANNA WITH THE INFORMATION.



Remember, if you have questions, comments, or concerns, see Anna in room 126 or Sally in room 118. You may also email us at international@cabrillo.edu

We hope that you are enjoying your courses this semester and that you were able to register many of the classes that you need for your program. Spring semester welcomes 13 new international students from 9 countries, including Italy, China, Poland, Nepal, Taiwan, Japan, Lebanon, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. We now have 56 international students representing 27 countries in the world, almost like our own United Nations!

Please look carefully through this semester's newsletter, you will find information about important deadlines, tax responsibilities for international students, scholarship information, and much information to help you through the semester. And, don't forget to contact Anna if you have any questions.

The International Student Program is here to support the success of students who are studying in the United States with visas as well as Permanent Residents and US Citizens who have studied abroad. The International Student Office offers the following services:

Here is Anna's contact information:

Anna Zagorska
Room 126 (Transfer Center)
Tel: 477-3375
Email: anzagors@cabrillo.edu

Appointments with Anna can be made at the Counseling Office or in the Transfer Center.

If you are looking to get involved on campus, there are many opportunities to do so. Student clubs, government and the campus newspaper all welcome international students and your unique viewpoints.

As you have seen, there is a lot of discussion about the California budget crisis and the effect of it on public education in the state. We encourage you to ask us any questions, and always register

for classes as soon as possible.

Do you miss home and love Cabrillo? Recommend Cabrillo to your friends at home and get the best of both worlds! We would love to welcome them to our campus.

We are happy that you chose to study at Cabrillo College and hope that you have a wonderful semester.

Sincerely,

The International Student Program Office
Cabrillo College
6500 Soquel Drive
Aptos, CA 95003

International Student Office Information

- Academic/Occupational/Transfer Counseling
- Immigration Advising
- Employment Authorization
- Personal and Cultural Adjustment Counseling
- Foreign transcript evaluation information

Counseling and Advising is provided by:

Anna Zagorska, rm. 126
Sally Larter, rm. 118

To set up a 30 minute appointment, please call 479-6274 or 479-6385.



Immigration Information

Announcements:

New Scholarship Available!

Cabrillo College is offering two scholarships for F-1 students for Fall 2010. The two awards are \$400 and \$200. Applications are available at the Transfer Center in the 100 Building. Scholarships applications are due on April 12, 2010 and the winner will be notified in early May. Applications require one letter of recommendation and an essay describing your experiences as an international student in the United States.

Graduating? Meet with a counselor to complete a Petition to Graduate and don't forget to apply for OPT three months before you plan to begin working.

Transferring? Make sure that you ask Anna to transfer your I-20 to your new college or university. You must do this before August 4, but remember that she won't be available at all times during the summer, so see her before graduation!

Students studying with F-1 visas are required by the United States Citizen and Immigration Service to maintain full-time enrollment each semester to be in status. Full-time enrollment is the completion of a minimum of 12 units each semester. Students with F-1 visas who are having trouble with classes must make an appointment to meet with the International Student Counselor. There are cases in which we can authorize F-1 students to drop below 12 units and still be in status. Students who drop below the 12 units without prior permission are considered out of status and will have to apply for reinstatement through immigration. **Please contact us before you drop any classes.**

Important-for Continuing F-1 students

Make sure you know when your I-20 will expire. If your I-20 will expire at the end of this semester and you need more time at Cabrillo to complete your educational goals, make an appointment with the International Student Counselor to extend your I-20. We must file for an I-20 extension before your current I-20 expires, otherwise your record will be automatically terminated by SEVIS and you will be out of status!

Change of Address

You must inform Anna if you change your address. She can then update SEVIS with the new information. You have 10 days after you move to contact her. You may lose your F-1 status if you do not inform Anna of your new address.

OPT

If you are graduating this semester and plan to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT), you should submit your application no later than April 1 if you hope to begin working right after graduation. See Anna in rm. 126 for an OPT application packet.

Travel information

If you need to travel outside the United States for any reason, you must have your I-20 signed for travel authorization before your departure. This includes travel to Canada and Mexico. Please submit your I-20 at least two weeks before you leave the country or before the end of the semester. If you do not have your I-20 authorized you may not be allowed back into the country. Anna or Sally can sign your I-20.

Also, if travelling, make sure the visa in your passport is valid. If your visa has expired, you must obtain a new visa in your passport before you will be permitted to re-enter the United States.

When travelling, have the following documents with you when re-entering the US:

- A passport that is valid for at least six more months
- A valid F-1 student visa
- Current I-20 with recent travel authorization signature (signature should have been received no more than 6 months ago)
- All your previous I-20s
- Cabrillo College transcripts verifying full time status and satisfactory academic progress
- Proof of class registration (if possible)
- If on OPT, a valid EAD and a letter from your employer verifying that you will be returning to work.

Important Tax Information



All students with non-immigrant visas are required to file taxes with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Even if you did not earn any income in the US in 2009, you have to complete a form and mail it to the IRS. You will need to obtain the appropriate tax return forms online at www.irs.gov.

Preparing for Tax Filing

Although the U.S. tax filing process may seem somewhat complex, it will be relatively simple for most international students. Plan to spend 10-30 minutes on this process.

Academic Calendar

Spring 2010

- Feb 19 Last day to drop with refund
- Mar 6 Deadline to drop without a W appearing on your transcript
- Mar 13 Deadline for pass/no pass option
- March 29-April 3 — Spring Break**
- April 26 Deadline to apply for AA or AS degree
- May 8 Deadline to withdraw
- May 12 Fall Registration begins
- May 31 Holiday
- June 1-5 Final Exams
- June 4 Graduation

Summer 2010

- Mar 16 Summer Schedule posted online
- Apr 12 Summer registration begins
- Jun 21 6 week Summer Session Term begins
- Jun 21 4 week Summer Session Term begins
- July 4 Holiday
- July 17 4 week Summer Session ends
- July 31 6 week Summer Session ends

Fall 2010

- May 12 Registration begins
- Aug 30 Semester begins
- Sep 3 Last day to add and drop courses

*** NOTE THAT THE ADD/DROP PERIOD IS BEING SHORTENED TO ONE WEEK ONLY***

What is the deadline?

The tax deadline in the United States is April 15.

What forms do you need to complete and return to the IRS?

If you did not work and earn money in the United States in 2009, you only need to submit Form 8843. (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf>)

This form is mandatory for all international students, even if you did not work at all.

If you did work and earn money in the United States in 2009, you will need to submit Form 8843 and Form 1040NR-EZ (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040nre.pdf>) or 1040NR (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040nr.pdf>). Instructions for the 1040NR-EZ can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1040nre.pdf>.

You may also need to submit Form 540NR-EZ or 540NR for your California State Taxes. Your employer should supply you with the required W-2 forms that you will need to complete the tax forms. If you have not received any forms, please contact your employer.

The EZ forms are shorter than the regular forms and can usually be used if you are single, have no dependents, and earned less than \$100,000. If you are married or have children, you need to use the longer forms.

Helpful Tax Sites

IRS website for international student taxes:

www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96431,00.html

There is also detailed information and the appropriate tax forms at:

Website: www.irs.gov

Telephone: 1-800-829-1040

Order IRS tax forms by calling toll-free 1-800-829-3676 or use the website. Cabrillo's international student website also has links to the forms.

Information about California State taxes is available at the Franchise Tax Board.

Website: www.ftb.ca.gov

Telephone: 1-800-338-0505 or 1-800-852-5711

CINTAX is a company which helps international students and scholars with their US tax filing. It may be ordered for individual use at <https://www.arcticintl.com/quick-spt-b.asp>. The cost of this service is \$39.

The University of Texas has a great website with information about international student tax responsibilities: <http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/status.html>

Q and A

- Q: I am registered for 12 units, but hate one of my classes. All my American friends tell me to just drop it before I get a bad grade, but I remember hearing that I should not have less than 12 units. What should I do?
- A: Don't drop that class!! As an international student, you are required to complete 12 units per semester or you will fall out of status. This means that you will not be able to transfer, apply for OPT, work on campus, or travel and re-enter the US. You will need to apply for reinstatement or leave the country and return with a new I-20. All this is not worth dropping that class, so get some extra help and remember that it will end soon!
- Q: I hear people talking about AA, AS and transferring. Do I need to get an Associate degree before transferring to a 4 year university?
- A: No. You may apply to transfer to a 4 year university if you have completed your 60 units of transferable courses. But, receiving an Associate degree allows you to participate in Graduation, receive a diploma, and apply for OPT. Students who complete all the requirements for transfer, but do not receive a degree, are not eligible to apply for OPT.
- Q: My friends told me that there is a new rule for international students not needing to update their address with the International Student Office. Is this true?
- A: Although your friends may be very smart, don't trust them when it comes to immigration advice. If you have any doubts or questions, see Anna in rm. 126, consult www.uscis.gov, or speak with an immigration lawyer.
- Q: With the budget crisis in California, how can I be sure to complete my program on time?
- A: It is very difficult to get the classes that you need, that is why it is more important than ever to register at the first available registration time for you. Look on WebAdvisor or ask a counselor when you can first register for fall semester classes.

For F-1 students completing their studies this semester

USCIS allows F-1 students who have completed their course of study to remain in the United States for 60 days after the completion of the semester. This time can be used as you wish; to prepare to return home, transfer to another school, or travel within the United States. You may not exit the US in your 60 day grace period and return in F-1 status.

F-1 Transfer Information

Students with F-1 visas who are planning to transfer to another institution within the United States must notify the International Student Office before the end of the semester. We will need to transfer your I-20 in SEVIS to the new school. If you travel outside of the US during the summer, you should re-enter using the I-20 from your new college or university.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OPT enables students on F-1 visas to receive up to one year of full-time employment authorization in a job that is directly related to their major. Cabrillo College recommends only Post-Completion OPT for students. You do not need a job offer to apply. Students who are in their final semester at Cabrillo College and are interested in applying for Optional Practical Training must file their OPT application no later than 60 days after they graduate. It usually takes three months to receive OPT approval, so plan to file your application 3 months before you graduate so that you can begin working right away.

Students who are interested in applying should make an appointment with the International Student Counselor. For

students graduating in spring 2010, you may apply anytime between March 4 and August 4. Please be aware that it takes 90 days to receive approval from USCIS, so you should apply in March in order to begin working in June or July. If you apply late and your OPT authorization is not granted before August 2010, you will lose some time on your OPT. More information is available in rm. 126.

Completing Program

If you are completing your program and returning home, make sure to let Anna know so that she can adjust your status in the SEVIS system. You will be eligible to return to the US in the future to start another program, but you will not be able to apply for OPT for your completed program.