



November 2008

## The International Times

Monthly

It is November and we are celebrating International Education Week. While I know many of you are preparing for finals and making travel plans, I hope that you are also thinking about the wonderful opportunity you have to be able to study here in the United States.

With so much global strife occurring between different countries, and social and economic struggles happening within countries (like the U.S.) many are wondering how it will affect the student exchange, immigration laws and visa programs. Although nothing has been made official, there are some reports that suggest the United States may consider suspending or putting a freeze on the number of students it allows in to study on Visas. This is why it is so important that we continue to show the college, the community, the State and the Country the value of international students and the significance of the languages, the cultures and experiences that you bring. Your participation and cultural contributions improve the country and the world.

Please join us in celebrating International Education Week and help make your mark on this campus and the world. Support your fellow students by visiting the Library exhibit and attending the International Masque on Thursday, November 20, 2008 In the Planetarium (152) from 7-8:30. For more information and tickets please call the ISS office at 526-1107.

### Check the Expiration Date on your I-20



Please check your I-20 for the expected completion date/expiration date. It is located on Page 1 in item number 5. If your document expires on or before 01/31/2009 and you plan to continue studying at CTC next semester, an extension of your Form I-20 is necessary at this time. You must apply for an extension BEFORE the expiration date of your I-20 to maintain valid immigration status.

If you are in academic classes or in ESL and would like to transition into academic classes, you will need to provide the following:

- A handwritten or typed letter to the director of I.S.S.O. explaining the circumstances that is preventing you from completing your program and why you are requesting an extension. The letter must be signed and dated.
- An unofficial transcript downloaded from WebAdvisor.
- A current degree plan marking the classes you have already taken. You may download it from [www.ctcd.edu/degree\\_plans.html](http://www.ctcd.edu/degree_plans.html).

Please contact I.S.S.O. at 254-526-1107 if you have questions about your I-20.





## Spring 2009 Pre-Registration

The Central Texas College Spring 2009 schedule bulletin is now available. Spring early registration (WebAdvisor) begins December 1.

Half hour appointments are still available. At each appointment you will need to show your passport, I-94, I-20, and pay for health insurance for the spring semester. Registration for the spring will not be granted until health insurance is paid for. HTH's spring semester price will be a total of \$164.00 for coverage from January 12 through May 8, 2009. Remember, you must pay by money order or cashiers check (no checks or credit/debit cards).



### What are the most frequent status violations?

By violating the requirements that govern your immigration status, you may jeopardize your ability to remain in the United States as a student or exchange visitor. Examples of violations include the following:

- Failure to enroll by the date specified by your school or exchange visitor program.
- Unauthorized employment during your stay.
- Failure to leave the United States following completion of your course, exchange visitor program, or program-related employment.
- For academic students (visa category F-1): Failure to maintain a full course load without prior authorization for a reduction from your designated school official.

Please note that this is not a complete listing of potential status violations. Check with your designated school official or exchange visitor responsible officer for more information.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/sevisfactsheet.htm>.

*“One pound of learning takes ten pounds of common sense to apply it.” - Persian Proverb*

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION**

**Question:** What do I need to do before I travel outside the United States?



**Answer:** First you must check your I-20 for a valid travel signature. Look at page 3 of the I-20 and check the date that the document was last signed for travel by the international student advisor. If the signature is more than 12 months old by the date that you plan to re-enter the U.S., please stop by the I.S.S.O. to have your I-20 signed before you leave.

We recommend that you get a new travel signature AND carry your immigration documents with you even if you are traveling WITHIN the U.S. anywhere close to the border, such as South Padre, Big Bend, South Texas, or Galveston. You could be stopped at an immigration checkpoint.





## Looking to Transfer to Another U.S. College or University?



TEXAS A&M

Before you decide which U.S. university or college you would like to transfer to, you will have to fill out an application packet for each school. Part of the application packet may include a form called a “Transfer In Form”. This form is from the university or college you would like to attend, and must be completed by the CTC international student advisor. This form takes into consideration your immigration status only; it does not have anything to do with the transfer of your academic record.

When applying to another U.S. college or university, speak to their admissions or international office about the required documentation.

- If they give you a “Transfer In Form”, bring this form to the CTC International Student Services Office after completing the student’s section.
- Let our office know that you want to transfer to another university or college. Also indicate if you want to come and pick up the form, or whether you would like it to be mailed or faxed directly to the institution to which you are applying.
- You may submit multiple Transfer In Forms; this does not mean you must attend the university or college for which we complete a form.
- Please note that this request will take the International Student Services Office three to five business days to complete.

Once you decide which university or college you want to attend, you will need to do the following:

- Bring your acceptance letter to the International Student Services Office.
- Complete our “SEVIS Release Form”, and let us know which date you would like your record to be released in SEVIS to the new institution. Please note that the release date cannot be before the end of the semester.
- After your record has been released in SEVIS from CTC to the new institution, contact the new school about your I-20. The new school will not be able to make an I-20 for you until after the release date.
- Speak to the new school about upcoming orientation sessions. Be sure to share any possible travel plans or concerns with them so they may counsel you appropriately.



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS IN AUSTIN

### Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee increase

On October 27, 2008, the U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS) increased the I-901 SEVIS fee for new international students and exchange visitors applying for F-1 and J-1 visas. Please note that this change only affects new F-1’s and J-1’s who have not yet paid the SEVIS fee, or students who have had a break in their F-1 or J-1 status after October 27, 2008. The new fee was raised to \$200 for F-1 students and \$180 for J-1 students. If you were a student prior to September 2004 when the fee was first implemented and have not had a break in your status, you are not required to pay the fee.

For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm>.





# Happy Birthday

## Academic Calendar Fall 2008

Monday, November 11

Veterans Day - College Closed

Friday, November 14

Last Day to Withdraw From a Course

Thursday & Friday, November 27-28

Thanksgiving - College Closed

Monday through Friday, December 8-12

Final Exam Week

Yoshimasa Komatsu - November 1

Ngoc Tran - November 3

Keiichiro Kakishima - November 4

Bek Bernar - November 5

Alberto Flores - November 6

Sunjo Yun - November 13

David Ramirez Castro - November 16

Priscilla Tole - November 25

Tik-Wan Cheung - November 28



## Fun Fact:

- The most familiar story of the first Thanksgiving took place in Plymouth Colony, in present-day Massachusetts, in 1621. More than 200 years later, President Abraham Lincoln declared the final Thursday in November as a national day of thanksgiving. Congress finally made Thanksgiving Day an official national holiday in 1941.
- Three towns in the U.S. take their name from the traditional Thanksgiving bird, including Turkey, Texas (pop. 465); Turkey Creek, Louisiana (pop. 363); and Turkey, North Carolina (pop. 270).
- According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the largest pumpkin pie ever baked weighed 2,020 pounds and measured just over 12 feet long. It was baked on October 8, 2005 by the New Bremen Giant Pumpkin Growers in Ohio, and included 900 pounds of pumpkin, 62 gallons of evaporated milk, 155 dozen eggs, 300 pounds of sugar, 3.5 pounds of salt, 7 pounds of cinnamon, 2 pounds of pumpkin spice and 250 pounds of crust.



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