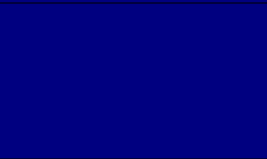


Johns Hopkins University
 The Office of International
 Student, Faculty & Staff
 Services
 Reed Hall, 1st Floor
 1620 McElderry Street
 Baltimore, MD 21205

The Global Connection

The Johns Hopkins International Society's Newsletter

April/May 2008



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Happy Spring!



The International Society is back in action

The Johns Hopkins International Society (JHIS) is the cultural outreach arm of the Office of International Services (OIS). Founded in 1959, the Society promotes international goodwill, helps international visitors establish social acquaintances, and provides programs for cultural, social, and educational exchange as well as sponsoring a variety of activities throughout the year. The OIS recently hired a new advisor for the International Society.

Dacia Gauer joined the Office of International Services as the International Services and International Society Advisor in March, just in time to attend the Easter Egg Hunt (see below). In this position, she will advise international students, faculty, and staff regarding their visa status and will work with the International Society to plan social and education events and programs.

A Maryland native, Dacia graduated from Loyola College with a B.A in History and received her M.A. in International Education from the School for International Training. She has several years of experience working with international students in higher education both in the U.S. and in Thailand, where she lived for three years.

Please stop by the Office of International Services on the first floor of Reed Hall to say hello and to learn how you can become involved with the International Society.

Familiar faces, new places



Florence Damiba was recently promoted to Associate Director of the Office of International Student, Faculty & Staff Services (OIS).

Originally from Burkina Faso, she began her career working for the Secretary General of the government in her home country. After taking a 10-year "break" to raise her children, she went to work for the African Development Bank in 1998. Then, in 2001, Florence came to Hopkins to work in the OIS as an Administrative Coordinator.

Florence brings her personal experience with immigration issues to her work at JHMI. From her own status as an H4 to

Legal Permanent Resident and finally to U.S. citizen, Florence understands what internationals are going through when dealing with U.S. CIS rules and regulations, "my own citizenship application was denied first so everyone in my family became a citizen before me even though I started the process first."

In her free time you can find her listening to music, cooking dishes from her native country, and reading. Florence enjoys classic American novels as well as "lighter" books such as mysteries and romance novels.

Easter Egg Hunt 2008



The Easter Bunny arrived early this year as The Johns Hopkins International Society (JHIS) hosted its annual Easter Egg Hunt at Decker Garden on March 22.

This wildly popular event typically involves over 100 children of JHU students, staff and faculty and special guests from the Kennedy Krieger Institute in a quest to find hidden eggs. This year was no exception—even the chilly March weather couldn't keep people away!

On hand as the Master of Ceremonies was Keith West, International Society President. He presided over the egg hunt, an egg toss (with raw eggs!) and hosted a relay race. There were plenty of prizes to go around and snacks were enjoyed by all!



Volunteer with the Johns Hopkins International Society



We are in need of help with:
planning and implementing events,
the newsletter,
ESL tutoring, and much more...

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Dacia Gauer at:

internationalsociety@jhmi.edu

We would like to thank Dr. Ken Taguchi for his recent "gift" to the International society!



Updates on Optional Practical Training (OPT)



On April 8, 2008 the Department of Homeland Security posted an interim final rule that changed the rules regarding Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT is a benefit F1 students may apply for following completion of their degree program, or while pursuing their degree program in some circumstances. This new rule is effective immediately and has provisions that will impact current students as well as those already on OPT.

Important provisions of this new interim final rule are below. If you have questions, stop by walk-in advising, or schedule an appointment with an advisor.

« **The acceptable time window for filing OPT has been extended to include the 60-day grace period following completion of studies.**

« Reporting requirements have been established for all students while on OPT. **All F-1 students on OPT are required to report to the OIS any change in name or address of your employer and any interruption of employment while on OPT.**

« **A student on OPT cannot have more than an aggregate of 90 days unemployment during the 12-month OPT period and still remain in legal F-1 status.**

« **In a limited number of circumstances, F-1 OPT may be extendable by 17 months**, for a total of 29 months of OPT, for certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) degree holders.

Determining if you are eligible for a STEM-based OPT extension: You must be currently participating in a 12-month period of OPT, working for a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your major area of study in one of the designated STEM fields. You must have a job or job offer from an employer registered with the E-verify employment verification system. OIS must recommend the 17-month OPT extension in SEVIS, after verifying your eligibility, certifying that your degree is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, and ensuring that you are aware of your responsibilities for maintaining your status while on OPT.

You will have to apply for the 17-month extension using the most recent version of the Form I-765 and other supporting documentation, photos, and fee.

Your employer must agree to report your termination of employment or departure to the OIS or through "any other means or process identified by DHS."

The following areas are on the [STEM Designated Program List](#):

Actuarial Science, Computer Science Applications, Engineering, Engineering Technologies, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, Military Technologies, Physical Sciences, Science Technologies, Medical Scientist

If you think you qualify, please contact the OIS for confirmation.



Do you have a question for an advisor regarding visa status or related issues?

Please send us your "Ask the advisor" questions at internationalsociety@jhmi.edu and we will publish them (and our responses) in future issues.



Upcoming Events



*Events in red are JHU events.

April

- 17—20** **JHU Film Festival.** Organized by The Johns Hopkins Film Society. Check the festival website for shows and times (<http://www.hopkinsfilmfest.com>), Shriver Hall. *Free for JHU students, faculty, and staff with a valid Hopkins ID.*
- 22** **Earth Day**
- 25—27** **37th Annual JHU Spring Fair** (<http://www.jhuspringfair.com>) Spring fun for everyone! Featuring live music, food, arts & crafts, a children's section, and local non-profits. Hours: Friday, 12pm-6pm, Sat. & Sun., 10am-6pm.

May

- 1—4** **Maryland Film Festival.** Check the website for the latest details. (<http://www.md-filmfest.com>)
- 4** **Baltimore Farmer's Market Opens.** Local fruits and vegetables, flowers, herbs, and more. Located underneath the Jones Falls Expressway at Holliday and Saratoga Street. Hours: Saturdays (through Dec 2008) 8am-12pm.
- 2—3** **Flower Mart.** Flowers, food, crafts, contests, and more. (<http://www.flowermart.org>) Located in Mount Vernon, around the Washington Monument. Hours 11am-8pm.
- 10** **Preakness Parade.** Downtown Inner Harbor along Pratt Street, begins at 11:00am.
- 11** **Mother's Day**
- 16** **77th Annual Turtle Derby.** This event is Hopkins' prelude to the Preakness. Come cheer on your favorite turtle in the courtyard of the Preclinical Teaching Building at 12:30 p.m. For more info, visit: <http://www.hopkinschildrens.org/news-room.aspx>.
- 17** **Preakness—Pimlico Race Track.** Purchase tickets and see the latest on upcoming pre-race events at www.preakness.com.
- 26** **Memorial Day**



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About our office...

Office of International
Student, Faculty, &
Staff Services (OIS)

Walk-in Advising

Monday and
Wednesday
1:00 p.m.—4:30 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday
8:30 a.m.—12 p.m.

Visit us on the web at:

[http://
www.hopkinsmedicine.
org/intlsvcs/](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/intlsvcs/)

The mission of the Office of International Student, Faculty, & Staff Services (OIS) is to:

Provide competent and professional service to international students, scholars, faculty, and staff at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions concerning U.S. immigration laws governing and/or regulating their stay in the United States.

Ensure that The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions maintains compliance with all applicable laws and regulations set forth by the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service (CIS), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Labor, and other government agencies pertaining to our international population.

Assist The Johns Hopkins International Society in promoting international good will, assisting international visitors in adjusting to life in Baltimore and the U.S., and providing for cultural, social, and educational exchange.

Support and engage in advocacy efforts at the institutional, local, national, and international level to promote the importance of international educational exchange.

Office of International Student, Faculty, & Staff Services

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