

MIE Minutes
MN State University, Edina
September 14, 2009

AGENDA

- Welcome by Henry Morris, MSU Executive Director of Off-Campus Centers
- Introduction new MIE board, new members, regional conference update, raffle announcement, other
- Networking Session/Icebreaker
- Update: SEVIS HQ/DHS issues by Bruce Gawtry, Immigration Specialist of The University of Minnesota and Macalester College
- Guest Speaker: Duane Pulford, IRS, US Bank Financial Center
- Immigration Update: Scott Borene, Attorney & President of Borene Law Firm
- Small Group Discussion: What do you hope to get out of MIE meetings this year?
- Announcements and Raffle

INTRODUCTION

- Tom Gjersvig introduces Henry Morris, Executive Director Off-Campus Centers. They call themselves a “site”, not a campus. They have been here since August 2008 and have started with 209 students, now up to 800. Undergraduate + graduate. Their goal is to have 1500 students. They don’t teach 100 and 200 courses. They have a partnership with Normandale which rents space from them.
- MIE board introduces itself.
- General intros of MIE members present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Regional conference update by Amy Vansurksun, NAFSA Region 4 MN Representative. The conference will take place in Rochester, MN, Oct 17-20. Pre-register by Oct 10. Great Pre-conference workshops. See online at <http://www.region4.nafsa.org/> . If you are a first time member, you receive a NAFSA membership discount. There are travel grants available. Please remember to make a donation for the MN state basket. ‘Rochester direct’ \$55 van tickets. Stops right in front of hotel.
- Raffle to encourage new MIE members to go to the regional conference.
- Sarah Ligday, who is filling in for Deborah at St Thomas, volunteers to be the MIE Webmaster!
- Membership list is outdated. Membership remains at \$25. Institutional membership is \$125.
- Strawberry allergy. Please put them aside at meetings.
- Addy Spitzer’s mom recently passed away. Card signing during the meeting.
- Deborah Knaust had a baby boy on June 20th, Nathan. They are currently in Switzerland. Deborah will be back at St. Thomas in mid-October.
- International student enrollment is down for private colleges. For community colleges the poor economy means high enrollment. Lower percentage of international students, though. A lot of Nepali students were denied visas. A lot of false documents.

- Public school enrollment: strong from China, down for other countries. Many people delay their enrollment by a year depending on the stock market.
- Fears about H1N1. Inform students about flu-shot.

ICEBREAKER

Cassie Bean from St. Thomas leads the icebreaker:

- introduce yourself and the institution you work for
- share an interesting fact about the country in which you have the most students come from

BRUCE GAWTRY

- Expects update from Sevis on liaison officer position. There's been a delay. Larry Minner (CBP DHS Officer of the Day) will do an update next meeting.
- New regs for 8CFR 214.2,3,4 : finished, being reviewed by DHS General Counsel's office. That's why they can't give us a date, but they should be done any time now.
- Recertification: No start date, just keep updating I-17 information. SEVP will try to coordinate it w/ Sevis II. They will also try to import information directly from other govt. agencies. Please participate in the Yahoo Sevis II group. There are 2 different ones (one is for Batch users). You don't have to be a DSO to join. Also: www.ice.gov/sevis/sevisii/
- There will be 2 Sevis sessions in Rochester (SEVP people from HQ). Records (screens viewable as read only) will show a red/yellow/green category for basic status in SEVIS; also students will be able to send questions to their DSO's about their status.
- DMV coordination- they want standardization. Domestic I-20 will be printable for states to view . New bill: PASS ID bill. Should ease the more harsh restrictions in the current REAL ID Act. 26 states dropped out of the real ID option already. The PASS ID will be usable to cross the border. Group updates/ mass updates will be allowed in RTI.
- "Transfer in" will start at the transfer in school.
- SEVIS II will implement DOS name change standards . 111 pages in the 9 FAM F 500 naming convention: some basics - FNU (first name unknown). No more hyphens, use spaces instead.
- See the July 2009 name migration and DMV fact sheets on ice.gov (SEVP section). Using passport and visa info as a base. Follow the visa sticker format to be consistent. People can have as many names as they want, but when it comes to immigration, it can lead to confusion. You need to be prepared to explain name difference between diploma and immigration. But there is no law against it.
- Student Records and Sevis Records: phase I of SEVIS II expected in the spring. Starting migration of data from SEVIS I to II to be ready for the Oct. 2010 changeover.
- I-515: POE's were not using updated version and they're being rejected. What about the ones that were already sent? What happens? Check with sevis.source2dhs.gov first but Bruce can call tier two if no returns.
- SSA: some delays on cards primarily due to late class start and POE delay of transferring info.
- OPT: tutoring is ok (min 20 hours a week in the field of study)
- E-verify: effective Sept 8 for federal contractors

- J1: new skill list (in effect 6/28/09)
- New EU pact in progress. Tougher immigration policies, including student policies.

DUANE PULFORD

- Presentation on Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) – (see Powerpoint presentation http://www.mn-mie.com/documents/ITIN_PPT-MIE_Meeting.ppt).
- They offer free tax advice and are always looking for new tax sites
- Get denial letter from SSN as 'proof'. Questions re scholarship – not work. They need an ITIN.
- Duane will get back to us if a letter from ISS office suffices. PAGE 4, F. Template will be on MIE website.
- What address should a student on OPT who moves back home use? They will send refunds to other countries. Or they can keep an account here (direct deposit) and close account later.
- Tax clearance document, commonly called a “sailing permit” or “departure permit”, final tax return from IRS: 1040; pertains to students who graduate in December before they get W2 etc. They create the return using pay statements. For more information go to www.irs.gov

SCOTT BORENE

- Scott won't be here in November. He will be in London at a conference.
- Fact sheet (Sevis website) preparing for Sevis II migration. http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/migration_factsheet.pdf
- Fact sheet on driver's licences (also on Sevis page) http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv_factsheet.pdf
- If a student's record is incorrectly terminated, contact the Sevis helpdesk.
- Dept of State passport office opened in Minneapolis. The U.S. State Department has opened Minnesota's first domestic passport issuance facility, located in downtown Minneapolis .

The Minneapolis Regional Passport Agency:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/about/agencies/agencies_4503.html

Location: 212 South Third Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55401

Hours: 8:30am to 3:00pm, local time, M-F, excluding Federal holidays.

Automated Appointment Number: 1-877-487-2778

Make reservations by phone. If traveling within 14 hours, you can get a passport.

- PR cases based on employment - 7 years backlog. Requires congressional legislation to fix. Results in 7/8/9 year H extensions.
- Service Center update: 3 step system nationwide: contact national service number. 1-800 is useless. They answer questions in a script. Write down their name, date and time of call, referral number. If more than 30 days go by, send email (USCIS website) . Step 3, send email to CIS headquarters.
- CIS met all internal milestones for name checks. 98% within 30 days. <http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/SCOPS%20Update%20Final0810.pdf>

- Premium processing was suspended, they brought it back (I-129's). For I-140's, EB2, EB3, but you can't get it for 2 categories. They send you something within 15 days (you pay \$1000).
- New director US CIS immigration service: Alejandro Mayorkas, Cuban immigrant. US attorney for 10 years in CA, 20 years of experience as a lawyer.
- H1 : still available!!! 20,000 available. Same # as 4,5 months ago. Is the economy that bad? If somebody is eligible, apply. Eventually the process will be harder and more expensive, so apply now.
- USCIS.gov website: re-evaluated their own website and created a new one. Starts Sept 22.
- Laptop searches from SEVP: new rules. CBP Supervisor needs to approve holding the device for more than 5 days. Searches are still authorized.
http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1251393255852.shtm
- H1: the labor certification system has been changed. iCERT (new system) is mandatory.
<http://icert.doleta.gov/> Labor certifications: instead of 90% of applicants knowing where they stand after 6 months, now 10% do. Politically driven decision.
- Legislature stuff: Janet Napolitano, DHS Secretary, met with immigration groups, US chamber of Commerce, Microsoft, etc. on Immigration Reform efforts. The press release says that they still care basically.
- ICE: Obama shifted the focus of the toughness. July 1, ICE: audits of 652 businesses audits. More than the whole year before. I9 inspection program. I-9 audits. Federal contractor schools need to be aware of this.
- Immigration still in top 3 priorities of Obama administration. Timeline has changed. Healthcare got stalled and is blocking CIR(comprehensive immigration reform). Immigration 'airplane' keeps getting other airplanes landing in front of it. Probably well into 2010 (spring).
- Religious worker visas: permanents (not ministers)- if you didn't file before Aug 30th, you got cancelled out, since the program expired 08/31/09 – the sunset date for non-ministers (SD). Temporary Rs : supposedly processing has been sped up. For R STUFF - ask George –staff attorney for Scott (go through Scott).

QUESTIONS:

- Where is Al Franken going to get seated? On the judiciary committee. Not armed services. Go to his website for more info.
http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/senators/one_item_and_teasers/franken.htm . Scott expects him to vote intelligently on immigration issues.
- OPT: What is volunteering in order to preserve OPT past 90 days (January MIE meeting)? It has to be documented (such as a signed letterhead statement) regularly – monthly, at least –for a minimum of 20 hrs/wk by the voluntary agency or the employer of the volunteer. Students can volunteer, in general, at any time – not just during OPT. They have to be true volunteers - not displacing somebody who could be a potentially paid worker. They can't replace a US worker unless authorized to work under OPT per DHS rules. Note: Grey area - there may be DOL labor law problems which may require payment. This issue has not been ruled on by SEVP HQ for OPT volunteers who are authorized to work. Also check the Dept of Labor page.
<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/esa/flsa/docs/volunteers.asp>
- Online work is considered employment. Any physical activity involving any kind of production or profit by a foreign person is potentially employment. The govt. assumes it is employment, until you prove it's an exception.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What do you hope to get out of MIE meetings this year and how can we assist each other?
Due to lack of time Luyen will send out an email to all MIE members and collect the responses to be discussed during the next MIE board meeting.

RAFFLE

Winner of raffle: Lois Ferris

Meeting Adjourned

Next MIE Meeting: Tuesday November 17, 2009 at St. Cloud State