ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
AND
STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE
Year: 2008

Area or Unit Name: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES
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Section 1. Goals and Accomplishments

Goal 1: Access and Diversity: Recruit, retain, and graduate a larger, more academically prepared, and more diverse international student body.
  - Surpassed the 500 plateau for new, first-time international students arriving during the year.
  - Attained the 110 country plateau of countries represented in the international student body.

Goal 2: Academic Excellence: Attain international recognition as a top public educational research university.
  - Obtained a 100% approval rate from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for employment-based immigration applications.

Goal 3: Engagement: Provide programs and services that disseminate knowledge and skills and that enhance the quality of life at the university, local community, region, state and nation.
  - Facilitated the nonresident income tax preparation program.
  - Presented 2 professional development workshops.
  - Presented 7 cross-cultural programs for the campus and community.
  - Facilitated 2 on-campus immigration information sessions.
  - Presented 58 employment rule sessions for international students.

Goal 4: Technology: Maximize the use of technology in the delivery of services.
  - Maintained a webpage to provide routine immigration information.
  - Maintained an electronic database to interact with the national SEVIS immigration system.
  - Maintained an electronic case management system for employment-based immigration of faculty and staff.

Goal 5: Partnerships: Build strategic partnerships and alliances with external entities.
  - Maintained the DSO Group for regular contact with University offices concerned with student immigration.
  - Cooperated with other University offices in facilitation of the New Student Orientation program.
  - Maintained connections with other University offices facilitating immigration data sharing across the campus.
  - Cooperated with other University offices in administering the International Student Insurance Program.
  - Maintained communications with the Office of Tax Compliance and Reporting for sharing data and information concerning nonresident tax issues.
  - Cooperated with other University offices in presenting cross-cultural events.

Goal 6: Human Resources and Infrastructure: Maintain a quality work force and work environment.
  - Maintained support of professional development for staff.

Goal 7: Tradition and Pride: Develop a national image based on Tech traditions and pride in achievements.
  - Provided introduction to Texas Tech in the New International Student Orientation program.
Section 2. Universal Quantitative Data

There are no Universal Quantitative Data for this area/unit.
# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

## Area/Unit Specific Information

### Section 3a. Quantitative Information

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Section 3b. Qualitative Information.

- Unit personnel attended 18 professional training sessions.
- Dawn Cepica, International Faculty Counselor, started service in the NAFSA Trainer Corps providing professional training on international scholar immigration and advising.
- Leslie Gipon, International Scholars Counselor, started service in the NAFSA Trainer Corps providing training on international student and scholar immigration and advising.
- Bob Crosier, Director, served as Chair of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Region III.
- Bob Crosier, Director, continued service in the NAFSA Trainer Corps providing professional training on student and scholar immigration, and international student advising.
Commentary:

The year 2008 for International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) was dominated by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, SEVIS, PERM, PIMS and other United States government programs impacting international students and scholars and universities, and by the chaotic state of immigration organization and processing in the United States. SEVIS, the national tracking system of students and scholars, has been in operation since 2003, but remains an electronic system under development requiring frequent changes and updates. Extensive revision of the rules for international student practical training in the spring of 2008 added new elements to the work of the office. This and other developments in international education create the fluid environment within which the unit must operate. ISSS, the University, and U.S. higher education in general continue to be challenged to reinvent effective approaches to free exchange of persons and ideas in international education exchange in a national setting dominated by security concerns. Personnel changes within ISSS over the past three years created a need for extensive professional training in both student and employment-based immigration and related issues. These changes also shifted ISSS from a major provider of training to a consumer of professional training within the field. Rapid change in the regulatory and procedural environment of international educational exchange will require a continuing emphasis on professional training and staff development. The trend toward greater demand for more labor-intensive and rigid employment-based statuses (such as greater demand for the H-1B and Permanent Residence as opposed to the relatively fast and easy J-1 Exchange Visitor Program) continued during 2008. Reactions to 9/11 caused a decline in the international student population at Texas Tech and at other institutions of higher education in the United States; however, statistics on the number of new, first-time international students arriving at Texas Tech during 2008 suggest a recovery from the post-9/11 period and a growing resurgence in the international student population at the university primarily at the graduate level. While this recovery is good news for international educational exchange, the continuing development and implementation of new security and surveillance requirements on international students and scholars imposes stress and limitations on the ability of the University and ISSS to provide a welcoming environment for these students and scholars. The continuing imbalance in the international student statistics favoring graduate students over undergraduate students raises concerns about the University’s ability to offer a diverse undergraduate student body.

Implementation Plan:

The work of ISSS will continue to be driven primarily by emerging policies and regulations of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Department of Labor, the Social Security Administration, and other federal government agencies. Frequent change in these systems for both student and employment-based programs are anticipated to continue. The impact of these emergent changes is unpredictable. Professional training of staff members during this period of on-going change will be the crucial component in efforts to fulfilling the mission of ISSS. Steps are also being taken to open additional staff positions to meet the expanding requirements of federal mandates. Continuing development and modification of electronic systems will also be essential in dealing with developments in federal mandates in international education. Homeland Security has announced its intent to move a new Student and Exchange Visitor data system during 2009 which will require extensive revisions in our systems and business practices. ISSS is also initiating recruitment programs to expand the number and diversity of international students at Texas Tech. At the same time, ISSS will endeavor to reestablish more cross-cultural and social services programs for international students and scholars. These programs have been eroded over the past decade as compliance with federally required security programs has come to dominate international educational exchange. Budgetary limitations leave few resources to apply to services and programs beyond those that are federally mandated. New sources of funding must be developed especially for scholar services, student orientation, and cross-cultural programming. Most services of ISSS are dependent upon the cooperation, input, and timely action of other offices and units of the University. Facilitation and maintenance of relationships with other units of the University must remain an overarching priority of ISSS.