

ISSS GLOBAL NEWSLETTER: TIPS FOR NEW STUDENTS

August 8, 2009

SUMMER GREETINGS!

The entire staff of the Office of International Student and Scholar Services hopes that you are enjoying your summer break. We are sending you a special “Tips for New Students” issue of the ISSS Global Newsletter.

TIPS FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

BANK ACCOUNTS

New students are advised to stop by ISSS, 210 Talbert Hall, North Campus for tips on opening bank accounts, maps to local banks and suggested questions to ask when selecting a bank. We have cooperative relationships with certain branches of Bank of America, HSBC, Key Bank and M&T Bank. These branches are accustomed to opening bank accounts for international students and streamline procedures for them. Please note that it is possible to open a bank account without a UB card, Social Security Card or even proof of address in Buffalo.

New students will be able to open bank accounts at Orientation Check-In on Sunday, August 23 (1:00-5:00) and Monday, August 24 (10:30-3:00). During those times, representatives from Bank of America, HSBC and M&T Bank will be in Knox Hall to assist students in opening bank accounts. The same bank representatives will return to campus to open bank accounts on Friday, August 28 (9:00-1:00) in Knox Hall.

There will also be two sessions during International Student Orientation on “Bank Accounts: What You Should Know.”

CELL PHONE ACCOUNTS

New students will be able to open cell phone accounts at Orientation Check-In on Sunday, August 23 (12:00-5:00) and Monday, August 24 (9:00-3:00). Representatives from AT&T and Sprint will come to Knox Hall to open cell phone accounts for new students. The same cell phone company representatives will return to campus to open cell phone accounts on Friday, August 28 (9:00-1:00) in Knox Hall.

Please note that students who do not have Social Security Cards and do not want to pay deposits will be able to open cell phone accounts at International Student Orientation.

There will also be two sessions during International Student Orientation on “Cell Phone Accounts.”

DRIVER’S LICENSES

International students can drive in New York State with an International Driver’s Permit and home country driver’s license as long as they are F-1 (or J-1) students and both the driver’s license and International Driver’s Permit are valid. New York State (NYS) law does not require international students to get NYS driver’s licenses as long as they meet the above-mentioned conditions. However, *we recommend that incoming students obtain NYS driver’s licenses because police officers often have difficulty determining if home country driver’s licenses are valid and request NYS driver’s licenses instead.* In addition, car insurance rates are lower if one has a NYS driver’s license.

Please note that, in order to apply for a NYS driver’s license, international students’ I-20 (or DS-2019) must show that they will enroll in a program that will last at least one year. They must also have at least six months remaining on their I-20 (or DS-2019) to obtain a NYS driver’s license.

There will also be a session during International Student Orientation on “How to Get a NYS Driver’s License”.

ESL COURSE REGISTRATION

New students who must take ESL courses in addition to their academic courses will be able to register for those courses starting on Sunday, August 23. Keith Otto, Program Director of ESL Programs, will be available to register students in their ESL classes and lift their language (“F”) checkstops during Early Orientation Check-In. For further information, new students should come to Knox Hall from 12:00-5:00 on Sunday, August 23.

H1N1 VIRUS

National and international media have covered the pandemic H1N1 virus. Symptoms of the H1N1 virus include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. If you experience these symptoms, we recommend that you stay home and avoid contact with others.

To protect yourself from H1N1, please follow these tips and suggest that your friends do the same:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Try to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night and eat a balanced diet.

For information about UB's preparations in case of an H1N1 outbreak, please visit emergency.buffalo.edu/index.php. Additional information about H1N1 may be found at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general_info.htm or www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html.

HOUSING: OFF-CAMPUS

In ISSS, Talbert Hall 210, North Campus and at Orientation Check-In, new students will be able to pick up some helpful brochures and handouts on off-campus housing. These handouts provide tips on where to look for off-campus housing, criteria to use in selecting an apartment, leases, etc. This information is also available at www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/offcampus.html.

SBI Legal Assistance will be open during International Student Orientation. New students are strongly encouraged to have their lease reviewed by an SBI Legal Assistance attorney in Student Union 377, North Campus before they sign it.

SBI Legal Assistance Summer Hours

Monday, August 24: 12:00-5:00

Tuesday, August 25: 12:00-5:00

Wednesday, August 26: 12:00-5:00

Thursday, August 27: 12:00-5:00

Friday, August 28: 12:00-5:00

NIAGARA FALLS TRIP

We will offer a Niagara Falls trip for new students on Saturday, August 29. In case some new students do not get a seat on the bus, we will offer a make-up trip in the future. Sign-up for the Niagara Falls trip will take place at Orientation Check-In. New students can also sign up at the Late Arrivals Table outside ISSS, Talbert 210, North Campus on Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27 (9:00-5:00).

ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

Campus Dining & Shops will offer a Job Fair on Wednesday, August 26 from 11:30-1:30 in Putnam's Food Court, Student Union. At the fair, new students who are seeking on-campus food service jobs can meet CDS managers and apply for available positions.

SHOPPING EXCURSION

New students will be able to shop for linens, toiletries, food, household items, clothing, etc. on Tuesday, August 25 from 6:00-9:30 p.m. ISSS will provide a bus to a local shopping mall and supermarket.

There will also be a session on “Shopping for Bargains” before the Shopping Excursion.

SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS

International students in F-1 and J-1 status must have written job offers and be registered as full-time students in order to apply for Social Security cards. To prove that they have written job offers and are registered as full-time students, the students will need two letters: one from a Designated School Official (DSO) in ISSS and another from UB’s International Employment Tax Unit. Please also advise new students that they cannot apply for a Social Security Card until International Student Orientation and until they are registered as full-time students at UB.

Any student who has a written job offer and needs to apply for a Social Security Card should attend one of the “Social Security Information Sessions” on Tuesday, August 25 or Wednesday, August 26 at 10:30 in Knox Hall 104. Then, s/he will be eligible to attend the Social Security Card Application Processing Session on Friday, August 28 from 8:00-1:00 in Knox Hall 20. There will also be a few “Make-Up Social Security Information Sessions” during the first week of classes (schedule available in ISSS, Talbert 210) and a Make-Up Social Security Card Application Processing Session on Thursday, September 3 from 12:00-3:00 in Student Union 145A, North Campus.

Note: Social Security numbers and cards were established for work purposes. Although Social Security numbers are not intended to serve as general purpose ID’s, most Americans have them and, therefore, many businesses request them. *If a landlord, bank or other business requests a Social Security card, new international students should simply state that they are international students and do not need Social Security Cards for those purposes. ISSS has prepared a letter to local businesses which explains this point. Please advise incoming students to come to ISSS, Talbert Hall 210, North Campus to request a copy of this letter if they are having problems with a local business provider.*

For further information about applying for a Social Security Card, please visit www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/sos.html.

SPEAK & TOEFL TESTS

New students who must take SPEAK or TOEFL tests will be able to do so during International Student Orientation. The TOEFL test will be given at 1:30 on Monday, August 24. The SPEAK test will be given to all graduate students who have been awarded graduate, teaching or research assistantships and graduate students whose departments require it. Sign-up for the TOEFL and SPEAK tests are required and will take place in Baldy Hall 320 on Sunday, August 23 (12:00-5:00).

UB CARDS

The UB Card Office will be open in the afternoon on Sunday, August 23 so that new students can get their UB cards during Early Orientation Check-In.

