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| SLCC Logo | International Student Services |
| 2019-2020 ANNUAL ASSESSMENTSUMMARY OF RESULTS |

# Project (Assessment) Title

International Student Services Registration Compliance

# College-wide Strategic Goal

Increase Student Completion and Secure Institutional Sustainability and Capacity

# Assessment Overview

International Student Services is tasked with maintaining institutional compliance for all international students. This means that our office is responsible to report all required data to the Department of Homeland Security as it pertains to international students on our campus. Some data is time sensitive and must be sent by a specific date each semester. One of these time specific events is the reporting of international student registration each semester. If we do not report a student’s registration on time the Federal Government will automatically terminate a student’s lawful presence in the United States. The student would be considered to be in the country illegally. Therefore, it is imperative that our office files the required data report accurately and on time each semester so that the student can avoid any unnecessary problems with their visa classification and study while in the United States.

Inevitably, each semester, there are always a few students who do not comply with the terms of their visa while studying at the College even though it is the student’s responsibility to maintain their lawful immigration status. International Student Services takes a proactive approach to help assist and educate international students with the terms of their visa classification. International Student Services provides a mandatory international orientation each semester that every new student is required to attend. During this international orientation international advisors review and remind the students about their responsibility to maintain their lawful presence as well as the terms regarding their immigration status. Our office also sends out frequent reminders each semester to provide helpful tips and next steps students can and should be taking so that they can maintain their lawful presence during their educational career in the United States.

This year our office decided to examine our processes in reaching out to notify international students for their semester registration event and see if by being more calculated and strategic in when these reminders were sent that there would be more students in compliance. Each semester International Student Services tries to communicate and remind students of their responsibility to register for the required number of credit hours so that our office can correctly report and register each student with the Federal Government. International students are required to take at least 12 credit hours each Fall and Spring semesters. If international students fall below this required amount of credits our office has the responsibility to report these changes to Homeland Security which could result in an international student’s immigration status to be terminated. Each semester there has always been a small number of students who do not comply with this important and required action. Each semester there has also been a small number of students who do not comply with the terms of their visa classification and have their immigration status terminated. This action results in having the international student begin accruing unlawful presence in the United States and could result in many more immigration problems if not corrected.

# Methodology (Plan/Method)

International Student Services decided to look at our current approach and try to improve upon what we were doing or not doing to achieve the desired results of having more students remain in compliance with the terms of their visa and lawful immigration status. (On a side note, we also thought that students with a GPA lower than a 2.0 were at more risk of not maintaining compliance and lawful presence.) For this assessment we will examine and compare the international enrollment data for Fall semester 2019 and Spring semester 2020 as well as the documentation being sent and communicated with students along with the time in which the messages were sent to the students. We will compare the data from each semester to see if our timely outreach has any effect on the number of international students who maintain compliance and lawful presence for registration reporting purposes.

As our processes for contacting international students in the past have not been calculated and strategic, we decided that we would compose some email messages that could be used each semester going forward along with a timeline as to when we would like to communicate with students. Michael Hasfurther, our Continuing International Student Advisor was tasked with preparing the email messages to be used. Samples are attached at the end of this document.

# Timeline

Fall 2019:

During the Fall 2019 semester messages were not uniform and were sent out sporadically to students. For the Spring 2020 semester we created messages that were uniform so we could reuse the message in the future as well as maintain more continuity in our communication with students. The Fall 2019 data was haphazard and inconsistent. We also did not retain this data as our assessment was assigned after the semester started.

Spring 2020:

We strategically reviewed the academic calendar along with our government reporting period deadline to determine the best days to reach out to communicate with students. As classes started on January 13, 2020, we decided that the best dates to reach out to students would be: 1. January 2, 2020 – This date was selected as most of our international students would be either in the United States or making preparations to arrive soon. For this communication we used the Fall 2019 Third Week Numbers Report. This date was a few days before our international orientation date of January 7, 2020. Furthermore, many of our new students will use this time to decide on their semester schedule and register for classes.

2. January 8, 2020 – This date was selected for the same reasons as above, but with the hopes of reminding students to register before classes filled completely and that this date was the second day of the required mandatory international orientation. This is the day that was set aside to advise students about their major and department as well as provide assistance with course registration with departmental and academic advisors. This would also give a reminder to students a few days before the last day to add classes so that they could change their schedule if necessary.

The Third Week Numbers Report is a document prepared by IT each semester by Patrick Chaffos. We receive reports from him during the start of the semester to calculate our student enrollment numbers. The Third Week Report is the official report that we use to indicate the international enrollment at the College. We also receive a First Day of Classes Report from which data was also used to reach out to students. We used the Fall 2019 Third Week Numbers Report to contact students who were registered for classes during the Fall semester but who may not have registered for any classes for Spring semester. We used the Spring 2020 First Day of Classes Report to contact all Spring semester registered students who were not in compliance with the required 12 credit hours to maintain their student visa classification.

The next dates for communication to students after classes began were January 14, 2020 and January 17, 2020. These dates allowed students to register before the add/drop period ended for students to meet the required 12 credit hour minimum. The last day to add semester length classes was January 22, 2020. For many international students it seems that their cultural adjustment to the U.S. Educational System would be improved with students taking advantage of the semester length classes rather than having a more intense experience with block classes. Our office first promotes the semester long classes over the block classes to provide a longer transitional period for student academic success.

We continued to contact students after the January 22, 2020 add period and began promoting second block classes to students in need of additional credit hours to maintain their lawful presence. The next date of contact to students was February 4, 2020. Second block classes started on March 9, 2020 and the last day to add classes for the second block classes was March 13, 2020. Our February date allowed us time to reach out to students and have them either register for classes on their own or to meet with an advisor for further assistance. On February 11, 2020 we began calling students who were deficient in required credit hours and remind them via phone of their responsibility to register for the required 12 credit hours and to see an advisor if necessary, so that they could maintain their status and lawful presence. On February 18-21, 2020 we sent staff out to meet students at one of their classrooms for which they were registered for a class to remind them of their responsibility to register for the required 12 credit hours so that they could maintain their lawful presence. February 24 – 28, 2020 was the Federal Government reporting deadline. Any student not registered for the required 12 credit hours would have their lawful status terminated and the student would be considered to be in the United States illegally.

# Results/Findings

Fall 2019 semester data:

Number of international students not registered for the required 12 credit hours on the first day of class: 54

Number of international students not registered for the required 12 credit hours on the third week: 7

(Not part of the assessment but interesting to see.) Number of international students not registered on the first day of classes for the required 12 credit hours and having a GPA below 2.0: 39

(Not part of the assessment but interesting to see.) Number of international students not registered by the third week of classes for the required 12 credit hours and having a GPA below 2.0: 3

Students terminated due to non-compliance for registration: 13

Spring 2020 semester data:

Number of international students not registered for the required 12 credit hours on the first day of class: 42

Number of international students not registered for the required 12 credit hours on the third week: 34

(Not part of the assessment but interesting to see.) Number of international students not registered on the first day of classes for the required 12 credit hours and having a GPA below 2.0: 7

(Not part of the assessment but interesting to see.) Number of international students not registered by the third week of classes for the required 12 credit hours and having a GPA below 2.0: 6

Students terminated due to non-compliance for registration: 14

We believe that results of the data indicate that the communication which was sent from our office to international students who were not registered as full time students with the minimum required 12 credit hours assisted in reminding them of their responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations pertaining to their visa classification while studying in the United States though the actual numbers did not appear to reflect any positive change from one semester to the next. It appears that our continued proactive outreach to international students did not assist in a higher number of international students being compliant with the terms of their immigration status and lawful presence in the United States. This could be contributed to the unique personality and behavior of individual students. While it is unfortunate to see that even with our more planned and strategic outreach to international students that there was a higher number of non-compliant students from Fall semester 2019 to Spring semester 2020. The actual number of students who were non-compliant with their semester registration was only one student higher in Spring from the Fall semester. It appears that as long as communication is being sent from our office to students that the majority of students will remember to comply with the requirements of the terms of their visa.

# Action Plan (Use of Results/Improvements/Call to Action)

It is recommended that our office will continue to strategically evaluate the best dates to send communication to international students prior to the add date for semester length and block classes deadline so that international students may take advantage of the opportunity to remain in compliance with the terms of their student visa. The College will remain compliant in terms of their authorization to admit international students with the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Department of State by submitting our required report by the deadline each semester with accurate data. The more students who remain compliant with the terms of their visa will have more time to focus on their educational goals and academic success by not having to deal with other problems and pressures associated with non-compliance and unlawful presence while studying on a visa in the United States. International Student Services will continue to evaluate and determine the best dates to send communication to international students each semester in a uniform and consistent manner and method to assist international students in reminding them of their responsibility to maintain compliance with all regulations pertaining to the terms of their student visa, especially the requirement to be registered with a minimum of at least 12 credit hours each fall and spring semesters, while studying in the United States, and reporting correct and accurate data so as to remain in compliance with the ability and continued authorization to admit international students to the College.

# Other Notes

Email message attachments:

Email message #1 Fall 2019:

Dear International Student,

Where are you? Why are you not registered for classes? Did you travel home? Did you get married?

Are you having medical problems? I am worried about you!!

As a condition of your F-1 student visa, you are required to be a FULL-TIME student. Full time

attendance is defined as having a minimum of 12 credits in each semester. You are receiving this email because you are not currently enrolled as a full-time student. Your I-20 is at risk for termination!! If your I-20 is terminated, your visa will become invalid and you will be in the U.S. illegally!!

Please take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of your I-20 by getting into classes as soon as possible!! It’s not too late to keep your I-20 active and stay in status.

1) Enroll in classes during the second eight-week block. Classes for the second block begin on

October 14th. Any 12 credits will be fine.

Please take care of your situation by getting signed-up for classes before the end of the month or submitting the proper application for Reduced Course Load (RCL). If you have any further questions about your current situation and how to avoid the termination of your I-20, please come visit an international advisor.

See you soon,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor

Email message #2 Fall 2019:

9-14-2019

Dear International Student,

As a condition of your F-1 student visa, you are required to be a FULL-TIME student. Full time

attendance is defined as having a minimum of 12 credits in each semester. Also, at least 9 of your credits must be taught in the classroom (not online). If you are auditing a class, those credits do NOT count towards the required 12 credit minimum.

You are receiving this email because you are not currently enrolled as a full-time student according to the guidelines above. Your I-20 is at risk for termination!! If your I-20 is terminated, your visa will become invalid and you will be in the U.S. illegally!!

Please take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of your I-20. This means you may need to enroll in additional credits. You should have at least 12 credits, and at least 9 of those credits should be taught in a classroom (not online).

You currently have only 2 options to stay in status this semester:

1) Get approved for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) this semester. RCL is granted to students with a current medical issue OR students who are in their last semester and are finishing up their

program.

2) Enroll in classes during the second eight-week block. Take enough credits to cover your current credit deficiency. Classes for the second block begin on October 14th.

Please take care of your situation by following one of the suggestions and notifying me of your action. If you have any further questions about your current situation and how to avoid the termination of your I-20, please come visit an international advisor.

See you soon,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor

Email message #3 Spring 2020:

Dear International Student,

As a condition of your F-1 student visa, you are required to be a FULL-TIME student. Full time attendance is defined as having a minimum of 12 credits in each semester. Also, at least 9 of your credits must be taught in the classroom (not online). If you are auditing a class, those credits do NOT count towards the required 12 credit minimum.

You are receiving this email because you under-registered for classes this semester. I know that some of you are wait-listed for a class or two. If this is your situation, please register for one or two “safety” classes just in case you do not get added into the class you want.

You might be eligible to take less than 12 credits in some special situations. For more information about how to qualify for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) please come to the ISS office and talk to an advisor.

The deadline to add classes this semester is January 22nd.

Protect your I-20!!

Best regards,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor

Email message #4 Spring 2020:

Dear International Student,

As a condition of your F-1 student visa, you are required to be a FULL-TIME student. Full time attendance is defined as having a minimum of 12 credits in each semester. Also, at least 9 of your credits must be taught in the classroom (not online). If you are auditing a class, those credits do NOT count towards the required 12 credit minimum.

You are receiving this email because you under-registered for classes this semester. I know that some of you are wait-listed for a class or two. If this is your situation, please register for one or two “safety” classes just in case you do not get added into the class you want.

You might be eligible to take less than 12 credits in some special situations. For more information about how to qualify for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) please come to the ISS office and talk to an advisor.

The deadline to add classes this semester is January 22nd.

Protect your I-20!!

Best regards,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor

Email message #5 Spring 2020:

Dear International Student,

As a condition of your F-1 student visa, you are required to be a FULL-TIME student. Full time attendance is defined as having a minimum of 12 credits in each semester. Also, at least 9 of your credits must be taught in the classroom (not online). If you are auditing a class, those credits do NOT count towards the required 12 credit minimum.

You are receiving this email because **you are not currently enrolled as a full-time student** according to the guidelines above. **Your I-20 is at risk for termination**!! If your I-20 is terminated, your visa will become invalid and **you will be in the U.S. illegally**!!

Please take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of your I-20. This means you may need to enroll in additional credits. You should have at least 12 credits, and at least 9 of those credits should be taught in a classroom (not online).

You currently have only 2 options to stay in status this semester:

1. Get approved for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) this semester. RCL is granted to students with a current medical issue OR students who are in their last semester and are finishing up their program.
2. Enroll in classes during the second eight-week block. Take enough credits to cover your current credit deficiency. Classes for the second block begin on March 9th.

Please take care of your situation by following one of the suggestions and notifying me of your action. If you have any further questions about your current situation and how to avoid the termination of your I-20, please come visit an international advisor.

See you soon,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor

Email message #6 Spring 2020:

Dear International Student,

Where are you? Why are you not registered for classes? Did you travel home? Did you get married? Are you having medical problems? I am worried about you!!

As a condition of your F-1 student visa, you are required to be a FULL-TIME student.

You are receiving this email because you are not currently enrolled as a full-time student and your I-20 is at risk of termination!! If your I-20 is terminated, your visa will become invalid and you will be in the U.S. illegally!!

If you are interested in remaining in legal status in the US, please enroll in classes during the second eight-week block. Classes for the second block begin on March 9th. Any 12 credits will be fine. Please take care of your situation by getting signed-up for classes before the end of the week (March 13th) or submitting the proper application for Reduced Course Load (RCL). Students who have not registered for classes or submitted the proper RCL application by March 13th will be terminated. Your I-20 termination date is scheduled for March 16th.

If you have any further questions about your current situation and how to avoid the termination of your I-20, please come visit an international advisor.

See you soon,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor

Email message #7 Spring 2020:

Dear Student,

Upon reviewing Salt Lake Community College student records as well as SEVIS I-20 records it has been determined that:

1. You are not enrolled full-time in classes this semester AND
2. You are not currently eligible to take a break

In order to maintain active status and stay in the US legally you must attend school full-time this spring. Please reply to this email before March 12th to discuss possible options for remaining in status. If you do not attend classes, this spring your I-20 will be terminated.

Once your I-20 is terminated you will be out of F-1 status and have 15 days from the date of your termination to depart the U.S. If you choose to remain in the U.S. longer than 15 days, you must apply for a change of status or reinstatement to F-1 status.

You may request reinstatement to F-1 status upon acceptance to another institution. You have five months from the date of your termination to gain acceptance to another institution and file the I-539 request for reinstatement. You will be out of status and illegally in the U.S. until your reinstatement request has been received by USCIS.

If you wish to avoid I-20 termination, please contact our office immediately.

Best regards,

Michael Hasfurther

International Advisor