April 2015

Published monthly by International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS), a division of the Office of International Initiatives, the International Services newsletter brings you updates on immigration rules and regulations, University services and programs, and conveys opportunities for campus and community involvement.

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1. iStart is Live!

We hope you have heard about iStart by now! Many of you have already begun using iStart to request various ISSS services or visa benefits. We’d love to hear your comments, good or bad. Just email us your thoughts at: isss@gsu.edu

To use iStart, all international students need to activate their Campus ID in iStart. To get started, please watch the introductory video here.

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2. Tax Reminder
Information on filing your U.S. and State of Georgia (if applicable) Tax returns has been posted on the ISSS website. This includes updated information about using Glacier Tax Prep (Federal tax return) and Sprintax (State of Georgia Tax Return). If you had no income in 2014, you only need to complete and mail in form 8843, which is free on the internet. Information was also sent to your GSU email on February 24th. Failure to complete and send in the correct tax forms could delay or complicate future applications for US Visas. The U.S. tax filing (all forms) deadline is: **April 15th by midnight**

For Tax information, click >> [here](#)

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3. ISAC Trip to Washington D.C. – May 5-9, 2015

![ISAC Trip to Washington D.C.](image)

**Trip details:**

**What:** Join ISSS for our annual trip to Washington, D.C.! This is a great opportunity to save money on hotel rooms and transportation, and to have a blast with other international students in the U.S. capitol city. Visit The Library of the Congress, Arlington Cemetery, Thomas Jefferson’s home (called Monticello), see the White House, the US Congress, the National Mall, and many free museums of your choice.

**When:** Tuesday, May 5 - Saturday, May 9 (leaving late afternoon after finals, back by Saturday late evening)

**Cost:** $225 - GSU students ($235 for guests and $250 for faculty/staff). Includes: transportation on a charter bus, 3 hotel nights, entrance to Monticello. By comparison, a trip like this on your own would cost approx. $550. Save 50% costs, and enjoy 100% more with ISSS.

**Registration is Open:** All participants must 1) [Sign up here](#) 2) pay their trip fees with [Touch the Earth](#).

**Trip Meeting:** All participants are required to attend a Trip Meeting. We have two meetings scheduled: Thursday, April 16 at 3:30pm or Friday, April 17th at 2:00pm. The meetings will be held in the Map Room – Sparks Hall 248.

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4. Applications Now Open for Need-Based Tuition Waivers

Georgia State University offers need-based, non-resident tuition waivers to qualified international students. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

a) Georgia State University 3.0 Grade Point Average
b) Previously enrolled at Georgia State University for a minimum of one academic year
c) Enrolled Full Time in a degree program
d) Must be within one academic year of completion
e) F-1 or J-1 Immigration status
f) Must demonstrate financial need, student self-help, and balance of awards from other sources
g) Students in academic programs that do not distinguish between in-state and out-of-state tuition (Intensive English Program, Global Partners MBA) are NOT eligible.

**Deadline to Apply:** Fall Semester - Monday, May 1st by 5pm. Please note that the deadline to submit applications for the Summer semester has passed.

Click [here](#) for the Fall 2015 application.

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5. **Employment Workshop Schedule**

ISSS offers small group employment workshops designed to answer common questions about applying for CPT and OPT. All workshops will be held in ISSS, Sparks Hall room 248 on the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>CPT (Part I)</th>
<th>OPT (Part II)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, April 13</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 22</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***PLEASE NOTE***

- Workshop completion is mandatory before you can apply for CPT or OPT.
- You can attend Parts I + II or just the section you’d like. ISSS recommends OPT applicants complete the workshop only in the semester you plan to graduate.
- There is no cost.
- A minimum of 4 students must sign up in advance, or the session will be cancelled.
- **Space is limited:** To register for an in-person Employment Workshop, please go log-in to [iStart](#) and click on “Session Sign-ups”.
- You may also complete an online workshop >> [here](#)

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6. **ISAC Final Dinner of the Year!!**

**What:** ISAC Pizza Party to close out the year! Come enjoy some pizza and music with each other!

**When:** Tuesday, April 5 @ 7pm

**Where:** Dahlberg Hall

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7. **Recap: ISAC Spring Break Trip!!**
The members of ISAC pictured above spent the week of Spring Break in Dade City, FL building a home through the Habitat for Humanity organization. Students were joined by GSU’s Official Ambassador, Mrs. Laura Voisinet, wife of GSU President, Dr. Mark Becker. A great time of service and fun were had by all.

**Interested in participating in next year’s Spring Break trip?**

Join an ISAC organization of your choice! [Sign up for the ISAC Newsletter](#) for updates on campus events for international students. For more info about ISAC, just click >> [here](#) or contact the ISAC Advisor, Mike Townsend at ctownsend@gsu.edu.

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8. **Travel Signatures**

**Are you traveling over the summer break?**

Don’t forget to get a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019. Travel signatures are valid for six months from the day that they are issued. **HOW?** Just log into iStart and fill out the Travel Signature Request e-form. When the form has been approved, you will receive an e-mail from the ISSS office. Then, bring your immigration document to the ISSS office during Walk-in Advising Hours for immediate signature. The 3-5 day processing period is no longer required if you do your part first in iStart. Make sure to submit the Travel Signature Request e-form at least two weeks before you intend to leave the United States.

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9. **Passport Expiration vs. Visa Expiration**

ISSS would like to remind students of the important *difference between the expiration of your visa and the expiration of your passport.*

**VISA:** Its purpose is entry into the United States. We often say that a visa is like a key that opens a door to a country. After entering the door, the key is no longer necessary unless you go outside and need to enter again. Once a student has gone through customs, the visa has served its purpose. If a student’s visa expires after they have entered the United States, this will not affect the student’s immigration status. A student will only need to renew their visa if they plan to leave the US after visa expiration.

**PASSPORT:** Students must maintain a valid passport at all times. A passport provides proof of your identity and citizenship in your home country. If your passport expires, you will not have a valid document to prove your national identity. This means that the student will no longer be in valid F-1 status, even if their visa and I-20 or DS-2019 is still valid. As a result, students must never allow their passport to expire. If the expiration date of your passport is approaching, please contact your home country’s embassy or consulate in the U.S. to ask how to renew your passport. Keep in mind that students are responsible for ensuring that their immigration documents are valid and up to date. If you have any questions regarding passport renewal or visa expiration, please contact ISSS at isss@gsu.edu.

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10. **Health Insurance Reminder**

United Healthcare Insurance (SHIP) was pre-paid for the summer semester and coverage is worldwide. Coverage continues until the 1st day of the fall semester. For more information of the student insurance plan and its coverage, click [here](#). Please note that no refund is possible for summer term if graduating and departing the United States at the end of this term.

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11. **Rec Center Events**

- **Panther Duathlon Challenge:** Tuesday, April 14th
  
  Join us for our first running and indoor cycling challenge at the Panther Duathlon Challenge! Free t-shirts are provided to all participants. The top male and female winner will be awarded a prize.

- **Rafting down wild and scenic Chattooga River:** April 24-26
  
  Take on the one of the most exciting rivers of the South, known for its thrill and natural scenery. Rafting experience is recommended, proficient swim ability is required. This trip includes transportation, rafting/camping equipment, four river meals, instruction, and guides. For more information, click [here](#).

- **13th Annual Recreational Services Golf Tournament:** Wednesday, May 20th
  
  Join us at Flat Creek Country Club! The proceeds from the tournament will be used to support the continual professional development of our student staff. More information will be available on our
website mid-April.

For more information on all events and programs at the Student Recreation Center, click here.

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12. Like ISSS on Facebook

FB is a major communications tool for ISSS. We have nearly 1200 likes, and we never post more than 2-3 times per day. All posts are designed to be helpful. For updates and information on future job opportunities, reminders, deadlines, events and more, just click the FB banner below. No student is required to use Facebook or any other social media; it’s your choice : )

For questions about any of the information mentioned above, contact:

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Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8:30am-5:15pm

Walk-in Advising Hours
Monday & Wednesday Mornings:
9am-11:30am
Monday-Friday Afternoons:
1pm-4:00pm