December 2014

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.

*********

CONTENTS:
1. Holiday Closing
2. 2014 Executive Action on Immigration Reform
3. Health Insurance Waivers
4. Employment Reminders
5. Spring Registration Reminders
6. Holiday Travel Reminders
7. AMIS – Christmas International House Opportunity
8. Tax Season
9. Spring Break Trip
10. Holiday Activities in Atlanta
11. ISSS Facebook – 1000 Likes Challenge

*********

1. Campus Closed for Winter Holidays

The ISSS office, along with all of Georgia State University, will be closed from December 20, 2014 through January 4, 2015. NOTE: This is 2 weeks! The University will return to normal hours of operation on January 5, 2015.

Please plan accordingly if you need advising before the two-week closure. The staff of ISSS wish you a safe and wonderful holiday and a prosperous 2015 solar new year!

*********

2. 2014 Executive Action on Immigration Reform

U.S. President Obama recently announced changes in US immigration regulations affecting all individuals in the U.S. who are not American Citizens. While the news is exciting, ISSS reminds you that only official regulations and guidance by USCIS can clarify these changes. USCIS has posted initial guidance at: http://www.uscis.gov/immigrationaction

ISSS advises you not to make any decisions based on speculation or rumors. Please contact ISSS if you have questions about this news.
3. **DEADLINE: Spring Semester Health Insurance Waivers**

   The period to apply for health insurance waivers for Spring/Summer 2015 has already opened. The deadline to apply for waiver is: **January 19, 2014**. To apply for the waiver, click >> [here](#).

   **NOTE:** If you were granted a Fall 2014 health insurance waiver, **you must re-apply** for Spring/Summer 2015. Waivers renewals are NOT automatic.

   If you have any questions regarding your individual insurance policy or coverage with United Healthcare, please contact them by email: customerservice@uhcsr.com or at: 866-403-8267.

4. **Employment Reminders**

   - **OPT (Fall 2014 Graduates):** If you plan to apply for OPT, remember you must apply before your 60 day grace period ends.

   - **Spring CPT:** Want to apply for CPT for the Spring? You still have time! The deadline to apply for Spring CPT is **Jan. 26, 2015**.

   - **Employment Workshops:** Remember that in order to apply for CPT or OPT, you must have attended an employment workshop within the past year. The employment workshops can be viewed >> [here](#).

5. **Spring Registration Reminders**

   - **DEADLINE:** Spring 2015 tuition and fees are due in full by 5pm on **Jan. 7, 2015**.

   - Late Registration: **Jan. 12 – 16, 2015.** (last day to add/drop classes). If you register for the first time during late registration, you will incur a $50 late registration fee. The late fee also applies if your classes are canceled for non-payment by the Jan. 7th deadline.

   - Late Registration tuition and fees are due on **Jan. 20th by 5pm**.

   - Classes begin on **Jan. 12, 2015**.

   If you need to request transcripts, enrollment verification, or any other document this year, make sure to do so before **Dec. 19th**, as these services will be unavailable during the winter break.

6. **Holiday Travel Reminders**

   - Planning on leaving the United States over the holiday break? Make sure that the travel signature on your I-20 is up to date. The travel signature page of your I-20 must have been signed within 6 months of the date of your return to the United States.
• **Travel Signature Day:** Dec. 8th, 2014. Stop by the ISSS office and an advisor will sign your travel page and immediately return your I-20 to you without the normal 2-3 day waiting period.

• If you do choose to leave the country over the break, please be sure to have the following documents with you upon reentering the United States:
  
  ✓ Your I-20 or DS-2019 with recent travel signature (no older than 6 months)
  ✓ Unexpired passport (valid for at least 6 months into the future)
  ✓ Valid F-1 or J-1 visa
  ✓ Copy of your GSU enrollment verification for Spring 2015
  ✓ Copies of your financial documents
  ✓ EAD card and employment letter (applicable for students on OPT)

If you have a paper I-94 card in your passport, please remember to surrender it to the airline gate agent upon departure from the U.S. You will be issued an electronic I-94 record and number when you re-enter the U.S. To obtain your electronic I-94 record and number, visit [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94) after you have returned.

*******

7. **AMIS – Christmas International House Opportunity**

   Need a family connection or a place to live during the Winter Break? Want a unique, cross-cultural, international opportunity you will never forget? The Christmas International House is open Dec. 18, 2014 – Jan. 2, 2015 and is open to everyone, regardless of religious tradition!

   For all the info, click >> [here](#)

*******

8. **Tax Season**

   With the end of the tax year approaching (midnight on Dec. 31st, 2014) the season when we report our income (tax filing season) will soon arrive. The American government requires all individuals to submit their tax information by midnight on April 15, 2015. ISSS will provide more details in 2015.

*******

9. **Spring Break Trip**

   **What:** Have you made plans for spring break? Join ISAC for an amazing service project opportunity! Participants will work with Habitat for Humanity to make a difference in a family’s life by building houses. Work side by side with the local homeowner and know that you will have helped change someone’s life for the better. No construction experience is required, just a passion for exploring new places and an open heart and mind. It’s a great opportunity to see a new state, develop friendships, and make a difference!

   **When:** March 15-21, 2014

   **Where:** Dade City, FL near Disney World! We will work hard but also have time to explore Tampa/Orlando and spend a day at the beach!
Our Christmas celebration meal will be Thurs., Dec. 25 and include traditional items, like: turkey, several vegetable side dishes and desserts. We have room for 5 students. The first 5 to register are welcome! It's

Estimated Cost: $180. The application and initial deposit of $30 is due Jan. 30, 2014. For more information sign up >> here or contact Mike Townsend at ctownsend@gsu.edu.

**********

10. Holiday Activities in Atlanta

If you plan to stay in Atlanta over the winter break, here are some activities you can enjoy over the holidays:

- **Go ice skating at Centennial Park.** Cost is $9 per person with college student ID for 90 minutes of skate time on Mondays and Tuesdays. The rink is open daily through Jan. 19, 2014. Please note credit card payments are not accepted. For more info, click here.
- **Walk through the Holiday in Lights at Centennial Park.** The park is open daily to view the lights from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., including Dec. 25th (Christmas Day). Admission is free. For more information, click >> here.
- **Georgia State Night at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens on Dec. 4th.** Free shuttles will be provided to the Botanical Garden from the Student Center and back from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets on sale on the third floor of the University Center until 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4th ($5 for students, $15 for non-students). To learn more about the exhibit, click >> here.
- **Visit Santa Claus, or go ice staking in Atlantic Station.** For a full calendar of events, click >> here
- **See the Winter Wonderland cultural exhibition at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History.** This exhibition features cultural displays of various holiday traditions around the world, and is open through Jan. 11, 2015. Admission is $17 with student ID.
- **Drive through the Lights of Life at Life University.** Located on the campus of Life University in Marietta, the display is open at 6:00 p.m. every night through Dec. 31st. Admission is $10 per car Dec. 19-31, and $5 per car all other days. A petting zoo, train and pony rides, and photos with Santa Claus are also available on weekends.
- **See the Atlanta Ballet’s Nutcracker at the historic Fox Theatre.** Running through December 28th, this holiday tradition features exquisite dancing and a thrilling trip into the Sugar Candy Kingdom. Tickets start at $20.

**********

11. ISSS Facebook - 1000 Likes Challenge!

We are now up to 975 likes! Thank you!!

Every new FB “like” between 900-1000 will be entered for chance to win a fabulous gift basket containing gift cards, coffee, tea, food items, GSU apparel and many other items. There will be a special surprise when we reach 1000 likes! You can “like” us by clicking >> here.

**********

12. Invitation to Traditional Christmas Celebration

Interested in joining an Atlanta family for a traditional Christmas Dinner? Please see the invitation below from Karin Stern.

*Our Christmas celebration meal will be Thurs., Dec. 25 and include traditional items, like: turkey, several vegetarian side dishes and desserts. We have room for 5 students. The first 5 to register are welcome! It's*
really wonderful to experience how people from different backgrounds and cultures enjoy this shared tradition. For Steve and me, it's always one of the highlights of our year! Thanks you, and enjoy the holidays!

**Arrive:** 4:30pm – 4:45 for social time

**Begin Meal:** 5:30pm

**End time:** 7:00pm

**Cost:** Free

Register here and we will confirm your spot with more information and directions as soon as possible.

***********

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

International Student & Scholar Services
Office of International Initiatives
Georgia State University
252 Sparks Hall
404.413.2070 (phone)
404.413.2072 (fax)
www.gsu.edu/isss

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

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