

## INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

### VISA WAIVER PROGRAM UPDATE

Effective in January 2009 citizens or nationals from **ALL** Visa Waiver Program countries will be required to obtain an approved travel authorization via ESTA in order to be eligible to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. In order to apply for an ESTA, travelers must go to <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>, follow the instructions to answer all of the required questions, and submit an application for travel authorization. Travelers will not be able to submit ESTA applications at a U.S. port of entry or a U.S. embassy or consulate.

International students and scholars should NOT enter the U.S. under the VWP while they are employed, conducting research or studying at UNLV, because in most cases it will cancel their visa status! Always check with an OISS advisor before you travel outside the U.S. to make sure you have the appropriate travel documents.

### TAXES, TAXES, TAXES! FILE YOUR TAXES BY APRIL 15, 2009

Even if you did not earn any income in 2008, you are still required to file taxes in the United States. UNLV has free tax software for international students and some international scholars. For more information, please contact Debbie Honrath at [nraassistance@unlv.edu](mailto:nraassistance@unlv.edu) or 895-0872. Her walk-ins are Tuesday and Thursday 10 - 12, Wednesday and Friday 11 - 1. NOTE: Debbie Honrath has temporarily moved her office to CDC Building 2.

Getting your W-2: If you worked at UNLV at any time during 2008, UNLV has mailed you a W-2 form. You need the W-2 form to file your taxes. If you were on a tax treaty for your wages, or you had taxable scholarships for 2008, you will also need to get a 1042-S form to file your taxes. Look at your UNLV payroll check stub and make sure that it has your current mailing address. If you need to report a change of address, contact the UNLV Nonresident Alien Tax Specialist – Debbie Honrath. Failure to report your change of address could result in a delayed W-2 and/or 1042-S. You may access EQUUS through the UNLV Human Resources website (<http://hr.unlv.edu/>) to update your employee address, print out your W-2 form, change your direct deposit, and view your employment records. The annual W-2 is available on EQUUS by February 1st of each year. To access EQUUS, you will need your UNLV Employee Identification Number (printed on your payroll stub) and UNLV PIN, or password. If you do not have a PIN or password to access EQUUS, call Human Resources at 895-3504. Form 1042-S was mailed by the Nonresident Alien Tax Specialist the week of February 2, 2009.

### BEWARE OF H-1B SCAMS!

We have received recent reports of fake companies offering to file H-1B applications for a fee. Filing a fake H-1B is fraudulent and one risks being deported or barred from entering the US by doing so. Please do not take these risks!

### TRAVEL TO MEXICO

The US Department of State has issued a travel warning to Mexico due to increasing violence especially among the border cities. Please view the warning if you are considering travel to Mexico. [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_3028.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_3028.html)

US Consulates in Mexico are no longer considering issuing visa stamps that would effectively change one's US immigration status.

#### SPRING BREAK INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

If in J-1 status, please remember to check that your DS-2019 form has been endorsed for travel within one year of re-entry date. You also must have a valid visa stamp and always make sure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months into the future from entry date. Your I-94 card should always state, "J-1 D/S." Please make sure that it does before leaving the counter at Customs and Border Protection. That is the time to fix it if they have incorrectly marked your card.

If in H-1B status, please remember to bring your original H-1B approval notice. You also must have a valid visa stamp and always make sure that your passport is valid for at least 1 year into the future from entry date. We recently had a case where Customs and Border Protection shortened the H-1B validity period to coincide with the expiration date on their passport. Your I-94 card should always state "H-1B (date that coincides with the end date on your H-1B approval notice – or 10 days into the future of the end date on your H-1B approval notice). Please make sure that it does before leaving the counter at Customs and Border Protection. That is the time to fix it if they have incorrectly marked your card.