

CIPRIS: Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students



October 2000

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

www.aacrao.org

PLEASE NOTE

- The following general information is provided for AACRAO members' professional development. Institutions are strongly encouraged to develop any campus policies through consultation with legal counsel.

Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students (CIPRIS)

- Partners: Departments of State and Education, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Consular Affairs Office and Exchange Visitor Program (formerly USIA), schools, colleges, universities and exchange visitor programs.
- An international student tracking system mandated by IIRIRA, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (P.L.104-208 sec. 641)

OBJECTIVES

- To move from paper documentation to Web-based exchange between colleges and federal agencies (in real time)
- To enable a universal Web-based system to update and verify international student and scholar visa status with INS
- To standardize international student admissions globally

Pilot Program - Jan '98-June '99

- 22 schools in the southern region of the U.S. took part in pilot to test ways to collect and maintain information on international students
- CIPRIS is not in place yet except at these schools; pilot participants have said CIPRIS represents a more efficient means of reporting relative to the paper process

Event Notifications to be Reported to INS

- ‘Events’ must be reported for F-1 (students), J-1 (students, scholars, specialists, teachers, trainees, other participants in EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAMS), M-1 (technical and trade school students) visas
- Events include:
 - Consular Affairs office and Exchange Visitor Program Category Change (J-1 only)
 - Int’l School Officer Recommendation for Hardship Employment (F-1 only)

(cont’d)

Event Notifications to be Reported to INS (cont'd)

- Int'l School Official Recommendation for Optional Practical Training
- Change in Financial Data
- Transfer in & Transfer out
- Termination of Program, including reason
- Int'l School Official Recommendation for Reinstatement
- Int'l School Official Correction of Technical Violation

TECHNOLOGY - Act Now!

- Assess existing software and vendor (such as campus-wide data sharing system, ie., Banner/PeopleSoft, SAP), and notify vendor of CIPRIS
- Assess technology costs to implement new Web-based reporting system (though institutions need only have access to a Web browser, additional equipment may be needed for personnel)
- IT personnel must foster data exchange b/t departments: registrar, admissions, international student office, enrollment, employment

COLLECTION OF THE INS FEE

- IIRIRA identifies colleges as collector of the fee that will be remitted by foreign students and scholars and forwarded to INS to pay for the costs incurred by the Service. A proposed regulation issued by INS in Dec. '99 requires the campus collection on campuses.
- AACRAO and other higher ed. assn.'s opposed the rule and worked with INS on an alternative
- We await president's signature to legislation that would either 1) repeal the college fee collection (an amendment to H.R.3767), or 2) repeal the entire program (an amendment to H.R.4690).

REASONS AACRAO OPPOSED CAMPUS FEE COLLECTION

- Practical concerns: If colleges fail to collect the fee, the school could be held accountable for the foreign student's neglect to pay.
- Philosophical concerns: Institutions of higher education have never acted as deputies of the federal gov't; it is inappropriate for INS to require them to do so.
- Inefficiency: INS and State Dept. collect all other fees from nonimmigrants; why not add another?

STAFFING ISSUES

- International student/scholar office must be involved in all academic/employment status of int'l students and scholars
- Communication b/t ALL academic and administrative office directors is CRITICAL so that int'l students/scholars maintain lawful enrollment status and employment

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

- Identify whether the Admissions Office, Registrar or International Student/Scholar Office issues initial F-1, M-1 and J-1 visa documents
- Identify campus official who issues subsequent visa documents for extensions, transfers, other benefits
- Ensure that communication between offices involved is reliable and consistent
- Network all visa documents into a single database; if this is not possible, determine how to pull info. together electronically/manually to report to INS

DATA SHARING B/T INT'L OFFICE AND REGISTRAR

- If international student info. and visa status is in registrar's d-base, visa status must be periodically verified with International student office
- Institute a **BLOCK before** CIPRIS implementation so int'l students cannot drop below a full course load without permission of Int'l student office
- Registrar must notify international student office **AUTOMATICALLY** if a student terminates/withdraws/alters enrolled student status

INSTITUTIONS ARE LEGALLY LIABLE

- Int'l students cannot:
 - manage their GPA or vary course load
 - work more than 20 hours/week while school is in session
- Scholars cannot be employed in activity not specified in visa document status
- Institution is liable if its int'l student/scholar engage in unlawful employment; FINES/sanctions will be imposed by INS; since both paychecks and visa documents held by school, institution is in a position to control unlawful employment/visa status
- No transfers without federal approval are allowed

CIPRIS and FERPA

- FERPA, the law regarding student privacy and the release of student records, does not apply to nonimmigrants for the purposes of IIRIRA; disclosing student information with federal agencies as mandated by CIPRIS is allowed. FERPA otherwise applies to international students as for U.S. citizen students.

Who To Call About CIPRIS

- The Immigration and Naturalization Service is implementing the project. The INS contact is:
 - Andrea Pierce, 202-514-5791
- AACRAO's contact person for CIPRIS is:
 - Jacque Gourley, 202-263-0282