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MEMORANDUM

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To: International Education Program Administrators

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1) Oh Where Oh Where has My ELIS I-539 Gone?

On June 16, USCIS announced that it had stopped accepting electronically filed forms I-539 (Applications to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status and Motions to Reinstate). Pending or draft cases created before June 15, are not affected. USCIS explained that as the paper I-539 had been updated recently, it wanted to ensure that the paper and electronic versions of these forms are consistent until the updated electronic form is developed. At this time, only the paper I-539 will be accepted, USCIS did not provide any timeframe for the introduction of the new electronic form. The USCIS announcement may be found [here](#).

2) DOS Announces Visa Systems Back Online

On June 29 the Department of State announced that all nonimmigrant visa issuance systems have been restored and that backlogs should be addressed by early next week. Between June 9 and June 19 DOS nonimmigrant visa issuance systems had been down and 335,000 visas were stuck in clearance. As of June 29, 300,000 of those nonimmigrant visas had been printed. However, applicants who had been turned away during the outage may not yet have been rescheduled. No analysis of visa types caught in the delay was provided. DOS stated that it would try to address "urgent" cases.

3) STEM List to Grow a Few Flowers

At a Liaison meeting held on January 20, 2015 between ICE and AILA, ICE stated in regard to STEM:

[Q]: Please describe the process by which ICE determines which degree programs should be on the STEM Designated Degree Programs List. Although a number of medical, pharmaceutical, and veterinary degree programs are on the STEM list, those for pharmacists, dentists, physicians, and veterinarians are not. Please explain why those degree programs have not been included.

[A] In light of Secretary Johnson's November 20, 2014 memorandum entitled, *Policies Supporting U.S. High-Skilled Business and Workers*, ICE is currently working on revisions and plans to introduce a new and improved version in the next few months.

ICE did not discuss the role of the Department of Education in making decisions as to what programs are listed on the STEM Designated Degree Programs List.

4) CBP Intends to Expand Preclearance to 10 New Countries

For many years, CBP has had preclearance posts in many airports across Canada, as well as in Dublin and Shannon in Ireland, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Aruba, the Bahamas and Bermuda where foreign travelers are precleared for entry into the US prior to their journeys. On May 29, DHS announced that it is “seeking to enter negotiations to expand air preclearance to nine other countries including: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the UK. Preclearance will cover all immigration, customs, agricultural, and security issues. The potential countries have already expressed interest and have been evaluated by CBP, TSA and the State Department. The airports involved sent nearly 20 million passengers to the US in 2014. Preclearance is expected to lessen pressures on US ports of entry. The notice may be found [here](#).

5) Vermont Service Center Schedules Annual Stakeholder Event

The Vermont Service Center announced that its Annual Stakeholder Event will be held on Friday, September 18, 2015. Topics or themes are being accepted by email at VSCCommunityEngagement@USCIS.dhs.gov.

6) White is the New Yellow

On June 30 VSC advised that "due to processing changes" RFEs will no longer be printed on yellow paper - but as of July 6, will be printed on white paper. Previously, RFEs had been printed on blue paper before the switch to yellow. Colored paper was used so that RFEs would not get lost in the VSC mailroom. No substantive reason was provided for the redecoration.

7) I-566 Revision Gets 30 day Extension

The “Federal Register” of June 17 carried a “30 Day notice” from USCIS that allows an additional 30 day period until July 17, 2015 to file public comments regarding Form I-566, “Inter Agency Record of Request A,G, or NATO Dependent Employment Authorization or Change/Adjustment to/from A, G or NATO status”. In the higher education context, this form is generally seen with diplomatic dependents changing to F-1 status or obtaining a greencard. USCIS advised that there are 5,800 respondents.

8) TPS Extended for Somalia

The “Federal Register” of June 1, carried a “Notice” that TPS for Somalia is being extended for an additional 18 months effective September 18, 2015 until March 17, 2017. Those seeking to extend have a 60 day window from June 1, through July 31 to do so. With some exceptions, all re-registrants must have resided in

the US since May 1, 2012 with physical presence since September 18, 2012. There are approximately 270 current Somali registrants who are expected to re-register.

9) TPS Designated for Nepal

The "Federal Register" of June 24, carried a "Notice" from USCIS that TPS is being designated for Nepal for a period of 18 months effective June 24, 2015 through December 24, 2016. Nepalese citizens may apply for TPS if they have resided in the US since June 24, 2015.

A 180 day registration period will close on December 21, 2015. USCIS estimates that there are 10,000 to 25,000 citizens of Nepal who are eligible for TPS both in lawful and unlawful status.

According to the *NAFSA.news* of June 30 SEVIS is planning to provide "special student relief." No details were provided.

10) TPS Initial Registration Period Extended for Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone

The "Federal Register" of June 25, carried a "Notice; extension of registration period" extending the deadline of the initial registration period from May 20, 2015 until August 18, 2015 for nationals of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone to register for TPS. Registrants must demonstrate that they have been "continuously residing" in the U.S. since November 20, 2014 and "continuously physically present" since November 21, 2014. Further, Liberians presently in Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status may also apply for TPS. The original TPS registration period was for six months and has now been extended for an additional 90 days. The "Federal Register" Notice may be found [here](#).

Please let us know if you have any questions, or if you would like copies of any of the materials covered.

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