

Governmental Roadblocks Are No Match for the Office of International Affairs

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eventually to obtain resident status.”

In the end, his family was able to stay together and he now does internationally recognized research. Also, patients at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center benefit from his special expertise in preventing hospital-associated infection.

Valencia's persistence pays off in bringing the “the best of the best” students and researchers to all parts of the UT Health Science Center. And, after a successful stay here, they return to tell others about their positive experience. That, says Valencia, is the best marketing that UT could receive.

“Our university has benefited greatly from her dedication and her skill during these troubled times, keeping alive our commitment to serve as a home to international scholars and supporting our commitment to pursue science with colleagues drawn to Houston and the health science center from around the world,” says Peter Davies, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice president for Research.

What Have Rules Got to Do with It?

The top major goals or responsibilities for the office are and will continue to be: compliance with federal, state, local and foreign regulations and policies; immigration expertise and service; and, cross-cultural programs.

Some of the major undertakings of the Office of International Affairs over the last years have been to ensure compliance with the U.S. federal regulations and institutional policies including, but not limited to those dealing with Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS): electronic and timely reporting on all F and J students and scholars as well as dependents to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State; on-site audits; recertification required every two years; and loss of ability to sponsor F and J visas if found to be non-compliant.

Such a loss would have a serious impact on both new and current F international

students and their dependents as well as new and current J-1 Scholars and their dependents. For this reason, compliance has been and will continue to be a primary priority for the Office: Department of Homeland Security regulations and policies; Department of State regulations and policies; Department of Labor regulations; immigration reform and control; the U.S. Patriot Act; and Social Security Administration policy and regulations.

Those regulations and policies continue to significantly increase institutional compliance requirements the volume of consultation with internationals and programs, processes, and paperwork ensuring eligibility for visa status; mandatory reporting requirements; education regarding visa restrictions, limitations and options; and enforcement of bars to international visitors seeking entry or return to the United States.

In addition, the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor and Department of State continue to

publish new policies and procedures that have a direct or indirect impact on the institutions and visitors. As policies and regulations are published, the Office of International Affairs sends out written and electronic communication; conducts Open Forums and teleconferences; and conducts one-on-one meetings with students, faculty and administration.

The institution's need for the immediate services of highly skilled international visitors continues to significantly increase the need to provide excellent immigration expertise and service.

Failure of compliance reporting with or appropriate documentation could result in: loss of ability to sponsor non-immigrant and permanent visas; loss of federal funding; financial penalty to the institution(s) and/or visitors; inability for a visitor to enter the U.S. temporarily or be barred for three years, 10 years, or permanently; and proceedings to remove a visitor from the U.S. Contact, <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/intlaffairs/>; 713-500-3176. ★



1) The Generalists

L-R, Mary Moore, Bronwyn Steward and Lucy Carter are members of the General Section of the International Affairs Office. They facilitate visa clearances for visitors who are permanent residents of the U.S., pending permanent residents, and holders of non-immigrant visas which do not fall in the other areas of service. In addition, members of this section facilitate visa extension applications for international medical patients who need more time in the U.S. for medical treatment and family members accompanying them.



2) Manager of Advisor Staff

Federico Rodriguez oversees the day-to-day operations of the Advisor Staff in addition to processing O-1 and Permanent Visa sponsorship applications.

3) J Advisors

Rachel Clements, right, is moving from work as a Student Advisor to a J Advisor, where she will work with Priscilla Mendez, left. Carol Hernandez not pictured.



4) H Advisors

Shannon Adams, center, is moving from a J Advisor to an H Advisor. He is pictured with his new colleagues, John Yoon, left, and Karen Oandasan, right. He is training in the H area while continuing to perform his duties as a J Advisor.

Student Advisors

Tiarsa Carter, not pictured.



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 15 - MARCH 14

For more information on these or other upcoming events, visit <http://www.uthouston.edu> and click on the link to the university's online calendar.

February

- 15 – “The Problems of Applying Do Not Resuscitate Orders and Living Wills in Emergency Situations,” by Brent King, M.D., interim chief operating officer of the UT Health Science Center and former chair of Emergency Medicine, **noon**, Medical School Building, Room 1.006.
- 16 – “Disentangling the Health Hazards of Complex Mixtures of Air Pollutants,” by Joe Mauderly, D.V.M, vice president and a senior scientist of the Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute, **noon**, School of Public Health, Room 102B.
- 19 – Presidents Day (full closure holiday).
- 28 – Employment Policies, Human Resources course for all, **9 a.m.-noon**, Sarofim Research Building, Room 108.

March

- 5-8 – Spring Institute of the Southwest Center for Occupational and Environmental Health of the School of Public Health (SPH), **8 a.m.-5 p.m.**, SPH.
- 7 – Samurai Leadership: No Fear Leadership, Human Resources course for all, **9-11:30 a.m.**, University Center Tower, Room 1505C.
- 9 – Spring Break (skeleton crew holiday).
- 12 – “The Controversial Role of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Medicine,” by Howard Brody, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Institute for Medical Humanities at the UT Medical Branch at Galveston, **noon-1:30 p.m.**, Medical School Building, Room 3.001.

Stars

Students

In 1946, Houston citizen Rosalie B. Hite left her entire estate to establish a fellowship program for cancer research. This award includes a stipend of \$25,200 per year, tuition and fees, and a single travel allowance up to \$850 for each student to present his or her research at a national meeting. The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences recipients for 2006-2007 are:

- ★ Hannah Cheung
- ★ Yumin Hu
- ★ Shannon Kidd
- ★ Stephen Kry
- ★ Taichun Qin

Correction

The name and credentials of the nominator of John Byrne, Ph.D., as faculty mentor for the President's Mentoring Award, were incorrect in the photo caption on Page 1 of the January issue of *The Leader*. The correct information is Ruth Heidelberg, M.D., Ph.D. *The Leader* regrets the error.



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON

The Leader is published monthly for faculty, staff and students of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston by the Office of Institutional Advancement, 7000 Fannin, Suite 1200, Houston, Texas 77030, <http://theleader.uthouston.edu>.

DEADLINES

Submit information to be considered for publication in *The Leader* by the 15th of the month one month prior to the desired time of publication. Requests for feature articles require a longer lead time and will receive strategic consideration. Send electronic information in Word format (no PDFs or posters) and digital photos as unedited, high-resolution images at 300 dpi or better. E-mail to Pamela.Lewis@uth.tmc.edu. Include a contact name, phone number and e-mail address. Mail hard copy to *The Leader*, c/o Pamela Lewis, Office of Institutional Advancement, University Center Tower, 1200, or fax to 713-500-3037. For information regarding *The Leader*, call Pamela Lewis, 713-500-3040.

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