



# International Student Services Newsletter

Office of International Programs

Block 4, Volume IV  
December 06, 2016

## Travel Reminders for F-1 & J-1 Students

### TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.



If you are planning to travel abroad during Winter Break, now is the right time to make sure you are prepared, from an immigration perspective, to depart and re-enter the United States. Understanding your immigration obligations can help minimize delays on re-entry.

Before you travel abroad, make sure to do the following:

- Check your passport validity.
- Check your visa to make sure it is valid for re-entry to the United States.
- Check to make sure that your Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for [F-1] Nonimmigrant Status) or Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for [J-1] Nonimmigrant Status) has been endorsed for travel.

### Same-Day Service Travel Signature Days:

Need a travel signature on your Form I-20/Form DS-2019? Stop by the Office of International Programs (OIP) with your document on the following days and we will be able to sign your form the same day:

- Monday, December 19th 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Tuesday, December 20th 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 21st 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

### TRAVELING WITHIN THE U.S.

If you will be traveling within the U.S., driving on major highways, riding on buses, trains, or planes, we recommend that you carry with you your passport, I-94 arrival record, and Form I-20.

## Winter Break Housing Requests

As you may know, the CC residence halls will close at noon on December 22, 2016 for Winter Break and re-open (with Gold Card access restored) at 8:00 am on Sunday, January 8th, 2017. Students and exchange visitors who are temporarily in the U.S. with a nonimmigrant visa may request special permission to remain in their current residence hall room (at no extra cost) during Winter Break as long as they are continuing their studies on the CC campus in Block 5.

**Please be advised that there will be limited campus services available during Winter Break,** so if your request for Winter Break housing is approved, you should be prepared to make your own arrangements for meals, since the campus dining facilities will be closed.

**Please be advised that there will be limited campus services available during Winter Break,** so if your request for Winter Break housing is approved, you should be prepared to make your own arrangements for meals, since the campus dining facilities will be closed.

If you would like to request on-campus housing for ANY part of the Winter Break period, you must complete the online [Winter Break Housing and Intent Form](#) and submit it **by 5:00 pm on Friday, December 16th**. Office of Residential Life and Campus Activities approval of your Winter Break housing request is required prior to staying and is not guaranteed. **If your stay is approved, you will be notified via your CC email address after the due date.** Please make sure that your CC email is correct.

All Winter Break housing requests are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, December 16th. Be sure to observe the deadline—late requests are more likely to be denied!



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### Finishing Your Program of Study at CC in December 2016?

F-1 students who have maintained lawful status have a 60-day “grace period” following their program end date at CC to:

- Depart the U.S.;
- Request a transfer of their SEVIS record to another school to begin a new program of study; or
- Apply for a change of nonimmigrant status



## Christmas in the U.S.



In the United States, Christmas is observed on the 25th of December. The festive season traditionally begins on the fourth Thursday in November, just after the Thanksgiving holiday. On Thanksgiving Day, a spectacular parade is held in New York City that has the smiling figure of Santa Claus participating in it. It indicates the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. Department stores, shopping malls and small shops ready themselves appropriately for the season to attract shoppers and get them to spend quite a few bucks on Christmas trees, gifts, apparel, greeting cards and suchlike. In the final days leading to December 25, small evergreen trees are seen to be established in every home and beautifully decorated with colored lights, tinsel, angels, stars and bright ornaments. The exterior of almost every house and the adjoining shrubbery is adorned with strands of electric lights. Strings of electric lights are used not only to adorn mantles and doorways, rafters, roof lines, and porch railings of individual homes but also of public/commercial buildings, departmental stores and even business hubs. Christmas trees are also seen to be set up in most of these places. It is often a pastime for the American people to drive or walk around neighborhoods in the Christmas evenings to see the lights displayed on and around other homes. Those with deep pockets are often found to place life-sized, illuminated Santas, reindeers and snowmen on their lawns and roofs. Many churches and private homes display illuminated Nativity Scenes commemorating the humble birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas Eve is not an official holiday here. Hence most people have to work. However, many workplaces hold Christmas parties or celebrations, so there is a celebratory air to the day. For kids, it is a day of great joy since most schools and other educational establishments are usually closed. In the evening, most people add final touches to their home decorations. Many also set up the Christmas tree in their homes on this day. Many organizations and department stores are usually open for last minute Christmas shoppers, but may close earlier. Many people travel to visit family members or friends on Christmas Eve. Some people, especially Roman Catholics, attend a Midnight Mass service at church and participate in singing carols. Traditionally, the midnight mass starts at midnight, the point of transition from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day. Many Protestant churches also hold special services on Christmas Eve, complete with displays of beautiful manger scenes and candle-lit religious observances.



The Christmas dinner in the U.S. includes turkey or ham, potatoes and pie. Cakes are, of course, a must for the occasion. Baked breads and cookies are also part of the dinner list. At Christmas Eve gatherings adults drink eggnog, a drink made of cream, milk, sugar, beaten eggs and brandy or rum. After dinner on Christmas Eve, children go to bed early but not before hanging up their stockings on the fireplace or the end of their bed to be filled with gifts and goodies by Santa Claus. On the following morning, children wake up to look for their desired items in their stockings and also find nicely wrapped presents under their Christmas tree.

Source: <http://www.theholidayspot.com/christmas/worldxmas/us.htm>

## Winter Break Shuttles

Are you planning to travel by air during Winter Break? Stop by the Worner Desk to sign-up for a Winter Break Shuttle to Colorado Springs Airport or Denver International Airport! The Worner Desk accepts cash, check, Gold Card and credit card payments.

### Denver International Airport (\$45 non-refundable)

Departs from Boettcher Health Center:

- Wednesday, December 21st @ 12:30 PM, 2:30 PM and 4:30 PM
- Thursday, December 22nd @ 6:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM

### Colorado Springs Airport (\$7 non-refundable)

Departs from the south side of Worner Center on Cache La Poudre:

- Wednesday, December 21st @ 12:00 PM, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM, 4:00 PM, and 5:00 PM
- Thursday, December 22nd @ 7:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM



## Winter Break Campus Office Closures

Please note that most Colorado College offices will be closed for Winter Break from Friday, December 23, 2016 through Friday, January 6, 2017. The Office of International Programs will re-open for business on Monday, January 9, 2017. If you have an emergency during the Winter Break office closure period, please contact the Office of Campus Safety at (719) 389-6911.



## Got Transcripts?



**CC and the Office of the Registrar are pleased to announce a new service for online transcript ordering and electronic transcript delivery.**

The quickest and most convenient way to send a transcript is to order it online, and in most cases, electronic transcripts are sent the same day an order is received (as opposed to 3-5 days for paper transcript processing). Transcripts Plus is a fully automated online transcript ordering service that provides a secure, compliant, and easy to use transcript ordering solution. Students or alumni can receive email or text notifications about transcript status, may view transcript order status via a secure platform, and can access transcripts and order history 24/7 online. Please visit the Office of the Registrar's [Transcripts webpage](#) for pricing and payment details and to learn more.



## Upcoming OIP Activities and Events

### OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) WORKSHOPS

Mark your calendars! Graduating in May and planning to apply for OPT? Post-completion OPT is employment authorization approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for eligible F-1 students interested in engaging in employment in the U.S. directly related to their field of study after their degree completion. Come learn more about this important immigration benefit: eligibility, application process, types of employment allowed, reporting requirements, and limits on unemployment.

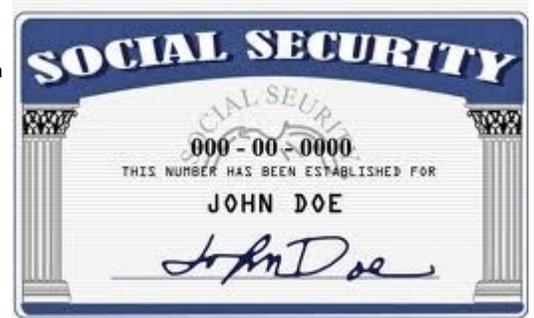
**Friday, January 27, 2017 3:30—5:00pm WES Room—Worner Campus Center**

**Friday, February 3, 2017 3:30—5:00pm WES Room—Worner Campus Center**



## Responding to SSN/ITIN Requests from Health Insurance Providers

Have you recently received a letter from the CC-sponsored student health insurance plan, UnitedHealthcare (UHC), asking for you to provide your U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)? As of 2015, health insurance providers in the U.S. are required to collect this information from their members in order to comply with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reporting requirements related to the "individual shared responsibility provision" of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Since health insurance providers don't know whether their members are resident aliens or nonresident aliens for U.S. tax purposes, and since, under the Affordable Care Act, health insurance providers must report on the minimum essential coverage they provide for all covered individuals, that is why health insurers now contact their members to collect the insured person's tax identification number, if the health insurer doesn't already have this information on file. These insurers must then confirm—during every tax season—that the coverage provided to the member satisfied the individual mandate requirements for any or all months during the preceding calendar year or reportable tax year.



The IRS requires that the tax identification number, which is usually the Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), be used to identify individuals on IRS reports. Since, as noted earlier, insurers may not always have this information, the rules require that insurers make reasonable efforts to obtain the SSN or ITIN. The rules further state that the reasonable efforts mean asking for SSNs/ITINs up to three times before any annual filings. Therefore, if you do not respond to the initial request from UHC or another health insurance provider for your SSN/ITIN, expect that you will receive up to two more requests for this information.

So, if you already have an SSN or ITIN, the easiest thing to do is to report it to your health insurance provider when first asked. If you do not have a Social Security Number and are not currently eligible to apply for one because you do not have an on-campus employment offer or you do not have off-campus employment authorization, then you may be able to apply to the IRS for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)—please see the Office of International Programs for further information and assistance.



## Office of International Programs

Office of International Programs  
14 E. Cache La Poudre St.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3294  
USA

Phone: 719-227-8282  
Fax: 719-227-8283  
E-mail: [ISS@ColoradoCollege.edu](mailto:ISS@ColoradoCollege.edu)

Campus Location:  
Armstrong Hall, 2nd Floor



The Office of International Programs (OIP) serves students who study off-campus (domestically and internationally), incoming international students, faculty who lead students on off-campus programs, and international faculty who require immigration services.

OIP provides comprehensive services for degree-seeking international students and exchange students, including individualized immigration advising, specialized workshops, and orientation programs.

For more information, contact Lisa Kosiewicz Doran, International Student Specialist at [ISS@ColoradoCollege.edu](mailto:ISS@ColoradoCollege.edu).

### We're on the Web!

<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/international/international-students/>

## December Birthdays

The Office of International Programs would like to wish a very happy birthday to all the international students who celebrate a birthday in December!

**Yuhan Chen**

**Armand Dominguez**

**David Gonzales Salgado**

**Lilly-Sophie Hamann**

**Ziyu (Alan) He**

**Hanqing Li**

**Shaojie Lu**



**Wafa Neji**

**Anthony Rojas Chavez**

**Gayathri Warriar**

**Wei Xu**

**Zhuang (Michael) Xu**

**Dexuan (Stan) Zhang**