

Fall 2009



International Update Tufts University International Center

Welcome!

As the 2009-2010 school year begins, the staff at the International Center would like to welcome all new students, faculty and research scholars! Tufts is an institution that offers a warm and welcoming environment for all and we hope that this will be your experience.

If you do not already know, there are three separate campuses at Tufts: Medford, Boston and Grafton. The International Center is located in Medford, but serves the international community on all three campuses.

The International Center, also known as the I-Center, can provide you with immigration information regarding your legal status while at Tufts. You should never feel uncomfortable approaching the I-Center staff for immigration advice. This is our role. We are here to help you understand your legal obligations in the US, but it is also YOUR responsibility to keep us informed! The staff at the International Center works for Tufts; we do NOT work for the US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). Ask the International Center any questions regarding your immigration status before approaching the USCIS.

We know that many of you will seek advice from friends and colleagues who have been in the US for a while. Although you can certainly



From Jane Etish-Andrews, Director

receive good advice from friends, colleagues and relatives, we remind you that you will get the most current and accurate information from the International Center. USCIS regulations are always changing and may be different from those regulations your peers and colleagues remember!

Finally, in addition to the immigration services offered by the International Center, we are available for advising/counseling in the area of cultural adjustment and settling into life in the US. We are comfortable answering questions on all topics.

We hope that your first year at Tufts is a wonderful one, and that the International Center will be a valuable resource in making your year a success. On behalf of the staff, we look forward to meeting you!

To All Incoming Students, Faculty and Scholars

The US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) requires the Tufts International Center to collect copies of the visa stamp in your passport, Form I-20, Form DS-2019 or Form I-797, I-94 card, passport identity page and expiration date. You must come to the International Center to complete this requirement **by Tuesday, September 15, 2009**. If you do not present this documentation to the I-Center, you will jeopardize your ability to study and work in the US.

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The International Community at Tufts

You are presently a member of our international community at Tufts University! Currently, in the schools of Arts & Sciences, Engineering, Gordon Institute, Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy, and the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, there are:

335 Undergraduate International Students
362 Graduate International Students
292 International Faculty/Research Scholars*
106 Intensive English Language & Summer Session
1095 Total International Population

* Faculty/Research Scholar number includes The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

There are **94** countries represented. The 10 countries with the largest number of international **students, faculty and scholars** at Tufts are (in descending order):

China
India
South Korea
Canada
Turkey
United Kingdom
Japan
Germany
France
Brazil

How to communicate with the International Center?

By E-mail:

We will use your Tufts e-mail account to contact you. If you choose to use another e-mail, be sure to forward your Tufts e-mail account to the other server. It is critical that you read the I-Center's e-mails especially when it refers to Immigration regulations.

Website & Appointments:

<http://ase.tufts.edu/icenter>

The International Center's website is a good source of information regarding immigration, travel, work authorization, taxation, cultural activities and programs. If, after reading the website, something is not clear to you, you can contact the office staff to ask for clarification. The staff can meet with you individually, or answer questions by phone (617-627-3458) or email (internationalcenter@tufts.edu). You can also "walk-in" to ask a question. If it would be better for you to set up an appointment, then a meeting with an advisor can be scheduled.

The Intercultural Conversation Program

For first-year **graduate** students who are interested in improving their English and learning more about American culture, the International Center offers an opportunity to meet one hour per week with a "conversation partner" who is a Tufts student or staff member. This is a great way to meet English-speaking people outside of your academic studies, as well as a great chance to develop a friendship!

Comments from past participants might provide a better understanding of what the program is really all about:

"It's really a great experience that we can have a chance to share our culture and help each other understand different backgrounds. It's not only an English conversation program, but a way to learn about the world."

- International student from China -

"I've learned that friendship and common interests can transcend any language, cultural or age barriers."

- English Partner -

If you are interested in this program, please contact the **International Center** by e-mail at internationalcenter@tufts.edu or sign up at International Graduate Student Orientation on Thursday, September 3, 2009.

"American Slang and Idioms Workshop for International Students"

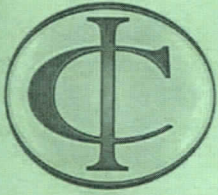
The office of Career Services and the International Center will host an "American Slang and Idioms Workshop" on Tuesday, September 29, 2009, 12:00-1:00 pm in the Campus Center Large Conference Room. Lunch will be provided. To sign up, please email susannah.krenn@tufts.edu. Space is limited. Reservations will be taken on a first-come first-served basis.

Undergraduate Student Groups

THE INTERNATIONAL HOUSE (I-HOUSE)

The International House, located at 13 Sawyer Avenue, is a residence made up of undergraduate students from around the globe, including the US. I-House members often sponsor international dinners, lectures, and parties for the Tufts community. The philosophy of the I-House is to create an environment in which residents can experience an intercultural living arrangement. The goal of the I-House is to foster intercultural friendships and experiences.

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB (I-CLUB) — www.int-club.org



The I-Club is a very active cultural and social organization whose primary goal is to promote intercultural understanding and exchange throughout the Tufts community. It also works to raise financial aid money for undergraduate international students. The I-Club plans events such as barbecues, the I-Cruise, semi-formal dances, cultural evenings, foreign film screenings and the annual Intercultural Festival. Watch for notes in *The Tufts Daily* and flyers around campus for information about upcoming events! For additional information, you may contact the I-Club President, Irmak Yaldiz at irmak.yaldiz@tufts.edu. Elections for Secretary and Freshmen Representatives are held in early September.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES FAIR

Monday, September 14, 2009, at the Residential Quad, 5:00-7:00 PM. If you are interested in joining a student organization, this is the time to do it! For further information, call the Office of Campus Life at (617) 627-3212.

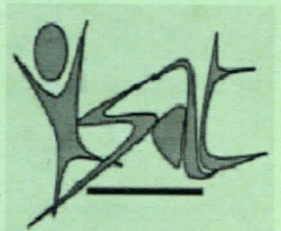
Graduate Student Groups

GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL (GSC) - <http://go.tufts.edu/gsc>

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) was formed to address the many issues all graduate students face, regardless of field of study. The GSC serves as liaison to the administration and faculty of the Graduate School. Additionally, the GSC organizes numerous social events throughout the academic year. To share your concerns or to become involved, stop by the Graduate Student Council Office at West Hall, basement level or contact the GSC's President R. Jason Heustis at Ronald.Heustis@tufts.edu. Phone (617) 627-3576 or 617-627-3213 or email gsc@tufts.edu. For additional information about the GSC and how to get on the mailing list, visit their website at: <http://go.tufts.edu/gsc>.

THE INDIAN SOCIETY AT TUFTS (ISAT) - <http://ase.tufts.edu/isat/>

The mission of the Indian Student Association at Tufts (ISAT) is to foster greater interaction among graduate students of Indian origin; to provide all possible help and support to incoming graduate students of Indian origin; to enable them to transition comfortably into their new environment; to provide a convenient forum to share experiences and discuss pertinent issues; to represent, promote and protect the interests of graduate students of Indian origin at the University level; and to create awareness among the Indian student community about the programs, environment and educational opportunities at Tufts. For more information about ISAT and their upcoming events, visit the web page at <http://ase.tufts.edu/isat/>. The ISAT President is Shiladitya Sen (Shiladitya.Sen@tufts.edu).



TUFTS CHINESE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION (TCSSA) - <http://ase.tufts.edu/tcssa>

The Tufts Chinese Students and Scholars Association (TCSSA) promotes communication and interaction among Tufts Chinese graduate students and scholars, their families and friends, and between the Chinese and other students at Tufts. TCSSA has organized many social events, such as a celebration of the Chinese Spring Festival, karaoke, potluck parties, Chinese movies, soccer and volleyball games. For more information, contact TCSSA president Shuai Nie at shuai.nie@tufts.edu.

WANT TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

INTERNATIONAL CLUB—LOCAL INITIATIVE

Tufts International Ambassadors is a service project of the Tufts International Club. This project brings international students from Tufts to interact with elementary students from local schools. When studying a specific region or a country, teachers often complement the existing curriculum by inviting students from that region or country to come talk to the students about their culture. This provides an opportunity for kids to learn about and interact with people from other countries. Currently, more than 50 students from 40 different countries are a part of this project. Tufts International Ambassadors help increase global and cultural awareness among elementary school students. Furthermore, it encourages elementary school students to start thinking about college. Additionally, it gives Tufts students an opportunity to get involved with the local community.

For more information contact the International Club: www.int-club.org

LEONARD CARMICHAEL SOCIETY (LCS) - <http://ase.tufts.edu/lcs>

The Leonard Carmichael Society (LCS) is an undergraduate student-run, community service umbrella organization at Tufts. Over 1000 students get involved in one or more of LCS's 30 programs each semester. The programs focus on everything from hunger, homelessness, work with children, and health education, to literacy, work with the elderly and much more! The International Center recommends the following LCS programs for international students:

- Habitat for Humanity / Volunteer Construction Corps
- Volunteer Vacations
- Hunger Project / Shelters
- Caring Helps In Living With Disabilities (C.H.I.L.D.)
- Junior Achievement
- Kids To College
- Lorax
- Anti-Smoking Awareness
- Best Buddies
- Special Friends
- Kids Day
- Blood Drive
- Cancer Outreach
- Traveling Treasure Trunk

An LCS General Interest Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15, 2009, 9-10pm, in Cohen Auditorium—a great way to see all of LCS's programs, talk to the coordinators, and sign up!

To find out more call the LCS office at 617-627-3643 or visit the web page at <http://ase.tufts.edu/lcs>.

TUFTS UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

The International Center co-sponsors "The Chaplain's Table", a series of discussions on various topics of religion and philosophy. This is a good opportunity to have a free dinner and interesting conversation with your peers and faculty. The fall 2009 schedule (September to November) includes weekly discussions on the topic of "Living Faith at Tufts".

Open to Graduates and Undergraduates.

For more information visit the Chaplaincy website, www.tufts.edu/chaplaincy.

Tufts Financial Resources

THE LAILA MOSHIRI YAZDI MEMORIAL FUND

This fund was established in memory of a Tufts international student, Laila Moshiri Yazdi. Laila was from Iran and was a senior, majoring in History at the time she passed away in 1982. She was well-known and well-liked on campus. Her father donated her spring tuition to establish a loan fund for foreign students in need of short-term help. Since its inception, the fund has been used often and is truly appreciated by students in need. **Small, short-term emergency loans (\$500 or less)** are available to all Medford undergraduate and graduate international students (except Fletcher students) through this fund. Applications are available at the International Center.

OLIVER CHAPMAN MEMORIAL EMERGENCY LOAN FUND

The Chapman fund is named in honor of Oliver Chapman, an international student from Panama who passed away in 1992. He was an International Orientation Host Advisor and was very active in the international community. The fund is intended to assist **undergraduate** international students with tuition payments during times of hardship. The amount of the loan ranges from **\$3,000-\$5,000**. Students in need should apply one month in advance. Please contact the International Center or Student Services at Dowling Hall.

Immigration Update

SEVIS (The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is a web-based system for maintaining information on international students and exchange visitors in the United States. It is administered by the US Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) Department. All non-immigrant **students, faculty and research scholars** on either an F-1 or J-1 visa are required to be entered into the SEVIS system by the Tufts International Center.

In order to maintain your F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant status, you must be aware of the following:

What is a Form I-20 or DS-2019?

Form I-20 (for an F-1 visa) or Form DS-2019 (for a J-1 visa) is a legal U.S. visa document. The Tufts International Center has entered your information into the SEVIS tracking system, and then produced the visa document for your use. The visa document entitles you to seek a corresponding F-1 or J-1 visa stamp from the US Consulate/Embassy in your home country. Form I-20 and Form DS-2019 prove to the officials that the student/scholar has demonstrated that s/he has not only been accepted to Tufts University to study, research or teach, but also that s/he possesses the funding necessary to both study and live in the U.S. Once you show the newly issued Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 to the officials at the port of entry, you will be allowed to enter the US as an F-1 or J-1 student or scholar. This visa document **governs your ability to legally stay in the US**. Make sure that your Form I-20 or DS-2019 is current. Pay attention to the end date on these forms. On the I-20 Form, look at the end date on Item #5 and on the DS-2019 look at the end date on Item #3. Do not allow your form, which says that you will complete your studies by (date), to expire!

What is a Visa?

A visa allows you to **seek entry into the United States** (Individuals possessing a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 have the corresponding **F-1 or J-1 visa**). The visa is like a key to a house: The key is necessary to enter the house, just as a visa is necessary to enter the US. Once inside the house (or the US), the relevance of the key diminishes. The only time the key is needed again is when one exits and needs to return to the house. Similarly, a visa is not used again until the next time you leave the US and need to re-enter the country. **Therefore, you can allow your visa to expire as long as you remain in the US and maintain your legal status. If you leave the US, you must be sure that the visa is valid for re-entry purposes.** If the visa has expired, you need to go back to the US Embassy/Consulate in your home country and request a new visa.

What is an I-94 Card?

This card records the entry and departure of a non-immigrant into the United States. This card is completed on the plane by the individual. It is stamped at the port of entry by the Immigration Official **to record when, in what status, and on what date an individual enters the US**. This card should be **stapled inside the passport and surrendered upon departing the US**. If this card is lost, it should be replaced. There is a \$320 replacement fee. Please consult the International Center regarding replacement of the card.

Maintaining Full-Time Status (For Students)

If you are a student, you must be registered in the fall and spring semesters as a full-time student (3 credits or more for undergraduate and graduate students). A full-time Graduate RA or TA may count as one course, provided you register for it properly at the beginning of each semester. You cannot drop below full-time during the academic year (September–May). If you have a compelling reason (i.e. due to illness, academic or language deficiency) to drop below full-time status, you must **first** have the clearance and approval from the International Center. Only in exceptional situations will an approval be granted.

Leave of Absence (For Students)

Students may **not** take a leave of absence and remain in the US. The International Center should be contacted to discuss the circumstances requiring any leave **before** it is authorized.

Disciplinary Action of Dismissal (For Students)

The International Center should be consulted about a student's impending dismissal from Tufts or disciplinary action **before** it is finalized.

Premature Termination of Studies (For Students)

The International Center must be informed of any early termination of a student so that the US ICE Department can be informed of the event.

(Continued on page 8)

Getting a Social Security Number

Non-immigrant International Students, Faculty & Research Scholars, and their dependents who are **legally eligible to work** per their immigration status, are required to apply for a Social Security card in order to be paid for employment.

International students applying for a Social Security card:

You will be required to be registered full-time at Tufts and have an on-campus job offer before you apply for a Social Security card. To prepare your application, you will obtain a letter from the International Center that must be signed by both the hiring department and the International Center. Please visit the International Center to get the form necessary to start this process. Once you have obtained the above-mentioned signatures, you must present the following to Social Security Administration:

- Letter of Employment Verification from Tufts University;
- Social Security Application form, which you can download from <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html>;
- Valid passport;
- I-94 card (small white card usually stapled inside your passport, at the port of entry to the U.S.);
- Valid visa document (F-1, Form I-20) (J-1, Form DS-2019) (H-1B, Form I-797) (Employment Authorization Document), etc.

The Social Security Administration will not accept your application unless you present them with ALL of the above-mentioned documentation. Normal processing of a Social Security card usually takes about 3 weeks, from the time that you submit your application.

The Social Security Administration will be on-campus at Tufts to facilitate student, faculty & scholar applications for a social security card. The on-campus visit is scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 2009, 11:00AM-3:00PM, in the Sophia Gordon Hall Multi-Purpose Room. Please plan to take advantage of this special on-campus visit!

Location of the Social Security Office closest to you:

The telephone number for all Social Security offices is 1-800-772-1213.

All Social Security offices are open between 9:00am – 4:00pm, Monday through Friday.

For the Medford Campus, 240 Elm Street, in Davis Square, Somerville.

For the Boston Campus, O'Neil Federal Building, 10 Causeway Street, Boston.

For the Grafton Campus, 51 Muddle Street, Madison Place Plaza, Worcester.

Other General Information:

- If you are a Tufts International Student, you will be issued a Tufts Identification Number that begins with 991. This is **not** a Social Security Number.
- If you need to open a bank account **before** you obtain your Social Security Number, explain that you are a newly-arrived non-immigrant. They will have you complete a W-8 form which permits you to open a bank account without a Social Security Number.
- If you are **not** eligible for a Social Security Number and need to obtain a driver's license, present your passport, visa document and I-94 card at the Social Security Administration office and request a "Social Security Denial Letter" from Social Security for you to present at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Information on the Registry of Motor Vehicles is available at our website, <http://ase.tufts.edu/icenter/> or at <http://mass.gov/rmv/>.

Travel Outside the US Requires Approval Signature from the I-Center

If you are interested in traveling to a country outside of the United States (including Canada & Mexico), you must first obtain a signature from the International Center on your visa document (Form I-20 or Form DS-2019). The signature is a requirement for re-entry into the United States. It confirms that you have maintained a full-time status.

Please remember to drop off your visa document in our office **at least one week before traveling**. This will give our office sufficient time to prepare the form for a signature. If you travel without a recent signature from our office, you will risk running into difficulties at the port of entry (or in extreme cases, being denied entry).

Change in Local Address (For Students, Faculty and Research Scholars):

USCIS requires that **all international students, faculty and scholars** report their change of address within 10 days of initial arrival and within 10 days of any subsequent address change, while in the US. All students will be required to update their address on the Student Information System (SIS on-line). The information from F-1 & J-1 students will be automatically transmitted to the I-Center and we will update it with SEVIS. Students holding other visa categories (such as TN, H-1, H-4, J-2, etc.) must also complete Form AR-11 in addition to updating their address on SIS. You can access Form AR-11 at <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> (choose the "Immigration Forms" tab).

Change in Major, Research Title or Specialty:

Any changes related to the academic field must be reported to the U.S. ICE Department by the International Center.

Change in Source of Funding:

Any significant changes related to your source of funding listed on your form I-20 or DS-2019 must be reported in the SEVIS program by the International Center.

Update Departure, Reentry or Addition of Dependent:

It is your responsibility to tell the International Center that a family member has arrived, departed, given birth, etc.

Health Insurance for J-1 Students, Faculty & Research Scholars:

It is your responsibility to have adequate health insurance, which includes repatriation of remains and medical evacuation. Students are automatically assessed a university health insurance fee. Faculty and scholars must present to the International Center proof of health insurance compliance.

Passport:

You must keep your passport valid six months **beyond** your required stay in the US.

Travel to Canada:

Please visit the International Center website <http://www.ase.tufts.edu/center> for important information prior to planning your trip.

Special Registrants:

If, when you entered the U.S, you were considered a "Special Registrant," you were informed that you will need to enter and depart the US by following certain procedures. Be sure to adhere to their instructions so as not to jeopardize future entries to the US. We have more detailed information on this topic on our website, <http://www.ase.tufts.edu/center>.

International Center, Medford Campus, Staff

STAFF

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Naoko Kotoge, International Student & Scholar Advisor

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**UNDERGRADUATE ORIENTATION
COORDINATORS:**

Danai Macridi (A '11)

Yaoyao Kelly (A '11)

International Student Work Eligibility

General Overview: An international student's eligibility to work on-campus is dependent upon their type of non-immigrant student visa. If a student has entered the US on a non-immigrant status, either **F-1** (I-20 document) or **J-1** (DS-2019 document), then s/he will be eligible to work **on-campus** without special permission from **U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)**. All full-time international students are permitted to work on-campus for up to **20 hours per week** during the academic year (September-May). During official Tufts vacations and summers, students are permitted to work up to **40 hours per week on campus only** without permission from USCIS or the Tufts International Office. Students will still need to have a valid Social Security Number in order to work on campus. Please refer to the Social Security page of this newsletter for application details. If you hold a non-immigrant status other than F-1 or J-1, you are most likely **not allowed to work**. Please contact the I-Center to confirm your work eligibility.

What departments are considered "on campus" and which ones are not?

Make sure that the compensation for an on-campus job is paid in the form of a Tufts University paycheck. The only exception is if an international student works for Barnes & Nobles Bookstore which is physically located at the Tufts campus. This site is considered on-campus for purposes of on-campus work authorization. However, if a student is offered a job at Telefund, with the Advancement Office, this is **not** a site that is considered on-campus employment. It is not legal for an international student to work for Telefund. Any questions regarding whether or not a specific department is considered on-campus for employment purposes should be directed to the International Center.

Research and Teaching Assistantships

Graduate students working as Teaching Assistants (TA) or as Research Assistants (RA) are considered to be working on-campus. Teaching & Research Assistantships are equal to **15 hours of work a week**. You are allowed to work more than one job on campus as long as you do not exceed the 20 hour limit per week (for total hours worked in all jobs, including RAs or TAs) during the academic year. Student Services monitors the number of hours worked per week and will freeze a payroll account if it is determined that you are working more than 20 hours per week.

Work Off-Campus:

After being a full-time student in good academic standing for 2 consecutive semesters (not including summer school), F-1 and J-1 students are permitted to apply for off-campus work authorization. The proposed work to be done must be in a position that is related to the student's academic field of study or major. This kind of work is known as **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**. The I-Center offers regular OPT informational sessions from late September to early May. You may sign up for an OPT informational session on-line at <http://ase.tufts.edu/icenter>. **Obtaining Optional Practical Training work permission normally takes up to 3 months, so advanced planning is strongly recommended.** The application must be submitted to USCIS up to 60 days after your graduation. Make sure your I-20 or DS-2019 end-date is the same as your graduation date.

Paid/or Unpaid Internships Off-Campus:

Pursuing a paid internship prior to graduation requires following the same procedures outlined above. It is extremely important to know that paid internships are not always possible because of the length of time it takes to get the work authorization and the short amount of time a student may be given to respond to a job offer. Usually there is not sufficient time to process the paperwork and receive an approval from USCIS before the company wants a student to begin work. It is critical to know that an international student cannot do a paid internship off-campus without having applied to USCIS for work authorization and this requires having been at Tufts for at least 2 semesters as a full-time student. **All questions about off-campus work or off-campus paid internships should be directed to the I-Center.**

Unpaid Internships Off-Campus:

Students pursuing unpaid internship opportunities in their field of study/major are permitted to do so. No form of compensation can be issued to you, which includes travel reimbursement, honorarium, etc. Otherwise, it is automatically considered employment for which you must have obtained work authorization. These unpaid internship opportunities cannot exceed 20 hours per week during the academic year. During the official Tufts vacation periods, a student can do a full-time **unpaid** internship. We recommend, before you start an unpaid internship, that you inform your employer of your non-immigrant visa status.

Curricular Practical Training Applications & Economic Hardship Work Applications

Curricular Practical Training is only offered to international students who must, as part of their degree requirement, work off campus within their field of study or will receive credit for internships. Any student interested in applying for Curricular Practical Training must schedule an individual appointment with an International Center staff person in order to confirm your eligibility. You must be a full-time student at Tufts for at least two semesters before you are eligible to apply for CPT. An *Economic Hardship* application would require you to demonstrate to USCIS and to the International Center that there has been a radical change in your finances, based on a natural or economic disaster that has occurred in your home country or in your sponsor's finances.