

# SEVP Spotlight

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### Greetings from the New Acting SEVP Director

As many of you know, after more than 10 years of outstanding service to the program, Louis Farrell stepped down last month as the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) deputy assistant director, and passed the baton to me, Rachel Canty. Director Farrell's leadership and passion for fulfilling the program's mission was impressive. I hope to carry on that legacy by continuing to provide outstanding service while working to move the program forward.

Over the past five years, as division chief of SEVP's External Operations, I have had the privilege to oversee the certification and compliance of schools enrolling international students, the development of policies and regulations related to the international student and

school life cycles, and establishment and impressive growth of the Field Representative Unit and the SEVP Response Center.

No stranger to the federal space, I have been with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) since its inception and before SEVP, served in various roles within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and at DHS Headquarters, including as the acting assistant director of the ICE Office of Policy. Prior to joining the federal workforce, I received my bachelor's degree from Emory University and earned my Juris Doctorate at the University of Florida.

I would like to emphasize that SEVP's leadership transition has no impact on the way students and schools will communicate with SEVP or comply with the federal rules and regulations

that govern the international student life cycle. It is business as usual with regards to the program's processes and policies for SEVP-certified schools and international students. As always, schools should maintain compliance and international students should maintain their status.

In closing, I want to reiterate my thanks to Director Farrell for his dedication to the SEVP mission. I am grateful for the opportunity to build on his legacy. He inherently understood how to strengthen our national security, while addressing the needs of our stakeholders. I look forward to continuing his good work and engaging with the academic community to further enhance the security of our nation.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Canty



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

## SEVP Welcomes Two New Field Representatives

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) recently welcomed two new field representatives to its team. John Mark Jones supports SEVP-certified schools in the Arlington, Virginia, and West Virginia areas (Territory 44) and Ronald McPeak supports schools in the San Jose, California, area (Territory 7). Below, Mr. Jones and Mr. McPeak share how they came into their latest role, explain the goals they hope to achieve and give advice for preparing for your next visit with an SEVP field representative.

### JOHN MARK JONES, TERRITORY 44

I have 20 years of experience working with international students and scholars in a higher education setting. Prior to joining the SEVP Field Representative Unit, I was a principal designated school official (PDSO) at universities in West Virginia and Texas. I was also the NAFSA Region III Training Coordinator from 2015 to early 2017 and a member of NAFSA Trainer Corps.

My primary goals for my first year as a field representative are to become very familiar with the designated school officials (DSOs) in my region, develop comprehensive insight into the unique needs of each school in my region and establish a strong line of communication between these schools and SEVP.

Looking ahead, I would like to encourage schools preparing for their SEVP field representative visit to keep an ongoing record of any questions, concerns or technical situations related to regulations or the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System so we can discuss these issues during our visit. In addition, I think it is important for schools to remember that field representatives are here as a resource for DSOs, and they should feel comfortable reaching out to us anytime they may have any questions or concerns about the international student life cycle.

### RONALD MCPEAK, TERRITORY 7

Reaching this point in my career as an SEVP field representative began with my advocating for international students on my college campus as early as 1998. After I graduated college, I began working in international education and spent the past 14 years methodically working towards improving my knowledge and understanding about international students as a DSO.

Some of the goals I hope to achieve as a new SEVP field representative are to learn the unique challenges that PDSOs and DSOs face in the San Jose area and help these schools realize their potential by helping to resolve challenges with their student population. Additionally, I want to focus on connecting our stakeholders with the tools they need to succeed. I look forward to helping DSOs make use of the knowledge and tools on Study in the States and providing advice I have from personal experience.

For instance, as a field representative I want to ensure that the DSOs in my area remember to pay close attention to their student's program end date (PED). Time flies and before you realize, it is time to graduate, transfer or return home. Also, not keeping a careful eye on the PED can mean some students can miss the chance to file for graduation or apply for optional practical training.

Schools can best prepare for their SEVP field representative visit by having a positive mindset and remembering that we are here to help. Field representatives act as liaisons between their office and SEVP, meaning it is our job to work with the schools to keep the integrity of the F and M program. The open communication established through these visits helps foster positive outcomes for all stakeholders and the security of our nation.



## Visit the New Stakeholder Webinars Page

In April, [Study in the States](#) launched a redesigned [Stakeholder Webinars page](#) that consolidates information about the following webinars in a central location:

- Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) webinars.
- Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) webinars.
- Partner agency-hosted webinars.

Users can filter webinars by event type (i.e., SEVP, SEVIS or partner), category or date. Each webinar will have its own unique webpage that will feature webinar details including recordings, presentations and transcripts. A link to the Stakeholder Webinars page can be found on the Study in the States [Schools page](#).

## Explore the Reorganized SEVIS Help Hub

In late June, [Study in the States](#) will launch a redesigned [SEVIS Help Hub home page](#) that reflects an updated content reorganization. The SEVIS Help Hub content will be accessible through three main sections (SEVIS

Basics, Student Records and School Records), providing easier access to content. A new site map will also be available to enable users to quickly see all the pages within the SEVIS Help Hub.

### OFFICE OF ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

## Secretary Kelly Meets with the Higher Education Community

On April 19, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary John F. Kelly held his first roundtable discussion with leaders from the higher education community in Washington, D.C.

The discussion, coordinated by DHS's Office of Academic Engagement, offered an opportunity for Secretary Kelly, DHS leadership and leaders from across the higher education community to engage in a productive and meaningful conversation about:

- Key DHS priorities.
- Implementation of President Donald Trump's Executive Orders.
- How DHS can continue to find opportunities for partnership and sharing.

Secretary Kelly led the discussion with leaders from several organizations, including the American Council

on Education, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the President of the University of Rhode Island and chair of DHS's [Homeland Security Academic Advisory Council](#), the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, and NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Alongside Secretary Kelly, senior leadership from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services participated in the roundtable discussion, along with the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Partnership and Engagement, and the Director for the Office for Community Partnerships.

DHS leadership looks forward to continuing the dialogue and its engagement with the higher education community.

## CONTACT US

# SEVP Contacts

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is dedicated to maintaining open communication with international students and academic officials. SEVP has multiple contact options:

Our offices are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, except holidays

Phone: 703-603-3400  
Email: [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov)

Find us on the web:  
[www.ice.gov/sevp](http://www.ice.gov/sevp)  
<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>

Follow us on Twitter [@StudyinStates](https://twitter.com/StudyinStates)  
Like Study in the States on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/StudyinStates)  
Follow SEVP on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sevp)

If you need assistance with passwords or Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) technical help, call the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4829 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. ET or email [SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov)

Disclaimer: The information presented in the SEVP Spotlight is provided for informational purposes only and should not be considered legal advice.

## ICE CONTACTS

To report national vulnerabilities or national security concerns, contact ICE's Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit at [CTCEU@dhs.gov](mailto:CTCEU@dhs.gov)

To report exploitation of student visa programs, contact your local HSI special agent by calling 1-866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423) or visit [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov).

