



Winter 2019 SEVP InFocus Webinar

Dec. 11, 2019

Webinar Script

Slide 1: Pre-webinar Title Slide

[Adobe Connect room opens approximately 15 minutes prior to webinar. Slide 1 displays until the start of the webinar at 2 p.m. EST.]

Slide 2: Title Slide

MARISSA:

- Hi everyone!
- Welcome to today's Winter 2019 SEVP InFocus Webinar. We're so glad you decided to spend your Wednesday afternoon with us. I'm Marissa Tinsley and I'm a member of the SEVP Strategic Communications Team, and I'll be your moderator for today's webinar.
- As we get started, please take a moment to complete the polls on your screen. We're going to hold several polls during today's webinar to get your opinion on some interesting topics. Your responses will help inform our communication efforts, so, as always, we really appreciate your input. I'll give you all a few moments to complete these polls.

Slide 3: Housekeeping Notes

MARISSA:

- We have a lot to discuss during today's webinar, but before we begin our presentation, I want to go over just a few housekeeping notes.
- First, please download and look at our hyperlink appendix, which contains links to the webpages and resources mentioned during today's presentation. We'll be referring to this throughout the webinar. You can access it at the bottom of your screen in the Webinar Resources pod.
- While you're looking at that pod, you'll also notice that you can download a PDF copy of today's PowerPoint presentation and a glossary that defines the key terms and acronyms mentioned during the webinar.



- Additionally, if you experience technical difficulties at any point, please explain your problem through that Technical Difficulties pod on your screen, and we'll do our best to address your issue.
 - As a reminder, we are not taking questions during today's webinar. If you do have any questions about any items discussed during this presentation, please contact the SEVP Response Center—their contact information is at the end of the presentation and is also included in your hyperlink appendix.
- Finally, if any of your colleagues are not able to join us today—we know that it's a busy time with the end of the year approaching—please make sure you direct them to our webinar recording. That recording, along with the resources I just mentioned, will be available on the Winter 2019 SEVP InFocus Webinar page, which is where you might have accessed today's webinar.

Slide 4: Today's Presenters

MARISSA:

- So, as I mentioned, my name is Marissa, and I'll be your moderator. I lead our Conferences and Outreach team within the Strategic Communications and Training Team, but I originally got my start at SEVP in 2010 as a program analyst in the School Certification Unit.
- I'm also joined by three other SEVP representatives: Jarod Klucho, the field representative for territory 37, Donald Delgado, the field representative from territory 8, and Cecilia Jeffus, from territory 42. Each of our presenters come from each of our three regions across the United States, so we hope that everyone in the audience feels represented in today's presentation!
- So, on that note, Jarod, would you mind taking a moment to introduce yourself?

JAROD:

- Thanks, Marissa!
- Hi everyone—as Marissa mentioned, my name is Jarod Klucho, and I'm the field representative for territory 37, which covers most of the state of Ohio.

MARISSA:

- Thank you, Jarod. Donald, can you give a brief introduction of yourself?



DONALD:

- Sure thing! Hi everyone, my name is Donald Delgado, and I'm the field representative for territory 8, which covers one of the four Los Angeles territories.

MARISSA:

- Thank you, Donald! Cecilia, can you give a brief introduction of yourself?

CECILIA:

- Will do! Hi everyone, my name is Cecilia Jeffus, and I'm the field representative for territory 42, which covers the area of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Slide 5: Presentation Overview

MARISSA:

- Now that we've put names to voices, let's move on to our agenda for today.
- As you can see, we have lots of great topics to cover. I'll let you read through the agenda items yourself. I do want to note that we will have a few polling questions towards the end of the presentation, so please make sure you stick around to complete those. As always, we really appreciate your feedback and we are always looking for ways to enhance future webinars.

Slide 6: Ask the Audience—Today's Audience

MARISSA:

- So, before we dive in, let's start with a poll question to learn more about you. Please select the option that best describes your current position using the choices on your screen. And, if your role doesn't fit nicely into one of the categories available, please describe it through the "comment" pod by typing in your response.
- I'll give you all a few moments to complete the poll.

[Pause]

- So far it looks like overwhelmingly we got a lot of DSOs and PDSOs. Some admissions folks as well, that's nice. I'll give you a couple more seconds to finish up with that. Thanks everyone for providing that insight. It's great to see that, while we have a lot of DSOs in the audience, we have a few other folks tuning in.



Slide 7: Ask the Audience—Today’s Audience

MARISSA:

- In addition to your position, we’d love to know what type of school you represent—whether it’s a post-secondary, K-12, or vocational school. Please select the answer that best applies to you. And once again, I’ll give you a moment to respond. And, if your school or organization does not match one of our options, you can always let us know who you represent through the comment function.
- Looks like higher education is leading the way. We’ve also got private K-12 and some vocational schools—that awesome. Also, some language training—that’s good to see.
- Alright, thank you so much for your participation in those two polls. Those are super helpful. Let’s get started!

Slide 8: SETA Rollout

MARISSA:

- Let’s kick things off by talking about the rollout of the SEVP External Training Application—also known as SETA. Jarod, since this is probably a new topic to some folks, do you mind explaining what SETA is and how DSOs can use and access it?

Slide 9: SETA Overview

JAROD:

- Sure, Marissa! As you mentioned, the SEVP External Training Application—otherwise known as SETA—launched late last month. For those that haven’t had an opportunity to check out SETA, it’s an online learning tool that we developed to provide trainings to DSOs and sponsor officials.
- If you’re an experienced DSO who is familiar with our DSO training courses on ICE.gov, SETA supplements those courses.
- However, I do want to note that SETA is its own application and separate from SEVIS, so you’ll access it on a separate website and create a separate account. Once you create an account, you can take the courses at your own pace. You’ll also have the option to test out of each course.



MARISSA:

- And, as always, we've developed plenty of resources to help you access and navigate SETA. We'll talk about how to create a SETA account later, but I want to give a quick plug for our SETA Account Creation User Guide on Study in the States. A link to this guide is available in your hyperlink appendix, which you can download in the Webinar Resources pod.

Slide 10: SETA Courses and Training

MARISSA:

- Now that we know what the application is, Jarod do you want to cover the courses currently available in SETA?

JAROD:

- Sure thing, Marissa! As you can see on your screen, SETA currently has four courses available that focus on SEVP and the Department of State's exchange visitor program regulations. Each training course contains lessons on key program functions, responsibilities and resources.
- The four courses include:
 - SEVP basics, which provides an overview of SEVP, SEVIS and the management of student records;
 - SEVP 101, which discusses the history of SEVP and describes the different types of students and exchange visitors;
 - EVP 101, introduces the Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program; and
 - Finally, the Introduction to Initial SEVP Certification, gives an overview of federal regulations that govern SEVP's school certification process and requirements.
- These courses are great for both new and continuing DSOs. Once I'm back in the field, I plan to promote these courses to my new and experienced DSOs during school visits—it's always good to have a refresher on SEVP regulations and processes!

MARISSA:

- Lots of good information and training in these courses. Jarod, are these courses mandatory?



JAROD:

- Right now, SEVP does not require school and sponsor officials to complete SETA. However, SEVP expects SETA completion will become mandatory in the future—this is one of our upcoming SETA enhancements that I believe we'll cover in a few slides.

Slide 11: Pre-submitted Question—SETA

MARISSA:

- Thanks again, Jarod. I want to pause now for a quick pre-submitted question about who can use SETA. So, Jarod, can you tell us who can access SETA? Is it just DSOs? Or can anyone take the courses?

JAROD:

- That's a good question. Because SEVIS access is not a requirement to take these courses, SEVP encourages all stakeholders to go to SETA and create an account. All current and prospective school and sponsor officials are encouraged to take these training courses.

Slide 12: Pre-submitted Question—SETA

MARISSA:

- Awesome! Now, let's pause again for another pre-submitted question. Jarod, can you tell us where we can find the instructions on how to gain access and login to SETA?

JAROD:

- Absolutely! You can find the instructions on how to access SETA and make an account on the [SETA resource page](#) on [Study in the States](#). Both resources are available in the hyperlink appendix.

Slide 13: SETA Navigation—Courses

MARISSA:

- Perfect! So, Jarod, once folks login to SETA, what are they going to see?



JAROD:

- The slide you're looking at shows a screenshot of the SETA landing page. On this page, users can access the course catalog, view their completed courses, review the FAQs within SETA and find contact information if they experience technical difficulties.
- We've also included a screenshot of an example SETA course. This one shows the SEVP Basics Course—you'll see that it provides an estimated completion time, the status of completion and an overview of course content. These courses are interactive and include knowledge checks and quizzes to make sure that you stay engaged throughout the training.

Slide 14: SETA Next Steps

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that walkthrough, Jarod. It's always good to see what the actual tool looks like!
- So, earlier you mentioned future plans for SETA. Can you share these plans with those watching?

JAROD:

- Of course! Moving forward, SEVP expects to continually evolve SETA and add new courses. Current courses in the works include: an additional SEVP course called Maintaining School Records. This course will address the student side of things, including creating and maintaining student SEVIS records. We're also working on a second SEVP course that will cover program management, annual reports, [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov) and official program updates.
- Also, as you can see on the slide, SEVP does plan to make completion of SETA mandatory in the future. So, I'd recommend that you get a jump on these courses now!

Slide 15: Ask the Audience—Today's Audience

MARISSA:

- That was a lot of great information. I'm sure our audience appreciates learning about these new SETA courses!
- But, before we move on, let's pause for another poll question. For all those DSOs watching, we want to know: have you already created a SETA account? Please respond, yes or no.
- I'll give you all a few moments to complete the poll.



- It looks like while some of you have made an account so far, we have quite a few that haven't, which is fine. It was only released late last month, so no sweat.

Slide 16: SEVIS Way Forward

MARISSA:

- Alright! Thanks for those responses.
- Let's move on to a topic similar to SETA. In fact, you'll learn about this topic as part of the SETA training courses—it's SEVIS. As some of you may know, we covered SEVIS and the SEVP Portal in some of our most recent presentations, including our Ask the Experts Webinar on the SEVP Portal earlier this fall.
- So, in this section, we will take a deeper dive into recent and upcoming SEVIS and SEVP Portal enhancements to give you a closer look at where SEVIS and the portal are headed in the future. Donald, take it away!

Slide 17: Looking Ahead—SEVIS: What DSOs Should Know

DONALD:

- Thanks Marissa!
- As many of you know, SEVIS updates and enhancements are one of SEVP's top priorities. I'm sure some of you have heard about our plans to move SEVIS to a one-person/one-record database that will clean up the system and improve user experience. As part of this effort, SEVP is already coordinating with our government partners at Customs and Border Protection to leverage their existing technologies.

MARISSA:

- That's great to hear! So, what are the next steps as SEVIS transitions to one-person/one-record?

DONALD:

- SEVP continues to work on internal timelines and processes for this transition. As I tell my school officials, we'll share additional information as it becomes available via Study in the States, Broadcast Messages and social media—so definitely make sure that you're subscribed to receive our updates.



MARISSA:

- Thanks Donald! So, aside from one-person/one-record, what else is on the horizon for SEVIS in 2020?

DONALD:

- As of right now, SEVP already has three major SEVIS enhancements planned for 2020:
 - The first enhancement will be to accommodate the U.S. Department of Education’s revisions to the 2020 CIP list, which you may have already heard about.
 - The second enhancement will be to collect the city of birth for F and M principles and dependents.
 - And finally, the last enhancement will be to collect addresses and telephone numbers for F, M and J dependents.
- Each planned enhancement will help SEVIS capture and reflect the most up-to-date, pertinent information for students!
- Once again, news about any SEVIS enhancements will be communicated well in advance through our various communications channels. We also upload release planning guides to the SEVIS Help Hub in advance of any release to help your school plan accordingly.

Slide 18: Be in the Know—Merge Your SEVIS Accounts Today

MARISSA:

- Thanks Donald! I’m sure many folks watching may have heard from their field representative about the SEVIS account merger initiative; is this something that users should still be doing?

DONALD:

- It is—one aspect of the one-person/one-record model requires that we consolidate the number of active SEVIS user accounts. If you have more than one SEVIS username, you should continue to submit account merging requests. Account merging is not mandatory, but SEVP highly encourages that you merge any active user accounts.
- So far, we have received positive feedback from users who have merged their accounts. In fact, as of September 2019, more than 1,800 SEVIS accounts have been merged. One of the great benefits of merging your accounts is that you have one username and password that provides access to all schools and exchange visitor programs.



MARISSA:

- The fewer passwords to remember, the better! There may be some folks watching who haven't heard of the account merging process, so for those who may be unaware, can you quickly cover the steps?

DONALD:

- Absolutely. This slide outlines the steps in the account merging process. First, ensure that your first and last names in SEVIS are the same across all accounts. The first and last names must also match on all Forms I-17 and DS-3036 in the system. Once you've aligned your account names, the next step is to submit a request to SEVP@ice.dhs.gov. We've included the instructions and information to include on the slide.

MARISSA:

- Anything else that folks need to know when they're submitting one of these requests?

DONALD:

- Yes—it's important to remember that requests are processed in the order in which they are received, and processing may take up to 30 days. During the merger process, you might encounter issues logging into SEVIS. If this issue occurs for more than 12 hours, reach out to the SEVP Response Center. Their contact information is at the end of today's presentation or in your hyperlink appendix.

Slide 19: Looking Ahead—SEVP Portal: What DSOs Need to Know

MARISSA:

- Thanks Donald, for that information.
- As an aside, I just want to make a note for today's webinar that we are not taking live questions. So, if you do have questions that you'd like to submit please refer to that SRC email address. So that's SEVP@ice.dhs.gov, so thanks for that.
- Let's switch gears and talk about the SEVP Portal. As you all probably know, in 2018, we launched the SEVP Portal, which is a tool for students on post-completion OPT to use to report certain information to SEVP. Since its launch, SEVP has made several enhancements to improve the portal user experience.
- Cecilia, how about you take it away with our look at the SEVP Portal?



CECILIA:

- Sure thing!
- As Marissa mentioned, SEVP has made many updates to the SEVP Portal since its initial deployment. In 2019 alone, SEVP has launched nine portal releases. Each of these releases responded to stakeholder feedback that we've collected from the field and conferences about portal functionality.
- I'm not going to talk through each release that came out this year, but I do want to highlight some of the functionality that these releases included, such as:
 - New email notifications for students, such as an email address change notification,
 - Reporting reminders for STEM OPT students, and
 - Fixes to known system errors.
- And, we're not done yet—SEVP has more portal enhancements planned for 2020! These future releases will improve portal functionality for users and on our back-end development.

Slide 20: Be in the Know—SEVP Portal Release 1.9

MARISSA:

- That's very exciting, Cecilia! I know you just recapped a few of the main items included in portal releases this year, but some of the portal releases this fall were pretty big. Do you mind going into more detail on these two recent releases?

CECILIA:

- Not a problem! This past September, we launched SEVP Portal Release 1.9. You can see the functionality included in this release on the slide. Most importantly, this release added an employer deletion confirmation, which means that students must confirm they never worked for an employer prior to deleting in the portal.
- We covered this release in greater detail during our recent SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar on the SEVP Portal. If you haven't checked out this webinar, I highly recommend that you do so. We also just uploaded a copy of the top 10 live questions from this webinar to the Study in the States Stakeholder Webinars page, so definitely check out that resource while you're there.



Slide 21: Be in the Know—SEVP Portal Release 1.10

MARISSA:

- That webinar also covered another big portal release—Cecilia, would you be able to explain for those that may have missed the webinar?

CECILIA:

- SEVP launched release 1.10 in November. This was a big release since it announced that SEVP will begin ending student access to their portal accounts after they complete their practical training opportunity. Moving forward, students will only be able to access their portal account six months after their OPT end date.
- With this release, I've been encouraging my DSOs to tell their students to make sure that they save copies of important information in the portal before the account's deleted. Students never know when they may need that information in the future.

MARISSA:

- But, SEVP notifies students before their account's closed, correct?

CECILIA:

- Correct. SEVP sends automated email notifications to all affected students. They'll receive these emails six months, 30 days and on the day of their account closure. So, there's plenty of opportunities for students to remember to go into the portal and save their information.

Slide 22: Be in the Know—When Students Receive Portal Emails

MARISSA:

- On the subject of the portal emailing students, when do students receive emails from the portal and where can DSOs find samples of these emails? Would you be able to shed some light on that situation?

CECILIA:

- Of course! The SEVP Portal uses email to convey important information and messages to students. The portal sends emails to students when an action is needed or in a specific situation—all of which we've listed on this slide.



- For those DSOs who want to know what information these emails contain so they can better advise their students, we’ve developed a page on Study in the States with sample portal emails. This link is included on the bottom of the slide and in the hyperlink appendix.

Slide 23: Be in the Know—SEVP Portal User Guide

MARISSA:

- Awesome! And, that sample email page is another example of how SEVP listened to your feedback and responded by developing a new resource. So, we hope that you’ll check out the sample emails page and share it with your colleagues.
- So, on that subject: are there any other portal resources that our audience might find helpful?

CECILIA:

- Yes, definitely—The [SEVP Portal User Guide](#) is a great resource to help students navigate the portal, including:
 - Troubleshooting problems with their account;
 - Updating their profile information; and
 - Managing employment information, including adding, editing and deleting employers.
- We’ve heard that many DSOs are interested in viewing portal screenshots, so they can get a better sense of what their students see. To that end, I want to point you towards this user guide—it’s filled with screenshots to assist students with navigating through the different pages and features. This guide is available for download in the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States, and if you haven’t guessed it, it’s also in your hyperlink appendix!

Slide 24: Pre-Submitted Question—SEVP Portal

MARISSA:

- That’s a great resource, Cecilia. I also want to give a plug for the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States that’s been mentioned throughout this part of the presentation. This page really is your one stop shop for all portal-related information for both students and DSOs.



- Alright, let's close out this section with a few pre-submitted questions related to the portal. These are questions that we've received from stakeholders during our fall conference season and want to share with those watching.
- So, Cecilia, how is SEVP addressing data integrity issues, such as phone numbers being removed from student records after submitting an update through the SEVP Portal?

CECILIA:

- Great question, Marissa! SEVP is aware of this problem and made an update to the SEVIS interface to try and mitigate this very issue. In the meantime, the SEVIS team is still analyzing how to restore anything previously deleted in the portal. We'll be sure to notify the stakeholder community once this issue is fully resolved.

MARISSA:

- And, if stakeholders encounter issues like the one in this question, they should contact the SRC, correct?

CECLIA:

- Correct. When emailing the SRC, I also strongly encourage DSOs to provide all information about the issue—including affected SEVIS IDs and screenshots of the problem, if applicable, so our team can fully address.

Slide 25: Pre-Submitted Question—SEVP Portal

MARISSA:

- Great point—that was one that our SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar presenters really hammered home: The more information and screenshots you can provide about an issue you're encountering in SEVIS or the portal, the better!
- And, we have one more pre-submitted question about the SEVP Portal. I know that this is also a frequently asked question at our conferences. So, Cecilia, does SEVP have any plans to start auto-terminating records based on students not reporting employment through the portal?

CECILIA:

- While SEVP does not have immediate plans to turn on the auto-termination feature, we are planning to make accrued unemployment days viewable to both DSOs and students. Right



now, DSOs can view student unemployment in SEVIS, but it is *not* viewable to students in the portal. SEVP has not yet scheduled the release that will make unemployment viewable to students in the portal.

- Additionally, we will be sure to notify stakeholders in advance of any portal release, whether it's one that adds an unemployment view for students in the portal or one that turns on the auto-termination feature.

Slide 26: Notifications and Follow Up

MARISSA:

- Thank you, Donald and Cecilia, for that deep dive into SEVIS and the portal. There was a lot of great information and resources mentioned in that section. Once again, please make sure you've downloaded our hyperlink appendix so you can access all of those links after this presentation.
- Let's now transition to our next section, which focuses on important program updates, including annual verification reminders and recent policy guidance. For any of our K-12 listeners, we have an update about outreach to the K-12 community designed just for you—so please don't tune out!
- Jarod, let's get you back into the conversation—do you mind taking this section?

Slide 27: Reminders for DSOs—Get Ready for SEVIS Annual Verification

JAROD:

- Gladly!
- Since it's now December, it's that time of year to complete the SEVIS Annual Verification process. I'm sure our more experienced PDSOs watching are familiar with this process that occurs every year between December and March.
- But, for those who may be new DSOs or unfamiliar with this process, remember that PDSOs must annually verify that all DSOs who have access to SEVIS are still employed by the organization, continue to serve as a PDSO or DSO and require continued access to SEVIS.

MARISSA:

- So, what about those schools who may not have a PDSO?



JAROD:

- That's a great question Marissa because I'm sure that there are a few schools out there in this situation. Schools who do not have a PDSO should begin the process of selecting another individual to serve as the PDSO and submit a locked petition DSO update request as soon as possible so that there is time to process the update.

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that reminder, Jarod. I do want to really stress that PDSOs should prioritize and complete the annual verification as soon as possible. Failure to verify school officials by the March 3 deadline may impact your school's ability to remain SEVP-certified and enroll international students. So, complete the verification while it's fresh in your mind—like after today's webinar!

JAROD:

- Great point, Marissa. The annual verification process is something that I strongly emphasize during my school visits at this time of the year. And, I remind folks that, if they have questions or issues with completing the annual verification, they should reference the resources available on Study in the States or contact the SEVP Response Center.

Slide 28: New SEVP Policy Guidance—Major Area of Study Requirements

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that reminder, Jarod!
- So far, we've talked a lot about SEVIS-related topics, so let's switch gears to recent policy guidance. This year, SEVP published two important policy guidance documents. Jarod, can you speak to these documents? I'm sure you've touched on them during your school visits.

JAROD:

- I've mentioned these during my school visits earlier this year. I'll start with the more recent of the two guidance documents. In September 2019, SEVP released policy guidance that addresses OPT and STEM OPT extension opportunities and provides clarifying language on the major area of study requirements for OPT students.
- This guidance notes that students are responsible for providing a description of how their job duties relate to their major and that DSOs can document the relationship in either



SEVIS or the student's file. The full policy guidance goes into more detail about the type of information students should provide and the DSO's responsibilities, so I want to direct people to the guidance document on our website at [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP). And, if you haven't guessed it, we've also included the link to this guidance in the hyperlink appendix.

Slide 29: New SEVP Policy Guidance—Form I-20 and Recruiters

MARISSA:

- Thanks for covering that guidance! Now, would you mind covering the second of these two policy guidance documents?

JAROD:

- Certainly! As you mentioned, SEVP released policy guidance on the Form I-20 and recruiters earlier this year. This guidance specified that DSOs must issue and send Forms I-20 directly to prospective students and their dependents. For our K-12 DSOs that deal with minor students, it's important to note that you must send Forms I-20 directly to the student, their parent, or a legal guardian.
- Although students can use recruiters to find a school in the United States, recruiters have no role in issuing or handling Forms I-20.

MARISSA:

- We've had some folks ask for the reasoning behind this policy guidance. Can you share, Jarod?

JAROD:

- SEVP released this guidance because it protects the privacy of individuals, protects against fraud or manipulation, and is consistent with relevant laws and regulations. We understand that there may be additional questions about this guidance and stakeholders who may be wondering about exceptions to this rule, so I strongly encourage you to read the full policy guidance on ICE.gov and contact the SRC with any additional questions.



Slide 30: Pre-Submitted Question: Form I-20 Issuance

MARISSA:

- I also strongly encourage folks to check out both the Form I-20 and the directly related policy guidance documents if you haven't already.
- Sticking on this subject, as you mentioned, Jarod, SEVP has received several frequently asked questions about this guidance. So let's tackle one right now—our questioner asks:
 - SEVP recently issued policy guidance limiting Form I-20 distribution to the student only. This appears to attempt to mirror regulation of DS-2019s, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status." However, this regulation makes an important allowance for releasing the document with permission to a third party. Does SEVP anticipate revising their original guidance to allow for this same practice?

JAROD:

- So, SEVP does not anticipate revising the original guidance as the intent was not to mirror Department of State rules, but rather to curb abuses stemming from Form I-20 releases to third parties. As I've alluded to, third parties may receive Forms I-20 only in extenuating circumstances, which are determined at SEVP's discretion. I do want to note that these are specific circumstances that depend on the student or country's unique situation.
- Requests to have Forms I-20 sent to another individual or party must come directly from the student to the DSO. DSOs should submit these requests to the SRC.

Slide 31: K-12 Outreach—Collaboration Between Post-Secondary and K-12 Schools

MARISSA:

- Since it seems like we've mentioned the SRC several times today, I once again want to note that their contact information is at the end of this presentation and in your hyperlink appendix. As you may have guessed, this is definitely information that you will want to become familiar with!
- I know we promised an update specific to the K-12 community earlier, so Jarod, would you mind covering this update for those K-12 schools watching?



JAROD:

- I'm happy to! As part of our continuing campaign to develop resources and messaging for K-12 schools, we want to remind both post-secondary and K-12 DSOs about best practices and resources for the management of K-12 international student programs.
- Remember, K-12 DSOs are typically the first line of defense for minor students studying in the United States. As a best practice, SEVP recommends that DSOs at post-secondary schools work with their K-12 counterparts to ensure that they understand our regulations, processes and reporting requirements, including:
 - The unique regulations for K-12 schools,
 - The importance of registering students at least twice per year, and
 - The requirement to report updates to student and school information in SEVIS.
- We also encourage DSOs at post-secondary schools to share best practices and resources with your K-12 colleagues. For example, you could collaborate with K-12 DSOs to share best practices and facilitate the transfer process to a U.S. college or university.

Slide 32: Field Representative Unit Updates—Current Field Representative Vacancies

MARISSA:

- That's a great point. I also want to strongly encourage those DSOs watching—both K-12 and postsecondary—to take a look at the many resources available for K-12 schools on Study in the States. We recently published a series of reminders about the importance of registering K-12 students in SEVIS, so be sure to check out these posts on our Study in the States blog while you're on the site.
- Alright, let's end this section with an update about current field representative vacancies. I know that we have had some vacancies open up this fall.

JAROD:

- We have, Marissa! We currently have three field representative vacancies, which are listed on the slide. I do want to note that our field representative for the Omaha, Nebraska territory is currently in training at SEVP headquarters and we hope that she will be deployed to the field after the new year.



- And, as a reminder, all schools in territories with a vacancy should continue to contact the SRC for assistance until you receive a message from your newly assigned field representative.

Slide 33: Don't Forget...

MARISSA:

- Thanks, Jarod! With those updates out of the way, let's move on to our next section that highlights important tips and reminders for DSOs. As the holiday season approaches, we know that travel is a hot topic for both students and DSOs. Donald, would you give us a refresher on travel rules and tips for international students?

Slide 34: Holiday Travel—Tips for DSOs

DONALD:

- Absolutely! So, for DSOs, SEVP has three recommended tips as you prepare for the holiday travel season:
 - First, encourage students to check in with their DSO, to make sure their SEVIS record is up-to-date and in Active status before they depart for the holidays. Also, use this opportunity to provide your updated, emergency contact information in the event a student encounters any issues at the port of entry.
 - Second, make sure that students travel with all proper documentation, including their passport, student visa and Form I-20. Remember, students should hand-carry all necessary paperwork at the U.S. port of entry—make sure your students understand not to put these documents in their checked luggage.
 - Finally, make sure that students understand the Form I-515A. Students need to notify you if they receive a Form I-515A from a CBP officer at a U.S. port of entry.

Slide 35: Student Travel—Form I-515A

MARISSA:

- Donald, I'm glad that you mentioned the Form I-515A since this takes us into our next slide. Can you explain the Form I-515A and how DSOs can assist students with responding to this form?



DONALD:

- Sure! As I just alluded to, the Form I-515A grants a student temporary admission into the United States. Typically, CBP issues this form if a student does not carry all required documentation or has a SEVIS status issue at the port of entry.
- If a student receives the Form I-515A, their DSO will receive an email notification and should assist the student in complying with all requirements. Please ensure that the student submits all required paperwork to SEVP within 30 days—we've listed this paperwork on the slide. Also, remember that failure to respond to a Form I-515A may negatively impact a student's status, so it's very important that they respond to this notice.
- Once again, I want to point you to our hyperlink appendix, which provides a link to our Study in the States Resource Library. This library has a great graphic called "Handling the Form I-515A" that outlines the actions students and DSOs can take to respond to this form.

MARISSA:

- Great point, Donald, and thanks for bringing up the Resource Library. Before we move on, I want to give a quick plug to check out this page if you haven't already. Our team has developed numerous graphics for different audiences—from students to K-12 DSOs—that you can easily download, print or email! So, I strongly encourage you to check out that resource today.

Slide 36: Ask the Audience—Holiday Travel

MARISSA:

- Let's take a brief moment for another poll question since we haven't had one in a while. This poll will give us a sense of how many DSOs watching have already gotten a jump start on preparing for the holiday travel season. So, DSOs, we want to know: Have you talked with your students about their holiday travel plans?

[Pause for responses]

- Overwhelming yes! That is what we love to see. That is awesome. We know it's a little early in the season yet, but that is exciting to see that everyone is already so far ahead of the game. So, well done you! And if you haven't had that conversation yet, hopefully this a good reminder so you can jump in on that.



Slide 37: Study in the States Resource—New Travel Resource Page

MARISSA:

- On that note, we want to end this section by providing you all with the new travel resource page on Study in the States. Donald, could you tell us more?

DONALD:

- Sure! The new travel resource page highlights some great travel tips, including the following:
 - Benefits of students meeting with their DSO before travel,
 - What students need to bring to a U.S. port of entry, and
 - How to comply if students receive a Form I-515A from a CBP officer.
- I encourage any DSOs listening to visit the [travel resource page](#) on Study in the States. As always, the link is provided in the hyperlink appendix, which you can find in the Webinar Resources pod at the bottom of the screen.

Slide 38: Facts & Figures

MARISSA:

- Thank you for covering those travel tips, Donald! Let's now switch gears to look at interesting facts and statistics related to international students studying in the states—I know this is a hot topic for many DSOs.
- In this next section, we'll look at some highlights from this year's Open Doors Report, which I'm sure many folks may have already read or heard about.

Slide 39: Open Doors Report—Fast Facts

CECILIA:

- I'll take this one, Marissa! Last month, the Institute of International Education released its annual Open Doors Report, which provides information and data about post-secondary student flows into and out of the United States during the previous academic year. So, this year's report looks specifically at data for the 2018 to 2019 academic year.
- This slide highlights some fast facts, including the total number of students studying in the United States. As you can see, the total number of international students increased by 5.5 percent from last year.



MARISSA:

- Those are some interesting numbers, Cecilia. The increase in students studying in the United States no doubt influenced the U.S. economy, right?

CECILIA:

- It sure did! In the 2018 to 2019 academic year, international students contributed \$44.7 billion to the U.S. economy.
- The entire report is available on the Institute of International Education's [website](#) and also included in your hyperlink appendix. So, if you haven't checked out this report, I strongly encourage you to take a look after the webinar.

MARISSA:

- That's all great information, Cecilia! I encourage anyone listening who wants more information to visit the Institute of International Education's website and read the full report.

Slide 40: Helpful Resources

MARISSA:

- Alright, let's move on to our final section, which highlights some of our newest stakeholder resources. As we go through this section, you'll notice that we have a few feedback questions on the screen about today's webinar. Please take a second to respond to these questions.
- While folks are taking these polls, Donald do you want to talk through some of the new resources from SEVP that folks should know about?

Slide 41: Upcoming Webinar—Government Voices Webinar

DONALD:

- Can do! For all of our viewers, mark your calendars now for February 5, 2020 for our upcoming Government Voices Webinar titled Get to Know Customs and Border Protection.
- This webinar will feature our government partners from CBP including the Office of the Intergovernmental Public Liaison and the Office of Field Operations.
- Tune in to take a deep dive into CBP and hear about hot topics for students and members of the academic community.



- We'll be posting more information on how to register for this webinar soon, both through email and on our Study in the States Stakeholders webinar page—so please keep a look out for these communications coming your way! A link to the stakeholders webinar page is provided in your hyperlink appendix.

Slide 42: Watch Now! SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: SEVP Portal Follow-up

DONALD:

- You can also check out our SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar on the SEVP Portal. We mentioned this webinar during our SEVP Portal section earlier, but this is a great resource to learn about how students report information in the portal. During the webinar, our friends from the Systems Management Unit walked through navigating the portal and responded to many live questions. As Cecilia mentioned earlier, we just posted a document answering the top 10 questions from this webinar—so if you don't have time to listen to the recording, make sure you open this Q&A.

Slide 43: New Resource—How to Navigate Pay.gov

DONALD:

- To coincide with the fee rule published earlier this year, Study in the States developed a new resource to assist DSOs with navigating Pay.gov. This blog post walks you through the steps to pay these fees, so I strongly encourage DSOs to review it before going to [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov).

Slide 44: Resource for New DSOs—Download New Resource Guide

DONALD:

- For any new DSOs watching, I also want to highlight the Resources for New DSOs guide that we developed earlier this year. This downloadable resource points new DSOs to useful information to identify resources and assist with reporting requirements, such as creating an Initial Form I-20, maintaining accurate SEVIS records and SEVIS name standards. So, if you have any colleagues that are new to the field, please make sure to share this link with them!



Slide 45: Sign up for GovDelivery—Subscribe to Receive Updates

MARISSA:

- Thanks for going over those great resources, Donald. Cecilia, would you like to brief our viewers on the different ways they can stay up-to-date on SEVP news and releases?

CECILIA:

- Absolutely. I know many folks are probably already subscribed to receive our GovDelivery messages, but we want to push this resource to anyone who hasn't already signed up. SEVP distributes monthly GovDelivery messages containing important program updates and reminders to all subscribers. We'll also deliver special messages to highlight breaking news, such as when a new regulation impacting the international student community is published. This is a great way to stay in touch and up to date with the latest program news.
- You must be subscribed to SEVP's GovDelivery channel, otherwise you won't receive these messages. Subscribing is easy—visit [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.gov/SEVP) and enter your email in the Stay Connected box on the right side of page.
- Many of our government partners also use GovDelivery to distribute updates, so use this opportunity to also sign up for their alerts!

Slide 46: Connect with Study in the States—Social Media

CECILIA:

- I also want to give a special plug for our social media channels—we have quite a few of them, as you can see on the slide. I strongly encourage not only DSOs to like and follow us on social media, but also to promote this as a resource to your students and even their parents. We regularly promote both new and existing resources and highlight important reminders from our government partners. For example, if there's a major snowstorm or wildfire, we'll share the latest emergency preparedness information from our partners at FEMA.



Slide 47: Engage with SEVP—Stay Connected

CECILIA:

- We just went through two ways that you can stay in touch with SEVP on the previous slide, but once again, I want to highlight that we encourage you to connect with all of our publications, including our blog on Study in the States.
- As we've mentioned throughout this webinar, you can also engage with us through conferences. If you'd like to have SEVP attend an event, please submit a request through our Event Request Form—this link is on the slide and in your hyperlink appendix.

Slide 48: SEVP Contact Information

MARISSA:

- Thanks Cecilia, for that information. And finally, the long-promised, SRC contact information!
- The SRC is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, except on federal holidays—we have several of those coming up. Remember, you can always reach out to us through the email addresses you see on the screen.
- Before we sign off, I'd like to encourage everyone to please take a moment to complete the polls listed on your screen, if you haven't already. Thanks to Jarod, Donald and Cecilia, our field representatives who jumped in while they're here at headquarters to deliver this webinar today. And thank you to our audience who jumped on to listen. Have a great week and enjoy your holiday season!

Slide 49: Webinar Closing Slide

[Slide 49 displays until the Adobe Connect room closes at the end of the webinar.]