Spring 2018 SEVP InFocus Webinar
May 3, 2018
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. EDT.]

Slide 2: Title Slide

LAUREN:

- Hello everybody! I'm Lauren Caricato and I'd like to welcome you to today's Spring 2018 SEVP InFocus Webinar.
- As we get started, if you haven't already, 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 hot topics. Your responses will help inform our communication efforts, so, as always, we really appreciate your input.
- We've also added a new option to our polls that allows you to provide additional insight if you select the "other" or "not applicable" option. We know that not everything neatly fits into a multiple-choice answer, and heard that you'd like the opportunity to provide additional insight, so we added this option to our webinar polls. I encourage folks to provide information through this pod if you have other thoughts or insight.

Slide 3: Housekeeping Notes

LAUREN:

- Let's get a few brief housekeeping notes out of the way.
- First, please download and take a 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 of today's PowerPoint presentation and a glossary that defines key terms and acronyms mentioned during the webinar.

- Additionally, if you experience technical difficulties at any point during our presentation, please explain your problem through the 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.
- Finally, if any of your colleagues couldn't join us today—we know that it's a busy time of the year with graduation and summer holidays approaching—please make sure you direct them to our webinar recording. That recording, along with all the resources just mentioned in the Webinar Resources pod, will be available on the Study in the States Spring 2018 SEVP InFocus Webinar page, which is where you might have come to access today's webinar.

Slide 4: Today's Presenters

LAUREN:

- As I mentioned, I'm Lauren Caricato and I'll be your moderator today. I'm joined by Marissa Tinsley, our regular SEVP InFocus Webinar presenter, and a special guest presenter for today's webinar: Kelly Pilleux-Petronia, the SEVP field representative for territory 30. You may remember her as one of our guest presenters for last year's SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: Campus Emergency Planning and the International Student Community.

MARISSA:

- I want to jump in quickly, Lauren, and give a plug for that Ask the Experts Webinar. Our presenters, including Kelly and representatives from DHS OAE, covered a wide range of topics related to campus resilience and emergency planning. Given that hurricane season is just around the corner, this webinar is a great resource to help make sure that your school is prepared to respond to a natural disaster or any other emergency.

LAUREN:

- That's a great point, Marissa. I'll take the chance to remind everyone now that the link to this webinar is included in your hyperlink appendix.
- Moving back to our presenters, Kelly, since you're a new to the SEVP InFocus Webinars, let's have you introduce yourself first. Would you mind giving a bit of background about yourself and what you do as an SEVP field representative?

KELLY:

- Hi everyone. I'm Kelly Pilleux-Petronia and I serve as the SEVP field representative for territory 30, which includes the Chicago, Illinois, area. I joined SEVP as part of the first class of SEVP field representatives, but my previous experience included working within

international departments at U.S. institutions as a DSO. I'm currently working with Marissa and the SEVP Strategic Communications Team to assist with SEVP's communications and resources. However, when I'm not at headquarters, I am out in the field visiting schools and answering their day-to-day questions.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Kelly. We're glad to have you with us!
- I'm sure many of our regular viewers are already familiar with you, Marissa, but would you mind introducing yourself?

MARISSA:

- Hi everyone—my name is Marissa Tinsley and I started working at SEVP in 2010 in the School Certification Unit doing Initial certifications. I later transferred to my current position on the SEVP Strategic Communications Team.

Slide 5: Presentation Overview

LAUREN:

- Thanks for those introductions, Kelly and Marissa.
- I'll let you all read through the items on today's webinar agenda, but before we move on, I want to stress to please mark our Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey in your hyperlink appendix and make a note to complete it after the webinar. We'll also have a few polling questions towards the end of today's presentation, so make sure you stick around until the end to complete those!

Slide 6: Ask the Audience

LAUREN:

- Speaking of getting your feedback, I want to pause for a moment for our first poll question to get a sense of who is in our audience. Please select the option that best describes your current position using the choices on your screen. And, like I mentioned earlier, if your role doesn't fit nicely into one of the categories available, please describe it through the "other" pod by typing in your response.
- I'll give you all a few moments to complete the poll.
- Looks like we have a lot of PDSOs and DSOs tuning in, but still some other folks that might work with international students.

- Thanks everyone for providing that insight. It's great to see that, while we have a lot of DSOs in the audience, we still have a few other folks tuning in.

Slide 7: The Latest News

LAUREN:

- With that poll out of the way, let's move into our first section, which looks at the latest news on the SEVP Portal, a tool for international students currently engaged in practical training that deployed in March 2018. I'm sure many of you, particularly those DSOs at larger colleges and universities, tuned in to our SEVP Special Report Webinar to learn about the SEVP Portal. But for those of you that may have missed this webinar, we want to take the time to give an update on the portal and review some key information for school officials.
- Kelly, given that you work in the field, I'm sure you've spent quite a bit of time talking about and promoting the SEVP Portal to school officials. Would you mind kicking us off?

Slide 8: SEVP Portal—Overview

KELLY:

- Sure, Lauren. As many DSOs are aware, the SEVP Portal deployed on March 23, 2018. I'm happy to note that, since then, more than 90,000 international students have successfully created an SEVP Portal account.

LAUREN:

- Wow—that's a good number of students!

KELLY:

- Yes, it really is. We are thrilled that so many students have taken the opportunity to create an account. On that note, I want to provide a few brief reminders to DSOs and international students related to reporting practical training information:
  - First, it's always beneficial to review practical training reporting requirements, even if you're an experienced DSO. There is a page dedicated to explaining these reporting requirements on Study in the States—that link is accessible from the SEVP Portal Help Section and is also in your hyperlink appendix.
  - I also want to remind everyone that students and DSOs are required to keep student records up to date; the SEVP Portal does not alleviate the burden for reporting

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changes in information to SEVP. I provide this reminder to a lot of DSOs out in the field. Remember, students are required to report changes to their physical address or mailing address and legal name to their DSO **or** through the SEVP Portal within 10 days.

- o Finally, DSOs and students should be aware of special considerations for the STEM OPT extension. In addition to reporting certain information through the SEVP Portal, STEM OPT students must still check-in every six months with their DSO.

LAUREN:

- That's all great information, Kelly. I know during our SEVP Special Report Webinar we received a lot questions about who exactly can use the portal at this point in time. Can you remind those watching which students currently have SEVP Portal access?

Slide 9: SEVP Portal Users

KELLY:

- Of course. Currently, the SEVP Portal is only available for those students listed on the slide: F-1 students currently engaged in post-completion OPT, including STEM OPT, and M-1 students currently engaged in practical training. So, to those DSOs from K-12 schools or schools with only English language training programs, it's good to be aware of the SEVP Portal, but it does not impact your students at this time.

LAUREN:

- If I can just jump in here Kelly—SEVP does hope to expand the SEVP Portal's reach to include new student audiences in the future, correct?

KELLY:

- Correct. As mentioned during the webinar, SEVP hopes to expand the portal's functionality and reach in the coming years. We'll be sure to communicate any changes to the SEVP Portal through field representatives like myself and Study in the States.

Slide 10: SEVP Portal Functionality—Student Uses

LAUREN:

- Now that we know who can use the portal, would you be able to remind those watching about what students can do through the portal?

KELLY:

- The current slide does a good job of summarizing what students can report and monitor through the SEVP Portal. However, I want to emphasize two points:
  - Students can monitor their employment information through the SEVP Portal. But, they still need to work with our partners at USCIS to receive an EAD. I know some folks may not be as familiar with some of these terms, so I want to encourage you to download our glossary, which is located in the Webinar Resources pod.
  - Also, I want to reinforce the point at the bottom of the slide: STEM OPT students cannot add a new employer or change their employment start date through the portal due to STEM OPT regulatory requirements. Remember, STEM OPT students must complete a new Form I-983 for each new employer, and DSOs must enter this information into SEVIS.

LAUREN:

- Just to reiterate: STEM OPT students cannot add a new employer, but they can edit their employer's information through the portal.

KELLY:

- Exactly. STEM OPT students should only be editing this employer information if they encounter a misspelling of their employer's name, such as spelling Google with three O's instead of two.

Slide 11: Account Creation Overview

LAUREN:

- Thanks for confirming that, Kelly. Our next slide takes a look at the account creation process. Would you be able to walk folks through this graphic?

KELLY:

- Yes, of course. As the graphic on this slide illustrates, once a student is approved for practical training in SEVIS, SEVIS will share the student's data with the SEVP Portal. This includes items like the student's biographical information, SEVIS ID and employment authorization details.
- When the portal receives this information, it will send an email to the student, who will then receive a unique link to create an account. Clicking on this link will prompt the student to enter information to create their SEVP Portal account.

LAUREN:

- That sounds pretty straight forward, but I'm sure there are certain things for DSOs and students to be aware of during the account creation process.

Slide 12: Account Creation—Tips and Reminders for DSOs

KELLY:

- Yes, there are. We've included some helpful tips for DSOs to assist students with the account creation process on this slide. Most importantly, I want to remind DSOs to encourage your students to add the email address on this slide to their safe sender list. I have heard of several instances in the field where the SEVP Portal account email went to the student's junk folder, and we certainly want to make sure that students have access to this email.
- I also want to direct your attention to the bottom of the slide and our SEVP Portal videos. We know that students might have questions about the account creation process, so we developed several step-by-step instructional videos to walk students through each stage in creating an account.

MARISSA:

- To echo Kelly's point, DSOs: please direct your students to these videos. They are great resources—and those links are included in your hyperlink appendix. If you haven't had a

chance to download this document already, I strongly encourage you to download it now—we'll be referencing it throughout this webinar.

Slide 13: Ask the Audience—SEVP Portal Accounts

LAUREN:

- Alright, I want to pause for a brief poll question to get a sense of how many DSOs watching have informed their students that are currently engaged in practical training to register for an SEVP Portal account. I'll let you all select an appropriate response on your screen.

KELLY:

- While everyone is taking the poll, I want to jump in and note that SEVP provides resources to assist DSOs with reaching out to students about the SEVP Portal. You can find a template email to send to students in the Broadcast Message archive at ICE.gov/SEVP. We also have a one-page reference sheet in the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States that DSOs can send to their students.

LAUREN:

- That's good to know, Kelly! I know a couple of DSOs asked about this letter during our SEVP Special Report Webinar. And, to those watching: don't worry about navigating to these resources right now—we've included links to both in your hyperlink appendix.
- Thanks for taking the poll, everyone. It looks like a lot of you have already notified your students about the SEVP Portal, which we're always happy to hear. Good to know that some folks also plan to reach out to their students after this webinar.

Slide 14: Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

LAUREN:

- Alright, let's move onto our next slide, which looks at how students and DSOs can troubleshoot issues they may encounter with creating or maintaining their SEVP Portal account. Kelly, you've shared a lot of helpful information about the portal thus far, would you be able to go into detail here?

KELLY:

- Sure thing, Lauren. The graphic on this slide explains how students can troubleshoot common issues they may encounter with their SEVP Portal account. To quickly summarize: students can resolve certain issues themselves, such as resetting their own SEVP Portal password. However, students need to contact their DSO if they:
    - Lock their account;
    - Check their inbox and junk mail folder and haven't receive an SEVP Portal email; or
    - Cannot enter or save data in the portal.
- As I mentioned earlier, students and DSOs are still held to those reporting deadlines in SEVP's federal regulations. So, if a student engaged in practical training moves to a new address and cannot report this information in the SEVP Portal, they still need to communicate this change to their DSO within the 10 days required by federal regulation. And, in turn, DSOs must make this change in SEVIS within 21 days.
- Finally, if a student has a problem entering or saving data in the SEVP Portal or encounters any other sort of technical problem, they may need to contact SRC, who can assist.

LAUREN:

- If you haven't noticed, SRC's contact information is included in your hyperlink appendix and at the end of this presentation. This is good to have on hand since, since, as we learned during our SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: Get to Know the SEVP Response Center, SRC can assist both DSOs **and** students with questions related to the international student process.

Slide 15: Ask the Audience—SEVP Portal Hot Topics

LAUREN:

- I know that it seems like we've had a lot of poll questions, but we want to keep you all engaged in this presentation and get your feedback on the portal, which is an important development for SEVP. We're curious to know: DSOs, what are the hot topics and common issues that students are experiencing with the SEVP Portal? Please select from the options on your screen and, if you've encountered a hot topic or issue not listed, please take a moment to write it in using our "other" option.
- Thanks, everyone for those responses. We're happy to see that some of you are writing in that your students have yet to experience any issues—that's great! Also, overall, this is some great feedback that we will certainly pass on to our team here to use for future blog posts and Study in the States resources.

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Slide 16: SEVP Portal Functions in SEVIS

LAUREN:

- With that poll question out of the way, I'll hand it back to Kelly to speak to the tools for DSOs in SEVIS that are related to the SEVP Portal.

KELLY:

- Thanks, Lauren. Once again, the graphic on this slide depicts the various tools DSOs can access in SEVIS to assist students with SEVP Portal accounts. I want to focus on the downloadable report, or the second item from the left in the graphic, since this has been a hot topic for some schools.
- This report allows DSOs to view information changes by students in the SEVP Portal. We are aware that larger schools that use Batch processing may be concerned about out-of-sync data between SEVIS and the school's Batch system if a student changes data in the portal. DSOs can access the "SEVIS Updates Submitted by Students" report from the Downloads page and can download this report in .csv or Excel format to feed data into the Batch software, if the system provides this ability. SEVP is planning to address Batch interface issues between SEVIS and third-party systems as part of SEVIS Modernization.

LAUREN:

- Good to know. And, SEVP provided an overview of Batch processing and the SEVP Portal in a March 2018 Broadcast Message, which is in your hyperlink appendix and at ICE.gov/SEVP, under the What's New tab. I also want to quickly note that we received several questions during the SEVP Special Report Webinar about why DSOs couldn't receive an email notification indicating that a student made changes to the portal—for the schools with more than 4,000 students on OPT, that would be a lot of emails. The downloadable report Kelly just mentioned is our way of providing this information in an easily accessible format.

Slide 17: SEVP Portal Links—Login Page and Resources

LAUREN:

- We've covered a lot about the SEVP Portal, but haven't mentioned how students can access it. Kelly, can you explain where DSOs and students can find links to the portal?

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KELLY:

- Sure. I'll start by mentioning that the links on this slide are included in your hyperlink appendix. I'll also reiterate your earlier point, Lauren, that folks should take the opportunity to download the hyperlink appendix and use it as a resource both during and after this webinar.
- To summarize the information on the slide, students can access the portal from three locations: ICE.gov, Study in the States and directly through the link in the middle of the slide.

Slide 18: Watch It Again—SEVP Special Report Webinar: SEVP Portal

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Kelly. And before we wrap up this section, we've mentioned the SEVP Special Report Webinar: SEVP Portal a couple of times during the past few slides. Would you be able to recap this webinar for folks?

KELLY:

- Our SEVP Special Report Webinar covered a lot of what we just talked about, but went into more detail about certain topics, such as the account creation process and how students can navigate the portal. If you missed the live webinar, I highly recommend taking the time to watch the recording. Additionally, since this webinar provided a lot of information for international students, I'd recommend that DSOs share the recording link with their students. Like the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States, this webinar is another great resource.

LAUREN:

- And don't worry about the link to the webinar recording—that is in your hyperlink appendix. I do want to note that we are currently working on two documents that respond to the top 10 questions from students and DSOs about the portal. Please be on the lookout for information about when these documents are available on Study in the States; we'll be sure to promote them as a resource for the academic community.

Slide 19: Ask the Audience—SEVP Portal Resources

LAUREN:

- Alright, before we move on to our next section, I want to pause for a poll question. We want to get a sense of what resources you're sharing with your colleagues and students related to the portal. Please select the options available on the screen. I'll give everyone a moment to respond.
- Looks like a lot of you have used the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States and also referred back to that SEVP Special Report Webinar: SEVP Portal.
- Once again, thanks for the feedback, everyone!

Slide 20: Notifications and Follow-up

LAUREN:

- Okay, let's move on to our next section, which provides updates on program initiatives and topics that we addressed during our previous SEVP InFocus Webinars. Since Kelly just provided a run-through of the entire SEVP Portal, Marissa, let's bring you into the conversation. Would you mind kicking us off with some updates?

Slide 21: News for School Officials–Uploading Evidence in SEVIS

MARISSA:

- Sure thing, Lauren. I'll start with a fairly recent change related to uploading evidence in SEVIS. I'm sure most folks are aware of this change, but I want to quickly remind DSOs that you are now required to submit evidence upfront at the time of filing through SEVIS for initial SEVP certification, recertification and Form I-17 updates. SEVP will cancel any requests received without the necessary evidence.
- Also, remember that documents uploaded to SEVIS cannot be encrypted or password protected, and cannot exceed the 10MB file limit. So, DSOs: Please make sure you triple check your document's security settings and size before uploading it to SEVIS.

LAUREN:

- Great points, Marissa. Is there anything else that DSOs should be aware of related to this change?

MARISSA:

- Yes, Lauren. DSOs should absolutely make sure that you label and store copies of evidence uploaded to SEVIS in a safe location. This is important for your record keeping, and also because you can only view the name of documents uploaded to SEVIS and not its actual contents.

LAUREN:

- Good to know. So where can folks find an explanation of the evidence they need to upload to SEVIS?

Slide 22: Enhanced Resource—Evidence Guides

MARISSA:

- That's a great question, which brings me to our next slide. SEVP recently updated the organization of our evidence guides on ICE.gov/SEVP.

LAUREN:

- Those were previously the two big PDF documents for accredited and non-accredited schools?

MARISSA:

- Yes. We reworked those evidence guides that you just mentioned, Lauren, into evidence checklists, which are organized depending on the action your school wants to take on the Form I-17 and your school type. These evidence checklists are located under the different tabs at ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools. If you're filing a Form I-17 update, click on the Petition Updates tab, and dependent on your school's accreditation status, look for the evidence checklist that corresponds with the section you're updating on the Form I-17. Once again, I want to stress here that schools should be providing all evidence for Form I-17 updates upfront at the time of filing.
- I also want to point all DSOs to our Definition of Evidence Guide—this document contains an overview of the common evidence required for SEVP adjudications, so it's an important reference document to have open when you're preparing to file a Form I-17 update.

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LAUREN:

- Let me quickly provide an example to make sure our viewers understand correctly. Say I'm a DSO at an accredited school who wants to update my school's Form I-17 with information for a program of study, and I want to check what evidence we need to submit. I would go to ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools and navigate to the Petition Updates page. From this page, I would expand the section for "accredited school/program of study filing evidence." And, since the update for a course of study is located in section 2 of the Form I-17, I would open this checklist.

MARISSA:

- Correct. And when you open that checklist, you would notice that, to update that information, you would need to provide a "programs of study statement." This is where that Definitions of Evidence Guide comes in. Many DSOs may not understand exactly what makes up a "programs of study statement," so we've provided an explanation in that guide.

LAUREN:

- That's quite a change from before.

MARISSA:

- Yes, it is. But, we hope once folks get the hang of the new system, they will be able to easily submit evidence for any type of action on the Form I-17, whether it's a program update or filing for recertification.

LAUREN:

- And to chime in here: folks can always reach out to their SEVP field representative, like Kelly, for assistance with navigating our new evidence guides.

Slide 23: Recertification vs. Petition Updates—Know the Difference

LAUREN:

- Keeping with the subject of actions a school can take on its Form I-17, would you be able to explain the difference between recertification and Form I-17 updates? I know we've touched on these processes before, but it never hurts to revisit this information because it's such an important clarification.

MARISSA:

- Sure. First, I want to start by emphasizing that Form I-17 updates are not the same as recertification—these are two separate processes that serve two separate purposes.
- Remember, recertification occurs every two years to ensure schools remain in compliance with federal regulation and eligible to enroll international students. During recertification, SEVP adjudicators will review your school's entire Form I-17.
- In comparison, schools are required to submit Form I-17 updates whenever information on the form changes. Additionally, federal regulation requires schools to report certain changes within 21 days.
- I want to emphasize that adjudication of a school's Form I-17 update is *not* considered recertification. A school must apply for recertification when notified of its CED.

LAUREN:

- Thanks for that explanation, Marissa. It certainly does help schools to prepare for recertification if they update their Form I-17 throughout the year.

MARISSA:

- Yes, it does, and SEVP recently deployed SEVIS functionality that allows schools to file for recertification and include Form I-17 updates as part of their recertification package. In some instances, schools may wish to file an update to the Form I-17 at the same time as recertification. When you're making an update as part of the recertification process, you must file this update using the recertification option in SEVIS.
- We've included some important information for schools using this option on the slide. However, I want to specifically highlight that schools **cannot** make updates to ownership or change of the address of the school's main location or instructional sites when filing for recertification. You must submit these as separate Form I-17 updates with all required evidence.

LAUREN:

- Marissa, I know there is some confusion about the change of instructional site. Would you be able to clarify this for our viewers?

MARISSA:

- A change in instructional site includes any change to a location listed on a school's Form I-17. This includes changes to the school's physical locations as well as adding new instructional sites to the Form I-17.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. Anything else folks should be aware of?

MARISSA:

- As I mentioned on the previous slide, DSOs should make sure that they consult the evidence checklists on ICE.gov when preparing to file a Form I-17 update or file for recertification. If your school is making an update while filing for recertification, absolutely make sure that you submit the required evidence for the update with your recertification package. This will ensure the process goes smoothly for all involved.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. We'll give you a brief break and switch gears to talk about some recent enhancements to the Form I-515A processing system. We're going to touch on a few reminders for DSOs about the Form I-515A and how you can prepare students for international travel later in this presentation, but let's first cover this update.
- Kelly, would you be able to explain?

Slide 24: Improving Processes—Enhanced Form I-515A Processing System

KELLY:

- Of course. SEVP recently enhanced our Form I-515A processing system that will hopefully ease these adjudications in the future. I want to stress that there is no effect on Form I-515A processing, so students are still expected to comply with all Form I-515A requirements, including submitting the necessary paperwork to SEVP.

LAUREN:

- Can you talk through the changes folks should be aware of related to this new system?

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KELLY:

- Yes—so I want to note that the Form I-515A process, while updated, is not markedly different for DSOs or students. The primary difference is that school officials will now receive two emails rather than one. The second email contains a password to open the first email, which helps protect student personal information. All in all, these enhancements are part of changes made by SEVP to ensure protection of student privacy.

LAUREN:

- That's great to hear that SEVP is taking steps to protect student information.

Slide 25: Around SEVP

LAUREN:

- Before we wrap up this section, Kelly, would you mind sharing our last two program updates?

KELLY:

- Sure! The first is related to a topic mentioned during our last SEVP InFocus Webinar and pertains to SETA, the new external training application for DSOs. I know many folks in the field are excited about a new training module that will replace the existing training on ICE.gov. I want to let everyone know that SEVP is working hard to develop and prepare SETA for public release—we hope to have its first iteration released later this year. So, please look to your local SEVP field representative and Study in the States for updates. I can guarantee you that we will provide numerous communications when this training is ready to deploy.
- The second item is related to SEVP field representative vacancies. I'm happy to say that we are very close to having all 60 field representative territories staffed. Currently, there are two remaining vacancies in Raleigh, North Carolina, and St. Louis, Missouri. SEVP posted hiring announcements for these two positions in March, and hopes to have field representatives hired, trained and deployed to these territories later this year.

LAUREN:

- That's great news, Kelly! And, I want to remind those DSOs in the North Carolina and Missouri territories—you can contact SRC for assistance in the interim. As always, their contact information is located at the end of this presentation and in the hyperlink appendix.

Slide 26: Don't Forget

LAUREN:

- Ok let's move to our next section, which provides some timely reminders to help DSOs prepare for the end of the school year.

Slide 27: Ask the Audience—Ending the School Year

LAUREN:

- We'll start with a brief poll question, just to get a sense of how you prepare for the summer term. We want to know, DSOs: Do you provide tips and reminders to your international students prior to summer break or the term? As always, I'll give you a moment to respond.
- Looks like the majority of you are already speaking with your students about tips and reminders for the summer; always good to hear.
- Thanks, everyone.
- Kelly, I know that this is a topic that you are familiar with and probably one that's likely to come up during your school visits around this time of the year, so would you mind kicking us off?

Slide 28: Ending the School Year—Ensure Students Maintain Status

KELLY:

- Sure. I'll start with an important reminder for DSOs: please ensure that your students know they need to maintain their status over summer break. I always recommend that DSOs talk with their students to make sure that, if they are graduating, they understand the grace period available to them and, if they're not graduating, they understand if they're eligible for a summer vacation—because as one of our upcoming slides explains, not all students can take this vacation.
- Also, if one of your students plans to travel internationally, as I'm sure many of them do, you need to make sure they have a valid signature on their Form I-20. If not, the student may encounter issues trying to re-enter the United States at a port of entry.
- DSOs also need to discuss applying for OPT with eligible F-1 students approaching graduation. While a student can apply for OPT during their grace period, they can also apply before graduation, up to 90 days before their program end date.

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LAUREN:

- Those are great tips. Taking proactive actions now can help students and even DSOs avoid potential issues down the road. You mentioned a grace period, would you be able to elaborate a bit?

Slide 29: Ending the School Year—Graduation Reminders for F-1 Students

KELLY:

- Of course. I'll start with covering information about the grace period for F-1 students. Students who are graduating from a program of study—whether its completing a high school diploma or a doctorate—have a 60-day grace period to take one of the actions on this slide. A high school student may plan to attend college in the United States, in which case they most likely have applied and been accepted to a new program of study at an SEVP-certified U.S. college or university. A DSO must transfer out this SEVIS record to the new school before the 60-day grace period ends.
- A student that completed their doctorate and plans to return home may wish to travel within the United States, which they can do for 60 days.
- But before we move on, I do want to note that students cannot depart and return to the United States during the grace period.
- DSOs should not manually complete these SEVIS records, as SEVIS automatically completes a student's record at the end of the grace period.

LAUREN:

- What about the grace period for M-1 students?

Slide 30: Ending the School Year—Graduation Reminders for M-1 Students

KELLY:

- Much like F-1 students, M-1 students also have a grace period after completion of their program of study. However, their grace period is shorter—only 30 days.
- Additionally, M-1 students can apply for an extension of study, which allows additional time for the student to complete their program or practical training. There is a very specific period during which M-1 students can apply for this extension, which you can see on the slide. So, DSOs with M-1 students: be aware of this period and advise your students appropriately.

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LAUREN:

- Thanks for covering that, Kelly. I know our viewers from M-1 schools appreciate it when we go over some of the nuances for their programs.
- You mentioned annual vacation eligibility earlier. Let me just confirm: not all students are eligible for an annual vacation?

Slide 31: Ending the School Year—Annual Vacation

KELLY:

- Correct. F-1 students must complete one full academic year to be eligible for an annual vacation, and M-1 students are not eligible for an annual vacation during their studies. Additionally, those F-1 students taking an annual vacation must intend to register for classes during the next academic term, which, in this case, is probably the fall.
- I want to stress that schools should have clear and consistent vacation policies. You can learn more about SEVP's policy regarding annual vacation in our policy guidance located on ICE.gov and in your hyperlink appendix.

LAUREN:

- Quick question to help clarify for our viewers: what should a student do if they're not eligible for an annual vacation?

KELLY:

- That's an easy answer: register for a full course load. This goes back to what I mentioned earlier—that it's important that students maintain their status over the summer term.

Slide 32: Ending the School Year—Student Travel

LAUREN:

- Great, thanks for that information. I think it's always beneficial to round out this section with a few travel best practices and tips for students and DSOs. Kelly, would you be able to finish this up for us?

KELLY:

- Sure. As we've mentioned, summer is a busy time for international student travel, and it's important that both students and DSOs understand and are prepared for what happens at a U.S. port of entry. On the DSO's side: make sure you sign your students' Forms I-20 prior to international travel and provide your emergency contact information to students.

- For students: it's important that they consult with you, their DSO, prior to international travel. This is your opportunity to provide any travel tips or reminders, and direct students to resources, such as our upcoming Government Voices Webinar that will explain the U.S. port of entry process. Taking these actions will hopefully help students avoid receiving a Form I-515A.

MARISSA:

- And, I want to quickly jump in here to plug our upcoming Government Voices Webinar: What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry. We'll promote this again later in the presentation, but I want to re-emphasize Kelly's point that this webinar will cover a lot of helpful information to prepare students and DSOs for international travel, and include a question and answer session with CBP.

LAUREN:

- Great points, Kelly and Marissa. Speaking of resources, I want to take this opportunity to encourage DSOs to also use their SEVP field representative as a source of information for how to handle seasonal topics and trends. Field representatives like Kelly are a wealth of great information and can discuss topics like what we just covered as part of their school visits.
- I also want to direct folks to our Study in the States blog, which contains seasonal tips and reminders for both DSOs and international students. I can guarantee that as we get closer to graduation, summer break and the return to school in August, we will have blog posts to help you navigate these topics.

Slide 33: Facts + Figures

LAUREN:

- Alright, let's move into our next section that looks at some interesting statistics related to SEVP and international students. For this webinar, we're going to look at how we work with our government partners, including a spotlight on an outreach program within Homeland Security Investigations, or HSI.
- But I don't want to spoil what's coming up. Marissa, would you be able to talk us through this section?

Slide 34: Intragovernmental Collaboration—Government Partners

MARISSA:

- Yes! I want to start with taking a 30,000-foot look at SEVP's government partners. This slide lists just a few of the government departments, agencies and offices that we work with on a regular basis. SEVP staff connect with entities across DHS to discuss topics ranging from emergency planning to student employment to student fraud. But, we don't just talk with folks from DHS; we also meet regularly with the Department of State, the Department of Education, and congressional members and staff to educate them on joint topics of interest.

Slide 35: Intragovernmental Collaboration—Government Partners

MARISSA:

- I think the graph on this next slide does a great job of showing just how much SEVP has expanded our reach and engagement with government partners. Here's an interesting statistic: between 2014 and 2017, SEVP's outreach to government partners increased 223 percent. You can see this jump illustrated on the corresponding slide.

LAUREN:

- Wow! That's quite a big jump!

MARISSA:

- Yes, Lauren. And I want to note that the numbers on this slide reflect the formal trainings and events that SEVP has participated in, such as joint conference presentations and in-person trainings. This graph doesn't capture the number of meetings and working groups that happen behind the scenes on a daily basis to discuss joint policies and other shared interests.

Slide 36: HSI Outreach Program—Project Campus Sentinel

Please note that the content for slide 36 has been updated to the following in the accompanying webinar presentation PDF:

- Overview
  - PCS partners with educational institutions to prevent SEVIS exploitation and improving communications between DSOs and local HSI special agents

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- PCS and DSOs can assist each other by sharing information
  - May improve the school's management of programs and help prevent students from falling out of status
  - Results in improved strategies for identifying and prosecuting unlawful activity
- HSI's investigation of non-compliant schools helps uphold the integrity of legitimate schools and programs

MARISSA:

- I also want to take this opportunity to shed some light on a few of the outreach programs offered by our government partners in Homeland Security Investigations, or HSI. For those of you who might not be familiar with SEVP's organizational structure, we are a part of the National Security Investigations Division within ICE HSI. It's important to be aware of these resources to help strengthen your school's response when disaster strikes or urgent questions arise.
- The first outreach program we're going to look at is Project Campus Sentinel, or PCS.

LAUREN:

- Just to jump in, Marissa, since those are a lot of terms that folks might not be familiar with, you can download a copy of our glossary, which contains the acronyms and form names used during this presentation, in the Webinar Resources pod.

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that reminder, Lauren.
- I know some folks may already be familiar with PCS or had a PCS agent previously visit their school. But for those who might not be aware of this program, PCS partners with educational institutions to improve collaboration and communication between DSOs and DHS investigators.
- PCS offers resources and assistance to DSOs, and can provide training to help your school identify suspicious activity. Additionally, PCS can help connect your international student office with campus law enforcement, which can strengthen your school's ability to respond to emergency situations or natural disasters. PCS is a great resource that can help protect your school's community and strengthen its ability to respond to natural disasters or other emergencies. As we mentioned earlier, with hurricane season approaching, it's never too early to start thinking through your school's emergency response plan.

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KELLY:

- And, before we move on, I want to remind folks that SEVP field representatives and PCS agents have two different missions. I want to stress that SEVP field representatives are here to provide training and assistance to ensure school officials understand SEVP regulations, policy and processes. While we can provide guidance to help your school's international student office handle potential emergencies, PCS agents can open direct communication channels between DSOs and HSI and help schools handle potential compliance problems before they become national security concerns.

Slide 37: HSI Outreach Program—Project Shield America

MARISSA:

- Our next slide covers another outreach program that many folks might be unfamiliar with, Project Shield America, or PSA. Larger research universities are probably more familiar with PSA, which establishes partnerships between HSI and academia to ensure compliance with U.S. export control laws and protect controlled technology.
- While PSA's mission may seem complex, their outreach to educational institutions can help increase your school's awareness of potential red flag indicators of export control violations, and open lines of communication between your international student office and export control office.

LAUREN:

- Thanks for that explanation, Marissa. I know that we plan to discuss more of these topics in detail as the year goes on. Without going too much into what's to come, I want to note that, if this topic is of interest to you and other folks at your school, to stay tuned to Study in the States for information about a future Government Voices Webinar this fall.

Slide 38: Helpful Resources

LAUREN:

- Speaking of upcoming webinars, we'll now move into our final section, which highlights some of those webinars, as well as the newest stakeholder resources on Study in the States.
- 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 and provide your feedback.
- Marissa, while folks are taking these polls, can you talk through our upcoming webinars and new resources?

Slide 39: Save the Date—Government Voices Webinar: What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry

MARISSA:

- Like Lauren just mentioned, our next Government Voices Webinar is taking place about two weeks from today on Wednesday, May 16. This webinar will provide information and helpful tips that build on the reminders Kelly mentioned earlier regarding international student travel. For this webinar, we're bringing in a presenter from CBP to discuss the U.S. port of entry process and respond to your questions to help ensure students know what to expect when they enter the United States.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. For everyone listening: make sure you mark your calendar now for May 16, 2018, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. I'll note now that this webinar has been extended to an hour and 30 minutes to provide adequate time to address your questions, so please make sure you mark your schedules accordingly.
- You can also visit this webinar's specific page on Study in the States to download a save-the-date calendar invitation—we've also included this link in the hyperlink appendix. If you're unable to make the live webinar, as always, a recording will be available on Study in the States shortly after the event.

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Slide 40: SEVP Portal Help

LAUREN:

- I know we mentioned this resource a lot at the beginning of the presentation, but I don't think it will hurt to quickly review the information in the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States. Marissa, would you be able to explain this resource?

MARISSA:

- Of course—the SEVP Portal Help section is a great resource, so I want to make sure that we promote it as much as possible. As Lauren and Kelly mentioned earlier, the SEVP Portal Help section provides information to assist students and DSOs with navigating the SEVP Portal.
- Here, you can find those video tutorials that students can use to create a portal account, as well as the SEVP Portal User Guide and more. You can access this section from the link on the bottom of your screen and from the link in your hyperlink appendix.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. I believe we have one more new resource to discuss—can you share with everyone?

Slide 41: Guide to Studying in the States

MARISSA:

- Yes. Before we wrap up, I also want to note that Study in the States deployed a new Guide to Studying in the States. This updated resource allows users to create a customized guide with information on the international student life cycle that's customized to their visa type and education level. So, going back to the theme of the end of the school year, students that are interested in pursuing a graduate degree or other type of study can use this guide to find out more about the options available to them.

Slide 42: Engage with SEVP—Stay Connected

LAUREN:

- Great to know! With that, let's move on to our closing slides. If you haven't already, please make sure that you take a moment to complete the polls on your screen.
- Marissa, would you mind telling folks about how they can stay connected with SEVP?

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MARISSA:

- Sure thing, Lauren. As this presentation has demonstrated, we have many great resources and ways for stakeholders to stay informed about the latest news from SEVP.
- Some specific things that we want to highlight are the SEVP Spotlight and SEVP Outreach Bulletin. You can learn more about these publications on the Study in the States Conferences page, which is listed in your hyperlink appendix.
- And speaking of the Conferences page, you can also submit event requests to SEVP and other government partners on that page if your school, or any association you are a member of, has an upcoming event where you would like us to present.

LAUREN:

- Also, remember that we frequently post on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, so be sure to connect with us on those platforms as well! And, also be sure to share these resources with your international students. We do a lot of engagement with students via Study in the States and over social media.

Slide 43: SEVP Values Your Feedback

LAUREN:

- As I mentioned at the start of this presentation, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that we would love to hear more of your thoughts about today's session, as well as any other events you attend where SEVP presents.
- Please take our Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey following this webinar so that we can continue to improve future webinars and general outreach to you all! If you refer to our hyperlink appendix, there's a direct link to the survey in there. It's also on the slide now too.

Slide 44: SEVP Contact Information

LAUREN:

- Finally, don't forget that there are numerous ways to get in touch with SEVP.
- SRC is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, except on federal holidays like Memorial Day at the end of the month. And you can always reach out to us via the email addresses you see on the screen.
- Before we sign off, I want to encourage everyone to please take a moment to complete the polls listed on your screen if you haven't already. Thanks to Kelly and Marissa, and all of those who joined us today!

- Hope everyone has a great day!

Slide 45: Webinar Closing Slide

[Slide 45 displays until the Adobe Connect room closes after the webinar.]