



SEVIS Way Ahead: A Message to the Academic Community Transcript – October 2014

Hello, I'm Lou Farrell, director of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program.

I'm happy to address the academic community once again to share updates on our steps to improve and modernize SEVIS.

As you know, SEVIS is a critical tool in our program's mission to protect national security while supporting the legal entry of the more than one million F and M students, J exchange visitors, and their accompanying dependents to the United States.

I am pleased to report that since I last updated you in the spring, we have rolled out two releases, 6.16 and 6.17. They contain numerous improvements to SEVIS, but I want to highlight two of those here today.

In April, SEVP launched the Accreditation and Recognition Conversion Project. As part of this project, two fields on the Form I-17 were revised to more accurately capture your school's accreditation information. An impressive 91 percent of schools updated SEVIS with the necessary information in a timely fashion. Thank you very much for your quick response. This helps SEVP more efficiently track school accreditation, recognition or license information, and assists us in identifying schools that need further review.

In another improvement, it is now easier to search for nonimmigrant students and work with lists within SEVIS. For the first time since SEVIS launched in 2003, users can open a student's record from any list in SEVIS, take action on that record, and return directly to the same list without having to re-navigate back. This system enhancement will make it easier for school officials to maintain their record keeping obligations, and improve tracking of all students monitored in SEVIS.

But the improvements don't stop there. Efforts are already underway for the next round of SEVIS enhancements. One of those enhancements will validate and standardize U.S. postal addresses and email addresses. This enhancement will improve the government's ability to communicate more efficiently with school officials, and ensure timely delivery of important messages related to compliance.

Additional enhancements include the periodic verification of school and sponsor officials. SEVIS users will be required to verify that the officials listed on their Form I-17 and Form DS-3036 are active and still working at their institution. Access to SEVIS is a responsibility DHS entrusts to school and sponsor officials, and so checking this information improves the overall system, and helps protect national security.

Our goal for future SEVIS enhancements is not only to improve data integrity to enhance our national security, but also to ensure the best possible experience for you, the SEVIS user. I

encourage you to provide your feedback on SEVIS releases by emailing SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

To help you adjust to these system changes, SEVP will continue to offer our free pre and post-release webinars on Study in the States. I hope you will take advantage of them. They are an opportunity to learn more about updated functionality, walk through new features, and have your questions answered directly.

In the meantime, we welcome your continued feedback. Please email any questions and comments you have to: SEVP@ice.dhs.gov.

In closing, I want to reiterate that you, the academic community, are critical to ICE's national security mission, as well as to the success of hundreds of thousands of F and M students and J exchange visitors who come to the United States. On behalf of all of us at SEVP, thank you for the important work that you do. We are both blessed, and most grateful, to be working with you.

Thank you very much for taking the time to listen to me, and until next time, Godspeed in all things to you, your students, and your families. Take care.