

**ISO-NEWS: Issue 6
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International Services Office, University of Rochester**

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I. WELCOME & WELCOME BACK FOR 2009!

The International Services Office (ISO) would like to offer a warm welcome to the newest members of our international community at the University of Rochester! To our returning students, we wish you a wonderful new year and a good term at UR. As always, our staff is committed to helping make your academic program and life in the U.S. satisfying and successful. Throughout the year, we hope you will feel free to contact the ISO with any questions or concerns you may have. Appointments are encouraged for students needing to discuss their questions in detail and may be made by phoning the office at 585-275-2866. Please also use our website for more information and stop by the office to ask a quick question, request letters and documentation, or to pick up immigration forms, as you need them.

If this is your first edition of “ISO-News”, please make a note of the email address and subject line. This is generally the best and most efficient way to keep our international students informed of important deadlines, new changes to immigration regulations, and upcoming social programs and events. The newsletter is delivered to your UR email, so please forward your messages if you prefer to access your email through a personal account.

Again, welcome (back) to campus and warm wishes for the coming year!

II. REMINDER: FULL-TIME REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

The ISO is required to report every academic term whether all F-1 and J-1 students are maintaining a full-time course load. **Please verify that you are registered for the appropriate credits this term.** Full-time enrollment is 12 credits per semester, 9 credits per quarter, or equivalent registration (with certain courses or other academic activities such as a Teaching or Research Assistantship). If you need to request an authorized Reduced Course Load, please make an appointment to see an International Student Advisor *before* you drop below your required credits. Unauthorized part-time enrollment is a violation of F-1 and J-1 student status.

III. NEW ISO OFFICE HOURS AT EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ESM Office Hours will be held at the Eastman School of Music on **Tuesday & Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:30 pm in Room 506** of the main building. An ISO advisor will no longer be available on Tuesday mornings. Students planning to stop by during these hours should call ahead to the ISO (275-2866) so we are able to bring your file and offer better advising. Many forms and handouts are available on the ISO website and for pick-up in Room 506, even when an advisor is not available. If you need assistance at other times, Eastman students are always welcome to make an appointment at our River Campus location as well.

IV. GETTING READY FOR TAX SEASON!

International students who were present in the U.S. during any part of 2008 must comply with Federal and State tax filing requirements. All F-1 students in the U.S. for less than 5 years and all J-1 students in the U.S. for less than 2 years must file a Federal Tax Statement (Form 8843), *regardless of whether any income was earned*. Additionally, any student who has earned income while in the U.S. during 2008 must also file tax forms for Federal and State earnings.

To help in understanding your U.S. tax obligations, campus resources will again be available to all UR international students. The CINTAX software system will be made available in February and several workshops are scheduled across campus to cover common procedures and questions. Additionally, the ISO is pleased to announce the return of our CINTAX Consultant! Rosemarie Eskes will be available to help students in using CINTAX and preparing the appropriate tax forms. Appointments are required and may be scheduled by contacting the ISO. Please see the attached flyer for more information and other resources. More details will be coming soon!

Over the next several weeks, you may be receiving important tax forms by mail from the University, U.S. employers, banks, or other financial institutions. **Do not discard these forms!** You will need to use them when preparing to file your 2008 taxes.

V. FREE ENGLISH CONVERSATION GROUP

The ISO is happy to report that free English conversation classes will resume this week. The group meets on Thursday afternoons from 1:15 to 3:30 pm in Room 503 of Wilson Commons. This is a great opportunity for UR spouses and anyone who would like to practice their English.

VI. REMINDER: ISO GOES TO WASHINGTON DC!

Make a weekend getaway this spring to the nation's capital, [Washington D.C.](#)! Our trip will be the last weekend in March, leaving Friday, 3/27, and returning Sunday, 3/29. The bus will begin pick-ups at 6:15 Friday morning, making stops at RC Interfaith Chapel, Whipple Park, and the Eastman School of Music. We will return around 9:00 pm on Sunday. The cost of the trip is \$165, which includes transportation and accommodations in DC (all students will have their own bed in a group room of the same sex). There will be some group sightseeing available or you can explore the city with your friends on your own schedule!

Please contact Stephanie Johnson in the ISO [sjohnson@iso.rochester.edu, 275-2901] with any questions or to book your spot. Payment in full is required to reserve your seat (cash, check, or money order only). Cancellations can only be refunded in full when another student is available on the waitlist to take your place. This trip has become very popular among our international students and 2009 promises to be another great one. We hope you can join us!

VII. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Diane Hardy, a PhD student at the University at Buffalo, is looking for participants in a survey on the experiences of being an international student in the U.S. You would be asked to share your thoughts and experiences during discussions held here on UR campus. If you are interested, please see the attached information and contact Diane directly.

VIII. RIC SPOTLIGHT: WINTER CABIN PARTY, THIS SUNDAY, 1/18!

The Rochester International Council will host a Winter Cabin Party this Sunday, January 18th, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. The event will be held at the Lodge at Buckland Park, at 1341 Westfall Road. This annual party is free-of-charge and is a great chance for members of Rochester's international community to share in winter traditions, such as building a snowman (snow & temperatures permitting), playing games in the cabin, and learning about "s'mores". Students, spouse, and families are all welcome to attend. Please see their flyer for details.

The Rochester International Council (RIC) is a community-based volunteer organization that provides services to international students & Department of State visitors in the Rochester area.

IX. CAMPUS FOCUS: PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION VIEWING, TUESDAY 1/20

Witness a piece of American history this Tuesday, January 20th, as Barak Obama is inaugurated as the next President of the United States! A live telecast of the event, from Washington D.C., will be shown in Strong Auditorium from 10 am to 1:30 pm. Attendees may also write a "message of hope" to the White House. This event is sponsored by the UR Interfaith Chapel.