



June 30, 2004

Contact: Russ Knocke
(202) 514-2648

Press Release

ICE ANNOUNCES SEVIS FEE PUBLICATION

Washington, D.C. – Today U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that the *Federal Register* will post, and tomorrow will publish, a rule on the implementation of a \$100 fee for international students, exchange visitors and scholars attending school or conducting research in the United States. The fee, associated with the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS), will take effect September 1, 2004.

Students, scholars and exchange visitors from abroad whose schools or programs are approved in SEVIS will be required to pay the appropriate fee – in most cases, \$100 -- prior to obtaining their visas. SEVIS, administered by ICE within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is an award-winning Internet-based system for maintaining information on foreign students and exchange visitors to the United States.

“Over the last year, ICE has worked to make SEVIS a stronger and more effective program by listening to our partners at universities and colleges nationwide and incorporating their suggestions for improving the system whenever possible,” said Jill Drury, Director of the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). “The new fee payment procedure is a continuation of our commitment to manage a system that enhances the integrity of America’s immigration system while facilitating the legal entry of legitimate international students and scholars into the United States.”

The purpose of the fee is to cover the costs for the continued operation of the SEVP, including the administration and maintenance of SEVIS. The 1996 law that mandated the establishment of the SEVP also required that the program be funded through the payment of fees. The fee applies to F, J and M nonimmigrant classifications; however, participants in certain J-1 exchange visitor programs will pay a reduced fee of \$35 or be fee-exempt. The fee will also fund the establishment of a cadre of liaison officers to help school administrators and students use SEVIS more effectively. Payment of the fee can be accomplished using a credit card via the Internet, by check through the mail or by a third party such as schools or sponsors.

SEVIS allows the DHS to collect and manage the information for foreign students and exchange visitors in the United States by maintaining up-to-date data that can be accessed electronically. SEVIS has simplified what was once a manual process, resulting in more accurate and timely data, faster processing and fewer delays for student and exchange visitors. Currently, more than 730,000 students and exchange visitors are registered with SEVIS at over 8,700 approved schools and programs nationwide.

- ICE -

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for the enforcement of border, economic, infrastructure and transportation security laws. ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.