SEVIS II

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised as of January 9, 2013

Implementation Time Line

Q: What is the anticipated rollout date of SEVIS II?

A: SEVP is unsure at this point. It will not be 2012 or 2013. Once the DHS review process is complete, SEVP will have a better idea of a timeline.

Q: You indicated that SEVIS II implementation will not occur this year or next year. Does that mean that IOC will occur in 2014?

A: We will have a defined schedule once we have a better idea of how long it will take to actually build SEVIS II.

Q: Do you currently have a timeline for selecting a SEVIS II vendor?

A: No. We do not yet have permission from the Department of Homeland Security to procure a vendor. We are actively seeking this permission, but we must follow strict government procurement procedures.

Q: Is there an expected date for rebaselining to be complete?

A: No.

Design and Accessibility

Q: How will SEVIS II accommodate second language students? Will SEVIS II be only in English for international students?

A: SEVIS II will be only in English, just as SEVIS is now. All instructions will be as simple as possible (5^{th}-8^{th} grade reading level). We recognize that this does not help ESL students with a limited English proficiency, but they can designate Account Managers to manage their customer account until they have the language ability to manage it on their own. We hope to have some informational materials translated into other languages.

Q: At this time, there are still areas in the world where internet and e-mail are inaccessible or uncommon. How will SEVP address these limitations?

A: SEVP understands that some individuals will not have internet access. One of the reasons for adding the Account Manager functionality is to accommodate these individuals. Users without internet access may enlist the assistance of an individual who does have access. An Account Manager may be a friend, a relative, an official at a school, someone in an Education USA office, or anyone whom the nonimmigrants trust to establish and manage the customer account on their behalf. The users could then claim their customer account once they have access to the internet.

Q: Is SEVP confident that SEVIS II won't change much before implementation?

A: Yes. We do not anticipate SEVIS II functionality changing very much from the way it has been envisioned.

Q: How much will SEVIS II differ from the current version of SEVIS?

A: From a technical point of view, it is an entirely new system with a new infrastructure that will accommodate a richer user experience. SEVIS II will have a different look and feel and has been designed with the end users (school/sponsor officials and nonimmigrants) in mind. Real Time Interface (RTI) users will notice an improved usability, efficiency, and logic to the system. P/DSOs will notice some improvements immediately in routine tasks such as reporting continuing registration each term. SEVIS II will have the option to register multiple students at one time rather than processing them individually.

Q: Has there been research on the User Interface with international subjects to further develop thoughts on web design and ease of use?

A: Except for some research done by the State Department, there has not been a lot of research done on the user interface with international students in mind. SEVP worked very hard to develop a site that is as easy to use as possible. However, ease of use can vary with the user's ability to understand the language. To create a system that is as user friendly as possible, SEVP plans to test the system and will make appropriate adjustments as needed. Additionally, instructional text that appears on screens in SEVIS II will be database driven, which means that the text can be easily changed should if it is not clear enough to be understood by non-native speakers of English. We do recognize that it is a challenge to support such a wide audience.

Q: I have seen initial screenshots and if the end product is anything like what we've seen, I'm afraid navigation will be challenging for the international user.

A: We appreciate your concern. SEVP is doing its best to design a system that is as easy for the user as possible.

Q: Will SEVIS II be ADA compliant?

A: SEVIS II will comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act which requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to an individual with disabilities.

Q: Can a P/DSO login to two computers at the same time using the same customer account login?

A: P/DSOs must never log on to two computers simultaneously. That constitutes a security breach that potentially allows access to an individual who is not authorized to use the system.

Q: Will text fields be limited in the number of characters one can type into them?

A: Yes. As a matter of good practice, the system will have some limits. The length of these fields will be informed by data in SEVIS and by interfaces with other systems. They will not have arbitrarily small limitations on them.

Q: Will the five security questions be asked at every log-in or will they only be used for

cases in which users have lost or cannot remember their user name and password?

A: The five security questions will not be asked at every log-in. When users forget their passwords, the system will randomly select from the users' security questions to verify identity before granting a password reset. SEVIS II must meet Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA) standards which will determine how access, passwords, and so on are managed.

Q: How difficult will password requirements be for students?

A: SEVIS II passwords must meet FISMA standards. Current SEVIS password standards are an indication of the type of password that will be required.

The Individual Immigration Number and One-Person One-Record Concept

Q: Does the one-person one-record concept apply to all F, M, and J nonimmigrants?

A: Yes. The one-person, one-record concept applies to all individuals who enter the U.S. in F, M, or J status whether they come as the principal or as the dependent. Individuals will retain the same IIN even if they change statuses among those three classifications.

Q: How will the one-person one-record concept affect the students' current ability to leave the United States and "re-set" their F-1 status by re-entering on a new I-20 to begin a new program?

A: Even under current SEVIS, this is an action that a student may attempt with no guarantee of success. It is subject to applicable visa and admission regulations and policies. SEVIS II will not affect the legal ability to make this attempt. However, SEVIS II will make the student's entire SEVIS record available to consular officials and immigration inspectors. This increases the probability that the student may have to answer questions regarding earlier departures and the current re-entry.

The Paperless System, Proof of Status, and the Domestic Report

Q: At NAFSA, they said that some students will need a physical I-20. If this is correct, what students will they be?

A: There will be no physical Forms I-20 after SEVIS II implementation; there will only be an electronic COE.

Q: Since there will be no paper Form I-20, what should the student bring with them at the port of entry?

A: Students should still carry the same documentation they currently present at the port of entry: passport, visa, and financial documentation. Continuing students may also want to consider carrying a transcript.

Q: How will travel authorizations work? Currently the signature is valid for a year. Will students have to update their COE?

A: In SEVIS II, there will be no travel signatures. As long as a student is maintaining status, the electronic COE will continue to be valid for all usual purposes such as applying for a visa or entering the U.S.

Q: How will P/DSOs know when a student is traveling if they no longer need a signature?

A: SEVP understands that many schools use the travel signature process as a way to advise students about travel and to maintain communication. With the elimination of the travel signature, there is no way of knowing who is traveling. SEVP will recommend that students check with school officials before they travel. P/DSOs will be able to look at the student record and look at entry and exit data received through interfaces with Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). SEVIS II also has an indicator that will show whether the student is in the country or out of the country.

Q: Is the entry/exit information always up to date to the day?

A: No. There is no way that it will always be accurate. There is a lot of work being done to make the entry data available quickly and with more accuracy. Entry and exit data from land and sea ports have improved remarkably since they rely on passenger manifests received from ships and airlines. Land ports remain problematic.

Q: How will the students be able to apply for Social Security Numbers, drivers licenses, etc. without the paper COE?

A: Students will be able to print out a “Domestic Report”. This Domestic Report will contain instructions on how to authenticate the information (via website) contained in the document.

Q: Will state and local law enforcement have access to SEVIS II to verify a student’s status if they get pulled over?

A: SEVP will work with local law enforcement to educate them on the new Domestic Report which can be used to verify a student’s status. The Domestic Report will provide law enforcement personnel with a web site address they can reference for validation. In addition, the Domestic Report can be printed and carried by students. Students can print the Domestic Report as frequently as they want. The Domestic Report is good for 30 days, but students can print a new Domestic Report every 30 days.

Regulations

Q: My understanding is that there will be new regulations accompanying SEVIS II implementation. Are there general timelines on expected new regulations?

A: SEVP cannot discuss specifics related to the new regulations at this time. However, regulations will be released in time for SEVIS II. There will be a preliminary rule making and a final rule making, so you will have an opportunity to comment on the new regulations.

Q: Have the numbers of DSOs per school changed? Or will there still be a limit of 10 DSOs per school?

A: SEVP is working on a regulation addressing this issue, but is unable to discuss the regulation at this time.

Data Migration during IOC

Q: Are schools responsible for migrating data from SEVIS I to SEVIS II?

A: No, school information contained in SEVIS will automatically be migrated into SEVIS II. However, schools are responsible for ensuring that school data is accurately reflected in SEVIS. Additionally, schools will be required to provide any data required by SEVIS II that is not contained in SEVIS.

Q: Will populating the e-mail addresses for students in SEVIS help with the migration to SEVIS II? If so, how would it help?

A: Yes, it could help. If SEVP has e-mail addresses, we can send e-mails to students. However, P/DSOs will need to ensure that they are accurate.

Q: Will current students' records be uploaded to SEVIS II and IINs assigned to them or will current students need to setup customer accounts?

A: Current nonimmigrants in SEVIS, both students and their spouse/dependents, will need to setup customer accounts during the Initial Operating Capability phase of SEVIS II. Nonimmigrants will be given plenty of time to set up their customer accounts and provided with instructions on how to complete the process. Once their customer account has been created, their COE data from SEVIS will migrate into SEVIS II.

Transition Issues and Cases

Q: What will happen to those students who are out of status with pending Reinstatement requests? Will they still have to create their customer account? Will the student's reinstatement 'pending' be transferred over to SEVIS II?

A: Students who have reinstatements or changes of status pending during Initial Operating Capability (IOC) will need to create customer accounts so their information migrates into SEVIS II. We will develop guidance on how to handle cases such as these during the transition.

Q: Have EducationUSA and the Department of State committed to anything for customer counseling regarding information inquiry?

A: SEVP has been in communication with EducationUSA regarding support for F-1 students. They are eager to be a part of the process and to help. We will be working with them on outreach to international students.

Q: You have told us that all students must create customer accounts in SEVIS II during IOC, otherwise they will lose status once SEVIS II launches. What about those students who are about to complete post-completion OPT and are not planning to stay in the US afterwards?

A: SEVP will provide transitional guidance on issues such as these during the transition period.

Q: During IOC will there be any new students expected? Will they need to have SEVIS IDs too? Do we create an I-20 or DS-2019 for new students during IOC?

A: We will provide specific transitional guidance on issues such as these as we get closer to IOC. We understand that new students will be arriving during the entire period of SEVIS II implementation. Students who will begin their programs during IOC would be issued I-20s through SEVIS, but would still need to create customer accounts in SEVIS II to have their data transferred.

Q: Will the recertification process be put on hold during the IOC transition period?

A: We will be discussing this with the School Certification Unit (SCU). We hope to avoid doing recertification during that period as we recognize that would be too much to handle. We will provide guidance on this to assist with the transition.

Customer Accounts for School and Sponsor Officials

Q: Which School/Sponsor Officials must have customer accounts, and how will those relate to their organizations?

A: Each School/Sponsor Official must have a single customer account related to that person. An individual who holds two roles (e.g., DSO and ARO) will have a single customer account through which either role can be accessed. This differs fundamentally from current SEVIS, where separate SEVIS user names and passwords needed for each role. This single customer account concept will also apply across organizations. One person with one customer account uses that customer account login to access all roles and permissions. For example, one person could be a P/DSO at one school, an RO for a different school/program, and an Account Manager for one or more nonimmigrants. Logging into SEVIS II through the one customer account will take the user to a page that allows selection of one of the specific organizations or roles. The user will not have to log out and then log in again to change organizations or roles.

Q: Why does SEVIS II allow users to enter the United States as a country of citizenship or legal permanent residence when they are not eligible to enter the U.S. as nonimmigrants?

A: Anyone who needs to access SEVIS II will need to create customer accounts. This includes U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents who serve as P/DSOs or ROs/AROs, heads of schools, Account Managers, and a few other roles in SEVIS II.

Q: Will P/DSOs be required to submit their home addresses as students do?

A: No. They may enter a business address.

Q: Are you allowed to be a P/DSO for more than one school?

A: Yes. If you are employed by more than one school.

Q: Will you provide us a list of school administrators that are required to create a customer account?

A: Yes. Additionally, SEVIS II will provide a list of current school officials who still need to create SEVIS II customer accounts.

Q: If we already have a SEVIS user name and password as P/DSO's, why wouldn't we just use the same login information?

A: SEVIS was not built on the one person, one record concept. Individuals who are P/DSOs and ROs/AROs may have two separate sets of log on credentials. This means two separate records in SEVIS that exist independently of each other. If they change institutions, they get different credentials and additional records. SEVIS II will remedy this by linking the different roles to the individual's single customer account. If a P/DSO moves from school to school, they will use the same customer account and SEVIS II will already know who they are. The one-person-one-record concept applies to every SEVIS II user.

Q: In creating our School/Sponsor Official customer accounts, will we need to put in all our previous SEVIS ID information (similar to how students will have to add their old records)?

A: You will use your SEVIS login and password to create the customer account.

Q: Should School/Sponsor Officials add a personal e-mail address for cases when their email address changes when changing schools?

A: Yes. SEVIS II will use e-mail as a method of communicating with customer account holders about system outages and other issues. As a result, all customer account holders must always have a valid email address in the system.

Q: Will there still be separate functions in SEVIS II for P/DSOs and RO/AROs?

A: Yes. However, an individual who is both a P/DSO and an RO/ARO will have a single logon and be able to access both roles from their homepage without logging out and logging back in. The roles and their associated tasks will be separated.

Q: Is the process for creating and updating a customer account the same for DSOs at batch schools as it is for those at schools using Real Time Interface (RTI)?

A: Yes. All school officials will follow the same process in creating their individual customer accounts, regardless of the type of institution where they work. Users can create customer accounts only in RTI. They cannot create customer accounts in batch.

Q: When creating a customer account, where are roles for school officials (PDSO, DSO, etc.) delineated?

A: Roles for individual school officials are not established in the customer account set up process. The customer account relates only to users, not to their roles within SEVIS or their positions at an institution. After the individual has created a customer account, the PDSO uses that user's customer account information to "associate" the user with the institution and to assign the appropriate role (DSO, Batch Specialist, Payer, etc.).

Q: Since users must create an association with a school, who will create that initial association in the case of a PDSO?

A: For schools already in SEVIS, school officials will create their customer accounts during Initial Operating Capability and their roles and permissions will migrate over from SEVIS as legacy data. After that, the Head of School must sign off on any new PDSOs for the school.

For schools seeking initial certification in the SEVIS II environment, whoever creates the I-17 will associate both the PDSO and Head of School as part of the initial application. The initial PDSO is approved by the Head of School and adjudicated as part of the I-17.

Head of School's Role in SEVIS II

Q: How much involvement in SEVIS II is required of the president/head of school?

A: SEVIS II will not change the legal responsibilities of Heads of Schools. They are required to sign off on certain submissions of the I-17. In the paperless SEVIS II environment, this will require that they create a customer account and a Personal Identification Number (PIN) so that they can submit electronic signatures.

Q: If the president/head of the school is not a PDSO, can they create their own customer account?

A: Yes, all presidents and heads of school will be required to create their own customer accounts.

Q: Does that mean that the president has to create a customer account even though he doesn't use SEVIS now?

A: Yes, the president must create a customer account, login information, and a PIN in order to sign applications for certification, recertification, changes of PDSO, etc. as all signatures and submissions will be conducted electronically through SEVIS II.

Q: Can the president of the university have an Account Manager?

A: No. Only nonimmigrants can have Account Managers. School officials (Head of School, P/DSOs, IT/Batch specialists, etc.) who have decision making and signature authority may not have Account Managers, which would, in effect, transfer that authority to a third party.

Customer Accounts for Nonimmigrants

Q: Do P/DSOs need to create a SEVIS II record for students only during IOC? Will it be necessary after FOC?

A: It is important to be clear that in the SEVIS II environment, the creation of SEVIS II records for students is not initiated by P/DSOs, but by the students themselves. Students will need to create their own customer accounts. Current students will do so during IOC so their data migrates from SEVIS into SEVIS II. New students will do so after FOC. The customer account creation process for students during IOC will be slightly different from the customer account creation process during FOC since SEVIS already contains data on the students that will migrate into SEVIS II.

Q: How will a student with minimal English language skills create a customer account?

A: SEVP recognizes the challenge of serving this population. SEVP will make the customer account creation process as simple as possible, but there may be cases in which students will need to designate an Account Manager to create the customer account. Insufficient English proficiency is one of the reasons people will be able to have an Account Manager.

Q: When does the student create a customer account and provide information to a school? Before or after the Certificate of Eligibility (COE) is created?

A: The student must create a customer account before a school can issue a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). The student's IIN is one of the data elements the P/DSO will need in order to associate that student's record with the school and to pull the student's biographical information into the COE-creation process. The student can create the customer account at any time.

Q: Are minors (younger than 16) allowed to enter customer information?

A: Nonimmigrants 14 years of age or over will be able to create their own customer account and legally must sign their own COE. This mirrors the laws regulating visa issuance. Children under the age of 14 cannot create their own customer account nor sign their own COE. SEVIS II will allow nonimmigrants to have Account Managers who can create customer accounts and sign COEs for individuals who cannot legally sign for themselves.

Q: Regarding required passport information, what about Palestinians, a lot of whom do not necessarily have passports, but rather travel documents issued by another country. How would they respond to that question?

A: When students enter passport information they are allowed to input the country that issued the travel document. This can be different from the country of citizenship. SEVIS II will accommodate other travel documents.

Q: Will the passport expiration date prompt a flag six months prior to expiration? If yes, to student, P/DSO, or both?
A: No. SEVIS II will not track passport expiration. However, you will be able to run a report using this data element.

Q: Will SEVIS II take expired passport dates?
A: Yes, it will allow expired passport dates to be keyed into the system. SEVIS II allows information entry for more than one passport or country. Nonimmigrants need to keep current the information on the passport they use for travel as an F/M/J. As the Form I-94 is phased out by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), maintaining current, accurate passport information will become even more important.

Q: I see that the passport information is not a required field. Will you then require schools to populate this field for their students?
A: No. Passport information will be provided either by the student or through a systems interface.

Q: Why would a nonimmigrant be asked to list multiple countries under their passport?
A: Nonimmigrants may have multiple citizenships and may have passports from those countries. SEVIS II allows these students the option to list all the passports they hold, even though they may only use one passport at a time to enter the U.S.

Q: Will passport information be verified at the port of entry (POE) and updated or corrected, if necessary?
A: No. This will not be done at the POE. Passport information will be verified by consular officers during the nonimmigrant visa application process. Nonimmigrants can edit passport information in their customer account. Any passport information entered into SEVIS II will be added to the nonimmigrant's history rather than being overwritten. SEVIS II will capture which passport the student uses to enter the U.S.

Q: What if a student does not want to disclose their gender (ex. transgender students)?
A: Unfortunately, nonimmigrants will be required to disclose their gender and will not have the option of leaving this field blank. Gender is a significant data point used in establishing identity in government databases and in matching records between databases.

Q: With respect to gender, would there ever be an option to say "prefer not to answer?"
A: No. The student will be required to answer the question.

Q: What if a student legally changes their gender after creating a customer account?
A: Students will need to submit a Help Desk ticket and provide evidence of the change.

Q: I recommend that there be instructions in the "Current Address Information" section.
A: SEVIS II will contain instructions on each screen.

Q: Will you accept a P.O. Box as a mailing address since they will be entering physical address as well?

A: Yes.

Q: Can students ever change their primary email address once it is used to create the customer account?

A: Yes. Students have the ability to change the email address on file in SEVIS II. They will need to complete the e-mail validation process initiated by the system before it will be accepted as their primary e-mail.

Q: It looks like first time SEVIS II users need a SEVIS ID to create a customer account. How will new initial users get a SEVIS ID for that (ex. Students applying to be F or J for first time ever)?

A: This is true only during the IOC period when only students with existing records in SEVIS will need to create a customer account into which SEVIS data can be migrated. After FOC, new students will not be required to provide SEVIS ID numbers, though they will have the ability to provide SEVIS IDs if they have ever had a SEVIS record before.

Q: For the security questions, do the students need to enter 10 questions or do they choose from 3 to 10 questions for the security purpose?

A: Students will compose 5 security questions and their corresponding answers.

Q: When a student claims previous records, will the system show complete SEVIS ID numbers for student to identify? Also, under add records in the same section, it appears that people cannot add records by SEVIS number. Considering that School/Sponsor Officials tell students to keep those records FOREVER, it's would seem that entering SEVIS ID numbers would be the best way to get the most accurate information, rather than trying to match up other records with SEVIS numbers. While the SEVIS number may not always be available, it is more accurate when it is.

A: The system will display the full SEVIS ID numbers during the claim previous records portion of the customer account creation process. Students will have the ability to add additional SEVIS records by either entering SEVIS ID numbers or, if they do not remember those numbers, by entering alternate information related to their past program to help the system locate those records.

Q: If the student answers "No" to the question of whether they have been here before under a different SEVIS number, will that penalize them in some way, or is this information just for data matching?

A: Answering “No” will not penalize the student. If, however, it is discovered that a student failed to claim a previous record that was, in fact, theirs, the student may be asked to explain the omission. Depending upon the circumstances, this might be seen as fraudulent behavior on the part of the student.

Q: Will users be able to change their biographical information after creating their customer accounts?

A: Yes. Users will be able to change biographic information until they have given their first electronic signature. After that, their information will be locked and they will need to submit a Help Ticket and appropriate supporting evidence to update information.

Q: Will P/DSOs have the same type of customer account as nonimmigrant students and spouse/dependents?

A: Yes. Their customer accounts are very similar. Since P/DSOS are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, they will not be asked certain questions that nonimmigrants must answer during the customer account set up process. The customer account, itself, simply gives very basic access to SEVIS. Users can view and update their own records, create a customer account for another person (as an Account Manager), and get basic information about SEVIS, apply for school certification and program designation.

The distinctions among P/DSOs, other school officials, students, spouse/dependents, and other nonimmigrants depend on their associations with an institution. Those associations determine the levels of access and permissions they have in SEVIS II, and that information is added to their customer accounts. For example, P/DSOs can see information for all the students at that school, while students may only see their own records (or records they manage if they are also Account Managers.)

Q: Do all nonimmigrant students regardless of immigration status (H-4, G-4, etc.) have to create customer accounts?

A: No. Only those students who hold or want to obtain F, M, or J status must create a customer account.

Q: Why only list "City" and "Village" under birthplace (i.e. why not list town)?

A: If we listed all the types of municipalities, the list would be too long. We chose two common names, but basically we want to know in which municipality the customer account holder was born.

Q: Once a student receives a Social Security Number (SSN), must it be entered into SEVIS II?

A: No. SEVIS II is not going to collect SSNs. Storing SSNs would not only raise the level of system security required by FISMA, but would also drastically increase the cost of developing the system. SEVP does not need to collect the SSN.

Names and the Integrity of Student-Entered Data

Q: Will there be clear instructions for "Surname" or "Last Name"?

A: Yes. The system will provide clear instructions during the customer account setup process. There will also be specific instructions for students with only one name.

Q: Will students' names be changeable, based on dual citizenship spelling?

A: Students will have the ability to submit Help Desk tickets to request changes to their name. They will be required to submit supporting documentation.

Q: Requiring a Middle Name is a big change for Consular Officers, School/Sponsor Officials, Students, and Exchange Visitors. Can this be an optional field?

A: SEVIS currently has a middle name field. SEVIS II will require users either to enter a middle name or to indicate that they do not have a middle name.

Q: During IOC, what happens if the name the student submits does not match the name on the student's passport or current SEVIS record?

A: During the IOC customer account creation process, students will not have the ability to submit their own names. Current biographic data in SEVIS will migrate into SEVIS II. Any data errors will need to be corrected in SEVIS now by P/DSOs and the corrections will migrate into SEVIS II.

Q: What should people do if their passports do not list a last name or list only one name?

A: SEVIS II will require the nonimmigrant to enter the primary name in the last name field.

Q: Will P/DSOs be responsible for making sure that the information that the nonimmigrants enter is correct?

A: No. Nonimmigrants are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of their own biographical and personal data. School/Sponsor officials have the ability to review the information on a nonimmigrant that has a relationship (prospective, current, or former) with the school and can help nonimmigrants understand how to make corrections. Nonimmigrants may make some corrections directly in their own records, while some corrections require submission of Help Desk tickets. Consular officials can also correct certain information during the visa application processes.

Q: If a consular officer makes a mistake in overwriting a student record, how will that be corrected?

A: Students will be able to submit a Help Desk ticket to correct biographic data in their customer account. They will be required to provide supporting documentation for these changes.

Q: After a nonimmigrant has obtained a visa, will they be able to change biographical or demographic data themselves?

A: Yes and No. Once a nonimmigrant uses the COE to obtain a visa, thus connecting the customer account information, the COE information, and the visa information, the identifying biographic data is locked. The consular officer has the ability to overwrite data until the visa has been issued. After visa issuance, changes can only be made to this data through the submission of a Help Desk ticket and requests must be accompanied with supporting documentation. The nonimmigrant may continue to update and change other data in the customer account such as address, telephone, e-mail, etc.

Q: Will there be on-screen instructions for naming conventions (e.g. hyphens not allowed)?

A: Yes. SEVP is developing guidance on naming conventions. SEVIS II will have some on screen help and links to larger documents providing guidance.

Q: Under "Additional Names," will there be a space provided to list dates associated with the use of those names?
A: Yes. Anyone adding an additional name will be asked to provide the timeframe associated with the use of that name.

Q: What is the character limit for the "last name" field?
A: We have not yet gotten down to that level of system development. Once a developer has been engaged to develop SEVIS II, we will look at other government systems such as SEVIS, ELIS, and the Department of State systems to determine field links and related naming conventions.

Q: Until SEVIS II is fully implemented and nonimmigrants with only one name have the option of indicating that they do not have a first or a middle name, should school officials continue to enter the single name into the last name field and enter "FNU" into the first name field?
A: Yes. P/DSOs should continue to follow existing SEVP guidance on data integrity and naming standards.

Q: In some languages, "Maiden Name" translates to "Mother's name" rather than "Mother's last name." How will this be addressed?
A: We had not heard of that particular translation. We will certainly keep that in mind as we write guidance for the field.

Q: Which name field categories will populate the domestic I-20 (Domestic Report)?
A: We will not use the term "domestic I-20" as the I-20 is the Government Printing Office-assigned form number for the paper version of the Certificate of Eligibility currently in use. The Domestic Report will be populated by first name, middle name, and last name because that is what is consistent with the other records.

Q: Will SEVIS II have a U.S. address validation function for domestic addresses?
A: Yes. SEVIS II will have an address validation function for U.S. addresses.

Q: Many school residence halls appear as unverifiable addresses in many address validation programs. Will there be an option to confirm addresses in these cases?
A: Yes. SEVIS II will allow a user to override the invalid address notice and submit the address that was not validated.

Q: What happens if students do not enter their local U.S. address upon arrival? Will this compromise their legal status in the US?
A: Students will be notified of their need to enter their address information. P/DSOs will be unable to register new students for the term until the students have provided a U.S. address. Failure to be registered in SEVIS will negatively affect the students' status. Students will receive e-mails and alerts informing them not only of actions they must take to maintain status, but also what they must do should they fall out of status.

Q: Will students be able to update their e-mail accounts in their customer account?
A: Yes. Students can update their primary e-mail addresses and provide additional e-mail

addresses, if they want.

Q: Will school officials be informed when students submit Help Tickets to update biographical information?

A: Yes. P/DSOs will receive alerts notifying them of Help Tickets and correction requests that students have submitted. P/DSOs will also receive notifications of address changes.

Student and Spouse/Dependent Access to SEVIS II

Q: What are the P/DSO's responsibilities in SEVIS II? Will students be responsible for their records?

A: Students are responsible only for creating and updating their customer account which includes biographic, demographic, contact, and employer information. P/DSOs are not permitted to make changes to the student's customer account. The P/DSOs retain responsibility for issuing the Certificate of Eligibility, deferring attendance, lengthening and shortening programs, recommending OPT, granting CPT, etc. Two key responsibilities that will move from the P/DSO to the nonimmigrant are address updates and entering employment information.

Q: If students are responsible for entering their own addresses, will SEVIS II send an error message if the address is incorrect or incomplete?

A: SEVIS II will use an address verification system to verify U.S. addresses. Students will see an error message if a U.S. address appears to be incorrect or incomplete. SEVIS will allow an override of the error notification to accommodate such common occurrences as a new apartment complex with a new zip code or a new housing development with street names that do not yet appear in the verification system.

Q: Will students get any notifications regarding their SEVIS records?

A: Yes. Anytime something happens to their record that will affect their status, they will get an e-mail notification or text message.

Q: Will students have the ability to see *who* accesses their record or simply that their record has been accessed?

A: Nonimmigrants will receive an alert that an official at a certain institution has created an initial prospect relationship. They will not be able to see which school official actually accessed their record.

Q: Will students be notified each time a P/DSO views their record?

A: No. Students will not be notified every time a P/DSO accesses their record. They will only be notified upon creation of the initial prospect relationship.

Q: What are the penalties for students who misuse the system?

A: There are federal penalties against hacking. Individuals who knowingly report false information are subject to the penalties associated with immigration fraud and could lose their status and face removal.

Q: How will SEVP know if the student is not reporting correctly?

A: Nonimmigrants will periodically be required to enter an affirmative validation that their information is correct. Compliance to this requirement will be monitored. SEVIS II will also send out reminders to students to check and update their information.

Q: What type of access will spouses/dependents have to the system?

A: Just as with the F-1s, M-1s, and J-1s, spouses/dependents must create their own customer accounts and electronically sign their own Certificates of Eligibility unless they are under 14 or are otherwise unable to do so. Their access to the overall system is limited. They will be responsible for keeping their own customer account information up to date and can only view their own records. Dependents who are 14 years of age and older can have full access to their own customer accounts. Parents can also manage dependent customer accounts.

Q: Will dependents be required to create their own customer accounts?

A: Yes. There must be a customer account for each person entering the country in F, M, or J status.

Q: To what degree will the customer accounts for the principal status holders and their spouse/dependent be linked? For example, will updates to the principal F-1's customer account automatically update the spouse/dependent's customer account?

A: The customer accounts will not be directly linked based only on the existing relationship. Each customer account stands alone. Upon the request of the principal, the PDSO may complete COEs for spouse/dependents, thus associating the spouse/dependents with the principal. Once this relationship is established through the association and COE creation processes, some updates to the principal's record will be reflected in the records of the associated spouse/dependents. Spouse/dependents may also make changes to biographic data in their own records.

Families change, marriages occur or dissolve, children age out, and people seek other nonimmigrant status not associated with the principal. By not linking the customer accounts of family members, SEVIS II recognizes that individuals may be associated with each other at specific times in specific ways that are not permanent. Upon the request of the principal or the spouse/dependent, the P/DSO may remove the association.

Q: Can a nonimmigrant delete a dependent's customer account in situations of marital discord or separations? Are there any concern over how this could affect the F-2 spouse/dependent's legal status and rights?

A: No. Users cannot delete someone else's customer account. Even in instances where the nonimmigrant serves as an Account Manager for a spouse or a dependent, the Account Manager can only end the relationship as an Account Manager, but cannot delete the customer account or sever the spouse/dependent relationship in SEVIS. Spouses and dependents 14 years of age or over have the ability to bar their customer accounts from being managed and can request corrections to their customer account if an Account Manager abuses that role by entering false or malicious data.

Nonimmigrants will not have the ability autonomously to disassociate a spouse/dependent from their record. As is the case with SEVIS now, only the P/DSOs have the ability to end the association as a spouse/dependent.

Account Managers

Q: Will agents be able to be Account Managers?

A: Yes. Although SEVP has some concerns about this we hope to manage it with ongoing oversight. If we do not allow for Account Managers, we recognize that people who are having difficulty creating or managing a customer account may give someone else inappropriate access to their customer accounts and allow them to "pretend" to be the customer account holder, which is a basic and serious security violation. SEVP would rather know that there is an identified Account Manager with specific permissions. SEVP can then monitor Account Manager activities to look for anomalies that might indicate fraud or abuse. SEVP can remove Account Managers as necessary.

Q: Can an agency charge fees to provide service to create customer accounts?

A: Yes. SEVP will not be able to stop them from charging the fee. However, agents cannot prevent nonimmigrants from creating and accessing their own customer accounts.

Q: We don't use agents for our ESL students. Will P/DSOs be able to serve as Account Managers for a student?

A: Yes. P/DSOs may assume the role of an Account Manager for a student.

Q: Will a school know if an agent was involved in creating the customer account or managing the customer account?

A: Schools will be able to see if a student has an Account Manager and the name of the Account Manager, but will not necessarily know if the Account Manager created the customer account or was added as an Account Manager after the customer account was established.

Q: Will an Account Manager be able to update address information on the nonimmigrant's behalf?

A: Yes.

Q: A lot of our students hire agents to fill out their school applications. If the agents create the customer accounts and provide an e-mail address that was created by the agent and that the student does not have access to, how do we know that the information provided is accurate?

A: We suspect there may be similar issues with agents that occur now. While SEVIS II allows agents to create and to manage customer accounts on behalf of students, it also provides SEVP the ability to monitor Account Managers as well as the people that they manage. P/DSOs will be able to view student information including email addresses and whether or not a student has an Account Manager. We would encourage you to contact us with any concerns about the behaviors of specific Account Managers. We have the ability to bar individuals from serving as an Account Manager in SEVIS II. Once students claim their customer account, they create their own user name, password, PIN, and security questions and can change the primary email associated with the customer account.

Q: Can you expand more on the Account Manager role? I am thinking about agents who create a customer account for their student, and continue to have access to the customer account even after a student enrolls (FERPA issues, etc.).

A: The Account Manager's role is fairly limited. They can create a customer account, but cannot create a user name, password, or PIN for anyone. Account Managers, including parents, cannot sign any COEs for individuals who are 14 years of age or older. They can view the nonimmigrant's record, report address and employment information, and they can initiate Help Desk tickets on behalf of the nonimmigrant. All actions they take can be traced back to them in the system's audit trail.

Once the customer account has been created, nonimmigrants aged 14 or over must "claim" their customer account before they can sign their Certificate of Eligibility. During this process the nonimmigrant creates the username, password, security questions, and PIN that is to be associated with their customer account. Claiming the customer account does not automatically disassociate the customer account manage.

Account Managers for individuals 14 years old or older are able to serve in that capacity only with the permission of the student. Students aged 14 years and older have the ability to remove or bar Account Managers at any time. An exception to this is 14- to 18-year olds who cannot bar a parent from being an Account Manager. By allowing someone to continue to manage their customer account they have given permission to that individual to access the information in the record.

Q: SEVIS II seems to be a great business opportunity for agents. Will SEVP report to schools any agents with a record of inaccurately entering data for their clients?

A: No. SEVP does not plan to notify schools of agents who abuse the system. SEVP does, however, plan to take appropriate action against the agent who could be barred from serving as an agent for any students.

Q: Agents could presumably be able to set up an customer account for students that would not have personal access (ex. setting up a dummy e-mail address, specific type of password hints, etc). How do students get past that?

A: If students become aware that another person has set up a customer account in their name and have been denied access to that customer account by the Account Manager, the student can contact SEVP helpdesk for assistance. During the customer account creation process, Account Managers do not create the student's user name, password, PIN, or security questions. The nonimmigrant does that when claiming their customer accounts.

Q: Will educational partners (e.g. recruiters) be required to create customer accounts?

A: No. Recruiters do not need to create customer accounts in SEVIS II to carry out their duties as a recruiter for your institution.

Students may, however, choose to have recruiters serve as their Account Manager to assist in the creation and management of students' customer accounts early in the recruiting, applications, and admission process. All SEVIS II Account Managers must have customer accounts. In such cases, both the school and the recruiter must recognize and draw clear distinctions between recruitment duties performed for the school, and Account Manager functions performed on behalf of the student. The potential for conflicts of interest should be addressed.

Q: Who is an Account Manager? Who may have an Account Manager? Is anyone required to have an Account Manager?

A: In the context of SEVIS II, an Account Manager is someone who assists nonimmigrants in establishing and maintaining customer accounts. SEVP recognizes that nonimmigrants may want or need an Account Manager because they are legally underage, lack internet access, lack English proficiency, are medically unable, or simply prefer that someone else manage their customer account. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act requires an adult parent or guardian to create and manage a customer account for a child under the age of 14. With the exception of children under the age of 14, there is no requirement for anyone to have an Account Manager.

Q: Can the president of the university have an Account Manager?

A: No. Only nonimmigrants can have Account Managers. School officials (Head of School, P/DSOs, IT/Batch specialists, etc.) who have decision making and signature authority may not have Account Managers, which would, in effect, transfer that authority to a third party.

Q: What exactly can an Account Manager do in SEVIS II?

A: The Account Manager's role is limited. They can create customer accounts, but cannot create user names, passwords, or PINs for the customer accounts they manage. Account Managers, including parents, cannot sign any COEs for individuals who are 14 years of age or older. They can view the nonimmigrant's record, report address and employment information, and they can initiate Help Tickets on behalf of the nonimmigrant. All actions they take can be traced back to them in the system's audit trail.

Once the customer account has been created, nonimmigrants aged 14 or over must "claim" their customer accounts before they can sign their COEs. During this process the nonimmigrants create the usernames, passwords, security questions, and PINs that will be associated with their customer accounts. Claiming the customer account does not automatically disassociate the Account Manager.

Account Managers for individuals 14 years old or older are able to serve in that capacity only with the permission of the nonimmigrant. Nonimmigrants aged 14 years and older have the ability to prevent their customer account from being managed. By allowing someone to continue to manage their customer account, they have given permission to that Account Manager to access the information in the record.

Q: Does a student having an Account Manager interfere with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)?

A: No. SEVP will link to information so Account Managers can understand the student's SEVIS immigration record. There is a difference between the student's educational record (which is maintained by the school) and the student's immigration record which is maintained in SEVIS. Account Managers only have access to view and to assist students in the management of their electronic immigration record in SEVIS. FERPA still applies to direct communications between the school and the Account Manager, and between the school and the student.

Student aged 14 or older must affirmatively accept an individual as an Account Manager to assist in the management of their immigration record in SEVIS. Students are still responsible for signing their COEs and attestations. They can also prevent their account from being managed.

When a parent serves as an Account Manager, it is very possible that the parent will contact the school with questions about the student's status. Questions regarding the immigration record can quickly lead to questions about the academic program. FERPA most definitely applies in these situations.

Q: Can P/DSOs become Account Managers?

A: Yes. P/DSOs can serve as Account Managers.

Q: Can an F-1 nonimmigrant be an Account Manager for F-2 minors?

A: Yes. The F-1s can be the Account Manager for each spouse/dependent, provided the F-1 nonimmigrants do not have an Account Manager for their own customer accounts. The spouse and dependents aged 14 or over can prevent their customer accounts from being managed.

Q: At what point will Account Managers create customer accounts for themselves, versus creating the customer account for the person whose customer account they are managing?

A: Account Managers must first create their own customer accounts. Account Managers must access SEVIS through their own customer accounts. From there, Account Managers may take the following actions for others: create new customer accounts; manage customer accounts they have created; request to be associated as an Account Manager to a customer account that has already been created by someone else.

Note that students with existing customer accounts do not initiate customer account management in SEVIS. A customer account holder must contact a potential Account Manager, who then makes a request in SEVIS to be associated with that customer account. The customer account holder, upon seeing the request in SEVIS, accepts (or rejects) that Account Manager.

Q: Will there be an "I Don't Know" option on the “Claim Previous Records” page?

A: No. For the initial release of SEVIS II, there is no “I don’t know” option for claiming SEVIS records that nonimmigrant may have had in the past. The user must answer YES or NO to the question of whether they have ever been in the U.S. in F, M, or J status. If the answer is YES, the user is asked to enter at least one SEVIS ID number. At that point, the user may check a box for “I don’t know.” An option for “I don’t know” for the first question is something we can take into consideration for future releases, particularly for instances where Account Managers may create customer accounts.

Q: Will an Account Manager be able to view all of the customer accounts they are managing by logging into SEVIS?

A: Yes. Once logged into SEVIS, the Account Managers will be on their SEVIS home page. From this home page, they can elect to view a list of all their managed customer accounts.

Q: What happens when nonimmigrants are unable to access their managed customer account, for example if they do not know their IIN?

A: Hopefully most nonimmigrants will have a good relationship with their Account Managers. However, in the event that the nonimmigrant did not receive the IIN or has perhaps forgotten it, they can seek assistance from the SEVIS Help Desk or from a DSO at a school with which they have already been associated. Once the nonimmigrants have gained access to their records, nonimmigrants can bar their customer accounts from being managed.

Q: Can a nonimmigrant have more than one Account Manager?

A: Yes. A nonimmigrant can have up to two Account Managers.

School Information and the I-17

Q: Will schools be able to add different types of cost of living? For example, undergrad vs. graduate, on-campus vs. off-campus living, etc.?

A: No. The I-17 has space to record one cost of living value. We are looking for the lowest living expense estimates. As you create a certificate of eligibility for a student you do have the opportunity to overwrite that figure. We are not concerned if you put a higher cost of living figure on the COE, but we are concerned if you put down a lower one. Our concern is two-fold: one, by understating the cost of living you create conditions for visa fraud through the misrepresentation of a material fact used in granting an immigration benefit. The student goes to the embassy with enough financial documentation to cover the understated costs on the COE. The student arrives to discover higher actual costs and doesn’t have the funds to cover them. That leads to our second concern: illegal employment in an attempt to simply survive.

Q: Regarding cost of living, will schools be able to add by month or still only be year?

A: The cost of living estimate reflected in the School Details section of SEVIS II is based on a calendar year. This figure must be at or above 125% of the Annual Poverty Level guidelines for that geographic area as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Q: How will costs for insurance and taxes be accounted for in SEVIS II?
A: Insurance and other expenses are captured during the COE creation process when a P/DSO enters expenses related to an individual student's program of study.

Q: Does "tuition" include only tuition or tuition plus mandatory fees?
A: Tuition includes only the figure for tuition and is listed as part of the School Information. Mandatory fees would be included in the "Books and Fees" field.

Q: Regarding staffing, what is an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of DSOs?
A: The student to DSO ratio is something that must be determined by the school. SEVP does not mandate an official ratio.

Q: Will the calendar function allow for both required and non-required sessions (e.g. summer sessions)?
A: Yes. For example, you will put in the summer session. Whether or not the student is required to attend depends on the student's circumstances (e.g. whether or not they are entitled to a vacation). We are expecting you to put in all your sessions - like you do on your website where you have the academic calendar.

Q: Should schools officials enter the "term" start and end dates or the dates when the student can begin to register for their classes?
A: We want start and end dates for when classes begin and end.

Q: Can calendars be updated at any time or will schools need to wait for SEVP to adjudicate these updates?
A: Yes. You can update your calendar at any time.

Q: If a school's academic calendar changes every year, will the Form I-17 need to be changed every year as well?
A: You must update the calendar every year, but SEVIS II will make it easy for you. You can duplicate the term names and then just change the dates.

Q: Will schools be able to designate a reporting date on the COE that is different from their calendar date on the I-17 (e.g. when reporting dates are different from schools' quarterly calendars)?
A: SEVIS II will operate as SEVIS does now. Schools can choose to have the program start date correspond to a reporting date that is different from the initial session start date. This would accommodate attendance at any required orientations.

Q: Regarding P/DSO emergency contact information, will this be made available to current "active" students and to prospective "initial" students as well?

A: Yes. Any student for whom you have issued a COE will be able to view the emergency contact information as part of your school's detailed information. This emergency contact number should be a number the school has established for emergency procedures. We would suggest that the phone number be one that can be forwarded, a phone that different people rotate on-call rather than someone's personal cell phone number, or a dedicated line where the person who answers can reach a P/DSO in a timely manner.

Q: Would it be acceptable for campus police to contact the P/DSO in case of an emergency rather than the students themselves?

A: Yes. Schools must determine their own emergency contact procedures. We understand that some schools have a system whereby students contact the school's campus police for after-hour emergencies and the campus police offers in turn contact the P/DSO.

Q: Is the need for emergency contact information required by law? Will officers at ports of entry be contacting P/DSOs to request confirmation?

A: No. It will not be legislated, but may be in the regulations. It will, however, be required by the system. We believe that the student would benefit from having access to this information. We anticipate that there will be an increase in the overall number of students sent to secondary inspection as a result of a more complete student history available to the inspectors at the Ports of Entry (POE). It may be helpful for the student or the inspector to have a short conversation with one of the school's P/DSOs rather than denying the student entry to the U.S.

Q: How will SEVIS II capture the majors for each school? Will programs and schools need to submit via the Form I-17?

A: Institutions will have to submit more detailed information on their programs of study as a part of the I-17. SEVP will make available the tools to complete this well in advance of the SEVIS II release.

Q: Will the program of study need to match what is being reported to Department of Education (DoEd) via IPEDS, or can schools include a program of study that is not reported via IPEDS? If not, does that mean schools will be asked to change what is reported to the DoEd?

A: There is currently no requirement to match what is in IPEDS. It needs to be an official program of study for your school. You must show evidence if requested.

Q: Should on-campus summer camps (e.g. music festival camps) with international students be added to the list of programs?

A: Yes, if you want to issue a COE for them. Keep in mind that nonimmigrants may be able to enter as tourists to participate in summer camps that are not part of a course of study.

Q: Regarding multiple campuses, will there be a single main campus that updates information?

A: SEVIS II moves away from the Campus and School referenced and will use the terms "School" and "Group." The "Group" represents the overarching ownership of the school or schools. Beneath the group is the school or set of schools where the academic programs are detailed and managed. Each school can update its own I-17 information. Much will depend upon how schools choose to organize themselves and who has been given authority by the school to update information.

Q: Our school has an intensive English Program with its own Form I-17. In SEVIS II, would that program be included along with the main campus?

A: The program would continue to have its own I-17. It could, however, be included in the same group as the main campus.

Q: Regarding the "capacity" field on the Form I-17, how will a school determine total legal capacity for instructional facilities? Is this every single classroom on campus as well as buildings?

A: SEVP will develop guidance on how this field should be completed. You may notice the placeholder for "instructional text" on the model.

Q: How will the relationship between COE and Form I-17 change?

A: Information from the I-17 will pre-populate some of the fields in the COE creation process. P/DSOs can overwrite this data as needed to accurately reflect a student's situation.

Q: Will school officials receive notifications when it is time to input information? Will there be SEVIS II training for school officials?

A: School Officials will be notified of the SEVIS II implementation schedule. They will be informed of the date that IOC is to begin and end. Training and tools to assist in the transition will also be made available.

Q: Do you recommend that schools apply for Form I-17 adjudication prior to IOC (so the adjudication will be pending during IOC)?

A: Once an official implementation schedule has been determined, SEVP will determine how best to handle Form I-17 updates during IOC and will provide transitional guidance to assist schools in managing those updates. We encourage schools to continue to keep their I-17 information current in SEVIS to minimize changes to existing data fields that must be made during IOC. We'll have resources available to help with adjudication of any updates. Again, we encourage you to make any updates in SEVIS as soon as you know you have them.

Batch Processing

Q: How will SEVIS interface with campus data management (i.e. batch processing)?

A: Batch processing will still be available in SEVIS II. However, since students will also provide information, there will be two-way batch functionality. Batch schema will be available at least 1 year before SEVIS II release.

Q: Can schools get a list of what information schools will get back from SEVIS via batch?
A: SEVP does not yet have a list ready, but will make it available as soon as possible.

Q: Will customer Account Manager information for participants be available for sponsors/schools to import in the reverse-batching process?
A: SEVP will give the institution everything that they are entitled to know about that person. This will include customer Account Manager information.

Q: For schools that use Batch, will there be additional time to work with third party vendors for software development and for testing?
A: SEVP is aware of the needs of batch schools. SEVP will ensure all developments are communicated effectively before a schema is developed. SEVP will also be holding a Batch User Conference after we have identified the contractor to develop the SEVIS II application. SEVP will release the batch schema at least a year in advance to allow for development and testing of batch software.

Q: If we are thinking about moving over to batch, would it be best to do that now or wait until SEVIS II is implemented?
A: That is a decision individual schools must make. SEVP recommends that you carefully look at SEVIS II functionalities before making a decision. SEVIS II will offer significant improvements for those who use the Real Time Interface (RTI). SEVIS II will allow you to make updates to multiple records at the same time. Some schools may decide that they do not need batch. We anticipate that there may be a 6-9 month period immediately preceding SEVIS II implementation where schools will not be able to change to batch, so you may want to consider it sooner rather than later.

Q: If we are a current batch school, can we elect to discontinue being a batch school?
A: Yes. You can discontinue batching at any time.

Q: For users creating Certificates of Eligibility (COE) via batch, how will the justification information be provided when funding is different from the I-17?
A: This will be part of the batch schema and, just as in Real Time Interface (RTI), P/DSOs must explain the discrepancy. The primary difference is that batch users will only be prompted to provide an explanation if their schools' system is designed to prompt them.

Certificates of Eligibility (COE)

Q: What is a COE?
A: A Certificate of Eligibility is an electronic record that summarizes a nonimmigrant's eligibility to engage in a specific program of study or program of cultural or educational exchange. In the current SEVIS environment, this eligibility is summarized on the I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status (I-20) or the DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2019). In the paperless environment of

SEVIS II, paper I-20s and DS-2019s will no longer exist, having been replaced by the COE. The terms “I-20,” Form “I-20,” and so on will also no longer be used, and will be replaced by the electronic COE which can only be accessed through SEVIS II.

Q: Please define what is meant by "association."

A: This is part of SEVIS II’s new vocabulary. In the one-person, one-record environment of SEVIS II, anyone who accesses SEVIS has a customer account. The accounts are, for the most part, managed by the user. The user’s role within the system is not defined until a relationship is created between that customer account and another entity such as a school or a program sponsor. In the SEVIS II context, the act of creating that relationship is called creating an association.

The type of association determines the user’s role and level of permissions in SEVIS II. When a P/DSO begins the process of creating a COE on behalf of newly-admitted students, the first task the P/DSO completes must be to associate the students’ customer account with the school. This defines the account holders as F or M- students with a prospect relationship to the school, and gives them the level of system access and permissions afforded nonimmigrant prospective students.

Likewise, when a PDSO adds a DSO, the prospective DSO’s customer account is associated with the school and a role is assigned. It is only after this association has been made that the user can access the functionality inherent to that role.

Over time, a user’s associations and roles within SEVIS II may change, but the same customer account will always remain the same.

Q: Can someone who is not a P/DSO, but is helping with data input for the Certificate of Eligibility create their customer account?

A: No. Anyone who directly accesses SEVIS II to enter data for a Certificate of Eligibility <u>must</u> be a P/DSO. SEVIS II will give the PDSO the ability to assign different levels of permissions to DSOs so that some DSOs may only be able to draft COEs while others can both draft and sign them. This functionality allows schools to establish their COE creation, review, and issuance processes.

Q: Must students wait until after they have received a COE to create a customer account?

A: No. The student must create their customer account before the school will be able to issue the COE.

Q: How will dependent COEs be created?

A: Before any COE can be created for a dependent, the dependent must have a customer account. A COE for a dependent can be created at the same time that you create the student’s COE or it can be created afterwards. Specific questions have been incorporated into the student COE creation process to solicit information on spouse/dependents so that COEs for the family may be created at the same time. If a dependent COE needs to be created after a student’s COE has already been issued, this can be done simply by clicking a link from the student's record and going through the process for adding spouse/dependents.

Q: How does a potential Exchange Visitor apply to our Exchange Visitor Program for their potential research experience?

A: They will apply the same way they do now. SEVIS II does not change how a student or Exchange Visitor applies to your programs. It does, however, change the manner in which SEVIS records, I-20s, and DS-2019s are created since the immigration document issuance processes will be entirely electronic.

Q: Must a student demonstrate proof of (non U.S.) citizenship before a school can issue a COE?

A: No, though we highly recommend looking at a copy of the passport the nonimmigrant plans to use to enter in F/M/J status to validate it against the name entered into the SEVIS II customer account record.

Q: In reviewing the FMJ record details, does a P/DSO have the right to refuse to issue a COE if they think the student will not be successful? For example, they failed a previous program at another institution or they have been previously terminated at my institution for unauthorized withdrawal or failure to make normal progress?

A: That is an admission decision as opposed to an immigration decision. It needs to be made by the institution in accordance with their academic standards for admission. SEVP does not tell institutions who they must admit to their programs.

Q: COEs issued for English as a Second Language students are usually for programs that are short in length and students extend often during their study. How does this work for P/DSOs in terms of extending COE?

A: You can do an extension of the program of study or a change of level in SEVIS II.

Q: Will school officials have the ability to print the Form I-20?

A: No. In the SEVIS II environment, there will not be a physical Form I-20.

School officials and nonimmigrants will be able to print a Domestic Report which will contain most of the student's information. Domestic Report is not an official form for immigration purposes. It is designed to meet the nonimmigrant's needs to show current status and employment authorization for purposes such as when it comes to social security numbers, drivers' licenses, bank accounts, apartment leases, etc.

School Officials may also print reports with student information, but these reports cannot be used for immigration purposes.

Q: When should schools add the Individual Immigration Number (IIN) to the admissions application?

A: Schools may choose to, but are not required to, ask for the IIN in their admissions applications. Schools may choose how they obtain the IIN for admitted students. We understand that schools need some lead time to make changes to their admissions applications and intake forms. SEVIS II implementation will not begin in 2012 or in 2013. SEVP will notify the user community once the SEVIS II implementation schedule has been determined. Schools will then be able to look at their own deadlines for making formal changes to their applications and intake forms.

Q: Under "History of Associations," will the school official be able to see if a student has held F-2, M-2, or J-2 status?

A: Yes. The History of Associations synopsis will display the dates, status, and the name of the sponsoring institution.

Q: Under "History of Associations," will the school official be able to see if a student has held any nonimmigrant status other than F, M, or J?

A: No. Only associations while in F, M, and J status will appear in this synopsis.

Q: Will a school official be able to see other institutions to which a student may be applying?

A: No. P/DSOs will not be able to see prospective relationships a student may have with other institutions.

Q: You mentioned that schools will need to justify costs greater than 10% of the cost associated with the program of study. However, some schools have varying costs for graduate versus undergraduate programs. How will that work in SEVIS II?

A: In SEVIS II, each academic program will be specifically associated with a level of tuition on the Form I-17. For example, University X's Form I-17 indicates that graduate tuition for a PhD in Philosophy is $40,000 a year. When creating a COE for a graduate student in that program, a P/DSO at University X would have to provide an explanation when a specific student's costs exceed the $40,000 associated with the program. This typically happens when a school's tuition has increased, but the tuition figures on the Form I-17 have not been updated.

Q: Pertaining to the length of programs and cost of attendance: On the Form I-17, how can schools represent the diversity of program lengths and estimated costs, given the fact that we have different educational levels (undergrad/grad, post-grad, program certificates) and how will we be able to represent the cost of attendance?

A: This webinar focuses solely on the COE issuance process. We did not demonstrate the Form I-17 functionality. In SEVIS II, P/DSOs have the ability to record different tuition levels for different programs. Each program of study must be associated with one of the tuition levels defined on the Form I-17. For example, the school might have different tuitions for undergraduate, graduate PhD, Graduate Masters, professional degrees, and so on. We are aware that some schools have different tuition levels for different years in a program. SEVIS II will not require updates to each student's tuition each year, but will require general updates to financials for certain event such as extending a program, adding a dependent, etc.

The cost of living is not tied to the program cost. The cost of living must be at or above 125% of the poverty level for the geographical area of the school. It must be expressed on the Form I-17 in terms of living costs for a full calendar year. Cost of Living is based on location, not on the student's academic program.

Q: Will the student be able to view the justification for reduced tuition or living expenses?

A: No. These justifications will not be visible to the student. Nor will P/DSOs see it in the COE summary.

Q: What would be an example of a reason for showing lower program costs on the COE than those listed on the Form I-17?

A: A Catholic university may have lower tuition rates for seminarians than for students who are not pursuing a religious vocation. Employees of the institution may have reduced tuition. In many cases the difference is in nomenclature. School A provides a lower tuition to a certain kind of student. School B charges full tuition to the same kind of student, but then provides funds from the school to off-set the tuition. In each case the student is paying the same tuition and the school's net income is the same, but that information is represented differently on the COE by each school. How this information is represented is left to the school.

Q: Most of our students live in low-cost student apartments. How will the cost of living be adjusted for institutions that require students to live in dormitories?

A: For the Form I-17, schools will need to annualize their cost estimates. Then they need to compare their annualized, estimated costs of living with the poverty level guidelines for their area. Schools may have different costs of living with the values for different programs or schools (for example, X for the divinity school and Y for the MBA program. If the schools' annualized, estimated living expenses for a particular program is at or above 125% of the poverty level for the area then there is not a problem. If it is below the required level, then an explanation is needed.

Q: What is the difference between program start date and initial session start date?

A: Program Start Date (PSD) is the date that students are expected to report to the school to begin their F-1 or M-1 programs, and allows for preliminary activities such as orientation. The Initial Session Start Date (ISSD) is the date that instruction that the academic program begins. The initial session start date is used to calculate registration deadlines, just as it is now in SEVIS. Some schools may choose to use the same date for both PSD and ISSD. These are school decisions, and SEVIS will accommodate these school variations.

Q: Will P/DSOs receive an alert when students withdraw their signature from their COEs or make their SEVIS fee payments?

A: P/DSOs will be alerted when students withdraw their signatures from COEs issued for study at their institution. P/DSOs will not be notified when students make payments. Only the students will be notified of their successful payments.

Q: Can a COE be modified after it has been signed by the student?

A: No. Once a student has signed the COE, it cannot be modified. It can, however, be deferred for later attendance or withdrawn by the P/DSO, if the modification is for something other than a later arrival date. If P/DSO withdraws the COE, a new COE with corrected information can easily be created.

Q: Does the 30-day initial reporting deadline calculate from the Initial Session Start Date (ISSD) or from the Program Start Date (PSD)?

A: The initial reporting deadline is based on the program start date. See *8 CFR 214.3(g)(2)(iii)(C).*

Q: After creating COEs for multiple students, can an individual COE from that group be modified?

A: The ability to modify the COE depends upon its status. If a P/DSO opts to create COEs for several students at once and saves them for later signature, individual COEs can be modified. The P/DSO has the ability to access a list of COEs in draft status, select those to be signed, and sign them. However, once the P/DSO signs the COE, it can no longer be modified. The COE would need to be cancelled (if the nonimmigrant has not yet signed it) or withdrawn (if the nonimmigrant has signed it), and a new COE issued.

Q: Will P/DSOs be able to create a COE for an F-2 student who will file an application to change status to F-1?

A: Yes. P/DSOs must create a COE for an F-2 status holder to use in support of the application for Change of Status.

Creation of the COE is not enough to convey F-1 status. The F-2 nonimmigrant must still follow through by filing the application for Change of Status with Citizenship and Immigration Services. Alternatively, the F-2 status holder can leave the U.S., obtain an F-1 visa, and re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status.

Transfers from one School to Another

Q: How does a COE for transfer get created?

A: The student will apply to the transfer-in school in the usual manner. The P/DSO at the transfer-in school will use the student's IIN to associate the student with the transfer-in school and complete and sign a transfer COE.

Q: Can transfer COEs be created before the transfer release date which is set by the previous school?

A: Yes. In current SEVIS, the I-20 cannot be created until after the transfer-in school gains access to the student's record on the transfer release date set by the transfer-out school. SEVIS II changes how transfers are processed through the system. The transfer-in school creates the transfer COE and selects the preferred range of dates for the transfer to take effect. The range may be one day (essentially specifying the transfer date) or several weeks or months. The transfer-out school is notified of the impending transfer and has the ability to select a specific transfer release date from the date range. The transfer takes effect either on the date selected by the transfer-out school or on the last date of the range specified by the P/DSO at the transfer-in school, whichever is earlier.

Q: Will the transfer-in school be able to determine the "release date range" based on a student's circumstances? If so, will the transfer occur on the first or last day of the date range?

A: Yes. The transfer-in school sets the transfer release date range based on the student's circumstances. The transfer occurs the last date of the range, unless the transfer-out school selects an earlier transfer release date, in which case the transfer occurs on that transfer release date.

Q: When creating a transfer COE, it appears that the P/DSO must select an explanation of when the transfer is to take place. Two of the options listed, "transfer before completion of program" and "transfer after completion of current term," are not mutually exclusive. Is it possible to select more than one box?

A: No. P/DSOs can only select one description and must use their judgment to determine the more accurate description.

Q: Will records be created as "initial" students after a student transfers from one institution to another?

A: SEVIS II will have different meanings for "initial." In SEVIS II, the P/DSO at the transfer-in school will create a "transfer" COE. The student will have an FMJ Status of "Active: Transfer" or "Active: Registration Required," depending on where the student is in the transfer process. If a student ends status at the transfer out school and leaves the U.S., thus ending FMJ status, then this is a not a transfer process. The P/DSO at the new school will complete and sign an initial COE for a new entry.

Q: What responsibilities do the student and P/DSO have in the transfer process?

A: The student applies to the institution and provides the IIN. The P/DSO associates the student to the school as a prospect, creates the transfer COE, and sets a transfer release date. Students will stay active during this time and the transfer-out university will have a very minor role in the process.

Q: Since only one school can receive the transfer student, does that mean that the student must go to the school that issues the first transfer COE? If so, does the student have the option of cancelling that school and getting another transfer Form I-20 through another school?

A: No. The student still has choices about where to go to school. The transfer process will mirror the process for creating initial COEs. Multiple schools can issue COEs to the student. The student is able to wait and see which schools issue COEs and then choose which one to sign. Once the student signs a particular COE, the other COEs will go into dormant status. If the student later has a change of mind, the student can un-sign the signed COE, and contact another school to restore the COE at that school, thus making that COE available for signature.

Q: Since we would not be able to see a terminated record for a transfer student, would we be able to create the COE in SEVIS II? How would this process work?

A: If you get a transfer request from a student who is terminated, you will be able to do the transfer. You would have to do a reinstatement as part of the process.

Q: If a student decided to un-sign their COE and not transfer to your school how does that school know that the student won't be transferring to their school? Does the school get a notice? You said that the school can sign the COE, but does that mean the school that is losing the transfer student or the school is gaining the student signs off on it?

A: An authorized P/DSO at the transfer-in school must sign the COE before the student can sign it (all electronically). If a student unsigns a COE, the school gets a notification alert.

Visas

Q: If the student applied for and received a visa based on signing school A's COE, then is admitted to school B and wants to choose the COE from school B, will the student need to apply for a new visa?

A: Yes. SEVIS II does not change the current regulatory requirement that the name of the school on the visa and the name of the school on the I-20/COE be the same for a student seeking entry on an initial I-20/COE.

Q: Does this do away with visa revalidation?

A: No. Implementation of SEVIS II does not affect the visa revalidation regulations.

Changes of Status

Q: What happens when a student applies for a change of status (e.g., from H-4 to F-1 or from F-1 to H-4)?

A: USCIS will be able to obtain real-time data from SEVIS II and will no longer need the paper I-20 in order to adjudicate the change of status. Individuals seeking to change status to F-1 must create a customer account if the individual does not already have one; obtain a COE from a school; pay the SEVIS fee; and submit a change of status application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS).

Q: Students sometimes get confused with the change of status process. Do you expect a lot of confused students?

A: SEVP anticipates that there will be some confusion because the entire process will change. SEVP will continually add new information to the Study in the States website and also turn to the school officials to help inform students.

Student Employment

Q: Campus employment is allowed incidental to status. Are we going to have to track specific dates for that in SEVIS II?

A: No. You won't have to track specific dates or keep track of whether or not the student is working on campus. SEVIS II provides a new management option. Subject to general rules regarding on campus employment, SEVIS II will allow a P/DSO to authorize or prohibit on campus employment campus wide, and then authorize or prohibit individual on campus employment different from the campus-wide setting. While most schools will likely choose to leave the default at general authorization (not prohibition), some schools may find this option helpful (e.g., prohibiting work for freshmen or for nursing students, etc.)

Viewing a Student's Participation History

Q: Will P/DSOs have the ability to see a student's complete history, including records from other programs or universities?

A: Because of privacy concerns, P/DSOs will only be able to see history at their own institution or limited histories from other institutions

Q: Will school officials have the ability to see periods of authorized employment from previous university records?

A: No. You will not be able to see details on employment authorizations at other organizations. However, you will be able to see information about how much CPT or OPT is available to the student.

Q: Will sponsoring schools be able to see if a participant's previous program ended in termination or a "no show" status?

A: No. This is considered private information.

Q: Will students and scholars be able to designate a School/Sponsor Official to see details in the record so we have information with which to advise in a given situation?

A: No. School/Sponsor Officials will have access to the information on the record that applies to their institution. At their own discretion, students can provide the School/Sponsor Official with a printout of their own record.

Alerts

Q: Will schools still be able to see alerts (e.g., program end date within 45 days) for students, too?

A: Yes. School Officials will see all alerts for students.

Q: What does "alert due today" mean?

A: It means that something needs to take place on that day. For example, a P/DSO may have mandatory training due that day. If the P/DSO fails to complete the training on that day, the P/DSO's ability to use SEVIS may be suspended.

Q: Do P/DSOs get e-mail alerts about students or only when they log into SEVIS II?

A: Students will be sent e-mails and will see alerts when they log in. Because of the anticipated number of alerts, P/DSOs will only get student-related alerts when they log into SEVIS II. They will receive e-mail alerts on matters relating to their own customer account.

Q: Will everyone get alerts in SEVIS II? What kind of alerts will they see?

A: Yes. All SEVIS users will receive alerts. The types of alerts they will see depends upon their role(s) in SEVIS II. Examples (not exhaustive) of roles: PDSO, DSO, RO, ARO, Group PDSO, Head of School, Batch Specialist, IT Contact, Payer, Attorney, Nonimmigrant Student or Exchange Visitor, Nonimmigrant Spouse/Dependent, Nonimmigrant with no association, and Account Manager. Some users may hold more than one role, and will receive alerts appropriate to each role.

- Every user will receive alerts relating to their customer account. For example, F-1 students and their spouse/dependents will receive alerts notifying them of the need to validate the information in their customer account. P/DSOs will receive alerts regarding their annual training.

- Nonimmigrants will receive alerts relating to their status and program participation. For example, nonimmigrants will receive an alert when their program is about to end.

- P/DSOs and RO/AROs will receive alerts relating to their own customer accounts, to their institutions, to nonimmigrants associated with those institutions.

- Heads of School will receive alerts relating to their own customer account or to their institution.

- A user who is a Head of School and a PDSO will receive and can view alerts as described above for each role. Parents who are Account Managers for their children will see their own alerts and those for the children.

Q: How do P/DSOs return to an alert list after working on a student's record?

A: In current SEVIS, returning to an alert list after accessing a student record from that list is not a one-click process. It is awkward and takes some time to navigate through a series of screens to return to the alert list in question. For certain alerts in SEVIS II, P/DSOs will be able to take action on the student records and will be returned to the alert list. For other alerts, the P/DSO will be taken away from the alert list to the student record and will have to navigate back to the alert list.

Q: When P/DSOs view the nonimmigrant records, can they see all of the alerts that the nonimmigrants receive?
A: No. P/DSO can see only school-related alerts for nonimmigrants. They will not see customer account-related alerts.

Q: Will students be able to see a registration alert if the P/DSO at their schools still needs to report their registration for the term?
A: Yes. Students will receive an alert if the P/DSO has not updated their record to show they have registered by the Next Session Start Date. P/DSOs will also receive those alerts. Students will also receive an informational alert when their record is registered. A significant number of P/DSOs currently fail to update SEVIS registration in a timely manner. Those students may be fully engaged in their academic programs, but the students' SEVIS records are subsequently terminated by the system for failure to enroll. Since they cannot view their SEVIS records, students have no idea this has happened. They often discover it during travel, during transfers, or when applying for immigration benefits such as optional practical training. By that time one or more sessions may not have been reported, and correcting the error costs the student time, resources, and possible lost or delayed benefits. SEVP hopes that alerting students to this requirement will give them the tools to collaborate more effectively with their P/DSOs in the management of their immigration status.

Q: Are alerts meant to be comprehensive and accurate?
A: Yes. As SEVP developed the requirements for SEVIS II, we carefully examined all of the events that occur during the lifecycle of a student. SEVP identified which events trigger alerts and to whom those alerts should be sent. The list of alerts should be comprehensive enough so that both P/DSOs and students know when to take an action. In addition, alerts will have short, explanatory messages and links to additional information where appropriate.

Q: Will P/DSOs receive alerts when students change their addresses?
A: Yes. School officials will receive alerts when students change their customer account information. By accessing individual student records from the alert list, P/DSOs will be able to see what customer account information was changed.

Communications through SEVIS II

Q: What is the messaging capability in SEVIS II?
A: SEVIS II will keep and expand upon the Broadcast Message functionality that currently exists in SEVIS. It will add the ability for certain users to send and receive messages

through the system which will then become part of the user's complete record.

Students will be able to compose and submit messages to P/DSOs, selecting from a pre-defined drop-down list of e-mail subjects. These messages will then be posted on a page that is accessible to all P/DSOs at the school.

P/DSOs also have the ability to generate messages through the SEVIS II:

- First, they can create and edit auto-responses to the student generated messages. The school determines the content of these messages, which could potentially inform students of any necessary next steps or even re-direct them to a website, office consultation, etc. for assistance. Example, messages from students regarding OPT might receive an auto-response directing then to the OPT information and instructions on the international office's website.
- Secondly, they can generate an *ad hoc* message for a specific student or group of students. Example: An end of program reminder for those graduating in the spring.
- Third, they can create template messages to be sent to students in specific circumstances. Examples: (1) A reminder or instructions to students who appear on a specific alert list. P/DSOs would select those individuals who would receive the message, apply the template message, and submit the message through the system. (2) Standard reminders and instructions regarding travel during break/vacation, time and place for an OPT workshop, or curricular practical training information for all of the music school students.

SEVIS II does not provide functionality for e-mail conversations. It is not an e-mail system and is not meant to replace existing channels of communication currently used by schools to manage interactions with students. P/DSOs will need to decide how best to incorporate this functionality into their communications strategy.

Q: Can other P/DSOs see student messages to another P/DSO?

A: Yes. When students send a message through SEVIS II, it displays on a page where all P/DSOs for the school can view it. It does not matter if students only want to contact their assigned advisor – the message goes to all P/DSOs at that institution.

Q: Are SEVIS II messages sent to the student's institutional e-mail as well as to their SEVIS account?

A: No. Messages generated through SEVIS II are only accessible through SEVIS II. It is not a true email system. It is only a way of initiating a process or procedure. It is important to note that all e-mail messages generated through SEVIS II are captured as part of the historical record functionality and can be fully accessed by the Government.

Q: Can template messages be edited?

A: Yes. P/DSOs can edit or delete existing template messages or create new ones. There are two types of editing the P/DSO can perform: permanent changes to the template or temporary modifications are not saved to the permanent template.

Permanent changes are just that – a permanent, saved change to the template. P/DSOs would access the template message, edit the text, and save the changes. The new template language then appears in any messages sent to nonimmigrants from that point forward.

A temporary modification is a one-time editing of the template message for an individual or group of students. The P/DSO selects the student(s) to whom the message should be sent, selects the template, and modifies the text of the message. If the changes are not saved, then the text of the original template message remains unchanged. If the P/DSO saves the text, it will overwrite the text of the original template. P/DSOs also have the option of creating and saving a new template out of the modified message. Example of a temporary change: The P/DSO has created an announcement message regarding an OPT workshop. The time and place are blank or contain an obsolete date. The P/DSO selects the template, modifies it with the time and place information, and sends it without saving the change.

Q: If a P/DSO wants to send a template message to ten students, but one of those students has a special circumstance that requires the message to be modified slightly, can the P/DSO edit the message for just that one student?

A: It depends on how the P/DSO opts to send the message. If the P/DSO has selected the 10 students from an alert list, the P/DSO cannot update the template for the one student whose message needs to be modified. All 10 students would get the same message. A better strategy would be to select the nine students who don't need a modified message and send the template message to them. Then select the single student for whom the message needs to be different, make a temporary modification to the template and submit the message. The P/DSO would not want to save that modification as that would overwrite the original template.

Q: You mentioned that allP/ DSOs will receive the students' messages. Does this include all campuses of a university?

A: All P/DSOs listed on the I-17 for the school with which the student is associated will receive the message. P/DSOs at other schools in the same group will not receive the message.

Q: How will one school official know whether another school official has already responded to a student's message? Will the message no longer appear in the list of incoming messages after someone else responds?

A: The system would mark the message as having been read or not read. P/DSOs can respond to a specific message and SEVIS II will record that response. Once a P/DSO has handled the message, they have the option to archive it. School officials will need to evaluate this functionality to determine how best to incorporate it into their business processes.

Q: The messaging system may be great for some schools, but not so good for others. The functionality raises several questions:

- **Are schools required to use the messaging functionality in SEVIS II? Our school has its own scheduling system that has a messaging feature which we would like to continue to use. Students must log in each and every day.**

- **Can P/DSOs manage the messaging system to determine what P/DSOs and nonimmigrants can send, receive, or view? For example, can a school turn off P/DSO and student ability to use SEVIS II's messaging functionality to send messages?**
- **Can schools narrow down the drop-down list of message subjects that a student can send and have an auto-response for all other questions?**

A: Schools are not required to use the messaging functionality of SEVIS II. Schools can continue to use their existing communication systems, or can use the SEVIS II functionality and their own systems in tandem as best suits their processes. However, schools cannot "turn off" the functionality to prevent P/DSOs or students from using the messaging functionality to send, receive, or view messages. Schools that choose not to use this functionality, or that wish to discourage or redirect its use will need to create an automatic response to student-generated messages that clearly indicates that the school does not use this feature and redirects students to the appropriate mechanism for initiating the communication. Schools that wish to use some message topics, but not others, can create an auto-generated messages for each topic. Schools cannot change the list of message subjects, as these are part of the general functionality.

Q: If all P/DSOs are receiving messages, it may be confusing and difficult for each advisor to check to find messages from their students. Is there a way to create a dropdown list so students can select the P/DSO, or designate a field of study next to the student's name to make it easier?

A: Students will not be able to select a P/DSO from a drop-down list; however, messages do appear in a table that can be sorted. For schools that have assigned students to particular P/DSOs, the name of the associated P/DSO displays in the table. Schools will need to assess the tool and determine how best to use the messaging functionality given their particular business processes. SEVIS II is not an e-mail system. It will include a simple message delivery system that may be a good way to initiate contact about an issue. Some schools may find the functionality useful; others may not.

Q: Does a student need to log in to SEVIS II to see a message?

A: Yes. Students will need to log in to SEVIS II to see their messages. Some messages, such as those sent by the Government, will trigger an e-mail or a text to the student that tells them to log in to SEVIS to check their alerts or messages. Note the distinction between messages in the system and e-mail messages. The system will send certain kinds of messages to users' e-mail addresses. Examples: A P/DSO may send or respond to an OPT or program extension message inside the system, but the system might send a notice by e-mail reminding a user that the Customer Account may be disabled for failure to log in within a specified period.

Training and Outreach

Q: Will webinars be about the same topics each month?

A: There will be new topics each month. The Study in the States website (http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/webinars) has a list of the webinars we will be conducting. SEVP will also solicit information about what topics users want to see.

Q: Will there be a webinar series for students?

A: SEVP is unsure at this time and would like to know the opinions of school officials on whether it would be a good idea.

Q: Will P/DSOs receive an e-mail alert when webinars become available for registration?

A: You can follow Study in the States on Facebook and Twitter, where you will receive updates and notifications.

Q: If SEVIS II will not be implemented until 2014 or later, is training relevant at this point?

A: While training might not seem relevant at the moment, detailed information on how SEVIS II will differ from SEVIS is important. These differences have the potential for changing how schools administer their F and M programs and how they manage their business processes and interactions with students. Knowing what changes SEVIS II entails allows P/DSOs to examine their existing processes, identify what changes need to be made, and work with campus partners to effect those changes.

Q: I work in an international office of one person. Will you do group in-person trainings for multiple schools at a centralized location?

A: We anticipate using SEVP's Field Representatives to conduct in-person, group training for schools in their regions.

Q: When will you post the questions asked during the webinar – following each webinar or at the end of all webinars?

A: We will post the questions and answers after each webinar. Additionally, the questions from individual webinars will be compiled into a larger, more comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions.

Q: Will webinar recordings be available on the SEVIS II website?

A: Yes. They will be posted on the Study in the States website with the webinar guide and Q&A.

Q: Will SEVP make SEVIS II tutorials or other types of training materials available?

A: Yes. SEVP will develop SEVIS II training materials. They will be made available in several ways, such as help inside SEVIS II, links to additional materials from SEVIS II, via the Study in the States website, and other venues that may be developed later.

Miscellaneous

Q: How does SEVIS II compare to immigration systems for students in other countries?

A: Immigration laws and processes vary in different countries. We have not seen a system comparable to SEVIS II.

Q: Will J-1 screens be the same as F and M screens in SEVIS II?
A: The screens will be very similar; however there will be notable differences to account for differences between the programs.

Q: What is this annual P/DSO training requirement?
A: There will be an annual training requirement for P/DSOs. The training will be web-based. PDSOs will be expected to take all training and DSOs will be expected to take training based on their permissions. There will be a record of training in P/DSO's customer account information.

Q: Is I-94 information still entered by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) or it is going to disappear for good?
A: I-94 information will be received through an interface with CBP.

Q: If the I-94 will no longer be used to track whether or not a students is in and out of country, what happens if a student leaves, but has lost the I-94 or it isn't taken at the flight gate?
A: Sometime late in 2012, CBP will eliminate the paper I-94 and implement a paperless entry/exit management system Procedures for entry/exit at land and sea ports will differ somewhat from the general change for airports. The exit information is electronically captured by the airlines at this time which is how exit information is currently gathered, rather than via I-94s. SEVIS does not currently interpret the exit information, but SEVIS II will.

Q: If there are not going to be I-94s how will programs be able to keep track of what status a student has entered on and how long they are admitted for?
A: SEVP is unsure right now, but SEVP will have a series of meetings with CBP to gather more information. There will be a stamp in the passport with I-94 information on it (no I-94 number on it though). Students will be expected to visit a website to enter personal information and print the I-94 information and number. Doing away with paper forms will save a considerable amount of money. SEVP will communicate more information as decisions are made. An interim final rule will be issued by CBP in the near future.

Q: The term "Class of Admission" seems to be confusing, is there some consideration for better wording?
A: No. Class of Admission is the correct terminology. This is the class they were granted upon admission the United States is their class of admission until they depart the U.S. or change or lose status.

Q: Will a student have the ability to "spam" our emails?
A: Students have the ability to send messages through SEVIS II, but this capability is somewhat limited. They can send messages on a limited number of topics. They can send them multiple times. Schools do have the ability to set up auto-responses student messages generated through the system.

Q: Do schools have to "register" all continuing students for each term in SEVIS II? Or do schools only need to report to SEVIS II if any of their students violate their status?

A: SEVIS II will not change the school's legal reporting requirements. You are still going to report registration for each continuing student each term in SEVIS II.

Q: Will there be a field in SEVIS II to request an additional allotment of DS-2019's for J-1 students?

A: Yes.

Q: Will students still have to pay the SEVIS fee separately or will that process be streamlined as well?

A: Students will be able to view any COEs issued by the schools that have accepted them and must pay any associated fee before they can sign a COE. A link from inside SEVIS II will navigate the student to the I-901 fee payment site. However, there will still be the ability to go directly to the I-901 site without having to access SEVIS II first.

Q: Will a new student need to present a letter from the P/DSO at the Port of Entry if the student arrives after the program start date indicated in the COE, but before the initial session start date?

A: A letter should not be required. Port officials will be able to see the Admissibility Indicator that is part of the student's record. The status of the student's Admissibility Indicator will be determined by business rules programmed into the system that draw on information contained in the student's record and on regulatory criteria.

Q: Will there still be a limit of 10 DSO's per school?

A: Current regulations limit the number of DSOs a school can have to 10. SEVIS II is designed to accommodate any change in regulatory limits on DSOs. SEVP is updating some of its regulations including the DSO limitation. Since those regulations are still in the draft stage, no details are available at this time.

Q: Will SEVP release a SEVIS II test environment for school officials?

A: We would like to have a training instance of the database available for P/DSOs to gain familiarity with the system. However, we have not yet made a determination on that.

Q: Is there an e-mail address for additional or follow-up questions?

A: Yes. Follow-up questions and comments can be sent to sevisii.team@dhs.gov.