

# SEVP Spotlight

January 2012  
Volume 1, Issue 2

**1**  
*Director's Corner*

**2**  
*Website Update*  
*CTCEU Participates in*  
*NAFSA Conferences*

**3**  
*Organizational Growth*  
*SEVIS Update*

**4**  
*SEVP Outreach*  
*DSO Knowledge*  
*Bulletin*

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

# Audit Will Serve to Strengthen SEVP



*A message from  
Louis M. Farrell,  
Director of ICE's  
Student and Exchange  
Visitor Program*

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) strives for openness and accountability in keeping our stakeholders informed about key developments in our program. As such, I would like to inform you that SEVP is currently being audited by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) as a follow-up to an investigation of a California university that was found to have engaged in visa fraud.

As director of SEVP, I welcome this audit and look forward to reviewing GAO's findings to determine if there are ways we might improve our operations to better serve the community of international students, exchange visitors, academic institutions and our other stakeholders.

By way of background, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations investigated Tri-Valley University in Pleasanton, Calif., for visa fraud. As a result of the investigation, the university lost its SEVP certification in 2011.

At the time of the decertification, a majority of the students enrolled in the university were international students from India. They subsequently lost their ability to attend the university. Moreover, Tri-Valley University has, as of this writing, ceased operations. The investigation, which received substantial media coverage, also caught the attention of members of Congress who inquired about



SEVP's process for school certification. Consequently, Senator Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) requested a GAO audit to more fully address their inquiries.

The audit GAO is conducting on SEVP is two-fold: it will examine both the process through which SEVP certifies academic institutions and the process used to monitor compliance of these certified academic institutions. Specific items that the GAO could examine more closely include the re-certification and compliance processes, which would help determine if the current processes are providing appropriate monitoring of certified institutions.

Additionally, the audit will review the technological capabilities of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System to determine if the system's ability to detect fraud could be strengthened.

Moving forward, SEVP will take the results and recommendations from the audit to ensure SEVP continues to provide timely and accurate information to prospective and current international students, academic officials and varied governmental organizations that have an interest in information on foreign students.

SEVP anticipates the results of the audit will be available in mid-2012. SEVP will continue to keep our stakeholder community informed with recommendations, impact and future actions.

Take Care,  
Lou



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**





