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News Release

DHS SEVIS PROGRAM RAMPS UP FOR FALL SEMESTER *220,000 New Foreign Students and Exchange Visitors Expected*

CHANTILLY, Va. – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today marked the start of the second year of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a nationwide registration program for international visitors, with a welcoming event today at Dulles International Airport for some of the 220,000 foreign students and exchange visitors expected to arrive in the United States this fall.

Michael J. Garcia, DHS Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Robert C. Bonner, Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), joined to welcome new international students arriving at Dulles International Airport and to observe the inspection and entry process for SEVIS-registered students and visitors.

SEVIS is a web-based program for maintaining information on international students and exchange visitors and their dependents in the United States, administered by ICE and used by CBP officers at ports of entry. SEVIS has simplified what was once a manual process, resulting in more accurate and timely data, faster processing and fewer delays. In May, SEVIS was recognized with the E-Gov Institute's Pioneer Award for innovation and excellence in delivering government services electronically.

“We want to offer a warm welcome and timely, convenient service to the great many foreign exchange and student visitors coming to America this fall,” said Commissioner Bonner. “The SEVIS program allows U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers to determine whether individuals are legitimate students, and to quickly process these students through our ports of entry. Yet at the same time, we are better able to deny entry to those who would try to illegally gain entry into the United States masking themselves as students.”

“SEVIS addresses the need to put integrity back into the immigration system,” said Assistant Secretary Garcia. “Violators of our immigration laws, in this case those who abuse this country's generous program of welcoming foreign students, will now face enforcement consequences.”

As of July 2004, roughly 770,000 students and exchange visitors (F-1, M-1 and J-1 visa categories), along with 100,000 of their dependents, were registered with SEVIS.

A SEVIS fee of \$100 for most students and exchange visitors registered in SEVIS will go into effect on September 1 to defray the cost of the program, as mandated by Congress. ICE is currently developing an array of payment options to make payment more convenient for students around the world. The fee will also fund a future system enhancement, a new SEVIS “Customer Service” website to allow student and exchange visitors to check their SEVIS registration and payment status online.