



Portland Community College International Student Services

Advising Update for F-1 International Students from OISS

06/29/2020

Dear International Students,

We hope that you are staying safe and enjoying the summer months, whether you are in the US or in your home country, in classes or taking a break.

IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT ADVISING

The Office of the International Student Services (OISS) has some important news to share with you about a transition happening at PCC. Currently, international students see International Student Advisors for both academic and visa advising. In Fall 2020, all PCC students, including international students, will be assigned an Academic Advising Specialist based on their program and Academic and Career Pathway. This is part of a major initiative at the college to provide equitable student success. Students will receive more individualized and program-specific advising with a focus on holistic support that carries a student through their entire time at PCC.

YOUR ACADEMIC ADVISING SPECIALIST

Your Academic Advising Specialist will assist you each term you are with PCC in these ways:

- making academic progress, for example choosing classes and using the GRAD Plan,
- learning how to use the course catalog and class schedule,
- navigating MyPCC, especially with registration, grades, payments,
- applying to specific programs,
- understanding college policies and procedures, and
- connecting to resources throughout the college.

DURING THE TRANSITION

As of July 21, 2020, four of the current International Student Advisors (Jie Bian, Maria Hill, Deanna Maczko, and Tracey Pettit) will move into PCC's General Advising Team and become Academic Advising Specialists who serve both international and domestic students. International students will continue working with these advisors on all the academic advising issues throughout the transition, which is from now until the assigned advising is implemented by Fall 2020.

SEVIS COORDINATOR

In addition, one of our current International Student Advisors (Madison Barrientos-Chinn) will remain with the OISS. She will become our new SEVIS Coordinator and will help all international students maintain their F-1 visa status while studying at PCC. She will work with you on:

- ensuring you have the right number of credits for your status and situation,
- activating, continuing, or extending your I-20,
- changing your educational level on your I-20,
- annual vacations,

- travel signatures,
- updating your information in SEVIS (name changes, new address),
- on OPT (optional practical training) / CPT (curricular practical training),
- leave of absence or reduced course load,
- special regulations issued due to COVID-19, and
- any other issues related to your F-1 visa status.

CONTINUED OISS SERVICE

The OISS will continue to provide all other services for international students, for example:

- You can still contact our Front Desk Team via the [OISS Virtual Front Desk](#).
- You will still receive all F-1 visa related advising (now it will be from our OISS SEVIS Coordinator).
- You can still take part in activities, events, and training with the OISS Student Life Team, including our International Peer Leaders.
- You will still receive assistance with health insurance from our OISS Insurance Team.
- Prospective students will still work with our specialized OISS International Admissions Team.
- New international students will still take part in the OISS Orientation Week each term.
- And Alicia Adams (OISS Assistant Director) and I will continue to support you, advocate for you, and do all that we can to ensure you achieve your goals at PCC.

We believe the change to assigned advising based on your individual Academic and Career Pathway will provide even more robust and holistic support for your successful educational journey at PCC.

We will send updates and more detailed information in the coming weeks. If you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Alicia or me.

All the best,



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FAQs

Question: *I'm a continuing F-1 international student. Who do I contact for advising related to classes, programs, registration, and similar?*

Answer:

- **Today - July 20:** You continue to work with the OISS International Student Advisors you have been working with.
- **as of July 21:** You will be assigned to either Jie Bian, Maria Hill, and Tracey Pettit. As of early August, Deanna Maczko will return from leave and also work with F-1 international students.
- **Just before Fall 2020 (exact date tbd):** You will be assigned to an Academic Advising Specialist based on your Academic and Career Pathway.

Question: *I'm a continuing F-1 international student. Who do I contact for advising related to my I-20 and F-1 visa status?*

Answer:

- **Today - July 20:** You continue to work with the OISS International Student Advisors you have been working with.
- **as of July 21:** You will contact Madison Barrientos-Chinn (madison.chinn@pcc.edu), our new SEVIS Coordinator, only.

Question: *Why is this change happening?*

Answer:

- Because PCC wants to make sure that all students are fully supported in their Academic and Career Pathway, international students will be included in the new college-wide initiative of assigned advising based on your academic program. You will benefit from working with an assigned (specific) Advisor who is specialized in your area of study and who provides you with holistic support throughout your time at PCC.

