IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: PLEASE READ

- U.S. government implements new fee effective September 1, 2004
- Fee primarily affects students and scholars seeking initial entry in F-1 or J-1 status after September 1, 2004
- Fee must be paid prior to visa interview and/or entry into the U.S.

This is an important announcement concerning students and scholars seeking admission to the U.S. in F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor status after September 1, 2004. Please read this message carefully and follow the instructions below (a) after you have received a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 from Teachers College and (b) if you fall into one of the following categories:

☐ You are making your initial entry into the U.S. after September 1, 2004 as an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor
☐ You are returning to the U.S. after September 1, 2004 to resume full-time studies at TC following an absence of five (5) months or more (F-1 students only)
☐ You are applying for a change of non-immigrant classification or reinstatement to F-1 or J-1 status (or reinstatement to F-1 or J-1 status) on the basis of a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 issued after September 1, 2004
☐ You are transferring your J-1 sponsorship to Teachers College from a U.S. government exchange visitor program (programs starting with "G", e.g., G-1-0001)

SEVIS FEE REQUIREMENT
Students and scholars in the above categories are subject to a new, NON-REFUNDABLE US$100.00 fee that is being charged by the U.S. government to support the operation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVIS is maintained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and is used to collect information and monitor the activity of students and scholars in F and J status.

Payment of the SEVIS fee is required and must be received and processed by the DHS no later than three days before your visa interview and/or entry into the United States. The fee is non-refundable, even if your visa application is denied (however, a single fee payment is valid for any visa application made within one year of the original denial).

If you are a citizen of Canada or Bermuda, you do not need to apply for a U.S. entry visa, but you are still subject to the SEVIS fee requirement. You must pay the fee at least three days prior to attempting entry into the U.S. as an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor.

INSTRUCTIONS ON PAYING THE SEVIS FEE
You should pay the fee after you have received your Form I-20 or DS-2019 from Teachers College, and once you have decided to enter the U.S. as an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor. (Fee payment is not required if your plans change and you decide not to come to the U.S. as an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor.) Payment of the SEVIS Fee is done using USBICE Form I-901, which may be completed in one of three ways:

1. **By Mail / Paper:** go to [http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm) and download a paper (PDF) version of Form I-901 from the DHS web site. Complete the form and follow the instructions for mailing and processing.
2. **Electronically**: go to the DHS-approved web site, [http://www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com), to complete an on-line version of Form I-901 (requires a valid credit card for fee payment).

3. **In person** at a Western Union office or agent in the U.S. or overseas, using the QuickPay option; go to [http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm) for QuickPay instructions and forms (allows for payment at a local Western Union office or agent in local currency).

The OIS strongly recommends using the web-based or Western Union payment methods to ensure the fastest possible processing of your fee payment. Paper-based processing may take up to 3-4 weeks to complete, and will delay your visa application accordingly.

Information you may need to complete Form I-901:

- **F-1 school code for Teachers College**: NYC214F01459000
- **J-1 Program code for Teachers College**: P100189
- **SEVIS ID Number**: Your SEVIS ID number can be found on the top right hand corner of your I-20 or DS-2019 and is in the format "N000xxxxxxx."

Once your fee payment is processed, you will receive a receipt from the DHS (or from the Western Union office or agent) indicating that payment has been made (if you pay the fee using the DHS-approved web site, you will have the opportunity to print out a receipt). Keep a copy of the receipt for your immigration records; you will need the original to present to a visa officer and/or border inspector.

**You must have a receipt confirming that you have paid the SEVIS fee prior to your visa appointment and/or your entry into the U.S.**

In general, only one payment of the non-refundable SEVIS fee is required for the duration of your status as an F-1 student or J-1 exchange visitor. As long as you continuously maintain valid F-1 / J-1 status, you would ordinarily not be expected to pay the SEVIS fee more than once (individual situations may vary, however).

**FEE PAYMENT NOT REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES**

The SEVIS fee is not required for certain categories of persons and in certain situations. In general, the following categories of individuals are exempt from the SEVIS fee:

- F-2 and J-2 dependents
- J-1 exchange visitors sponsored by a U.S. government exchange visitor program (exchange visitor program numbers beginning with “G”)
- F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors who entered the U.S. and began their programs prior to September 1, 2004 and have maintained F-1 / J-1 status since entering the U.S.
- F-1 students and J-1 exchange visitors who entered the U.S. prior to September 1, 2004 and are transferring their F-1 / J-1 sponsorship to Teachers College after that date

**The applicability of the SEVIS fee may vary from case-to-case.** Contact the OIS with specific details and questions regarding your situation.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on the SEVIS fee requirement, as well as payment details and methods, go to [http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm), or contact the Office of International Services at tcintl@columbia.edu.