



October 26, 2017

To: CSIET Membership
From: Christopher Page, Executive Director
Subject: Evaluation of CSIET F-1 International Members

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CHRISTOPHER B. PAGE,
Executive Director

Dear CSIET Member:

I write today to announce an important new initiative that CSIET and its Board of Directors believe will level expectations among international students, natural parents, host families/schools, U.S. based F-1 programs and foreign-based international partners. Expectations across the international student recruiting and placement spectrum are in need of thorough alignment. Natural parents often expect their children to attend top U.S. universities, based on promises of admittance to top U.S. college preparatory schools. Foreign-based recruiters frequently have little or no connection to these schools, yet applications are made, scores reported, and interviews completed. As a result, international students are placed in schools and homes that provide substandard support. In many cases, international students and natural parents are subject to questionable recruiting practices by international partners/agents/agencies that sometimes put profit before industry standards. With no F-1 regulation in sight, the problem is likely to continue.

Regulatory Context: CSIET maintains a strong relationship with ICE and SEVP, and our Standards for F-1 activity have increased student safety and welfare for well over 50 F-1 programs. However, there is little appetite at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for regulation of F-1 high school programs. Leading independent school associations have adopted a “best management approach” rather than strict adherence to a set of standards. The leading certification agency for overseas agencies at the higher education level, AIRC (American International Recruitment Council), has no specific certification process for the secondary school market. Further to this point, recent recruiting issues have caused increased scrutiny of agencies within China. In a December 4, 2016 meeting, attended by CSIET, CQC (China Quality Control, the leading certification agency in China) and representatives from several Chinese recruiting agencies, a number of concerns about recruiting practices were expressed and attendees entered into exploratory discussions regarding a review process for agents operating in China.

Recruiting Challenges: An indication of the continued F-1 visa issues faced by secondary schools is echoed in the results of a recent CSIET survey of 684 secondary schools:

- 90% of schools agree “There needs to be more oversight of non-U.S. based international agents/agencies at the secondary school level”
- 76% cite “testing for English language capability” as one of the main reasons for additional oversight. 61% cite “verification of application materials”. 55% cite “mental health”.
- Schools use a variety of recruiting methods, including:
 - Third party, US based organizations (54%)
 - Direct recruitment (44%)
 - Non-US based agents/agencies (25%)

**Note: Just 16% of surveyed schools do not recruit international students.*

- 98% of surveyed schools report hosting F-1 students
- 84% report recruiting students from China, 65% from South Korea, 45% from Vietnam, 25% from Germany, 20% from Brazil, 20% from Spain, 18% from Mexico.

Conclusion: Because of its thorough evaluation process and seal of approval, CSIET is best positioned to intervene and to balance expectations all the way from the natural parent, through the recruiting continuum, to the American school/host family. Accordingly, with a target evaluation cycle of 2019-2020, CSIET will open its Listing Process to include F-1 International Members.

Next Steps: Full implementation of this initiative (development, infrastructure, evaluation, final listing) is estimated to take three years, and will proceed as follows:

- In 2017-2018, CSIET will convene a task force to develop a new process for the evaluation of F-1 International Members. In addition to this new review process, which CSIET believes will benefit the industry and raise service quality, the task force will consider a new proposal to require US based F-1 program members to partner with approved CSIET International Members;
- In the next 6 months, CSIET will create a new strategic plan that includes goals for promoting the new review process to international members/agents and for generating awareness among US schools;
- It will be the goal of the task force to implement the new evaluation process and membership requirement for the 2019-2020 listing cycle, with a target date of February 28, 2020 for submission of relevant documentation/materials. Newly evaluated F-1 International Members will be listed in the *2020-2021 Advisory List*;

The CSIET Board of Directors and staff see this new development as a positive step for transparency, safety, and the welfare of all constituents. We look forward to working with you throughout this process and thank you in advance for your support. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. As always, thank you for all you do to make international student exchange a safe and valuable experience.

Sincerely,



Christopher B. Page, Executive Director