



U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service

HQ 70/6.2.6

425 I Street NW
Washington, DC 20536

July 20, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

FROM: Michael Cronin /s/
Acting Executive Associate Commissioner
Office of Programs

SUBJECT: Name Change to the Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating
International Students (CIPRIS) Project

This memorandum is to update you on the recent name change to the CIPRIS project. For reasons discussed below, the reengineered nonimmigrant student and exchange visitor process (covering the F, J, and M nonimmigrant visa categories) will be renamed the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) and the corresponding application will be referred to as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

In June 1995, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) established a task force to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the current process for the collection of information regarding foreign students and exchange visitors in the United States. As a result of the review, the task force proposed substantial changes for the collection of information on foreign students and exchange visitors. Subsequent to the Task Force's assessment, similar changes were also mandated by Congress. Section 641 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) requires the INS to collect information on an ongoing basis from schools and exchange programs relating to nonimmigrant foreign students and exchange visitors during the course of their stay in the United States, using electronic reporting technology to the fullest extent practicable.

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Accordingly, the INS conducted a pilot program, known by the acronym CIPRIS, to test the concepts involved in an electronic reporting mechanism. The CIPRIS system project was developed in partnership with the Department of State, the Department of Education, and experts from INS-authorized schools and exchange visitor programs. It began as a pilot project in June 1997, involving the Atlanta Hartsfield Airport and District Office, the Texas Service Center, and 21 institutions of higher learning in the states of Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Specifically, the CIPRIS pilot program was designed to test the feasibility of electronic reporting and monitoring (including issues related to security and data accuracy), as well as to support the visa screening at consular posts and the inspection process for foreign students and exchange visitors at INS ports of entry. The pilot concluded in October 1999.

From its inception, the CIPRIS pilot system was designed as a “throw-away” program. Thus, although the pilot program performed the functions necessary for the data collection and reporting as mandated in IIRIRA, section 641, the CIPRIS system was never intended to continue beyond the conclusion of the pilot program. Rather, based on lessons learned from the CIPRIS pilot, customer and stakeholder feedback, the needs of INS’ partner federal agencies, the requirements outlined in section 641 of IIRIRA, and the INS mission and goals, system design work began on a new electronic information system.

Given the substantial differences in the system designs for the national program from the CIPRIS pilot, the INS made the decision to denote the new program with a new name in order to minimize the confusion between the functionality of the two systems. As such, with the conclusion of the CIPRIS pilot in October 1999, the new electronic reporting technology under development in compliance with IIRIRA, section 641, is named SEVIS.

Currently, SEVIS is at the start of its national deployment. Implementation of SEVIS will occur in phases, with initial deployment taking place at 11 institutions in the Boston area. In accordance with the corresponding growth in funding, SEVIS will be progressively expanded to include all INS- and Department of State- approved institutions where F, J, and M nonimmigrants are enrolled. Higher education and exchange visitor communities have been made aware of this name change since June 2000, and the INS will continue working to notify the public of this change. Already, many of the correspondence sent to the INS reference the SEVIS and SEVP program.

This memorandum is to alert you to this new system name. If you require additional information, please contact Maura Deadrick, Assistant Director, Office of Adjudications, at 202-353-8177.

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