

Foreign Visits and US Science

There are four issues I would like to review this month.

First is the reduced number of H1-B visas that are issued this year. This relates mostly to scientists who come to the US to work on collaborative projects.

Second is the continuing delays experienced by foreign scientists who apply for visas to travel to the US.

Third is the reduction in foreign student applications at US universities.

Fourth is the plan (discussed by Vicki) to travel to Washington to meet with representatives and present our concerns about the impact of immigration legislation on science in the US.

Here are some snippets from the news this past month.

The New York Times

ON THE WEB

1)

(NYTimes, Feb 18, 2004).

Door shuts on H1-B Visa applications. Less than 5 months into the fiscal year, there are already enough applications to fill the 65,000 slots for H1-B Visas.

2) Last week the KOPIO collaboration had a meeting. Our Russian colleagues could not attend because they were unable to obtain visa clearance in time.

FYI: The AIP Bulletin of Science Policy News

FYI Number 24: March 1, 2004

[House Science Committee Reviews Visa Process](#)

...(snip).... At last week's hearing Boehlert's criticism was lessened, as he now said, "we have some real problems with our current visa processes."

.... After looking at a sample of visa actions, the GAO found that **it took an average of 67 days for a security check to be performed and for the State Department** to notify the consular office. Visa processing can take considerably longer for citizens of China, India and Russia.

..."We need to find that place where the need to protect America's homeland security interests is balanced against the well-being of the nation's science and technology enterprise," Gordon said. As Boehlert concluded in his opening remarks, "This is very, very difficult."

The New York Times

ON THE WEB

3)

(NYTimes, Feb 26, 2004).

Bucking a trend that dates to the end of World War II, the number of foreign students applying to graduate and doctoral programs in science at American universities is declining broadly, according to a survey of 130 such programs released here today...

4) FNAL UEC Minutes -- February 21, 2004

[.....]

Planning for the UEC/SLUO DC trip

“13 people from the UEC (and GSA) and 11 people from SLUO (the SLAC Users Organisation) will visit Washington from March 24/25/26. The meeting will start with visits to members of congress and the senate. We are making every effort to visit members of all the relevant/important sub-committees. An initial pass of assignments to make appointments, based on where people live is now final, but a second pass is being prepared as there seems to be time to visit with more members.”

What will be the participation from the BNL RHIC-AGS UEC (and other BNL Users' Groups)???