Message for Canadian Students

In terms of immigration regulations, the only difference between Canadians and other international students coming to the United States is that Canadian citizens do not require application to a U.S. consulate for an entry visa.

Some Canadians have mistakenly assumed that other regulations that apply to international students do not apply to them. Canadians are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirement for full-time study and all other provisions for maintaining status. It is especially important for Canadian students to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper student status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian citizens as visitors.

Canadian citizens do not require an entry visa to enter the U.S. from Canada, but DO require an I-20. All Canadian citizens entering the U.S. by air will be required to show a passport to enter the United States. Effective December 31, 2007, a passport will be required for ALL entries to the U.S. However, we recommend that you use a passport to enter the U.S. as it may be required for other purposes in the U.S., such as completing a form for employment on campus, or applying for a Social Security number. If you enter the U.S. from a country other than Canada, you are required to present a passport at the port of entry.

To enter the U.S. in F-1 student status, Canadians DO require an I-20 and proof of payment of the SEVIS fee. To pay the SEVIS fee, go to http://www.fmjfee.com and follow the instructions. Be sure to make a copy of the receipt for your own records.

At the port of entry, Canadian students must present the Form I-20 and supporting financial documentation to the immigration inspector to be admitted into the U.S. in F-1 status. You will be given an I-94 Admission/Departure card to complete. Be sure to look at your I-94 card before you leave the inspection area to ensure that it has the notation "F-1, D/S" written on it. Canadian students must have an I-94 card to confirm current F-1 status. If not, you are considered to be in Visitor (B-2) status, a status which does not permit study in the U.S.

Other than applying for a visa, it is important that you read about and abide by all other provisions relating to F-1 status.