

DVC

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www.dvc.edu/isas

ISAS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSIONS & SERVICES

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9, No. 2

Spring 2007 Edition

Dear Students:

Welcome for the spring 2007 semester! We hope it runs smoothly for everyone. A special welcome to all our new students and congratulations to the 56 students who transferred for the spring 07 semester.

Please read this newsletter!! It contains a lot of important information that will be helpful in maintaining your international student full time status and also provide information about support services, procedures, and policies that will keep you abreast on what is happening on campus.

REMINDERS FROM THE ISAS OFFICE

Student Services Center (formerly BE) 210

International Student Medical Insurance –

The medical insurance fee for this semester is \$386.00 (includes summer). This amount is automatically deducted when the students register for the spring semester. The coverage starts 1/7/07 and ends 8/10/07 and is continuous for students who had the insurance in the fall. Only new students will receive a medical insurance card this semester, continuing students can still use the same medical insurance card they received for the fall 2006 semester. All DVC F-1 students will be charged this fee.

The last day to obtain a medical insurance waiver for the spring semester is on **February 14th**.
No medical insurance waivers will be given out after February 14.

Health Clinic: There has been some discussion through Student Union, Management and the District Office concerning the feasibility of bringing a Health Clinic to Diablo Valley College starting with the fall 07 semester. All students will be charged a fee for this service (about \$14 per semester). We support this effort because of the importance of having medical care on campus with such a large student population.



Address Changes or Corrections – Please remember to inform the ISAS office of any address changes or corrections so we can make the change in the SEVIS database and in the DVC database. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations require that students inform the DSO within 10 days of a change of address.

****Department of Homeland Security**
Regulations Reminders**



- Students will need to maintain their **full-time status** at all times. Students must see the DSO **before** taking fewer than 12 units.
- Report a change of address within 10 days.
- Attend the college on the I-20 that they used to enter the country.
- Report to the school's international office within 15 days of their arrival at the school. In the case of most schools including DVC, this means showing up for required orientations.
- Transfer students need to pick up their I-20s from the DVC International Student Admissions and Services Office within 15 days of their arrival.
- Students who drop out of school or quit school will need to leave the U.S. immediately or begin studies immediately at another program (within 15 days).
- Students must inform the DSO of the school they will transfer to before they will be able to get an I-20 from the new school.
- Only **one on-line class (3 units)** can be counted towards the required 12 units to maintain full-time status. Students must take at least 9 units of in-class attendance to maintain their status

Social Security

Students who want a Social Security Number (SSN) card must show evidence of employment from their campus employer before they can apply for a Social Security card.

1. F-1 student must first find a job on campus.
2. Pick up a letter of employment from Business Services with the employment package.
3. Take the letter of employment to your supervisor. The letter needs to be filled out by the supervisor confirming that the student has been offered employment.

Take the completed letter of employment to the Social Security Office with the following documents:

- a. Letters from the ISAS office verifying full time status.
- b. SEVIS I-20
- c. Passport
- d. Visa
- e. I-94

Remember to get proof that you applied for the SSN, so that you can begin working immediately.

Nearest Social Security Office:

Walnut Creek District Office
1111 Civic Drive, Ste. 180
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Transfer Students

Transfer Students – Students who are transferring for the fall 2007 semester need to bring their letter of acceptance from their transfer school to ISAS to show Gloria or Gena so their SEVIS I-20 record can be electronically transferred to their new transferred school.

Students planning to leave the U.S. for the summer break before starting their fall 07 semester in their transfer school **must use their new school's I-20 to re-enter the U.S.**

Congratulations to all the students (56 students transferred to four year schools) for spring 2007. Some of the schools students transferred to were:

11 students SFSU

3 students UCB (originally applied for fall but were deferred—you cannot apply to the UC for the spring semester or quarter.)

5 students USF

Indiana U. (2), Loyola U. (1), Penn State (1), University of Wisconsin (1), UNLV (2)

Paying Your Fees at DVC

This is a reminder that ALL students are required to pay their full fees at DVC at the time of registration of classes. If you cannot pay your full fees you MUST come see Gena or Gloria in the ISAS office to establish a payment plan. The DVC and District management will be implementing a plan very soon that would result in students being DE-REGISTERED from classes when any payment is due. You will also NOT be able to sign up for summer or fall classes or get your transcripts until your entire debt is paid. Please let us know in the ISAS office if you have serious concerns regarding your ability to pay your fees at Diablo Valley College.

Campus Employment – Students can work anywhere on campus for 20 hours or less a week. They can work more than 20 hours a week during vacation time or school holidays. Students working on campus **must maintain** their full-time student status (12 units) in order to work on campus.

Curriculum Practical Training (CPT) — See the ISAS Student Handbook for more information on Curriculum Practical Training. Students must get the approval of a DSO (Gloria or Gena) to do CPT each semester. Students doing curriculum practical training (CPT) need to maintain full-time student status. The Handbooks are available at the ISAS office.

Traveling outside the USA



All F-1 students wishing to travel outside the U.S. and who are returning to DVC **must have** the DSO, Gloria Zarabozo or Gena Gruber sign on page 3 of their current I-20. This travel endorsement is required for re-entry into the U.S. and means that you have been attending DVC **and** you intend on returning to DVC. Allow a **minimum of two days** for Gloria or Gena to sign your I-20.

Full-time Status

All F-1 students are required to maintain full-time status while studying at Diablo Valley College. A minimum of 12 units must be taken each semester. The student GPA should not be below 2.0. Students **must talk** to a DSO BEFORE dropping below 12 units to make sure that they have an acceptable reason for being below the full-time equivalent.

General Information

Summer School Reminder: International students are not required to take summer classes if they are in full-time status and intend to register for the next term. Summer is considered vacation time before starting up for the fall semester. Summer school is only required if a student's I-20 has a summer 2007 start date.

Tax Assistance for Tax year 2006: Gloria Zarabozo usually conducts a workshop on tax form 1040NR-EZ and form 8843 for all DVC F-1 International students during the spring semester. The tax workshop is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, 3/28/07 starting at 3:00pm to 5:00pm in the Trophy Room. An email blast will be sent to everyone to confirm the date, time, and place.

Pizza Party: The yearly free Pizza Party for all international students to help celebrate the successful transfer of all transferring international students is scheduled for May 4 at Round Table Pizza starting at 2:00pm to 4:00pm. ALL FOOD IS FREE!! For transfer students, remember to bring a copy of your admit letter so you can receive your congratulation's gift.

Scams and Fraud: Students should be very cautious when dealing on-line with other persons, especially if they are looking for roommates. **Never give out your personal information to anyone on-line unless you are positive that it is a secure website.** Never refund money sent to you via a check by someone backing out of a rental situation unless the person's check has cleared through your bank.

Assessments: For students who have brothers, sisters, relatives or friends coming to DVC next semester, the math department recommends that the new student spend a little time reviewing their mathematics coursework before taking the math assessments, in order to ensure that the student is placed in the appropriate course. There are also some links to practice tests on the dvc website that may be useful at:

www.dvc.edu/mathematics/math_assessment_test.htm

Scholarships for International Students –

International Students are eligible for some scholarships at DVC. By filling out the master DVC Scholarship Application, students can be eligible for a few different scholarships. The DVC Scholarship Program application is available on-line on the DVC web site – <http://www.dvc.edu/scholarships>.

Deadline for applying: Applications must be received in the Scholarship Program Office by **noon, Thursday March 15, 2007** in order for the students to receive a scholarship for the next academic year.

You can also find information on scholarships and loans for international students at the following websites:

http://www.nafsa.org/students.sec/financial_aid_for_undergraduate/#funding%20Factors%20to%20Consider

<http://www.iefaf.org>
<http://www.internationalstudentloan.com>

Please remember that neither DVC nor the ISAS office has any connection to these sites. If you have any questions about them you must contact them directly.

Volunteer Services

DVC's Volunteer Services are excited to announce a new innovation in placing student volunteers. Beginning this fall, Volunteer Services will be partnering with our on-campus Employment Services office to offer all volunteer positions on-line, through the MonsterTRAK job search system. If interested in volunteering:

1. Complete an application from Employment Services, which is located in the Career & Employment Services Center
 - a. You will receive a password that allows you to search the online system for volunteer positions.
2. When you find a volunteer position, print the information and visit Volunteer Services for additional information.
 - a. Please DO NOT show up at an agency without meeting with Volunteer Services staff first.

Contact Information:

Career and Employment Services Center, located in the bottom floor of the Student Services Center entrance through the Information Center
Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
(925) 685-1230 x2579
www.dvc.edu/volunteer.htm

Important Dates to Remember

Jan 16 – April 6	A.A./A.S. degree or certificate of achievement filing period
Feb. 18-19	Holiday—Washington's birthday
Mar. 30 – Apr. 6	Spring Break
Apr. 27	Last day to drop a full-term course with a "W" appearing on transcript

International Student Club

The International Club had a very successful fall semester. A big thanks to the club officers who coordinated the International Education Week (11/13 to 11/17) celebration. This year the club celebrated International Education Week by inviting faculty speakers to discuss the pros and cons of Globalization. Flags representing all the home countries of the international students were displayed in the Student Union Conference Room. Food provided from local ethnic restaurants and performances by the campus community helped make the international festival a very successful event.

Spring 2007--We are looking forward to another semester of club activities. **The first meeting is scheduled for Friday, 2/23/07, starting at 12:00 noon to 1:00pm in Student Services Building room SS 209 (BE209). Refreshments will be served!!**

OFFICER OPENINGS-- We are looking for interested club members who want to run for office for the spring semester. We will need an **Activities Coordinator, Secretary, ICC Rep and a Web Master.** Everyone is welcomed to apply or nominate someone for any of these officer positions.

After that we will meet every Friday, from 12 to 1 pm in Student Services Building room SS 209 (BE209). Students interested in joining can do so at the meeting..

DVC ... Da Vinci Code? Diablo Valley College?

By Kenneth K. Tong, 2007

~ Live life to the MAX!

For every individual, entering college or university life is another new phase of life. You're expected to be mature, independent and you've got yourself more responsibilities to fulfill. It is as though you should fit that description when you step into college. However, we're not insects that go through stages of metamorphosis where we could change and acquire new traits or characteristics in a short timing! We're humans and we learn from experiences and getting help from others.

As international students, we have got ourselves additional responsibilities. Being in a new environment we face many challenges; language, culture, society to name a few. In addition, as a student, we need to get ourselves used to the different education system, find our path towards our academic goal, and fitting ourselves in college. Not just that, being a student away from our home, we need to learn how to live independently; to prepare our meals, do laundry, clean up and others. Getting those responsibilities settled and planned out is hard enough but being humans, we have emotional stuffs to take care off also. Uprooting ourselves from a place where we're comfortable to some new strange place is hard. These make life in college as though as a huge mysterious puzzle and we need to put the

pieces together in order to move on and achieve our dreams.

I can tell you that it is a very complex and mysterious puzzle but once you get yourself at pace to put the pieces together, you would be able to adapt better and for all you know; you would be comfortable in this new environment. All you need is some courage, persistency, initiative and hard work. Being the only Malaysian student while I was first here at DVC and having a career goal which was uncommon, it was not easy for me to adapt quickly. However, being in such a situation has allowed me to learn more about other cultures by having friends from different countries and learning a lot about the education system and paths to take for certain majors as I had to discover by myself of which academic path I would need to go on to achieve my dreams in genetic research.

To learn more, you need to take the initiative to seek help and get involved. Ask instructors questions or even counselors when you have questions rather than just leaving it unanswered and get yourself involved in the things you like to do instead of waiting for someone to approach you someday which might never come. Since my first semester in DVC, I have find that all my instructors were approachable and they are open to students who have questions or want to learn more about certain topics. But you must learn to be polite and understand that they don't work for you but you and the instructor work together.

There are also many clubs on campus that you can get yourself involved in. Being in a club helps you to get to know people easier and also find something to do out of class. It could also help you to adapt faster in this new environment and a place where you feel that you're part of. You could even play an active part in the club by running or volunteering for the club. When I decided to run for Treasurer for the International Students Club in my first semester, I never knew I would continue on playing an active role till today and now serving as the President of the club. It has been fun and great to be part of the club as I have got to know many people on campus and doing something out of class, which I agree could be boring sometimes.

If you're interested to work, you could even find jobs on campus. There are jobs on campus which are available to international students and you just need to look for them if you want them. By working, you can experience the business world and know what your life is going to be like when you graduate. Not just that, you could even earn some money for your expenses! In college, when you have an idea, you don't just let it be an idea but you can try to make your idea a reality. In the end of last semester, I had the idea of international student mentorship program, and it is now a reality. The purpose of the program is to provide help to new students coming to DVC to adjust to the new environment and be friends to them. It's not just open to new students but open to all students who

want to seek additional help. Just drop by the International Student Admissions and Services to get more information. You could even sign up to volunteer as a mentor!

It is important to get to know friends in DVC. I was involved in a pedestrian-vehicle accident in Fall 2005 and it would have been hard for me to cope if I was alone. I was out from classes for 1 month due to the injuries but I was able to continue taking my classes and still do well in that semester because of the friends I had. My friends would take notes in class and teach me if I had any questions. Also, the instructors were helpful as they communicated with me through the internet about homework. To me, DVC is a cool and great place to study in. It makes you part of the DVC family. However, you need to take the initiative and courage to take the step to make your life in DVC a fun and enjoyable one while attaining your higher education!

All in all, life in college is an adventurous journey which you could get a lot out of. You attain more knowledge in the academic sense and at the same time, experience more about life! Just remember to set things right and take one pace at a time. Just like a puzzle, you set up the skeleton of it and then continue fitting the pieces in. At the end, when you're done, you'll enjoy it!