

DVC International Student Admissions and Services Newsletter Vol. 3, No. 1

Fall Edition
August, 2003

Dear Students:

We, at the ISAS office, would like to welcome everyone back from their summer break and a SPECIAL welcome to our new students. We are looking forward to a great semester!

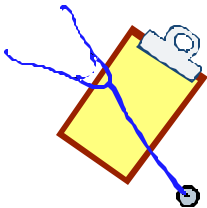


As of 8/1/2003 all F-1 students are required by the DHS (Department of Homeland Security) regulations to be registered in SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) and receive a SEVIS I-20. To comply with this new regulation the ISAS office has prepared a SEVIS I-20 for all F-1 DVC students who are in status or are new initial entry students. Remember to pick up your new I-20 at the ISAS office if you have not already done so. SEVIS is an Internet-based program for electronically tracking and reporting on foreign students.

Please pick up the new "Immigration, health and employment for International Students" booklet with the updated SEVIS information at the ISAS office. The booklet will provide you with useful information concerning these critical changes in immigration regulations. Also, read the SEVIS questions and answers in this newsletter, which we decided to reprint because we believe all F-1 students need to know this information.

Finally we need everyone's support for the International student club. It is a way for students to have a voice on campus through student government. Email Gena Gruber at ggruber@dvc.edu with questions.

REMINDERS FROM THE ISAS



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MEDICAL INSURANCE

The deadline to bring in your proof of personal medical insurance to receive a waiver/refund from Gena Gruber at the International Student Admissions and Services office is **September 18**. **No refunds/waivers after September 18**. Remember all DVC F1 students must have medical insurance. Please make sure your registration receipt shows you were charged for the insurance unless you have obtained a waiver approval from the ISAS office.

Pick up the new brochure and medical claim form with the new **Claims Administrator address and phone number** from ISAS. **You will need this information to give to your doctor or hospital in case you have to see a doctor or have a medical emergency.** All new claims on or after 8/10/03 will need to be mailed to the new address for processing!



Transfer Conference—DVC will host a transfer conference on Saturday, October 18, 2003. Some of the activities planned for the conference include transfer workshops, presentations on special transfer topics, and a transferred student panel. There will be lots of opportunity to have your transfer questions answered by international student advisors from UC or State universities. International students interested in transferring to a four year school will benefit from this conference. You must pre-register for the conference to sign up go to www.dvc.edu/transfer/conference.

ADDRESS CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS: - It is required by BCIS (formerly INS) that when a student moves he or she needs to inform the DSO within 10 days of the change of address. This information needs to be reported to BCIS through SEVIS and changed in the DVC school database system. If you move or need to correct your address please come to the International Admissions and Services Office to inform the office of the address change. Students who are required to go to Special Registration must also fill out an AR-11SR form and mail it to the address on the form.



HOUSING: There is, presently, a directory of families who would like to house International Students at the ISAS for the fall 2003/spring 2004 semesters. If your present location is too far or you need to move, see Gena Gruber. Meals are not included, rental rates range from \$500 to \$550. Most of the housing is located 2 to 7 miles from Diablo Valley College.

FEE REFUNDS

To qualify for a refund of enrollment fees for an 18 week course, units must be dropped within the first two weeks of instruction. The last day to drop and receive a refund for the fall 2003 term was **Friday, 8/29/03**. The drop date for refunds for spring 2004 will be January 29. Remember to officially withdraw from the class, fill out a drop card and take it to the Admissions Office or drop the class online before the deadline.

As you already may know ALL student fees have increased \$7 per unit starting fall 2003 semester.

BCIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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/credits 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. Students who are below 12 units can add a late starting class to get more units. For information on late starting classes check the DVC website for the course offerings, section number, meeting times, and stop and start date.



CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT – An F-1 student in status can work on campus for 20 hours a week during the semester. During vacation period, i.e., summer or winter break, a student is allowed to work up to 40 hours per week. Students must be **in F-1 status** (i.e. have 12 units and a GPA above 2.0) before they are approved for on campus work. You will need to have an approval form signed by a DSO at the ISAS office before you are allowed to work on campus.

To register for assistance in finding campus employment, go to the Job Placement Office located in the Career Center. The DSOs at the ISAS office are barred from helping you find employment.

SOCIAL SECURITY CARD – A student who needs a Social Security card for on-campus employment purposes can come into the ISAS office to fill out a form and have it signed by the DSO. The student can then take the signed form to the Social Security Office with the required documents, (passport, Visa, I-20, I-94, letter of employment) to apply for a card.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING AUTHORIZATION FOR OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT—Students who have been in status for an academic year are eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Work allowed through CPT must be related to the student’s area of study. The student must register for Cooperative Education units. Both the Coop Ed office and the ISAS office must approve the employment. Employment authorization is granted by the DSO at the ISAS office instead of through BCIS (INS). A student may take advantage of this training for a total of 4 semesters. During school time a student is allowed to work only 20 hours per week but during vacation period, i.e. summer, winter break a student is allowed to work up to 40 hours per week.

TRAVEL – A reminder to all students who plan to leave the country during the semester and plan to return to Diablo Valley College, you need to have your I-20, page 3 signed by a DSO. Please allow two working days after dropping off your I-20 at ISAS to have your I-20 signed.



SEVIS – The ISAS office has completed the implementation of the new electronic system (SEVIS) to collect, maintain and track information on international students required for all college international offices. All F-1 DVC students have new SEVIS I-20.

We want to make sure everyone is aware of the BCIS regulations and updates for F-1 students. If you have any questions please come in to talk to an advisor. For more information on SEVIS please see SEVIS Questions and Answers below.



Important New BCIS (formally INS) Regulations

All schools who admit international students are required to report all F-1 students' records directly to the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). There have been major changes in immigration laws which result in the F-1 students taking much more responsibility for their status. The DVC International Student Admissions and Services office has put together this question and answer sheet to help students understand their responsibility. Here are some questions and answers that we think might help you to understand the changes in the laws that affect you.

Q. What is non-immigrant status and how does an F-1 student maintain it so that they may remain in the US legally?

- 1) F-1 international students are admitted into the United States by the INS for the sole purpose of studying and acquiring a degree or specific knowledge or training. An F-1 student must be a full-time student making regular progress towards their academic goal. At DVC this means, taking 12 units and getting a grade point average above a 2.0 **EVERY** semester.
- 2) An F-1 student cannot work illegally. In all cases they must have approval from the Designated School Official (DSO) or the INS. Gloria Zarabozo and Gena Gruber at the ISAS office of DVC are the only two people who are DSOs and who can approve any work. You must also be eligible to work.

Q. Under what circumstances can I take fewer than 12 units?

In all cases a student must get permission from the DSO **BEFORE** dropping below 12 units. INS allows students to drop below 12 units for the following reasons **ONLY** and with **PRIOR** permission from the DSO:

- 1) Student is having difficulty adjusting to the new educational system. (Only can be used the first semester in school in the United States.)
- 2) Student is having language difficulties. (Usually only the first semester will this reason be acceptable.)
- 3) Student has medical problems and proof from a doctor that they should take below 12 units. A student is allowed medical reasons to be below 12 units for a total of two semesters **ONLY**. If a student is sick longer than two semesters for whatever reason they may not be below 12 units and must leave the United States because they are not making regular progress towards their degree. Student must have medical proof for both semesters and must show DSO each semester.

- 4) It is the student's last semester and he or she needs fewer than 12 units to complete their program.

Q. What do I now have to do when I finish a program and I want to transfer or go home?

Now, whenever a student finishes a program or is going to leave for any reason they must let the DSO know. If the student is transferring he or she must let the DSO know to which school they will be transferring to so that the DSO can release the records to the new school. **AGAIN**, when the student leaves the school for ANY reason they must inform the DSO of that school. **An F-1 student is allowed to remain in the US only 60 days after completing a program or post completion practical training.**

Q. How early can an international student enter the US?

It used to be 90 days before starting a program **now it is only 30 days**. This is for initial entrance to a program.

Q. What happens if an emergency happens and an international student has to leave the US?

The student should tell the DSO that they must leave. They will be allowed to drop all classes with authorization. They **must leave within 15 days** of when they dropped their classes.

Q. How much time do I have between programs?

An F-1 student must be admitted from one program to another within 60 days of successfully completing a program **IF THEY ARE PLANNING ON STAYING IN THE UNITED STATES BETWEEN PROGRAMS**. The maximum amount of time a student is allowed to remain in the US in between programs (end of one and start of next) is **FIVE MONTHS**. For example, if an international student completes a program on February 3, they must start a program by July 3 or they will be considered out of status by INS.

Q. What information do I now need to give to the ISAS office?

International students must present their **I-94s** and **Visas** to the DSOs. International students are also required to maintain a current address with ISAS which then gets sent to the INS. **A student must also fill out an AR-11 form and sent it to the INS every time they change their US address. These forms are available at the ISAS office.**

Q. What does an international student do if they fall out of status?

If a student falls out of status he or she comes to the ISAS office to discuss if **REINSTATEMENT** is a possibility. Reinstatement is when a student writes a letter to INS and requests that they be reinstated to status once they fall out of status. A student **MUST** apply for reinstatement within 5 months of falling out of status. **IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AWARE OF AND TO MAINTAIN HIS OR HER STATUS.**

Q. How many online courses can international students now take?

The new law states that international students may take one course or three units of online or distance education per semester.

Q. What if I cannot finish my program by the “program completion date” on my I-20?

If a student is unable to finish a program on time he or she must ask the DSO for an extension of program. However, if the delay has to do with academic problems such as failing or withdrawing from classes without permission no extension can be given. A student must ask for an extension BEFORE the “program completion date” on the I-20. After that day no extensions can be granted.

Q. Will I need to get a new SEVIS I-20?

Any student who receives an I-20 after January 30, 2003 will be getting a SEVIS I-20. Any student who will need a new I-20 for any reason after January 31, 2003 will also receive a SEVIS I-20. Any student who applies for 1) change of major 2) employment 3) official name change 4) an extension of studies 5) RENEWING A VISA or any other reportable change will be given a new SEVIS I-20. HOWEVER, any student continuing their education after August 1, 2003 must be issued a new SEVIS I-20.

The DSOs at each school are available to students to help clarify any confusion that may occur regarding the rules and regulations affecting international students but they are NOT responsible for the students’ status.

SPECIAL REGISTRATION

A reminder to students that are required to go through the **Special Registration Process**:

1. Please remember to report to an immigration interviewing office (444 Washington St., San Francisco) between 30 to 40 days after arriving in the U.S.
2. Students need to report in person to an immigration office within 10 days of the anniversary of the date when they were last admitted to the U.S. and show that they are complying with educational intensions in the U.S.
3. Special Registration students who change their address must notify the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in writing within 10 days of the change (you can pick up a form at the ISAS).
4. Students leaving the U.S. must appear in person before an inspecting office at a designated port of departure (San Francisco International Airport, CA).
5. These instructions should be in the Special Registration Instructions which all students should have received when they completed their Special Registration at the port of entry. You can also check the Special Registration information on the web www.immigration.gov.

Note: Remember to bring all your documents with you to these interviews (i.e., SEVIS I-20, passport, visa, I-94, bank statement, transcripts, registration receipts), student ID card, and a friend.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CLUB

All students who are interested in joining and participating in the International Student Club are invited to the club meeting on, Thursday, September 18, 2003 at 3:30 p.m. in the Associated Student Building Club Room. Mr. Fenno Ogutu has volunteered to be our faculty advisor this semester. Students will nominate and **elect the officers for the club** and also discuss and plan the activities for the fall 2003 semester. More details will follow. We hope to see everyone there. Refreshments will be served!

This semester we are planning a special event for the International Student week with the International Education Center, and other DVC participants.

PRAISE & RECOGNITION

Congratulations to the following international students who received scholarships for the fall 2002 and spring 2003 school year:

You J. Ahn, Gi Tae Bae, Alexandre F. Cardoso, Judy Chan, Arlin Chondro, Stefanus Jasin, Matthew A. Joe, Yuki Kwok, Ashwani A. Lal, Wingman Lam, Varoonchai Leekanchanakorn, Ming Hang Eunice Li, Kim S. Mahler, Ryoko Nakamura, Rhesa Nathanael, Nedko A. Nedev, Stela A. Nedeva, Ji-Ae Park, Niloufar Sarraf, Airi Suzuki, Adeline Tan, Diana Tanuwijaya, Cam N. Tran, Sandra Widjaja, Moises Yi, Miwa Yoneyama.

THE LOOK

By Sandra Widjaja

“I hope he will not be there this time,” Lena says to herself, walking as fast as she can in the early morning, embracing the mid-October wind. She holds her arms tightly, close to her chest while carrying a navy backpack full of her school textbooks. When she almost gets to the bus stop, she sees that tall figure again, standing next to the wooden bench with his brown bag next to his feet. He stares intently at the passing traffic, then walks back and forth in his own space, muttering some unfamiliar words. Lena’s heart sinks a little when she notices him, but she keeps walking toward the bus stop anyway. They both always wait for the seven o’clock bus, standing together in silence and strangers to one another.

At least until last week, when he stopped in front of Lena and spoke with his baritone voice, “Good mor-ning, my name...is Tom.” She gazed at him, a little bit surprised by his reaction. He was about forty years old, tall and slender with his brown hair and bushy beard. Wearing his black jacket and khaki pants, he looked like a salesman who worked for a small company. When she finally extended her hand, she mentioned her name, and then, they both just stood there, waiting for the bus.

This time when she gets to the bus stop, Tom looks at her, and she politely says, “Good morning. How are you?” without any response from him. Like usual, she does not feel the need to start a conversation with him. She senses that something is wrong with him, something that she cannot quite put her finger on. It even comes to her that maybe he is a little bit insane. Somehow she is uncomfortable being alone with him, especially inside the bus. Lena hates the way he looks at her when his eyes gaze fixedly at her face, keeping an eye on her every move. It is cold and strange, as if he is penetrating her very being, thinking and wondering what kind of creature she is. At a time like that, she does not know what to do; ignoring him by looking out to the window is probably a wise decision. When they get into the bus, she is upset because she knows that Tom will give her that look again. She wishes that she could tell him to back off or to say to him to mind his own business. But there is always a voice, deep inside her heart, that prevents her from doing so. Then, Lena decides to focus her attention on her book, reading some chapters that have not been assigned. Once she looks up and when Tom gives her that peculiar look, she is irritated, but she returns to her book anyway.

At the next stop, an old woman gets in and she sits next to him. She apparently knows him well since she starts speaking to him about the weather and his condition. Curious, Lena watches them, waiting for Tom’s reply. To her surprise, Tom answers slowly, little by little that sounds like he is trying to spell a word. “I...am do-ing fine.” After that, he moves his head from side to side and says, “Nice to...see you to-day, Alice” to the old woman. The woman smiles at him and pats him on his hand. Then, Alice asks him again, “Are you going to the center this afternoon, Tom?” He replies, “Yees, of course. I will be...there.” Then, a man who is sitting next to Lena whispers, “Poor guy, he needs to go to the center every day to fix his head.” “What do you mean by that?” Lena inquires. “Well,” the man answers, “he got injured in a car accident, you know. And since then, he is never quite the same person.”

Lena then understands, now she does understand what is wrong with him. He has some kind of disability, which prevents him from thinking and functioning like normal people. The way he looks at her or to others is probably his way to make sense of the world around him. And under his aloofness, he is maybe afraid to express his thoughts, for he does not want people to judge him unfairly. But she already formed an opinion without any effort to find out whether her feeling was true. Ashamed of what she has been thinking, Lena regrets her bad feelings about him. She closes her book, not knowing what to do, except to forgive herself. She stares at Tom, thinking of how awful she is to be unkind to others and wondering if Tom can sense it. Somehow she feels that he, who is used to people staring or ignoring him, may understand though it will not get rid of her guilt. Nevertheless, this is a good lesson that she will remember her entire life.