

DVC

321 Golf Club Road
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

www.dvc.edu/isas

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSIONS & SERVICES

ISAS

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, No. 1

Spring Edition

January, 2006



Dear Students:

We want to welcome everyone back for the beginning of the spring 2006 semester. We extend a very special welcome to all our new students.

As the new semester starts we hope everyone has a great one.

REMINDERS FROM THE ISAS OFFICE

International Student Medical Insurance – The medical insurance fee for this semester is \$354.00 (includes summer). This amount is automatically deducted when you register for the spring semester. The coverage starts 1/7/06 and ends 8/10/06 BUT it 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 2005 semester.

All DVC F-1 students will be charged this fee. Students who have their own medical insurance, which is similar to or better than the DVC medical insurance offered by Somerton Insurance Service, need to bring in their proof-of-insurance to the ISAS office to receive a waiver. The last day to obtain a medical insurance waiver for the spring semester is on **February 17th**. **No medical insurance waivers will be given out after February 17.**

Health Clinic: There has been some discussion through the Student Union, Management and the District Office concerning the feasibility of bringing a Health Clinic to Diablo Valley College in the near future. 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 huge student population.



DHS

(Department of Homeland Security) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



SEVIS FEE - All new F-1 students are required to pay a one-time SEVIS fee of \$100 to help pay for the administration and maintenance costs of the Student Exchange Information System (SEVIS). Students doing Reinstatement, Change of Status to F-1, or receiving a new I-20 for re-entry are also required to pay this new SEVIS fee.

For more information on how to pay this fee go to the DVC international student website:
http://www.dvc.edu/isas/sevis_fees.htm
or www.fmjfee.com.

Regulations Reminders

1. Students will need to maintain their **full-time status** at all times. Students must see the DSO **before** taking fewer than 12 units.
2. Report a change of address within 10 days.
3. Attend the college on the I-20 that they used to enter the country.
4. Report to the school international office within 15 days of their arrival to the school.
5. Transfer students need to pick up I-20s from the DVC International Student Admissions and Services Office within 15 days of their arrival.
6. Students who drop out of school or quit school will need to leave the U.S. immediately (within 15 days).
7. 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.
8. Only one on-line class 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

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.

IMPORTANT

The Department Homeland Security (DHS) regulations require that international students inform the DSO within 10 days of a change of address.

Transfer Students

Students who are transferring for the fall 2006 semester need to bring their **letter of acceptance** from their transfer school to the ISAS office to show Gloria or Gena so their SEVIS I-20 record can be transferred to their new school.

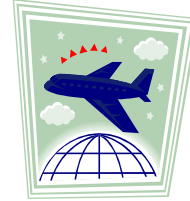
Students planning to leave the U.S. for the summer break before starting their fall 2006 semester in their transfer school must use their new school's I-20 to re-enter the U.S.

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.

Campus Employment

Students working on campus **must maintain** their full-time student status - 12 units - in order to work on campus unless they have been authorized by IAS to be below 12 units.



Traveling outside the USA?

All F-1 students wishing to travel outside the U.S. and who are returning to DVC **must have** their current I-20 signed on page 3 by a DSO, Gloria Zarabozo or Gena Gruber. 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.

Reminder: Returning students who cannot pick up their signed I-20 and need to have the I-20 mailed by the ISAS office to their home country for re-entry in the U.S. will be charged a \$25.00 mailing fee to cover the mailing costs.

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.

WANTED!

If you have an interesting story or article that you would like to share, please contact Gena at ggruber@dvc.edu

General Information

During the fall semester we were saddened by the loss of two IEC Japanese students, Satoru Abe and Masatoshi Nomura, in a car accident. It was a very sad time for the international student community. They will be missed by all of us.

Emergency Evacuation Tips for International Students

The Katrina hurricane disaster has made us more aware of the importance of being prepared for an emergency. Unfortunately, California does have landslides and earthquakes. The following evacuation tips from the SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) may be helpful to keep in mind in case of an evacuation emergency:

1. Important documents to take with you: Passport, visa, I-20, I-94, Social Security Card, financial records, and plane tickets, checks and credit cards.
2. Take any contact numbers or email address to keep in touch with Gloria Zarabozo or Gena Gruber at the ISAS office or DVC website.
3. If you cannot contact Gloria or Gena at the ISAS office, contact SEVP (Student Exchange Visitor Program) by email at SEVIS.source@dhs.gov or call (800) 961-5294.



Summer School Reminder

International students are not required to take summer classes as long as you 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 2006 start date.**



Tax Assistance for 2005

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. Check with ISAS office early March for information on date and time.

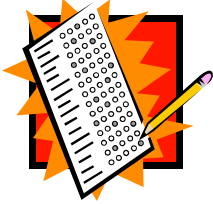
SCAMS AND FRAUD

Students should be very cautious when dealing on-line with other individuals, 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.**

There have been some recent problems with persons pretending to be students sending a fake cashier's check to the international student. The pretend student then "decides to back out of the deal" and requests that the international student transmit the funds back electronically. This is a scam and should be reported to the police. For more information on other types of scams and fraud and how to avoid them go to www.craigslist.org/about/scams.html.

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. The math department is working on getting some “practice assessments” up on the DVC website. They should be available before the summer and fall 2006 semesters.



International Students Club

The International Club had a very successful fall semester. The members were busy each week participating in the various activities—barbecue, potluck, games, and preparing for international education week. A big thanks to the club officers who coordinated the International Education Week (11/14 to 11/18) celebration.

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 many different scholarships. The DVC Scholarship Program application is available on-line on the DVC web site – <http://www.dvc.edu/scholarships>

Flags representing all the home countries of the international students were displayed in the Quad during that week. Films about different countries were set up for viewing, grammar books in 7 languages were sold, a calligraphy table was set up, and music was played throughout the event. Food provided from local ethnic restaurants and performances by the campus community helped make the international festival a very successful event.



DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE
Online Scholarship Application
for Academic Year 2006-2007 is
available online.

DVC Scholarship Application

DEADLINE EXTENDED!

Application Receipt
Deadline: 5:00 p.m.
Thursday
March 16, 2006

Spring 2006--We are looking forward to another semester of club activities. **The first meeting is scheduled for 2/1/05 starting at 3:00 to 4:00 in the ASO Club Room. Refreshments will be served!!**

After that we will meet every Wednesday, from 3:00pm to 4:00pm in the ASO Club Room. Students interested in joining can do so at the meetings.

Experiencing Cultural Diversities

By Takahiro Kikuchi

I have never traveled to foreign countries until I came to Diablo Valley College, so I worried a little bit if I could adapt to American culture and the people living here. However, living in the United States, in a multicultural society, I was successful in broadening my horizons. In Japan, I never met people from other countries, so I used to stereotype foreigners. At first, when I came to the United States, I had great misconceptions about people from different cultures, and it was quite difficult for me to accept them. Regardless of that, I was able to stop seeing fellow students as so different from me after I joined the International Student Club at DVC because everyone I met here is totally different from my preconceived ideas. All international students from various countries have shared different cultures with each other, and we became closer as we shared our cultures. By doing so, I found out new aspects of Japanese culture that I had not

experienced before. As I made new friends with people from different nationalities, I began to realize how they perceived Japan and its culture. Since I recognized both the positive and negative sides that I did not know, I understood Japan much more than before I came to America. I was able to objectively see Japan not only as my home country but as a member of the world.

Experiencing the American and other cultures has largely impacted my life in a positive way as I am able to see people not as stereotypical images but as individuals. I am willing to continue to meet more people from other cultures and learn facets of their lives that are hidden behind the stereotypes.