REMINDERS FROM THE ISAS OFFICE

International Student Medical Insurance

The medical insurance fee for this semester is $441.00 (includes summer). This amount is automatically added to your registration fees when you register for the spring 2011 semester. The coverage starts 1/7/11 and ends 8/10/11 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 2010 semester. All DVC F-1 students will be charged this fee.

This medical insurance is mandatory for all DVC F-1 students. NO INSURANCE WAIVERS ACCEPTED!

Note: Students who have not paid the mandatory insurance medical fee of $441 by the deadline (February 11) will be dropped from their classes.

The International Student Admissions and Services (ISAS) website at (http://www.dvc.edu/international/resources/insurance.htm) has valuable information on how to file a claim, contact information, how to find a doctor, and download the 2010/2011 insurance brochure.
**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 immigration system and in the DVC student database. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations require that students inform the DSO within 10 days of a change of address.

**Transfer Students Reminder** – If you are transferring for the fall 2011 semester you need to bring your letter of acceptance from the new transfer school to the ISAS office. After making sure you are in status, we will then transfer your SEVIS I-20 record to your new school. Please let us know if you are planning to work or travel so that we can make the best possible choice on when to transfer your record.

**NOTE:** If you are planning to leave the U.S. for the summer break before starting the fall 2011 semester in your transfer school, you must use the new school’s I-20 to re-enter the U.S.

**Spring 2011 transfers**

Congratulations to the 37 students who transferred to four-year colleges or universities for spring 2011. Some of these schools include:

University of California at Berkeley (UCB) 7
University of San Francisco 6
San Francisco State University (SFSU) 5

Some of the private or out of state universities students transferred to include Pepperdine University (2) and University of Michigan (1), New York University (1), University of Oregon (1), and University of Wisconsin (1).

**Department of Homeland Security Regulations Reminders**

- You need to maintain your full-time status at all times. You must talk to the DSO before taking fewer than 12 units. Your GPA should not go below 2.0.
- You must report a change of address within 10 days. The ISAS office will change your address for you.
- Attend the college on the I-20 that you used to enter the country.
- You MUST report to the school international office within 15 days of your arrival at the school. At DVC this is done through the F-1 check-in sessions.
- Transfer in students need to pick up their I-20s from the DVC International Student Admissions and Services Office within 15 days of their arrival.
- If you drop out of school or quit school you MUST inform the DSO so that your SEVIS I-20 can be properly handled. Once you drop your classes you will need to leave the U.S. immediately (within 15 days).
- You must inform the DVC DSO (Gena or Gloria) of the school you will transfer to AND present an admissions letter from that school before we will release your SEVIS I-20 record to that school. You will only be able to get an I-20 from the new school after we release the SEVIS record.
- Students who travel outside the U.S. must have the third page of their I-20 signed by a DSO (Gloria Zarabozo or Gena Gruber) for RE-ENTRY to the U.S.
Only one on-line class can be counted towards the required 12 units to maintain full-time status. Students may NOT take all evening classes. *These rules are being waived by the Department of Homeland Security for the spring 2011 semester due to the budget constraints in California.

Students must sign up for their classes no later than 30 days after the close of course registration each semester. SEVIS requires that all students be registered for the current semester in SEVIS no later than 30 days after the close of course registration each semester.

Social Security Number

You can only get a Social Security Number (SSN) if you are offered a job. These are the steps you must follow:

1. You must first be offered a job on campus.
2. Pick up a letter of employment form from Business Services with the employment package.
3. Take the letter of employment to your supervisor. The letter needs to be filled out and signed by the supervisor confirming that you have been offered employment.
4. Go to the ISAS office to fill out status confirmation form. (This can take two to three days).

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

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

Nearest Social Security Office:
Walnut Creek District Office
1111 Civic Drive, Ste. 180
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Employment

Campus Employment You can work anywhere on campus for 20 or fewer hours a week. You can work more than 20 hours a week during vacation time (summer or winter break) or school holidays. Continuing students are not required to take classes during the summer to work on campus. If you are working on campus you must maintain your full-time status (12 units or approval to go below 12 units) in order to continue working on campus. Note: A minimum of 6 units is required for all students (domestic and international) during the fall and spring semester to work at Diablo Valley College.

Curriculum Practical Training (CPT)
See the ISAS Student Handbook for more information on CPT. You must have been in status for TWO semesters in an ACADEMIC program to be eligible. Time in an ESL program does NOT count. You must get the approval of a DSO (Gloria or Gena) to do CPT each semester. Students doing CPT need to maintain full-time student status. Students must also get approval of employment through the Career and Employment Services office.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
See the ISAS Student Handbook for more information on OPT. You must be completing an Associate’s degree or a Certificate to be eligible for OPT. Students must plan ahead, it takes approximately 90 days for the DHS Service Center to process an OPT application. You can apply for OPT three months in advance of finishing your program. See the
DSO’s (Gloria or Gena) early in the semester to begin the application process.

**Traveling Outside of the USA**
If you wish to travel outside the U.S. and you are returning to DVC you must have the DSO, Gloria Zarabozo or Gena Gruber sign on page 3 of your 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 to three working days for Gloria or Gena to sign your I-20.

Remember to pick up your signed I-20 from the ISAS office before leaving the U.S. ISAS will not mail your I-20 to your home country if you forget to get DSO signature or do not pick up your I-20 from the ISAS office. You will need to ask for a I-515 form at the U.S. port of entry and will need to report to the ISAS upon arrival at DVC for instructions on how to mail your I-20 and I-94 for processing.

Documents needed to re-enter U.S. after travel:
1. Current SEVIS I-20 signed on page 3 for travel by DSO at ISAS
2. A valid passport (with at least 6 month validity)
3. A valid F-1 visa
4. A recent financial or bank statement (recommended)
5. Current school transcript from Web Advisor (recommended)

**Special Events**

**Tax Assistance for 2010:** Gloria Zarabozo will be conducting a workshop on tax form 1040NR-EZ and form 8843 for all DVC F-1 International Students who were present in the United States AT ANY time between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010. ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PRESENT IN THE U.S. DURING THOSE DATES MUST FILE TAX FORMS. The tax workshop will be held on March 18 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at the BFL Community Conference Center (the small building next to the BFL). Students who entered the US for the **first time** in January 2011 do NOT need to attend. You SHOULD download and print the form 8843 and 1040NR-EZ at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and students who worked during the 2010 calendar year should also bring their W-2 forms to the workshop.

**General Information**

**Online International Students Request Form**

International students can submit requests online without having to come into the ISAS office. Although you still need to drop off your I-20 if you wish to have it signed for travel and re-entry some of the things you can do online include:
- Address changes
- Letter requests: full-time status, bank letters, military letters, etc.
- Change of major on your I-20

The link to the online request form is [http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/counseling/forms.htm](http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/counseling/forms.htm) Please allow the usual three days for us to complete your requests.

**Summer School Reminder:** You are not required to take summer classes if you are currently 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 for students whose I-20 has a summer 2011 start date.**

**Assessments:** Students must make an appointment with the Assessment Office to take the math or English Assessment at [http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/assessment-center/](http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/assessment-center/) follow the directions to the appointment link.
The math assessment link is http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/assessment-center/math.htm. This link has a description of the different math level assessments (Lower-Level Math Tests, Level 2, Level 3, and College-Level Mathematics Test).

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/.

Facebook—Join us in ISAS Facebook. Go to ISAS@dvc in Facebook and request to add yourself as a friend. Once in the ISAS Facebook check out the various groups (DVC Alumni or International Club). Great place to find other students with similar interests and to get answers to questions from other students.

Volunteer Services (Off Campus) –
Volunteering offers students an opportunity to interact with the community outside of Diablo Valley College, gain valuable work experience and help others. Students can obtain more information on the process of how to volunteer, how to obtain a volunteer certificate and what agencies are available outside of DVC where students can volunteer by going to the following DVC Career and Employment Services web link: http://www.dvc.edu/current/jobs/volunteer.htm

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is representing someone else’s words, ideas, artistry, or data as one’s own, including copying another person’s work (including published and unpublished material, and material from the internet) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else’s opinions and theories as one’s own, or working jointly on a project, then submitting it as one’s own (DVC 2010/2011 Catalog, pg. 31).

Alcohol and drugs and International Students

Many International Students experience some difficulty adjusting to a new culture, climate, and traditions in a new environment. Students may experience loneliness, anxiety, and depression leaving their home country to come to the U. S. to study. It is not uncommon to experience some difficulties. Remember that turning to alcohol or drugs to lessen the adjustment difficulties will cause more problems. Some important points to remember:

- The legal age to drink in the U.S. is twenty-one.
- Drugs are illegal in the U.S.
- It is a misdemeanor to be drunk in a public place, (California Code 647f).
- Alcohol or drug use in the school grounds is considered grounds for disciplinary action (Student Code of Conduct, http://www.dvc.edu/org/info/policies/alcohol-drugs.htm).
- It is illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol-DUI (California Vehicle Code 23152a).

A reminder that DVC students are eligible for five free visits to a confidential professional who can provide support in coping with stressful issues. Call 800-227-1060 to make an appointment with a counselor. Also the International Student Wells Fargo Insurance
will pay 50% of counseling fees for up to twenty visits per year. Call 866-378-8885 to find a doctor or provider. The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Hotline telephone number is: 925-932-8100.

**International Student Club**

All students are invited to join the International Student Club (ISC) for the spring 2011 semester. The club is a great place to make friends and have some fun besides learning about student government. Remember that, not only are students encouraged to get good grades to transfer to the school of their choice, school activities, volunteer work, and interning can also affect on whether or not a student is accepted into a great transfer school. This spring ISC is planning a Karaoke contest and a volley ball competition. Email Derek, the ISC president, at derek122@hotmail.com for information about the club. Also, the club is in Facebook in ISAS@dvc in the Groups area.

ISC does a great job coordinating our yearly **International Education Week** celebration. The theme was Your Smiles, Color our Lives. This fall (11/15/2010) in conjunction with the other clubs, ISC celebrated this joyful event, which included a sampling of food from the various countries, dancing, singing, music performances, display booths from the various clubs, and games.

**Academic Counselor’s Corner**

*(Mark Isham)*

By Mark Isham, International Student Academic Counselor

Check out these websites frequently for important information and updates on academic counseling:

- Academic Counseling FAQs – [http://www.dvc.edu/international/pdfs/frequently-asked-questions.pdf](http://www.dvc.edu/international/pdfs/frequently-asked-questions.pdf)

**COUNSELING ETIQUETTE**

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines “etiquette” as “…the forms prescribed by custom or authority to be observed in social, official, or professional life.” Every culture has its expectations of etiquette. Counseling faculty and staff, too, have norms of etiquette that they expect all people to follow. Here are some of the most important rules of etiquette to remember when visiting the Counseling Center or seeking counseling from a counselor:

1. Always be on time for a counseling appointment. In fact, try to be a little early for your appointment. Your short wait in the lobby will give you a chance to review your questions for the counselor. If you will be late for your appointment, call the Counseling Center and let them know. If you are more than ten minutes late, however, your appointment might be canceled, and you will have to reschedule.

2. If you must cancel your appointment, do so as early as possible so another student can have that time slot. There are about 1200 international students at DVC currently, and there is only one international student counselor, so appointment times are valuable.

3. If you come for Express, or Drop-In, Counseling, do not expect to have more than ten minutes with the counselor. Time-consuming questions, such as “What courses should I take to transfer?” or “What should I major in?” or “Could you help me with my university application personal statement/essay?” require an appointment. Examples of Express Counseling questions include:
   a. How many Pass units can I transfer to the UC?
   b. How many PE units can I transfer to the UC?
c. How do I request a unit overload?
d. Where do I go for help with _____?
e. And so on…

The Academic Counseling FAQs, located at http://www.dvc.edu/international/pdfs/frequently-asked-questions.pdf, will answer many of the questions that international students commonly ask.

4. Students can never give their counseling appointment to another student under any circumstances. If you do not want to keep your appointment, but your friend wants that time slot, you must first contact the Counseling Center to cancel your appointment, than your friend can contact the Counseling Center to request that time slot. This is because the Counseling Center staff needs time to create a file for each appointment. The Counseling Center extensions are 2276 and 2278, or you and your friend can go together to the Counseling Center to cancel and make the appointment.

5. Never interrupt a counselor when he or she has initiated a discussion with another student. For example, if the counselor comes to the front desk to call a student back for an appointment or drop-in, do not say, “I just have a quick question.” You are stealing time from the other student who followed the rules of etiquette, and that kind of behavior is just plain rude. Your concerns are neither more nor less important than any other student’s concerns. Sign in, sit down, and wait your turn like everybody else, please.

6. There is no such thing as an academic counseling emergency. Be patient when waiting for your appointment time, drop-in time, or emailed response. In the meantime, refer to published resources, such as the DVC Catalog, the Schedule of Classes, the UC booklet “Answers for Transfers” (available in the Transfer Center), and online sources such as the DVC website, the Academic Counseling FAQs, and websites like www.assist.org, www.universityofcalifornia.edu, and www.csumentor.edu to find the answers to your questions. If you plan ahead, you will not feel a sense of urgency regarding your academic counseling questions. Remember, competitive universities like to admit students who know how to plan ahead and manage their time well.

7. Come prepared for your counseling appointments and drop-ins: Bring a list of your questions, some paper to write on, and a pen or pencil. Also bring any important documents, such as notes from previous counseling appointments, copies of your transcripts and test scores, and so on. This will maximize the time you have with the counselor. If you are coming as a drop-in, bring a copy of your DVC transcript, as counselors may not have time to look up your transcript on the computer.

8. Rules are rules; they are not negotiable. Do not persist to the point of begging and whining; not only is that unattractive, it is immature, and competitive universities look for mature, responsible students. Practice your maturity and responsibility at DVC so that you will be a successful student after you transfer.

9. Do not “shop” for the answer that you want to hear. Counselors communicate with each other on a regular basis. We make every effort to give consistent and accurate information to all students. If your friend has told you something that contradicts what a counselor tells you, ask your friend, “Where did you get that information?” And ask the counselor, “Where did you get that information?” Counselors get their information from official UC and CSU sources. If the information comes from an official book, handbook, website, or communiqué, then it has come from a reliable source of information.
Ultimately, you are the only one responsible for your academic choices.  

10. Finally, never, ever misrepresent yourself to a counselor. That is a violation of academic honesty, and you will be reported to the Student Life office.  Such a report can have very serious negative consequences on your continuation as a DVC student, and maybe even the continuation of your privilege to study in the U.S.

Nobody likes rules, but they are necessary for the smooth functioning of a society.  DVC is a society unto itself, and each office and division within DVC has its own rules to follow.  If we all participate in creating and abiding by these rules, our society will run more smoothly, and everybody will have a more positive experience at DVC.

Volunteering in Haiti

by Junhee Lee

In May 2010, before summer school started, I decided to do something “meaningful”. During this contemplation I received an interesting E-mail from a woman, who graduated from a college I had attended, Saint Mike’s College.  She invited me to go to Haiti as a volunteer.  I was hooked!  To contribute in place with such great need, I thought I could find meaning.  I quickly decided to go to Haiti.  Once the plane ticket was “in hand”, the project progressed quickly.

I had traveled all five continents, but had yet to visit the nations of Oceania.  Given my age I believe that I have faced more challenged and hardships than others.  So when people would say, “It is going to be dangerous” or “this is more than you expect”; I was still excited to go to Haiti to volunteer.  I couldn’t wait to get there.  Yet, I was concerned and worried about what might happen; fear of the unknown. I was both nervous and excited.

I went to Haiti through a volunteer organization ‘Project Medishare’ http://www.projectmedishare.org/. Most of the volunteers are doctors, nurses, pharmacists and few psychologists, physical therapists, journalists, translators and photographers.  The organization is based on hospital. I considered how I could help or how I would communicate with medical professional. I am unfamiliar with medical lingo and I am from a distant language and culture.  While in flight to Haiti, volunteers made introductions to one another.  Many volunteers had specific specialized jobs that they would be walking into.  I on the other hand would have to use my intellect and creative resources to develop how I would help the Haitian community.  It was often stated that the mere act of getting on the plane with the intention to help is help already.  Even if you bring a smile to a person who has lost everything, this will create positive energy.  The thing is I am pretty good at is, smiling. I made myself a promise thousands times like a vow and an oath to do my best.

Arriving to Haiti was a wake up to the feelings of distress and sympathy.  It hurt my heart to see devastation, abject poverty, suffering and hunger.  I kept reminding myself of the promise I made to myself.  All volunteers took buses that were provided by the organization.  We headed off to the base-camp which consisted of four huge tents.  We could see the earthquake damage along the way.  What was even worse, were the throngs of people who were begging for money or selling some gifts.  We were informed that ‘the volunteer policy’ was not to offer assistance at the port of entry for fear of being mobbed by the beggars.

We had an orientation after we came to the camp.  The orientation was about our rules, and dividing teams such as surgery teams, nurse teams, pharmacist teams, psychologist teams, and so on.  For me, beginning of two weeks, I worked as a multi-tasker and support personnel doing duties such as taking care of newborn babies, delivering surgery stuff to the surgeon, hanging out with children, comforting the sick,
organizing materials and supplies. There were 100s of things to be done.

I didn’t anticipate how hot the sun would be and the impact on my health. It was 114 degrees in the sun. Just standing outside and breathing can make you crazy and your body keeps saying “Needs water, needs water”. Sometimes I would take refuge in the air-conditioned container for medication where I would organize supplies. I would find some friend in there near fainting from the heat.

I have some friends in Haiti, so I had a chance to go outside of camp. Even though there was an antigovernment demonstration and the country is being a chaotic state of affairs, I really wanted to see how they live and how it looked. I wanted to experience the real situation of outside of the hospital compound. I wanted to see it own my eyes. I met my five Haitian friends, and they took me to fast-food restaurant. I was the only person who was not Haitian. We also went to a club in a rich town. One beer cost $6.00US. I thought that it was outrageous when compared to how much money Haitian people earn for a month.

I asked my friends, what do those people do to survive? I learned that many of the people are from Dominican Republic and they sometimes come into Haiti. The places and the people in Haiti that I witnessed were all peaceful. When I asked my friends, “Could you take me to local area like downtown?” They replied, “It is too dangerous for you and even for us”. When we headed back to one of my Haitian friend’s house, we got a phone call from; their friends who wanted to let us know that we should go around the way back home. It was because there was a demonstration. When I visited my friend’s house, I got a bit shocked. Their house has no lights and no paint on the walls. After I came back to the hospital camp I asked one of my friends whose father is from Haiti all about the history and culture of Haiti.