Dear Students:

Once again we want to welcome everyone back from the winter break. As we start a new semester we look forward to meeting all of you especially the new students entering DVC for spring 2010. We hope you will read this newsletter because it is full of great information pertinent to international students.

Congratulations to the 45 students that transferred to 4 year colleges and universities for the spring 2010 semester. Eighteen of these students transferred to UCB!

NEWS FROM THE ISAS OFFICE

International Student Medical Insurance

The medical insurance fee for this semester is $401.00 (includes summer). This amount is automatically added to your registration fees when you register for the spring 2010 semester. The coverage starts 1/7/10 and ends 8/10/10 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 2009 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 $401 by the deadline will be dropped from their classes.

The International Student Admissions and Services (ISAS) website at http://dev.dvc.edu/international/resources/insurance.htm has valuable information on how to file a claim, contact information, and information on how to find a doctor.
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 2010 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 2010 semester in your transfer school, you must use the new school’s I-20 to re-enter the U.S.

Spring 2010 transfers

Congratulations to the 45 students who transferred to four-year colleges or universities for spring 2010. Some of these schools include:

University of California at Berkeley (UCB) 18
University of Southern California (USC) 5
University of San Francisco (USF) 4
San Francisco State University (SFSU) 4
State University of New York (SUNY) 2

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
**Department of Homeland Security Regulations Reminders**

- You need to maintain your **full-time status** at all times. You must see 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.

- Report to the school’s international office within 15 days of your arrival at the school.

- Transfer 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 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 to 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 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.

**SEVIS II**

The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is launching the latest SEVIS II in 2010. The new SEVIS II places even more responsibility on the students. Some of the features include a paperless system, students’ ability to access SEVIS II and make changes and check status, a one person-one record system based on students entering all the biological information in SEVIS II and getting one number that stays with him/her as long as they study in U.S. Stay tuned for more information on this change in SEVIS which we will share with you from the Department of Homeland Security.

**Full-time Status**

You are required to maintain full-time status while studying at Diablo Valley College. A minimum of 12 units must be taken each semester. Your GPA should not drop below 2.0. You **must talk** to a DSO **BEFORE** dropping below 12 units to make sure that you have an acceptable reason for being below the full-time equivalent.
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 below 12 units) in order to continue working on campus. DVC regulations require that any student working on campus must have a minimum of 6 units. This is true for international students who have been approved to be below units.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) See the ISAS Student Handbook for more information on Curriculum Practical Training. 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 curricular practical training (CPT) need to maintain full-time student status.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) See the ISAS Student Handbook for more information on Optional Practical Training. 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 this 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 the signed I-20 from the ISAS office before leaving the U.S. ISAS will no longer mail I-20 to continuing students’ home countries. Students who forget to pick up their I-20s 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 their 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 2009: 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, 2009 and December 31, 2009. ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PRESENT IN THE U.S. DURING THOSE DATES MUST FILE TAX FORMS. The tax workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 17 in the Trophy Room at 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students who entered the US for the first time in January 2010 do NOT need to attend.
**General Information**

**International Students Request Form**
NOW ONLINE

International students can now 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://www2.dvc.edu/isas/Forms/Student_request.asp](http://www2.dvc.edu/isas/Forms/Student_request.asp). Please allow the usual three days for us to complete your requests. Other online requests and forms are available through the counseling office at [http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/counseling/forms.htm](http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/counseling/forms.htm).

**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 2010 start date.**

**Assessments:**  

The math assessment link is [http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/assessment-center/math.htm](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). New students or students who want to take a higher level Math Assessment should also check out Sample Math Level Practice Test at [http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/assessment-center/math-practice.htm](http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/assessment-center/math-practice.htm) for sample tests and more descriptions on the different math level tests.

**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 website [http://www.dvc.edu/scholarships/](http://www.dvc.edu/scholarships/).

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

- [www.edupass.com/](http://www.edupass.com/)
- [http://www.nafsa.org/students.sec/financial_aid_for_undergraduate/#funding%20Factors%20to%20Consider](http://www.nafsa.org/students.sec/financial_aid_for_undergraduate/#funding%20Factors%20to%20Consider)
- [http://www.iefa.org](http://www.iefa.org)
- [http://www.internationalstudentloan.com](http://www.internationalstudentloan.com)
- [www.InternationalScholarships.com](http://www.internationalscholarships.com)
- [www.Schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com)
- [www.InternationalStudent.com](http://www.internationalstudent.com)
- [www.Fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.studentservices.com](http://www.studentservices.com)
- [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)
- [www.scholarshipexperts.com](http://www.scholarshipexperts.com)

Please remember that neither DVC nor the ISAS office has any connection with these sites. If you have any questions about them you must contact them directly.
Facebook—Join us in ISAS Facebook. Go to ISAS@dvc in Facebook and request to become 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

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 website: http://www.dvc.edu/org/departments/career-employment/special/volunteer.htm.

International Student Club

All students are invited to join the International Student Club for the spring 2010 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 whether or not a student is accepted into a great transfer school. Email Vanus Che, the International Student Club president, at chemani_2004@hotmail.com for information about the club. Also, the club is in Facebook in ISAS@dvc in the Groups area.

The International Students Club does a great job coordinating our yearly International Education Week celebration. Last fall in conjunction with the other clubs, the International Student Club 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.

Yuhihai Intercolligate Kendo Tournament

The DVC Kendo Club competed in the tournament and did very well. Congratulations to Kenichi Nakayama for coming in first place in Court D. This event is sponsored by the UCLA Kendo Club. Go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8r_BfpdxYY on You Tube to see some of the action.

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 are 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 semester. Call 866-378-8885 to find a doctor or provider. The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Hotline telephone number is: 925-932-8100.

Academic Counseling Information
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
Academic Counseling Presentations, including New Student Orientation - http://www.authorstream.com/tag/misham

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, then 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 no more nor no 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.
Witness the severe effect of education budget cuts in California on DVC

by - Nari Jung

In late May 2009, as a result of continued financial woes, Governor Schwarzenegger declared budget cuts to the education system in California. Since then, there have been significant and severe consequences of the budget cuts on our campus. As part of the budget cut process, the number of classes, the allowable size of classes and the number of instructors have diminished while more and more students, displaced from the U.C system, have enrolled. At the beginning of the Fall 2009 semester, there was total chaos among class with students trying to add classes at the last minute. Most new students and transfer students couldn’t find enough classes to enroll in, and even existing students had trouble as well. As a student employee at the International Student Admissions Office (ISAS), I have witnessed, first hand, many students who couldn’t enroll in enough classes. In fact, some were not able to enroll in any class at all. Since international students are required to take a minimum of 12 units each semester to maintain our student status in the United States, it has been a severe impact. The budget cut didn’t only affect class enrollment. Learning center where students could get help from tutors closed and learning labs cut their hours. Even a coffee shop in the bookstore cut the hours, so students can’t even have a cup of coffee whenever they want. The impact from it is severe and immediate.

Education shouldn’t be the subject of a budget cut, or considered a burden. World is suffering the financial crisis, and it is right to take action to be out of the problem. However, we shouldn’t only consider the immediate impact, save money, but also anticipate the long-term effect as well. Education is an investment for the future, and an educated population in CA is essential for the future economic development.