

Nation to Nation

VOL. 13, 1

SEPTEMBER 09

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Do some shopping at the COD Street Fair: Every Weekend from 7:00am-2:00pm.
- Check out the animals at The Living Desert 47 -900 Portola Avenue, Everyday from 9:00am—5:00pm. Admission: \$12.50

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Registration 2 update
- Tutoring: 2 COD & IEA Students
- Immigration 3 News
- Student 3 Survey Results
- Living with 4 Your Host Family
- Important 4 Deadlines

Welcome to Fall 2009!



The International Student Program would like to welcome our new and returning students for the Fall 2009! This term, we welcomed 53 new students to College of the Desert and 10 new students to the Intensive English Academy. Students participated in our orientation program which included the help of our Peer Mentors, Alana Raica and Chui Mei Chan.

We would also like to extend a special greeting to our new in-

ternational students. We are happy to welcome students from the following countries to our program:

Brazil
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
China
Germany
El Salvador
Hong Kong
Hungary
Iran

Iraq
Japan
Korea
Latvia
Nepal
Netherlands
Norway
Peru
Philippines
Sweden
Taiwan
Vietnam

We are happy to have you with us!

Visiting the IEP Staff

Who Do I See?:

The International Student Office is open Monday—Friday from 8:00am—4:00pm.

If you have questions about particular topics, please visit the following staff members:

See Christina Delgado, International Education Program Director, for: Immigration advice, enrollment verification

See Lisa McFadden, International Student Counselor, for: Academic advising, university transfer assistance or personal counseling.

See Josielind Ferrer, International Student Services Specialist, for: Housing, health insurance and activities

See Carolyn Acord, International Education Program Assistant, for: Appointments, address changes and grades.

Appointments Required:

Staff members will see students by appointment. You are encouraged to call 776-7205 or stop by the front desk to schedule an appointment with Christina, Lisa or Josielind.

Walk-In Hours:

For your quick questions, you can come in during our posted walk-in hours which are:

Josielind and Lisa:

Mondays: 9:00am-12:00pm
Tuesdays: 9:00am – 12:00pm
Wednesdays: 2:00pm—4:00pm
Thursdays: 2:00pm—4:00pm

Christina:

Mondays: 9:00am – 12:00pm
Wednesdays: 2:00pm-4:00pm
Thursdays: 2:00pm—4:00pm

All other visits require an appointment.

Registration Update

“WOW!” That is what we are saying at the International Student Office regarding fall 2009 registration. We know many of you dealt with long lines, closed classes and the inability to get your first choice of class this semester. Unfortunately, this is going to be the trend throughout California as all community colleges are dealing with massive budget cuts due to the state budget crisis. This is not unique to COD.

How Does this Affect Me?

1. Register On Time for Spring 2010! Registration for the spring 2010 semester will begin in late November/early December. Although you may prefer to register late due to payment issues, you are encouraged NOT to do that in the future. Instead, you should register on the first day of your priority. Talk with your families now regarding financial planning. Let them know that you will

need to register on time in order to secure the necessary classes needed to graduate. Our office cannot guarantee courses for those who register at the last minute.

2. No Winter Intersession or Summer session (IEA not included). Many schools in California are cancelling winter and summer sessions. College of the Desert will also be canceling winter 2010 and summer 2010 sessions. Plan Ahead! How does this affect your graduation plans? You are encouraged to make an appointment with Lisa McFadden who can update your two year SEP (Student Educational Plan) to determine if these session cancellations will change your graduation plans.

3. Get an SEP done with Lisa McFadden. The SEP is the Student Educational Plan. This is an outline of the courses you need to take for graduation or transfer at COD. It is a semester-by-semester guide of what you should take in order to graduate on time. An SEP is always important to ensure you are taking the correct courses; however, it is even more important in these difficult times.

*With a little planning,
you will be able to get the classes
you need!*



*The student
educational plan
will change your
life! It will help
you to graduate,
save time and
money!*

**ALERTU at
COD:**
Sign up for
COD's emer-
gency alert sys-
tem by texting
253788 and reply
“y” OR sign up
via the COD
website under
“My COD”

Tutoring for IEA and COD Students

TUTORING HOURS:

The IEP provides free tutoring for our international students. If you are having trouble with an English class, have a paper due that you need edited, a reading assignment that is confusing you or want to practice the English language, please come in and see our tutor.

COD students:

Please seek tutoring with, Amber McCartney during the following hours:

Mondays: 8:00am—9:30am
Tuesdays: 8:00am—9:30am

Amber will be located at the tutoring table in front of the International Student Office at the above times.

Tutoring begins on Wednesday, September 16.

IEA students:

Please seek tutoring with Ana McGraw during the following hours:

Tuesdays: 3:30-5:30pm
Thursdays: 3:30-5:30pm

Ana will be located in CA 11 during the above times. IEA students who visit the tutor will receive credit towards weekly lab time.

Tutoring begins on Tuesday, September 15.

Immigration News



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement



ADDRESS CHANGES: Each of you have recently been sent an email requesting verification of your current address. If you have not already replied with any changes, please do so before September 18. This information is needed so that we can update your SEVIS record as required by law. Any change of address must be reported to SEVIS within 10 days.

MAINTAINING STATUS: Remember, you must register for **AND** complete a minimum of 12 units during the Fall and Spring semester. Dropping below 12 units at any time during the semester will place you out

of status with US DHS. Please see Christina for questions.

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING: For those of you graduating in December, you may want to consider applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT is an opportunity for qualified international students to work off-campus in a professional level job that is directly related to their major. Students must attend an OPT workshop in order to apply. Please visit the “Upcoming Workshop” page on the International Student Program website for dates and times.

TRAVEL SIGNATURES: Don't forget to have your I-20 signed whenever you are planning a trip outside of the country. This includes trips to Canada and Mexico. Please drop off your I-20 at least 3 days before your departure to ensure that it is ready for your trip.

EMPLOYMENT: Please remember that any employment off-campus that has not been authorized by the US DHS is illegal employment and is a deportable offense.

See Christina Delgado for any immigration related questions.

International Student Survey Results

The results of our second annual international student satisfaction survey are in. Thank you to the over 100 international students that completed the survey. The information we gained from the survey is already being put into use as we work to serve you—our international students!

Here is a quick snapshot of the survey highlights. Of our international students:

- 89% report that the services of the International Student Program have helped them as students at COD
- 89% report that they are receiving a quality education at COD
- 93% report that they receive timely and friendly assistance from the International Student office

One area where we found that students would like additional assistance is about choosing classes for graduation and university transfer.

To address this, we will be making a concerted effort to ensure that all international students have an SEP on file in the office. Lisa McFadden will be contacting each student to begin the SEP process. We will start with our newly arrived students who will be contacted for an appointment during the months of September and October.

We also encourage students to attend our workshops on the university admission process. As university admission policies are changing in relation to the California state budget crisis, knowing the most up to date information is critical. Lisa McFadden

will be attending UC and CSU information sessions to get the most accurate information for our students. This information will be covered in our University Transfer and Application workshops—so please attend!

We are also looking to offer more social activities to allow you an opportunity to get to know each other. We have an all program barbecue which is scheduled for October 17 followed by Karaoke night on November 13. This is a great time for you to meet and mingle with other international students. More information to follow on this and other opportunities to make new friends and have fun!

91% of international students report that they made a good decision choosing COD!

Need Information Fast? Click on the “Current Student” link at our website:

www.collegeofthedesert.edu/international

Living With Your Host Family

Josielind Ferrer coordinates housing for our international students. If you have questions or concerns about your host family or apartment, please contact her.

Host Family Questionnaire:

Josielind will be sending out the Host Family Questionnaire to all students living with a host family. Please make sure to send completed questionnaires back as we want to evaluate your housing placement. We will be sending out periodic questionnaires throughout the semester so that we can ensure that our host families are taking care of our students!

Of course, your experience with your host family also depends on how you interact with that family. We want the host family to provide a good home for you, but it is also up to you to make sure that you are

interacting and learning from the family. Do not let a problem get too big that it cannot be solved. Work with your host family and contact Josielind for help. To that end, here are some helpful tips for you:

DO: Be courteous to your host family. Thank them when they do nice things for you, such as driving you to school, taking you to the grocery store, etc.

DON'T: Expect to be driven everywhere at anytime of the day. This is not a part of the host family program.

DO: Take time to get to know your host family. Sit down with them and watch a video, show them your photographs, talk about your families and homes.

DON'T: Stay in your room all of the time. You will not be able to learn about your host family or enjoy yourself.

DON'T: Do not be late in meeting your host family if they will be picking you up from school or elsewhere. If you are late too many times, you may find that your host family will no longer offer to take you anywhere.

DO: Come in to see Josielind Ferrer if you have any problems or concerns about your host family.

DO: Have fun with your family!



International Student Program

College of the Desert
43-500 Monterey Avenue
Palm Desert, CA 92260 USA



International Student Program Staff

IMPORTANT DATES:

September 19:	Venice Beach <i>all international students</i>
September 23:	IEA only: Kite making
September 28:	Last day to drop classes without a grade of "W"
October 6:	IEA only: Movie Day
October 16:	Last day to request an Evaluation for Graduation Spring 2010
October 17:	Barbecue! <i>all international students</i>
October 23:	IEA only: End of session lunch
October 25:	IEA only: Holiday