Dear Students,
As we come to the end of the Fall semester, we hope that you are well and wish you good luck with your Finals. We hope that you find the information contained in this newsletter enjoyable and helpful. As always, the ISP welcomes your feedback, questions and story ideas. Happy Hanukah, Happy Kwanza, Happy Eid al Adha, Happy Bodhi Day, Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a happy, peaceful and successful New Year!

Traveling Abroad during the Semester Break?

Before you leave the U.S.A., please make sure that you come into the ISP Office so that we can endorse your I-20 for your return to the U.S. and also review your travel documents.

If you are going to another country besides your home country of residence, be sure you know the travel requirements to enter that country. You may need a visitor’s visa. Please check the website of the country you are planning to visit for more information.

You will need the following to re-enter the U.S.
- A valid passport (must be valid for 6 months beyond the date of re-entry to the U.S.)
- A valid visa (except under certain conditions for trips to Canada, Mexico or the adjacent islands - come to the ISP Office for more information)
- A current signature from the Designated School Official (DSO) on page 3 of your I-20
- I-901 Fee Payment Receipt
- EAD Card (if you are on Post Completion Optional Practical Training)
- A recent copy of your or your sponsor’s financial statement may also be required.

If you forget any of these items, you may experience difficulty in re-entering the U.S.
ISP Office Closed - December 24 - January 1

Las Positas College and the ISP Office will be closed from Wednesday, December 24, 2008 until Thursday, January 1, 2009. We will return on Friday, January 2, 2009. In case of emergency, contact the Campus Safety and Security Office at (925) 424-1690 who will then reach Cindy for you. (Sean will be in New Hampshire with his family).

Student Health Center Closed during Semester Break

The Student Health Center at Las Positas College will be closed during the entire Semester Break, from December 24, 2008 until January 20, 2009. If you need medical attention during this time, please go to your nearest doctor or urgent care center. In cases of emergency, call 911 or go to the closest Emergency Room. The nearest Emergency Room to the College is Valley Care Medical Center located at 5555 West Las Positas Boulevard in Pleasanton. Their phone number is (925) 416-3418.

Health Insurance Coverage

Although it is not required, we strongly recommend that you extend your health insurance coverage to include the entire time you are in the U.S., even during school breaks. If you have even a one day lapse of coverage, illnesses or injuries that occur or occurred before could be not covered by your health insurance plan due to a “prior existing condition” exclusion. Do not let your health insurance expire! All continuing students are required to have health insurance at least from the start of the semester which begins on January 20, 2009 and you must submit proof of this insurance to the ISP Office. As always, if you have questions about your coverage or need assistance to extend your health insurance please see Sean.

Cash for Books - Fall Buyback Event - December 15 - 23

Be sure to bring your textbooks back to the Bookstore during finals and sell them back for up to 50% of the purchase price. Visit http://www.bkstr.com for more information about getting cash back for books.
Christmas - Thursday, December 25

The only religious holidays that is also a national holiday in the U.S. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. Many U.S. Americans of Christian faith regard this as the most important holiday of the year. Family members travel great distances to be together for this day on which gifts are exchanged and a traditional dinner is shared. It is especially exciting for children, as they are taught that Santa Claus visits their homes and gives them presents under the Christmas tree while they are sleeping. Even families who do not have strong religious convictions decorate a Christmas tree and join in the festivities of the season.

Hometown Holiday Celebration

Downtown Pleasanton
Saturday, December 6, 2008
5:30 - 7:30 pm
The parade begins at 5:30 pm marching down Main Street with floats, marching bands, community groups and more. The theme of the event is “Sights and Sounds of the Holidays”. Also at this free event, the lighting of the Christmas tree in front of the Museum on Main. Visit the website http://www.hometownholiday.com or call (925) 931-2432 for more information.

Christmas Lights Displays

Marking their 10th Anniversary, the Lights of the Valley website at http://www.lighsofthevalley.com features the best and brightest Christmas lights, decorated homes and holiday light displays in the San Francisco Bay Area, Silicon Valley, San Joaquin and Sacramento Valley areas. Now with 435 houses (126 confirmed for 2008) in 97 cities in 19 counties across Northern California.

Deacon Dave’s
352 Hillcrest Avenue, Livermore
Deacon Dave’s house is a “must see” experience. Probably the largest display in the Bay Area with more than 250,000 lights. It opens Friday, December 5 at 6:30 pm with a parade down Hillcrest Avenue, and then daily Sunday - Thursday 6 pm - 9:30 pm and Fridays and Saturdays from 6 pm - 10:30 pm. Visit the website at http://www.casadelpomba.com for more information.
Holiday Sights and Sounds Parade

Downtown Livermore
Saturday, December 6, 2008
6:00 pm
Come see the holiday parade on First Street in Livermore from M street to McLeod Street. The parade features local marching bands, music, light displays and of course, Santa Claus. A lighting of the “Bruce Spruce Tree” will follow the parade. Visit the website http://www.livermoredowntown.com/events/event_pg/holiday_parade/ for more information.

The Nutcracker - December 13 - 21

Bankhead Theater
2400 First Street, Livermore
Tickets $23 - $31
Experience the 28th annual full-length production of Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker with the Livermore - Amador Symphony. Gorgeous costumes and spectacular sets are the backdrop for the exceptional dancers as the classic story of Clara’s dream is brought to life on stage. For more information, please visit their website at http://www.valleydancetheatre.com or call (925) 373-6800.

Kristi Yamaguchi Holiday Ice Rink

Open through January 15 at the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco, experience the thrill of ice-skating outdoors under the beautifully lit skyscrapers and Bay Bridge. Hockey and Ice-skates are available for rent for $3.50 and admission allows for 90 minutes of skating. Call (415) 956-2688 for more information.
Graduating or Completing your studies at LPC this semester?

If this is your last semester at LPC, it is very important that you notify the International Student Program Office of your plans and complete our “Termination / Future Plans” form (available at http://www.laspositascollege.edu/international/f.php) to ensure that your SEVIS record is updated. Students planning on transferring to another school must also notify the ISP Office and bring us an acceptance letter from your new school to ensure that your SEVIS record is transferred in a timely manner.

Post Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

If you are going to graduate this semester, and are interested in working up to 1 year full-time in a field related to your major, please come to the ISP Office to begin your application. All F-1 students are eligible for OPT as a benefit of their F-1 status. To apply, you must complete and submit your application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services before the end of your 60 day grace period (February 23, 2009). Come to the ISP Office for more information.

Study ESL over the break

To keep up and even improve your English proficiency skills over the semester break, please check out the Las Positas College’s ESL Homepage at http://www.laspositascollege.edu/ESL/links.php for a list of great study activities.

Spring 2009 Semester Textbooks

The LPC Bookstore posts textbook information to their website at http://www.bkstr.com as soon as it is received from the instructor. You are welcome to browse this information and place orders.
December and January Birthdays

Jin Ho Hwang - December 5
Mehtap Keskin - December 5
Moulaye Cherif Keita - December 8
Paul Kimani - December 12
Alexie Oyane Bikom - December 16
Rianna Bain - December 25
Angyalka Szekely - December 26
Eun Jung Nam - December 26
Tai Duc Nguyen - December 29
Tu Ngoc Bao Tran - December 30

Changhee Kim - January 1
Vu Nguyen Nguyen - January 1
Wing Chung Leung - January 2
Ahmad Jamal - January 5
Seokju Kim - January 5
Jung Mi Lee - January 7
Saori Taira - January 8
Olivera Panic - January 8
Crisanto Mora - January 10
Sandra Vacikova - January 14
Hyun Park - January 23
Katarina Kunderlikova - January 23

Happy Birthday from the ISP!

Birthday Tradition in Germany
In Germany, children are never given homework or chores on their birthday. The tradition of children’s parties first started in Germany, Kinderfeste. A member of the birthday person’s family wakes up at sunrise and lights the candles on the birthday cake. There are as many candles as the years of the age of the birthday person plus one for good luck. The candles are left burning all day long. After dinner that night, everyone sings the birthday song and the birthday person blows out the candles. If all of the candles are blown out in one try, then the wish of the birthday person will come true. When men reach the age of 30 and they still don’t have a girlfriend, they have to sweep the stairs of the city hall. All his friends will gather and throw rubble on the stairs to make his job take longer. This way, every girl in town can see that this man is eligible.
Student Interview of the Month - Marcia Tafarel

Did you know that one of our International Students is an Internationally known athlete who has participated in 2 World Cups and 1 Olympic Games? Marcia Tafarel or “Tafa” as she is commonly known, was kind enough to share thoughts and experiences with us this month.

Marcia is from Brazil and when you think of Brazil, you can guess what sport she plays. We’ll get into that later. In addition to her native Portuguese and English, she can understand Spanish. She has been a student at LPC since the Fall semester in 2004, although she took a break from her studies in 2005 and returned to Brazil. Her major is Social Sciences but she is taking a General Education transfer program with many Physical Education courses. She plans to finish her studies here next semester (Spring 2009) and may transfer to St. Mary’s College, where she has been offered a scholarship, nearby CSU East Bay, or she may return to Brazil to resume her studies at the University of Sao Paulo.

Marcia came to the U.S. as soccer player who believed she had retired from playing. She ended up playing for the California Storm, in the Women’s Professional Soccer League (WPSL). She said that she didn’t speak any English when she first came to the U.S. She heard about LPC from her best friend and fellow star Sissi Do Amor, who began coaching the Women’s Soccer team here at LPC. Marcia had known Sissi by playing with her on the Brazilian National Soccer team and against her on club teams. Marcia was a member of the first Brazilian Women’s National Soccer team when it was formed in 1988. She remembers that it was a difficult decision for her to join the team full-time because she had just starting working. Playing at the midfield position, she participated in the 1991 World Cup in China, the 1995 World Cup in Sweden, and the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta where her team placed 4th. She has received many honors including a First Team All-American player, the first player in history of women’s intercollegiate sports at LPC to receive this award. Her All-American pin and team picture are on display in the women’s trophy case in the PE Complex.

In Building 2500.

She is proud of being a pioneer of her sport in her country. She recalls that she had to fight for the sport to grow and that initially, women’s soccer wasn’t supported by the media or even the Brazilian confederation. She began playing soccer when she was 5, playing against her brothers and neighbors in the street. There were no competitive teams organized for young girls, just for boys. She has battled this sexism her entire career and is proud that she “planted the seed” for her sport, as now, in Brazil, women can play soccer full-time without keeping another job to support them, and they enjoy the full support of the Brazilian Confederation.
After she retired, she began coaching soccer in Brazil, and coached many of the current members of the Brazilian national team. She is proud that she still stays in touch with her players and is proud that several have told her that she has not only taught them soccer skills, but been a mentor on how to conduct themselves in their lives. She said that these compliments are “better than a paycheck”.

She stays involved in soccer by volunteering to coach a local Under 9 team. Also, in her free time, she enjoys playing soccer in a co-educational league in San Ramon. She has visited many other parts of the U.S., but loves the San Francisco Bay Area. She feels the diversity is amazing here, and she meets so many Brazilians here, she sometimes forgets she’s not in Brazil. She said that she loves LPC because it of its small size, she can’t get lost and she appreciates the personal attention here. She appreciates the helpful ESL instructors that she has had here. She would like to see more sports offered here at LPC. Although she is ineligible to play collegiate soccer, she had hoped to play volleyball here. She would also like to see more cultural events and plays offered in the future.

For her future, she would like to continue coaching, and hopes to one day coach the Brazilian Women’s Soccer team or another club at a high level. Her advice for new students is to “be serious if you want better opportunities. If you want to learn ESL, you should be committed to that, and don’t just have fun.” She has learned that there is a time for fun, but also a time to work hard to achieve your goals. She is passionate about everything she does, and this led her to her success.

Spring 2009 Semester

Full-term classes begin on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. Monday, January 19 is a national holiday honoring Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday, a famous American civil rights leader. All English as a Second Language classes are Late Start Classes and will begin on Tuesday, February 3, 2009 (2 weeks after the start of full-term classes). If you have a Late Start class that meets on Mondays, your class will not begin on Monday, February 2, 2009 and will meet at the next regularly scheduled class. For further information, please see the Spring 2009 Class Schedule.

Due to our increasing enrollment at LPC, classes for the Spring semester are filling up faster than ever. Please register for your full-time (at least 12 units) course load as soon as possible to ensure that you can take the classes you wish.
Contact Us

Cindy Balero
International Student Program Coordinator
Telephone: (925) 424-1548
E-mail: cbalero@laspositascollege.edu

Sean Day
International Admissions Specialist
Telephone: (925) 424-1540
E-mail: sday@laspositascollege.edu

We're on the web
www.laspositascollege.edu/international