

AUGUST 2006 NEWSLETTER



GEARING UP FOR FALL ON THE FRONT LINES— THE STORM BEFORE THE STORM

On September 5, thousands of students, faculty and staff will converge in the cafeteria, patios, classroom corridors, and in Gorton Quad with all the intensity of a New York subway. Although classes continue year round, for many the heart of City College doesn't really start pumping until fall classes begin with a full compliment of students, services and personnel, marking the onset of another academic year. In comparison, the summer session must feel like a long awaited respite on calm waters after enduring a strenuous workout on white-water rapids—Right? WRONG. In fact, for staff working through the summer, the rapids may feel less intense but their intervals are steadily increasing.

Few departments and their staff are exempt from the pre-fall hustle, and the diligent workers in Admissions/Records and Veterans are no exception. Although online registration has reduced in-house traffic, application collection and input, distribution of appointments, and student assistance, especially via email and phones, is steadily on the rise. Admissions/Records and Veterans Supervisor Lou Humphries indicated that in the weeks just prior the fall semester, her staff will serve approximately 200 students in person each day and nearly double that number in phone and internet inquiries. But she clarified that August 28 is the big day to watch for. "That is when the flood gates open. During this time we are overwhelmed with first time students who were unable to obtain registration appointments, manually enrolling special part-time high school and joint diploma students, apprentices and other students attending special off-campus programs." Although the Admissions Office is fortunate to scan applications into an imaging system, the Records Office continues to manually process all student transcripts.

Lou further pointed to a growing trend in residency issues—the latest centered on the victims of Hurricane Katrina. "Last year

Katrina students were exempt from paying tuition, but this year no extension was granted from Sacramento. Some students have received deferments from Student Affairs and will be required to pay tuition on their own at a later date."

Historically, City College's Financial Aid serves more needy students than her sister institutions combined (based on Pell Grant recipients). In fact, well over 30 percent of City College students rely on some form of financial assistance. It is estimated that for the 06-07 academic year, our FA office will process over 9,000 BOG's, 4,000 Pells, and 800 Cal Grants. Further magnifying this year's rush are recent legislative changes that require immediate maneuvering. The student health fee policy—which now limits exemption eligibility to BOG A (TANF and SSI) students, apprentices, students taking classes located on SDSU and/or UCSD campuses, high school students meeting on high school campuses, and students depending on prayer for healing—have left 1,200 students in IOU status. FA manager Greg Sanchez indicated his staff are contacting each student by phone to alert them of the \$13 outstanding fee, as well as the \$1 Student Rep. fee. The FA office will also facilitate distribution of a new federal grant program—The Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG). Grant applicants must be screened for a laundry list of eligibility requirements, but because no computer screen has yet been developed to accept ACG data, all applications must be manually recorded. Other legislative changes, such as the State Exit Exam for high school students, coinciding with students rushing to follow up on their files and appeals, have created a bottleneck of challenges for everyone and, according to Greg, "...probably one of the busiest summers we've had in ten years."

Gail Rodriguez, who processes student deferments and emergency book loans through the Student Affairs Office can



Students line up outside the Financial Aid and EOPS offices in the A-building patio.

attest that the requests for both services are on the rise. She projected that by the end of registration the Student Affairs Office will have processed well over 400 Fall deferments, and she noted that Accounting staff have already processed 200 independently. Gail stated, "It's crazy this time of year and we could really use help. With the student health fee changes, as well as increases in non-resident students and financial aid appeals, we expect this year to be especially busy."

At the start of fall enrollment, resources and staff in Counseling and Evaluations are equally stretched to their limits. Each day, over 200 students crowd into the modest A-110 to seek counseling, receive testing appointments, challenge prerequisites, petition to retake courses, attend disqualification workshops, and to have their transcripts/courses articulated. Eric Flores, who coordinates testing and placement indicated there was once such a thing as "down time." However, between intersessions and special year-round programs such as apprenticeships and Cosmetology, testing is now an ongoing process with sessions held every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday in two computer rooms totaling 22 sessions per week. This is also the time of year when evaluators receive a multitude of "red-tag" requests to review/articulate transcripts (needed to appeal financial aid), and petitions ranging from course repetition to modification of major. In August alone, Evaluations served an estimated 900 students, totaling over 3,200 individual transactions and inquiries.

Under the pressure of increasing FTES—which translates into more students, faculty, courses, and terms—meeting everyone's needs has become a logistical challenge. With the advent of intersessions, implementation of legislative changes, the cyclic overlapping of deadlines and processes, and little budget to fill existing vacant classified positions, keeping pace these days feels more like running a race. The concept of "down time" may be real for some, but it is one condition rarely experienced by those on the front lines.

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Classified Close-up



The spotlight is on DSPS Student Services Assistant, **Darwin Browne**, who is scheduled to tour Kemer, Turkey in early October to participate in a production segment for MTV: Russia called "Rough and Ready Joint Jam." Darwin, who is a member of the hip hop dance troupe UrbanFX, said the show is a spin-off on the movie "You Got Served," which is reminiscent of the choreographed beat street, electric "boogaloo" performances that simulate opposing gangs (teams of dancers) battling it out to the bitter end. "My job is to take two [dance] teams that have won competitions in Russia, choreograph two battle segments, and teach these two groups all the right moves." He noted one of the groups will consist of teachers and students while the other group will consist of street dancers. The entire process will be televised by MTV Russia."

Darwin began his professional dancing career in 2001, approximately one year after accepting a full-time position at City College. Since then he has performed with Ashanti at the 2003 BET Music Awards, danced alongside the pop group 3LW during the BET Lady of Soul Awards, and toured with Gospel/RnB artist "Tonex." Recently, he performed as a cast member of MTV Laguna Beach.

The Classified Senate is proud to sponsor the



Annual Bake Sale

Thursday,
September 21
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Gorton Quad

All proceeds from this fundraiser will support an "adopted" family this December. Be a part of this important effort. Donate your baked goods (home-made or store-bought). Donations can be made anytime during the week of September 19-21 (morning only). Contact Susan Gregory (ext. 3520) or Susan Chandler (ext. 3386) for details.

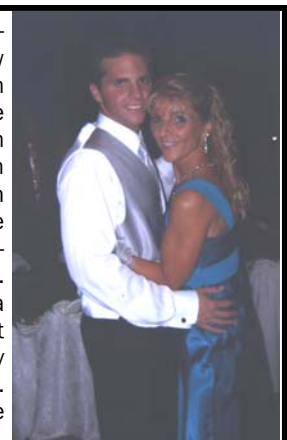


DSPS Senior Clerical Assistant, **Marilyn Douglas** has reason to celebrate. On August 3, 2006 she finally received U.S. citizenship! Marilyn, who has held her contract position since 2001, moved to the U.S. from Canada in 1998. Since then, she has been patiently awaiting citizenship eligibility. (It typically takes five-six years after issuance of a "green card" for non-citizens to receive the go-ahead to apply for U.S. citizenship). When asked how this new status will change her life she stated "I can now vote and be chosen for jury duty. Although I'm not sure if jury duty will be fun, it will sure be great to be able to vote. Also, I now can leave the country to visit my home country without having any problems at the border or airport." Congratulations, Marilyn!

Congratulations to Multimedia Center's Instructional Lab Technician **Nikko De La O**, who successfully completed a Masters Degree program in Information Systems and Management at the University of Phoenix in June of 2006. Nikko's plans include earning a teaching credential and applying his knowledge and skills in the classroom. Ultimately, he would like to work in an administrative capacity, at City College, of course. Kudos Nikko!



Senior Secretary Susan Gregory of the E-building's "Deanery" has a new daughter...*daughter-in law*, that is. On July 29, Susan's son Brandon tied the knot with long-time girlfriend Amy Brown in San Diego at Marina Village. Brandon and Amy met seven years ago as high school Sea World employees. The newlyweds are currently enjoying a three-week European honeymoon. Coincidentally, they still work at Sea World, although in management positions. Of the couple, mom says, "They share the same interests and lifestyles. They're perfect for one another and I love both of them."



Susan Gregory and son Brandon

Best wishes to all!



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