Hello, my name is Clarence, I am currently in my final semester here at Bergen. Well, I started at Bergen in the Spring semester of 2013. At this time I was told several times by the advisors that I needed to take both the Math and English placement tests. So I went to the testing center and took only the English placement test as the program I was in did not require me to take math classes. This meant that I could take the math placement test a little later as it was not an immediate requirement for me and it would give me time to study for it. I did not inform the advisors of my decision and thought that there is plenty of time for me to take it, so I do not need to panic.

After my first and second semester I got reminders from the international student center that I need to take the math placement test, but again I figured I knew best and decided to put it off for a later date. In the third semester I met up with an advisor who went over my program evaluation with me. At this point she again mentioned how important it is that the test immediately as it could delay my graduation. I promised here at this point I will take it during summer. Well summer came and went and I did not take the test.
By the start of my last semester, I finally decided to take the test. Now I just wanted to take the test to get it over with, so I skimmed through the practice accuplacer examination to help prepare you for the test. Went to write the test like a few days before testing was over, low and behold I failed the test by two points. So I figured, okay they said I can challenge the test and retake it. I did that and had to wait a day before I can take it. I was working so I put it off another day or two. The day before testing ended I retook the test, again I failed, this time by one point. I went to ask if I can re-take the test and was told no, the only way I may do it is if the math chair approved it. But that wasn’t the only problem, as the testing ended the next day and I couldn’t take the test that day as you need to wait a day before retaking a test.

What a predicament! Now I will be in my final semester and have to take and pay for a math class I do not need as part of my program, all because I didn’t take the test earlier and studied. Luckily they said that Lyndhurst campus were still doing testing for another week, so if I get permission, I can go take the test there. Immediately I head off to the math department chair. Get to her office they made me wait about 20 minutes before they told me she is in a class, and I can go wait outside the class and speak to her once she is done. So I go to the class, wait for a further 30 minutes and when I went in to speak to her, I had to plead my case, explain as to why I waited this long and say why I needed the opportunity to take the test a third time as it is not allowed. Getting her to sign off was not an easy thing, and she made sure to let me know that it won’t happen again. So my advice to you all, take your placement test as soon as possible to avoid the drama I had to go thru. Oh and I passed the third time, studied and I did pretty well.

Traveling to Ebola virus affected areas over the break?

It is highly recommended that any travel to Ebola virus affected areas should be postponed.

More information can be found at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: [http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html)
Important Message from Health Services

If it is an emergency, always go to the emergency room at the nearest hospital, but if you’re simply not feeling well, and would like to see a medical professional, the BCC Nurses’ Office suggests that you go to one of the offices with the Valley Health Medical Group. In the event that your health will prevent you from attending your classes, please contact the ISC IMMEDIATELY!

Also, if you have not submitted your Immunization Form, this needs to be given to Health Services in HS-100. Any student that needs to still get their immunization shots can visit Health Services or the ISC to get information on locations that provide these services.

Need health insurance information, please stop by the ISC.

Public Safety Announcement

Reminder: Always keep your personal belongings with you at all times. Do not leave your personal belongings unattended. In addition, the ISC recommends that you only keep copies of your passport with you when you are on campus. All original documents should be kept in a safe place.

More information from Public Safety can be found at http://www.bergen.edu/about-us/public-safety

Academic Reminders

Thinking about changing your major? — Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with their International Counselor to discuss a potential change of major. Call the office at 201.689.7601 and schedule your appointment today! Note that all requests will take place in February.

Maintain full-time load—All F-1 students are required to maintain a minimum of 12 credits unless they have received permission from the ISC counselor to go below.

Math Placement Test—Students who have completed or passed out of their ESL courses should stop by the Testing Office in S-127 to take the math placement test. IMPORTANT: Beginning Spring 2015, any student who places into remedial math will be required to register for IST-123 ‘Success 101’

ESL Update—SPE-003 has changed to SPE-100.
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Any student that is interested in working off campus needs to attend a workshop (see Workshop Schedule) on OPT. The Spring 2015 Workshop Schedule will be updated by mid-January.

Graduated this Fall 2014?
Any student that graduated this fall will have a 60 day grace period from the last day of classes (12/20/2014). The grace period gives additional time to transfer to another U.S. institution, apply for the post completion OPT benefit, or return home.

I-20 Extensions
It’s time to check your program end date on the I-20. If it’s about to expire, you need to apply for an extension. The I-20 extension packet is on the website.

Updating the ISC Office
Moving or have a new e-mail address? USCIS/DHS (United States Customs & Immigration Service/Department of Homeland Security) requires all F-1 students to notify the ISC of ANY home address changes within 10 DAYS of the move. In fact, if you have ANY contact information changes, like change of e-mail, or phone number, let us know! To notify the ISC, simply visit us in C-102, fill out the F-1 Change of Data Form, and we will change the information. This form is also available online at www.bergen.edu/isc/forms.

Traveling
Any student that will be traveling over the winter break needs to obtain a travel signature from the ISC. Please stop by the ISC.

Important News—Office of Testing Services
The Office of Testing Services will offer tests beginning January 5, 2015. Any student needing to take the math placement or challenge tests can review the schedule (www.bergen.edu/testing) and make the necessary arrangements to the appropriate test.

The ISC encourages all students to take their tests as early as possible.