SPOTLIGHT: Moving to Albuquerque

Hi, Bergen!

My name is Jiseok Jang, I came from South Korea 4 years ago. Before I start writing this, I want to say that this is a great pleasure for me to participate in this newsletter.

I had started studying at Bergen in the fall of 2010. I was in the American Language Program (ALP) for 3 semesters and after that took all the college courses I needed to graduate BCC. As the last semester’s approached, I was getting nervous and hopeless because I couldn’t decide what major I should choose. Even more, I was afraid of having to pay for two more years at another school when I transferred. One day, I found out that there was a school which had the same tuition for in-state and out-of-state students in North Dakota, and I had applied to other 4 year schools such as, CUNY, SUNY, a few others in Jersey. Finally, I got into all the schools that I applied to. One day, I stopped by the International Student Center to get some advice. Laura told me that there is a school in New Mexico which has scholarships for international students. Even though I didn’t have the perfect GPA, I was at least eligible to apply for the scholarships. I applied and finally got accepted to University of New Mexico which I am going to this fall.
Moving to Albuquerque Cont. 

When I was at BCC, I had three major concerns all the time, finding a major, getting a good GPA, and lack of funds. First of all, I wasn’t sure what to major in, I had changed majors more than three times. I wanted to major in nursing, economics, accounting, and business. Each time I applied for scholarships from University of New Mexico. We are missing a lot of chances because we don’t ask people for help. The purpose of writing this is not letting students know about the strategy of going to school, or showing myself off that I got a scholarship from University of New Mexico. I know there must be other students who have struggled at BCC for many reasons that were similar to mine. I am writing this because I if there is at least one person who reads this newsletter and get some motivation to ask for help.

One thing that I recommend to all the international students who are going to transfer, please stop by International Student Office and ask questions, as many as you want. If Laura didn’t help me out I wouldn’t have found out not only about the University of New Mexico, but also that the school had scholarships for international students. If I didn’t talk to Laura, I might be living in South Korea with my family now.

Sometimes, I do envy some of my friends who have gotten into some famous private universities; however, I don’t think that I am below them. I did my best in a situation that I was in, and was satisfied with how I turned it around. I believe that many of us are asking ourselves what we want to be when we finish college. There are not many students who do know what they want to be. We are not too late. I want to mention that we all have the same opportunities, whether we are rich or poor. We have one condition, we international students. Don’t give up what you are doing now. Keep doing the work that you do. Chances are always given to people who never give up. If you are finding it hard to live in the U.S., then ask yourself the reasons why you came here. This will make us feel better.

Thank you Bergen and all the professors I had for 4 years. I couldn’t do all the things by myself.
Spotlight 2: Get to know Mariia

My name Mariia Alibekova, I am 21 year old student from Ukraine. My journey at Bergen started in 2013 when I decided to change my career path and study science. So far, I believe this was the best choice I have made so far. I enjoy the size of the school, level of knowledge of professors and friendly environment. Also, I had the chance to become peer tutor and tutor chemistry, physics and math. I enjoy studying science and challenging myself because my main goal is lifelong learning and continuing excellence. Recently, I joined STEM and PTK clubs and I am holding an E-Board position in both of them. Also, I am a team leader for UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) project and am enjoying working with the technology. I really hope to transfer to NJIT and study Chemical Engineering program. The school is one of the best in the state. Also, it has highest starting salary versus tuition rate which makes huge difference with any other school in the states.

My hard work is paying off. Recently, I have been informed that I am one of 2014 Merit Scholars for Research and Development Council of New Jersey. I am really excited to see where my journey will take me.

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.
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Any student that is interested in working off campus needs to attend a workshop (see Workshop Schedule) on OPT.

Electronic I-94
Any student traveling recently should print out their electronic I-94.

Graduating this Summer 2014?
Any student graduating this summer will have a 60 day grace period from the last day of classes. The grace period gives additional time to transfer to another U.S. institution, apply for the post completion OPT benefit, or return home.

Travel Signatures
Any student traveling outside the U.S. and plans to return to Bergen, must obtain a travel signature from the International Counselor. Signatures are valid for one year from the date it was issued. Those traveling during Summer Break should obtain their travel signatures NOW. Bring your I-20 to the ISC and your International Counselor will sign off on it. There is no need to make an appointment.

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.

Academic Reminders

Online Courses: Students may enroll in one online (WB) course OR two hybrid (HY) courses (per semester / per 12 credits). Registering for too many “distance education” classes will result in the termination of any SEVIS record.

Math: Developmental Math courses have changed and now align with your major. There are now two different math tracks, MAT 040 for liberal arts majors and MAT 048 for science majors. For those who have YET to take the math placement test, the ISC strongly encourages you to stop by the Testing Office in S-127.

ALP Update: SPE-003 is now being awarded college level credit. This class can count towards programs that have free electives. Woohoo!

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 21689.7601 and schedule your appointment today! As the fall semester approaches, there will be limited appointments.
Weather Update: It’s Hurricane Season

No, the Scorpions are not coming to town. Hurricane season runs from June 1st to November 30th. It’s not common that the New Jersey/New York area sees hurricanes and tropical storms. If there should be any bad weather conditions heading our way, the International Student Center and Bergen Community College will keep you posted. So for now, enjoy the awesome sunny weather!

Registration Alert

♦ All students must be registered by September 2nd.
♦ Students on probation/suspension/dismissal must see the international counselor in the ISC prior to registering for classes.
♦ Any student that hasn’t taken the math placement is strongly encouraged to visit Testing in room S-127. Remember, students can challenge the exam if they want to achieve a higher score.

Graduates!

♦ Students who have completed their program this past Spring 2014 are in their 60 day grace period. Need to take action soon!
  ♦ Transfer Out
  ♦ Apply for post-OPT
♦ Summer graduates can begin the transfer out process or apply for post-OPT.

— OPT Workshops Dates —
♦ 7/11 12pm—1pm
♦ 7/15 1pm—2 pm
♦ 7/23 3 pm—4 pm
♦ 8/11 10 am—11 am

New schools that the graduates have selected are….

♦ Baruch College—CUNY*
♦ Bloomfield College*
♦ Brooklyn College—CUNY
♦ Columbia University
♦ Felician College*
♦ Hunter College—CUNY*
♦ Lehman College—CUNY
♦ Montclair State University
♦ Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing
♦ Rutgers—New Brunswick*
♦ Rutgers—Newark
♦ Stevens Institute of Technology**
♦ Stony Brook University—SUNY
♦ University of Arizona
♦ University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)
♦ University of New Mexico*+

Explanation:

* several students transferred to the school
+ a student received an academic scholarship from the school

This could be YOU soon—see your ISC counselor to find out what it takes to graduate!