Student Highlight
Humaid Almulla

"God, Nation, President" is the motto of the United Arab Emirates. If Santa Monica College student Humaid Almulla could rephrase his country's motto it would be "God, Family, Nation, President."

Humaid, who is majoring in Business Administration, explained that his brother attended SMC several years ago and told him that he could be certain of having a solid foundation of learning based on American education by studying at SMC. And you know what? My brother was right," exclaimed Humaid.

Born in Dubai, the largest city and the capital of Abu Dhabi, where the official language is Arabic, Humaid comes from a family of five brothers and one sister. "I'm the middle one and my mom is crazy about me," admits Humaid. "I really do love and miss my family, not to mention the great food my country is known for," Humaid.

This is an exciting time for Humaid since he will start making plans to transfer to CSU Northridge this semester. Humaid adds, "I say it's exciting given the fact I have the opportunity to transfer and experience a U.S. Presidential election. Stop and just think about it, when in the history of the United States has a woman and a man run against each other for the White House, not to mention an African-American male named Obama."

"I'm taking Public Speaking this semester and it really excites me to learn how to communicate in public. I've learned about developing my speaking ability and expanding my thinking as well. This election for a new American president certainly has caused me to take notice of how brilliant Obama expresses his ideas. This could very easily bring new creditability for the United States if either one of the two democratic candidates came to negotiate in my region of this global society."

Making the adjustment from Dubai to SMC was really not a big deal for Humaid, "I'm a pretty social person and have made many friends with who I enjoy spending my spare time. I enjoy listening to music and going to movies. One of the best movies I've seen recently was American Gangster. Denzel Washington is a five star actor, along with the performers Tupac and Usher. They are favorites of mine," says Humaid. "I enjoy music like Hip Hop, House and I relax to Mozart. The only real difficult time I had making the social adjustment was learning how to do things for myself. I've been blessed with the fortune of a great family where, until I came to the U.S, I really didn't understand any kind of struggles of having to do things for myself. By being here at SMC I have had to learn outside the classroom too," described Humaid.

Whether it's inside or outside the classroom, Humaid is learning more about his faith, his new family of friends, American culture, and the next president of the United States. That's a solid foundation in higher education!

By: Lynn W. Washington

SPRING BREAK IN MEXICO – “Know Before You Go!”

The U.S. Department of State issued an advisory bulletin to all U.S. citizens traveling to Mexico for Spring Break. It is a good safety practice to phone home periodically to assure family members of your safety and inform them of your whereabouts. Remember, whether you travel to Mexico by land, air, or sea, you are entering a foreign country and are subject to the laws and customs regulations of Mexico.

Please visit http://travel.state.gov for more information.

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**Policies & Regulations: Be Informed.**

A reminder to all international students, if you were present in the U.S. as an F-1 visa student for more than 30 days in 2007, you will need to file the tax form 8843 by June 15, 2008. The form 8843 should be mailed to: The Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Austin, TX 73301-0215. This form needs to be completed even if you did not work during 2007.

If you did work during 2007 and earned more than $3,400.00 you will also need to file form 1040NREZ or 1040NR. This form needs to be mailed to the Internal Revenue Service by April 15, 2008. Be sure to include form 8843 when you mail this tax form. Also, you may also be required to file the California state tax form 540NREZ or 540NR. These forms are available at the U.S. Post Office or at your local library.

**Optional Practical Training**

If you will be earning an associate of arts degree or a career certificate upon completion of the spring 2008 semester or summer 2008 session and would like to apply for optional post-completion practical training, please turn in a letter of request to Patricia Preston, Immigration Coordinator at the International Education Center. The letter should request the optional practical training, your major field of study, the type of degree or certificate you will be earning and the date of completion.

Application Deadline Dates for Optional Post-Completion Practical Training:
- Completion of Program at end of Spring 2008 - Deadline Date is May 15, 2008
- Completion of Program at end of Summer 2008 - Deadline Date is July 20, 2008

**International Student Forum**

Santa Monica College has a diverse population with just under 3,000 international students from all around the world. The International Student Forum (ISF) is at the center of such diversity. To put it simply, the ISF is a friendly club to assist international students with adjusting to a different culture, make friends, and having fun. On top of helping international students, we also hope that those students will add cultural value to the campus. Every Thursday we hold a meeting in LS 106 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. During the meeting, we prepare for weekend activities, plan for upcoming events such as club row, or college campus tours, and, most importantly, get to know more people. This semester’s weekend activities have included beach volleyball, a visit to communities in Venice, and a trip to Six Flags Magic Mountain. We are planning to visit UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and University of San Diego during a weekend this May. If you are interested in joining ISF or would like to receive e-mail notifications of planned activities, please contact us at isf.smc@gmail.com.

Keh-Kuan Sun
President, ISF

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**Important Announcements**

**Drop Deadline for Full (18-week) Semester Classes.**
Drop with a Guaranteed W: Sunday, April 6 by 10:00 pm by phone or Internet
April 6 is the last date that a student can drop a class on his/her own. After this date, only the instructor may drop a student from a class and only if the student has a C or better grade in the class AND the instructor approves of the reason for withdrawal.
BEFORE dropping a class you should come into the International Education Counseling Office and see a counselor, especially if dropping the class will leave you with fewer than 12 units.

**IEC Office Closure**
I.E.C. Office will closed Monday April 7th in observance of Cesar Chavez.

**Graduation**
Petition for graduation – April 30, 2008
Graduation Ceremony RSVP – June 2, 2008

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**Campus Events**

**Library Tips, Tricks & Techniques**
Thursday, 4/3/2008
Library
Location: Lib. 192
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

**How To Transfer To USC**
Thursday, 4/3/2008
Transfer Counseling Center
Location: Art 214
11:15 AM - 12:35 PM

**Spring Break - Campus Open (NO CLASSES)**
Monday, 4/7/2008 - Friday, 4/11/2008

**COLLEGE FAIR**
Tuesday, 4/15/2008
Transfer Counseling Center
Location: Clocktower
10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

**How To Transfer To UCLA & Other UC's**
Wednesday, 4/23/2008
Transfer Counseling Center
Location: LV 160
5:15 PM - 6:30 PM
Home Sweet Home!

-Teresa Morris

Think back - when you first arrived in Los Angeles, did the reality meet your expectations? “No!” says Kazuto Tsuchiya, an international student from Japan in his first year at SMC. “The climate is colder than I expected – I thought I’d only need t-shirts! I also did not expect to find such diversity, either at SMC or in L.A.”

In fact, it is LA’s diversity that makes this city internationally renowned as the ethnic and cultural hub of the Pacific Rim. Los Angeles County has the largest population of Pacific Islanders in the nation, as well as the world’s third largest Hispanic population. Residents from over 140 countries, speaking 96 different languages, call L.A. home. Nearly half the population was born outside of the United States, and signs in Spanish, Korean, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Armenian and Russian are as common in some areas of the city as those in English. As you walk through SMC’s campuses, pay attention – you will see this rich cultural heritage reflected in SMC’s own international constituents, with over 2,800 students from almost 100 countries populating our classrooms, the library, the cafeteria, and our open spaces.

Now, step outside of campus and into a world of your choice – will it be an exotic dim sum sampling in Chinatown, a tranquil stroll in a shuyu Japanese garden, or a Mexican Fiesta at Olvera Street? You decide! Every month we will feature a different Los Angeles area cultural center, each offering the opportunity to discover the unique tapestry of cultures that make up Los Angeles and our surrounding areas.

- Chinatown

This year the Summer Olympics will be held in China, so it might be the perfect time to explore Chinese culture and cuisine offered a little closer to home, by LA’s own Chinatown. First officially recognized in 1938, Chinatown is a center for Chinese culture in Los Angeles, boasting an incredible array of restaurants, art galleries, shops and cultural events. Hungry for some Beijing duck, Shanghai noodles, Sichuan soup or Guangdong dumplings? You might also find some Xiao Bai Cai or Tian Luo on the menu! Interested to see what you future holds? Want to know what it means to be born in the Year of the Rat or why using a fork and knife used to be considered “barbaric”? You’ll find all the answers in this colorful downtown LA area bordered by Hill Street, Bamboo Lane, Broadway and College Street.

More info: http://www.chinatownla.com/

- Getting there:

By bus:
http://www.bigbluebus.com/home/index.asp
http://www.metro.net/default.asp

By car:
http://www.mapquest.com/
http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&tab=wl

In addition to any academic questions you might have, the International Education Counseling Center is happy to help you with all non-academic matters, including housing, insurance questions, finding on-campus jobs, social security issues, banking, cell phones, utilities, drivers’ licenses, notarizing documents etc.

Feel free to visit us at 1734 Pearl Street (across the street from the Liberal Arts Building) during the following hours or call us at 310-434-4218:

- Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Fridays 8:00 am to 12:30 pm
Counseling Corner
-Gail Fukuhara

Spring is an important time for planning and preparing for your future. At Santa Monica College we are fortunate to have many colleges come to us to recruit students. Be sure to take advantage of the upcoming College Fairs and college representative visits. If you have been accepted by a university to transfer in the fall, you should attend a Congratulatory Admissions workshop to be sure that you follow the necessary steps for a successful transfer. If you do not get admitted to the college of your choice, you might want to attend one of the Appealing Admissions Decisions workshops to see if you can submit an appeal.

If you are having difficulty with a class, have questions or concerns about your academic program or just need someone to talk with, here are things you can do:

• Come in and meet with one of our counselors. Take advantage of the opportunity to make a 30-minute counseling appointment in the International Education Counseling Center.
• Get tutoring help on campus. Go to the ‘Current Students’ section of the SMC webpage for tutoring information. Tutoring is available for ESL, math, sciences, modern languages, English and humanities classes.
• Keep in touch with your instructors to know how you are doing in class. Meet them during their office hours or before/after classes for extra help and advice.
• Keep up-to-date in your classes. Attend all classes and complete all assignments and tests.
• Meet with one of our campus psychologists in the Health Center located in the Cayton Center if you are feeling homesick or overwhelmed.

Get help early if needed. Do not wait until it is too late. Counselors are available now and we look forward to meeting with you soon.

College Fairs

Spring College Fair
Tuesday, April 15  10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Clock tower area
Over 80 colleges will visit the SMC campus.
See http://www.smc.edu/collegefair/ for more information and a list of visiting colleges.

Fine Arts Fair
Thursday, May 1  10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Art Patio
Schools with fine arts programs such as art, music, theater and architecture will visit SMC
See http://www.smc.edu/artfair/ for more information.

College Representative Visits and Open Houses
Cal State Dominguez Hills Open House - Saturday, April 19  9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
For information: http://www.csudh.edu/outreach/dayatdominguez.html

CSUN International Admissions Representative – call (310) 434-4218 for an appointment
Tuesday, April 29  2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. International Education Counseling Center
Tuesday, May 6  10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. International Education Counseling Center

Counseling Appointments Available!
Beat the rush – avoid the wait! See a counselor now to plan your summer and/or fall courses. Call (310) 434-4218 or stop by at 1734 Pearl St. to make an appointment. For continuing students, appointments are available through May 12th. After that, counselors will be available to meet with students on a walk-in basis only.
Enrollment for summer and fall classes begins May 5. Enrollment dates are determined by the number of units a student has completed, plus those in progress. For details see: http://www.smc.edu/apps/pub.asp?Q=14&B=1#9