Greetings from the International Students Program!

This has been another successful and exciting year for the students of the International Student Program here at Cypress College. Our 2011-2012 newsletter, *International Focus*, highlights the success of ISP students, on and off campus activities, our updated enrollment and university transfer statistics, and articles written by our current and former students. In addition, we are featuring a spotlight on the ESL Department, and a farewell message from our President, Dr. Michael Kasler, who is retiring at the end of June 2012.

This year's newsletter would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work put into it by our graduate intern, Katharine Lampert, who spent many hours interviewing, writing, editing, and designing the newsletter.

Welcome to the 2011-2012 edition of the *International Focus* from the International Students Program at Cypress College.
International Students Program @ Cypress College

Cypress College welcomes applications for its International Students Program (ISP). One of the goals of our program is to provide positive educational opportunities for international students from around the world in an effort to promote and improve the global community.

The International Students Program office assists international students with the application and admission process, assessment testing, orientation, academic counseling, and course registration. It also provides support services to promote student success and transfers to four-year institutions.

As of Spring 2012, Cypress College has 150 international students from 25 different countries including new countries to Cypress: Canada, France, Switzerland, Spain, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Mexico.

ISP Mission Statement

The International Students Program at Cypress College strives to internationalize the campus and community by recruiting, integrating and supporting international students (F-1 visa holders) of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

ISP Hours and Contact Information

Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Location:
Student Activities Building
(714) 484-7049
international@cypresscollege.edu
Meet the ISP Staff

Yongmi Han, Manager
Before coming to Cypress College in the fall of 2005, I worked at two different English language schools from 2000-2005. Prior to that, I spent almost 5 years teaching and living in Seoul, Korea, where I became interested in working with foreign or international students.

My educational background is in biology and art history, but I enjoy working with international students here at Cypress, assisting them with their pursuit of higher education in the United States, and witnessing their successes in transferring to universities or obtaining their degrees here to enrich their professional careers back home.

In addition to overseeing the college's International Students Program, I am also involved in the campus Diversity Committee and Student Services Council. Each spring, I work with the Associated Students and student services areas in planning the World Fest & Diversity Fair, and each fall, I assist in planning the New Student Welcome Night.

Gina Marrocco, Administrative Assistant II
I attended Cypress High School and then came to Cypress College. My major was Business Administration. I worked part-time in the Business Building Computer Lab. My word processing teacher was responsible for the computer lab. I enjoyed keeping in contact with my word processing teacher and my academic counselor after graduating.

While attending college, I also worked as an Administrative Assistant at Knott’s Berry Farm. I worked at Knott’s for 17 years before coming to Cypress College in 2001. I was hired for the Administrative Assistant position in the Center for Intercultural Understanding. Our office was responsible for the Study Abroad Program, Diversity Committee and assisted with the international student orientation. This position progressed into my current position as Administrative Assistant II for the International Students Program. We had 35 international students at that time. It has been exciting to see the program grow and meet so many wonderful students from all over the world! I continue to serve as the administrative support for the Diversity Committee. In addition, I am a member of the Kindercaminata Committee.

Renay Laguana-Ferinac, Counselor
My favorite part of my job is career counseling. Each person has a special story and a unique path. My life outside of work is tremendously blessed and busy with fun activities! Married to my sweet husband, John for 12 years, we enjoy special weekends, just the 2 of us, in addition to weekends with our two wonderful children, Bella (11) and Noah (9)...camping, time with cousins, sports, and cultural events. My favorite pastimes: dancing, listening to live music, cooking, flowers and time with family and friends.

One of my favorite poems: We cannot choose how many years we will live, but we can choose how much life those years will have. We cannot control the beauty of our face, but we can control the expression on it. We cannot control life's difficult moments but we can choose to make life less difficult. We cannot control the negative atmosphere of the world, but we can control the atmosphere of our minds. Too often we try to choose and control things we cannot. Too seldom we choose to control what we can … our attitude. — John Maxwell
Student Employees Share Experiences

Khang Huynh, Vietnam
Khang will be transferring to CSUF to major in Business in Fall 2012.

Back in Spring 2011 semester, I received an email from the International Students Program (ISP) looking for two students to work in the office. I applied along with my other international student friends, who were also very good. Fortunately, all those years of computer experiences and my adequate English skills landed me in the ISP with a fancy title as the “Student Assistant”. This was my first job ever so I was nervous and excited at the same time.

Honestly, the first few weeks were terrifying for me. The job might sound simple but there are actually detailed protocols I need to follow. Thanks a lot to the initial training from both Yongmi and Gina, I have become more and more confident at the job. Being a Business major, I have absorbed many useful skills for the future, such as being organized and patient, telephone etiquette, how to communicate with customers, who are sometimes frustrated students and angry parents, planning for an event, handling multitasks, etc. I felt that I have been guided more like a student by two, kind, and dedicated teachers with their professionalism, rather than a strictly formal employer-employee relationship. Surprisingly, this job has enabled an introvert at heart like me to be more open socially. In addition, having a job and earning money on my own have made me a more mature and responsible young adult. There have been quite a few interesting moments working here at the ISP, but being able to help new students and give them my advice, like how to get the cheapest textbooks or which classes to take, is the most memorable one for me.

I truly recommend international students to apply for a job on campus. In my humble opinion, it is important to understand that work experience is undeniably to be more valuable than the money you earn while you are still in school. Lastly, I just want to wish all of you success in the career path that you have chosen!

Zarah Nulud, Philippines
Zarah will be earning her AS in Management and AS in Culinary Arts in Spring 2012.

I have been working for the ISP program as a student assistant over the course of my education at Cypress. It may appear that working as a student assistant may seem like a simple office clerical job, but there’s more to it than that. The International Student Program not only processes student applications but also assists students during their transition into college life. It is very rewarding to assist students throughout this process.

One of the important events that we organize twice a year is our new student orientation. I feel nostalgic whenever I see students come in for our orientation because it reminds me of my student orientation experience when I first started college. I can relate to the new students on how it feels to be in a foreign place and having a language barrier, which makes it difficult to adapt in a new environment. This is where the ISP plays a key role in assisting the international students with the registration process and to help them succeed in college. During our orientation we assist them with the registration process, give them campus tour and all other information that can be helpful during their stay here at Cypress College. Additionally, as part of assisting international students in their college life we organize Conversation Hour every Tuesday which is a good opportunity to meet new friends and discuss any concerns or questions they may have.

I am very grateful that I have the opportunity to work at ISP. It has allowed me to help other students that were in the same situation as myself and to share my experience with them so that hopefully they will be able to take what they have learned from the ISP and use it to help them be successful during their college venture. The ISP has helped me to grow, as there are always new things to learn every day because every student has different needs and we are here to address their concerns and help them. I also feel that the international students that come to ISP have also helped me to learn from them. Each student that comes to our office brings new ideas and challenges to our program that will also help us grow and provide a better service. Being part of the ISP as a student assistant is an experience that I will never forget. For the future student assistants, I hope that you will enjoy your employment at ISP as I did.
Farewell, Dr. Kasler: From Ukraine to Cypress

Interview with Dr. Michael Kasler (aka Mikhail Kasjanenko), Cypress College President

Interview and article by Katharine Lampert

Although Dr. Kasler’s last day as the Cypress College President is June 30, 2012, he is not anxiously counting down his final days. It is evident from speaking with him and hearing the passion behind his voice that he will truly miss the students, faculty, staff, and community of Cypress College. After serving as the Executive Vice President of Educational Programs and Support Services, Dr. Kasler became the 10th President of Cypress College in 2007.

In speaking about some of the highlights and accomplishments during his tenure as president at Cypress College, Dr. Kasler focused on creating a collegial and inclusive campus culture among the students, faculty and staff. He is also proud of the improvement seen in student success, renovation of the Library and Learning Resource Center (LLRC) and the services it offers, growth of the International Students Program (ISP), campus aesthetics, and cooperation between the faculty and staff. What has always been of the foremost importance, however, is that Cypress College remains student-centered, serving the needs and success of its students.

As an immigrant from Ukraine and an ESL learner, Dr. Kasler has always been interested in and passionate about international education and has been a supporter of the ISP. As chair of the campus Diversity Committee, Dr. Kasler is dedicated to fostering diversity, encouraging participation, and inclusiveness. With this in mind, he advises international students to take advantage of the resources on campus and to get involved in clubs and practice English as often as possible. Dr. Kasler views international students as ambassadors of their home countries to the United States and hopes that when they return home, they will share positive stories about their experiences in the US and Cypress College.

Although Dr. Kasler will soon be stepping down from his role as the college president, he has no intention of leaving the field of student affairs and higher education. He would like to teach graduate courses at local universities. He believes his knowledge and experience at the high school and college levels can be beneficial to future administrators and educators.

Final Words to Cypress College Students: Dr. Kasler attributes his success to his education and therefore strongly believes in the importance of post-secondary education. He stresses persistence and motivation over brainpower, having confidence in your abilities, never giving up on your dreams, and setting goals. “I am so proud of the work we do here at Cypress College. This is an outstanding college, with outstanding students, faculty, and staff.”

Thank you, Dr. Kasler, for your transformational leadership in serving Cypress College and its students, and we wish you good luck and all the best in your next phase in life!

His greatest strengths are his integrity and sense of fairness. He is always willing to listen to all sides of an issue. His impact on the students and staff at this campus will be long lasting. I know I won’t be the only one who will miss his presence when he retires. - Pat Humpres (Executive Assistant to Dr. Kasler)

Those who work with him have the opportunity to observe his true sense of fairness and integrity - Louella Nelson (Administrative Assistant to Dr. Kasler)

One of Mike’s strengths is his accessibility. He will often pop in one’s office unannounced, not giving one time to scurry away. Mike has his own personal mantra, “Student Success.” He can be seen among the lily pads on the pond, chanting it obsessively. - Pat Ganer (Communication Studies Faculty)

Dr. Kasler has played a pivotal role not only in my educational success but also in the success of all students at Cypress College. He has always been supportive and caring, no matter what the situation. Without his motivation I would not have been able to accomplish one of the most important things in my life, and that is graduating. - Jennifer Caspellan (Student Trustee)

Having Dr. Kasler welcome our new international students at our orientation each semester was always a highlight, and his own personal journey and success have inspired many of our students - Yongmi Han (ISP Manager)
Advice from ESL Faculty

**Kathy Llanos, M.A.**
Kathy developed a passion for teaching ESL through her travels in Central America and Thailand. She believes her 22 years of success as an ESL professor at Cypress College can be attributed to her fluency in Spanish. Kathy loves working at Cypress because of the students she gets to meet and interact with. She enjoys learning about people and their culture. 

*Advice for International Students:* Ask questions (not only in class), actively participate, take advantage of campus resources, and connect with an American buddy.

**Debra McPherson, M.A.**
After earning her Master’s degree in Linguistics (the science of language and communication), Debra spent time in France and Africa teaching language skills. With a passion for language and culture, Debra enjoys her work because she loves providing skills and seeing her students grow and obtain their goals.

*Advice for International Students:* Be patient, connect with Americans, join clubs, find a peer mentor, and find ways to interact with native English speakers.

**Alison Robertson, MTESL**
Alison discovered her passion for ESL while teaching overseas in Japan. She loves her job because she enjoys teaching and interacting with a wide variety and diverse student population. Alison finds it extremely rewarding to observe students progress throughout their educational career at Cypress.

*Advice for International Students:* Become more involved in student groups, listen to radio programs (NPR) or TV and music, ask questions, take advantage of office hours, and use the language as much as possible.

**Kathy Wada, M.A. (Department Coordinator)**
Kathy discovered her passion for ESL after spending a summer teaching English in Japan. She completed a Master’s Degree and shortly after began teaching at Cypress. She loves teaching and treasures the “Aha!” moment when students realize they have become better readers and writers. Kathy also shared several success stories of her students who transferred after Cypress.

*Advice for International Students:* Seek out supportive relationships with a few good people while getting used to living in the US. Being homesick and lonely makes it really hard to study for college courses!
New Student Perspectives

Bertha Garcia-Munoz (Mexico)

In my life, I have experienced many interesting and risky situations, and being an international student adds one more to the most interesting experiences. To begin with, the fact that I am completing my education in a different country and at a later time in my life can be confusing and stressful. Cypress College, and specifically the International Students Program, has been helpful. I felt very minimal stress with the change. Regardless of my age they understand my goals and have provided me with assistance to pursue them.

In addition, I have found support not only within my family but also inside the campus itself. Cypress College has a nice learning support center that offers extra workshops designed to help students in the English as a Second Language (ESL) area. I have taken advantage of these sessions as well as extra instruction offered by my teachers in their office hours; both tools have been essential to maintain or improve my grades.

I strongly believe in family life. My family, my inspiration and my motivation are the basic tools I use to succeed in this new environment. A hard working husband and three growing bright children are my motivation to fulfill my education and career goals. My husband and I are considering college education for all three of our children, and I am planning to reach the goal by completing my education and a degree.

Bertha plans to complete her general education at Cypress College and to transfer to California State University, Fullerton or University of California, Irvine and major in Engineering.

Alice Chen (Taiwan)

I came to the USA in January 2012. When I was in my home country, I always wanted to study abroad to learn English. I thought that if I were surrounded by people who speak English, I could learn the language more efficiently and also I could experience a different culture. But the thing that had discouraged me was the high tuition fees of universities in America. It’s much higher than the university fees in my home country. Then, I applied to Cypress College because it is near the house of my mom’s friends.

The land here is so large that people drive cars to everywhere. As a result, when I first came here, I felt so lonely for not seeing anyone walking on the street. I am not even sure if anyone lives in the house near mine. Also, it is inconvenient not having a car. As an international student, it’s much harder for me to register for classes by myself. Fortunately, the International Student Program staff can help me step by step. Whenever there is an event at school, they email students to remind us. Moreover, Puente Program and ISP held a 3-day trip in February taking us to five universities, which makes me really think about what university I want to transfer to. People from the church I go to also help me to find a place to live, open a bank account, and take me to buy things I need.

Now, I am getting used to the life here. Although I still miss the food in my home country, I like to try different kinds of foods in America. In the future, I want to transfer to a UC school. With a lot of help here, I think I can do it.

Alice plans to major in Business.
International Student Peer Mentor Program

The ISP Peer Mentor Program provides incoming international students with personalized support through regular contact with their mentors. The goal of the program is to help students better adjust to the campus community, the United States, and enhance their college experience through interaction with continuing international students.

Mentor: Ji Yeong Karen Kwon
South Korea
Karen plans to transfer to CSUF Fall 2012 and major in economics.

Why did you decide to be a mentor? I was inspired by previous mentors reserving part of their busy time to help the new students to feel comfortable. As an international student, I knew how busy they must have been just to adapt to the new environment and culture and to keep up with the school work. I also wanted to help others and keep this beautiful and healthy tradition going.

What skills/knowledge do you posses to be an effective mentor? I’m familiar with the resources and opportunities that Cypress College and our ISP offer since it was my third semester that I started Peer Mentor Program. I can empathize with other students who are going through tough times because I already did and still am going through the same experiences. And having a competent academic ability in my major subject to help the mentees was a plus, too.

What is your favorite memory of you mentor/mentee experience? I had the opportunity to explore UCs and CSUs this previous month with other ISP students and Puente Program students. It was so amazing to see how their eyes and mine were sparkling, being able to see our academic goals more clearly.

What advice can you give to your mentee or new international students? Seek and ask for help. With ISP manager and counselor and other experienced students’ help, you can enjoy being a student here as you strive for your goal.

Any recommendations to improve the peer mentor program? I think it is a good idea to arrange ISP activities more often so that the students can bond as they spend time together.

Mentee: Sohyeon An
South Korea
So Hyun plans to major in Civil Engineering.

Why did you decide to join the Peer Mentor Program? The ISP staff encouraged me to join during our orientation.

What is the most difficult thing you experienced during your first semester? How did your mentor help you through this? The language barrier made classes hard because I could not understand the things in the textbook. However, my mentor helped me understand and explain what I did not understand.

Would you recommend other new students to join the peer mentor program? Yes. I think it is a great way to meet new students and get the help you need to pass your classes. Especially for international students who don’t have English as their first language, this program allows people like me to understand and do better.

What is your best memory of you and your mentor? We went on a UC trip together.

What is the best advice you gained from your mentor? She told me confidence is key to success and learning.
### 2010-2011 TRANSFERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>MAJOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hyun Joo Cha</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>East Asian Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Chiem</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>CSULB</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Sang Cho</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anh Dinh</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>CSUF</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Tu Dinh</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nham Dinh</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Drexel University, PA</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Hoang</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Laguna College of Art &amp; Design</td>
<td>Graphic Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ye Eun Hong</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>CSULB</td>
<td>Child Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Young Ji</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyungmi Lim</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>UCI</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ailun Lin</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>CSULB</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayoung Namgung</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Moore College of Art &amp; Design, PA</td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc Nguyen</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Caltech</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngoc Nguyen</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Cal Poly SLO</td>
<td>Animal Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phuong Nguyen</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Cal Poly Pomona</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuy Nguyen</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dao Pham</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>CSUF</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchu Song</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>CSULB</td>
<td>Illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram Ta</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>CSULB</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dung Thai</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>UCI</td>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nhi Thai</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>UCI</td>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khoi Tran</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Drexel University, PA</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam Troung</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>CSULB</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yejee Won</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunghoon You</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of semesters at Cypress prior to transferring! 5
At the end of each spring semester, a number of international students transfer to 4-year universities such as Cal State Fullerton, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Los Angeles, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UC Los Angeles, UC San Diego, Chapman University and USC. To encourage international students to pursue transfer programs at Cypress College and to increase the number of students who transfer to 4-year universities, the Office of International Students Program (ISP) has been awarding scholarships since 2007.

### Scholarship Application Criteria

- Your overall GPA at Cypress College must be 3.0 or higher
- Complete an ISP Scholarship Application for University Transfers
- Submit your acceptance letter from the university you are transferring to
- Submit an essay of 500 words describing your future educational and professional goals and your extracurricular activities at Cypress College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>Yiching Cheng, Taiwan</td>
<td>University of Texas of Austin</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>Young Jin Kim, South Korea</td>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>Chi Vo, Vietnam</td>
<td>UCI</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Heng Sok, Cambodia</td>
<td>Chapman University</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Khoi Tran, Vietnam</td>
<td>Drexel University</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Joao Barao Neto
Country: Brazil
Attended Cypress Fall 2008 to Spring 2010
Major: Music and Business

Joao is currently living in Santa Monica, but constantly travels to New York City for music projects. He has been busy writing songs for various record labels and film studios. In his free time, Joao is trying to get his own original project, an alternative rock band, Caravan, off the ground. Recently Joao had his first big achievement: American Idol Season 10 finalist, James Durbin, recorded one of his songs “Deeper”. The album is titled “Memories of a Beautiful Disaster” (Wind-Up Records) and it debuted #8 on the Billboard Rock Charts and #28 on the Hot 200.

**Deeper**
I lost myself again
Like the dead of the night, the dead of the night
I’m on a chase of fate as the world rushes by
I’m bound to collide
And now I won’t wait to walk away
My last mistake
Every time I go under I’m running from this
And I try so hard
But I can’t wake up
I’m speeding up the meter and the sirens echo on
And it’s all too wrong
But I can’t let go
I’m falling ever deeper, but it’s better than before

I found myself again
With the dead of the night, the dead of the night
It takes me to a place
That I wish I could find a way out of my mind
Too much to think
Too late to stay
I try to break
But again and again I am calling for help

It hurts to go
So what do you need?
So what do you need?
To see me walk right out the door
I’m on my way
Help!
Hi everybody. We are Khoi Tran and Nham Dinh, and we are two alumni of Cypress College who transferred out after spring 2011. As we said goodbye to Cypress, we left California behind as well. Our new destination was Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and our move has truly changed our lives. Living on one’s own was not an easy thing at first, especially being college students. In California, we both lived with our relatives, but here we knew nobody at first and didn’t have a single friend. Someone said that life begins at the end of your comfort zone. It’s true. Now we started to see the difficult side of life. At the same time, we have learned a lot since moving from California.

Going to school at Drexel University has been a great experience. The student population here is much larger and more diverse compared to Cypress, thus we had a chance to make friends with many people from different cultural backgrounds. We also participate in the Vietnamese Students Association which holds endless activities: Tet gathering, Cultural Show, Northeast Union of Vietnamese Student Association Conference, and many volunteer events. In addition, we have access to the professional workshops hosted by the school. Drexel University is well-known for its Co-Op program, which allows students to gain some real working experience while still in college. Therefore, it provides many opportunities for students to meet with the recruiters from companies and businesses and to network, which is going to be a big plus when we have to start looking for a job.

Although we like our new school and the new experiences we are having, we always miss California. Everybody we meet asks us why we left such an ideal place. However, we do not regret our decision to move to Philadelphia. It was worthwhile taking the chance to learn new things and make new friends. The best thing is that we transferred to the same school and moved together. Living as roommates helped us overcome difficulties and not feeling so isolated during the first days here. So, our advice to you is to not be afraid of opportunities that could change your life in a tremendous way. Life can present you with great experiences you never dream of, so pick a good companion, have your mind set on what you want to do, what you want to accomplish in life, and then get going!
Optional Practical Training

OPT is designed for International Students who have completed their degrees and are given an opportunity to work in the US to get practical training to their related field of study.

Tram Phan (Vietnam) earned her AA degree in Accounting in Spring 2011, and moved to Maryland to begin her OPT in the summer.

The weather in Maryland this year is quite different from the years in the past, people tell me. Even though it’s winter time right now, I don't see much snow. It has been 7 months since I moved to Maryland, and even though I think I am getting used to living here, I still miss California.

At work, I have many chances to meet people and also have learned a lot from them. I like my job because I can deal directly with customers and have more chances to practice English. My job is interesting. I know how to manage and schedule appointments, answer phones more fluently, count the inventory and keep track of cash and credit card payments. But the thing I love the most about my job is that I am able to apply all the things I learned from the accounting classes I took at Cypress College to my job. Now I finally recognize that all those courses are really helpful. I even know how to support the customers confidently and I feel like my English is improving every day.

In summary, I like my life in Maryland because I am getting more experiences from my work and have many opportunities to improve my language skills. The downside is that it is really cold here and I don't like that. I really miss the weather in CA and all my friends there. I still have 4 more months left working here and until I can go back to school and I can't wait for that time to come. While I enjoy working and having new experiences, I really miss school now.

The OPT Program allowed me the opportunity to work in the Hospitality field. As a result it allowed me to be exposed to different aspects of working in the food service business. I was given the opportunity to work as a food service staff for Sodexho at Disneyland, which caters to the Disneyland cast members. The OPT opportunity allowed me to utilize the skills that I learned in class and apply them to the daily operational routine at Sodexho. Through these hands-on experiences, I realized that the food service industry has many facets that include production, staffing, and managing. Also, I realized how important it is to work as a team to meet the daily demands and be successful in providing good services as well.

I was very fortunate to have worked with a supervisor who was very supportive. She gave me the chance to experience all the areas in the food service such as line service, working at the front and back of the house and with the baking production team. I appreciated being allowed to work with the production team as baking is one of the areas that I enjoy the most in the food service business. Aside from the work experience, the OPT program gave me the chance to widen my network and meet new friends.

Zarah Nulud (Philippines) is completing two AS degrees in Management and Culinary Arts in Spring 2012.
Touring the University of California Campuses

In February 2012, ISP and Puente Program students toured UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Cruz, UC Berkeley, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for a weekend trip. Students had an opportunity to tour each campus to help determine their transfer plans and prepare for life after Cypress College.

“My favorite campus is UC Santa Cruz because they offer my field of study (Bioengineering) and the university has a very unique campus with many trees, fresh air, and a view of the ocean.”
- Vi Pham, Vietnam

“The trip gave me a lot to think about transferring to these schools. I’m interested in UCLA and UCSB and want to start focusing on meeting their admission requirements.”
- Tri Pham, Vietnam

“My favorite campus is Berkeley. I like the old buildings and its close location to San Francisco.”
- Duy Nguyen, Vietnam, Business
Message from Katharine Lampert

As a former Cypress College student, I am so happy to come back as a graduate intern for the International Students Program. My educational journey began at Cypress and because of my positive experience with the college, faculty and staff, I have decided to pursue my degree in student affairs. I hold a specific interest in International Education because of my passion for traveling and learning about new cultures, and my own ethnic background.

I would like to thank the entire ISP staff for welcoming and supporting me through this learning experience. I also want to thank the International Students themselves for sharing their stories with me.

GO CHARGERS!

Katharine Lampert
M.S. Counseling, Student Development in Higher Education
California State University, Long Beach

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”
-Eleanor Roosevelt

North Orange County Community College District

Board of Trustees:

Jeffrey. P. Brown
Molly McClanahan
Barbara Dunsheath
Leonard Lahtinen
Michael Matsuda
Donna Miller
M. Tony Ontiveros

Jennifer Caspellan, Student Trustee, Cypress College
Chris Sanchez, Student Trustee, Fullerton College

Ned Doffoney, Ed.D., Chancellor
Michael Kasler, Ed.D., President, Cypress College