



# 33° Latitude

## International Students Community Newsletter

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Fall 2003



### Official Welcome

*Janie Olcott,*  
*Director of International Education*

All of us in the International Student Services Office (ISSO) welcome new students to Pima Community College! We're so very glad you've chosen our college as the place to begin your educational journey in the United States! You have already accomplished many things just to arrive in Tucson. We congratulate you on this. Obtaining your student visa, making your travel arrangements, organizing your personal, family and financial affairs to

study abroad all take courageous risks. You have already demonstrated that you are on the road to personal success! I remind you that one of the ways to make America feel more like home while you are here is to ask questions. That's where the ISSO can be the most helpful. We are more than just the place to find out what classes to take or what immigration rules you need to follow. We're your newest best friends! Feel free to ask us any question that is on your mind as you settle

into your new home. In fact, we hope you will think of the ISSO as a second home, a place to rest, relax and laugh with good friends, a safe oasis to seek advice and counsel, a quick stop in between classes to catch up on news or check your e-mail. This newsletter is yours. ISSO staff will start it but we invite all

*...one of the ways to make America feel more like home while you are here is to ask questions.*

of you to contribute to it and shape the kinds of news stories and items you most wish to see. We invite you to join in on the fun of actively sharing ideas and stories as

part of the 33° *Latitude*. See you around!  
Janie

### Your New SEVIS I-20

*Maria Tecson*

SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is an internet-based system that allows Pima Community College, the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Service (BCIS) and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) to exchange data on the visa status of international students. Accurate and current information is transmitted electronically throughout an F-1 student's academic career in the United States. United States embassies and consulates also have access to SEVIS. The requirement that schools provide the federal

government with information about each student's status is not new. The INS has required most of the information that will be reported to SEVIS for many years. But the existing paper-based system precluded widespread coordination among schools and governmental agencies. In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) directing the INS to move to an electronic data collection system. This program would come to be known as SEVIS. Technical challenges and lack of funding delayed the program for several years. However, in

October 2001, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act that authorized additional SEVIS funding and required nationwide compliance by January 30, 2003. Data moves faster through an electronic system than through a paper system. Students can expect that INS forms will be produced faster, applications for benefits such as Practical Training will be approved more quickly, and visas will be granted without long delays. All new and continuing F-1 students must have a SEVIS generated I-20 by August 1, 2003. For more information contact the ISSO at 206-6732.

#### Favorite Day Trip:

- *San Xavier del Bac was constructed by Franciscan monks and the local Native Americans called Tohono O'odam in 1783. The church has gone through many states of decay and rebirth. Today the church stands as a bridge between the past and the present.*
- *How to get there: Go to I-10 and I-19 intersection. Head south on I-19. Exit San Xavier Mission. Phone: 294-2624*

#### Web Links:

- [www.immigration.gov](http://www.immigration.gov)
- [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org)
- [www.emol.org/tucson/sanxavier](http://www.emol.org/tucson/sanxavier)
- [www.pima.edu/~ptk/index.html](http://www.pima.edu/~ptk/index.html)



## Student Focus - Margaret Rweikiza

I cannot believe that I have finished my second semester at Pima Community College (PCC). I clearly remember the night I arrived at the Tucson Airport and met my American host. I had never been so fatigued in travel as I had been that night. But this was no surprise as it literally took me four days (instead of two) to arrive in Tucson, Arizona.

The very first day I arrived at PCC (West Campus), I got such a wonderful welcome from the ISSO staff. The first question from one of the staff truly revealed the genuine concern the staff had on international student issues. It was: "Did the immigration officers treat you okay?" It was easy for me to smoothly communicate with the ISSO staff due to their friendliness. They were not only reliable academic helpers, but also the very first friends I met in this new environment.

The first month and a half was quite exciting and adventurous. The summer heat, monsoon rains, getting acquainted with directions and bus routes, getting lost, and meeting "weird" people... all this, though frightening at times, came to me as a positive experience. However, after two months, the party was

over. I suddenly was confronted with homesickness, loneliness and other emotional issues.

It seemed so odd that I felt that way for I already had come to know many other students at the campus. Yet, despite the many acquaintances, I felt more isolated and "foreign". Life seemed artificial for I couldn't find a relation that genuinely linked who I was to my new society. I remember sitting at the cafeteria and wondering what on earth made me decide to come to America. I was in tears as I thought what could have gone into my head to sacrifice the life back home, my good old friends, and all that was so "normal" to me just to get a degree at PCC. I no longer had the confidence that I could make it to the end of the coming two years. As I sat there trying to hide my tears, another international student joined my table. She could see that something was wrong. But it was amazing to find out that she was going through the same emotional stage. We talked for a small while and at the end of the conversation I could see that I was not alone in the struggle with change. I had the opportunity to re-evaluate the significance of my time at PCC with



what I wanted to achieve in life. This significance still upholds me even today. There are very good counselors and advisors at PCC. One may be surprised at how much they actually do understand concerning the many issues of international students, not only academically, but also socially and culturally. And even when they cannot help you directly, they will hook you up with someone from your country!

So, however confident you may be, never underestimate the services you can receive from your ISSO staff.

My journey is not yet finished, and I may still encounter a lot along the way but I know that my determination, the support of other international students and that of the ISSO staff will help me through it all.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### About Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society of the Two-Year College

*Dr. Candido Mercado*

**Q. What are the membership benefits?**

A. More than \$32 million in transfer scholarships designated specifically for Phi Theta Kappa members only, by some 550 senior colleges and universities in 46 states, such as the Guistwhite Scholarships of \$5,000 each, or Guistwhite finalist Awards of \$1,000 each and Leaders of Promise Scholarships of \$ 500 each to name a few.

Members are automatically nominated for the National Dean's List, a directory of college and university honor students. Those who complete the Dean's List biographical forms become eligible for scholarship awards of \$ 250 each, presented annually to 30 Society members. At graduation ceremonies members wear

Society regalia including the gold monogrammed honors stole and gold mortarboard tassel. A gold diploma seal denoting membership affixed to the college diploma. Their membership noted on all official transcripts.

P T K makes available opportunities for scholarship, leadership development, and contribution through service. Financial awards are presented to members for academic achievement, including the Citation Award of \$1,000, presented for the best overall submission to Nota Bene, the Society's internationally distributed literary anthology and \$500 to four runners-up.

**Q. How does a student become member?**

A. The candidate must have cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher on a 12 credit hours of associate degree course work.

**Q. Are part-time students eligible?**

A. Yes. According to the International Constitution and Bylaws, part-time students may be eligible if they have accumulated the numbers of hours over two or more academic terms used by the college to designate full-time status (usually 12 credit hours on a semester system).

**Q. Are international students eligible for membership?**

A. Yes, international students attending college on a U.S. student visa are eligible for membership.



# August 2003

# September 2003

## Schedule of Events/Important Dates to Remember

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7-Fall payment deadline	8	9
10	11	12-New Int'l Student Orientation	13	14	15	16
17	18-All College Day (College Closed)	19 O-Bon Festival	20	21	22	23
24	25 -Fall Classes Begin	26	27	28	29	30
31 Philippines National Heroes Day						

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1-Labor Day (College Closed)	2	3	4	5	6
7	8-Drop/ Refund Deadline (16wk classes)	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Acorn Festival (Native American)	16 Mexican Inde- pendence	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Autumn Equinox	24- Korean Thanks- giving	25	26	27
28 Confucius' Birthday	29	30				

- **August 7 - Fall 2003 Tuition/Fee deadline.**
- **August 12 - New International Student Orientation - West Campus Cholla Room 9:30 am. - 1:00 pm**
- **August 18 - All College "In-Service" Day College Closed**
- **August 25 - Fall Classes Begin**
- **September 1 - Labor Day - College Closed**
- **September 8 - Drop/Refund Deadline (for 16 week courses)**
- **September 8 - Health Insurance Fee - Refund Deadline**

## About Tucson

*Eric Rook*

Welcome to Tucson. Now that you have felt the heat, what else is there to know about this city? Is there anything to do here besides sweat and seek out the shelter of an air conditioned movie house or a swimming pool? When the sun shines for 350 day a year, what do the locals know that keeps them here through these long summer days? Let us see if we can shed any light on these topics for you. People have been living in the Tucson valley for over 1800 years. The city of Tucson was officially founded in 1785.

The name comes from the Native American words *took shun*, meaning "water at the base of the black mountain". The black mountain is Sentinel Peak, or better known as "A" Mountain and the water was in the Santa Cruz riverbed. One hundred years ago, water use to flow in the Santa Cruz nearly year round. It was this water that allowed the Native Americans to populate the Tucson area, plant crops and raise livestock. Tucsonans find a reprieve from the desert sun in many ways. Mt. Lemmon, in the Santa Catalina Mountains use to offer the

relief, but due to a devastating forest fire this summer, the mountain has been closed until September. So where to now? Well, there is Madera Canyon to the south that can be cooler by 15 degrees. There are many hiking trails that lead through the high desert oak and pine forests. The small town of Bisbee allows you to walk around in an old southwest mining community located in the Mule Mountains. Many of the buildings maintain the look and feel of the early 1900's. And when we really need to escape, San Diego is only six hours away.

## International Student Club

*Beatriz Padgett and Dr. Candido Mercado*

The purpose of the International Student Club is to serve the specific needs of international students at Pima Community College as well as organize activities to increase the international awareness of the student and surrounding community population. Participating in the club gives you the opportunity to qualify for membership in community college awards such as The

Dean's List and Who's Who in Community Colleges. Board members acquire leadership skills that could be applied in future careers and/or graduate studies. The International Student Club board will meet soon to determine the club's mission and objectives. We welcome your ideas and suggestions. The meetings are usually held at West Campus at the Student Government/ Clubs Room, east of the cafeteria. This

fall the club will meet every other Tuesday from 12:00pm to 1:00pm

- Our new board members are:**  
**President: Margaret Rweikiza (Tanzania)**  
**Vice President: Beatrice Fankem (Cameroon)**  
**Secretary: Melinda Lovelett (U.S.)**  
**Treasurer: Orlando Ruiz (Mexico)**  
**Public Relations: Eduardo Campoy (Mexico)**

# Pima Community College

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*"Successful Journeys Begin Here"*

*We're on the  
Web:  
[www.pima.edu](http://www.pima.edu)*

*For article contributions and  
suggestions, please e-mail them to:  
[Maria.Tecson@pima.edu](mailto:Maria.Tecson@pima.edu)*

Pima Community College is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and educational institution committed to excellence through diversity. Reasonable accommodations, including materials in an alternative format, will be made for individuals with disabilities when a minimum of five working days advance notice is given. For the general public, please contact the PCC information line at 206-4500 (TTY 206-4530); for PCC students, please contact the appropriate campus Disabled Student Resources Office.

## Today's Recipe

### **Simple Couscous - Maria Tecson**

Couscous (KOOS-koos) -[North African Food](#) is granular semolina (a coarse wheat often used to make pasta), which has been moistened with water, lightly covered in flour, and rolled into tiny beadlike pellets.

**1 cup couscous**

**2 Roma Tomatoes diced**

**2-3 scallions chopped (or you may use medium onion chopped)**

**1/2 tablespoon olive oil**

**2 cloves garlic minced**

**Salt (optional)**

**Lemon**

(Serves 4-6 and only takes 15 minutes!)

1. Prepare the couscous. Bring 1.5 cups of water to a boil. Turn off heat. Add dry couscous and let stand until water is absorbed. Put aside.
2. Heat Olive oil in a small pan to medium heat.
3. Add garlic, scallions and tomatoes.
4. Sauté in pan for 3 min.
5. Fluff couscous with a fork while adding salt and lemon to your taste.
6. Mix sautéed tomato mixture together with couscous.
7. Serve with pita bread.

You may find all ingredients at Trader Joe's or any supermarket.

## That American Social Security Number...

*Janie Olcott*

As an international student, you are eligible to apply for a Social Security number only for employment purposes. Since you are allowed to work in America only under college and federal government guidelines, you may not have a Social Security for quite some time. As you select your apartment, open your bank account or obtain an Arizona driver's license, many of these places may ask you for your Social Security number. Simply tell them that as an international student, you are not currently eligible to have one or contact the ISSO and we will give you a letter verifying your status as a Pima Community College student. All of these agencies have the capacity to assign you a different identifying number.

