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Japanese Students Spend School Year at DVC and LMC



Shimonoseki students Visit District Office : L-R: Chancellor Helen Benjamin, Kaori Okuda (LMC), Manami Takano (LMC), Tomoko Ozawa (DVC), Atsuko Osoegawa (DVC), Vice Chancellor, Districtwide Planning and Educational Services' Deborah Blue, and International Education/Study Abroad Program Assistant Harue Takanashi.

Four students from Shimonoseki, Japan, are spending the school year taking courses at Diablo Valley College (DVC) and Los Medanos College (LMC), as part of a sister-city exchange program between the District and Shimonoseki City University. The program is designed to improve the students' skills in spoken English and give them the opportunity to learn first-hand about American lifestyles and culture.

Shimonoseki and Pittsburg became sister cities in 1998, and the first study exchange was conducted in 2006 when two students from Shimonoseki came to LMC to attend classes for a year.

"In October, 2009, we will send the first two students to spend a year at Shimonoseki City University," says

Harue Takanashi, program assistant for the International Education/Study Abroad program.

Shimonoseki student Manami Takano, is living with Robyn Morgan and her family in Antioch as she attends classes at LMC. Morgan signed up to host a student after reading about the need for host families in a local newspaper.

“We hosted another student from Shimonoseki last year and had a great experience,” Morgan says. “I recently returned from a trip to South Africa and it gave me a newfound respect for these students and how hard it is to travel to a country where you don’t speak the native language fluently.”

Although English is taught in Japanese schools, Takano says classes emphasize how to read and write the language, rather than how to speak it.

“Learning to speak English, and listen to others speak it is very different than what we learned in Japan,” says Takano who hopes to someday work in the immigration field. “It was hard at first, but I’m enjoying my classes at LMC, and have met many local students and also some from countries including Korea and Mexico.”

Aleks Ilich, the District’s International Education director, says that Shimonoseki City University also has sister cities in Korea, China, Australia, and Turkey, but the exchange program with our District is the largest in terms of scope and student length of stay.

Shimonoseki student Atsuko Osoegawa is currently taking three classes at DVC and says the classes are more interesting than those offered in Japan. Osoegawa plans to major in business and would like to get work in an international job, perhaps for a trading company.

For Tomoko Ozawa, this school year marks her second visit to the United States. She is planning to major in either Economics or Accounting.

“Studying at DVC is really fun,” Ozawa says. “I’ve met a lot of people in my classes and the Study Abroad office has been very helpful.”

Yukari Okuda is currently taking three classes at LMC and appreciates the smaller class sizes.

“All classes at LMC have about 40 students but in Japan, many of our classes have over 100 students,” says Okuda who admits to being a tad homesick. “I really like the United States and am enjoying the experience but I also miss my family and friends in Japan.”

FYI: President Clinton in 1999 declared the third week in November as International Education Week.

District Van Gets Wrapped Up



Don't be startled if you see this colorful van pulling up beside you. It's only David Harris, driving the District van around the county making his normal deliveries. But as you can see, the van has now been outfitted with graphics that include the 60th anniversary logo with our new .edu website address, and our college logos.

PG&E Rebate Check Presentation



Accepting the ceremonial \$7.9 million rebate check on behalf of the District are (L to R): Governing Board members Tomi Van de Brooke and Dr. Anthony Gordon. Also pictured are Lt. Governor John Garamendi, PG&E's Brad Whitcomb, and Measure A/A+ Bond Citizens' Oversight Committee representative Jack Weir.

Lt. Governor Garamendi commends the District for making solar power a priority and setting an example for residents, businesses, and other colleges around the state of California.

At a November 7, 2008 press conference held at DVC, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) presented the District with a \$7.9 million rebate check for solar panels installed at three different colleges. Funds for this project came from the voter-approved 2006 bond measure, and the rebates will help fund other District capital projects.

The Contra Costa Community College District, founded in 1948 and governed by a publically elected five-member board, is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. The mission of the District is to transform and enhance the lives of students, and through them, the communities served.

“The Contra Costa Community College District is visionary in its efforts toward energy efficiency and renewable resources,” said Brad Whitcomb, PG&E vice president of Marketing and Customer Innovation. “We are proud to help the District as they show true environmental leadership, demonstrating to students and communities of the East Bay that solar power is achievable.”

Representing the District at the event was Los Medanos College president Peter Garcia, who thanked PG&E for their partnership in completing the largest solar installation generation at an institution of higher learning in the country. He also recognized the work of the Measure A/A+ Bond Citizens’ Oversight Committee by saying “their work and commitment reassures the community that we are good stewards of these public funds.”

New Employees

Please welcome the following new employees who were approved by the Governing Board in November.

CLASSIFIED

Location	Name	Title
Diablo Valley College	Coleen Geoffray-Lento	College Human Resources Assistant
	David Reyes	Financial Aid Assistant I
District Office	Kenneth Blaney	Senior Applications Support Analyst
	Marcie Kapell	District Accounting Specialist
Los Medanos College	Constance Tolleson	Administrative Assistant

DVC Financial Aid Program Earns Recognition

Educators are taking enormous initiative to improve college access and success, according to a recent report released by the Campaign for College Opportunity which highlights fifteen ‘Practices with Promise.’ The DVC Financial Aid Student PLAN Program is one of the fifteen programs from around the state that the report recognized.

PLAN stands for Progress, Learning, and Nurturing – which is what the program’s leaders believe highlights their goals. Adequate financial aid is one of the key factors that allow students to remain in school.

The Student PLAN Program identifies students who are at risk of facing financial aid probation and suspension or of reaching the maximum units allowed for financial aid in their program of study. DVC conducts workshops throughout the semester,

maintains regular contact with students, helps them develop action plans, and connects them with campus resources. Staff provides ongoing follow up with students to help ensure financial aid is maintained.

This type of intervention program, according to report authors, deserves recognition because it shows precisely the kind of creativity in dealing with practical tools and support services that students need in order to stay in school. Community colleges in California have a high dropout rate – approximately 2 of every 3 students never complete their intended program of study.

“It is exciting to see the degree to which educators are breaking down barriers to increase access to college for Californians,” according to Michele Siqueiros, executive director of the Campaign for College Opportunity (CCO). “What all of these programs have in common is they simplify the process of going to college, they forge connections between high schools, community colleges, and universities, and they clear a path for student success in the workforce.”

The CCO is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization solely devoted to ensuring that the next generation of college-age students in California has the chance to go to college as promised by the state 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education.

The co-founders of the CCO are the California Business Roundtable, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Community College League of California.

Visit their website at www.collegecampaign.org for the full report of all 15 programs that were honored.

November 2008 Board Report

To review the highlights of the November 18, 2008 Governing Board meeting, click on the link below:

<http://www.4cd.net/publications/BoardReport0809.asp>

The November 2008 Cabinet Highlights will be combined with next month’s report.

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E-mail topic suggestions for *The News* to Suzanne Fox at sfox@4cd.edu.