

International Connection

August/September 2008, Volume XXV, No. 1

Welcome to USC!

by Tony Tambascia, Executive Director and Assistant Dean of Students



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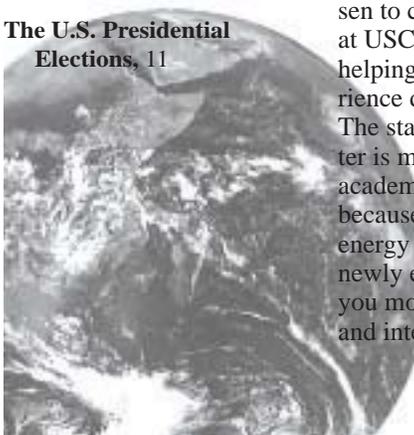
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On behalf of the entire staff of the Office of International Services (OIS), it is my pleasure to welcome all new students to the University of Southern California! We are so pleased that you have chosen to continue your education at USC, and look forward to helping you have a great experience during your studies. The start of a new Fall semester is my favorite time of the academic year. I think this is because of the enthusiasm and energy brought to campus by newly enrolled students. As you move about the campus and interact with students, fa-

culty and staff, I think you will see that this sense of eagerness and anticipation is shared by most everyone you'll meet.

You probably already realize that you are joining a truly vibrant academic community. At USC you will have the opportunity to learn alongside exceptional students from around the globe, and to study with the university's world-class faculty. Many of you will participate in cutting-edge research with renowned experts in a wide variety of disciplines. Along the way, staff in a variety of departments will help

you navigate the university and encourage your overall success.

This is a time of excitement and change at USC. Several projects are reshaping the university's physical space, and improving our experience. New facilities, including academic buildings serving different schools and departments, have been completed in recent years. On a walk across the University Park campus, one can't help but notice the ongoing construction. Perhaps the most visible current project is the Ronald Tutor Campus Center, to be located next to the Student Union Building. Scheduled to open in 2010, this facility will create a new hub for all members of the USC community to learn, work, and socialize. You might also notice that just off campus, along Exposition Boulevard, a rail line is being developed to further connect USC to LA's growing network of public transportation.

This Fall is also a very interesting time to be coming to the United States, as we are now in the midst of a national presidential election campaign that is dominating local and national media coverage, and has perhaps been covered in your own country. You now have the chance to be a first-hand witness to the American political process,

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Welcome *From page 1*

and to share your own perspectives on the policies, politics and the candidates themselves.

Despite the dust of construction and the evolving landscape of our surroundings, a very important tradition at USC remains unchanged—the wonderful diversity of the university community. Last year, USC hosted over 5,800 international students from 115 different countries. At the same time, over 1,400 visiting scholars and professors from abroad taught and conducted research at USC. We are truly an international university!

We hope you will take advantage of this diversity and make it a point to meet people of many different nationalities, including Americans. Previous students have told us that one of the most valuable benefits of their USC education was the chance to make friends from around the world—to form friendships that spanned the boundaries of national borders, cultures, and languages and have even led to fruitful professional collaborations.



Besides your interactions in the classroom and laboratory, consider getting involved in any of the numerous activities and organizations on campus. You can join clubs and organizations, participate in community service programs, and attend educational and cultural events. It's up to each of you to discover all that USC has to offer. We're sure you'll like what you find and have fun in the process!

Your selection of USC as your university means that you have also chosen to live and study in Los Angeles, a city that is home to people from around the world. Here, diverse cultures don't just co-exist, but also mix to form multi-ethnic experiences, perhaps best expressed in our various California fusion cuisines. We urge you to discover all that LA has to offer, including entertainment and the arts, amazing coastal and mountain environments, and a variety of interesting neighborhoods.

On a personal note, I have lived in the Los Angeles area for over 15 years, and am always amazed at how much there is to explore in this region, and across the state of California. For me, it's interesting to discover new places to go camping, cycling, and to take part in other outdoor activities. Your interests may be different, but my best advice to new students is to make sure you set aside time to take advantage of all of the natural and cultural resources available to you. Ask everyone you meet, even OIS staff members, for suggestions about fun things to do!

The mission of the Office of International Services is to do everything we can to help international students, scholars, faculty and staff to make the most of their USC experience. So whether you are here for a semester exchange or for several years, OIS staff are available to advise on a variety of topics, starting with helping you understand the immigration rules and regulations affecting your stay in the US. Moreover, our office offers a number of academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs for you. Stop by Student Union 300 any time, or visit www.usc.edu/ois for more information.

We wish you the very best as you embark upon your own personal USC experience!

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17 Month OPT Extension for F-1 Nonimmigrant Students with STEM Degrees

by Esther Lee, Associate Director

On April 8, 2008 the lives of many international students changed with the implementation of the 17 Month OPT Extension by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This interim final rule allows students who have completed a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree to apply for a 17 month extension of their current 12 month OPT, giving them a total of 29 months of OPT after graduation.

This interim final rule was implemented because of the growing concern among U.S. high tech industry companies about obtaining H-1B visas for qualified F-1 students due to the limited number of these petitions being granted by the USCIS each year. Previously, students who were not able to secure an H-1B work visa or status after their 12 month OPT period were either required to leave the U.S. or maintain their F-1 status by beginning a new degree program at the same or another SEVIS approved institution. This created a hardship for both the student, and the company that was losing a skilled worker they had hired and trained for a specific position. The new 17 month OPT extension allows the student and company to keep the employment active and also gives the student another chance at the H-1B visa category.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the 17 month OPT extension the student must first have earned a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree that is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List. This list provides eligible courses of study according to Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes developed by the U.S. Department

of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and includes the following areas: Actuarial Sciences, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Computer Science Application, Engineering, Engineering Technologies, Science Technologies, Mathematics and Statistics, Military Technologies, Physical Sciences, and Medical Sciences. Second, the student must currently be in an approved post-completion OPT period based on the designated STEM degree. Thus, a student with a bachelors degree in a designated STEM field, but currently on OPT based on an MBA degree, would not be eligible for an OPT extension. Third, the student's employer must be enrolled in E-Verify, a program operated by the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration that verifies and monitors all employer information. Lastly, the student must apply for the 17 month extension prior to the expiration of the current OPT or EAD.

Employment status during the filing of the 17 Month OPT Extension

Once a student files for the 17 month OPT extension the employment authorization period begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization, and ends 17 months later, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved. In addition, as processing times for the EAD is stated to take approximately 90 days, the F-1 student is allowed to maintain continuous employment for up to 180 days while the USCIS adjudicates the application.

Reporting Requirements

With the benefits of the 17 month extension, come reporting requirements by the USCIS for all students with an approved or pending 17 month extension. The student is required to report within 10 days to the Designated School Official (DSO) of the academic institution any changes to his/her legal name, residential or mailing address, email address, employer name, and employer address. In addition, even if there are no changes, the student must confirm the information every 6 months to the DSO. To assist students with these reporting requirements, OIS has created a website at <https://sait.usc.edu/ois/infoupdate/> where students can report these updates.

Limited Periods of Unemployment to Maintain Status

Prior to the implementation of the 17 month OPT Extension and reporting requirements, a student was considered to be maintaining immigration status if he/she was working on the OPT or if he/she was actively seeking employment. However, now students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during any 12 month post-completion OPT period. In addition, students who have been granted the 17 month extension cannot accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29 month OPT period.

[See *OPT Page 9*]

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OIS Programs Ease Transitions to U.S. and L.A.

We know it's not easy to absorb American culture, get to know Los Angeles and stay on top of academic requirements without feeling a little overwhelmed. That's why OIS has designed the following programs to help with your transition to the American way of life. They offer fun ways to learn more about what it's like to live in the United States, and particularly in Los Angeles County, a metropolis of more than 25 million people from just about every part of the world!



Horseback riding in Griffith Park

LA Today

Want to experience Los Angeles in all its facets? This program provides group trips to parks, museums, plays, movies, sporting events, beaches, concerts or amusement parks. An International Program Assistant (IPA) from OIS will lead you to a popular Southern California point of interest. Past events have included whale-watching, horseback riding, skiing, a tour of the National History museum, sports and theatre events, hiking in the San Gabriel Mountains, and more. These activities are open to all USC students, scholars, faculty, staff and their families. LA Today occurs 2-3 times per semester. Each event will be advertised in the weekly International Update (IU) so sign up for the IU at www.usc.edu/ois. Transportation is usually provided.

Thanksgiving Match-Up



Spend the traditional Thanksgiving holiday with a host family in the Los Angeles area. This celebration always includes a hearty feast, but will also provide opportunities to meet and widen your circle of friends. You will learn more about this traditional U.S. holiday, the biggest in American culture, as it is celebrated by people of all faiths. But you can also share your own culture with the individuals you meet! If you'd like to participate, please apply at OIS starting in early October. The program will take place on Thursday, November 27th.

International Diners' Club



Diners' Club: German cuisine

Each school year, OIS International Program Assistants lead small groups of students, faculty and staff to local restaurants to sample the incredible diversity of food within Los Angeles. The intent of Diners' Club is international education and social enjoyment while experiencing an array of cuisine. Cost is typically \$15 - \$20 and 3 to 4 outings are planned for each semester.



Exchange Visitors at the 2007 reception

J-1 Monthly Luncheon and Annual Reception

Every month four students and/or scholars in the Exchange Visitor Program (J-1) meet OIS staff for lunch at the University Club. It's a small gathering that allows for good conversation. But the big event for J-1s is the annual reception held every October. Exchange Visitors and their families are invited for food, music and networking. All J-1 events require emailed invitations from coordinator Zach Williams.

State of the World Seminars

A student from Iraq will present excerpts of his own documentary footage portraying life in Baghdad and talk about the reality of the everyday lives of the people of Iraq in this period of upheaval. Students from Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates will share their perspectives of how the conflict has affected the lives of people in their countries. These are perspectives that you won't find easily in the American media.

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USC Student Affairs

Flyer from 2008 program

This engaging program presents panel discussions addressing current issues of global political, social and economic importance. The panel is composed of students, scholars and alumni from those areas of the world under discussion and is moderated by a USC faculty member with expertise on the issue/geographical area being discussed. It takes place once per semester. To suggest a topic for a State of the World Seminar contact hartwich@usc.edu.

English Language Program

by Esther Lee, Associate Director

Since 1972, the English Language Program (ELP) has been an important part of many people's lives at USC. Offered free of charge to spouses and families of international students, and to visiting scholars and their dependents, the ELP provides English language instruction while fostering positive intercultural exchange. ELP participants are placed in beginner, intermediate or advanced level classes.

Field trips are also an important part of the program. Participants have gone to see the crafts and spectacle of Venice Beach; taken a tour of downtown Los Angeles and Olvera Street, the oldest part of downtown Los Angeles; dined together on dim sum in Chinatown; and explored various museums. There is a lunch potluck once a month, when each participant brings a delicious dish from his or her home country to share. The December potluck is usually at the home of one of the teachers.

The program has become more popular over the years. Here are a few of the wonderful things that past participants have said about their ELP experience

From Russia: "I...envy...such interesting discussions and the events you have in your classes. Dreaming of joining you again someday."

From Korea: "The class has been a great pleasure for me. I will keep this memory in my heart."

From China: "I really miss all... the fun we had together. I will graduate with straight A's and I know those classes helped me."

From Brazil: "You made me understand the American culture."

[See *English Language Program* on Page 8]

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New Staff Members at OIS

by Judy Hartwich, Senior Associate Director

We've had four new staff members join OIS since we last published. We knew you'd want to be introduced!

Toyicha Chisom *Office Manager*



Toyicha Chisom joined the OIS staff as Office Manager in May of this year. Toyicha was born and raised in Santa Rosa, California. She earned her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice at California State University, Long Beach where she was also a member of the Black Student Union, the Debate Team, and the Residential Senate and Residence Hall Judicial Board. During the same period she worked in a Law Office, served in Customer Service at a Big Lots store and was a reader for Disabled Student Services. So you can see, Toyicha really knows how to manage her time!

After completing her bachelor's Toyicha pursued the Master of Science in Public Policy and Administration with a certificate in Public Sector Employer/Employee Relations, also at Cal. State Long Beach. She was awarded the degree in May 2003. Prior to accepting the position at OIS Toyicha spent two years in the Department of Computer Science in the Viterbi School of Engineering as a Budget/Business Technician.

Toyicha is the proud mother of three children: a son, Shaolin, who is five years old and two year old twins, a girl La Shenique, and boy Maleeque. Most of her hobbies revolve around spending time with family. In July Toyicha coordinated a family reunion for 60 family members in Negril, Jamaica.

In the short time she has been at OIS, Toyicha has set about getting the office running as efficiently as possible. She says it's a challenge she embraces: "I enjoy working with OIS and look forward to helping the department meet its goals and objectives in providing quality customer services to USC's international students, faculty and staff."

Scott Turner *Immigration Specialist*

Scott Turner was born in New Hampshire and grew up in northern Maine, a state of only one million people! He received his bachelor's degree in English from Bowdoin College in Maine, and then spent a year as an admissions intern at a post-graduate school in Maine. In 1995, he accepted a teaching position at a private high school in Colorado Springs, Colorado. After two years there, he moved to California to teach English at Idyllwild Arts Academy in Idyllwild, California. It was at Idyllwild that he met his future wife, Jill, and together they made the adventurous decision to go to China to work and learn Mandarin Chinese. Intending to stay only one year in Hefei, China in Anhui Province, they ended up staying four years. The last year in Beijing, Scott worked for an educational non-profit organization called Education Forum for Asia. Scott and Jill's son, Ciaran, was born in Beijing in 2005.



They returned to the US in 2006 and Scott was a stay-at-home dad for a while before taking a position in International Student Services at Pasadena City College and subsequently coming to the Office of International Services at USC on a temporary worker basis. Scott joined the permanent staff of OIS as an Immigration Advisor, in June of this year.

Scott is very interested in Chinese culture and language, and enjoys reading and hiking in his free time. Scott, though still a young man, cannot remember the years or dates of his life experiences. So when you're chatting with him, don't ask him what years he was in China, because he won't know. (But you can probably figure it out from this article.)

Sarah Bang

International Student Advisor

Sarah Bang was born in South Korea and came to the United States when she was seven years old. She grew up in Michigan with her



parents and older brother. Moving across the Pacific Ocean was a bittersweet experience. Sarah describes the difficulties: "There was very little support at my school. I was in a special ESL (English as a Second Language) class, but there was only one other student in the class -- from Japan. The two of us stayed behind while the other kids had recess because I guess at that time they thought we could learn more from the teacher than from interacting with other kids. I remember we would just look out the window and see the kids playing with each other and wish we were there too."

International education has played a big part in Sarah's life. "When I went away to college at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, I met a lot of international students," she says. "I got to rediscover my Korean roots and form my career goals. Though I was pre-law and interned at a Law Firm in my senior year, I discovered that somehow my heart just wasn't really in it. Through a friend I learned about the field of International Student Advising."

Sarah went onto earn a Master's Degree in Student Affairs Administration at Michigan State University, East Lansing in May of this year and moved right out to Los Angeles to begin her position at the Office of International Services at USC.

Now she has to learn how to adjust all over again. "I still can't believe I'm here! Though I have several friends living in Southern California, this is the first time I've lived in a big city. I love the diversity and can't wait for Fall semester to start so that I can see USC in full swing." Sarah is determined not to watch all the action from her window (even though she has a very nice view). She's determined to participate in as many Trojan activities as possible.

Ariel Suarez

Information Specialist

Ariel Suarez joined the Office of International Services in early June as Information Specialist at the front desk. Ariel was born in the Philippines and moved to Dallas Texas when he was only nine. He has two older sisters.

Ariel hasn't had to do much adjusting since he got to campus. It has been more a matter of re-adjusting since he attended USC for his undergraduate degree, earning a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in May, 1999.

After graduating, Ariel focused on non-profit work. He volunteered for AmeriCorps, a government sponsored organization that places volunteers with community service organizations all around the United States. Through



AmeriCorps, Ariel worked with the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, at a literacy program called Koreh L.A. where he was the Literary Coordinator for the Reading Program. He coordinated 300 volunteers, matching them

with about 400 children between the ages of 6 and 10, from Grade 1 to Grade 5. The volunteers spent an hour per week reading with students and helping them learn to read. Ariel also volunteered at Hazeltine School where he helped with office administration.

From there, Ariel moved to a more corporate position, accepting a position with AT&T in their Sales Department. He worked at AT&T for nine months before leaping back to the world of learners (although now he is dealing with adults) by joining the OIS staff. Here is where he's had to do some real adjusting. "Working at OIS has been a real learning experience," says Ariel. "I've never been exposed to people from so many backgrounds, so I'm kind of going through culture shock myself -- trying to figure out different ways of seeing things and approaching problems."

In his free time Ariel likes to go to the beach with friends, read and shop for technical toys (he got the new iphone the first day it was available!).

International Connection

English Language Program *From Page 5*

Sally, an ELP participant who came to USC with her husband, summed it up well:

“Being a spouse of a student in a new country could be tough without ways in which to spend my time. My husband is very busy with homework, writing papers or working on projects. While waiting for him I practiced cooking and watched TV but I felt very lonely and homesick. I really wanted to chit-chat with someone who could listen to me and relate..... I made some new friends from the ELP, found some coffee shops and shopping malls to go to and became more like a family member of USC instead of a “desperate housewife.”

This year the Coordinator of the program is Marisa Olson, right, a graduate student pursuing a Masters degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the Rossier School of Education. A native of California, Marisa received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish Language and Culture with a minor in Linguistics from the University of California, Irvine. She has taught ESL to underprivileged Chilean high school students in Santiago, Chile and has been an English/Spanish translator for the Habitat for Humanity organization in Orange County.



Marisa Olson, ELP Coordinator

At the end of the Spring 2008 program, Jordi Valls, a participant in the English Language Program, performed a magic show for ELP participants and friends. Valls and his wife, Meritxell Roca-Sales, a Research Scholar at the Annenberg School for Communication, are Exchange Visitors from Spain. Valls credits the English Language Program with helping him to improve his English skills. So of course, he performed the show in English!



Jordi Valls, above middle, performs



The audience gets into the act

ELP classes are offered every Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon at the University Religious Center (URC). Registration for the fall semester will be on Thursday, August 28 at 9:30 a.m. in URC Room 108. For more information please go to the OIS website or pick up an information flyer at OIS.

Did You Know?

USC has more international students than any other American university: 5954 enrolled in Fall 2007.

USC's international students come from 115 different countries.

The Top 10 countries of origin are: India, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

OPT *From Page 3*

Cap Gap Extension for students with a pending or an approved H-1B Petition

In addition to the 17 month OPT extension, USCIS proposed an interim final rule that allows students who are currently on an approved OPT and have a pending or approved H-1B petition with the USCIS to submit a request for a Cap-Gap Extension.

This Cap Gap Extension bridges the gap from the end of the student's OPT to the start of the H-1B fiscal year thus allowing an extension of the authorized period of stay, as well as work authorization, for the student.

Unlike the extension of post-completion OPT, which is limited to F-1 students who have obtained STEM degrees, the extension of status for F-1 students in a cap-gap applies to all F-1 students in all fields of study with pending or approved H-1B petitions during the fiscal year. If the student is in a period of authorized post-completion OPT on or after the date the student becomes eligible for the extension, the student's post-completion OPT is automatically extended. Therefore, the student is allowed to continue working with the employer while the Cap-Gap Extension request is pending.

A more in depth explanation about the 17 month OPT extension, the Cap Gap Extension, and how to apply for both benefits, are at www.usc.edu/ois.

International Students' Assembly (ISA)

by Becky Peterson, International Student Advisor

More than 20 nationality/cultural groups are represented in ISA – one of the largest student-run assemblies at USC. Its purpose is to express and promote international students' concerns while providing intercultural educational experiences for the campus, as a whole.

ISA sponsors many events on campus during the year including international films and USC World Cup Soccer, along with collaborative programming with other student groups and organizations. Its two largest events are *the International Food and Culture Fair*, featuring ethnic cuisines from different nationality clubs and *International Night*, offering an exciting evening of cultural entertainment from around the world. Weekly meetings occur Fridays at 12 noon during the school year and interested students are invited to attend. For more information:

Email: isa@usc.edu

<http://www-scf.usc.edu/~isa/index.php>

Current ISA student groups:

Africa SC • Armenian Students' Association • ASHA •
 Association of Indian Students • Association of Indonesian Students •
 Association of Malaysian Students • Caribbean students' Association •
 Chinese Students' Association • Chinese Students' & Scholars' Association •
 Computer Science Graduate Organization • European Student Association •
 Hong Kong Students' Association • Iranian Graduate Students' Association •
 Japan Students' Association • Korean International Students' Association •
 Lebanese Club • Singapore Students' Association • TESOL and TEFL Society •
 Thai Students' Association • Turkish Students' Association

International Connection

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Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please send them to:
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International Connection

USC Well Represented at Beijing Olympics!

by *Desa Philadelphia, Publications Editor*



Allyson Felix, silver medalist 2004

If USC were a country, it would rank 19th in the world for most medals won at the Olympics! Extraordinary, but true. With 236 medals, 112 of them gold, USC has racked up an impressive number of medals.

As those numbers indicate, there are many more impressive statistics behind the hardware count. Consider that USC has more athletes who have competed in the Olympics than any other university. According to the athletics department, from 1904 to 2004 there have been 363 athletes who attended the University before, during or after their Olympic appearances.

This year will be no different. The USC Olympic transition continues as 39 Trojans will be in Beijing, hoping to achieve Olympic glory. And they are not all from the United States!

In keeping with its tradition as a truly international university (USC in fact has more international students than any

other university), Olympic athletes with USC affiliation will be representing the United States and these 15 other countries: Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Slovenia and Tunisia.

Sports Information Director Tim Tesalone says the diversity among USC's athletes is another tradition the university celebrates. "We've had a great heritage of Olympians here at USC and a lot of those Olympians are from countries other than the United States," he says. "It helps cement the great tradition that we've had. It's fun to not only root for the home country but also to root for the home school. Whether you root for athletes from Mexico or Italy or wherever, it's fun to root for an athlete knowing they used to compete wearing the cardinal and gold. It's the best of both worlds."

Favored to win gold medals to add to USC athletes' treasure trove are sprinter Allyson Felix (top left), who attended from 2003 to 2007; although as the first U.S. track athlete to turn pro after high school, Felix was not allowed to compete for USC. She won a silver medal in the 200 m in the Athens 2004 games and is the current world champion in the event. Also expected to put on golden performances are basketball players Lisa Leslie (right) who played for the Trojans from 1991 to 1994 and currently plays for the Los Angeles Sparks and Tina Thompson who played for USC from 1994 to 1997. Leslie won three golds with the U.S. women's basketball team in 1996, 2000 and 2004. Thompson was also on that 2004 team. Other leading American candidates are water polo players Patty Cardenas, Kami Craig, Brittany Hayes, Moriah Van Norman and Lauren Wenger; track sprinters

Torri Edwards and Anglea Williams; soccer player Amy Rodriguez; and swimmers Larsen Jensen, Klete Keller and Erik Vendt.

These current USC students are competing for other countries:

Eva Orban of Hungary, a USC senior, will take on the Hammer throw.

Ankur Poseria of India, a senior, will swim the 100 m butterfly.

Zoltan Povazsay, a junior from Hungary, will take on the 800 m free relay in swimming.

Gabriela Varekova, a sophomore, will compete in rowing for Czech Republic.

Mandula Wijesekara will compete in the high jump in track and field, representing Sri Lanka.

So when you're scrutinizing the Olympic results, remember to look for your fellow Trojans!!



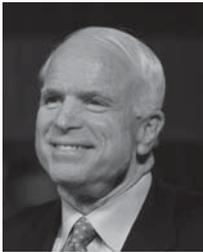
Lisa Leslie, three-time gold medalist

Welcome to American Politics!

An Introduction to the U.S. System

by Desa Philadelphia, Publications Editor

You probably know that Barack Obama and John McCain are competing to become the next President of the United States of America! (And by the way you'll hear that phrase a lot as each candidate will call himself that until the actual "next President" is chosen!). However, you may be wondering about their party affiliations, political experience and all the other things that make them qualified to actually be President. So here now is a primer on the American political system (Well at least the part that has to do with the two candidates running for the Presidency).



John McCain

Party: Republican Party

Symbol: Elephant



Current Job: Senator representing the State of Arizona.

Government credentials: He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives (the lower house of Congress, where representatives serve two-year terms) in 1982, from the State of Arizona, a California neighbor. He was then elected to the Senate in 1986, also from Arizona and has held the job since then. He served in the Vietnam War and was a Prisoner of War for more than five years, after his plane was shot down.

Has he run for President before? Yes, in 2000 he was defeated by George W. Bush, the current U.S. President

Former Republican Presidents include:

Abraham Lincoln
Dwight Eisenhower
Richard Nixon
Gerald Ford
Ronald Reagan
George H.W. Bush



Barack Obama

Party: Democratic Party

Symbol: Donkey



Current Job: Senator representing the State of Illinois.

Government credentials: In 1996, he was elected to the Illinois State Senate, the upper chamber of the Illinois General Assembly. States' General Assemblies or State Legislatures (they can be called either) legislate for their states alone. In 2004, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where two representatives from each state serve six-year terms.

Has he run for President before? No, this will be the first time. It's also the first time an African-American has gained the nomination of one of the two major parties.

Former Democratic Presidents include:

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Harry S. Truman
John F. Kennedy
Lyndon Johnson
Jimmy Carter
William Jefferson Clinton

International Connection



Welcome from the Staff at OIS

Back row (left to right): Trevin Barnes, Tony Tambascia, Scott Turner. Middle row: Ariel Suarez, Becky Peterson, Sarah Bang, Esther Lee, Iran Carranza, Toyicha Chisom, Joan Cerera, Sumaiya Mamun. Front row: Zach Williams, Judy Hartwich, Gwen Crowe, Cheryl Gilman.

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