

International Connection

August/September 2010, Volume XXVII, No. 1

New Campus Center Offers Trojans Social Hub

by Oliver Riley-Smith, Publications Editor



Top, the International Plaza at the new Campus Center, and bottom, 'The Trojan Tapestry' by John Nava hanging in the foyer of the Steven and Kathryn Sample Hall.

Source: Joel Zink.

Starting this semester, USC students can enjoy the fruits of three years of labor as the Ronald Tutor Campus Center emerges from the green hoarding and rubble that has occupied the spot since 2007. As well as housing some of the existing university offices, such as the Admission Center and the Alumni Center, the space provides dining options, meeting rooms, and student lounges that offer students the chance to eat, relax, and socialize in a central location.

The hope is that the Center will become a focus of social life for stu-

dents and faculty at USC, the spiritual heart of campus and a 'living room' for those who are looking for an evening's relaxation away from the The Row. Jason Cruz, the project coordinator, says that 'the building will create a new definition of community', a mantra reflected in its open design, which was shaped by students' input.

Integrating the pre-existing bookstore and Student Union, the Italianate architecture, courtesy of AC Martin Partners, matches the style of USC's other historic buildings, while also creating a sense of shared space, exemplified in the International Plaza. This courtyard, bordered by a sweeping

Romanesque colonnade, is designed to give the building a greater sense of connectivity, complete with open walkways above, extensive outdoor seating below, a bubbling memorial fountain, and the curving 'Steps of Troy'.

Perhaps the grandest feature is the Trojan Family Room, a high-ceilinged temple of USC life, complete with plush leather furniture, towering fireplace, and thirty foot windows, which will appeal to potential students and families as they make their way up to the admissions office. The entranceway to the room includes an impressive tapestry by artist John Nava entitled 'The Trojan Tapestry', depicting a myriad of USC students going about their daily business.

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New Campus Center *Continued from page 1*

Current students will be interested in the new facilities offered – Traditions sports bar, fitted out with booths, a long bar, and flat screen TVs, is open until 2am, while Tommy’s Place is a large performance venue in the same area. The food on offer includes a California Pizza Kitchen, Wahoos (relocated from the King food court), Carls Jr, Coffee Bean, and for the fancier tastes, the Moreton Fig, a farm-to-table upscale restaurant from Chef Bradley Ogden, named for the century-old fig trees in front of the building. Multiple student lounges are available for relaxing or reserving, including an almighty underground ballroom, which can seat 1,200 people.

Michael Pontvert, an international graduate student from France, was impressed by the space: ‘It’s very grand, but not in an intimidating way. It seems like the kind of place I’d want to meet in with friends, it’s got a really nice, open vibe.’



The Trojan Family Room in the Ronald Tutor Campus Center. Source: Joel Zink.

International Connection

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Welcome New International Students!

by Tony Tambascia, Executive Director and Assistant Dean of Students



OIS Executive Director Tony Tambascia

On behalf of the entire staff of the Office of International Services (OIS), it is my pleasure to welcome all new international students to the University of Southern California! We are delighted that you have chosen to continue your education at USC, and look forward to helping you have a great experience during your stay here. I'd also like to welcome new visiting scholars coming to USC from around the world.

You are joining an incredibly diverse, vibrant academic community, made up of exceptional students from around the globe, scholars conducting cutting-edge research in every field imaginable, and a world-class faculty. USC is a truly international university, enrolling more international students than any other university in the US – 6,585 in Fall 2009, coming from over 115 different countries. Being at USC means being part of a global community of learners, coming from around the world with a shared purpose of making new discoveries and excelling in each of your chosen fields of study.

As new members of the USC community, it's up to you to take advantage of this diversity and get the most from your USC experience. I hope you'll make an effort to try to meet people of many different nationalities, including Americans. Previous students have told me that one of the most valuable benefits of their USC education was the chance to form friendships that spanned the boundaries of national borders,

cultures and languages.

Meeting people at USC is easy! Every day on campus there are activities that bring people together around shared interests. OIS offers several programs to help students get to know each other and to experience some of what LA has to offer.

There are also hundreds of student organizations on campus catering to a very wide range of interests – religious, recreational, academic, artistic, etc. One organization, the International Students' Assembly, specifically serves to promote international students' concerns.

For most of you, this time also marks a transition to living in the US, and especially in the state of California and the city of Los Angeles. In my opinion, you could not have chosen a better place to be a student or visiting scholar.

LA really has just about anything you might want to do. With a thriving arts scene, lively neighborhoods, world-class cuisine, and a wide range of spectator sports, there is always something fun to do. LA is also situated in an amazing natural setting, with beaches, mountains and desert all within easy reach for outdoor activities of any kind.

I hope that every one of you will try during your busy time at USC to go out and explore as much of California as possible. For more ideas of things to do, just ask anyone who's lived here awhile (current students, staff, your professors) and they'll surely tell you about their favorite places.

At OIS, it's our mission to do everything we can to help international students and scholars make the most of their USC experience. As well as helping you understand your rights and obligations related to US immigration regulations, our office offers advice and programs on a number of academic, social, and cultural issues to make your time in the US as rewarding as possible.

Stop by Student Union 300 to visit, or find us on the web (www.usc.edu/ois) or Facebook (look for "USC Office of International Services") anytime.

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

International Connection

A Fond Farewell to Zach Williams

by Judy Hartwich, Senior Associate Director

Zach Williams, who has been part of the OIS staff since 2002, will be leaving the University in August of this year and will be doing some open-ended travel in South America through the end of 2010.

Zach, a native of Madera, California graduated from John Brown University in Arkansas and began his position as an Immigration Advisor in OIS in August of 2002.

He assumed the position of Exchange Visitor Program Coordinator in 2005 and since that time created the J-1 Scholar website, revived the annual J-1 Scholar Reception and initiated the Meet and Greet series for J-1 scholars and the J-1 Facilitator Roundtable Workshops for academic departments.

Zach has been well known for taking scholars on camping trips to various locations in Southern California, for getting scholars involved in outdoor volunteer opportunities, and for sharing his surfing expertise with a number of students, scholars and attorneys.

Zach plans to travel in Peru, Chile and Argentina for several months and when he returns to the US he plans to travel to a number of State and National Parks to explore the idea of designing and promoting accessible hiking trails throughout the various park systems.

“I would like to take the ideas of universal design and apply them to the outdoors – and to give a different definition to the word “accessible.” There are so many of us who love the outdoors and hiking but who either need or would prefer to be able to gain access to the wilderness on broader, flatter trails.

“To my knowledge, there is no system like this in any of the parks and I have come across no guides specifically tailored to these kinds of trails. I may pursue working or volunteering in one of our State or National Parks, or doing consulting for a non-profit



*Ex-OIS Exchange Visitor Program Coordinator
Zach Williams, soon to be roaming South America!*

organization and eventually writing and publicizing a guide to accessible trails within the United States.”

In his years at USC, Zach has made immense contributions to the community of international scholars and students and to the University at large. He will be missed dearly by all his colleagues at the Office of International Services, by the large number of USC faculty and staff he has worked with over the years, and by the vibrant community of scholars at the University.

We wish him a fruitful journey and great success in his steps along the path when he returns to the US.

Maintaining Your International Student Status at USC

by Sarah Bang, International Student Advisor

All international students who are in F-1 and J-1 visa status must follow a set of immigration regulations as outlined by the U.S. government in order to maintain their international student status. The following set of rules and regulations is an introduction to properly maintaining international student status at USC.

Full Course of Study

International students must be registered for a full course of study during fall and spring semesters:

- Undergraduate students – 12 units
- Masters graduate students – 8 units
- Ph.D. graduate students and graduate students with a graduate/teaching/research assistantship - 6 units

ONLINE COURSES: Only one online course per semester is applicable to the full-time enrollment total.

AUDIT COURSES: Units for audited courses are not applicable to the full-time enrollment total.

On- and Off-Campus Employment

On-campus employment is limited to 20 hours a week when school is in session during fall and spring semesters and 40 hours a week during University vacations and summer vacation. Freshmen should note that they are not authorized to begin on-campus employment until their second semester at USC.

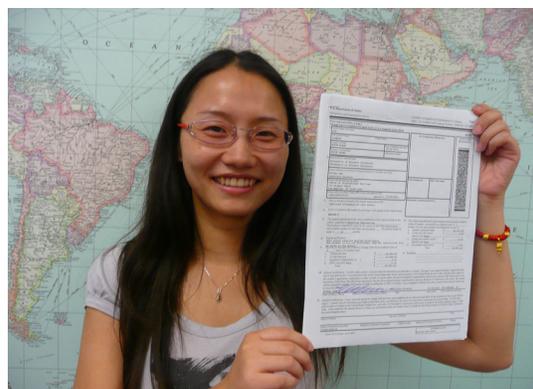
In order for international students to work off-campus, they must obtain the proper work authorization through OIS and/or the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS). For F-1 students, off-campus work authorization options are: Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), and Off-Campus Employment based on Economic Hardship. J-1 students' off-campus work authorization is Academic Training (AT).

Please review www.usc.edu/ois to learn more on work authorization options.

Maintaining Valid Immigration Documents

I-20/DS-2019: International students must be aware of the expiration date on their I-20/DS-2019. If it is not possible to complete their academic program by that date, students must request a program extension before the expiration date on the I-20/DS-2019. Students who do not file a program extension in a timely manner will be considered out of status.

Passport: Students should keep their passport valid at all times. If the passport will expire soon, students



must renew it through the embassy or consulate of their home country.

Change of Local Address

Students who change their local address must report the change to OIS within 10 days of moving by submitting the change of local address form on the OIS website: www.usc.edu/ois.

Grace Periods

International students have a set of grace period regulations that are specific to their visa status. F-1 students who complete an academic program or OPT have a 60-day grace period and J-1 students who complete an academic program or AT have a 30-day grace period in which they are permitted to do one of the following:

1. Begin a new program of study at USC
2. Transfer to another institution
3. Apply for a change of immigration status
4. Depart the U.S. before the end of the grace period

Students who have received prior authorization to withdraw from classes have 15 days to depart the U.S. after the withdrawal date. Students who withdraw from classes without prior authorization are not eligible for a grace period.

Because these regulations can be quite complex and confusing at times, international students should always seek clarification and advice from OIS advisors with regard to any questions related to their immigration status.

OIS counselors and advisors are available to assist students through individual appointments. If you would like to make an appointment, please call OIS at (213) 740-2666.

International Connection

OIS Programs Help Students Ease Into LA Life

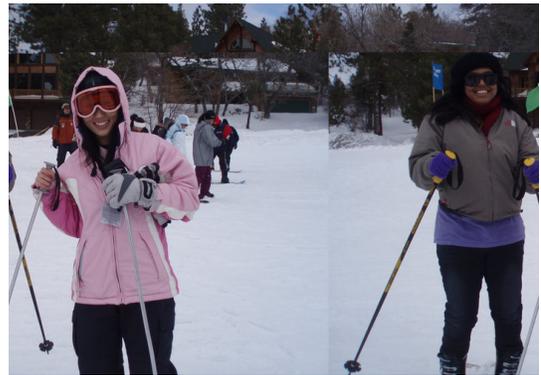
by Sarah Bang, Becky Peterson, Judy Hartwich, & Esther Lee, OIS Staff Members

In order to help students acclimatise to the overwhelming metropolis that is Los Angeles, OIS has designed a series of programs to introduce you to some of the exciting opportunities available to you during your stay here. These events are fun and informative ways to learn about US culture and lifestyle, while also meeting fellow international and domestic students.

LA Today

This program offers the chance to experience the diverse activities that Los Angeles and Southern California has to offer. The OIS International Program Assistants (IPAs) plan excursions to popular local cultural festivities, sporting events, parks, beaches, museums and more.

Past events have included skiing at Big Bear Mountain, experiencing Halloween through the Queen Mary in Long Beach, visiting the Getty Museum, and exploring Catalina Island. About 2-3 trips are planned for each semester in the fall and spring, so keep an eye out for upcoming LA Today events on the OIS website, www.usc.edu/ois.



Skiing at Big Bear Mountain last year

Thanksgiving Match-Up

The annual Thanksgiving Match-Up program provides USC international students and scholars the opportunity to experience this American holiday by joining local host families for a Thanksgiving feast. It is a wonderful cross-cultural experience for both international students/scholars and host families and a great way to foster new friendships.

For more information, please see our program information page on the OIS website: <http://sait.usc.edu/ois/workshops-events/ois-programs/thanksgiving.aspx>

Application information for both students/scholars and host families will become available in early October through the International Update (IU) and OIS website.

This year, Thanksgiving Day is Thursday, November 25th so if you're interested in participating, mark your calendars and plan ahead!

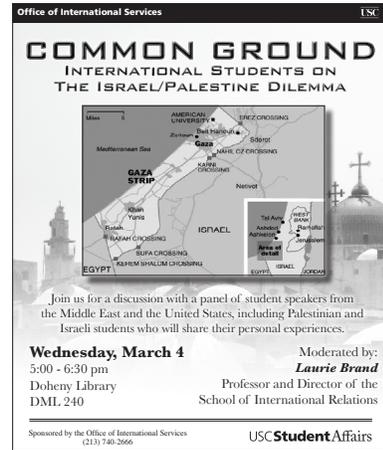


A traditional Thanksgiving feast

State of the World Seminars

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.



Office of International Services USC

COMMON GROUND

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE DILEMMA

Join us for a discussion with a panel of student speakers from the Middle East and the United States, including Palestinian and Israeli students who will share their personal experiences.

Wednesday, March 4 Moderated by:
5:00 - 6:30 pm **Laurie Brand**
Doheny Library Professor and Director of the
DML 240 School of International Relations

Sponsored by the Office of International Services USC Student Affairs
(213) 746-2666

International Diners' Club

Each school year, OIS International Program Assistants lead small groups of USC students and scholars to local restaurants and evening locales 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.

Some of last year's events included Ethiopian, Jamaican, French, Cuban, and Malaysian. Cost is typically \$15 - \$20 and 2 to 3 outings are planned each semester. For more information, please email oisdc@usc.edu



Diners at an event last year

Join OIS on Facebook!



OIS is now on Facebook to announce important news and upcoming events for USC international students and scholars.

Search for "USC International" and join our page to receive automatic updates to your news feed!

International Connection

Cecilia Melendres Joins OIS Staff

by Judy Hartwich, Senior Associate Director



Cecilia Melendres, the newest member of the OIS team.

Cecilia Melendres, Fellowship Officer and Immigration Specialist on the Health Sciences Campus at USC, officially joined the OIS staff in July of

this year. Cecilia has been at USC since 1986 and began working with the J-1 Scholar population at the Health Sciences Campus in 1987.

Cecilia grew up in Los Angeles, attended Los Angeles City College and has been living in Whittier, California since the 1970s. She and her husband, a former LAPD officer, have a daughter who is a high school principal, a son who works with the California Department of Water and Power and four grandsons.

I asked Cecilia what was unique to working with J-1 Scholars on the Health Sciences Campus. “I do a lot of work with the Medical Board of California, with doctors, clinical fellows and residents. I work a great deal with medical researchers which is a whole different world. The Health Sciences Campus is smaller than the University Park Campus – there is a unique kind of friendliness on the HSC because it is so easy to run into a wide variety of faculty, staff and researchers on a daily basis.

Cecilia will continue to serve the needs of J-1 exchange visitors and academic departments on the Health Sciences Campus as part of the Office of International Services. All the staff at OIS, who have already had a long relationship with Cecilia, are happy to welcome her to our staff.

International Students’ Assembly

by Becky Peterson, International Student Advisor



ISA Members on the Discover LA Tour 2009

Close to 20 nationality/cultural groups are represented in ISA – one of the largest student-run assemblies at USC which is housed under the USG Program Board.

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 along with collaborative programming with other student groups and organizations. Its’ two largest events are the International Food Fest, featuring ethnic cuisines from different ISA nationality clubs, and International Night, offering an exciting evening of cultural entertainment from around the world. Also, every spring ISA has its’ own version of the “World Cup” with the nationality groups competing against each other for the prized ISA World Cup trophy!

[ISA continued *opposite*]

Frequently Asked Questions

by Trevin Barnes & Ariel Suarez, OIS Information Specialists

Our OIS front desk specialists answer your most frequently asked questions!

How do I apply for a social security card?

Social Security cards are issued only to international students who have secured paid employment. If you are a new student coming from overseas, you must be present in the US for at least two weeks before you are eligible to apply for a Social Security Card.

When should I get my I-20 signed for travel?

Travel signatures are valid for 6 months.

Please have your I-20 signed at least a week or two before your departure date. To see if you need a new signature, please look at the last page of your I-20 to determine the date of your last signature. Count 6 months into the future and that is the validity of that travel signature. If 6 months have passed from the date of the last signature, please bring your I-20 to OIS for another travel signature.



Trevin Barnes and Ariel Suarez, from the front desk at OIS.

I have lost my I-20, what should I do?

If you have lost your original I-20, please report to OIS to request a new one. It takes our office approximately 5 business days to process this request.

Processing Times:

4 Days: Travel Signature on existing I-20

5 Days: Social Security Letter

International Students' Assembly *continued*

For more information:

Email: isa@usc.edu

Website: www-scf.usc.edu/~isa/index.php

Facebook: International Students' Assembly

Current ISA student groups and emails:

- Africa SC: africasc@usc.edu
- Armenian Students' Association: marslani@usc.edu
- Asha USC: gowrappa@usc.edu
- Association of Indian Students: india@usc.edu
- Association of Indonesian Students: asis@usc.edu
- Association of Malaysian Students: mohdmuhi@usc.edu
- Caribbean Students' Association: usccsa@usc.edu
- Chinese Students' Association (undergrad): csa@usc.edu
- Chinese Students' & Scholars' (grad): usccessa@usc.edu
- European Student Association: euroclub@usc.edu
- Hong Kong Students' Association: hksa@usc.edu
- Iranian Graduate Students' Association: igsa@usc.edu
- Japanese Students' Association: uscjsa@usc.edu
- Korean International Students' Association: kisa@usc.edu
- Lebanese Club: lebanon@usc.edu
- Singapore Students' Association: ssa@usc.edu
- TESOL and TEFL Society: tesol@usc.edu
- Thai Students' Association: thaiclub@usc.edu
- Turkish Students' Association: turksa@usc.edu
- Vietnamese International Students': uscvisa@gmail.com

International Connection

America: Where Hobbiton Meets Hobbes

by Dr Tristram Riley-Smith, Author of 'The Cracked Bell: America and the Afflictions of Liberty'



Cowboys and Indians: two faces of America new and old - the famous Naked Cowboy busker from Times Square, New York (left), and Hobbes' representation of 'Libertas' as a Native American Indian.

Eight years ago I arrived at the shores of the United States - a muddled mass of nervous energy and wide-eyed anticipation - to start a new chapter of my life serving in Britain's Embassy in Washington DC.

My first job was to sustain that Anglo-American "Special Relationship". But I had set myself a second, personal, challenge: I would use my training as a Cultural Anthropologist to capture, for posterity, a panoramic impression of America in the opening decade of the 21st Century.

This era was, of course, flash-lit by the lightning strikes of "9/11", Hurricane Katrina, the Global War on Terror, and the 2008 Credit Crash. This showed up, for me, the stress-lines present in the bedrock of the American Way, as well as the surface gloss.

So how I would encapsulate America for the visitor coming to this extraordinary country for the first time?

For starters: **Enjoy!**

This is, after all, the first nation in the world to have been constructed in a sort of Political Science Workshop, with liberty as the central principle. The engineers (or "Founding Fathers") were filled with the spirit and optimism of the Enlightenment as well as with righteous indignation at the high-handed attitude of the British monarch. Their blueprint remains alive in the Charters of Freedom: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Secondly, **Reflect!**

Everywhere you look you will find contradiction and paradox in what has been called the *Untied* States of America. Take, for instance, the following seven varieties of American paradox:

1. **Identity.** The riddle of *e pluribus unum*, where the image of the liberated citizen of the republic contrasts with social and racial divisions.
2. **Consumerism.** Where God and Mammon unite in a Temple of Trade, bringing plenty and poverty to the nation.
3. **Belief.** The "Culture War" between creeds, with a clash of ideas about sacred and profane, ancient and modern, Good and Evil.
4. **Innovation.** The contradiction between the entrepreneurial spirit of innovation and the influence of power-blocs.
5. **Frontiers.** The illusion of wilderness in a tamed landscape, and the search for new frontier challenges.
6. **War.** The paradox of a peace-loving warrior-state marshalling massive forces to defend freedom.
7. **Justice.** The conundrum of "liberty under the law", with a tolerance about many matters contrasting with an austere attitude to crime and punishment.

Ultimately, I see America as the place where Hobbiton meets Hobbesville.

Hobbiton derives from the vision of Tolkien's Middle Earth - a voluntary, ordered society where fellowship is

[America continued *opposite bottom*]

The English Language Program

by Esther Lee, Associate Director

The English Language Program (ELP) offered by the Office of International Services provides English language instruction to individuals on F-2, J-1 and J-2 statuses. This program is held weekly Mondays through Thursdays from 9:30am to 11:45am, and offers three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

At the beginners level, students learn basic grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. In the intermediate level, where students are more verbal but have difficulty expressing their thoughts coherently, they learn proper pronunciation through listening to CDs and group discussions. In the advanced level, students are challenged with reading materials to increase their comprehension ability.

They also learn idioms and discuss common issues faced by international students, such as immigration problems, laws, and car insurance.

The ELP is taught by experienced teachers and it provides a safe and friendly environment for spouses and family members of international students to learn and improve their English as well as make friends in the community. Each year, there are students from many countries enrolled who enjoy learning English together and getting to



Students in a language class

know each other's culture.

In addition, each month, the program offers students the opportunity to explore Los Angeles or other cultures through a potluck event. Students have the opportunity to visit the Natural History Museum, downtown Los Angeles, Chinatown, and many educational places in Los Angeles.

Registration for the program will be on August 26th with classes starting on August 30th. To learn more about the program, go to <http://sait.usc.edu/ois/workshops-events/ois-programs/elp.aspx>.

America *continued*

strong and where government is small. There is a piece of Hobbiton in all but the most dysfunctional communities of the USA. Comfort comes from a consensus in common observances: the give and take of commerce in the mall; the uplifting quality of church rites; the spectacular theatricality of myths narrated in the cinema or played out in computer games; the ritualized battles of baseball stadium, football field and NASCAR track; the year's cycle marked out with Labor Day and Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and Halloween.

But the social cohesiveness of Hobbiton is undercut by the hyper-individualism of Hobbesville – representing the “natural liberty”

described by the philosopher Thomas Hobbes. Hobbesville USA is a frontier town, or an urban jungle like Liberty City in Grand Theft Auto.

The radical spirit of the liberated individual is in the vanguard, with the emphasis on licence rather than liberty. There is intolerance and violence: conflict between and within ethnic groups; tension between classes of have-mores and have-nots.

Barack Obama understands the balance between Hobbesville and Hobbiton, freedom and the common good. This makes it an exciting time to be in America, as the 44th President strives to ‘perfect an imperfect union’.

The Cracked Bell: America and the Afflictions of Liberty by Dr Tristram Riley-Smith is published by Skyhorse, New York. It is available in hardback and on Kindle via Amazon.

International Connection



Welcome from all the staff at OIS

Front to back: Zach Williams, Cecilia Melendres, Quyen Le, Judy Hartwich, Gwen Crowe, Anne Kaufman, Sumaiya Mamun, Cheryl Gilman, sarah Bang, Joan Cerera, Esther Lee, Tony Tambascia, Scott Turner, Trevin Barnes.

Not pictured: Iran Carranza, Becky Peterson, Ariel Suarez

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