

Palomar College Int'l  
Student Program

Welcome Packet



Spring 2010

Palomar College International Student Program  
Welcome Packet

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Congratulations on your acceptance to Palomar College for the Spring 2010 semester. Please read the following carefully so you will become fully prepared before you arrive at the Palomar College Campus.

## Official Acceptance to Palomar College



### Application for Admission

You received this form (white, four page form) with the acceptance letter by email. **Please make sure to complete this form and return to the Office of International Education immediately.** Without this form received and processed by the Office of International Education, you won't be able to take the placement test or register for the Spring 2010 semester.

### Changing Your Plan

If you decide not to come to Palomar College at this time, please return the I-20 form together with a letter informing us of your change of plans. If you decide to postpone your admission until the Fall 2010 semester, your application documents will be forwarded, and you will receive a new I-20 form indicating the new start date.

## Preparing for Departure to the U.S.



### Passport

The first step is to apply for your passport, if you have not done so already. If you already have one, make sure that it is not expired.

### F-1 Visa

The second step is to apply for an F-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy (or Consulate). Since the application procedure differs from country to country, it is recommended that you contact the embassy which has jurisdiction over your area and clarify the procedure. You may find the embassy/consulate in your area on-line at <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.

## SEVIS I-901 Fee Payment

You must make the SEVIS fee payment before you go to the visa application interview. You may pay by mail or online.

To pay by mail:

- Obtain a form I-901 "Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants."
  - i. Download the form from:  
<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>.

ii. Request the form by phone at 1-800-870-3676 (within the U.S.)

- Complete the I-901 form. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 form and passport.
- Prepare a check, international money order, or foreign draft (drawn on US banks only) in the amount of \$200 USD, made payable to "The Department of Homeland Security"

To pay online:

- Go to the site <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>
- Complete the form online and supply the necessary Visa, MasterCard or American Express information (be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 form).
- Print a copy of the online receipt
- Keep the copy of the receipt with your other important immigration documents

### **In Case of Visa Denial**

In case your visa application is denied, please contact Yasué O'Neill, Coordinator, International Education, via email at [yoneill@palomar.edu](mailto:yoneill@palomar.edu) immediately, so you will receive some tips on re-applying for the visa.

### **Air Ticket**

When you make the reservation for your airline ticket, make sure that your final destination is San Diego (unless you have friends or relatives picking you up somewhere else). If you are flying into the Los Angeles International Airport, you will need to transfer to another plane, so you will arrive at San Diego Airport.

### **Packing (What to Bring with You)**

You may want to bring everything you own with you; however, the airline companies have strict policies regulating the weight of your suitcase(s). Here's a sample list of items you may want to bring with you.

- Casual clothing for mild weather including a jacket and sweater
- Comfortable shoes
- Address/phone book which contains the information of your friends and/or relatives
- Photographs of your family and friends
- Small gift to your host family (if you will be staying with an American host family)
- Medication
- Medical record (if you have been taking prescribed medication)
- Personal hygiene items (tooth brush, deodorant, etc.)

- Imperishable food from your home country (in case you start craving for such)

## Money

You should bring enough money which will last you at least one semester (4 months). Do not carry a large amount of cash. Traveller's checks or a credit card in addition to a couple hundred dollars cash are strongly recommended. Following is the list of fees you will need to pay upon arrival:

Estimated Tuition fees (based on 12.0 units/credits) for the Spring 2010 semester:

\$2,635

Text Books (approximate): \$300

Parking Permit (if you will be driving to campus): \$40

Monthly Bus Pass, if you will ride a bus to school (approximate): \$50.00/mo

Homestay fee, if you will stay with a host family: \$2,600

Personal expenses: \$1,200

## Insurance



**All the international students with F-1 visa are required to have adequate medical/accident insurance policy throughout their studies here at Palomar College.**

If you are purchasing a policy through a travel agency in your home country, please make sure that the insurance company has a claim office in the U.S.

It is recommended that you purchase a policy sold through the Office of International Education at Palomar College. You will receive detailed information during the orientation session on January 14, 2010.

## Housing

### Homestay

If you want to stay with an American host family for some time until you get used to the new environment, please contact the Homestay Services International (Mr. Jae Hopkins, Director; telephone 619-461-4764 or fax 619-670-3397; Mrs. Jenny Cole, Area Coordinator; telephone 760-740-9244 or email at [jennycole3@home.com](mailto:jennycole3@home.com)). You'll be charged a placement fee of \$250 to the agency and will pay to your host family \$650 per month for a private room and two meals a day.

### Apartment Rental

Renting an apartment in North San Diego country can be very expensive. In addition, it is becoming difficult to find a vacant room. If you would like to rent an apartment, you may research the availability over the Internet. Some of the sites we usually refer our students to include: [www.apartmentguide.com](http://www.apartmentguide.com), and [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com).

### **Finding A Roommate**

Once you get settled here and become familiar with the system and environment, you may become interested in sharing an apartment with a roommate or two. Many international students, after a couple of months of studying together, decide to share an apartment. This way, you can save monthly rental fee and utilities (electric, gas, etc.).

### **Finding a Room for Rent**

If you'd rather rent a room, you may check with Homestay Services International (contact Mrs. Jenny Cole), since the organization usually has this option with a lower monthly accommodation charge (\$500 per month). You will have a private room, access to the kitchen, bathroom, laundry, etc. You will need to purchase your own food and cook yourself. You can also check the housing bulletin board on the student affairs web site at <http://www.palomar.edu/studentactivities/Housing.htm>.

### **Arriving on Campus**

#### **New International Student Orientation**

You will not complete the admission process for the Spring 2010 semester if you don't attend the orientation sessions. Orientation will start on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> with the check-in process starting at 8:00am in SU-103. For check-in purposes, please bring the following documents:

- Your passport
- I-94 card (you'll receive this card in the airplane on the way to the U.S.)
- I-20 form (issued by Palomar College)
- Your local address and telephone number

During the orientation sessions, you will receive valuable information which will help you get familiar with the on/off campus environment, important rules and regulations, and academic information including how to choose the proper courses..

### **Counseling**

During the counselling session, the International Student Counselor will review your selection of classes for the Spring 2010 semester and approve your list of courses to take. The session starts at 1:00pm. You may also modify your spring 2010 registration after you talk to the counselor. By the end of the session, you will develop your first educational plan with the counselor.

## **Purchasing Textbooks**

Once you complete your registration, you can go to the bookstore and purchase the appropriate textbooks. Shelves are divided in alphabetical order (by subject), and you can find the right textbook according to the section number of the course(s) you have selected.

## **Getting Around in the Community**

### **Public Transportation**

The public transportation system is not very well established in North San Diego County. However, many students take buses to come to school. Route numbers 302, 341, 342, and 344 stop at the Palomar College Transit Center, which is located right in front of the college entrance. The bus fare is \$4.00 per day and you are required to have the exact change. You may also purchase a monthly bus pass for your convenience at the Comet Center on campus. For more information on the public transportation system, you may visit the web site at <http://www.sdcommute.com/agencies/NCTD/index.asp>. There is also the new "Sprinter," a train that runs from Oceanside to Escondido ([http://www.gonctd.com/sprinter\\_schedules.htm](http://www.gonctd.com/sprinter_schedules.htm)), which stops right in front of the main entrance to Palomar College.

### **Driving**

Some students prefer to drive to school. If this is the option you take, be prepared financially. You may need US\$5,000 or more to purchase a reliable used car. You will also need to purchase automobile insurance and register the car as mandated by the state of California. Parking on campus will cost you \$40 per semester. During the first two weeks of the semester, you may find it difficult to find a parking space. Because of this, you may have to leave home much earlier.

### **Riding a bicycle**

If you want to ride a bicycle to school, make sure to bring a locking system for the bicycle. You will find parking bars for bicycles right in front of the library and the Student Services Center.

## **Getting Ready for Classes**

Once you complete the registration procedure and purchase your textbooks, prepare yourself for the first day of class. Make sure that you arrive on time, since some instructors may report you absent if you are late for class.

Usually, the instructor will give you the introduction to the course during the first class meeting. You will receive the course syllabus, the grading policy and the

schedule of quizzes and/or exams. Make sure that you understand this written information.

**Employment Opportunity**

Employment opportunities for F-1 visa holders are very limited, so make sure that you have an adequate source of funding for the entire period of your stay. More information on this topic will be covered during the orientation session.