

# THE OUTLOOK

A NEWSPAPER PRODUCED BY AND FOR IEP STUDENTS

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## IEP WELCOMES A NEW FACE

By Victoria Otazo

Since July, Kim Badrkhan, Deputy to the Dean, has taken over some of Michael Weaver's duties in the Tseng College of Extended Learning in relation to the Intensive English Program. Badrkhan is in charge of International Programs and Partnerships and also works on the budget and financial management of such international programs.

As Deputy to the Dean, Badrkhan currently works to find international organizations to collaborate with in order to recruit students and establish partnerships. Prior to working at CSUN, he was the Superintendent President of the College of the Sequoias, which is the gateway to Sequoia National Park. He has been in the education field for over thirty-five years.

Badrkhan is enjoying

working with the IEP. He said he got a kick out of the summer orientation where more than a hundred students looked happy mingling with instructors and other students. He says it was heart warming to see how the students were welcomed into the program, and he has sympathy for students who come to a foreign country to learn a second language. He is impressed by the IEP faculty, who are well qualified and sincerely interested in their work.

Badrkhan came to this county from Egypt as an eight-year old child. He attended a local elementary school and recalls having two friends when he first came, a Chinese boy and a Peruvian boy. At the time his family emigrated



to America in 1959, Badrkhan says there was not even one English as a Second Language program in Los Angeles. Although he has not returned to visit his native country of Egypt, Badrkhan fondly remembers climbing the pyramids as a young boy. Also, even though he has been in this country for many years, he still retains the Arabic language. Besides his interest in education, he has many outside interests which include music, photography and computers.

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# The Truth about Cheating in College

By Yumiko Boecher's Core 2 Level 8 class

Cheaters never win. No excuse is legitimate since cheating is, in essence, to break the trust of teachers, fellow students, and most significantly, cheaters themselves. Surely, some sympathy may go to them as almost all students may have thought about cheating, or even attempted it, at some point in their academic careers owing to an enormous amount of work and pressure given to today's students. However, receiving a poor grade is exceedingly better than cheating because the outcome of cheating can be devastating and irreparable. In particular, the following negative effects of cheating on an exam are worth addressing: failing in class or school, damaging self-esteem, and developing destructive tendencies.

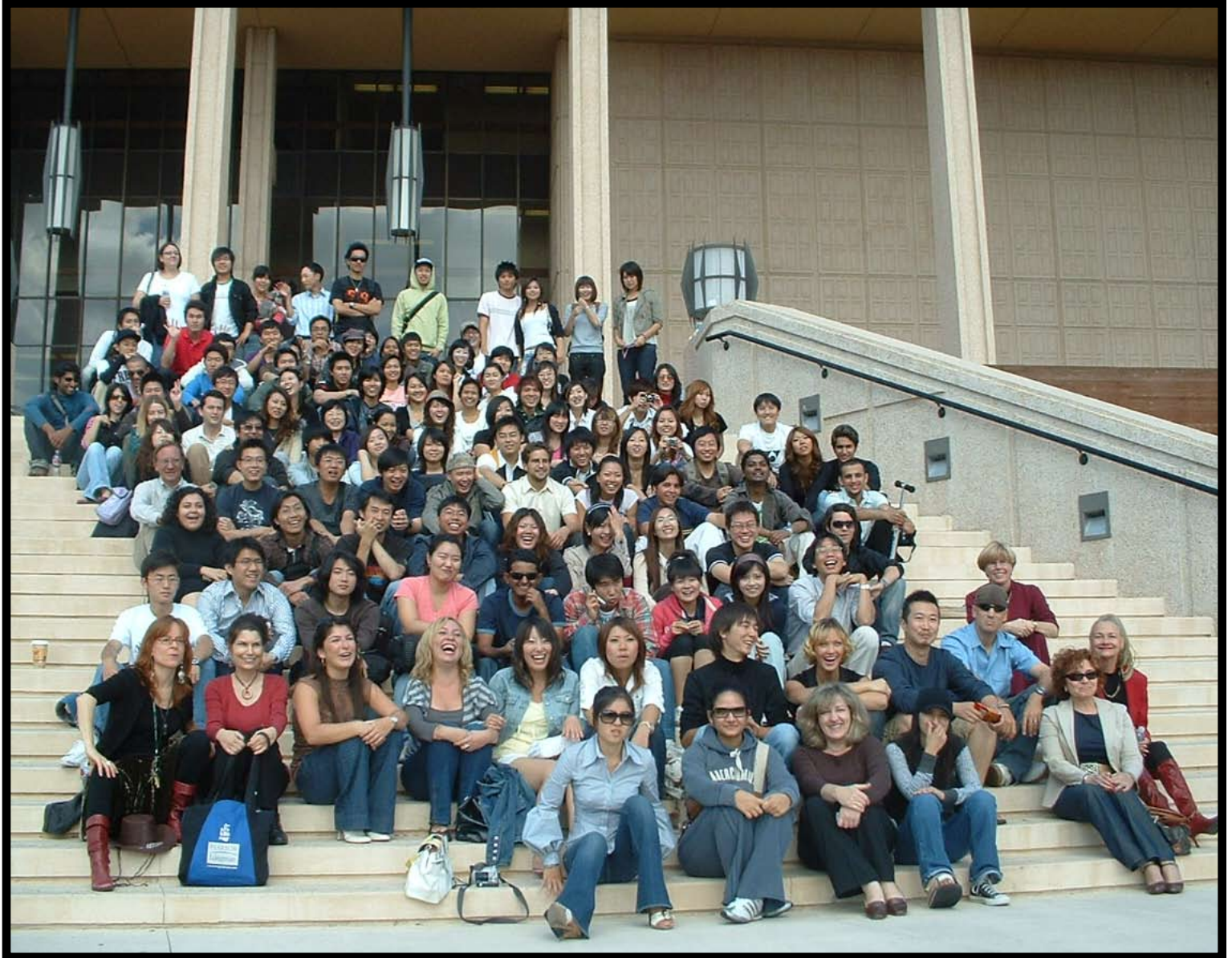
First, students could get kicked out of class or school if they get caught cheating, which many schools see as an appropriate course of action. The primary responsibility of students is to try their best to learn and acquire useful knowledge and skills, which are the only tangible way to better prepare themselves for their future careers. If some students decide to cheat on an exam, however, they are simply surrendering their right to education and disrespecting the objectives for which academic institutions are built. Therefore, it is more than reasonable and deserving that cheaters do not pass a class or graduate from school. It just goes to show that there are always serious consequences if anybody tries to take an easy way out and digress from the correct path. Another negative effect of cheating on an exam is that the students' self-esteem may suffer when they are caught cheating, and, as a result, they are punished. Students who cheat on exams might not re-

alize how serious cheating is, but when their faults are exposed, they could lose their reputation and be labeled by others as losers. This public humiliation would in turn hurt students' self-esteem. They would also experience a sense of shame and regret their unwise actions for a long time. In short, because of negative judgments by both others and the cheaters themselves, cheating leads to deteriorating self-esteem that tortures students tremendously.

Interestingly, the most devastating aspect of cheating on an exam is when students don't get caught: once they get the hang of it, they may become frequent cheaters, not only in school but also in life. When students luckily pull off their cheating scheme, they would think that cheating is a piece of cake and may even rejoice in the discovery or mastery of a practical technique to achieve optimum results without any painstaking efforts. Resorting to cheating with no hesitation or sense of guilt is a scary thing. It means that students become more and more tolerant of their deceptive behavior, eventually becoming unable to face their life challenges head on at all. In a nutshell, cheating on an exam may seem like a minor offense, but it can potentially be the beginning of a phony life where the joy of overcoming obstacles is absent.

In conclusion, unfortunate consequences from cheating on an exam include academic failure, wounded self-esteem, and the development of unhealthy behavior. There is nothing to gain from engaging in academic dishonesty. Besides, resisting the occasional temptation to cheat and confronting demanding academic tasks wholeheartedly are what it truly means to be a student. Why would anybody give up on this priceless training?

# I AM, YOU ARE, WE ALL ARE IEP!



BEHOLD THIS HAPPY BUNCH OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND STAFF, TAKEN ON OCTOBER 12, 2007.

# My Personal Journey Through the IEP

By Oscar Zamora

When I registered with the IEP, I only had one expectation: I knew that I was traveling to America to learn another language, English. However, when I came here I found a whole world that exceeded what I had thought. I found a place full of friendly people who were teachers, tutors and students, whose only intention was to share with me a part of them.

The teachers here are very interesting. It makes no sense to compare them to each other because each teacher has a special value to transmit to others. They are funny, tough and a complete team of very colorful personalities. Moreover, I have been a student since I was a child and I cannot remember people as concerned about their students as the IEP team. But I am not talking only about the Core class teachers. In the afternoons, the tutoring and activity classes are full of fun if you know how to take advantage of them. There are a lot of interesting activity classes: movies, writing for the newspaper, listening, reading and so on. Sometimes when I finish my homework early, I just go to the tutoring lab or activity classes and speak with the teachers about movies, TV shows, or American culture in general. It is a real fun experience because I do not have to be assisted in a rigid class,



so I learn a lot of things. The teachers and tutors are like friends to me and every time I had doubts, they are there to help me.

Besides the teachers, I made a lot of friends. IEP has given me the opportunity to meet so many people from so many countries. Japan, China, Korea, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Peru, Chile, Switzerland (if I am missing any country, sorry folks) are some examples of the countries students in the IEP are from; and if you are lucky, you can learn a couple of words in different languages. Don't worry; your friends will help you learn. Here you will

begin to understand that the world is not such a big place. Furthermore, in my case I can't wait to visit my friends in their home countries. It is going to be quite expensive, but I can tell you more about that later, in some years.

There is only one more thing left to tell you. The valuable things you will learn here in the IEP will be better than anything you can imagine, but you will not know what I mean until you try it for yourself. If you are not a student, go ahead and register with the IEP so you can see what I am talking about. Otherwise, see you in class duuuuuuuude!!!

**WANTED:**

**The Outlook needs help from students like you!**

**Come join the staff next session.**

**If you have questions and/or comments contact Victoria at [v\\_otazo@yahoo.com](mailto:v_otazo@yahoo.com)**

# TOEFL: Preparing for the Test or the University

By Sasiwimon “Sam” Khlongakkhara

TOEFL: Test Prep or University Prep

I would not be claiming too much, I think, to say that we IEP students all came to study in the IEP for the same reason—to learn English. However, do we all want to learn English for the same purpose? Apparently not. Many of us want to get high scores on the TOEFL test so that we can get into the most desirable universities. Some would like to be conditionally accepted to CSUN while several just want to brush up their English skills and/or develop their English proficiency. Regardless of our specific reasons, all of us clearly want to learn English.

What about the TOEFL test? Does everyone need to take the TOEFL test? IEP students who have been conditionally admitted to CSUN can receive a TOEFL waiver if they complete the highest level of the program in all core classes with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B average). For those who do not plan to attend a university in the US and just want to learn English, a TOEFL score is not required. However, if a student’s primary reason for being in this country is to study in the university here, he/she probably needs to take the test. Some might wonder, “What is the TOEFL test, anyway?” According to the ETS website, the TOEFL test is an exam that assesses a student’s proficiency to use English in an academic setting. The test, especially the iBT (internet-based test), integrates four English language skills—reading, writing, listening and speaking. Many students lament that the TOEFL iBT is somehow more difficult than the PBT (paper-based test) and the CBT (computer-based test). Actually, the test isn’t harder, but it is more realistic and reflective of a student’s ability to communicate in an academic environment. That is why ETS changed to the iBT version in 2005.

Obviously, life in the university in this



country is not as easy, happy and fun as it is in the IEP. According to IEP instructor, Reed Christy, “In universities, especially large universities with a huge lecture hall with 200-300 students in it, the professor doesn’t know you; the professor doesn’t care about you; the professor only cares about the results.”

Corinne Cummings, another IEP instructor adds, “When you get into the university, you have to read a lot, take quizzes, write research papers, give presentations, think critically, analyze, synthesize, reproduce and show that you are making some contributions to the world of knowledge . . . . It’s not something you cram for.”

Actually when ETS first introduced the TOEFL iBT in 2005, they didn’t make the TOEFL test preparation books like we have today. According to Bessie Karras-Lazaris, Academic Director of the IEP, ETS originally produced supplemental reading,

TOEFL continued on page 8

# Almost Famous 'Idol' Contenders Compete for 15 Minutes of Fame



**Oscar**



**Kelly**



**Majed & Friends**

**On November 16, 2007, students, teachers and staff crammed into the Sattelite Student Union to enjoy and cheer on their favorite performers.**

**Photographs by Yukiko Bryant.**



**The Panel: Matthew, Gloria & Gersten**

**Nao**





**The Winner: Hong-Min**



**Corinne**



**Yuri**



**Ryo**

**The Audience**



**Kazumi**



## TOEFL

Continued from page 5

writing, listening and speaking exercises that could be added to the curriculum of any program.

Why did ETS initially create exercises for classes instead of the preparation books we now have? What does that mean? Obviously, it means that in order to prepare for the test, students need to practice those skills they learn in the classroom because that's what is going to be tested on the TOEFL exam. If students take the test and get lower scores than they expected, they better practice because their TOEFL scores can tell them if they are prepared to enter the university. Otherwise, they might have to struggle in the regular classes.

As a matter of fact, getting into a university is easier and far less important than successfully graduating from a university.

According to the CSUN website, only 11.6% of international students who entered CSUN in 2003 graduated within four years, and the length of time spent in universities could be up to twelve years. Therefore, TOEFL scores are just a ticket for students to get into the university. If they only focus on passing the test by using tricks and strategies they may end up finding themselves walking towards a dead end.

Actually, when ETS changed from the CBT to the iBT, the IEP also adjusted the curriculum in ways that assist students to pass the new test. "What we did when TOEFL changed from CBT to iBT was we reviewed all of our curriculum and added exercises and textbook material that focused on the skills required for the new TOEFL test," said Karras-Lazaris.

Some of the IEP instructors like Gloria Cliffords help students prepare for the test by creating

exercises similar to those on the TOEFL for students to practice. Gloria said that she wants to create confidence and positive thinking so that her students won't be so nervous when taking the test.

Regardless of the reasons we are here, we all need to learn English to improve our English proficiency in order to succeed in the university. And that's what our IEP instructors have been teaching us for sessions since the primary purpose of the IEP is, as Karras-Lazaris said, "to prepare students for university studies; therefore, the curriculum is designed to teach students academic skills so that they can succeed when they get into the university." I think that is probably the ultimate goal of the IEP instructors. Piera Fumagalli—an IEP instructor said that her main purpose is "not only to get students to pass the TOEFL but also to get them to graduate in the shortest amount of time."

## **The Outlook Staff 2007.5**

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