The Kitchen Corner

Welcome new members of the Aztec Parents Association (APA), as well as all returning members. As the Vice President for Student Affairs, I am most proud of my relationship with you, the Aztec Parents. The APA is a vital organization that helps to provide much needed support for programs and services that directly benefit our students.

For those returning members, you may notice a big difference in this issue of News for Aztec Parents. The Aztec Parents Advisory Board voted to create a new, full-color magazine format for the parent newsletter. We're excited to take this publication to a higher level and we hope all of you enjoy the new look!

SDSU continues to be a popular campus. This year, we had a record number of applicants, making admission to SDSU extremely competitive. More than 62,000 students applied for admission this fall for more than 7,300 open spots.

Academically, our student body is more prepared than ever for the rigors of college. Incoming freshmen boast an average high school GPA of 3.47 and an average SAT score of 1048. This fact adds extra value to the degree your student will earn.

For your student, however, college is more than the classroom experience. It’s important for your son or daughter to get involved and make connections that can last a lifetime. I am pleased to tell you that this year, SDSU has more options than ever before for your student to get involved on campus in healthy, positive ways.

Early in the fall semester, we introduced Aztec Nights, which provides safe, healthy on-campus social events for all students. These programs were offered Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 pm to 2 am. I hope your students had the opportunity to participate and will continue to do so in the future.

The health and safety of our students is SDSU’s highest priority. With that in mind, Aztec Nights was created to offer fun, substance-free activities. The university continued to enhance education and enforcement of alcohol and other drug usage to create a safer environment. Students caught violating SDSU’s alcohol or other drug policies may face serious consequences, including suspension or even expulsion.

I welcome your input. Please contact our Parents Hotline at (619) 594-1653 or e-mail us at aztecpar@mail.sdsu.edu. We value you as partners in the education of our students. With your support, we all contribute to student success.

Sincerely,

James R. Kitchen
Vice President for Student Affairs

News for Aztec Parents
Volume 24, Number 1, Fall 2008

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San Diego State University maintains and promotes a policy of non-discrimination and nonharassment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, handicap, marital status, sexual orientation, or national origin. The California State University is committed to providing equal opportunities to men and women CSU students in campus programs, including intercollegiate athletics.

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Get to Know SDSU with the New Virtual Tour

While your student is busy making new friends and attending classes this fall, you can get to know the SDSU campus without leaving home.

The new SDSU Virtual Tour is a great resource for Aztec parents and families to become more connected with your student's life as an Aztec. You can tour at your own pace and learn more about the campus facilities your student sees every day. The SDSU Virtual Tour offers behind-the-scenes photos and facts that will give you an up-close look at the university.

Visit www.sdsu.edu/virtualtour today. Enjoy the tour!
In an effort to strengthen the culture of student involvement on campus, SDSU recently hired Timothy Quinnan as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Campus Life. Quinnan will oversee the offices that focus on student engagement: Student Activities and Campus Life; Intercultural Relations/Cross Cultural Center; Student Rights and Responsibilities; Fraternity and Sorority Life; the Ombudsman; the Assistant Deans for Student Affairs; and he’ll be the direct liaison with the Associated Students.

“I am passionate about student development,” said Quinnan. “My work with students is not a job, but a calling.”

**Quinnan’s Background**

Over the last 24 years, his career spanned leadership roles in Student Affairs at the University of Michigan, the University of Cincinnati, and Florida State University. His most recent position was Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management at Stark State College in Canton, Ohio. At each university, Quinnan created a true “college experience” for traditional and nontraditional students alike.

“A true college experience is one in which students are given opportunities to learn in informal ways that complement instruction and enrich them,” he said. “Students gain knowledge in class, but that knowledge becomes truly meaningful for them when they apply it in social, recreational, or career-related settings,” Quinnan asserted.

Quinnan received his bachelor’s degree in English literature and a master’s degree in college student personnel from Miami University in Ohio. After attending the University of Michigan on a Dean’s Fellowship, he received his doctor of philosophy degree in Higher Education Administration from the Union Institute & University. He has published two books, including *Generations Lost: Pop Culture and Youth in Crisis*. He has also published numerous articles for peer-reviewed, national journals.

**Student Program Accomplishments**

Among his most notable accomplishments are: the founding of FSUnited at Florida State University, a national “best practice” model initiative that builds community and diversity; the creation of the first student leadership center at FSU; and directing the prestigious 2006 Institute on College Student Values international scholarly conference, which promoted values exploration and character education.

“I have an unwavering commitment to individual student success,” said Quinnan. “I have mentored hundreds of students over the past two decades, many of whom have gone on to successful careers as attorneys, surgeons, community leaders, and even show business. But the best part is that so many continue to keep in contact with me, indicating that I touched their lives in a meaningful and lasting way.”

When asked what he hopes to accomplish at SDSU, Quinnan became passionate about the possibility of building one of the strongest student life programs at any university.

“Not just in California, but I foresee SDSU becoming a national model for student involvement and engagement,” he said. “I am convinced we can get there in three years! I want other universities to look at us and say ‘wow, look what SDSU has accomplished.’ I know we can do it.”

Quinnan and his wife of 20 years are the proud parents of a five-year-old daughter. Together they enjoy outdoor recreation, traveling, and spending time together.
With both their son and daughter attending SDSU, Barry and Jinny Vroom are very involved members of the Aztec Parents Association as Aztec Parents Advisory Board Members. They have participated in parent receptions, orientation sessions, New Student and Family Convocation, residence hall move-in, and served as the co-chairs for Family Weekend 2008.

“Being actively involved as parents helped with the transition of our students leaving home for college,” explained Barry. “Learning about SDSU, and being a part of their entry into university life is comforting, exciting, and was a supportive gesture to both our daughter and son when they first came to SDSU.”

The Vrooms eldest, daughter Addie, is a senior majoring in business administration with an emphasis in human relations. Son Dylan is also a business major who began his sophomore year this fall.

The family resides in Folsom, California, a suburb of Sacramento. When asked if they had reservations about their daughter, and then their son moving more than 500 miles from home, they said they see the value in leaving home for college.

“There’s a tremendous amount of personal growth, responsibility, confidence, and of course, adventure, to be gained when you go away to college,” said Jinny. “Part of this change comes from just growing up and out of the teen years, but most of the growth is attributed to your student being out on their own and having to figure things out for themselves.”

Barry added: “It’s a ‘sink or swim’ situation that is challenging and sometimes lonely at the beginning but, at the same time, it’s exciting and empowering. Although we miss Addie and Dylan, having them so far away has not been a problem for us. They are always just a short flight away and the nine-hour drive to Folsom prevents the spontaneous weekend drives home, which further enhances the ‘going away to college’ experience.”

Barry graduated from California State University, Chico with a degree in business administration and has a background in business/operations management, mergers and acquisitions, and information technology. He is currently working as consultant for an information technology consulting firm.

Jinny graduated from California State University, San Jose with a degree in business marketing. She also has a California multiple subject teaching credential, and has been teaching the second grade in Folsom for the past five years. Together, they enjoy traveling, music, fine dining, cooking and exercising.

As seasoned Aztec parents with two returning students, both of the Vrooms have learned some valuable lessons to pass along to parents of new students at SDSU.

“Send them notes and care packages,” suggested Barry. “Remember that when they call with concerns, they mostly just need you to listen. Assure them that they will be okay and things will work out. You learn not to overreact and try to solve things for them by understanding that it is just that particular ‘moment’ that is giving them stress. They will get over the hurdles, and be better for it. Encourage them to get involved to expand their horizons.”
Now that the fall semester is well underway, encourage your student to visit Career Services, located in Student Services East, room 1200.

Career Services provides assistance with common student needs such as choosing a major, locating an internship, and securing a job.

The best way to promote a visit to Career Services is to make it simple and rewarding. Recommend any of these actions as starters:

1. Attend a career fair, and get a lead for a job or internship. To view all upcoming Career Fairs, visit http://career.sdsu.edu.

2. Meet with a career counselor to take a career assessment, and gain a focus for a major or internship. Call (619) 594-6851 to make an appointment.

3. Register for the Aztec Career Connection: http://career.sdsu.edu/, to gain 24/7 access to jobs, internships and career development tools.

Encourage Your Student to Visit Career Services

“While 26 percent of funding comes from the state, without private support, critical programs proven to drive student success wouldn’t exist,” said Capalbo. “A parent’s gift to the university touches all students, not just their own.”

Capalbo is a graduate of Arizona State University. Advocating for nonprofits and striving to better the community is a personal commitment of Capalbo’s that stemmed from her parents’ extensive involvement in volunteer work.

“Giving back to the community, whether it’s through your time or money, if you have the means, is so important. It’s something that was always instilled in me,” said the Orange County native, who volunteered as a Big Sister for a number of years, and more recently worked for the St. Jude Memorial Foundation in Orange County.

In her current role she works with parents to secure gifts to the Aztec Parents Fund. It’s the enthusiasm and energy unique to SDSU parents that adds a new dimension of excitement to Capalbo’s mission.

“I’m here when parents want to explore gift opportunities or to talk about how they can further contribute to their student’s college experience.”

For more information on how to give to the Aztec Parents Fund, Capalbo can be reached directly at (619) 594-3325 or kcapalbo@mail.sdsu.edu.
Q: My daughter is a new freshman at San Diego State and, overall, is enjoying her experience at school. Her biggest complaint is her roommate, as they are very different from each other. There have only been minor conflicts, but she had hoped to become close friends with her roommate. What advice should I give her?

A: Actually, we consider living with someone different from oneself to be a great opportunity for growth. Learning about the unique differences of individuals is central to the mission of the university.

However, we know realistically that conflicts will happen in learning to live with other adults. Some residents will become “best friends for life,” while others live together respectfully without becoming close friends. Either way, living with another person always requires compromises.

Your daughter is now an adult. The first course of action is for her to discuss any problematic issues directly with her roommate. If that fails to improve the situation, then she should have a frank discussion with her Resident Advisor (RA). Her RA is there to help her adjust to life in the residence halls and offer advice. Each hall also has a Residence Hall Coordinator (RHC), who is there specifically to assist with conflict resolution and problem solving.

The bottom line is COMMUNICATION. Open communication between your daughter and her roommate may create a whole new level of mutual respect for each other.

Upon moving into the residence halls, each student was required to fill out and sign a roommate agreement. Now would be the time for your daughter and her roommate to bring out the agreement and discuss if any of the items they agreed to are being violated.

However, if the issue is only that they are not becoming friends the way your daughter had imagined, then you should assure her that it is okay. She’ll make many friends in her experiences in the residence halls, in the classroom, and in various activities around campus. Her roommate may or may not ultimately be a close friend, and that’s fine. Your daughter will have learned to live in harmony with someone different than she is, which will be a lifelong lesson as she ventures into the world.

Contact the Parent Hotline at (619) 594-1653 or aztecpar@mail.sdsu.edu with questions or concerns.
SDSU’s Recent Rankings, Discoveries & Distinctions

Below are a few of the university’s notable awards and research findings from 2008

**America’s No. 1 Small Research University**
For a second year in a row, SDSU was ranked as the nation’s No. 1 small research university among universities with 14 or fewer Ph.D. programs. The rankings are based on the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index (FSP Index) created by Academic Analytics.

**An American Red Cross Honor**
SDSU received the American Red Cross Purpose Award, the highest regional honor the organization bestows to top blood drive sponsors. Only 24 of these awards are given annually to Southern California sponsors who generate the greatest number of donations, or units of blood collected, in their respective category. SDSU placed first among 20 regional universities.

**Seven SDSU Aztecs Named 2008-09 Fulbright Scholars**
The Fulbright U.S. Student Program sends roughly 1,400 American student, faculty and staff scholars abroad annually, to more than 140 countries worldwide, to teach, learn, and conduct research. For the 2008-09 academic year, seven of these prestigious grants were awarded to SDSU scholars.

**SDSU Ranked in the Top 10 Nationally for Diversity**
In recent rankings released by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, SDSU ranks as No. 10 for the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to ethnic minorities. Last year SDSU was ranked No. 11.

**San Diego State Receives $1 Million Endowment**
San Diego State University’s library received its largest single endowment – a $1 million gift from SDSU alumni Christopher and Karen Sickels.

It will support SDSU’s National Center for the Study of Children’s Literature by increasing the library’s collection in this field, enabling the purchase of rare items in children’s literature and paying for visiting scholar fellowships.

SDSU is seeking to establish the first humanities doctorate in the California State University system in children’s literature, and the endowment will support this program.
Student-Athlete Stephen Strasburg Pitches for U.S. Olympic Baseball Team

In August, Strasburg pitched against No. 2 and defending champion Cuba during the Summer 2008 Olympics in Beijing, helping to bring home the bronze for the United States. A pitcher for the SDSU Aztecs, Strasburg was the lone amateur named to the 23-man U.S. Olympic Baseball team. The 20-year-old SDSU junior is the first college player to be named to the U.S. team since the 2000 decision to use minor leaguers.

For up-to-date sports information, visit www.goaztecs.com

Donor Gives Nearly $1.5 Million to Establish SDSU Institute for the Teaching of Critical Thinking Skills

San Diego State University will establish the Institute for the Teaching of Critical Thinking Skills thanks to an anonymous alumni donor’s nearly $1.5 million endowed gift to the College of Education. The Institute will provide leadership to improve the teaching of critical thinking skills through preparation and professional development of preschool and elementary teachers.

Critical thinking skills help students interpret, analyze and evaluate information in order to make a thoughtful and considered decision, according to Christianna Alger, assistant professor in SDSU’s School of Teacher Education, who recently was recognized for her work in promoting critical thinking. Planning for the development of the institute will begin immediately.

Researchers Discover Deadly Truth of Anthrax

SDSU researchers are the first to prove that anthrax bacteria has the ability to directly penetrate the blood-brain barrier, a barrier which normally functions to keep dangerous viruses and bacteria from entering the brain.

“This discovery helps us explain why anthrax exposure is so deadly,” said SDSU microbiologist and lead researcher Kelly Doran. “Toxins secreted by the bacterium interfere with our internal surveillance system, allowing the organism to escape the immune system, and in many cases enter the brain to cause meningitis.”

Anthrax meningitis is the main neurological complication of bacterial anthrax infection and is associated with a fatality rate approaching 100 percent. Until this point, there was no research to explain the connection between anthrax and the brain disease meningitis.

SDSU Receives Nearly $131 Million in Research Grants and Contracts

SDSU’s Research Foundation received 805 grant awards in 2007-08, for a total of $130,908,260, a 9.4 percent increase over the previous year’s total. In addition, SDSU experienced a $7 million increase in research awards from the National Institutes of Health.

Awards were granted for various projects, including a study in how to protect heart cells; a study of Latino’s higher incidence rates of hypertension and diabetes; a study of the blood-brain barrier penetration in bacterial meningitis; an interpretation modification program for social phobia; and an ecological analysis of activity, eating and weight in adolescents.

For more information on SDSU’s rankings, discoveries and distinctions, visit http://advancement.sdsu.edu/marcomm/news/releases.
This year, 560 people across the world are receiving the gift of independent mobility in the form of a wheelchair thanks to the efforts of San Diego State fraternity men and sorority women.

In an annual campus event known as Greek Week, SDSU fraternities and sororities collaborate to fundraise for a common beneficiary in the spring. Barbecues, car washes, and blood drives are just a few examples of how students have pooled their efforts to help local charities. Unlike past years, students set their sights on making a difference in the global community for Greek Week 2008.

"A year before we decided on a charity, I went with my father to Colombia on one of his wheelchair distribution trips," said SDSU senior and Associated Students Vice President for University Affairs Tim Velasquez, whose eye-opening experience motivated him to get others involved. "When it came time to decide on a charity, I proposed The Wheelchair Foundation." 

For the past several years, Tim’s Colombian-born father, Diego Velasquez, has advocated for The Wheelchair Foundation, a nonprofit organization that delivers wheelchairs to people who need them but cannot afford them around the world.

“As a parent, you want your sons and daughters to achieve and do great things,” said Diego. “When my son told me he was going to present this project to his Greek community, I was excited and very happy to think of all the young people at SDSU being able to take part in such a great opportunity and privilege.”

As the then-president of the Interfraternity Council and member of Sigma Chi Fraternity, Tim spoke with dozens of other SDSU fraternities and sororities about his idea for Greek Week 2008. He soon found that another student, Chloe Marx of Alpha Phi Sorority, also had family ties to the nonprofit, as her father, Larry Marx, is the executive director of The Global Health and Education Foundation (GHEF), which houses The Wheelchair Foundation.

With all SDSU Greeks on board, and the support of some highly involved parents, the efforts of Greek Week expanded...
into something more like a year, resulting in the most successful collaboration to date. Together, the SDSU Greek community raised $30,000, which was then matched by a donation from the Rotary Club of Conejo Valley, Calif., bringing the grand total to more than $60,000.

**Going one step, and 4,000 miles further**

In May, Chloe and SDSU students Jenn Bjorklund of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, and Josh Shiel of Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity, traveled with the Velasquez family and fellow Rotarians on a wheelchair distribution trip to Colombia.

In a place where landmines and broken bodies are reoccurring tragedies, Colombia is one of more than 150 countries that receive donated wheelchairs through The Wheelchair Foundation.

“I must tell you that these people maybe cannot hear, or cannot see, and cannot walk, but their hearts and minds are still alive. And the feeling you get from offering them a wheelchair is so overwhelming,” said Diego, who is the past president and current International Chair and Foundation Chair of the Conejo Valley Rotary Club.

For 10 days the group of volunteers traveled extensively throughout Colombia to personally distribute wheelchairs, follow up with past wheelchair recipients, and listen to the stories of those whose lives have been forever changed by this ongoing gift. Students also attended a Rotary International Convention where they spoke to a crowd of 500, including local dignitaries.

“The greatest part about the wheelchairs is that they are a tangible gift,” said Chloe. “Their effect is immediate. As soon as you place someone in a wheelchair you see how much it affects their life and all those around them.”

Jenn remembered one wheelchair recipient who lived alone, and without the aid of a caregiver he was predominately confined to his home. Vividly, he expressed how his new wheelchair improved his quality of life, enabling him to venture out on his own and rejoin his community.

“Without being able to understand his words, I could still clearly feel the emotion in his message,” she said.

**Global perspectives**

In addition to a rich cultural experience, students had the opportunity to look global health in the eye; more specifically, peering into the challenging circumstances facing emerging and developing countries.

Cradled in the Aburra Valley of the Andes Mountains, the group visited the city of Medellín. A now thriving metropolis – the second largest in Colombia – at one time it was an area plagued by guerrilla warfare. Baring the scars of its past, students met city resident and wheelchair recipient Karla, whose paralyzing moment occurred eight years ago when a stray bullet lodged into her spine.

At the prosthetic limb rehabilitation clinic in Bogotá, emotions ran high when students met with 10-year-old David, who like many of the clinic’s patients is a landmine victim.

The group also met a college student by the name of Carlos, whose incredible positivity and energy made for an unforgettable meeting. “He came by twice to visit with us!” said Tim. Carlos, who suffered a 20-foot paralyzing fall a few years ago, was quick to tell students about how he lives a very full life. “Talking to him made me realize that there are no
limitations to what you can do for yourself or others,” said Josh. Without a wheelchair, going to college was an impossible feat for the 21-year-old, ultimately forcing him to drop out of school. “Because of the wheelchair Carlos received, he was able to go back to college,” said Chloe. “He’s studying to be a chemical engineer.”

**Lasting impressions**

In addition to Colombia, wheelchairs funded through Greek Week 2008 went to recipients in Ecuador, Ukraine, and Romania. The students’ tremendous success prompted The Global Health Education Foundation to establish a new program designed specifically for student-based fundraising.

“I cannot think of a better way to change the world than by helping others and doing so through our youth. The Greek Community at San Diego State is an awesome example of this,” said Larry Marx.

Reflecting back on their yearlong efforts, the students agreed: “We can make a difference.”

**Looking forward**

As for Greek Week 2009, students are working with Operation Global Vision to combat cataract blindness – the world’s leading cause of blindness affecting 18 million people worldwide.

Students are again working with Rotary, attempting to raise more than $200,000 when all matching gifts are tallied. “The Global Health Education Foundation and the Lions Club International have agreed to match the money we raise,” said Jenn.

To view the documentary of the students’ trip to Colombia, visit [www.sa.sdsu.edu/atstate/2008-09/feature-1.html](http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/atstate/2008-09/feature-1.html).

For more information about SDSU Fraternity and Sorority Life, call (619) 594-5221 or e-mail [greeklife@sdsu.edu](mailto:greeklife@sdsu.edu).

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**Aztec Nights Produces Positive Results**

**Fun, Healthy Activities Help Students make Better Choices**

Aztec Nights is a new program that provides a vibrant campus nightlife and opportunities for students to become engaged in positive, substance-free social and educational activities.

Based on research, the experiences freshman students have during the first six weeks of school helps them decide whether a college or university is right for them. SDSU decided to be intentional and deliberate in delivering campus-wide programs and activities to ensure the success of its students during these first critical weeks of school.

Students were involved in the creation of Aztec Nights, which gave them the chance to lead, plan and implement various events and activities. Students attending Aztec Nights made new friends, learned about cultural diversity, relationship issues, involvement opportunities, and most importantly, that most students can have fun in a substance-free environment.

Aztec Nights, along with other enhanced campus-wide strategies, has shown positive results in that students are adopting healthier ways to socialize.

An example of the outcomes of Aztec Nights is that alcohol-related incidents were down 57 percent this year compared with last year. In fall 2007 during the first five weeks of the semester, there were 487 students cited for alcohol; this year during the same period, there were 209 citations.

Most importantly, the number of students whose immediate health was compromised was down as well: far fewer students required transport to medical facilities for alcohol poisoning.

“SDSU has followed a comprehensive strategy to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse and associated harms,” said Vice President for Student Affairs James R. Kitchen. “Aztec Nights is just one component addressing behavioral alternatives. What that means is that we are expanding developmentally appropriate social opportunities away from drinking. The concerts, movies and interactive events of Aztec Nights provided our students entertainment during typical ‘party hours’ in a substance-free environment.”

SDSU is working to enhance Aztec Nights for future semesters, as well as continue refining policies to reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs.
SDSU’s Online Assessment Tool Reduces Student Drinking

e-CHUG Changes Students’ Perceptions by Analyzing the Consequences of Drinking

Several years ago, and with seed money provided by the Aztec Parents Fund, SDSU developed an innovative online alcohol assessment tool, the e-CHUG (electronic-check-up to go). It has since been licensed to hundreds of universities throughout the United States, Canada, Ireland and Australia.

All new students are required to complete the e-CHUG before the end of their first semester. Encourage your student to take the online assessment tool no later than Dec. 1 to avoid any consequences of a missed deadline. View e-CHUG at https://interwork.sdsu.edu/e-chug2/?id=SDSU&hfs+rue.

In addition, the e-CHUG also compares a student’s drinking habits with the “norm” of other students. Contrary to what some people think, most SDSU students do not abuse alcohol or other drugs. In fact, two out of three students do not. When students see that data, it makes them realize that it’s socially acceptable to have fun without alcohol, because the majority of students are doing just that.

The e-CHUG analyzes the financial and caloric costs of drinking. Many students are often shocked to discover the amount of calories they are consuming.

“Some students will find that they consumed the equivalent of 35 cheeseburgers over a long weekend of drinking,” said James Lange, SDSU’s director of alcohol and other drugs. “When they see these consequences, it has a real impact in changing their perception of drinking. Students suddenly realize there are many other negative effects to alcohol than simply getting a hangover. The e-CHUG has proven to reduce drinking among students.”

The e-CHUG is an interactive online survey that allows students to enter information about their drinking patterns and receive feedback. The assessment takes about six-to-seven minutes to complete, is self-guided, anonymous, and does not require face-to-face contact with a counselor or administrator.

As the parent of an SDSU student, you might find it interesting to take the e-CHUG yourself. Go to https://interwork.sdsu.edu/e-Chug2/?id=SDSU&hfs+rue

SDSU is committed to education and enforcement when it comes to alcohol and other drugs. The consequences of making poor decisions could last a lifetime. Violation of the student code of conduct found at http://csrr.sdsu.edu/conduct1.html, which covers the university’s alcohol and drug policies, may lead to immediate suspension, and in some cases, even expulsion.
Credit Card Companies Target Students

Now that your student is in college, he or she may have received credit card offers with speedy approvals.

Credit card companies are increasingly targeting college students and even high school seniors because:

- They usually don't have a credit card, and credit card companies want them to have, and use, their card first.
- They're most likely debt free and have great spending potential.
- They’re inexperienced and prone to overusing their card, which spells profit for card companies.

Many credit card offers come with “free” gifts – a Frisbee, T-shirt, and other trinkets – anything to get your son or daughter to fill out an application. Even in this tight economy, they may approve your student's application regardless if your student has a job to repay the debt.

It Takes More Than Being Approved

Easy approval can lead to serious consequences. Credit cards are good financial tools for those who know how to use them to their advantage. Following are some facts about credit cards that few students realize:

- Interest rates can change at any time. Many card companies lure applicants with low introductory rates, even 0 percent. The rate then jumps after a balance is built up.
- There are more possible fees besides interest. Some cards require annual fees. Companies also charge fees for paying late, exceeding the card limit, or even not using the card for a certain period of time.
- Cash advances are different from store-charged items. You pay interest on a cash advance from the date of transaction until repayment. For charged items, you won't pay any interest if you pay the statement balance in full each month. Some cards also charge higher rates for cash advances.
- Credit card companies profit from interest payments, penalties, and annual fees. They also receive merchant fees. For every credit card purchase, the merchant pays 1 – 5 percent of the purchase price to the card company.
- Paying only the minimum payment each month is not a wise idea. For example, if your student had a balance of $1,000 on his or her card with an interest rate of 18 percent and he or she only paid the minimum payment each month, it would take six years to pay the balance off and cost an additional $560 in interest.
- Most college students intend to use a credit card for emergencies but the fact is that only 13 percent really do so. Some students end up taking a semester or a year off from school to work full-time to pay off credit card debt.
- The average consumer has seven national credit cards. U.S. consumers owe more than $500 billion in credit card debt, according to Federal Reserve’s Survey of Consumer Finance.
- The state of California sets a ceiling on interest rates but can’t protect you from doing business with out-of-state companies. Credit card issuers can charge higher interest rates by doing business by mail from states that have high or no interest ceilings.
- It’s possible for balances to exceed card limits. If a merchant calls for card authorization, they won’t accept your card for a purchase that exceeds your card limit. If they don’t call, it’s possible for balances to exceed card limits, resulting in a $20 to $25 fee for exceeding your limit.
- Your student will be tempted by many credit card offers. but they only need one card for things that require a card: reservation guarantees, emergencies – and when used wisely – convenience. Ask for help if needed. If your student already has a history with a credit union, call them first. If not, encourage your student to visit USE Credit Union on campus for a free copy of The College Students Guide to Managing Credit.

SDSU Aztec Center (619) 265-5534, www.usecu.org
Living Well: How to Help Your Student Through Trying Times

Becoming a college student is a major life transition that brings with it both exciting new opportunities and stressful challenges. As students develop a new sense of independence, often moving away from home for the first time, they are faced with the additional responsibility of managing their lives. Some common challenges many SDSU students face include: balancing academic and social demands, financial difficulties, relationship conflicts, and peer pressure. Generally, with a little help and support, most students successfully resolve these issues. Unfortunately, some of our students’ personal problems may persist until the level of emotional distress becomes overwhelming and their psychological well-being is compromised.

As a parent, you are in an excellent position to recognize changes that may indicate that your son or daughter is emotionally troubled. Some common signs of distress are: inability to concentrate, persistent worrying, social isolation, increased irritability, procrastination, mood swings, and depressed or anxious mood. You can have a profound effect by acknowledging your awareness of their distress, and expressing your concern and willingness to help. Sometimes that help may include encouraging your son or daughter to seek professional counseling. Maintaining open lines of communication is particularly important during these times.

Students who take advantage of opportunities to thoughtfully confront personal issues, learn more about who they are as a person, and/or improve their ability to relate to others, often do significantly better in their chosen academic field. A variety of services on our campus offer support and guidance to students as they deal with life’s many challenges. Counseling & Psychological Services offers individual and group counseling for students who want assistance in successfully resolving problems faced in everyday life. These services are designed for students who can benefit from short-term counseling. If a student’s situation requires longer-term therapy, referrals can be made to off-campus resources. Students interested in talking with a therapist can call (619) 594-5220 for a phone consultation. This service is also available to parents who would like information about how to help a student get the support they need.

Spring 2009 Registration is Almost Here

SDSU does not bill for registration fees

Students must check “My Registration” in the SDSU WebPortal for their specific registration information, including fee payment date and registration time. This information is made available starting early November.

Registration fees must be paid in full before they can access the Web registration system to register for classes. It is recommended that the payment be made two weeks prior to your student's registration date to avoid any delay in registration. The registration process is not complete until your student officially enrolls in classes. Payment alone does not constitute registration.

Students may pay registration fees, out-of-state and foreign tuition, and other semester charges online at www.sdsu.edu/sfs. SDSU offers two online payment methods.

Electronic Check (ACH payment) is just like writing a check, but you make the payment online. There is no additional charge for this option. The second option is by credit card payment from MasterCard, American Express or Discover Card. A convenience fee will be assessed based on the transaction amount for payments made with credit cards.

Checks, money orders, and certified funds should be made payable to SDSU. In order to have fees processed on time, your student will need to print the fee payment coupon found in the SDSU WebPortal and submit it two weeks before the registration date (via mail or the Cashiers Office drop box).

Your student's fee payment coupon and check should be mailed to: SDSU Cashiers Office, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, CA 92182-7426

Spring registration begins on January 2, 2009 and the University Cashiers Office begins accepting payments in November. The first day of the spring semester is Thursday, January 22, 2009.

Although SDSU does not bill for registration fees, it does bill for housing/meals, lab fees, library fines and telecommunication charges. Students are sent monthly statements via e-mail in electronic format known as Ebills. SDSU uses e-mail as an official form of communication. We strongly advise students to check their e-mail and WebPortal accounts on a regular basis.

More information on Money Matters Spring 2009 can be found on the Student Financial Service Web site at www.sdsu.edu/sfs.
The SDSU Scholarships Search Web site offers students the ability to search and apply online for SDSU Scholarships. The search and application process is available all year with various deadlines for different scholarships. Although the deadline for this academic year ended on October 20, there is time to apply for scholarships for the 2009-10 academic year. February 4, 2009 will be the next deadline for students.

All SDSU scholarships require an online application and essay. Other requirements vary and are listed in the scholarship’s description.

New scholarship opportunities, with unique deadlines, are posted throughout the year. Have your student apply now and continue to check the scholarships Web site regularly.

It’s fast, it’s easy, it’s online: www.sdsu.edu/scholarships.

**Federal Student and Parent Loans**

Students and parents will be able to borrow federal loans and receive financial aid this year, despite some troubling reports in the media. Recent developments in the credit markets will not prevent SDSU students or their parents from borrowing through the Federal Direct Loan Programs.

SDSU participates in the Federal Direct Loan Programs, which provide long-term, low-interest loans borrowed directly from the U.S. Department of Education. Direct Loans include subsidized and unsubsidized student loans and parent loans.

**Updates Effective July 1, 2008**

Several changes to the federal guidelines affect student and parent loans borrowed after July 1, 2008.

**Parent PLUS Loan** is a 7.9 percent fixed interest rate loan you begin repaying within 60 days after the loan is disbursed for the academic year.

You may request that your payments be deferred while your student is enrolled at least half time. Be aware that if you select the deferment option, interest accrues and capitalizes which increases the principal amount of the loan and the amount you eventually repay. If you request deferred payment, try to make monthly or quarterly interest payments to reduce the amount of capitalized interest.

**Subsidized Direct Student Loan** is a 6 percent fixed interest rate loan that the student borrower begins repaying six months after no longer being enrolled at least half time.

**Unsubsidized Direct Student Loan** is a 6.8 percent fixed interest rate loan that the student borrower begins repaying within 60 days after the loan is disbursed for the academic year. The student may request that the payments be deferred while enrolled at least half time.

The annual and aggregate amounts that a student may borrow increased this year.

**Scholarship and Loan Information for Parents to Know**

The state of California proposed almost $200 million in budget cuts to the California State University system for this academic year. This will leave SDSU critically short of the level of funding required to sustain quality student programs and services – a vital educational component for which San Diego State is known. You will receive a telephone call from an SDSU student regarding the Aztec Parents Fund. You’ll hear about exciting developments on campus and be asked to join other Aztec Parents in enhancing the quality of student life at SDSU. Last year, our callers successfully raised nearly $300,000. These funds are going toward sustaining and implementing student programs in the 2008-09 academic year. We’ve set this year’s goal even higher. We’re counting on you to support our vision for student success. We hope you will consider making a tax-deductible donation. Without your generosity, many valuable programs and services would be unavailable for SDSU students. Make your gift online at www.sa.sdsu.edu/parents/ParentsFund.html or contact the director of development for Aztec Parents, Dan Montoya, at (619) 594-8236.
SDSU’s Parent Program to Present at National Conference

The Aztec Parents Association has long been recognized as one of the top parent programs in the nation. As such, SDSU’s parent programs has been invited to present a workshop titled “College Student Success and Parent Involvement: Partnerships for Lifelong Learning” at the NASPA conference in March 2009.

NASPA is the leading organization of Student Affairs Administrators in the world. Its annual conference hosts more than 3,000 attendees.

Heading to Seattle in March will be Eric Rivera, associate vice president for Student Affairs; Janet Castro, director of New Student and Parent Programs; Reynaldo Monzon, director of Student Testing, Assessment and Research; Michelle DuBord, parent programs coordinator; and Aztec Parents Advisory Board members Jack and Dee Dee Klunder, and Dan and Lori Steinberg.

“The presentation will highlight the results of a study that analyzed the impact of the centralized Aztec Parent programs model on student success,” said Rivera. “We collected and analyzed the academic performance data of first-time freshmen and compared those whose parents were members of the Aztec Parents Association to those who were not. The findings show that students with involved parents perform better academically.”

“Our parent board really is unique,” said Castro. “Even those universities with more advanced parent programs rarely have parents provide input into the allocation of funds or advising a vice president. It’s a powerful engine that drives many of our programs.”

DuBord said having parents speak directly to the higher education administrators at the conference also sends a powerful message.

“Some institutions are leery of having involved parents, but our board members exemplify the partnership aspect of the relationship parents have with the university,” said DuBord. “Our message is that parent participation can be a nurturing partnership that benefits the institution and, most importantly, our students.”
SDSU will begin finals for the fall semester on December 13. Finals can be stressful. You, as a parent, can help your student cope by providing a bit of perspective and understanding. Below are few tips to help your student:

- Be a sounding board: oftentimes, students just need someone to listen to them, so be there to hear your student’s frustrations. Listen for clues: do they sound disorganized? Are they getting enough sleep and eating nutritiously? Encourage balance.

- Understand your student is busy: if he or she needs extra space, respect that by letting them initiate conversations. Don’t take it personally if they communicate less during this time.

- Stay positive: while respecting their independence, do stay curious in a positive way by asking questions.

- If your student doesn’t do well on a final, continue to stay positive. Don’t use punitive language. Be encouraging but realistic.

- Don’t lecture: just saying “shouldn’t you buckle down and do your homework” isn’t helpful for students.

SDSU’s Counseling & Psychological Services offers support such as dealing with test anxiety or incorporating balance into one’s life. Encourage your student to utilize these services.

One of the best things a parent can do is to send a letter or care package during finals. According to Randy Timm, SDSU’s director of Residential Education, nothing brightens a student’s mood more than receiving a package from home.

“It really does say to the student ‘mom and dad are behind you’ and lifts their spirits,” he said. “It doesn’t have to be elaborate, but something small that lets them know you are thinking of them.”

Parents can create their own care packages or you can contact SDSU’s Aztec Shops for premade care packages that can be delivered to your student. Visit www.eatatsdsu.com and click on “Parents” and then “care packages”, or call (619) 594-4932.
Campus Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies can happen at any time. The safety, security, and welfare of the campus community remain our number one priority. San Diego State University has established Emergency Preparedness guidelines for students, faculty, and staff to follow so that the effects of emergency situations can be minimized.

Please take the time to review the campus Emergency Preparedness information site at http://bfa.sdsu.edu/emergency. The site includes emergency phone numbers and important information related to emergency notification and campus and individual preparedness.

The Campus Emergency Operations Information Line, 1-866-794-8832, is updated in the event of a campus emergency. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to program this number as well as the additional campus emergency phone numbers into their mobile phones.

Students can sign up to receive Emergency Text Alerts from SDSU through their WebPortal account: https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/portal.

Signing up for this service is a voluntary, highly encouraged step for students to take to stay informed during an emergency, such as the 2007 San Diego firestorms.

Encourage your student to visit their WebPortal account, and click on the “Emergency Contact Info” tab to sign up to receive Emergency Text Alerts from SDSU.

If you have any questions regarding campus Emergency Preparedness, visit http://bfa.sdsu.edu/emergency.

Important Phone Numbers and Web Addresses

For emergencies requiring reaching a student while in class, call Student Affairs at (619) 594-5211.

Other Emergency Numbers:

Parent Hotline ........................................ www.sa.sdsu.edu/parents/contact.html .................................................. (619) 594-1653
Emergency Information Line ................. http://bfa.sdsu.edu/emergency .................................................. (866) 794-8832
Student Affairs .............................................. www.sa.sdsu.edu .................................................. (619) 594-5211
University Police ............................................ www.dps.sdsu.edu .................................................. (619) 594-1991
Student Health Services ............................ http://shs.sdsu.edu .................................................. (619) 594-5281
Counseling & Psychological Services ........ www.sa.sdsu.edu/cps/index.html .................................................. (619) 594-5220
Escort Service ............................................. http://police.sdsu.edu/escort.htm .................................................. (619) 594-6659
Aztec Parents Association
Office of New Student and Parent Programs
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-7441

Thank you, Aztec Parents, for your continued support!

Aztec Parents Fund — Why Giving is So Important

The goal of the Aztec Parents Fund is to enhance and create quality programs and services that directly benefit SDSU students. The Aztec Parents Fund has had a profound impact on the types and quality of programs and services available for students. Your partnership with the university dramatically enhances the student experience.

As the Aztec Parents Fund continues to grow, so do the size and scope of the projects. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Members of the Aztec Parents Advisory Board met in June to discuss requests for Aztec Parents Fund grants, and then gave recommendations to Vice President for Student Affairs James R. Kitchen.

Below are examples of some of the programs funded:

Alumni Association
- Three-part program to help prepare graduating seniors for the job market. Programs include a “What Not to Wear” workshop, etiquette dinner and networking mixer.

Career Services
- Exploring Majors Fair, which provides in-depth exploration of the array of majors available to students.

Intercultural Relations/Cross Cultural Center
- Diversity Awareness Programs.

Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- Development of the EOP Learning Community and the Summer Bridge Programs.

Student Health Services
- Creation of a comprehensive brochure to help parents have conversations with their students on alcohol and other drugs.

SDSU Center for Leadership
- Seed money for leadership programs addressing gender-based and underrepresented student leadership development.

Student Activities and Campus Life
- Support for fraternity and sorority members to attend the California Higher Education Alcohol and Other Drugs Education Conference.

Division of Undergraduate Studies
- SDSU Mexican Border Initiative offering alternative education abroad opportunities for students.

Graduate and Research Affairs
- SDSU Student Research Symposium to support faculty-student interaction and student research opportunities.

Counseling & Psychological Services
- Virtual wellness materials.

International Student Center
- Study Abroad Top-Up Grants.

Thank you to all the families who contributed to the Aztec Parents Fund last year. We invite you to join the rich tradition of parent support at SDSU and contribute to the Aztec Parents Fund to make a difference for students today! Make your gift online at www.sa.sdsu.edu/parents/ParentsFund.html or contact the director of development for Aztec Parents, Dan Montoya, at (619) 594-8236.