



Greetings from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University. Thank you for signing up to receive information from the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.

The email newsletters we send are meant to provide you with information about the opportunities available to SIPA students and details related to the process of applying for admission and financial aid. An archive of the emails sent can be found by visiting the following site:

http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/admissions/newsletter.html

Application Information

During January and February the Admissions Committee is busy reviewing admission applications. Admission decisions will be made available via the Internet starting in early March. Candidates who have submitted an application will receive an email indicating that the admission decision is available on the application web site. Users will need to log in with their username and password to view the decision. The Committee has a goal of starting to send decisions in early March so if you have applied, be sure to keep checking your email account for a message from our office.

We do not set one specific date to communicate all decisions. Some files take longer to review than others. We will do our best to communicate the decision of the Committee as soon as possible.

Admitted Student Information – Message Board and Open House

Candidates who are offered admission to SIPA will be able to take advantage of both the Internet and a visit to campus to learn more about what SIPA has to offer. Shortly after admission decisions are made available, admitted candidates will receive an invitation to participate in an Internet Message Board. This will give successful candidates the opportunity to interact with current SIPA students. The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid will also be hosting an Open House for admitted candidates on Tuesday, April 15th. The Open House will last all day and will feature a number of panels that include faculty, current students, administrators, and alumni.

Information regarding both of these opportunities will be made available in admission letters.

Financial Aid

Shortly after admission letters are mailed, financial aid information will also be made available. Initial letters will include a basic summary of the costs and types of aid that are available. Individual letters will be sent as we are able to process information that has been provided to our office.

We highly recommend that U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the 2008-2009 as soon as possible. The FAFSA is used to award loans and Work-Study awards to students. More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. Completing the FAFSA requires tax information so we also encourage you to file your tax return as soon as possible. The SIPA FAFSA code is E00128.

International students should begin to accumulate information regarding personal finances. Admitted international students will need to begin the process of applying for a student Visa. For more information on the process please feel free to visit the web page of the International Students and Scholars Office:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/>

GRE Policy Change

For those who wish to apply to SIPA in the future, we have a very important announcement. In the past SIPA has always strongly recommended, but not required, the submission of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) with an admission application.

Starting with the fall 2009 application cycle please note that GRE scores will be a required part of the admission application for the MIA and MPA two-year full-time degree programs.

Those who plan on applying for the fall of 2009 should start gathering information on the GRE exam now. The exam is administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and you can find more information on their web site:

www.ets.org

The GRE code for SIPA is 2161 – there is no department code. We do not average GRE test scores; we take the highest scores achieved. Thus for some applicants, it may be advantageous to take the test more than one time.

Student Interview

The following is an example of student interview that is available on our web site. We conduct interviews with current students, faculty, and alumni. The interviews are available on the following site:

http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/admissions/interviews.html

We encourage you to check the site frequently as we are constantly working on interviewing additional people.

Current Student: Liana Melchenko

Liana is a second-year SIPA student pursuing an MIA degree with a concentration in Management and Institutional Analysis. She was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship for outstanding human achievement and leadership and holds a B.A. in Public Law from the Russian State University of Kant, Kaliningrad, Russia and a M.A. in Linguistics from Lund University, Sweden.

Prior to studying at SIPA Liana worked three years for the government of the Kaliningrad region, Russia as a Legal Consultant for the Human Rights Commission representing the Ombudsman authority in national and international court litigations, providing assistance on human rights violations and preparing reports on public policy. Liana also has experience in the non-for-profit sector, she was a project manager of YMCA-AMBER in Kaliningrad, Russia from 2002 to 2004.

Have you taken classes at other Columbia schools?

"I have taken a class at Teachers College and I liked it very much because TC has a different atmosphere and students have a very different perspective on the issues we were studying. I am also taking a class at the Law School and the professor is one of the most knowledgeable persons in the world on European Law. I am really enjoying the opportunity to choose classes from others schools."

What did you do over the summer between academic years?

"I did a summer internship for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London working in an investment project in Kalliningrad, my hometown in Russia. It is a huge project that involves a loan for over 100 million euros for rebuilding water, heating and waste management facilities. My job was to do lobbying and evaluation of the project and I was traveling back and forth between London and Kallinigrad. I really enjoyed this experience, I was able to spend time with my family and help my hometown while applying everything I had learned at SIPA."

How did you obtain your internship?

"One day I was reading the local newspaper of my hometown and I saw an article about this project and I thought I would love to work in this venture. At that point the project was still an idea, but the size and scope of the project represented an extraordinary opportunity for such a small town.

"The purpose of the project at that time was to increase foreign investment and environmental standards in a strategic area that is in the border of the European Union and the sea shore of the Baltic Sea. I was so excited with the project that I decided to call them. At the beginning they were hesitant because the project had not started, but when the agreement was signed in May they called me and invited me to join them. It was a unique opportunity and I was able to apply all the skills I learned at SIPA, particularly the memos of Prof. Lawrence.

"Currently, I am doing another internship with the World Economic Forum in the Banking and Capital Markets Team. I am assisting in the preparation of the Annual Meeting in

Davos, Switzerland, to take place in January 2008. This is a world major event to be attended by head of states and business leaders from all over the world.”

What has been the most challenging part of your experience at SIPA?

“The most challenging was economics last year. I did not expect it, I thought it was going to be easier but it wasn't and I have to recognize that is one of the good things SIPA has to offer, its emphasis in economics and statistics in the core requirements.”

News and Events

U.S. Presidential Election

The race to be the next American President is far from being decided but the field is dwindling. Dorian Warren is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. Warren specializes in the study of inequality and American politics, focusing on the political organization of marginalized groups. Before Super Tuesday Warren recorded the following video interview:

http://sipa.columbia.edu/news_events/interviews/d_warren.wvx

Middle East Foreign Policy

On February 1st, Zalmay Khalilzad, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, spoke on the challenges facing the U.S. regarding foreign policy formulation in the Middle East. The video of Mr. Khalilzad's speech can be viewed on the following link:

http://sipa.columbia.edu/news_events/multimedia/videos/sipa_khalilzad.html

Office Information

Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have questions. In addition, if you plan to visit New York City you are welcome to visit campus and attend an information session. We do request that you contact us at least one week prior to your arrival so we can make the proper arrangements. Thank you again and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Staff of the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

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