

HANDBOOK FOR
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

ST. NORBERT COLLEGE
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR
SERVICES

REVISED FALL 2003

WELCOME!

Welcome to St. Norbert College! This handbook is designed to help you locate the resources and services you will need while you are here. We hope it will answer your questions. If you are unable to find an answer to your specific question, please contact International Student and Scholar Services, located in the Bemis International Center. The telephone number is (920) 403-3263.

NOTICE TO STUDENTS

This guide should be used in combination with *The Citizen: A Student Guide to the St. Norbert College Community* and the *St. Norbert College Course Catalog*. Because every student is responsible for the information contained in these resources, you should read a copy of each publication before you begin your studies at SNC. Both publications are available on the SNC webpage: www.snc.edu.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

St. Norbert College does not discriminate on the basis of age, citizenship, color, disability, marital status, national origin, religion or sex in matters of educational programs, activities or employment policies. The college adheres to Federal and State Laws including the Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. The Affirmative Action Officer, Office of Human Resources, is at 920-403-3212. The St. Norbert College Section 504 coordinator, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, is the Director of the Academic Support Services (920-404-1321).

STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES: YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Most international students at SNC have an F-1 or J-1 student visa issued by the U.S. Government. This section of the handbook is designed to help you understand the special privileges and important responsibilities that come with your visa status. If you have questions that are not answered in this section please contact International Student and Scholar Services.

The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) requires you to always maintain your immigration status. Students who fail to follow the rules of their visa status can expect problems, which might be serious. In some cases, they can affect you forever.

Important Immigration Terms

BCIS	Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. This agency is a part of the federal government organized under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
I-20	Certification of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status for Academic and Language Students
I-94	Arrival/Departure Record (should be stapled in passport)
J-1	Visa category for certain exchange participants
F-1	Visa category for student in an academic or language program
Status	Your legal status in the U.S. Should not to be confused with “visa,” which is the stamp in the passport
Visa	The stamp in the passport that permits someone to apply for admission to the U.S. at the port of entry
I-765	Application for Employment Authorization
DS-2019	Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 Visa
Non-immigrant	Individual who wishes to enter the U.S. for a temporary stay and intends to return home
Immigrant	Individual who enters the U.S. as a lawful permanent resident (also known as resident alien or green card holder)

Your F-1 Student Visa

If you look at your passport and the visa stamp, you will see that the visa stamp tells you:

1. how long the visa is valid;
2. the name of the university from which you received the Form I-20 or DS-2019; and
3. the number of times you are allowed to enter the U.S. (multiple indicates you can re-enter the U.S. multiple times; single indicates you may enter the U.S. only once)

Entering the United States

When you first arrived in the U.S., you went through passport control, showing the official your passport with the entry visa and your Form I-20 or DS20-19. You also received the white Form I-94. These documents are very important. It is your responsibility to keep them in a safe place as you will need to use them several times during your education in the U.S.

Note: It is strongly recommended that you make photocopies of your immigration documents to be kept in a safe place. Then, if the originals are lost, you have copies to use when you request replacements. The BCIS requires schools to keep a photocopy of each foreign student's immigration documents on file.

The date and place you entered the U.S., your F-1 status, and the 11-digit admission number are written on your Form I-94. The 11-digit number is given to you and to no one else. You also have a "SEVIS" number at the top of your I-20 or DS-2019. SEVIS stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. Through these numbers, the U.S. government keeps a record of your departures and arrivals, your major, your degree objectives, all schools that you attend, permission to work, and practical training. As long as you remain in the U.S., you will keep the Form I-94. If you leave to visit your home country over summer, for example, then the Form I-94 will be taken from you just before you depart the U.S. If you return, you will be given a new Form I-94.

On the I-20 or DS-2019, the immigration officer wrote the date and place of entry and your new admission number. You will see "D/S" –this means *Duration of Status*. That means you may be in the U.S. so long as:

1. you continue to study; *and*
2. you are making satisfactory progress in your education; *or*
3. you are undertaking authorized practical training after completion of your education.

How Do You Remain in Status?

Federal immigration law says that you are maintaining your student status if:

1. your passport is valid (has not expired);
2. you are attending SNC full-time (or have special permission to enroll part-time);
3. you do not stay longer in the U.S. than permitted on your Form I-20, Part 5 (+ 60 days for F-1's and 30 days for J-1's);
4. you obtain permission to continue from one educational level to another, for example, after you obtain your bachelor's degree, you may want to obtain a master's degree;
5. you follow specific procedures if you transfer to another school;
6. you are not employed off campus or, if you do want off campus work, you obtain permission to do so; *and*
7. SNC reports any change of address for you to the BCIS within 10 days of the change.

Everyone at SNC wants to make certain that you have a great educational experience. We want you to make friends, obtain a high quality education, learn about your new host country, and prepare for a successful future. We do not want you to experience any problems that can be avoided. Certainly, we

do not want you to have any avoidable problems with immigration. *It is extremely difficult and often impossible to regain your immigration status once you have lost it.* The BCIS stresses that each student is responsible for maintaining status; we are here to help you do that.

The BCIS and You!

Please read the following sections carefully. It is your responsibility to make absolutely certain that you maintain your student status. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact International Student and Scholar Services. If we cannot immediately answer your questions, we will assist you in getting the correct information.

Full Course of Study

Your F-1 student visa requires that you maintain your status by following a full course of study at SNC.

Definition of a full course of study: The BCIS regulations state that a full course of study, excluding audited courses, includes:

1. study in a language program requiring at least 18 hours of classroom instruction per week;
2. at least 3 one-credit SNC classes; *or*
3. a combination of ESL and SNC classes that add up to a full course of study

In addition, the student must be in continuous attendance making academic progress. What this means is that you are expected to be registered for classes and attending full time during the regular academic year. You may take a summer vacation if you wish. BCIS regulations state that you are in status if you take a summer vacation and intend to return to take courses the next academic semester.

Advisement and Registration

The International Student and Scholar Services staff will advise new international students, including those completing ESL. The advisor will assist you in selecting classes and processing your registration. Please remember that you must meet with your advisor before you can complete your registration.

Adding a Class, Dropping a Class, Withdrawal

You must obtain permission from your academic advisor before you may add or drop a class, withdraw completely. As an undergraduate non-ESL student, you will be out of status if you fail to be in continuous attendance (Fall semester through Spring semester) or if you take fewer than three one-credit courses. Therefore, if you wish to add or drop a class after you have registered (or if you are considering withdrawing from all of your classes, for whatever reason), you must meet with a staff member at International Students and Scholar Services.

Employment

At some time during your stay in the U.S., you may wish to be employed. It is important to follow the required BCIS procedures for securing that employment.

As an F-1 student, you may be eligible for the following types of employment:

1. on campus employment

2. off campus employment
3. practical training

Definition of On Campus Employment: The BCIS defines on campus employment as work undertaken on the school's premises. At SNC, examples of such work could include employment in the bookstore or cafeteria; a work/study position within an administration office; or a campus internship. There are many opportunities for on campus employment at SNC. Typically, foreign students may work on campus without receiving permission from the BCIS. During the school year, the maximum number of hours foreign students may work is 20.

Eligibility for On Campus Employment: Should on campus employment opportunities exist, you can be employed without obtaining permission from the BCIS, if you:

1. are in status, maintaining your full time status without interruption;
2. do not work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session and less than 40 hours per week, during holidays and summer vacations; *and*
3. possess a valid social security card

BCIS regulations state that you may not be employed on campus if you have completed your degree program, unless you are enrolled in another degree program the following academic term and have an I-20 from that school/program.

Definition of Off Campus Employment: The BCIS has very strict regulations controlling off campus employment. Off campus employment is just that – working away from the university at a restaurant, a store, or a factory, for example. Students who disregard these regulations are placing themselves in jeopardy.

Foreign students **may not** work off campus in **ANY** job, unless they have received permission from the BCIS. Students may only apply to work off campus after they have been in F-1 status for nine consecutive months and can demonstrate drastic, unforeseen changes in their financial circumstances, or obtain employment that is directly related to their area of study (practical training). If you do receive permission then you may work only 20 hours per week, except during vacation periods, when you may work full-time.

Definition of Practical Training: You are permitted to engage in temporary employment in your field of study during and after completion of your degree program. This employment is called practical training. There are two types of practical training: *optional practical training (OPT)* and *curricular practical training (CPT)*. International students interested in learning more about practical training should meet with someone at International Student and Scholar Services.

Visits Abroad and Re-entry

Many of our international students will return to their own country to visit during their education at SNC; for most, this will be over the summer. Others may visit other countries, such as Canada or Mexico. If you follow some simple requirements, such visits should present no difficulties.

Requirements for Re-entry into the United States: If your visit outside the U.S. is temporary, 5 months or less, you may re-enter if you have the following:

1. a valid passport;
2. a valid F-1 visa; *and*
3. your Form I-20 or DS-2019 that has been endorsed by a Designated School Official

Before departing the U.S.: *You must take your Form I-20 or DS-2019 to International Student and Scholar Services at SNC so it can be signed for re-entry.* The staff will indicate on this form that you are eligible to re-enter the United States to continue your education at SNC. Though there are exceptions, if your visit will be longer than five months or if your visa expires before you return, you must reapply for a visa at an American consulate.

Other Immigration Procedures

You must follow certain procedures to 1) change (transfer) schools; 2) extend your academic program or completion of studies date; 3) change your degree or major; 4) change from one visa status to another; 5) apply for reinstatement of status. Please see the International Student and Scholar Services staff for informational handouts and advice on these and other immigration questions to ensure you do not fall out of status.

J Visas

Students holding J-1 visas may not work unless they receive permission from their exchange-program sponsor. Visiting faculty holding J-1 visas are already employed, and they are therefore considered ineligible for other employment.

How to Get Information About Immigration Matters

The International Student and Scholar Services office is the first place you should go if you have any questions about immigration matters. While friends and acquaintances might be able to share their experiences, you should be careful about relying on their advice.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ST. NORBERT COLLEGE

Classroom Location Abbreviations

(As will appear in the “Course Schedule” at the beginning of each semester)

JMS	John Minahan Science Hall
SJ	St. Joseph Hall
BL	Francis H. Boyle Hall
MN	Main Hall
COF	Austin E. Cofrin Hall
PAC	Pennings Activity Center

PN	Abbot Pennings Hall of Fine Arts
MS	St. John's Hall/Military Science
WL	Todd Wehr Library
SC	Schuldes Sports Center
IC	Bemis International Center

ACADEMIC LIFE

Your first impressions of academic life in the U.S. might be confusing. Foreign students often comment that U.S. students are competitive but don't seem to study very hard, and that beyond the informality of the classroom the professors are very demanding. Some of these apparent contradictions can be explained in the values that underpin them. Creativity, tolerance, and flexibility are, in general, valued above tradition and respect for authority in the U.S. Teaching styles and classroom attitudes vary widely and are influenced by many different factors. Even where tradition does dictate professorial or student behavior, the patterns may not be evident to someone coming from a different tradition.

The classroom atmosphere at an American university is generally quite relaxed. Most professors allow students freedom to raise questions when they have problems understanding the lecture.

Regular class attendance and involvement in class discussions is expected. Part of your final course grade will often be based on class participation.

The teacher commonly uses lecture and discussion sessions. The professor assigns readings to supplement the lectures and discussions. Examinations cover materials discussed in class as well as readings done outside of class. There are also frequent quizzes (short tests on assigned material), papers, and tests throughout the semester. It is very important that you meet the deadlines assigned.

Professors are available to meet with students individually. The best time to visit is during specified office hours, which will be on your syllabus at the beginning of each semester. If you are not free during that time, you can make an appointment with the professor.

All students will have an academic advisor assigned to them when they enroll in a degree program. To help your advisor, try to present a total picture of your educational plans and career goals within your first few meetings. Two days per semester are reserved as advisement days: no classes are scheduled. During these days you will meet with your advisor to discuss the number and types of classes you will be taking the following semester. Before you add, drop or change your schedule in any way you must meet with your academic advisor.

Homework

At SNC there are typically four hours of class per week and sometimes, predominantly in the natural sciences, a two-hour lab. You are expected to spend time outside of class reading the daily assignments, studying for quizzes, tests, mid-term examinations, and final examinations as well as working on research papers or other projects.

Foreign students are sometimes dismayed by the amount of reading assigned for their courses, especially if English is not their native language. It is important, therefore, to be clear about the role of the reading assignments in the course. In some courses, the reading is central; you must read the texts closely and know the material for the exams. In other courses, readings may be supplementary or optional. It probably will not be possible for you to read thoroughly everything that is assigned. You will have to prioritize: read the most important material first and carefully; then skim the less important assignments.

If you find yourself falling behind or feeling terribly pressured about your assignments, discuss your problem with the professor after class or during office hours. Do not hesitate to get help if you have an academic problem.

Where to Get Help with Academic Problems

At SNC you have a number of options to choose from if you are having academic problems. As stated before, you should talk to your professors. He/She may have some good suggestions about how to study for the class. Also, for most classes at SNC there is a TA or a tutor that can help you. Most information about the TAs is given out in the class syllabus at the beginning of each semester. If you have any problems finding the TA information just ask your professor. He/She will be able to point you in the right direction. Finally, Academic Mastery is a tutoring service offered to SNC students free of charge. Designed to increase students' opportunities for academic success, the Academic Mastery Program provides tutorial services to students for lower division courses. Tutorials are conducted either one-on-one or in small groups. When appropriate, staff members assess academic skills and study habits to determine the most effective course of action.

Writing Papers and Where to Turn if You Need Help

Research papers are another aspect of homework that may seem overwhelming. Some students are unable to express themselves clearly or eloquently in written English; others do not know how to use the research tools in the library; others may not be familiar with American academic writing styles and conventions. Many American students share these problems, and help is not far away.

If you have any problems with writing the Writing Center at SNC is an excellent place to turn. The Writing Center, located in the Todd Wehr Library, Room 142, is a tutorial writing center available to all SNC students at no charge. Student peer tutors from across the disciplines, trained in the techniques of one-to-one tutoring of the writing process, can help students at every level of the writing process: discovering ideas, developing ideas and thesis statements, organizing, revising, and editing. Tutors can also work with students systematically on personal writing needs: paragraphing, sentence structure, style, grammar, mechanics and usage. Note: Writing Center tutors do not proofread essays. Drop-in and appointment hours are available.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas without acknowledgment of the source. Although in some cultures incorporating the words of revered scholars is an important part of the style of academic writing, it is not acceptable in the United States; indeed, it is considered a serious offense. The consequences of proven or even suspected plagiarism can be severe (for example, a failing grade or

expulsion from class or the university). Borrowed words and ideas must always be clearly documented.

SNC takes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty includes copying exam papers, assignments or term papers and presenting material as if it were your own. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who are academically dishonest.

You will be required to sign a pledge card agreeing to abide by the SNC Academic Honor Code. If you have further questions about the SNC Academic Honor Code please consult your current SNC Catalog.

Glossary of SNC Academic Language

Advisor	Each SNC student has an academic advisor. This is a faculty or staff member who assists the student in selecting courses and following the student's academic progress. The academic advisor is available to discuss choosing a major or career path.
Credit	Each course (which usually meets four one-hour periods per week) is worth one credit. Full-time students usually receive four credits per semester. Thirty-two credits are required for a degree.
Division	Each division specializes in a certain academic subject. At SNC, there are three divisions: Divisions of Natural Science, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Within each division, you will find professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers and teaching assistants (TA's).
Drop Date	Students may choose to drop a course up to a certain date each semester after midterms; however, you must remember that if you drop a course, you usually do not receive your tuition money back. After the drop date, it is not possible to drop a course. Check the schedule of classes for the final drop date.
Final	This is the last, major examination of the semester. There is one week set aside at the end of the semester for final exams. If a student is scheduled for three or more final exams in one day, he or she is allowed to switch the date of one of the exams. This rule also holds true for exams throughout the semester.
Grade Point Average	Course performance is evaluated with grades of A, AB, B, BC, C, CD, D, or F. The grades A through F are given a numerical value (A=4, AB= 3.5, and F=0). Your grade point average is computed by taking the grade you receive for a course and adding its numerical value to those of your other courses.

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$$\begin{array}{rcl} 1\text{credit} \times B & = & 3.0 \\ 1 \text{ credit} \times AB & = & 3.5 \\ 1 \text{ credit} \times CD & = & 1.5 \\ \hline 1 \text{ credit} \times A & = & 4.0 \\ \hline & = & 12.0 \end{array}$$

Now divide the total points by the total credits. 12 points divided by 4 credits equals 3.0, the GPA for the semester.

Mid-term	A Mid-term is a major examination given in many classes in the middle of the semester. This examination is usually given before the final drop date. You may have more than one major exam in a class.
OARS	On-line Advisement and Registration System. This is SNC's web-based system for academic advisement and registration. It is accessible via SNC's webpage. Using a password, you can get information on courses, propose a schedule, and register.
Quiz	An informal examination, shorter in length than a regular examination. Points for quizzes generally are counted towards your final grade.
Research Paper	This is a major paper, which can be anywhere from five to twenty-five pages in length. In order to write this paper, a student must select an approved topic, somewhat narrow in scope, and do research in the library. Papers are to be typed, either on a typewriter or on a computer with a word processor program. You can obtain help with the mechanics of paper-writing in the Writing Center in the Library.
TA	Teaching Assistant. Some professors hire students to be teaching assistants or TAs. TAs help other students understand material discussed in lectures or labs.
Syllabus	When you begin a class, you will receive a syllabus during the first class meeting. The syllabus lists information about the course, the books you will use, and the professor's name, office number, and phone number. Usually there is a general outline of how the course will proceed, and sometimes assignments and dates of examinations along with the grading policies are included.
Transcript	A transcript is a record of a student's grades. An "official transcript" is sealed by the issuing institution, and normally it is sent directly to the school or office requesting it. You will probably need to request an official transcript from the Registrar Office if you wish to obtain credit for your SNC courses back home.
Undergraduate	Undergraduates are students who are studying for their first degree at a College or University. During the first year students are called Freshmen; the second year, Sophomores; the third year, Juniors; and the last year, Seniors. The undergraduate degree is the Bachelor's degree.
Withdrawal	Sometimes students find that a course is too difficult for them to complete and do not wish to have their grade in the course placed on their GPA. The deadline for withdrawal of courses falls in the twelfth week of the semester. After this date, any withdrawal results in a failure (F) of the course. Before this date, the grade will appear as a W on the report card and will not affect the GPA, but the student will be charged financially for the course.

A Note on Grades

Foreign students sometimes find that their U.S. classmates are preoccupied with grades. This can be explained partly by the spirit of individual competition that is fostered and supported by American society. It is also a pragmatic matter, as grades are an important factor in gaining admission to graduate school or getting a job after graduation. The basis for grading in each course will be determined by the professor. The weight given to exams, papers, class participation, and other factors will be clearly specified at the beginning of each term.

Advice from Past International Students

- The more work one puts into the classes, the more one gets out of them. Never hesitate to ask questions. The professors are very understanding.
- It is very difficult to study the same as American students. Since our languages are different, most of the international students have to study more than other students.
- Practice typing. I had a very hard time typing my papers.
- I think that the tutors are very helpful
- Do not waste one minute while living here. Gain as much knowledge as possible.

LIBRARIES AND RESEARCH

Todd Wehr Library

The campus library contains a wide collection of resource materials, such as books, reference volumes, current and bound periodicals and journals, microfilm, and maps and charts. In order to take material out of the library, you must present your SNC ID card at the circulation desk.

Inter-library Loan

Books and articles not available at the SNC library can be lent from other libraries via a loan network. Interlibrary loan is available at the circulation desk. You must ask the librarian for the appropriate forms.

CD-ROM Services

These databases provide indexes for completing research. If you find an article that you would like to use for your research you can order it through Interlibrary Loan. In order to use the CD-ROM services you will need to understand basic information about computers. If you are unsure how to use a computer, just ask the reference librarian and he/she will help you get started.

On-Line Catalogue

The library is fully automated to assist students in obtaining books or reference materials. The on-line catalogue serves in place of a card catalogue to assist students in completing their research. If you have any questions on the library services, ask for assistance at the Resource Desk.

FOOD SERVICES ON CAMPUS

Visit the SNC Dining Services webpage at www.snc.edu/dining for information on the meal plan, dining services hours, Union cafeteria menus, and more!

Your SNC ID Card

Your ID card has your photo, name and SNC ID # on it. You will need it to use your meal plan and Meal Dollars. If you lose your card, immediately report it missing to Campus Card Services. Any lost card will be replaced for a fee .

Custom Cash

Custom Cash is money placed on the ID card for purchases made either on or off campus without having to use cash or a check. Custom Cash can be purchased in any amount at any time during the year. Unlike meal dollars, Custom Cash will transfer from one semester to another as long as you have a minimum balance of \$25.00. You may cancel your card at any time to receive your cash.

St. Norbert Sensenbrenner Memorial Union Cafeteria (“The Union”)

Food service is available for all students seven days per week during the academic year. The Union staff offers nutritious meals and does its best to provide a variety of foods for all needs and preferences. American food, including the food at the Union, probably will be quite different than the food to which you are accustomed. Consider trying new things and you likely will develop some new favorites! However, if you have serious difficulty adjusting to the food or have special dietary needs that are not being met, please see the International Student and Scholar Services staff.

During special vacations, such as the summer months and Christmas vacation, meals may be served at different times, or no meals may be offered. Watch for announcements. If you have a special diet, for example a low-salt diet, which you must follow, it is your responsibility to notify Food Service of your needs.

If you have schedule conflicts that do not allow you time to eat, you may request a sack lunch or dinner prepared. This will be taken off of your meal plan. Requests must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Ask the cafeteria cashier for instructions. If you are too ill to come to the cafeteria for a meal, you can also make arrangements with your RA to have a sick meal “to-go.”

HOUSING

All SNC students are required to live on campus. Only those students over age 22 or those students who are of senior year status may choose to live off campus. **Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors under age 22 are required to live on campus from arrival until May.**

On Campus

In addition to traditional residence halls, the campus also has townhouses, apartments, and college owned houses. These options for housing usually are reserved for senior students.

Students who live in a residence hall at the time of arrival are required to live on campus until the end of the school year in May. Students are not allowed to move off campus mid-semester.

Students must get permission from Residential Life before moving off campus. Permission is not guaranteed.

Off Campus

Students over the age of 22 who wish to live off campus must investigate housing on their own. However, the office of Residential Life does keep a list of the available apartments off campus. While students are looking for an apartment or other off campus housing, St. Norbert College is able to provide students with information about temporary places to stay.

On Campus Vacation and Summer Housing

Housing is available during breaks for a fee. Contact Residential Life for details.

Summer dormitory/residence hall rates are inexpensive. (Approximately \$30-35 per week).

However, students are not required to live on campus during the summer.

Roommates

Living with a roommate from the U.S. can be an excellent way to practice English, to learn about U.S. culture and customs, or to simply meet a new friend. Living with another person requires patience, tolerance, and kindness, especially as you get to know one another during the first few days. It can also be one of the most enjoyable aspects of your stay on campus.

If you and your roommate disagree about certain things, the best way to solve your differences is to speak honestly to each other. Sometimes, even when roommates try to work out differences, they are simply not well suited for each other. If this happens, you may go to your RA, who will work with your Hall Director in assigning you a new roommate.

HEALTH

Emergencies

In case of an emergency or to request an ambulance (emergency transportation to the hospital), dial 9-911 if you are on campus. If you are calling from off campus just dial 911. This number is only to be used in emergencies. For on campus emergencies, contact St. Norbert College Security at 403-3260.

Staying Healthy

Adjusting to life in a new country means excitement, challenge, and the unexpected. No amount of preparation can guarantee a trouble-free transition. There is one area, however, in which you do not want to face the unexpected: medical care for yourself. The U.S. does not have a national health plan, and the government is not a major provider of medical care. Arranging and paying for medical care is your responsibility. Because medical care in the U.S. is very expensive, the best way to meet this responsibility is to obtain comprehensive health insurance coverage to protect you and your family from exorbitant costs.

Health Insurance

Medical services in the United States are very good but they are also very expensive. For this reason, St. Norbert College requires that all students, including foreign exchange students, international students and ESL students, have medical insurance.

SNC will require you to purchase health insurance during orientation if you have not done so prior to arriving on campus. This must be done at the Business Office in JMS. SNC will automatically collect

the Student Only premium from students who do not submit proof of insurance prior to the first day of classes. Generally, no outside insurance will be accepted.

Key Benefits of the St. Norbert College Health Insurance:

1. Services at the Student Health Center (located on campus) are covered 100%. Itemized coverage for referral to community physicians.
2. No claim forms are needed for services in the Student Health Center.
3. Study abroad and other foreign travel are covered under basic and major medical plan.
4. Coverage for the Hepatitis B immunization series, recommended by the American College Health Association, is included.
5. \$50,000 per injury or illness major medical coverage that begins when any one item of the basic plan is exhausted (\$100 deductible and 20% co-pay).
6. Insurance rates can be prorated by month, semester, or year.
7. Pre-existing conditions are covered when insured for 12 months.

The premium cost is approximately \$600 per year. The premium will be posted to your student account and will be payable at the Business Office. If you have health insurance questions, please call the Student Health Center at (920) 403-3266.

Where to Go if You Are Sick

Emergency Room

If you are feeling sick, do not hesitate to get help. Unless you have a real emergency, however, such as uncontrolled bleeding or a broken bone, do not go to a hospital emergency room for treatment. Emergency rooms are very expensive and, if your condition is not life threatening, you may have to wait a long time for care.

If you do have a serious problem, go to the emergency room. The number to call in case you or someone else needs emergency transportation to the hospital is **911**. If you are on campus remember to dial **9-911**.

SNC Health Center

The SNC Health Care Center can be a real bargain. If you are suffering minor problems, you can save yourself expensive visits to the hospital by stopping in at the Health Center.

A nurse is available for outpatient (limited) care from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. You are strongly encouraged to make appointments, as this will assure a visit with the nurse at the time you come into the Health Center. A visit with a nurse is free of charge. A medical doctor is available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, and charges \$30.00 per visit.

The Health Center can assist with referrals to college counselors and community resources for specific needs. The Health Center is located in the lower level of Main Hall. The extension for this office is 3266.

Clinics

Most clinics in the United States are staffed by physicians, nurse practitioners (registered nurses qualified to evaluate, diagnose, and treat common conditions), midwives (registered nurses specializing in prenatal and childbirth practice), registered nurses, and a variety of other health-care workers. You may not see a physician when you first seek medical care.

Depending on the severity of your symptoms, you may receive care immediately, later the same day, or the next day. You may be offered a choice of doctors or other health-care providers. Consider whether you would prefer to see a man or a woman, an older practitioner or a younger one, etc. Even if you are not asked, you should make your preferences known. For the best medical care, it is important to choose one clinic and use it throughout your stay. In this way, all those who see you will know you and your medical history and they will be able to treat you appropriately.

The time you spend with health-care providers may seem very brief, with little opportunity for conversation. The doctor or nurse will ask you many questions; some may appear unnecessary or intrusive, but you should try to answer them as completely as possible. You may think the approach abrupt and impersonal; however, the workers are only trying to be efficient and thorough, characteristics central to American culture. It is expected that patients will ask questions about their health, diagnosis, treatment, and costs. American physicians expect their patients to participate in making decisions about medications and treatment choices. If you ever have difficulty understanding anything about your medical status or treatment, ask for clarification. You can ask workers to talk more slowly, to repeat, or to write something down. If you think that you will need a translator, ask when you make your appointment if someone can assist you, or bring a friend.

Emotional Health

Sometimes individuals become depressed, lonely or fearful and even the passage of time doesn't seem to improve things. Visitors and students from overseas may especially experience these feelings if they come from a culture that is very different from that of the United States, or if they miss the support of their family and friends at home.

If you are feeling emotionally upset, depressed, or just need someone to talk to, help is available for you. Remember, you're not the only person on campus to have faced problems! It is often a relief to speak with someone about your concerns. At home, it is likely that you would have consulted with someone in your own family circle for help. Here, you have several choices.

The International Student and Scholar Services Staff

For concerns about culture shock, loneliness, or if you just need to talk to someone, call your student mentor or your advisor. They can make helpful suggestions, listen to your concerns, and may refer you for further counseling.

The SNC Counseling Center

You may prefer to make an appointment with a counselor at the SNC Counseling Center, 3045. Trained counselors are skilled at helping students and faculty members with a wide range of personal and emotional concerns. Your appointments and your records will be kept confidential, and there is no charge to you. The Counseling Center is located in the lower level of Main Hall.

Exercise and Eating Right

An important part of staying healthy is eating a nutritious and balanced diet. Finding the right foods in a new country may be difficult. The food everyone is eating may not appeal to you. It may help to find some traditional foods from home, especially when you first arrive.

Exercise can also contribute to your health. If you exercise regularly you will get sick less often, have more energy, and feel less stress. All of these factors will improve your academic performance.

Schuldes Sports Center and the Campus Center offer various classes and fitness equipment at no extra charge for students. Visit www.snc.edu/cc for more information.

Staying healthy in a new environment, with all the differences in climate, food, and language, is a challenge. If you have adequate health insurance, get medical care when you need it, eat a nutritious diet, and get regular exercise, you will stay healthy and get much more out of your experience in the U.S.

SOCIAL LIFE ON CAMPUS

Degrees of Friendship

As is probably true in your culture, it takes time for friendships - a close relationship - to develop between Americans. Nevertheless, most Americans are very “friendly” and appear to be very open when you meet them. You may hear Americans refer to acquaintances, such as persons who happen to sit together in class, as “friends.” There are, however, degrees of friendship.

In the U.S., people often say, “Hi, how are you?” or “How are you doing?” and then do not wait for a response. This is a polite phrase, not really a question. You can respond by saying, “Fine, thanks.” Or you may hear an American say, “Drop by anytime” or “Let’s get together soon.” These are friendly expressions, but they may not be meant literally. It is polite to call someone on the telephone before you visit. Even with an invitation, it is acceptable to call a new acquaintance to see if he or she would like to go to a campus activity with you.

You will have to make an effort to meet people so that friendship can develop. Because crossing borders to study is a unique and powerful experience, you may find, at least initially, that you have more in common with other foreign students than with Americans, and some of your strongest friendships will be made with other foreigners. Soon you will meet Americans who have studied abroad—and who therefore know something of what you are experiencing—as well as individuals who share your interests, academic and otherwise.

Relationships with roommates work best when the dual arts of flexibility and compromise are practiced. Your roommate may or may not become a friend, but there is no reason you should not develop a good relationship. If necessary, SNC will offer guidance and advice to help you.

Participating in Campus Life

Seek out fellow students with similar interests. You may find them in your classes or laboratories, but there are other options, too. St. Norbert College offers a wide variety of clubs and organizations.

There are cultural and religious associations, sports teams and sports clubs, volunteer service organizations, fraternities and sororities, student government, academic societies, music and theatre groups, and a student newspaper. Some of the many clubs and groups are listed below.

Club Activities	Beyond Borders, Japan Club, Environmental Club, Amnesty International
Service Trips and other Travel	Campus Center/Leadership, Service and Involvement Office
Fitness	Latin Dance, Aerobics, Yoga (Campus Center)
Sports Teams	Crew, Hockey, Basketball, Soccer, etc.
Greek Organizations	A Greek organization is a tight-knit primarily social group of all males or all females. Sororities are all female groups while fraternities consist of all males. To become involved in either, talk to a roommate or an American friend.
Independent Groups	Independent groups are similar to the Greek organizations, except they do not have a pledging program. Also, there are no national ties as there is with the Greek organizations. They are very easy to join, and usually cost between \$20 and \$25 per semester- less than fraternities or sororities. Independent groups also pick queens or uglymen. (first semester and second semester only)
Campus Ministry	Volunteer programs, discussion sessions and religious retreats

Advice from Past Foreign Students

- Join a group or club. Don't just hang out with the people from your own country. Be active!
- Join some organization to make some friends.
- Ask about non-academic organizations, groups, and activities at SNC.
- When I first came here, I was told not to talk or get along with other Japanese by my friends who had been abroad to study. However, I would say it's great to get to know both Americans and other international students, including Japanese. Also I recommend them to make at least one close American friend.
- Don't stay alone; don't be afraid to speak to people; work out; participate in activities.

Practicing Your Religion

The U.S. is a multicultural society founded on tolerance and mutual respect; you should not hesitate to seek out opportunities to practice your religious beliefs. Organized religious groups of many denominations can be found in the Green Bay community. Approximately 100 churches are located throughout the Green Bay area. If you need help locating any of these organizations, come to International Student and Scholar Services.

Because SNC is a Catholic institution, there is a Catholic Church, "Old St. Joe's," located on campus. Times of worship are:

- Monday through Friday, Common Prayer (no classes or meetings at this time): 10:10-10:40 AM

- Saturday: 4:30 PM
- Sunday: 10:00AM, 8:00 PM

Although America has a higher rate of church attendance than most other western societies, many Americans are uncomfortable discussing religion. Some Americans may shy away from the topic altogether. Others will want to share their religious views with you. Most people are sincere and straightforward, but some may try to take advantage of you or convert you to their religious beliefs by offering you their friendship. If you begin to feel uncomfortable in such a situation, politely but firmly explain that you are not interested.

Alcohol and Smoking

U.S. laws concerning the sale and consumption of alcohol may seem very liberal or very constraining to you, depending on your nationality. In the U.S., it is illegal to purchase alcoholic drinks, including beer and wine, until you reach the age of 21. Laws governing alcohol can vary from state to state. For example, it is illegal in some states to walk along the street with an open container of beer. In some states, alcoholic beverages can be purchased only in special, state-run stores.

You may purchase alcohol in Wisconsin only if you are at least 21 years of age. If you may legally purchase alcohol, its consumption on campus is confined to your room in the residence halls. It is illegal to buy alcohol for minors (people under 21 years of age). There are serious consequences, including fines, jail or deportation, if you are caught drinking underage or purchasing alcohol for minors. Never drink and drive or get into a car with someone who has been drinking. If you have any questions about the laws in Wisconsin or the rules on the SNC campus please ask.

In many parts of the U.S., all public buildings are designated “smoke free,” meaning that you cannot smoke in any part of the building. Other buildings may have spaces designated for smokers. Restaurants may have smoking and nonsmoking sections. If you are a guest in someone’s home, room, or apartment, always ask permission before you smoke. Even if you are in your room, it is polite to ask guests if anyone objects to your smoking before you reach for a cigarette. Be prepared to see “No Smoking” signs in most offices, classrooms, and stores.

Dating

You may be surprised by the informality of relations between men and women in the U.S. Couples go out alone in the evening to attend a movie, concert, lecture, or party. In the past, the man usually asked the woman, and the man paid for the expenses of the movie, concert, or meal. Today, a woman may ask a man to go out with her. Whether the man or the woman offers the invitation, students usually share the expenses.

Relationships between American men and women of college age range from simple, casual friendships to strong emotional and physical commitments. As your friendships develop past acquaintance, you may not always understand what your partner expects from you. Whatever the relationship, the best policy is honesty and frankness. Although sometimes embarrassing, it is best to express your feelings and intentions so you can avoid misunderstandings and even greater discomfort. If your date appears interested in a sexual relationship and you are not, it is very important that you say no clearly. And if

someone seems to be saying no to you, listen. Unwanted sexual attention is a very serious matter in the U.S. Do not interpret the acceptance of a date as anything more than an agreement to meet at a certain time and place and to spend some time together. If you are in doubt about correct behavior, talk with American friends, with your host family, or with your foreign-student adviser. Be aware that alcohol and dating can be a problematic mix, particularly in a cross-cultural setting.

Time

In the U.S., people place great importance on punctuality. It is very important to honor appointments without being late. You may notice what you consider to be unusual concern for time and efficiency.

Greetings and Titles

People in the U.S. usually shake hands, smile and say, “Nice to meet you,” when they are introduced to someone. People sometimes embrace in public, although often only with members of their family or very close friends.

You should address your professors as Dr., Professor, Mr., Ms., or Mrs., unless they request otherwise. You should also use titles with older people, unless they ask you to call them by their first names. For persons your own age, and with your colleagues, it is normally expected that you will use first names in conversation.

Food and Table Manners

In the U.S., people usually eat three meals each day. Breakfast may be eggs, bacon, cold cereal, toast, coffee or tea, and milk or juice. A light lunch of sandwiches, soups or salads is common. The main meal, referred to as dinner or supper, is eaten between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM and usually consists of meat, vegetables, bread, salads, and a dessert. Low-calorie and “diet” meals are popular as the country becomes more health-conscious.

Not speaking with food in your mouth, keeping your elbows off the table and your hands in your lap while eating, and sitting upright instead of leaning over one’s food are considered correct table manners in the U.S. A knife, fork and spoon are used, unless “finger foods” are being served. After the meal is finished, the napkin should be taken from the lap and laid beside the plate, and used silverware should be laid across the top of the plate.

Bathing and Hygiene

Most people in the U.S. brush their teeth at least twice a day, bathe or shower daily, and use a deodorant or anti-perspirant daily. They also tend not to wear a clothing item more than once without washing it. Because Americans are not accustomed to perspiration and body odor, they find it offensive. Some international visitors may want to adjust their bathing and hygiene routine to accommodate the U.S. preference for the time they are here.

NECESSITIES

Laundry and Dry Cleaning

On Campus

For those who live in the residence halls or in college owned houses, there are coin-operated washers and dryers available in each building. Each load cost \$1.25 to wash and \$1.25 to dry. (You must have quarters to use the machines. Quarters are available at the Information Desk in Sensenbrenner Memorial Union or you may get them from machines, located in some of the buildings.) In most of the residence halls, students may use Custom Cash to do their laundry. Remember that you must bring your own laundry detergent.

Off Campus

Several coin-operated laundromats are located in the local community. Look in the telephone book yellow pages under “Laundries, Self-Service.”

Dry Cleaning

A dry cleaner will clean your nicer clothes, such as silk dresses, wools, suits, and overcoats. Dry cleaning is more expensive than laundering. Generally, you will be charged per item. Look in the telephone book yellow pages under “Cleaners.”

Supermarkets

In the U.S., all food products are located in one store. You will find fresh fruits, vegetables, canned goods, meats, bread, and frozen foods. In most supermarkets, you may also purchase cleaning supplies, paper products, and toiletries. Generally, supermarkets have lower priced items than smaller, locally owned stores. The supermarket within walking distance of campus is Festival Foods, Main St. and Hwy. 41, De Pere.

Drugstores and Pharmacies

At a drugstore or a pharmacy, you can purchase the medication that your doctor has prescribed for you. Your insurance doesn't always cover the cost of prescriptions, so be sure to bring along money. You can also buy magazines, candy, newspapers, cosmetics, non-prescription medications, and personal items at a drugstore. There are several drugstores in the area.

Department Stores

Department stores carry a wide variety of merchandise from clothing to toys, drugs to garden supplies, appliances, paper products, etc. There are several department stores in the Green Bay and De Pere area, including Shopko—just over the bridge. Please refer to the phone book yellow pages for addresses and phone numbers.

Restaurants

There are many good restaurants within walking distance from campus. However, before you head to a restaurant, remember that customs in the United States probably differ from your home country. Remember, unless you are buying food, restaurant owners do not like you to stay there. Also, it is customary to leave a 15% tip. (If you are at a fast food restaurant you do not have to tip.) Look in the “Restaurant” section of the yellow pages (in the telephone book) for locations of restaurants. Sometimes it is necessary to call ahead to make reservations.

Sales Tax

Wisconsin has a state sales tax of 5.5% on all purchased goods except food and medicine.

FINANCES

Managing your finances is one of the most important and challenging aspects of a successful and enjoyable academic experience. Dealing with a new currency and cost of living are the beginning of the challenge. Always keep in mind the exchange rate between your country and the U.S. Try to think in dollars.

Be careful when handling American currency. With the exception of the new \$100 and \$50 dollar bills, all American paper money looks alike, so keep your eyes open when paying or receiving cash. Our coins can be tricky, too. The five-cent piece is known as the nickel, the ten-cent piece as a dime, and the twenty-five-cent piece is known as a quarter. A dime is smaller than a nickel, even though it is worth more.

Start budgeting from the time you arrive. Bills often take a month or two to arrive. Don't fool yourself into spending the money you'll need to pay them.

Money Exchange

If you did not exchange your foreign currency for U.S. dollars at your port of entry (Chicago, New York, etc.), you should take your money to the main office of a local bank. There may be waiting period while it is processed.

Transferring Funds to the United States

Hopefully, you have brought enough money with you to meet the initial costs of getting to campus and at least one month's expenses. Traveler's checks are the safest way to carry money, but be sure to record the check numbers and keep the record separate from the checks. **Do not carry or keep large amounts of cash in your residence.**

You will need to transfer larger amounts of money for your expenses for the year. Several options exist, and you should check with SNC and your bank to discuss the solution that best suits your situation. You should learn whether your country has restrictions on sending money abroad. The best ways to carry or transfer money are:

- ✓ Traveler's checks (in U.S. dollars)
- ✓ A bank check (also called a cashier's check) drawn on a U.S. bank in U.S. dollars
- ✓ A "wire transfer" from your bank at home to your new institution (if you are paying a bill) or to a U.S. bank.

Avoid checks in U.S. dollars drawn on a foreign bank. Such checks take much longer to "clear" than do checks drawn on U.S. banks or even checks in your home currency drawn on a bank at home. Remember that until a check clears, you will not have access to the money it represents.

Checking Accounts and Savings Accounts

You are strongly encouraged to open checking and/or savings accounts at a local bank (Associated Bank at the corner of Reid and 4th is the nearest). U.S. are safe and secure. Banks are where most people in the U.S. keep their money. It is not wise to carry around large amounts of cash or to keep large amounts of cash in your residence.

Banks offer many different services. You might wish to compare the services and costs of several banks before choosing one at which to open an account. One bank may be more conveniently located than others; another may have more automated teller machines around town; a third may charge less to maintain a checking account; a fourth may allow you to do your banking from home via computer. Banks are competing for your business, so don't be shy about asking questions. Ask friends or the International Students and Scholars staff for recommendations on local banks. During orientation we will visit a local bank so interested students can open accounts.

Checking Account

A checking account will permit you to write checks to make purchases and pay bills. Most retailers and service providers will accept a personal check drawn on a local U.S. bank so long as you can show appropriate identification (passport, student ID card, or driver's license).

By using checks, it is easy to keep records of your purchases and payments. At most banks you need not keep a substantial sum (or "balance") in the account - just enough to cover your checks and any fees the bank charges to maintain the account. Many banks offer "overdraft protection," enabling you to write a check that exceeds your balance with the understanding that you will pay interest on the overdraft amount. Finally, checking accounts have the advantage of providing you with immediate access to your funds.

You will receive personalized checks for a small fee. Usually, a \$100.00 minimum balance is required to open an account. You will receive a monthly balance statement from the bank. A monthly service charge will be assessed based on a minimum monthly balance.

Savings Account

Unlike most checking accounts, savings accounts earn interest on a balance in the account. If you plan to bring money for the entire academic year or for your entire academic program, you should be sure that your money earns interest! You may withdraw money from an ordinary savings account, but you may not do so by writing a check.

Safety Deposit Box

A safety deposit box, available at most banks, is a good place to store valuable possessions such as the airline ticket for your flight home, expensive jewelry, foreign currency, and the important documents you brought with you.

Automated Teller Machines (ATM)

Most banks provide customers with a card by which they may access their accounts to receive money or to deposit checks (never deposit cash) 24 hours per day at various locations. In Wisconsin, the ATM's are called Tyme machines. There may be a charge for this service. A Tyme machine is located in the Sensenbrenner Memorial Union on campus.

Credit Cards

Credit cards will allow you to make purchases even when you have no money immediately available. Banks and other financial institutions, department stores, and gasoline companies all issue credit cards that can be used to buy goods. You are billed every month and are required to pay at least a portion of your balance each month. If you do not pay the entire amount due, interest accrues on the unpaid balance. The interest rate can be very high, particularly if you have not established your “credit worthiness.”

The cost of credit cards varies greatly. The annual fees and interest rates charged by some financial institutions are much higher than others. Many cards offer premiums or awards linked to the amount you spend using the card. Ask your adviser or fellow students: it really pays to shop around. One you establish “credit history,” or if you have significant assets, you should be able to obtain a card with lower interest rates.

Credit cards are convenient, but unless you are careful you may be shocked when you get your monthly bill. Keep all your receipts to keep track of what you spend. Debit cards are a better solution for students who have trouble managing their debt. They are as convenient as credit cards but do not allow you to spend more than you have.

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH HOME

It’s a great adventure coming to a new place to study, but be fair to yourself and your family; stay in touch with home. Phone home or send a tape; link up with your friends around the world via e-mail; set down your daily thoughts in a journal and in letters to those who helped you get there; plan ahead for a special postgraduation vacation for you and your family. There are all sorts of reasons to stay in touch with home, and all sorts of ways to do so.

Mail Service

On Campus

The SNC Mail Center in the basement of Sensenbrenner Union offers a variety of services. (Remember, your mailbox is in the Campus Center.)

- All domestic and international mail may be sent from the Mail Center or the Campus Center.
- Campus mail is a service provided by the college for mail going between people on campus. To send a letter via campus mail, clearly mark the person’s name, office/room number, and place the letter in the “campus mail” slot at the Mail Center or the Campus Center. You do not need to use a stamp.
- You may buy stamps at the Mail Center.
- You may pay for any of the services mentioned above with Custom Cash. Campus mail is free.

Mail Delivery Schedule

Mail is delivered once a day, Monday through Saturday. There is no mail delivery on Sundays or holidays. You may drop your letters to be mailed in the SNC Mailroom or in a United States Post

Office box (found at the post office and on city streets). If you live off campus, you may leave your outgoing stamped letters at your personal mailbox, and the mailperson will take them to the post office for you. *You should not send cash through the mail*, but otherwise you can be fairly sure that your letter or package will be delivered safely. For additional protection, you may insure your package at the post office.

Telephone Service On Campus

Telephone service is provided by local and long-distance telephone companies. Local telephone companies provide local or regional telecommunication services; long-distance companies provide national and international services. Each student who lives on campus pays a monthly fee for basic telephone service (you will see this charge on your business office bill).

If you live on campus, both your local and long-distance telecommunication services are provided. You will be given a personal and confidential seven-digit telephone Authorization Code number to use when you make long distance phone calls. For your protection, memorize your code number and keep any papers referring to it in a safe place. *However, the international telephone service provided by the SNC plan may not be the best for your particular needs. You may want to purchase a pre-paid calling card at the Knights Telcom Store in JMS or at a store.*

- To place a long distance phone call within the United States, dial 9 – 1 - (area code) - (phone number)
- To place an international call, dial 9 – 011 – (country code) – (city code) – (phone number)
- To place an on campus call, dial the last four digits of the phone number
- To place an off campus call, dial 9 and then the telephone number
- If you are looking for a number, campus address, or e-mail of any faculty, staff, or student, visit the SNC Directory at www.snc.edu/direct.

CULTURE SHOCK

What Is It?

Culture shock is not quite as shocking or as sudden as most people expect. It is part of the process of learning a new culture that is called “cultural adaptation.” You may experience some discomfort before you are able to function well in a new setting. This discomfort is the “culture shock” stage of the adaptation process. The main thing to remember is that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through.

Just as you will bring with you to the U.S. clothes and other personal items, you will carry invisible “cultural baggage” when you travel. This baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcase, but it will play a major role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter abroad.

Know What to Expect

Anticipating future events and possibilities makes it easier to deal with them when they happen. For example, it helps to anticipate your initial departure and plan ways to maintain relationships with people at home while you are away. Be sure to allow ample time to say goodbye to all the people who are important to you, and plan how to keep in touch. This assures people that you will continue to care about them.

Planning to stay in touch does not require a promise to write or telephone on a strict schedule, but it does help to establish a realistic interval between communications. You will be extremely busy getting settled and learning about your new environment, so it is essential that long periods between communications not alarm your family and friends at home.

Some surprises always await you when you arrive in a new location. People may walk and talk more quickly, traffic patterns may be confusing, and buildings may look different than expected. Such differences are easy to see and quickly learned. The housing arrangements at your university or college, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange or very confusing. International Student and Scholar Services is the best place to go for help with such matters.

Studying abroad, however, means making big changes in your daily life. Generations of students have found they go through a predictable series of stages as they adjust to living abroad.

At first, although the new situation is a bit confusing, most students also find it to be exhilarating, a time of new experiences, sights, sounds, and activities. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and your host culture. You will find that people really are friendly and helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns, things that you can learn and depend on. You may classify other aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting, or “quaint.” There will be many opportunities to meet people off campus; such opportunities can be rewarding, but they also present an expanded array of cultural puzzles.

Emerging Differences

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, difference - rather than similarities - will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic and social life. As these differences emerge, they can be troubling and sometimes shocking. But culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the community.

For many this gradual process culminates in an emotional state known as “culture shock,” although it is seldom as dramatic as the term implies. The common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Boredom and fatigue
- Hostility towards the host culture

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

Coping with Culture Shock

The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from a given event that has bothered you, assess it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation
- Describe the situation, what it means to you, and your response to it
- Ask a local resident or someone with extensive experience how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works
- Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation

Throughout this period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy about living in your host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the “shock” gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you - and toward them - are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

“Will I Lose My Own Culture?”

Sometimes students worry about “losing their culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Don’t worry: it is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for and understanding of your own culture. Don’t resist the opportunity to become bicultural, able to function completely in two cultural environments.

Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, so can an accumulation of small successes lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies and social life and to relax and fully enjoy the experience. And you will recover your sense of humor!

LEGAL CONCERNS

While you are in the U.S., you are subject to all of the laws and regulations that define and limit your activities as a non-immigrant. Failure to comply with immigration laws can lead to a request for your voluntary departure, or forced deportation from the United States, so it is important that you maintain your legal status at all times.

Equal Protection of the Law and Due Process of Law

Except for immigration laws and a few special laws, such as those for social security, selective service, etc., non-immigrants in the U.S. are subject to the same national, state, and local laws as U.S. citizens. Non-immigrants are therefore entitled to the same protection of the law and due process of law for persons, regardless of citizenship. This is an important concept, for it means that, with few exceptions, you will be treated the same as a U.S. citizen in your relationship with the law and law enforcement agencies. Those few exceptions can be very complex when immigration laws also come to bear on your situation.

Illegal Drugs

The possession, use or sale of illegal drugs or narcotics, including marijuana, hashish, amphetamines, hallucinogens, barbiturates, cocaine, heroin, and a wide range of other drugs, are serious offenses under Wisconsin laws and immigration laws. Those who choose to use illegal drugs run the risk of serious difficulty with the law, and the possibility of deportation.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security numbers for international visitors are for purposes of identification only. While they are not required of all international visitors, they are useful in opening bank accounts, and they are a requirement for people who are employed or wish to get a Wisconsin Driver's License.

It is current practice for the Social Security Administration to issue Social Security cards for non-U.S. citizens with the following notation: "Not Valid for Employment." If you are a student worker, a teaching assistant, a visiting faculty member, or if you have been authorized to work off campus by the Immigration Service, this notation does not apply to you.

To Apply: You may apply for a Social Security number during orientation, or on your own time at the Social Security Administration Office at 101 North Webster Avenue, in downtown Green Bay. Check with International Student and Scholar Services for an application

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Concern	Office	Phone Number
Advising, Personal Concerns, Immigration	Sarah Griffiths, Bemis 305 Int'l Student and Scholars	3263

Bills (tuition, insurance, etc.)	Bob O'Donnell Business Office, JMS	3248
ESL	Richard Porior, 306 Bemis	3125
Campus Card Services	Ms. Kathi Kaminski, Union	3159
Health or Illness Assistance	Barb Bloomer, Health Ctr Main Hall, Lower Level	3266
Mail	Mailroom	3214
Personal Counseling	Counseling Center Main Hall, Lower Level	3045
Residence Life	1) Your RA or Hall Director 2) Residence Life Office 406 Third Street	3360
Safety Concerns	Security, PAC	3260
Student Employment	Financial Aid Office, JMS	3071
Transcripts	Registrar, JMS	3216
Tutoring	Academic Support Services St. Boniface	1321
Writing Help	The Writing Center, Library	3003

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

The transportation system in the United States is quite different from that in most countries. Most Americans own cars, which are the most common form of transportation. Our rail and bus systems are not as extensive as those of many other countries.

Taxi and Bus Transportation

Within De Pere and Green Bay, both public bus and taxis are available. See the Yellow Pages of the phone book.

Owning and Operating an Automobile

If you decide to purchase or lease a car, you must have a valid driver's license. Each state in the U.S. issues its own driver's license. Not every state will recognize your country's driver's license or the international driver's license. To obtain a state driver's license, you will be required to demonstrate your knowledge of the traffic laws in Wisconsin. You will be required to take a driving test. Never drive a vehicle unless you understand all of the applicable road rules, recognize all of the road signs, and possess a valid license to drive.

Most states require car owners to purchase and maintain automobile insurance. You should purchase insurance if you plan to own a vehicle. In case of an accident, automobile insurance protects you against most of the cost of injuries and repairs. The cost of repairs can be very high. Please consult International Student and Scholar Services with any questions.

Helpful guides to purchasing cars can be found in local bookstores. Be careful when purchasing a car, especially a used one. Before you buy have a reliable mechanic inspect the vehicle for defects. Be sure to obtain the “title” to the car you buy. This title is an official document issued by the state that signifies ownership of the vehicle. Additional documents may be required to complete the transfer of a car from the previous owner to you.

WORKS CITED

The 2000 Handbook For International Students is a compilation and, in some sections, a direct quotation of NAFSA's International Student Handbook (1996), Bellevue University International Student Handbook (1993).