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**STUDY
ABROAD**

CSU International Programs Parent's Guide

April 2010

Parent's Guide

Your son or daughter is about to begin one of the greatest adventures of his/her life. At the same time, this will also be an adventure for you, the parent. Many months of e-mail and postcard correspondence lie ahead (and maybe a few big phone bills), which will give you the opportunity to marvel at the unique and wonderful experiences your son or daughter is having. This Parent's Guide has been designed to help acquaint you, the parent, with International Programs (IP), and to provide you with information to help guide you through the journey that lies ahead.

The Student's Perspective

The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page. - St. Augustine
(Christopher Wagner (Florence, Italy, 2008-2009))

This travel quote is a perfect analogy for the missing holes in a person who doesn't ever take a chance and leave home. I know several of them myself... Traveling and studying abroad, first and foremost, are not luxurious experiences. Let's just get that myth out of the closet. On the contrary, much of the comforts and privileges of home are quickly taken away. But without leaving them in the first place, you would remain completely ignorant of that new perspective...that between what you thought was necessary, and that which you can get by on just fine. Maybe ignorance is bliss. Then again, having just one singular experience in the hopefully many years you are given, but missing out on the entirety of the rest of the world seems like a pretty big mistake.

Life is what you make it... life is short, life goes fast (and still faster), and before you know it your "exciting adventures" are suddenly distant memories. Travel while you are young: later, even if you finally have money, you won't be in a situation that lets you escape for long! The more attachments and obligations you acquire, the less likely it is you will ever do more than take that yearly "cushy" vacation, which doesn't quite cut it in terms of a real travel experience. How much more value can one place on quality time spent truly "out of the comfort zone?"..In my personal experience, having lived now more than 16 months outside of the United States by age 23, I will attest that those 16 months contain more density, substance, and life than several ordinary years any time else in my stereotypical "American" life. My predictable short-story life already has several strange and unpredictable tangents, creating a bizarre, constantly-in-flux plot. It is not as a result of what I do specifically, but as a result of merely just being here in Italy (or wherever else), day by day, (life takes care of the rest)...good and bad days, awkward and proud moments, strange reflections, total confusion...It can be daunting to think about how much is out there... how many strange people, cultures, landscapes, daily lives, languages, and customs...and maybe at this point most people just decide that it's better to stick with what works and is easy (being American and staying there, too). But those who never take a chance and travel abroad are in essence actually doing themselves a dis-service. At the very worst (excluding death or disease), travel would still greatly enhance anyone's perspective on their own way of living and without a doubt, at the very least, augment satisfaction with our extremely high American standard of living. And we like it to be that way. For me, however, the more I see and experience, the more I want to keep traveling. It is an obsession that defies the logic of a well-planned, successful life back home. But

maybe that is another lesson to be learned. Suddenly there is this terrible, soul-wrenching struggle: the saddest part of being abroad is knowing your life must, at least temporarily at the end, go back to that suddenly not-so-savory "norm". On the other hand, the insatiable hunger for knowledge, worldly-experience, and a chance to bridge (if just for a moment) cultural divides you will possess in retrospect may forever drive your new life in untraveled directions.

Our "prescribed formula" to achieve the "American Dream" may actually not be the best way to plan for a fulfilling life. Beyond our consumerist, ultra-competitive, production-crazed, hyper-paced, Jamba Juice-slurping daily grind, perhaps we are all just a little blind. We like to experience the "rest of the world" through the Travel Channel on our huge couches while eating take-out pizza and devouring another pint of Haagan-Daz. My advice is to write chapters of life that don't follow the prescribed formula. It only takes a little effort to force yourself out of your plans for life, once outside the borders of safety the rest will take care of itself. Maybe in retrospect the life you left behind won't seem quite so important.

In closing, studying abroad or even just traveling for an extended period of time will teach you a few valuable lessons: nothing is better or worse than where I've come from, just unpredictably different through each person's individual experiences and perspective; all those crazy, scary foreigners are really just ordinary people like you and I, trying to get by, and, as one might suspect, every well-traveled person's life book is overwhelmingly full!

Yesterday is but a memory. Tomorrow an uncharted course. So live today so it will be a memory without remorse. Farm Khouan Saelee, (Beijing, China, 2006-2007)

Before heading out to China, I had certain expectations. I expected my Chinese to improve. I expected to travel and explore the wonders of China that we often hear about. I wanted to visit Tiananmen Square, see the Peking Acrobats, and of course climb the infamous Great Wall.

After one semester, I've realized that I've gotten so much more out of this experience than I had expected. I've learned life long lessons and have developed close relationships. I have even discovered answers to questions about whom I am and where I came from.

I was born in Thailand, yet raised in the United States. I was only two when I left Thailand; therefore do not recall anything about the country I was born in. During my time in China, I was often asked what nationality I was and where I was from. Few thought I was Chinese. Most assumed I was Korean or Japanese. They were all curious as to what nationality I was. I didn't have clear cut answers for them or myself.

If I told them I was American, they were immediately surprised and asked how that could be since I have the black hair, a petite stature, and the face of someone from the east not the west. If I told them I was Thai, they would then ask me if I spoke the language and then my response would be "no."

I speak English and a dialect of one of the Chinese ethnic minorities; known to the Chinese as Yao Zu, known to my people as Iu-Mienh. I didn't feel comfortable telling others I was Chinese because I wasn't even sure myself. I knew my ancestors descended from China, but how long ago and exactly from where, I wasn't sure.

After a few months in China, I contacted a woman who was Mienh as well. Her name is Li Shaomei, and she speaks both Mandarin and the Yao Zu (Mienh) dialect. She was born and raised in China. By spending time with her and her family, I discovered quite a bit about myself and my origin. The Iu-Mienh are originally from southern China. We can be found in the Hunan, Guangdong, Yunnan, and Guizhou Provinces and also in the Guangxi Autonomous Region in China. Over a period of 300 years, we have migrated to Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and many have even found homes in the United States like my family.

Being on the other side of the world away from loved ones is not easy. However, through my past experiences abroad, I've discovered that I've always been able to find my own little family away from home. I've been very fortunate during my stay here in China. I was given the opportunity to live with a Chinese family, and

was pretty hesitant to take upon the offer. I was introduced to the Chinese family, and decided to give it a try for a month. That month has turned into a full academic year. My experience here in China has been so rich, in large part due to the relationship with my host family.

My host family consists of a young couple in their mid thirties with an eight year old daughter named Emily. I was brought into the family so that I would have a place to stay in exchange for English lessons for their daughter. Communication was difficult in the beginning, since I spoke very little Chinese and their English was worse than my Chinese! While this seemed to be a large obstacle at first, it has turned out to be a blessing for both parties.

My Chinese has improved tremendously by living with a Chinese family. I've never had a little sister before and now I have a sense of what it feels like to have one. I'm going to be honest and tell you that Emily is a spoiled brat. However, despite her little fits and temper, she really does bring a lot of joy into my life. She's carefree and makes me laugh all the time.

By being a part of their household, I've been able to objectively observe many things. By observing their family, I've gained many insights as to the roles that each member plays in the family beyond, the father, mother, and child roles. I've been able to see the joy that a child can bring to a mother as well as the pain and sorrow. As the philosopher and psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm once said, "The mother-child relationship is paradoxical and, in a sense, tragic. It requires the most intense love on the mother's side, yet this very love must help the child grow away from the mother, and to become fully independent."

Because of my experiences with them, I know that I will be much more prepared when the time comes for me to start a family of my own. I will definitely have more than one child. And the type of mother I will be will be drawn from the way my own mother raised me as well as the way Emily's mother is raising her.

I don't think I have been healthier in my life. It's ironic in a sense just because I'm living in a third world country where the standard of living is much lower than the first world country that I grew up in. The pollution here in Beijing is horrible. The reason why I feel healthier here is due to the plain fact that I am just more active. I can afford to go to the gym, take martial arts courses, and take ballet classes. I'm in an unfamiliar environment, which challenges not only my body but my mind as well. I don't get bored easily because I have classes to keep me busy, and I live in a place with such rich history.

I guess I've always been the most adventurous one, the bold one, in my family. I'm the first one to travel outside of California and live abroad. I've only been abroad twice in the twenty years of my life, but I can already tell you that traveling has definitely helped sculpt who I am today. My experiences abroad have helped define what my values are. They have contributed to an even more goal oriented and ambitious individual. I learn more and more about myself each day and begin to realize what it is that I truly value.

When I share my experiences, I often hear people say that they can never be as brave as me, and go to an unfamiliar place where they don't even speak the language. They say that they wouldn't be able to leave the comforts of home. I then say to them that I am probably no braver than they are. The father of American literature, Mark Twain, once said, "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

So for those of you who have the slightest desire to go abroad, I send you all my blessings and encourage you to listen to that inner voice of yours. You will definitely run into obstacles, and find yourself crying, wanting to come home at times. Just keep your chin up, and when it's all said and done, when your time abroad has come to an end, only then will you realize and understand the positive impact that it's had on your life.

A College Education is Not Complete without a Study Abroad Experience
Emily Commer, CSU San Marcos (Germany, 2002-2003)

I cannot give any better advice to all college students except to say that they must study abroad before completing their college education. A college education is just not complete without this invaluable and life-changing experience. Studying abroad in Germany the past eight months has extended my cultural palette to include colors I didn't even realize existed. I am truly amazed by this culture every day that I live, move, breath, and learn in it. It has also given me an interesting perspective on the American culture and my personal culture and beliefs as they existed within the cultural limitations of my experiences in America. Even America in all its diversity has common views of the world, and it is a refreshing breath of air to see that from the other side.

Not only is study abroad culturally stimulating and educational but it is also a bonding experience. It can sometimes seem when one is in a foreign country that there are few who might naturally reach out to help you navigate your way through foreign surroundings. Those who do become special people to you, making you realize the power of goodness, making you realize things you take for granted on a daily basis in your home zone of comfort. The friends you make abroad who are there for you during times of homesickness, great triumph, discovery, and embarrassment, are people you will hold onto even after your experience is over, because when you return, the journey begins.

Study abroad has given me a new lease on how I look at my education, work environment, personal relationships, and myself. This year was a particularly interesting year to be an American abroad in Europe in light of the war in Iraq and the fact that many Europeans were against it. I had many interesting and enlightening conversations with people of different political backgrounds and historical viewpoints. I even had a few less than friendly encounters with people who possessed anti-American sentiment. It made me think about how foreigners are often treated in America and how it made me feel to be judged less by the person I am but by the passport I carry. How invigorating it is then when others defended me in those situations and wanted to talk more with me one on one about what I thought. I also learned a lot about listening and patience, and in the end, I think that is one of the most important cultural lessons I have learned. Instead of trying to change people's thoughts, ideas, and beliefs and replace them with my own, I listened and thought about how their thoughts and beliefs added dimension to my own. It's really about letting down barriers and tearing down the proverbial wall.

When I think about how my life would be different had I not studied abroad, I am assured as to how important this has been to my education and my life. In reality, had I not come abroad, I suppose I would not have known what I was missing. Knowing now how far I have come, how much I have learned, how I have grown, the passion that exists inside me, and the many wonderful people who have touched my life through this, I can safely say I would not have had it any other way. There have been hard times, but everything always works out, and in the end, the hard times make you stronger and shine light on the great times. The hard times I would not have had any other way either, because each time I learned an important lesson and grew more.

Students should be required to study abroad before they graduate college. There is a way to make it happen if finances are a worry. A college education is just not complete without this experience. I know mine wouldn't have been.

The Benefits of Study Abroad

Living and studying in another country provides students with a number of exceptional opportunities. Broadening their academic experiences, learning another language and culture, and adapting to new customs are only the beginning.

Study abroad requires commitment and hard work. After all, if learning a second language and another culture were easy, everyone would be fluent in another language and competent in two or three cultures. However, this is not the case. Over the years, we have seen that IP students are students committed to gaining a broader international awareness and, as a result of their participation in the IP program, most acquire an acute

sensitivity to cultural differences. IP alumni are making a positive impact on the State of California because they bring their newfound global awareness back to California.

Study abroad enriches education through exposure to things that must be experienced firsthand. By studying abroad, students enhance their education through exposure to different points of view and, in turn, improve their critical thinking skills. They gain firsthand linguistic, geographical and historical knowledge. These benefits flow over into their professional development and help many students identify and focus more intensely on their career objectives. The international experience students acquire gives them an edge in a competitive job market.

You can never overestimate the personal enrichment that study abroad students gain. They acquire a stronger sense of self and become more self-reliant. Looking back on their year abroad, some participants sum it up by saying, "I grew up!" They gain a self-confidence that helps them achieve their goals. Many also discover and define what their priorities are in life. Study abroad not only enhances the academic experience, but it also enriches the personal journey that university students take on the road to graduation. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that will enhance the whole university experience, an opportunity that should not be passed up.

The Systemwide Office of International Programs (OIP)

International Programs (IP) is the systemwide study abroad program of the California State University (CSU). IP is affiliated with over 50 distinguished universities and other institutions of higher education in 19 countries where students can pursue coursework for CSU resident credit.

Currently in its 48th year of continuous operation, the academic excellence of IP has been recognized by respected organizations such as the Council on Learning and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. IP provides international academic opportunities in the framework of a California State University degree program. With a focus on academic year studies, IP offers an array of study options related to specific degree and career objectives.

Students apply to the IP program on their home CSU campus, but once students are selected for participation, they become part of a statewide program. All of the details of their year overseas are handled by the systemwide Office of International Programs (OIP) rather than by the student's home CSU campus.

The Office of International Programs is located in downtown Long Beach at the CSU Office of the Chancellor, **not** on the CSU, Long Beach campus as many mistakenly assume. Our address is:

<p>CSU Office of International Programs 401 Golden Shore, Sixth Floor Long Beach, California 90802-4210</p> <p>Tel: (562) 951-4790 Fax: (562) 951-4983</p>

OIP Staff:

Mr. Leo Van Cleve, Director

Ms. Sharon Okashima, Assistant Director, Finance

Ms. Joyce Cury, Student Funds/Scholarship Coordinator

Ms. Renata Bouwmeester, Assistant Director, Academic Services

Ms. Laura McCrary, Academic Services Assistant

Ms. Jan Terborg, Campus Relations Administrator

Ms. Dana Roson, Assistant Director, Student Services

Ms. Jeanine Beu, Student Services Assistant

Ms. Danielle Pattee, Student Affairs Assistant

Ms. Jolene Colman, Department Secretary

When students have questions, we request that the student contact OIP directly, instead of having their parents call for them. Having supportive parents contributes to a successful year overseas; however, when it comes to the details of participation, it is very important that students handle their own affairs firsthand.

During their year abroad, students should direct all questions to the Office of International Programs in Long Beach, rather than to their home CSU campus. Since the OIP staff is aware of the special status students have as IP students, it is often much easier for us to solve a problem, particularly when these issues affect a student's enrollment, academic or financial status as an IP student. When students are abroad, they may contact us through the Resident Director or host university representative overseas.

How OIP Helps Students Prepare for a Year Abroad

OIP provides students with numerous resources to help them prepare for a year abroad. There is an IP Coordinator on each CSU campus who counsels and interacts with the students during the application and selection process. In addition, the IP website directs students to additional resources www.calstate.edu/ip. Once students are selected to participate, they interface with the staff of the Office of International Programs (OIP), located in downtown Long Beach.

The most informative tool that OIP provides for its participants is the Participant Guide. A copy of the Participant Guide is available online at: www.calstate.edu/ip [Admitted Students]. It is very important that students read the Participant Guide, which includes the following chapters:

- Student Policies and Procedures
- Preparing for Your Year
- Program-Specific Information (a unique chapter for each country)
- Academic Arrangements
- Finances
- Health & Safety Abroad
- Agreement

We ask parents to remind students to look in their Participant Guides to find the answers to their questions. These booklets are carefully updated every year and contain thorough program information for each overseas study center.

Once students are selected they will be required to submit a number of forms to OIP. The forms are available in Online Packets. Students were instructed about how to access these Online Packets in their acceptance letter from OIP. They will need to print, complete and submit all forms to OIP by the deadline dates provided on the Checklist at the beginning of the Online Packet.

www.calstate.edu/ip [Admitted Students]. See Online Form Packets.

Regional Pre-Departure Orientations

While there are a number of things students can do to prepare for their year abroad, one of the most important is to attend one of the Regional Pre-Departure Orientations in California before going abroad. There are two orientation programs to choose from. The OIP staff will be present to share information on a number of topics including academic policies, health and safety, financial issues and cultural adaptation. In addition, IP alumni will be present to share practical information with the new students about living and studying overseas. Parents are also encouraged to attend one of the Regional Departure Orientations.

What Should I do as the Parent of a Study Abroad Student?

1. Applaud your student for the academic achievements that he/she has made to qualify for the IP program. IP is a competitive program with high academic standards. Participants represent some of the top students in the CSU. IP is a serious university program in which students take regular university courses to earn California State University credit. This will enhance a student's overall academic experience and will give him/her an edge in a competitive job market.
2. Try not to remind your student over and over that you didn't have such an opportunity. The IP program is NOT a vacation. Students will be facing many challenges and difficult situations. They will experience indecision, insecurity, disappointment, and fears. They will also experience the joys of discovery, including the discovery that they can handle and survive difficult and enormously frustrating situations. They will be seeing wonderful sights and meeting interesting people – and they may even regret that you didn't have the same opportunity when you were young, but reminding them may only add to the pressures that they already feel.
3. Encourage your student to get involved in the local community of the host country. Students who engage themselves in the local culture, tend to be happier and more successful in the IP program overall.
4. Don't worry too much about your student when he/she expresses homesickness or frustrations. Everyone who travels abroad for an extended stay experiences some level of homesickness and frustration. Often, when students are feeling frustrated, they will phone or write home. In these "crisis" times your students can unload trouble, tears and frustration, and after the catharsis, return to routine, relieved and lightened, while you inherit the burden of worry. Be patient with those "nothing-is-going-right-I-hate-this-place" emails and/or phone calls. You're providing a real service as an advice dispenser, sympathetic ear or punching bag. Granted, it's a service that may make you feel lousy, but it works wonders for a frustrated student! Encourage students to talk to their advisors and/or to other students about the way they are feeling. Oftentimes, frustrations are a result of simple misunderstandings that are inevitable when crossing cultures.
5. Trust them. You are more experienced and may know dangers and temptations better than they do, but after you have gently and lovingly warned them, let them go and trust that they have learned the values that you have instilled in them. By doing this, you will be able to relax and enjoy the tales of their adventures.
6. Expect change. Growth brings change, and no one can deny that living abroad is a growing experience. Some of the changes you perceive will be temporary (perhaps a result of cultural adjustment), but some will be permanent and may be the result of a combination of maturation combined with a new perception of the world and of life.
7. Write! (Even if they don't write back.) Students abroad eagerly await letters (real paper letters are especially exciting) from home, even "boring" letters that fill them in on the "mundane" things you are doing. This fills them with a sense of security in spite of all of the changes they are experiencing. Likewise, save the letters and postcards they send to you. These will serve as a sort of "diary" for the student to reflect upon after they return.
8. Don't overdo it with e-mail. While e-mail is convenient, please remember that every minute your son/daughter spends sitting in the apartment or the computer lab writing e-mails in English to friends and family in the U.S. is one less minute that he/she will be engaging in the culture and/or language of the host country.
9. Help your student inform him/herself about his/her host country prior to departure. Americans oftentimes lack general knowledge of the rest of the world and it would be wise to know more about their host country before arrival (i.e. the name of the current President/Prime Minister, current events affecting their host country).
10. Encourage your student to read *Maximizing Study Abroad*, the book they received from the Office of International Programs at the Regional Pre-Departure Orientation. The authors provide students with tips

about how to improve their language and culture learning while they are abroad so that they can have a meaningful and productive year abroad.

Academics

The CSU International Programs (IP) is an academic program, requiring students to attend classes regularly and to engage in a new academic environment. Students will face new challenges in their academic fields of study. As participants in the IP program, students are expected to enroll full-time, make normal progress toward graduation (15 units per semester) and to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 each semester.

Prior to departure, students meet with their CSU academic advisors to look over the courses they might register for overseas and to develop an academic plan. Once they are abroad, students will also have the opportunity to meet with host university faculty and/or staff to discuss their options.

At the end of the academic year abroad, OIP prepares an “Academic Report”—a transcript showing the student’s courses and grades. This is the official academic record of the student’s year abroad and will be forwarded to the Record’s Office at the student’s home CSU campus. All coursework completed during participation in the IP program will be reflected as resident credit on the student’s CSU transcript. This means that all grades will be recorded and calculated in the student’s CSU grade point average.

Please note that the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 protect students’ privacy in their academic records. The Office of International Programs is always available to students who have questions about their academic records with OIP, and students may contact OIP by telephone, fax or e-mail with their questions. However, please understand that OIP cannot discuss a student’s academic record with the student’s parents.

Transportation & Arrival

Each student’s Participant Guide provides information about transportation to the study center. All students, regardless of country of destination, are responsible for making and paying for their flight reservations, whether participating in an OIP prearranged group flight or traveling independently.

OIP arranges group flights to six of its overseas centers: China, France (Aix-en-Provence, not Paris), Ghana, Japan, Mexico, and Spain. Information about the group flight is included in the packet students receive from OIP. It is also available online at www.travelcuts.com/csip. Participation in the group flight is voluntary, except for Ghana. All students going to Ghana are required to participate in the group flight. A host university representative will be advised of the group flight arrangements and will meet the group at the airport and provide ground transportation **or** assist students with public transportation, depending on the country of destination. Students who choose to arrive independently must arrange their own ground transportation from the airport to the host university. Arrival information is included in the Participant Guide.

When your student makes a reservation on the group flight, your student will choose a return date. The reservation will be made for the date your student requests to return home. If your student decides to change that date after purchasing the ticket, he/she will be charged a change fee.

Students going to places where OIP has not organized a group flight are responsible for making their own flight arrangements. OIP and, in most cases, the host university provide students with arrival information. OIP expects students to arrive at the study center overseas on a specific date. This arrival date is listed in the student’s Participant Guide under the Calendar section. OIP will not approve late arrivals.

Air travel involves risks and could result in damage to property, injury to persons, and death. Please be informed that the California State University assumes no liability for damage, injury, and death which may occur during air travel required by the California State University-affiliated programs. Participation in the IP program is voluntary, and students participate at their own risk.

Passport

All IP participants must have a passport to leave from and return to the United States. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the expected completion date of the IP program. Students were instructed to apply for a passport in the IP Application Instructions. **Students should apply immediately for a passport if they do not have one**, or should renew their passport if necessary. This process can take several weeks. Parents: It may be wise to ensure that you also have valid passports. This way, in case of emergency, you will be ready to travel abroad.

Persons applying for a passport for the first time must apply in person. You can apply for or renew your passport at over 4,500 passport acceptance facilities nationwide that include many federal, state and probate courts, many post offices, some libraries and a number of county and municipal offices. These designated facilities are very convenient because they are located near your home. We recommend that you start by contacting the largest post office or courthouse in your area. You can find information on the web about how to obtain a U.S. passport at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Visa

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government, which permits you to visit that country for a specific purpose and for a limited time. In most instances, you must obtain necessary visas before you leave the United States. If IP participants are required to get a student visa or residence permit for their country, instructions will be provided in the Participant Guide.

There are several things to keep in mind related to visa applications. **First, there is no legal right to a visa. In other words, everyone who applies for a visa will not necessarily be granted a visa.** Second, when entering another country's Consulate, you are, in a sense, entering that country. Utmost respect should be paid to all consular officials and employees. Students should dress appropriately and be extremely well organized and prepared whenever they enter a Consulate to apply for a visa.

**Visa processing takes time.
Students who must apply for a visa are advised not to make
any travel plans for the summer prior to the program start date.**

Program Costs

While information regarding finances is outlined in detail for participants in the "Finances" chapter of their Participant Guides, we thought it might be helpful to highlight a few points here for parents.

IP programs are more affordable than most study abroad programs of comparable quality, duration and academic value because the State of California supports study abroad by contributing to the OIP program costs. When students study abroad with the CSU International Programs, they are only required to pay the State University Fee and a \$750 Study Abroad fee (campus based fees are waived). Matriculation at a foreign institution is oftentimes more costly, yet the opportunity to study abroad remains within reach because of the state's contribution.

IP participants have decided to take part in the California State University International Programs, an academic program of the CSU. The Office of International Programs does not generate profit for the CSU, but rather provides students with affordable, academically enriching international opportunities. The decision to be an IP participant means that students are aware that OIP will be making some of their arrangements and that OIP will therefore have control of some of the program-related costs.

There are many benefits to participating in a study abroad program managed by a central office. OIP takes care of numerous things for students that they would otherwise have to manage themselves if they were going abroad independently. For example, depending on the program, OIP assists students with such things as: temporary housing arrangements, admission to and registration at a foreign university, health insurance, orientation before departure and upon arrival, information about how to obtain the student visa, and group

flight information (for some OIP programs). By and large, students appreciate the plans made by OIP, especially at the beginning of the year when they are still unfamiliar with their new surroundings.

OIP has been operating study abroad programs since 1963. The OIP staff is familiar with the intricacies of international travel and living. Our insights and combined years of experience give us an advantage when it comes to making arrangements overseas. We do our best to keep costs as low as possible and to make practical decisions to keep students safe and comfortable.

“Program Cost Estimates” are those costs which are paid by the student and are divided into two categories: “Prepaid Costs,” which students pay in advance to OIP, and “Out-of-Pocket Expenses,” which students will pay individually while overseas. Students are advised to refer to the **Program Cost Sheet Estimates** in their Participant Guide, which identifies all program costs. It is especially important for students to understand what they have prepaid prior to departure and what they will need to pay for once they are abroad. **We advise all students to start the year with enough money to cover at least their first two months worth of expenses.**

Payment

Students are expected to pay the Total Prepaid Cost to OIP. Students may pay by check, money order or credit card. Students may also defer the payment for their Total Prepaid Cost, not including the \$500 deposit, by providing OIP with Financial Aid information (if Prepaid Costs are to be paid by Financial Aid) or with a Parent Payment Schedule. Each form of payment is described below.

Check/Money Order: Students may pay the Total Prepaid Cost by sending a check or money order to OIP by **May 15** (October 15 for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) payable to: **International Programs**. Make sure the student’s name and host country are clearly indicated on the check. No receipts will be given for personal checks; the cancelled check will serve as a receipt. A \$10 fee will be charged for returned checks. Mail to:

CSU International Programs
401 Golden Shore, Sixth Floor
Long Beach, California 90802-4210

Credit Card: Students may pay the Total Prepaid Cost by Visa or MasterCard by completing the required information on the Program Cost form (in online Packet 1) and return to OIP by **May 15** (October 15 for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa). Students should double-check that the information supplied on the form is correct —especially the credit card expiration date (update OIP as necessary).

Deferral of Prepaid Costs: The Total Prepaid Cost is due by **May 15** (October 15 for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa). However, if students are unable to pay the full amount at that time, they may choose one of the following deferred payment options:

- **Financial Aid:** Pay a \$500 deposit by **May 15** (October 15 for Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) and defer the remainder until the student’s financial aid is disbursed. If the student chooses this method of payment, he/she should indicate so on the Program Cost Form and return the form with the deposit to OIP by **May 15**. Then, by July 1 (November 15 for Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) or before he/she leaves for his/her study center (whichever comes first), the student must submit a copy of the Financial Aid Award Letter to OIP. If students intend to defer any portion of their Prepaid Cost with a bank loan, they may be asked to provide a letter from a guarantor in the event the loan is not approved.
- **Parents’ Payment Schedule:** Pay a \$500 deposit by **May 15** (October 15 for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) and then parents make payments for the balance due. There is no service charge or interest charged by OIP for a payment schedule. If students choose this method of payment, they may indicate so on the Program Cost form and return it **with their \$500 deposit**. The Program Cost form is to be used to list the monthly payments. The balance due should be paid in not more

than six monthly installments with the final payment arriving at the Office of International Programs (OIP) no later than November 30 (June 30 for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa).

If the monthly installments will be paid by credit card, please double-check the expiration date of the card and update OIP as necessary. When OIP receives the proposed payment schedule it will be reviewed and if approved, a copy of the schedule will be mailed to the address shown on the form. **Monthly reminders are not sent; please keep a copy of the payment schedule on hand for reference.**

Parents should be aware that any refund due will be returned to the student.

Payment of CSU Campus Fees

Students do not pay fees directly to their home CSU campus during the year they are participating in the IP program. The State University Fees that students usually pay to their home campus are included in the "Prepaid Costs" that they will pay to the Office of International Programs prior to departure. Non-resident students are required to pay the non-resident fees that they would normally pay while attending a CSU campus. If there is a State University Fee increase that would affect the student's Program Costs, OIP will notify the student of the additional amount due.

Financial Aid

Except for *College Work Study*, IP participants continue to be eligible for all student aid they would normally be eligible for at their home CSU campus. Students need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their eligibility for financial aid.

Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

Please note that the rules for the awarding of Federal Financial Aid are different for graduate and post-baccalaureate students than they are for undergraduates. The home CSU campus determines all financial aid eligibility based on the IP program costs supplied to them, along with other factors. Students must keep IP updated on financial aid awards. Students receiving financial aid should also check with their home CSU campuses to find out when, how and where their financial aid will be disbursed.

OIP Emergency Loans

OIP can lend students money overseas as follows:

1. In an emergency students may borrow up to \$300 at a time through March 31 (August 31 for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) this date is subject to change. No loans other than for medical care are available after this date.
2. At the beginning of their year abroad, students may borrow against receipt of their expected financial aid if the aid is excessively late arriving, provided that OIP can determine the status of the pending financial aid.
3. Students may borrow money to pay for large medical expenses, such as extended hospitalization, backed up with completed insurance claim forms. These are expenses that are covered under the student's health insurance plan.

Verification of Enrollment

OIP can provide Verification of Enrollment Letters for the period that a student is a participant in International Programs to scholarship donors, insurance companies, and the like. Requests for such letters should be e-mailed to: ipacademics@calstate.edu, or by calling Ms. Laura McCrary at: (562) 951-4773.

Health & Safety

As students prepare to study abroad, health, safety and security are important issues to consider. Students should first realize that while there are a number of potentially serious situations that can occur around the world, each country has its own unique characteristics that differentiate it from others. In one country, traffic accidents may pose (statistically) the largest danger, while in another country the AIDS virus may be a more serious threat. It is important for students to focus their attention on matters that are relevant to their study abroad destination. Nothing is more valuable than accurate information to help students make wise decisions.

The Participant Guide produced by the CSU Office of International Programs provides students with valuable country information as well as numerous resources that participants can access to better inform themselves about their study abroad program and their host country.

Perhaps the most critical variables, however, are the students themselves. Their medical circumstances, personal habits, and the activities they choose to engage in or the places they choose to go will undoubtedly play a crucial role in their overall health and safety.

No orientation program or handbook can alert students to every potential difficulty. OIP has provided participants with background information and resources so that they can make informed decisions, both as they prepare to go and while they are abroad. OIP expects students to read their Participant Guides carefully, attend a Regional Orientation, and learn as much as they can about the country to which they are going. Being well-informed and making wise decisions are the two greatest things students can do to prepare for a healthy and safe year abroad.

We expect that the students will have a productive and challenging year abroad. As we have indicated above no location here in the United States or abroad can be considered risk free. By informing themselves and acting responsibly, the students can help make their stay abroad a safe one. Nevertheless, changing circumstances that pose risks to students may require OIP to act. In those cases, that action may include evacuation, relocation or suspension of the program. While this is extremely rare, it remains a possibility of which students should be aware.

Health Insurance

All IP participants are required to have Accident and Sickness Insurance for CSU Students Studying Abroad. The cost of this insurance is included in the IP Pre-Paid Program Costs and is only valid outside the United States. It is considered an “excess” policy, meaning that if the student has other insurance coverage through another company outside of OIP (e.g. parents’ insurance policy), then they must file the claim with the other company first, then with the OIP insurance carrier. We should also mention that many of the host countries require visiting international students to purchase local coverage. Therefore, some students will have two health insurance policies, the OIP policy and the host country policy. If this is the case for your student, it will be noted in his/her Participant Guide.

Please note that the CSU policy requires students to pay for medical services up-front, and then file a claim form for reimbursement. If students have a large medical expense, such as hospitalization, OIP is prepared to lend the student the funds to cover their expenses, provided the illness is covered under the student’s health insurance plan.

Student Health Insurance Plan Brochure & Claim Forms

<http://www.csuhealthlink.com>

Under “Student Insurance” select “Find your school’s plans” then select “CSU IP” from the list of Schools. Once there, click on the link to the Brochure or the Claim Form.

The required insurance goes into effect the day the students are told to arrive overseas and remains in effect as long as they are enrolled in classes with OIP. If the student withdraws or is disenrolled from OIP prior to the

end of the academic year, they forfeit participation in the health and accident insurance plan effective on the date of withdrawal as established by OIP. Although the health insurance coverage has proven adequate for most OIP participants, please note that it is not a comprehensive policy and does not cover pre-existing conditions.

Have you Thought About This?

We certainly understand that you may still have concerns about specific issues. If you have not found the answers to your questions in this Parent's Guide, in the Participant's Guide or on any of the websites we have provided for reference, we encourage you to discuss your concerns first with your student who will be going abroad. Perhaps he or she has attended a meeting or read something about the issue that still concerns you. If you and your student cannot find the answer to a question, it is important for the student to contact the Office of International Programs prior to departure and we will do our best to provide the needed information.

Some of the issues we encourage you to discuss with your student are listed below. While we do not consider this a comprehensive list, it can provide a good start to an open dialog about issues that may be of concern, and may provide some direction as your student begins to plan for the year ahead.

1. Is my passport current? Do my parents have current passports?
2. Have I read the instructions in the Participant Guide regarding the student visa? Do I need to apply for a student visa?
3. What will be the best housing arrangement for me? Students who want to focus on language learning are advised not to live only with other American students. It is too easy to simply speak English all the time.
4. Have I reviewed a map of the city where I will be living? International maps are available in most bookstores. The Auto Club (AAA) also sells international maps.
5. Have I contacted IP alumni of the program I am participating in? IP Campus Coordinators have information about how to contact IP alumni. Alumni of the program are the best resources of information about the study abroad program. They have just returned and are happy to share their experiences. A copy of the "Student Experience Report" is provided in the Participant Guide.
6. What is the crime level in the country where I am going? What kinds of crimes are more prevalent? Students and parents are advised to read the US Department of State Consular Information Notes http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html.
7. Do I know the exchange rate for the foreign currency of my host country? Check out the Oanda currency website: <http://www.oanda.com>.
8. Have I reviewed my Program Cost Estimate? What have I prepaid and what will I still need to pay for once I get to my study abroad destination? (The Program Cost Estimate is in your Participant Guide.)
9. Do I know how much money I will need for my first two months abroad and will I have ready access to adequate funds?
10. Have I completed and submitted all financial aid documents (financial aid recipients only)? Do I know when and how my financial aid will reach me?

What Parents Say about The CSU International Programs

Dear Fellow IP Parents:

My son, Adam, spent the 2005-2006 academic year living and studying in Florence, Italy, leaving in the fall and returning in the spring. Even though it seems like a long time, students really benefit from being there that long. They get to really know their new city inside and out, instead of feeling like tourists all the time. Florence became a second home to Adam and his roommates, as they developed routines and patterns.

Communicating with my son was made very easy with the use of cell phones, emails and phone cards. We were able to stay in touch, hear about his adventures and missed him less, because of the easy contact. Even when he traveled away from his home base to Moscow, Dublin, Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam, Munich and all over Italy, he was only a phone call or email away. We really looked forward to hearing about his travels!

When he was in Florence, he lived with 4 other roommates in a 14th century palazzo, next to the Ponte Vecchio, that had been converted into apartments. The three girls and two guys who decided to room together had to go apartment hunting and apply for a place, shortly after they got to Italy. I was concerned about the process but the Italian rental agencies were very helpful and these students found their wonderful place within three days. During their time living together, they became a family of their own.

I was fortunate enough to visit Adam during his spring break. We spent several days in Rome together, seeing sights that we had both seen separately before. Being able to share the Vatican and other sights are memories I hold dear. We also visited Salzburg, Austria for a few days so I could show him the town I lived in and places that were special to me as a college student. The rest of our time was spent together in Florence. I was fortunate to live with Adam and his roommates in the apartment, see their favorite spots in the city and eat at most of the restaurants I'd heard about. I strongly recommend visiting your son or daughter abroad so that you too will share wonderful memories.

Adam's experience was life changing. His confidence and self-assuredness blossomed. His view of the world and its people are forever changed. The transformation he has made is impressive and I will be forever grateful that he had the opportunity to study abroad.

*Sincerely,
Sue Roberts*

Dear Fellow IP Parents,

In July 2004, our son Joe headed off to Santiago, Chile where he studied at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile for nearly one year. I cannot imagine a more enriching experience. Not only did Joe have the advantage of studying at a renowned South American University, but also he was also able to immerse himself in a different culture; something very few of us have an opportunity to do.

Joe had a wonderful host family who became second parents to him. Joe also traveled extensively during the winter and spring breaks. During this time, Joe was able to meet and befriend a wide range of people everywhere he went. Although we were at first nervous that he would be traveling to neighboring countries, we were able to keep in touch both by calling his cell phone and through e-mails. Everywhere from Machu Picchu, Peru, to the tip of South America, Punta Arenas, Chile, Joe was able to contact us and bring us up to date on his travels.

In the spring, we were fortunate enough to visit Joe in Santiago and meet his second "family." What a great Spanish-speaking tour guide we had! Joe, of course. It was wonderful to share first hand in his experiences and see what a transforming experience this was for him. If you get the opportunity to visit your child, I would strongly recommend it.

The Cal State Stanislaus IP coordinator was a great partner throughout our son's year abroad. She provided guidance for Joe as he entered the program and helped him transition back upon his return. I am proud of the academic and social accomplishments Joe achieved. Let your child know that you trust him/her and let your child go. The first few months are hard, but it gets easier, and before you know it, the year is done!

Sincerely,

Scott and Marla Pettygrove

Dear Fellow IP Parents,

What an amazing year our daughter had in the IP program, Paris, France 2002-2003! We would encourage any student, regardless of his/her chosen course of study, to spend a year abroad. The time spent out of the classroom and in the culture of another country enhances your child's growth and provides such a rewarding experience.

Don't let the yearlong program dissuade you from allowing your child to go abroad. The year goes by so quickly, and it would almost be a disservice for the student to be there any less time. If you can fit a trip in to visit your son/daughter sometime during that year, we highly recommend it. It is best to go after several months, though, so your child has time to settle in. We did this and thoroughly enjoyed it; seeing Anna's living arrangements and daily routine put several uncertainties to rest. We also recommend that your student be persistent with advisors upon returning after the year abroad, so that all classes are accounted for. Anna did this and is right on track for graduation! The only significant challenge of the program was the housing situation in the very beginning. It may not be this way for all programs, but our daughter had a very difficult time finding suitable lodging. Obviously it worked out in the end.

We are so proud of our daughter for taking this opportunity, and she just exudes confidence in every aspect of her life. We attribute part of this to living abroad.

Sincerely,

Jim and Marsha Beaty

Dear Fellow IP Parents,

IP provided our daughter with a myriad of opportunities that she would have never experienced had she only studied in California. She lived in dorms that had students from all over Europe and Asia. On a daily basis she interacted with students from all over the world, which exposed her to different cultures, political ideologies, and cuisines. Today she keeps in contact with friends she studied with in England.

I would recommend that parents encourage their children to take every opportunity to travel during the holidays. Our daughter spent Christmas day in a youth hostel in Ireland with strangers from around the world followed by travels throughout Western Europe, visiting 12 countries. She also backpacked throughout Spain during her Easter break for three weeks; experiencing Semana Santa parades which only occur during Easter week. Had she come home for the holidays she would have never experienced these unique events and places.

She took full advantage of her year abroad. She excelled academically and now has a more global perspective. Socially she has a better understanding of world politics and even engages in friendly, political debates with her international friends via e-mail. Professionally, her international experience makes her a unique candidate in job interviews and gives her an edge over the rest.

*Sincerely,
Joe & Patty Tellez*

Dear Fellow IP Parents,

At first I wasn't happy with my daughter's decision to study abroad. I was worried that she wouldn't finish school in time and that it would cost too much (she is graduating on time and the actual cost was about the same). I later realized that this was a worthwhile experience as she learned how to overcome language barriers and to interface with people from different cultures. By living in Denmark, she learned what it was like to live with a Danish family and experience their day-to-day living. By living with a family, she learned how others live, work, eat, and spend time together. Through these experiences, my daughter has made life-long friends whom she will communicate with all her life.

My daughter also learned that the Danish grading system is much more rigorous than the American system she was used to. She observed how other students treated studying abroad as a fun year, whereas she worked hard to complete her studies.

She also learned what it was like to live in a city and use the mass transit systems, which she learned to appreciate and now misses. After living in California her whole life, she experienced a different type of weather for a whole year and learned that she could now live anywhere.

My daughter learned what it was like to live on a limited budget since she had to pay all her own expenses for travel in Europe and in Denmark. She also learned that it is not fun to wear the same red jacket for a whole year!

The bottom line is: My daughter got as much out of going abroad that anyone could from a year-long life style change and she is a better person for having made the trip. Because I was working in Germany, I went to visit her twice and I enjoyed all the people I met. I thought after six months that she would want to come home, but she had no intentions of doing so! She had traveling to do over the winter holiday! My daughter enjoyed staying the year and cannot wait to go back.

Advice for parents: Urge your kids to go, but try to determine if this is for fun or for school. If it's for school, IP is a valuable experience. If it is for fun, a summer trip to Europe might be the way to go instead.

*Sincerely,
John Holschlag*

Dear Fellow IP Parents,

After coming to the program for parents, I was assured that IP was a well-run program. I didn't worry about the program doing the things they said they would do, such as health insurance, setting the students up with host families, etc. The part that worried me the most was that my daughter was going to travel on her own between semesters. E-mail helped tremendously. Before our daughter left, she received an e-mail from the family she was going to stay with. My husband e-mailed the family and introduced us as her parents. I think they thought it was a little strange but we later became good friends. It was fun getting e-mails from another country! We eventually traveled abroad to meet them.

I think my daughter had a great experience traveling abroad. Denmark was her chosen country. She actually ended up staying with two host families so she was able to see how different families in the same culture live. She had a more varied experience this way. I think staying with a host family was better than living at the dorms because the host family could help in a variety of ways. They helped her get around town, showed her the best places to shop, and they helped her when she got sick. She was included in many of the family celebrations, such as going to the grandfather's 70th birthday extravaganza and the birth of her host mother's twin babies. The host families were very willing to help in any way. Her pregnant host mom even went out in the rain for an hour to search for her stolen bike. She found it and stole it back!

My daughter learned how to run a household with less "stuff" and to live in a smaller space (five people for one bathroom). Danes live a lot simpler life, have lots of vacations and play more games (probably because it was dark most of the winter). She also learned what a great public transportation system they had with all the trains and busses. Public transportation was something she wasn't used to. She also learned how a different type of government works. This experience helped make her more aware of politics, history and geography (she was not so interested before). This is an experience she could not have possibly gained from a book! I think it was well worth her time and the money, and I recommend it for all students. It also helps them gain confidence in their ability to travel and do things on their own.

*Sincerely,
R'Lene Holschlag*

**Thank you for attending the CSU
International Programs Pre-Departure Orientation.**