

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICANS	4
Introductions and Relationships, U.S. Diversity and Perceptions of International visitors	4
Appointments and Punctuality, Invitations	5
Dietary Restrictions, Smoking Restrictions, Asking Questions	5
CHAPTER 2: PRACTICAL MATTERS	7
Housing	
Temporary Housing on Arrival, Locating Permanent Housing	7
Costs	8
Food	8
Family	
Family Concerns	9
Your Spouse	9
Your Children	9
Preparing to leave the United States	
Travel Documents, Passport, Form DS-209	11
Exchange Visitor Visa, Applying for the J Visa	12
Required Documentation for J Visa applicants, I-94 Card	13
Finances	
Before you arrive	13
Eetting up a Bank Account	14
Credit	14
Budgeting, Sales Tax, Tipping for service, Consumer Fraud	15
Communications	
Mail, Telephones, Telephone Directory, Emergencies	16
International Calling	16
When Budgeting your Stipend	17
Medical Care	
Importance of Insurance	18
Preexisting Conditions; Doctors, Dentists and Hospitals	18
Common Misconceptions about Health Insurance; Pharmacies	19

CHAPTER 3: AT THE UNIVERSITY	21
Higher Education in the United States	
Accreditation, Types of Institutions	21
Funding and Governance, Admission, Elements of Cost to Students	22
Enrollment	23
Faculty	23
Undergraduate Study	25
Graduate Study	26
Academic Year	27
Credit System	27
Registration	27
Assessment	28
Methods of Instruction	29
Classroom Culture	30
Extracurricular Life	30
Campus Services for International Visitors	31
CHAPTER 4: TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY	33
Academic Department	33
Students and Teaching	35
Classroom Environment	36
Teaching Styles	38
Campus and Community Life	39
International Postscript	40
CHAPTER 5: USING THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES	42
Organization of Libraries	
Overview, Open Stacks and Circulation of Books, Online Databases, Orientation Tours and Bibliographic Instruction Programs, Classification Systems	42
Online and Card Catalogs, Reference Desk	43
Serials and Other Special Materials, Interlibrary Loans and Visits to Other Libraries	44
Archives	44
Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress Classification	46
APPENDICES	
Suggested Readings About the United States	47
Suggested Readings About U.S. Academic Culture	48
Glossary of Terms Commonly Used on Campus	49

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the beginning of the IIE-SRF fellowship experience! We are delighted that you have arrived at your host campus as a fellow of the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF). As you know, this fellowship is intended to provide you with respite from some of the pressures at home and to encourage your reintegration into or continuation of productive academic activity. Through your engagement on campus, you will also be developing new linkages with U.S. colleagues and expanding your understanding of the U.S. At the same time, your presence will expose students and colleagues to new perspectives and approaches. While we know you as a fellow of IIE-SRF, many colleagues and students at your host institution will know you as simply a visiting scholar, professor, or researcher. Whether you choose to inform colleagues and students of your status as an IIE-SRF fellow is entirely up to your discretion. We hope that you will feel comfortable to share your background and experiences with individuals you encounter in your new community. Either way, we do expect that your fellowship experience will be similar to that of any scholar on an exchange visit and we have put together some materials to help you adjust to new surroundings and navigate the academic setting in your host country.

We hope you will find this guide useful. As always, any questions related to your fellowship can be directed to the IIE-SRF program officer with whom you are regularly in touch or to our main office by phone at (212) 205-6486 or via email to SRF@iie.org.

We wish you all the best.

Culture Matters. Whether you are leaving the country for the first time or are a veteran traveler, international visitors often experience frustration when they move to a new country. IIE-SRF scholars coming to the United States are no exception. The stress of living in another country can be subtle but intense, requiring that you learn to navigate new surroundings and adjust to different modes of communication. Culture shock, the anxiety produced when a person moves to a new environment and culture, is a natural response to this stress. It can leave you with the anxiety of not knowing what to do, how to do things, or how things work in your new setting. You can also feel unsure of what is appropriate or inappropriate in social situations.

The first step in overcoming culture shock is anticipating this stress before it happens. You can also reduce the burden of culture shock by educating yourself about your new environment so you can successfully adapt to new situations. We hope the information offered here will help you feel at home quickly so you can focus on the activities of your fellowship.

CHAPTER 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICANS

It is not easy to make generalizations about the United States, for above all, it is a land of diversity. The size of the country, its geographic and climatic differences, and the ethnic mix of its people all contribute to its variety. Still, there are a few characteristics you will encounter in “typical” Americans from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

For example, Americans tend to value their individuality, think of themselves as equal to any other man or woman, and believe they are masters of their own destinies. They feel free to speak their minds on most subjects and are often astonishingly frank in expressing political opinions—cherishing above all other rights the freedom of speech guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. They are direct in communication—asking questions when information is needed and saying “no” when they mean no. They are materialistic on the whole but generous as well. Americans do not commonly exhibit class-consciousness or make distinctions amongst themselves along class lines. If anything, the vast majority identify themselves as belonging to the middle class. Except for perhaps the very rich or very poor, Americans do not usually feel that the social class into which they were born will determine their success in life. Further, people do not usually show excessive deference or superiority to each other in public situations. This may be different, however, within a professional setting.

Introductions and Relationships. Americans appear open and friendly at first meeting, but this only means that they are pleased to make your acquaintance; it may or may not lead to true friendship. They are informal and often introduce themselves by their first names and call others by their first names on very slight acquaintance. In professional situations, however, it is preferable to address people using their titles and last names (for example, Dr. Smith, Ms. Jones) until they ask you to use their first names. Also, in professional situations, Americans tend to stand at least an arm’s length apart when conversing and usually don’t touch one another, except to shake hands upon greeting one another. Americans generally make a clear distinction between their professional and personal relationships. In professional relationships, Americans tend to start conducting business without necessarily establishing a strong personal rapport. Though seemingly impersonal and unfriendly at first, this practice merely illustrates American values of efficiency, practicality, and time. Americans do not always feel it necessary to establish a strong personal rapport when conducting business. Above all, the most ideal standards in American professional relationships are fairness, impartiality, and objectivity.

U.S. Diversity and Perceptions of International Visitors. The United States is known for being a land of immigrants. Visitors are sometimes surprised at the nation’s ethnic, linguistic, racial, and religious diversity. Especially in the largest cities, dozens of ethnic groups have established communities and institutions. In some instances, you may meet many people who come from your home country, speak your language, or share your religious beliefs. While experiencing American culture, you are encouraged to get involved with this community.

The U.S. Constitution specifically forbids discrimination against anyone based on color, race, or religion. This is one ideal commonly held by most Americans, and they generally welcome cultural

diversity within their own communities. However, there are some Americans, unfortunately, who do not value these ideals. These individuals may even continue to hold on to negative stereotypes. You may receive stares, be received with hesitation, or asked questions that seem odd or offensive, particularly in areas of the country where people are not accustomed to international visitors. In these cases, you are encouraged to educate those you encounter about your area of the world. They will have a lot to learn from you. You should not, on the other hand, put yourself in a position of harm or danger because of someone's bigotry and ignorance. If you feel threatened or uncomfortable you should notify your IIE-SRF program officer, host university contact, or local law enforcement (in extreme cases).

Remember: *Ask questions whenever you need guidance or information ... Americans consider it your responsibility to raise an issue as a concern so it can be addressed.*

By and large, differences are indulged, and “doing things your way” is held in high regard. Thus, there is no need for you to change your own habits or lifestyle. Nonetheless, there are a few customs you may find convenient to adopt while you are here.

Appointments and Punctuality. When Americans make an appointment or accept an invitation, they can generally be counted on to appear at the appointed time. They view punctuality as a virtue, especially in a professional environment. It is always appropriate to make an appointment before visiting someone, particularly at an office, and best to be on time for those appointments. Americans value their privacy and rarely visit even good friends without telephoning first. When appointments are professional in nature—with a doctor or a colleague at the university—you should appear five minutes prior to the time you agreed upon. On social occasions, especially when the invitation is for a meal, plan to arrive no more than 10 to 15 minutes after the appointed hour (but never before the hour — the hosts may not be ready yet). In both cases, be sure to telephone if you are unavoidably delayed. Public events such as concerts, weddings, and university classes begin promptly at the scheduled time.

Invitations. If you accept an invitation or make an appointment, it is very important that you appear as promised since your hosts will have taken considerable trouble to prepare for your visit, and professionals will have arranged their schedules to accommodate you. It is perfectly acceptable to decline an invitation if it is not convenient for you, but some response is always necessary. On a formal, written invitation, RSVP means “please reply.” It is not necessary to bring a gift unless the occasion is a birthday or Christmas party. If the invitation is for an entire weekend, a simple, inexpensive gift of flowers, candy or wine, or a small souvenir from your own country would be appropriate. A thank you note to your host or hostess, especially following an overnight visit, is considerate and always appreciated. If you are invited to go out for a meal, you should assume that all parties will pay for themselves, unless the invitation includes a specific offer to pay for your food.

Dietary Restrictions. If health or religious beliefs restrict the foods that you can eat, you should feel free to explain this when you accept an invitation to visit. Such preferences are always understood and

common among Americans. Your host or hostess will usually be happy to take them into account when the menu is planned. You can also be assertive about dietary preferences or restrictions in a restaurant. Many places will try to accommodate your request. Some examples of these that you may see often are: vegetarian, kosher, halal, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free.

Smoking Restrictions. It is now quite common in the United States for cigarette smoking to be either restricted or completely prohibited in public places. This includes restaurants, airplanes and other modes of public transportation, theaters, stores, museums, and many office and university buildings. Cigar and pipe smoking are almost always prohibited. You should also be aware that Americans often object to guests smoking in their homes or on their properties, and it is considered a courtesy to ask for permission from your host before you begin to smoke.

Asking Questions. Probably the best advice this handbook can give is to suggest you **ask questions whenever you need guidance or information**. In fact, if you feel that something is not going as you anticipated, Americans consider it **your** responsibility to raise an issue as a concern so it can be addressed. Americans ask questions freely and never think inquiries are a sign of ignorance or weakness. On the contrary, questions indicate interest, and you will find most people glad to help.

CHAPTER 2: PRACTICAL MATTERS

HOUSING

You may have already located suitable housing near your host campus in which case, the following explanation will serve as an additional resource. If you are still seeking housing, please contact your IIE-SRF program officer or host institution contact for assistance. In most cases, a designated international student and scholar services office will provide the best guidance in your housing search. Your faculty supervisor/mentor may also offer helpful ideas.

Temporary Housing on Arrival. Unless you are familiar with the surrounding area of your host institution, you may need assistance to arrange temporary housing for yourself and your family for the first few days of your stay in the United States. Some universities offer short-term accommodations; otherwise, a hotel or motel nearby may be the best alternative. You may also wish to correspond with your faculty colleague for assistance in making these initial arrangements. When corresponding, be sure to specify exact arrival times, the number of family members coming with you, and any special requirements. You can also ask if special rates are available for faculty. These temporary accommodations may be somewhat expensive, but if you make the location of permanent housing your first priority, you should not need them for an extended period of time.

Locating Permanent Housing. Housing is often in short supply and may be expensive in university communities. Housing is especially difficult to locate—and expensive—in such cities as Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, as well as the state of Hawaii. Most universities, as mentioned, have offices to assist students and faculty in this regard. They may be able to help you compile a list of available apartments or houses and offer guidance about neighborhoods and costs. You should also check the classified advertisement section of the local newspaper. The weekend papers have the most complete listing of available apartments for rent, both furnished and unfurnished. Many newspapers' classified listings are also available online. Check with your host contact or the host institution's international office for other local resources that may help you find housing.

Once you have identified potential housing, you will likely need to make an appointment to visit the premises. Usually, lists of available housing prepared by housing offices or advertisements in the newspapers include the phone number of the individual or agency renting the apartment, as well as information about when they can be reached to schedule appointments. Sometimes landlords or agencies will schedule appointments for after-work hours. Because the weekend newspapers usually have the most complete listing of available rental units, many landlords, especially private individuals, schedule visits to the rental units on Saturdays and Sundays. In general, you should respond to advertisements as soon as they appear—apartments often rent quickly.

You will probably be asked to sign a lease (rental agreement) for a stipulated period of time. Read the lease carefully; it is a legally binding contract. It will list your obligations and those of your landlord in detail. Generally, it will be your responsibility to maintain the apartment in the condition in which it is

turned over to you, but the landlord is responsible for repairs to the building and equipment that are not the result of tenant negligence. If possible, ask a friend or colleague familiar with the area to accompany you when you look for an apartment or house and review your rental agreement.

Costs. Housing costs vary widely in the United States, depending on the region of the country and whether you are in a rural, suburban, or urban area (see the Budgeting section in this chapter). Normally, the monthly cost of a unit rented for less than a year is higher than the monthly cost for a 12-month rental. Furnished accommodations are also more expensive than unfurnished units. Your university housing office or host faculty colleague may be able to offer guidance in advance as to probable costs for accommodations to meet your needs and thus facilitate budgeting of your stipend.

The terms and conditions governing the rental arrangements will be found in the lease. Landlords expect payment of each month's rent at the beginning of the month. The lease will stipulate the exact date payment is due and the amount of security deposit required by the landlord. The security deposit is usually equal to one month's rent. It protects the landlord in the event that a tenant fails to pay rent at some point or damages the apartment. The security deposit, and frequently the first month's rent, is required at the time the lease is signed. Occasionally, the landlord will also ask for the last month's rent in advance. The deposit should be returned after the tenant vacates the premises if all conditions of the lease have been met. You should read the lease carefully to determine the size of the security deposit as well as potential penalties for breaking the lease. You should also check to see if the rent covers utilities, that is, the cost of heating, cooling, water, and electricity. If these are not included, the living unit is metered, and you will receive a bill for the amount used each month. Utility costs in a single-family home are almost always the tenant's responsibility. You should be sure to reach a clear understanding of the bills you will be expected to pay in addition to rent and ask for an estimate of the costs incurred by previous tenants. This information will help you to determine whether the housing is affordable for you or not. The cost of a telephone is almost always billed separately, regardless of whether the rental unit is an apartment, room or house.

If the apartment is separately metered, you must telephone the companies that provide the services (oil, gas, electricity, water—the landlord will identify them) and ask that accounts be established in your name.

Furnishings. You may wish to seek "furnished" accommodations. Sometimes these will have all the furniture, equipment, and supplies you will need. At other times, you will have to provide linens for the bed, bath, and table, and utensils for eating and cooking. These items can be purchased at a relatively modest cost. If you lease an unfurnished apartment, you can find inexpensive furnishings at "garage" or "yard" sales (where neighbors sell household items they no longer need out of their garage), or shops run by the Salvation Army or Goodwill Industries. Normally, even "unfurnished" apartments contain such appliances as refrigerators and stoves.

Food. Because the United States is a nation of immigrants, foods from all parts of the world can be found throughout the country, especially in major metropolitan areas. Ethnic restaurants are found in cities and towns, and supermarkets and specialty shops often stock ingredients to create the favorite dish of most nations and cultures. If you ask neighbors and colleagues, you should be able to find

almost anything you want.

Typically, Americans eat breakfast on workdays (Monday through Friday) between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. (fruit or juice, cereal or eggs, toast, and coffee or tea) and have a light lunch of a salad, soup, and/or sandwich between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. The main meal of the day (dinner, or, in some parts of the country, supper) is taken between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. when family members can eat together.

Shopping is ordinarily done once or twice a week in supermarkets, which are enormous stores that carry inventories of foods of all kinds, pharmacy items, and housewares, displayed on open shelves for self-service. These are usually open from early morning to late in the evening (in some cases, 24-hours per day), Monday through Saturday, and throughout the day on Sunday.

Residential neighborhoods commonly have smaller convenience stores as well, but these tend to offer a limited selection at higher prices. These stores are handy places to purchase essential items such as bread and milk or other items needed between major shopping trips. Alcoholic beverages, depending on regulations of the individual state, are sometimes sold in supermarkets, convenience stores, separate liquor stores, or special state-operated shops.

You may be surprised at the abundance of processed “convenience” foods sold in U.S. markets. These can be frozen, canned, or packaged in a form that requires minimal preparation time. They are often less nutritious and more expensive than fresh foods, but occasionally they are cheaper. For example, fruits and vegetables are frozen at the height of the harvest season when they are plentiful, then sold for a standard price all year long when the fresh produce is either unavailable or very costly.

FAMILY CONCERNS

Your Spouse. A number of social, cultural, and educational activities are available in most university towns in the United States. These include:

- English as a second language classes, either provided by the university or in nearby community colleges or adult education programs;
- Academic courses offered by the same institutions, which may either be audited or taken for credit;
- Recreational courses (for example, arts, cooking, auto mechanics, sewing, crafts, dancing, and fitness) offered by local schools and community organizations;
- Opportunities for volunteer work at local libraries, hospitals, day care centers, or social agencies, in which many Americans participate; and
- Social or special interest groups (for example, gardening, bridge, hiking, sports teams, or bird watching clubs).

Local newspapers and public libraries are good sources of information on all these activities, but you can also consult your colleagues at the university and their spouses.

Your Children. Day care centers and nursery schools, most of which charge a fee, are available for children of preschool age. Costs in large cities are quite high. Day care provides care for children of

working parents, usually for the entire work day; nursery schools provide supervised play and some educational experiences for part of a weekday. Of course, it is also possible to engage babysitters to care for very young children in your home. Neighbors and faculty colleagues are the best sources of information in locating an appropriate person. Regulations in some locales require day care providers, including babysitters, be licensed by the city, state, or county.

At age 5, many children attend kindergarten within the free, public school system, where they continue their education through grade 12; some school systems also offer prekindergarten (pre-K) for 4-year-olds. Education in the United States is compulsory for all children from age 6 to either 16 or 18, depending on the state of residence. Although most parents choose to enroll their children in public schools, private, and parochial (religious) schools are also available at all levels. Private schools, however, charge tuition and can be costly.

Children are assigned to specific public schools by the local board of education based on where they live, and Americans often choose their housing based on the educational reputation of the local schools. After you have arrived in the United States and have completed your housing arrangements, you should contact the local school board to inquire about enrollment procedures and special services your children require, such as English language training, facilities for the disabled, and curricular modifications to keep them up-to-date on their schoolwork at home. You will need proof of your children's age (a copy of a birth certificate or other official document) if they are entering school for the first time, transcripts of earlier schooling, and updated medical and dental records (to avoid having to repeat expensive tests and/or vaccinations and inoculations) for whatever schooling you choose.

Your contacts at your host institution may be able to assist you in starting the process to enroll your children in school.

If your children have participated in international youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, YMCA or YWCA, they may wish to continue those activities while in the United States. There are local chapters of these and other youth organizations in most towns and cities throughout the country. In addition, neighborhood community centers regularly offer programs geared toward children and teenagers.

Clothing. The climate of the region where you will live will naturally determine the clothing you need. If appropriate winter clothing is not available in your own country, the local department store in your host community will offer a wide range of options and styles at varying prices for all family members. Secondhand stores and thrift shops offer inexpensive common household items and used clothing. They are listed online or in the telephone directory (see the Communication section in this chapter for more information on yellow pages) as "Thrift Shops," "Secondhand Clothing," or "Clothing, Used." Discount stores such as K-Mart, Wal-Mart, and Target are additional sources for less expensive clothing, household items, and toys.

Depending on the local climate, buildings in the United States are centrally heated in winter and air conditioned in summer. Nonetheless, Americans tend to wear cotton and cotton blends from May or June to September or October and lightweight wool or synthetic blends the rest of the year.

Campus dress is informal. Men wear slacks, shirts, sweaters, or sport jackets (with or without a necktie). For women, skirts or slacks with blouses or simple dresses are appropriate. Suits for men and dresses for women are useful for more formal occasions. Your country's national dress is always welcome and appropriate.

Children also wear casual clothes and rarely dress up, even for parties. Both young men and women prefer to wear blue jeans daily through the college years, although they will conform to more formal clothing for religious services and special occasions. Only a few private or religious schools require students to wear uniforms, but many public schools now have dress codes that limit the type of clothing that students may wear. Make sure to check with your child's school about these rules.

Preparing to leave for the United States.

IIE-SRF fellows undertaking appointments in the U.S. may enter the country on one of a number of different visas. Most commonly fellows will obtain a J-1 visa, which is intended for students, scholars, and researchers undertaking temporary appointments in the U.S. **The below information applies to J-1 visa holders only; requirements for holders of other visas may be different.** (The type of visa you obtain to undertake your IIE-SRF position will be determined by, or in conversation with, your host institution. Alternative visas may include H1-B, O, or EB1.)

Travel Documents.

To enter the United States, you must have:

- a valid passport
- Form DS-2019
- J-1 visa

Make sure the information on these documents is correct and that your name is spelled the same way on all of your travel documents (passport, Form DS-2019, J-1 visa, and airline ticket). Do not put these documents in any checked luggage.

Passport. You are permitted to use only one passport during your IIE-SRF Fellowship. Use this passport when applying for your J-1 visa and when traveling to and from the United States.

Make sure the expiration date on your passport, as well as on any accompanying dependents' passports, is at least six months beyond the end date of your appointment.

Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status). The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a Web-based application used to track and monitor schools and programs, students, exchange visitors, and their dependents throughout the duration of approved participation within the U.S. education system. Your host institution is responsible for providing information about your appointment to SEVIS so that you remain in compliance with J visa regulations.

Your academic host institution will provide you with a SEVIS-generated Form DS-2019.. ***Please review this form and make sure that all of the information is correct.*** The dates on your DS-2019 are the

start and end dates of your IIE-SRF fellowship appointment. You must present the original DS-2019 to the U.S. consular officer in your home country, or in the country where you are applying for your visa, when applying for your J-1 visa. You may wish to make a copy of the DS-2019 for your records prior to submitting your visa application. If your J-1 visa is granted, your DS-2019 will be returned to you in a sealed envelope. **Do not open this envelope.** You will present it with your passport at the U.S. port of entry. Keep the DS-2019 with your passport at all times.

Exchange Visitor (J) Visa. You must enter the United States on an Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa, issued under the sponsorship of your host institution. (In rare cases, IIE or another entity may be the sponsor of your visa.) Your spouse and any unmarried children under the age of 21 are eligible to accompany you on J-2 dependent visas. If one of your children turns 21 during your fellowship period, that child's J-2 immigration status will end on his or her 21st birthday, and he or she will be required to leave the country before that date.

Other family members, such as parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, etc. are not eligible for J-2 classification. These family members, along with any children over the age of 21, may be eligible for B-2 visa classifications to visit the United States as tourists for a maximum of six months.

If you intend for your immediate family to join you in the U.S. as J-2 dependents, please inform IIE-SRF and your host institution as soon as possible. Each dependent must have his or her own DS-2019, issued by the host institution. Your dependents may accompany you or arrive separately, but they cannot arrive in the U.S. before you do.

All J-2 DS-2019s will have dates identical to your J-1 DS-2019 dates, even if their actual stay will be for a shorter period.

Both J-1 and J-2 visa holders will be subject to limitations on re-entering the United States in the future.

Dependents who are U.S. citizens are welcome to accompany you during your IIE-SRF fellowship appointment, but will not be issued DS-2019s as J-2 dependents and should travel on a U.S. passport.

Applying for the J Visa. You should apply for your J visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country. Please consult your IIE-SRF program officer and host institution contact for more information regarding how to apply for your J visa. Your host institution may have a special office for international scholars that can help you with this process. Although you may apply at any U.S. Consular Office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa while outside your country of permanent residence. **Apply for your visa early to provide ample time for visa processing.** A personal interview is almost as always required as a standard part of visa processing, and it may take several weeks before you can get an appointment for your interview. The typical application process may vary from a few weeks to several months, depending on your country of origin. A consular officer may need to request special clearances depending on your field of study, nationality or background. This will take additional time.

An I-901 SEVIS fee is required of most individuals upon application for a J visa. If you cannot afford this

fee, please contact your IIE-SRF program officer.

Required Documentation for J Visa Applications

Each applicant for an exchange visitor must submit:

- An application Form DS-156 Nonimmigrant Visa Application and a Form DS-158 (Contact Information and Work History for Nonimmigrant Visa Applicant). Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also need to complete and sign Form DS-157 (Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application). Blank forms are available without charge at all U.S. Consular Offices and on the Visa Services Web site at http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms_1342.html.
- A passport valid for travel to the United States. Make sure the expiration date on your passport is at least six months beyond the end date of your fellowship period. If more than one person is included in the passport, each person desiring a visa must complete an application.
- One 2-inch x 2-inch photograph
- A valid DS-2019 issued by your host institution

J visa applicants must also demonstrate to the consular officer that they have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country that they intend to return to, and that they are coming to the United States for a temporary period. Applicants may also be asked to show that they have adequate financial resources for themselves and any accompanying dependents. Applicants will be fingerprinted and photographed as part of the visa application process.

Even if your host institution has issued a DS-2019, this form only denotes your eligibility for a J visa. It is ultimately the decision of the consular officer whether to issue the visa.

I-94 Card. When arriving, the flight attendant or Immigration Officer will give all non-U.S. citizens a Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record). The form asks for basic identification information and the address where you will stay in the United States. You must fill out the information on the form exactly as it appears on your passport and DS-2019.

You will present your completed Form I-94 to a border inspector along with your passport containing your visa and your sealed DS-2019. You should also have a copy of your IIE-SRF award letter and host institution invitation letter with you to show the inspector, if requested.

FINANCES

Before You Arrive. If your government does not restrict the exchange of currency, you may wish to transfer some personal funds, if available, to the United States. There are no restrictions on the importation of U.S. or international currency. This can be done by instructing your bank in your home country to issue an international draft, near your U.S. university, that your bank has a correspondent relationship with. Upon arrival, you can then open an account at that bank and draw on the funds or arrange for the funds to be transferred to a more conveniently located banking institution.

You are strongly advised to bring some personal funds, if available, with you to cover expenses during

transit and immediately after your arrival. You may choose to do this by purchasing traveler's checks from abroad. When you arrive at the airport in the United States, it is useful to exchange some money (traveler's checks or international currency) into U.S. dollars to pay for transport to the city, tips for baggage handling at the airport and hotel, and other essentials. If you have an internationally accepted bank card, you may withdraw U.S. dollars from an ATM (automated teller machine) at the airport. Be sure to check for extra fees when exchanging currency or withdrawing money.

Setting Up a Bank Account. As soon as you arrive at your university, you should open an account at a local bank. If you have transferred funds from your home bank, you will probably choose its correspondent bank in the United States if it is conveniently located. If not, ask your host institution contact to suggest an appropriate bank.

Although the bank you select will offer you many different kinds of accounts, they will generally fall into two categories:

- 1) Savings accounts pay interest at a modest rate but limit the number of withdrawals per month and require your presence at the bank to handle transactions.
- 2) Checking accounts help depositors pay their bills by writing checks that can be sent safely through the mail (to pay rent or utility bills) or handed to cashiers in local stores.

Some checking accounts are offered without a fee but require that you maintain a minimum balance; others require no balance but debit the account a monthly service charge, as well as a small fee for each check cashed. The bank staff will list the options for you. Most banks also issue an ATM (automated teller machine) or debit card that allows bank customers to access funds in their accounts through machines that are open 24 hours a day by using a personal identification number (PIN). These machines are located outside the bank and may also be found in convenience stores. If you use an ATM that is not associated with your bank, you will likely be charged a fee to withdraw money. Most stores have also installed machines that allow you to pay for your purchases at the checkout counter using your ATM or credit card. Remember to take your receipt with you and never give your PIN to others, as they could use it to access your funds.

It is important to note that checks drawn on out-of-town banks can take up to five business days to clear (that is the time required for the money to be transferred from one bank to the other before it will be available to you). If you transfer your home from one city to another during the period of your fellowship, you can move your funds to a new bank in one of two ways: (a) you can write a check drawn on your original bank for deposit in the new account (which then must clear), or (b) you can purchase traveler's checks with the balance of your funds.

Credit. Predictions are that America will someday be a cashless society. This means payment for goods and services will be made either by credit card or by an electronic transfer of funds triggered by telephoned instructions. Even now, credit or debit cards are widely used. The most popular cards are those issued by American Express, Visa, MasterCard, and Discover. There are also many others available from credit companies with a local focus and from individual shops and department stores. Ordinarily, cards are issued only to applicants with a substantial income and proof of past credit worthiness. The safest place to apply for a credit card is at your bank. Given the complexity of credit

checking outside the United States, it is difficult for visiting scholars to qualify for cards once they are in the United States. However, if you can obtain one before you leave home, you will find it useful, especially at hotels or for renting a car.

Credit companies bill monthly and charge interest at very high rates (12–21 percent annual rate) on any unpaid balance from the previous month. Some companies, such as American Express, require payment in full at the end of the month. Although no interest is charged on the current month's bills, there are sometimes hidden costs for the convenience of credit.

Budgeting. The cost of living is highly variable in the United States. Speaking in very general terms, goods and services are more expensive in the Northeast and on the West Coast, where salaries are generally higher, than in the South or Midwest. The cost of living is lower in small cities and towns than in large urban areas.

Sales Tax. You should also be aware that state and local sales taxes—ranging up to nine percent of the sale price, depending on the area—are added to the marked price of many items at the time of purchase. Thus, a \$10 item with a 9% sales tax will actually cost \$10.90.

Tipping for service. There are a number of circumstances in the United States when tipping is expected and, in fact, where tips make up a substantial portion of the wage of the person providing the service. Although tipping should be based on the quality of the service rendered, most people tip as follows:

- Porters at airports and train or bus stations, \$1 per piece of luggage
- Porters who show you to your room and carry your baggage in hotels, a minimum of \$1
- Servers in restaurants, 15-20 percent of the bill (for large groups, a service charge may already be included in the bill)
- Taxi drivers, 15 percent of the fare or bill
- Barbers or hairdressers, 10–20 percent

If you do not wish the services of a porter, you can simply indicate your preference to handle your baggage yourself. Under no circumstances should you offer a tip to public officials, including police officers; this may be viewed as an attempt to bribe the official and could have serious consequences.

Consumer Fraud. Consumer fraud is when businesses or merchants intentionally deceive, misrepresent, or twist the truth in order to persuade someone to part with something of value. This is also called a “scam.” Scams are aimed at getting people's money by selling them defective goods or services or by taking their money and not providing a promised service or product. People running scams can try to reach you through the mail, over the phone, or in person at your front door. Consumer fraud is an unfortunate but real aspect of life in the United States. Most people are honest and are not going to steal from you, but there are some who might try. Here are a few useful words of caution:

- Do not give your savings, checking, or credit card account numbers to anyone you do not

know—especially over the telephone!

- Do not sign any contract until you have a few days to read it. If you have any questions, do not be afraid to ask them until you are completely satisfied and fully understand all the terms. High-pressure “limited-time offers” are usually intended to get your money before you have time to think and are scams.
- Get all promises from salespeople in writing, including any guarantees and a receipt for the product or services you are buying. Make sure you have the full name of the company, its address, and telephone number in writing.
- You do not need to listen to a salesperson over the phone if you are not interested. You do not need to be polite, especially if the person is pressuring you to make an immediate decision. You can say, “I am not interested and do not call me again,” and hang up the phone.
- You do not need to let anyone into your home. Always ask for proper identification from strangers who may claim to be repairmen, pest exterminators, or workers from the telephone, gas, water or electric company. They should all have identification cards or badges. If you have any doubts, ask them to wait outside while you call the company to verify.
- Beware of extravagant claims and promises of miracles. It is best to follow some common wisdom: “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”

Communications

Mail. The U.S. Postal Service, a government-owned corporation, provides mail service from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and until noon on Saturday, although some have extended hours. You can also place mail in blue mailboxes, located on many street corners and in public buildings; each carries a sign that indicates collection times. In most areas of the country, mail is delivered to individual residences, Monday through Saturday.

As is customary in other countries, U.S. post offices offer a variety of services, including parcel post and insurance, registered and certified mail, and money orders.

Telephones. The telephone system in the United States is composed of many privately owned but cooperating companies. The system is effective, and a good deal of business is conducted over the telephone. Almost all Americans have personal mobile phones, often called a “cell phone,” and some may also have an additional telephone in their homes, known as a “landline.”

Emergencies. Throughout the U.S., there is a special number (“911”) to use in the event of an emergency. It can be dialed from a pay phone without payment. Through this number, you can reach police, fire, and emergency medical services.

International Calling. International calling can become expensive due to different rates each telephone company charges. One method of calling internationally is through purchasing pre-paid minutes on a calling card. Another innovative way to make internationally calls at a much lower cost is using Skype Software. Skype is a [program](#) that allows users to make [telephone calls over the Internet](#). Calls to other users of the service are free of charge, while calls to [landlines](#) and [cell phones](#) can be made for a fee.

WHEN BUDGETING YOUR STIPEND, KEEP THESE ESTIMATES IN MIND (\$US):

Rent for one-bedroom apartment (living room, dining area, kitchen, and bath):	
–Major city:	\$1,000-\$2,000/month
–Smaller cities/rural areas:	\$500-\$900/month
Utilities (electricity, water, heating oil/gas):	
–Dependent on size of unit & climate	\$50-\$200/month
Telephone (domestic calls only):	\$35-\$50/month
Motel/hotel room:	
–Major city:	\$100-\$200/day
–Smaller cities/rural areas:	\$40-\$80/day
Bus or subway fare:	\$1-\$3/ride
Cup of coffee:	\$1-\$3
Lunch (on campus):	\$5-\$10
Dinner:	
–Coffee shop, deli, cafe:	\$5-\$10 (per person)
–Family restaurant, bar and grill:	\$8-\$20 (per person)
–Elegant restaurant (bistro):	\$20 or more (per person)
Loaf of bread:	\$3-\$5
Dozen eggs:	\$4
Quart of milk:	\$3- \$5.00

MEDICAL CARE

Importance of Insurance. Medical care in the United States can be extremely costly. Unlike many countries, the United States does not have a national health care plan. Rather, health insurance is organized on a private, paying basis and insurance policies vary widely in what they cover. To guard against financial hardship if you should become ill or have an accident while in the United States, you must hold adequate health and accident insurance.

The J-1 and J-2 exchange visitor visa requires health insurance coverage at levels in compliance with the Exchange Visitor Program Regulations. For the duration of your fellowship, you should be covered by a health insurance plan provided by IIE-SRF or your host institution, or you may purchase an alternative independent health insurance plan.

As a part of your IIE-SRF fellowship, you are entitled to J-1 compliant individual health insurance, provided by Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). If you choose to waive coverage in this plan in order to enroll in a university or other alternative health insurance plan, you may receive a one-time stipend from IIE-SRF for the amount of the CISI plan, contingent upon proof of enrollment in another plan. Please note that, if you choose to enroll in CISI health insurance, the plan cannot cover your dependents and you must purchase health coverage for other family members. IIE-SRF fellows enrolled in CISI insurance will receive the insurance card and policy brochure via email directly from CISI.

We strongly suggest you carefully consider all health insurance options to determine which option will best cover your (and your family's) needs. Be sure to review your selected health insurance policy carefully. Your IIE-SRF program officer and your host institution's international office may be able to provide some information and/or guidance regarding health insurance.

Doctors, Dentists, and Hospitals. It is a good idea to identify a physician and a dentist and to learn the location of the nearest hospital when you move into a new community. This information will prepare you in the event of a medical emergency. Unless you have health problems that require the attention of a highly specialized doctor, an "internist" or "general practitioner" will probably meet your needs. Additionally, there are physicians specializing in "family practice" who care for the entire family, "pediatricians" who treat children through the teen years, and "obstetricians/gynecologists" (two specialties usually combined) who are concerned with female health and childbirth. Discuss your needs and preferences with colleagues and neighbors and ask whom they would recommend and the charges to expect. You may also wish to inquire about doctors and medical services at the hospital, health center, or clinic on your university campus.

When you go to a doctor, you will be asked many questions. The doctor will expect you to give details about your symptoms—what they feel like, whether they are more noticeable under some conditions than others, how long you have had them and so on. The doctor will also ask what treatments you have already tried.

The doctor will expect you to discuss your symptoms objectively, even though you may feel

uncomfortable or fearful. This approach does not necessarily mean that the doctor is unsympathetic; rather, the doctor is attempting to be efficient and thorough, reflecting the high value Americans generally place on those qualities.

In the U.S. health care system, patients are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves by asking the doctors (or other caregivers) questions about their condition and its treatment. Patients are expected to ask about the costs of recommended treatment and may be asked to participate in making decisions about treatment and medications. If the doctor does not know the likely costs, you should ask another member of the doctor's staff.

Notice that this general approach differs significantly from approaches in some other societies, where (1) the doctor is expected to understand the patient's condition without relying so much on information the patient provides in response to the doctor's questions, and (2) patients are not expected to be so self-reliant.

It may be necessary to pay for medical services before you leave the hospital or doctor's office. This is usually done by personal check or credit/debit card. Be sure to request a receipt indicating the diagnosis and treatment in order to request reimbursement from the insurance company if you are covered for the care you received. You and/or the attending physician's office must also complete a claim form and submit it to the insurance company. See your health care policy for instructions on submitting claims.

Common Misconceptions about Health Insurance. Scholars from other countries often have difficulty understanding how the health insurance system works. Here are some common misconceptions about U.S. health insurance:

- *If I have health insurance, all my medical expenses will be covered.* They will not. Please refer to your insurance brochure.
- *Any visit to the hospital emergency room will be paid for if I have health insurance.* An emergency room visit is covered only in case of a genuine emergency, as defined by the health insurance company. Usually this means a serious accident or life-threatening illness. Even if insurance covers an emergency room visit, the patient will still have to pay the deductible (the amount of money you are expected to contribute for your medical treatment).
- *The insurance company's job is to help me meet my medical expenses.* Yes and no. The insurance company's job is to fulfill the terms of the contract it has with you. But insurance is a business; insurance companies operate in order to make a profit (by investing the money people pay for insurance). Insurance companies can be better or worse, and insurance policies can be better or worse, but in no case do insurance companies operate like charitable organizations. The doctor or hospital considers it your responsibility to pay your bills and not the insurance company's.

Emergencies. In many communities, dialing the telephone number "911" will bring you emergency

aid—police, fire department, or ambulance. You can also dial “0” and ask the operator to locate assistance in all areas. Ambulances are generally well-staffed and equipped with the life-sustaining apparatus needed to transport patients to the hospital safely. Hospitals provide 24-hour emergency services. If you become seriously ill or have an accident, go directly to the emergency room of the nearest hospital.

If you are not seriously ill or injured and you are able to make an appointment or get to the hospital on your own, do not dial “911,” request an ambulance, or go to an emergency room. Insurance will not cover expenses incurred during a hospital emergency room visit that is not an emergency in nature.

Pharmacies. Also called drugstores, pharmacies sell many health remedies “over-the-counter,” that is, without a doctor’s prescription. Certain medications cannot be dispensed without specific authorization from a physician. Most towns have at least one drugstore that is open 24 hours a day.

Drugs, especially those sold under brand names, can be very expensive, and many pharmacies offer the customer the option of filling prescriptions with “generic” products. These contain the identical chemicals found in the well-known brands, but they are governmentally controlled and thus pure, safe, and much less costly.

American drugstores are an interesting phenomenon to many international visitors. They almost never restrict themselves to medical items alone. Rather, you can find cosmetics, tobacco products, stationery, magazines and newspapers, housewares, and snack foods.

CHAPTER 3: AT THE UNIVERSITY

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The structure of education in the United States differs notably from that in most other countries. While educational systems in many areas of the world are national in character and centralized in control, education in the United States is decentralized and diversified. Under the principle of federal government, education is a responsibility of each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories. Each state has developed a system of public schools and a system of chartering and regulating private schools.

Higher education is the term used in the United States for formal education beyond the 12 years of elementary and secondary school and includes the instruction offered at two-year community and junior colleges, four-year colleges, universities that award graduate degrees, and various technical and professional schools. In 2005, there were 4,236 such institutions with a student enrollment of over 16.6 million. Of this total, over 86% of students were enrolled as undergraduates working toward associate's or bachelor's degrees, 12% were graduate students working on master's or doctoral degrees, and 2% were enrolled in professional degree programs, such as law and medicine.

Accreditation. In the United States, recognition of U.S. institutions of higher education and of certain specialized programs is achieved by means of a voluntary and continuous process known as accreditation. Accreditation is granted by recognized accrediting bodies that have no affiliation with the U.S. government. In order to become accredited, institutions or programs must meet minimum standards of quality established by the relevant accrediting bodies. In order to maintain accreditation, they must demonstrate periodically that they are continuing to meet or exceed established standards.

There are two basic types of accreditation: institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation provides recognition to institutions as a whole. Specialized accreditation provides recognition to programs in specific disciplines. It is common for U.S. colleges and universities to seek specialized accreditation of the professional or specialized programs they offer in addition to institutional accreditation.

Types of Institutions. In everyday speech, the terms “college” and “university” are used interchangeably. However, there is a technical distinction. The U.S. college has no exact counterpart in the educational system of any other country. There are many colleges that stand alone as undergraduate institutions. Most colleges award the bachelor's (four-year) degree, although some may award the associate's (two-year) degree. The university is the outgrowth and expansion of the college. A university is made up of a group of schools that include a four-year, undergraduate liberal arts college and graduate and professional schools. Some technological and professional programs, such as those in agriculture, business administration, engineering, nursing, and teaching, are offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Other professions, such as medicine, dentistry, and law, are studied only at the graduate level.

Institutional titles can be confusing because states have different regulations and traditions. For example, many institutions called “universities” do not offer degrees beyond the bachelor’s or master’s degrees, while some “colleges” (such as Boston College) offer master’s degrees and doctorates. A few prestigious comprehensive research universities in the country are known as “institutes” (for example Massachusetts Institute of Technology). In addition, there are institutions called colleges—institutes or universities that are not accredited but offer degrees and certificates.

Funding and Governance of Institutions of Higher Education. The financial support for U.S. higher education is derived from a number of different sources. Public colleges and universities are financed primarily by student tuition and by state, county, or city governments or by a combination of several levels, and they are subject to governmental authority. Public institutions—such as the University of Maryland, the various branches of the University of California and the College of William and Mary—make up 45% of the total number of higher education institutions in the United States. Private institutions, which are 46% of the total, are governed by their own boards of trustees and are supported largely by student tuition, private individuals, groups, or religious organizations. Examples of these institutions are Harvard University, Oberlin College, and Georgetown University. Private colleges and universities are generally nonprofit institutions, but profit-making or proprietary educational institutions also exist at the postsecondary level. Included in this category are the Electronics Technical Institute of Denver and the Art Institute of Atlanta.

U.S. institutions of higher education are controlled by governing boards of trustees or regents and headed by a president or chancellor, who is assisted by deans. The dean of academic affairs in a small institution, or the dean of the college or school in a multi-unit university, in cooperation with the teachers of the institution (known as members of the faculty), has general authority over matters of policy, such as curriculum and degree requirements. The dean of students is responsible for the personal and social aspects of student life. Colleges and schools are organized into different departments for each field of study—English department, history department, department of plant breeding and so on—and each unit is headed by a chairperson who is a senior member of the teaching staff.

Admission. Admission to a college or university in the United States is considered a privilege and not a right. Each institution establishes admissions policies consistent with its level and mission. Some are highly competitive, others less so, but admission in all cases is based on an appraisal of the applicant’s past grades, completion of prerequisite courses, scores on entrance exams that measure both aptitude and achievement, and other personal factors. Letters of reference from past teachers play an important role. Undergraduate admission is usually centralized, while graduate students are admitted only with the consent of the discipline department in which they will study.

In contrast to public education at the elementary and secondary levels, higher education in the United States is not free of charge. The student must pay tuition, fees, room and board (if living away from home), and research and thesis expenses as well as for books and materials.

Elements of Costs to Students. Tuition is the basic charge to the student to help cover the cost of instruction. Depending upon the institution, tuition for the academic year can range from less than

\$1,000 to more than \$50,000. Generally, tuition rates are higher in private colleges and universities than in public institutions. In the latter, the rate for residents of the state, county, or city is less than the rate for nonresidents. The tuition and fee charges at graduate and professional schools are generally higher than those at the undergraduate level.

In addition to tuition, students can also expect to pay \$800 to \$1,200 annually for books and other course materials and \$1,500 or more in fees for such items as medical insurance, parking, laboratory materials, library privileges, computer access, campus athletic and cultural events, and graduation. Graduate students incur further costs related to research and preparation of their theses or dissertations. Students who live on the campus of a college or university pay an additional charge for room and board, usually another \$5,000 to \$10,000 for the academic year.

Enrollment. Despite the great expense of higher education, college and university education in the United States is more accessible today than it was prior to the 1950s. Until that time, a college education was the prerogative of the elite who could afford it. Other than competitive academic scholarships, there was little financial assistance available.

After World War II, Congress passed the G.I. Bill of Rights, which subsidized the higher education of returning veterans and opened the door for further legislation aimed at providing financial assistance to any qualified student who wanted a college degree. Today, grants, loans, and other forms of financial aid are provided by the federal and state governments, as well as by other independent agencies and by the colleges themselves. The majority of students entering U.S. colleges and universities apply for and receive some form of financial assistance in the form of scholarships, loans, grants, and work opportunities.

As a result of today's opportunities for a college education, a college student may represent any age group – from young adult to senior citizen – as well as diverse economic and cultural groups. The student population now includes the economically disadvantaged as well as the affluent. Women now outnumber men (women account for 56% of enrollment), and U.S. minorities are increasingly represented (27% of all college students). The age of students on college campuses has also broadened beyond the traditional 18 to 22-year-old undergraduate. Today, students aged 25 and over account for 37% of college enrollment. There has also been a constant growth in the number of international students attending colleges and universities in the United States, with the number of international students totaling to about 1 million in 2017. Many campuses, especially those of large universities, have now added an international component to their student profiles.

FACULTY

Although elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States must be certified to teach by the state in which they practice, there is no certification requirement for those teaching in higher education. However, a Ph.D. degree is a normal prerequisite for a faculty position in major colleges and universities.

Faculty members are ranked on academic credentials, performance in teaching and research, and years of service to the institution. Requirements for advancement are relatively standard in higher education institutions throughout the United States. The usual ranks are instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and (full) professor, but faculty sometimes bear the titles of lecturer, adjunct professor, and professor emeritus. Faculty members are usually referred to and addressed as professor, regardless of formal title.

Instructor is an introductory rank for a member of the full-time faculty; it is usually assigned to persons with limited or no college teaching experience. The time spent in the rank of instructor is often considered a probationary period. Instructors receive a one-year contract that is renewable annually for a period of three or four years, after which they may be eligible to apply for promotion to the rank of assistant professor. In some institutions, if an instructor is not promoted after the probationary period, the contract is not renewed.

Assistant professor is the more common introductory rank and usually signifies a tenure track position. (Further discussion of academic tenure is given below.) Most assistant professors have a doctorate, although there are some fields in which a terminal degree other than the doctorate is appropriate. Generally, five to seven years must be spent at this rank before a faculty member may apply for promotion or tenure. During this time, the young professor establishes his or her reputation in research and gains valuable teaching experience. If tenure is denied at the end of a set period, the faculty member may have to leave the institution.

Attaining the rank of **associate professor** implies that the faculty member has had broad and successful experience in a college or university, has made scholarly contributions to his or her discipline, and has been actively involved in the overall life of the institution. After a specified number of years in this rank, the faculty member may apply for promotion to the rank of professor. There is no limit to the number of years that may be spent in the associate rank, nor does the denial of promotion imply dismissal.

By tradition, a **professor** is an academic leader who has made an outstanding contribution to scholarship as well as to the development of the institution in which he or she is employed. The professorship is the highest academic rank awarded to an individual by a college or university. The number of full professors is limited, but there are usually several in a given department.

A **lecturer** is usually a faculty member who is appointed for a limited term to teach a specific set of courses.

The title of **adjunct professor** is sometimes given to a ranked academic who is teaching only part-time. It is also given to visiting professors, especially from universities abroad, who are serving on the faculty for a limited time.

Professor emeritus is an honorary title conferred upon an individual for long and distinguished service to the institution. It is usually given at the end of a faculty member's full-time service or at the time of

retirement.

Ordinarily, the students, faculty peers, and the administration evaluate all members of the faculty annually. The evaluation is weighted in relation to the priorities of the institution and includes the quality of the faculty member's teaching and research, participation in institutional and student affairs, and contributions to the local civic community. These evaluations play a part in contract renewal, promotion in rank, the awarding of tenure or institutional honors, and appointment to one or another of the institution's standing committees. In several large universities, student evaluations of individual courses are published and available through the campus bookstore.

Academic tenure is an arrangement under which faculty appointments in an institution of higher education, after a specified period of probation, are guaranteed until retirement for age or physical disability. A tenured member of the faculty is subject to dismissal only for serious cause (and after due academic process) or as a result of financial exigency or change of academic program. Systems of tenure are designed to provide the economic security that will encourage highly-qualified men and women to choose academic careers and to ensure academic freedom. Once assigned a course, a faculty member is presumed to be an expert in the field and is free to teach it as he or she wishes, express opinions without fear of reprisal, and assign grades for students that cannot be challenged.

U.S. faculty members have extensive duties. While about half their time is spent teaching and preparing for classes, they are also expected to engage in research leading to publication in scholarly journals. They must "publish or perish," which is to say that their advancement in rank, or even continuation in employment, depends heavily on their scholarly attainments. They must also spend time raising funds to support research, including any staff assistance required; advising undergraduate students; directing graduate student thesis and dissertation research; and serving on institutional committees. Many provide consulting services to government or private business as well, on both a profit-making and volunteer basis.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDY

Undergraduate students are classified according to their year of study, which is determined by the number of credit hours they have earned. First-year students are called freshmen; second-year students, sophomores; third-year students, juniors; and fourth-year students, seniors.

The first two years of a four-year college program are usually devoted to general learning or the "**liberal arts**," that is, a variety of courses in the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences designed to develop intellectual ability and provide a solid cultural background. The scope of each course is usually broad. Courses that treat a vast area of subject matter, such as the history of art from prehistoric cave painting to modern, are known as survey courses. Since they survey an entire field of study, they are usually taken as introductory courses or as prerequisites for more specialized courses.

During the third and fourth years of college, students concentrate most of their courses in one discipline. The field of concentration is called a major. A number of courses are required to obtain a

baccalaureate or bachelor's degree in the chosen field; other courses may be taken as electives. Each student is assigned an academic advisor who is a member of the faculty in his or her major field and who offers guidance on the choice of electives and helps solve any academic problems that arise. The B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) and B.S. (Bachelor of Science) are the most common degrees at this level, but the baccalaureate is also awarded in a few professional fields (for example, Bachelor of Nursing or Bachelor of Fine Arts).

The two-year (community, junior, and technical) colleges and institutes have seen widespread expansion in the last two decades. By offering an alternative in higher education, these schools provide students not only with a liberal arts background, but also with the semiprofessional and technical training needed to prepare for employment in a highly technological world. Their programs of instruction lead to an A.A. (Associate of Arts), A.S. (Associate of Science), or A.A.S. (Associate of Applied Science) degree. A liberal arts curriculum, corresponding to the first two years of undergraduate study, is generally offered to students who wish to continue their education at a four-year institution. Other programs offer career training for positions such as dental hygienists, legal secretaries, and laboratory technicians, which require special skills.

GRADUATE STUDY

Graduate work leading to a master's degree requires at least one year of study beyond the bachelor's degree, although in fields such as engineering and business administration, a two-year program is common. The typical requirements for this degree include successful completion of a specified number of graduate courses, maintenance of a minimum B-grade average, and preparation of a thesis. In general, advanced studies leading to a master's degree emphasize either research or preparation for professional practice. Again, the M.A. (Master of Arts) and M.S. (Master of Science) are the traditional degrees, but professional degrees at this level include the M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) and M.S.W. (Master of Social Work), among others.

The Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) degree requires a minimum of two years of full-time study beyond the master's degree, but in most fields, considerably more time is necessary. For example, completion of the requirements for a doctorate in one of the natural sciences usually takes four to five years of study beyond the master's. In some institutions, highly qualified students may bypass the master's and enter a doctoral program with only a bachelor's degree, but this does not necessarily shorten the period of time required. Doctoral students attend advanced lecture courses and seminars, undergo extensive written and oral examinations, and carry out research under professional guidance. Graduate study leading to a doctorate in most fields emphasizes original research presented in the form of a dissertation. Doctorates are also awarded in medicine (M.D.), education (Ed.D.), law (J.D.) and other specialized fields.

Research has become one of the chief functions of the graduate school. Universities carry on research in many fields and extend their services to businesses, government agencies, and other nonacademic organizations.

Graduate study that prepares the student for professional practice is largely a function of the

university, but there are also many independent schools of music, art, law, engineering, medicine, nursing, and other professions. The professional associations and societies in each field establish standards at professional schools. Institutes of technology specialize in science and technology, and many of these schools have graduate programs. These should not be confused with technical institutes, which are generally two-year institutions.

ACADEMIC YEAR

The academic year ranges from 32 to 36 weeks in duration. It usually begins in August or September and ends in early or late May. Some colleges and universities divide the academic year into two terms of about 15 to 18 weeks each, called semesters. Other schools divide the year into four periods of 12 weeks each, called quarters; students must be present during the three quarters that fall between August or September and May or June; the fourth quarter is the summer. Still other institutions divide the academic year into three equal trimesters. At all colleges and universities, there is a two to four-week holiday beginning in mid-December, and many schools separate their terms with this holiday. Other institutions hold special short courses in the month of January and begin a new academic term in February. Most schools also have a one-week spring holiday in March or April and some have a one-week break in the fall, as well.

CREDIT SYSTEM

In many postsecondary institutions outside the United States, certificates are awarded in the various areas of study after successful completion of national examinations. These examinations are quite comprehensive and are usually given once a year. Instead, the U.S. system involves a process of continuous assessment based on a series of individual courses. Each course carries a certain number of credits that are awarded after the successful completion of that course.

A student's rate of advancement in meeting degree requirements is measured in **course credits**. These are often referred to as credit hours, semester hours (in the semester system), quarter hours (in the quarter system) or merely hours. In many cases, credit hours equal the number of hours spent in class per week. In other cases, credit hours reflect the workload or level of difficulty of a course. In most universities and colleges, the typical class is three or four credit hours. Two or three laboratory periods are usually considered equal to one credit hour. For the undergraduate student, the normal full-time program—called an academic load—is 12 to 16 credits per semester or quarter. For the graduate student it is 9 to 12 credits. The two-year associate's degree generally requires 60 to 64 credit hours. The four-year baccalaureate degree requires between 120 and 136 credits; a normal master's degree, 30 to 36 beyond the bachelor's; and the doctorate, 90 beyond the bachelor's. Approximately 16 of the doctoral credits are usually awarded for the dissertation.

REGISTRATION

Admission to an institution authorizes a person to become a student at the institution, but it does not constitute official enrollment or registration. The process of enrolling or registering for a group of specific subjects or courses generally begins with a personal consultation with the student's academic

advisor. A student selects a study program from a variety of courses and includes in it those that the major department requires. The student will not be permitted to enroll for credit in any course for which adequate preparation and prerequisites are lacking. The student fills out the required registration forms in order to be listed on the roster of each class or course that the advisor has approved. Usually, within the first week or two of a semester or quarter, changes in the program may be made if the student has the consent of the teacher and academic advisor, fills out the correct form, and presents it to the appropriate office of the institution. Thereafter, a student will be permitted to withdraw from courses only with the advisor's consent and by following the school's procedures. The student will receive a failing grade unless these procedures are followed. The registration process is repeated each semester or quarter as students enroll in a new group of courses.

ASSESSMENT

At most colleges and universities in the United States, a student's academic work is assessed with a letter grade. An "A" is considered superior; "B," above average; "C," average; "D," below average; "F," failure. Many institutions also employ the use of pluses and minuses to distinguish between a higher letter grade, "B+," and a lower one, "B-." The undergraduate student is expected to maintain a C average or better to remain in good academic standing. A student whose average drops below a C will be placed on probation, usually for one term. A student whose grades do not improve in that time could receive either a temporary academic suspension or a permanent academic dismissal. Graduate students are expected to maintain a B average or better to remain in good academic standing. Some institutions use the letter "I" to denote incomplete work and allow the student an additional period of time (usually a semester or a year) to complete the course requirements before a final grade is entered. A few institutions use percentages rather than letter grades; under this system, 90 to 100 is usually equal to an A; 80 to 89, a B; 70 to 79, a C; 60 to 69, a D; and below 60, an F. Many schools also make use of a pass-fail system, either for all courses or for elective courses only. The student who completes a course satisfactorily receives a grade of "pass"; the student who does not, receives a grade of "fail."

Assignment of a grade for a student's work in a course is entirely the prerogative of the instructor, and it cannot be changed by anyone of higher authority in the institution. Some instructors prefer to grade students against an absolute standard that they alone have determined. Others choose to measure students against one another in a system known as "grading on the curve." This assumes that most students in a class would work at an average level of C, that there would be several B's and D's and a very few A's and F's to reflect the normal achievement curve. The system is thought to reduce the element of subjectivity in measurement. If a test or assignment is so difficult that most students do poorly—or alternatively, so easy that almost everyone completes it without error—the best will receive an A and the poorest an F, regardless of the absolute scores.

Overall academic achievement is measured by grade points. The most common system of numerical values for grades is A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and E or F=0. A student's grade point average (G.P.A.)—or sometimes, quality point average (Q.P.A.)—is computed by dividing the total number of grade points (arrived at by multiplying the grade point for each course by the credit hours of each course and then adding the resulting numbers together) by the total number of credit hours of enrollment. For

example, a student may earn an A in a three-credit course in English, a B in a four-credit course in biology, a C in a three-credit course in statistics, and a B in a three-credit course in history. The average is determined as illustrated in the box to the right:

Colleges and universities regularly record the progress of each student, and in most institutions, the grades that indicate the quality of classroom work are the most important part of the record. Access to a student’s records is limited, and there are federal laws to protect the students’ privacy. Records are maintained in the office of the institution’s registrar.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Grade Points</i>
English	A=4	x 3	= 12
Biology	B=3	x 4	= 12
Statistics	C=2	x 3	= 6
History	B=3	x3	= 9
		13	39 ÷ 13 = 3.0 <i>G.P.A.</i>

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

The way a course is taught is often the result of the preference of the instructor. However, the course content, the academic level of the students, and the number of students enrolled in the class are also determinants of the method by which the material is presented.

The lecture-only method, in which an instructor relates the material to a silent but note-taking group of students for the entire class session, is now relatively rare. It has developed into the lecture-discussion style in which the instructor pauses frequently in his or her presentation of the course material so that the students may comment on or question that portion of the material. Teachers frequently assign certain topics for discussion in a class period, and the actual lecturing is reduced to a minimum. In large universities, where undergraduate classes tend to have high enrollments and discussion is not feasible, students attend lectures for part of the assigned time and are then divided into small groups for discussion led by a graduate student assistant. In science courses, laboratory sessions supplement lectures.

The seminar method is used extensively at the graduate level and frequently employed in advanced undergraduate courses. The method itself limits the large number of students in a class, and its success is questionable in classes of more than 12 to 15 students. In seminar courses, the material is studied in greater depth, students are usually required to do research and prepare papers, and the discussion time is given to an analysis of student and scholarly theory and opinion.

Independent study contains elements of the European tutorial style. It is a one-on-one method in which a single student, in consultation with a professor, takes on the independent investigation of an academic subject for a specified number of credit hours. Independent study usually involves more reading and research than would be required in a scheduled course.

Practical training refers to all instruction or supervision given to a student who is engaged in an apprentice-like period of learning outside the college or university. It includes clinical practice for those

in the health or allied health fields, practice teaching for those in the field of education, and many other on-the-job experiences. Although this type of experience is not always a part of the college curriculum, it is usually mandated in the case of students who plan to take examinations for professional licensure after graduation.

Whatever the method, students are expected to appear regularly for class and to take an active role in discussion, to spend up to two hours in preparatory reading for each class hour, and to complete research papers or other written assignments by given deadline dates. Small examinations, or “quizzes,” may be given on a regular basis throughout the semester or quarter. More comprehensive examinations are given at the middle and end of the term. The quality of work is measured by the results of the examinations, papers and laboratory reports the student has written, and class participation. The professor then assigns a grade at the end of each term for each student registered in the class and reports it to the institution’s registrar.

CLASSROOM CULTURE

Visitors from abroad are surprised by the degree of informality exhibited by both faculty and students in the U.S. classroom. Students usually dress informally for class. Professors address students by their first names, and the reverse is sometimes true if the two are not far apart in age. It is best, however, to use the formal address in new situations. Students may sometimes eat in the classroom, and it is not unusual for students to arrive late or depart early from class, seemingly without the professor taking notice. Some discussions begun in the classroom will continue after class at a meeting in the professor’s office or over coffee.

Visiting scholars frequently comment that the student-centered classroom they observe in the U.S. is quite different from the classroom culture they are used to at home. Most notable is the questioning spirit that permeates the classroom. From their earliest school years, children are taught to speak up when they do not understand what the teacher is saying—or even when they hold a different opinion. By the time they reach university age, the habit is firmly entrenched, and many U.S. professors encourage active debate in the classroom. While students show respect for their teachers, they take it for granted that respect will be returned. In fact, because of the high cost of postsecondary education today, college and university students view themselves as consumers with the right to demand that a professor be competent in the subject matter, well prepared and on time for each class, clear in explaining the grading policies, and fair in applying these policies.

EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

With the exception of some urban institutions that cater largely to part-time, older students, U.S. campuses, whether in the city or in rural areas, resemble small, independent communities. The formal coursework is only one part of the college experience—extracurricular life is equally significant. In addition to the university authority structure, there is usually a student government that monitors student concerns and oversees a full range of activities. Faculty and students may spend much of their time on campus in common areas, such as libraries, cafeterias, or outdoor spaces. These can often be

useful places to meet for social events. Sports, both intercollegiate and intramural, have major importance, and there are student associations focusing on everything from poetry to politics, a campus newspaper published by students, and concerts and theatrical events featuring students and outside artists. Many campuses have “Greek” organizations known as fraternities and sororities, which are usually segregated by gender. Most of these organizations serve social functions—some have a service or an academic orientation. Membership in these organizations is usually selective based on criteria that vary by organization. Students also involve themselves in concerns of the broader community through service to the needy, the hospitalized, preschoolers, youth groups, and the elderly. Finally, much of the students’ social lives revolve around the campus, with formal dances, parties organized by the various clubs, and spontaneous gatherings in the dormitories.

In many cases, one of the dormitories has been designated an “international house,” and an effort is made to pair U.S. students and students from abroad as roommates. These dormitories typically have a full schedule of internationally oriented activities—lectures, discussions, concerts, and social events. In several major U.S. cities, the international house is an independent institution serving both resident and nonresident students and scholars but is not associated with one particular college or university.

At institutions with substantial numbers of students from abroad, there is usually an international student association that sponsors activities and provides peer support for young newcomers.

Finally, there are programs designed to teach English as a second language to students, visiting scholars, and their families. Such programs are common at institutions with large international enrollments, but where they do not exist on campus, there is often a collaborative arrangement with a neighboring academic institution.

CAMPUS SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Most U.S. campuses have an official person who serves as international student and/or scholar advisor. At larger institutions, he or she may be part of an international office headed by a dean who is responsible for overseas study programs, faculty exchanges, technical assistance projects abroad, international studies in the curriculum, and visiting scholars and students. The advisor’s role is to offer guidance to students and scholars from abroad with respect to both personal and academic problems. He or she is also the liaison between the international visitor and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The office is also the focus of many campus events with an international flavor. For example, there might be a festival featuring one part of the world and including cultural and social events or a special dinner at one of the residence halls with food prepared by students of one nationality or another. At many institutions, visiting scholars are welcome to take part in these activities and to use other services the advisor offers. Upon arrival at your institution, you are urged to contact the office of the advisor to inquire about programs and services.

Note: A glossary of terms commonly used on U.S. campuses is included as an appendix to this handbook.

Sources. Parts of this chapter have been reprinted and adapted, with permission, from: *A Brief Guide*

to *U.S. Higher Education*. American Council on Education, 2001.

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CHAPTER 4: TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY

THE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT

While on fellowship, you will most likely be affiliated with a college or university department. The department is the most prevalent form of organization in a U.S. academic institution and is generally formed on the basis of an academic discipline such as philosophy, history, or music. Martin Trow, a U.S. sociologist concerned with the organization and development of higher education, writes that the U.S. academic department developed in the period 1870–1900, a product of the emergence of graduate education and the rise of the research oriented university in this country. The functions of a department include undergraduate instruction, research, recruitment, promotion of academic staff members, and, at the university level, graduate education as well.

The **structure of an academic department** fits no one model. Some departments in small liberal arts colleges with 1,200 students may consist of three or four faculty members and may join several different fields under one academic umbrella—for instance, a department of sociology, anthropology, and social work. Other departments, in large public or private universities enrolling as many as 40,000 students, may have 80 faculty members (instructors, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors), as well as graduate teaching and research assistants, all lecturing in one academic discipline. In large universities, the individual subspecialties of a particular discipline will sometimes form independent departments such as departments of educational psychology, applied mathematics, or marine biology. Alternatively, broader interdisciplinary areas may become the focus of a department, such as departments of urban studies, women’s studies, or African American studies.

The administration of a department, like its structure, follows no set standard. In some institutions, the chair (sometimes known as chairperson or chairman) is appointed by the president of the college or university in consultation with the dean of the faculty and/or the provost for an indefinite or specified period of time. In others, their colleagues elect the chair for a term varying from two to four years. In yet other instances, the chairmanship is a rotating position that each permanent (or tenured) member of the faculty can expect to hold at some time (or, indeed, several times) during his or her career in the institution. In departments with large student enrollments (and at institutions simply attempting to divide the administrative burden), two faculty members may serve as co-chairs, an assistant may share the department chairmanship, or a deputy chair may be named to perform some tasks. In very large departments, an executive committee of departmental faculty may act on behalf of the department’s faculty.

Responsibilities of the chair include determining teaching assignments (in consultation with faculty, designating the specific courses to be taught and their meeting times); negotiating, monitoring, and allocating the department budget—which includes determination of faculty salaries, distribution of funds for research and travel to conferences; and coordinating faculty recruitment. The chair also serves as intermediary between the department and a variety of academic administrators, including the dean of students, dean of the faculty, dean of the graduate school, vice president of academic affairs, provost, and president.

Upon your arrival on campus, you may want to **meet with your department chair** and let him or her know of your academic plans and interests. Departments will usually have a secretary and/or an administrative assistant (sometimes several depending on size and resources). At some institutions, departments will have additional support staff such as a business manager and work-study students. Consult with the chair to find out what departmental resources are available to you.

Since computers are commonplace in most university departments, most university professors handle their own correspondence and type their own papers. Correspondence with other faculty and with students by e-mail through the Internet is routine. You should be prepared to rely on this technology. You may want to discuss computer availability and setting up an e-mail account with your faculty supervisor/ mentor prior to your arrival. Many universities will have student computer centers where you can use the computer, or they may be able to provide information on where you can either purchase or rent one.

Departmental affairs are generally a collective endeavor, with faculty members (both tenured and non-tenured) participating in committees to help administer the unit. Thus, faculty serves on departmental curriculum committees (proposing new courses, evaluating syllabi presented by colleagues and students for new courses, and establishing degree requirements), faculty development committees (organizing seminars and workshops for faculty both within the department and the broader academic community), search committees (for hiring new faculty members), and tenure review committees. Departments will usually hold monthly meetings during which departmental business is discussed and various committees report to the faculty as a whole. Many decisions affecting departmental affairs will be reached through consensus with the faculty participating directly in the process by voting as a group on issues of concern.

If possible, you should certainly attend your general departmental meetings. They will provide you with an invaluable insight into the organization and structure of U.S. academic life. If you are interested in attending a departmental meeting, you should tell your department chair and ask for his or her approval. Generally, visiting scholars are not asked to serve on departmental committees. However, if you are interested in doing so, consult with your department chair.

Instead of a department, you may find yourselves based in a division such as the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences. Under this organizational pattern, faculty members trained in different disciplines are placed together with their academic colleagues who are humanists, social scientists, or natural scientists. Or you may be located at an institute or research center with geographic or issue-oriented focus whose membership ranges across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. You may also work in a department based not on disciplines but on such problem areas as the environment, modernization, humanism, and cultural change. In such frameworks, your colleagues will come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds across the academic spectrum. Over the past two decades, there has been much discussion and a fair degree of experimentation in the organization of U.S. colleges and universities. You may well find your institution in the midst of such explorations during your stay as an IIE-SRF fellow.

In some institutions, you will find college- or university-wide governing bodies on which some of your faculty colleagues serve. These may range from the board of trustees of the institution and the university faculty senate to policy review councils and committees on campus life, long-range planning and alumni relations. You may find such meetings interesting and should ask the presiding officer if it would be possible to attend as an observer.

STUDENTS AND TEACHING

Are students fundamentally the same around the world? You will have some definite views about this at the conclusion of your stay in the United States, but to assist you in coping with some of the more distinctive traits of U.S. students, the observations in the following sections may be helpful. U.S. college students generally like to have a sense of the overall structure and requirements of each course at its inception. A written outline of the topics to be covered, the readings assigned for the course, the specific dates assignments are due, and the scheduling of mid-term and other major examinations are all important in providing guidelines and a sense of orientation to students. It will be helpful to the students and useful to you when grading time arrives to specify at the beginning of the course the criteria by which you will determine grades. You may wish to allocate a certain percentage of the grade for class participation, another percentage for quizzes, and other percentages for the mid-term, final paper, and final exam. You should consult with your colleagues and the department chairman to gain a sense of the customary weighting of various criteria in determining grades at your institution. You may also want to know your colleagues' general academic expectations of students taking courses in the department. You should also inquire about departmental or college policy toward "incompletes"—designations given to courses for which students have not been able to complete all required work within an academic term. It is standard practice in the U.S. to provide students with a syllabus at the beginning of the term that details most of all of these topics and expectations.

In comparison with students back home, you may find U.S. students intensely preoccupied with grades. In the highly competitive U.S. academic environment, undergraduates concerned with gaining a place in a prestigious graduate program or in law, business, or medical school frequently feel pressured to attain the highest possible grades. Those students entering the job market directly after college often feel that a high G.P.A. and a top rank in class are critical to their getting a "good" job.

As a result of this orientation toward grades, you may find students focusing a considerable amount of attention on the nature of their exams and the specific information on which they will be tested. You may find students questioning the grades you have given them on exams and papers and as their final course grade. A common response by U.S. faculty to such questions is a firm explanation of grading criteria.

As grades are such a highly charged issue, many students are strongly concerned that information about grades be private and held in confidence. U.S. students do not want their grades on exams and papers read out publicly or their academic status in class a matter of public knowledge. Indeed, some departments will post final grades on a bulletin board with the students identified only by a number unique to each student.

In general, class sessions are expected to begin on time. You can expect students to hand in assignments on the day requested; check with your department to learn whether your colleagues permit submission of late papers and what, if any, penalties may be incurred. You should ascertain departmental policy on examinations missed by students and class cancellations by instructors. Students like to have papers, quizzes, and other written assignments returned with grades and comments by their professor. This criticism is particularly valuable in helping them assess their understanding of the course material and the areas in which they need to show improvement.

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. If you find a student to be chronically absent, you may wish to discuss the matter with him or her and, if this behavior continues, to lower the student's grade. Here again, your department's policy will furnish a valuable guideline.

As an integral part of teaching responsibilities, U.S. faculty members are expected to hold office hours for meeting with students. Check with your chair for the suggested number of office hours for your courses. Faculty members regularly allot two to three hours a week for office hours—sometimes scheduling them all on one day (for example, Wednesday afternoon from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.) or on two or three different days for an hour each (for example, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.). You may wish to indicate your office hours on your course outline or syllabus and on your office door. Many faculty members also provide students with their office telephone number so students can contact them should they have any questions about assignments or wish to make appointments. You may prefer to hold your office hours as informal sessions, as many U.S. academics do, where a prior appointment is not necessary; or, you may feel more comfortable with students making a specific appointment with you to begin and end at a particular time. Some professors put sign-up sheets for office hour appointments on their office doors, and students write their names next to particular half-hour or 15-minute time slots. Again, you may wish to explore local practices at your institution.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

While U.S. institutions of higher education certainly vary in their particular environments, mix of students, faculty, history, and traditions, students in these very diverse settings generally tend to behave in an informal manner among themselves and in encounters with academic faculty and administration. In language, demeanor, and dress, undergraduates, in particular, will be colloquial, familiar, and informal. They will call each other by their first names and feel most comfortable if faculty members do the same. Young men and women, as well as older students, will generally appear in class in shorts, slacks, jeans, t-shirts, and sweaters most of the year. Only on formal occasions will most undergraduates appear in suits or dresses. This attire does not indicate a devaluing of the educational experience; rather, it expresses a desire to approach learning in a comfortable, easygoing manner.

Students will treat faculty with respect but not with any special deference. Students may call you "Professor," "Dr.," "Mr.," "Ms.," "Mrs." or "Miss" or simply speak to you without using any title at all. U.S. students are encouraged from elementary school to consider the classroom a lively place, a site for dialogue with the teacher and sometimes for debate. Students will occasionally challenge what professors say—some may be particularly insightful and some may be more argumentative than

enlightened. It is a generally accepted convention of the U.S. classroom for students to interrupt an instructor's presentation with a question or comment. You should not construe a raised hand during your lectures as a sign of disrespect or an occasional comment by a student without formal permission to speak as a mark of great rudeness. You can certainly make it clear that you would prefer to entertain questions at the conclusion of your prepared remarks; however, you may well find students persisting in raising their hands to ask questions.

However, not all classrooms are dynamic. To engage students who may be somewhat passive, you may wish to provoke discussion with pointed questions, controversial statements, and structured debates.

In many U.S. academic institutions, particularly small colleges sponsored by religious denominations, students share relatively similar geographic, social, and economic backgrounds. In other institutions of higher learning, however, you will find a wide diversity of backgrounds. During your stay in the United States, you are more than likely to meet a variety of international students, as this country is host to the largest number of international students in the world.

Do not assume that your undergraduate students will all be between the ages of 18 and 22—the once traditional ages of college attendance. You may encounter a number of students who are older because many do not enter college directly after secondary school but wait a year or two. Others take time out in the middle of their college experience to join the work force for a few years before returning to complete their degree requirements, while still others hold jobs while attending college and therefore may take classes over a longer period of time. The most important factor changing the traditional age for both undergraduate and graduate students is the increasing number of adults who return to school or even begin their studies after the age of 25. You may find students in their mid-to-late twenties sitting in your classroom as well as middle-aged and retired men and women enrolled as full-time students seeking degrees they always coveted, and mid-career professionals developing new career directions or embarking on new avenues of personal growth and intellectual exploration. These older students will enhance your classroom in many ways and will certainly keep you attentive intellectually.

This great variety of student backgrounds will undoubtedly make your class a more interesting one. It will also mean that you will be unable to assume a base of common knowledge among the group. They probably will not all have read the same “great books;” they will not all have discussed the same “great ideas;” and they will not all be familiar with the same “classical” references to the great traditions in a number of fields. You should begin any introductory course, especially with undergraduates, assuming no prior knowledge of fundamentals in your field and then adjust your references as you discover the actual level of student knowledge. You should be able to assume a certain familiarity with the literature of the field if you teach a course with a prerequisite course mandated. But to determine exactly what materials were covered, you should check with your departmental colleagues.

Your students may well be heterogeneous by grade levels, as well as by the other characteristics already mentioned. U.S. classrooms may have precocious freshmen enrolled alongside juniors and seniors in upper-level classes or beginning graduate students in introductory survey courses. You may wish to spend some of your opening class session exploring student backgrounds and levels of

knowledge, either through class discussion or by having students complete brief personal biographies.

A growing number of U.S. academic institutions mandate student evaluations of every faculty member and include the results in the professor's academic file. In other institutions, such evaluations are not part of the formal departmental evaluation structure but have acquired a venerable informal tradition of their own. Compilations of such evaluations are sometimes sold at the college bookstore or made available to the general university community through a special edition of the campus newspaper. At the end of your course, you may wish to emulate some of your U.S. colleagues and have your students complete a course evaluation form in which they evaluate your course according to a number of components (clarity of the lectures, faculty preparation, value of reading assignments). Some faculty members choose to use predesigned evaluation forms; others employ their own form or one prepared by the department. As a visitor in your department, you will probably not be required to undertake such an evaluation. You may, however, find the student comments of interest.

TEACHING STYLES

While there is not a single U.S. teaching style, there are a variety of approaches to teaching that together may constitute a U.S. teaching approach that is increasingly learner-oriented, learner-involved. While the traditional tightly organized, well prepared, finely honed, and eloquently delivered professional lecture still has an important place in contemporary academic practice, it has been joined by a variety of other methods of communicating information that develop a range of student abilities.

At a large university where one faculty member (often a distinguished senior professor) lectures to a student audience sometimes numbering in the hundreds, students are assigned to small discussion groups to meet with other instructors to discuss the lecture. Sometimes the senior professor may lead one of these groups—known as a recitation section—while other sections are directed by teaching assistants who are graduate students. In more manageable settings, even in courses containing nearly a hundred students, instructors will invite discussion, questions, and comments from students.

In many courses, U.S. faculty try to build student presentations into the courses. These presentations may take the form of book reviews and critiques, oral presentations of a research assignment or term paper, case-study analyses, student debates, panel discussions, or role-playing simulations. To introduce new perspectives into their courses, faculty members invite experts or practitioners to discuss particular approaches to issues and then have students question the guest speakers.

Team teaching, an approach where two faculty members from different disciplines or representing two diverse traditions within one discipline jointly teach one course, has gained popularity recently. In such a co-teaching effort, both faculty members are present for the entire course and conduct dialogue between themselves and with their students on the course material. In other instances, a course may be divided into different components or modules with several different faculty members individually teaching a specific module.

At some institutions, student “field experiences”—experiences outside the classroom in a government

office, private business, professional setting (physician’s office, architectural firm), or cultural institution (museum, symphony orchestra)—are part of a course. As a term project, the student may serve as a participant-observer, volunteer, evaluator, counselor, teacher, or intern in a particular field setting. The student can thus contribute directly in the field context and in the classroom with observations, hypotheses, and insights generated by his or her experience. This “experiential” dimension in U.S. education is one that you may hear about during your stay in the United States and may wish to discuss further with your colleagues. Another technique increasingly employed to enhance course content is the use of audiovisual materials. Documentary films from the United States and abroad, commercial films of significance, and audio and videotapes of important radio and television programs have all become part of course presentations. Indeed, at a growing number of institutions, courses are given to students and faculty in the use of video equipment to enable them to produce their own materials for use in the classroom and/or for individual creative projects. Audiovisual resources are often housed in college or university media centers, which may be part of the university library system or affiliated with a department of education or speech and theater.

Your college or university may have a department or office of educational technology, or a media resource center within the library, where staff can provide guidance in the use of innovative technologies in education. Other services provided by such centers include the use of computer, television, and video equipment, as well as providing tutorials to students on how to use the technology programs and equipment available to them. When visiting your campus library, be sure to find out what programs and services are available to you and your students.

Other educational tools increasingly used both in and out of the classroom are computer-aided instruction packages and learning modules. The Internet is playing an ever-greater role in many college and university classrooms, and many American college students are required to take a basic computing class in order to graduate. Most campus libraries now have “computer classrooms” that professors can reserve for a class period so students may learn to use various technology programs with the professor at hand. These “classrooms” are hooked up to highly specialized academic databases and journals, covering a wide range of subjects, which students otherwise may not have access to and can be particularly useful for research purposes. Some institutions also use technology to allow students to participate in discussion groups or post assignments between class sessions virtually through the Internet.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Whether you are at a large, urban university or a small, rural college, you are likely to find U.S. campus life lively and innovative. Student groups abound in areas ranging from the pre-professional (pre-med and prelaw societies), discipline-focused (geology society, history club), and geographically and culturally centered (the German culture club, the Spanish language and culture association), to the issue-oriented (third world development, ecology and conservation, human rights). International student organizations are often found on larger campuses (the Nigerian Students League, the Chinese Students’ Alliance).

You will also find service and action-oriented groups (providing day care services in the city, literacy

tutoring, feeding the homeless, building housing, assistance to the physically handicapped), organizations fostering the arts (choral society, opera group, symphony orchestra, drama guild) and a wide variety of student athletic groups (swimming team, track and field clubs, basketball and football teams). Most universities will also have clubs and student groups providing religious fellowship for Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other religions, and many institutions have chapels available to students for worship. Students, or the college itself, may sponsor lecture series, dance or drama events, and musical evenings with off-campus guests and outside performing arts groups. An Office of Student Life oversees this wide range of student activities, which is responsible to a dean of students. Your institution may also have a student union or student center where many student organizations and recreational facilities are located. Many of your colleagues will be involved with these student groups as advisors, guest lecturers or participants. You may find such involvement a fine way to learn more about your students and become more deeply immersed in campus life. Your college or university's student newspaper is an excellent source of information on campus-wide activities as are the many announcements posted on bulletin boards throughout the campus.

Many campus activities will be open to the broader community. Equally, many community activities will be open to college faculty and students; indeed, local churches and synagogues as well as civic and fraternal groups may actively seek your participation. You may be asked to give a lecture on current developments in your country or to discuss aspects of your academic specialty before such local groups. You may want to get a listing of your community's voluntary associations (which may also be branches of large national organizations), such as the Rotary Club, the League of Women Voters, the Girl or Boy Scouts, the 4-H Club, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Inform them of your presence in the area and request that they put you on their mailing lists for local events. You may wish to involve your family in activities organized by these groups and participate yourself.

Inform your colleagues of your interests—whether they are in sports, the arts or civic issues—and they will be able to suggest local organizations in which you can participate. You should also ask whether there is an international visitors' center in your community or any organization in your area that provides assistance and hospitality to international visitors. The international student advisor or the international office on your campus should be able to assist you in such a quest.

Lastly, some colleges and universities organize English as a second language programs for international students and instructors. Such services generally include tutoring by subject, help with writing, and help developing good study habits and time management skills. You should consult with your colleagues or International Office to learn what services are available at your institution.

INTERNATIONAL POSTSCRIPT

Student and community awareness of your country, its interests, and concerns may ebb and flow with U.S. media coverage of dramatic events or crises occurring there. U.S. students and faculty vary considerably in knowledge, interest, and appreciation of international cultures and experiences. You may meet returned Peace Corps volunteers, participants in overseas exchange programs, consultants on international development projects, businessmen and women, children of diplomats, and clergy

with extraordinary understanding and insight into other cultures. You will, however, also find many students, community people, and some faculty members who have never been outside the United States or traveled beyond their particular state or region. Some of these people may see your home country and its traditions in two dimensions only; they will be the victims of stereotypes and clichés. You will then have the opportunity to give these people a vivid sense of another reality, a way of approaching the world and its manifold complexity through other lenses, other perspectives.

You may be able to provide your U.S. students, colleagues, and community acquaintances with a more profound view of your country through slide or film presentations and discussions. Perhaps you can even include your family and friends from home. You may wish to explore with your U.S. contacts the variety within your culture, the range of opinion, and the issues under current debate. Students and colleagues may find a discussion of academic culture in your country to be of particular interest. How does the structure of higher education back home compare with what you have seen of U.S. academic life? What do students in your country expect from a college experience and how do they organize their lives during their university years? What role do faculty members play in local and national life? Providing students and colleagues with examples parallel to their current experiences may help to solidify realities in other worlds and underscore the many correct ways of organizing human experience.

CHAPTER 5: USING THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

ORGANIZATION OF LIBRARIES

As part of your orientation to academic resources at your institution, you should arrange for a tour of your college or university library. Many institutions will have a variety of libraries located at different sites on campus. There may be a separate library for undergraduates, special libraries for science or music or the visual arts, a major research library, and small departmental libraries. Many universities are members of a consortium that share library privileges.

Open Stacks and Circulation of Books. U.S. libraries may seem quite different from libraries in your home country. Most libraries, public and private, have an open stack system where you are free to browse the shelves and choose your own books. Most books circulate for a period of approximately two weeks to a semester. This means that if you have a library card, you can check the books out at the circulation desk near the entrance and take them home to read for a specific amount of time. You will have to pay a fine if you do not return the books on time. You should request a library card as soon as possible. Often, this card must be presented to enter the library. Sometimes, if the book you are looking for is not available, you may be able to request it through an interlibrary loan, explained below.

Online Databases. Every university library provides its students with access to various online databases. These databases allow you to search through different academic journals and catalogs for articles, research papers, and books related to a certain topic or a range of disciplines. This can be a much faster, easier, and more comprehensive approach compared to searching through open stacks. To use these databases, you will need to use either your host institution-issued email address or separate login credentials that can be provided to you by a librarian. Often, you can access these using a library computer or your personal computer. It is advisable to have a librarian show you how to navigate these databases, as they are extensive and can be very helpful to your research if you know how to use them properly.

Orientation Tours and Bibliographic Instruction Programs. Early in the semester, most university libraries give orientation tours for students. You should definitely take such a tour if it is offered. Sometimes libraries provide bibliographic instruction programs or lectures. These are extremely useful and will save you much time in conducting your research. Even if you do not take a class or a tour, be sure to pick up any handouts or maps of the library so you can learn how your library is organized and what services are available to you.

Classification Systems. U.S. libraries use two main systems for organizing their collections. Most university libraries use the Library of Congress Classification System, but some smaller college libraries and all public libraries use the Dewey Decimal System. In both systems, books are shelved by subject groups according to their call number and then alphabetically by the author's name. The call number is a combination of the classification number and a letter or number representing the author. The call number appears on the spine of the book as well as in the library catalog. You will need to understand the system used in your library to locate the books on the shelves.

Online and Card Catalogs. Another difference between U.S. libraries and libraries in many other countries is their reliance on technology. Most U.S. university libraries have computerized catalogs of their holdings. Many still have card catalogs, as well. Be sure to find out if the card catalog is up to date. Frequently, books cataloged after a certain date are included only in the online catalog, while in a few libraries books cataloged before a certain point are found only in the card catalog. You may need to know how to use both catalog systems. The card catalog is almost always organized dictionary style with cards for author, title and subject filed alphabetically word-by-word (not letter-by-letter). If the library uses the Library of Congress Classification System, the subject headings used will be based on the list that the Library produces. It is helpful to look in the big red books titled *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (usually found near the catalog) to get an idea of how to locate your topic.

It is important to read the library's instructions for use of the online catalog since there are many different systems. It is appropriate to ask a librarian for assistance until you are comfortable using the system on your own.

Reference Desk. Another important aspect of U.S. libraries is their service-oriented feature. You should feel free to ask librarians for help. It is their job to answer reference questions, and they will not think less of you for asking for assistance, no matter how minor your question may seem. In fact, they will often ask if you need help. For some research topics, you may wish to consult a librarian who specializes in your discipline or language. Most large university libraries have subject specialists and geographic specialists. You can usually find a librarian at the reference desk, which is near the card catalog or computers that contain the online catalog. The reference area will also include a large number of non-circulating (which means that you cannot take them out of the library) reference books such as encyclopedias, directories, dictionaries, atlases, indexes, abstracts, bibliographies, and other finding aids.

Most reference areas have electronic databases (sometimes as part of the online catalog) and CD-ROMs for use in locating journal articles and other recent publications. CD-ROMs are compact disks similar to recordings, but they can hold an entire encyclopedia worth of digitized text and images. Some databases require a librarian to do an electronic search for you, but many are set up at computers for you to use on your own or can be accessed online. They have instructions for users and can save a great deal of time. Some particularly useful indexes found in online or CDROM form are ERIC (for education), MLA (for literature), ABI/Inform (for business and economics), AGRICOLA (for agriculture), Historical Abstracts, Social Sciences Index, MEDLINE (for medicine), Art Index, Humanities Index, Sociological Abstracts, Legaltrac (for law), Art and Humanities Citation Index, Public Affairs Information Service (also called PAIS— for political science), Engineering Index (also called Compendex), CA Search (for chemistry), BIOSIS (for biology), INSPEC (for physics), PSYCHINFO (for psychology), Books in Print, Newspaper Abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts, and Magazine Index. By using an electronic database or CD-ROM version of an index, you can search numerous years of periodicals at one time. You can also look for the print version, if the database version is not available.

Serials and Other Special Materials. Most university libraries separate books from serials. Serials are periodicals such as newspapers, journals and magazines. They are kept in various formats: paper copies, bound copies, microform and microfiche. Some libraries have separate audiovisual sections for videotapes, microform, microfiche and audiotapes. Some also have special divisions for maps, music, manuscripts, prints, government documents and other special collections. Legal and medical works are usually kept in separate libraries.

Interlibrary Loans and Visits to Other Libraries.

If your library does not contain a work you need for your research, you can usually request to borrow it from another library. To find out what the procedures are, ask for the interlibrary loan department of your library. If you need an article from a periodical your library does not subscribe to, you may be able to obtain a copy through a document delivery service. These services will fax a copy of an article to you for a fee. Ask your librarian if the library has an arrangement with a particular document delivery service.

You should also find out if your university is a member of a consortium of institutions that share library privileges. If so, you can usually use the libraries of other members of the consortium with the library card from your university.

Perhaps the easiest method to find out about another library's holdings is to view its catalog on the Internet. The Library of Congress (LOC) has an extensive Web site at <http://www.loc.gov> that includes the complete catalog of the LOC. In addition, there is a link from the LOC Web site to access hundreds of other university and public library catalogs throughout the U.S. and internationally.

If you plan to visit the LOC, you should be aware that researchers intending to use public reading rooms in the LOC are required to have reader identification cards issued by the LOC. The cards are free, and can be obtained by presenting a valid driver's license, state issued identification card or passport and completing a simple self-registration process. Also note that unlike most U.S. libraries, it is not possible to remove books from the LOC; rather, you must submit a request for a book from a librarian and it will be brought to you to be read in the library.

ARCHIVES

Archives contain documents and papers of historic record, which usually relate to an individual, family, institution, organization or government. Some archives are found within libraries while others are completely separate. Archivists are historians with special training who can assist you with your research and show you the rules and organization of their archive. Archive materials do not leave the premises. There are usually restrictions on what you can carry into the archive. Sometimes you are only permitted to bring pencils and papers, and you are not allowed to photocopy materials. Most archives do not have a catalog. You can sometimes consult an inventory of their holdings, which is much less detailed than a catalog. It is preferable to contact the archive before your visit to inform them of your needs. You may need to make a special application to use an archive.

If you are new to archival research, you may find, "Using Archives: A Practical Guide for Beginners" a

useful tool to guide you in your research. It is available online at http://www.archives.ca/04/0416_e.html.

To locate archival collections in the United States, consult Internet resources such as “Repositories of Primary Resources” compiled by the University of Idaho and available online at: <http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/other.Repositories.html>. You may find that state and local archives are excellent resources. Depending on your research, you may also want to investigate the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which preserves the records of the U.S. government accessible online at www.archives.org.

Dewey Decimal Classification	
000	General Works
100	Philosophy
200	Religion
300	Social Sciences
400	Language
500	Pure Science
600	Technology
700	The Arts
800	Literature
900	History

Library of Congress Classification System	
A	General Works – Polygraphy
B	Philosophy – Religion
C	History – Auxiliary Sciences
D	History and Topography (except U.S.)
E-F	America
G	Geography – Anthropology
H	Social Sciences
J	Political Science
K	Law
L	Education
M	Music
N	Fine Arts
P	Language and Literature
Q	Science
R	Medicine
S	Agriculture – Plant and Animal Husbandry
T	Technology
V	Naval Science
Z	Bibliography and Library Science

SUGGESTED READINGS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES

The publications listed below, which are available in many U.S. educational advising centers abroad, will help you gain a greater understanding of Americans and their culture.

Althen, Gary. *American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States*. 2nd Edition. Intercultural Press, Inc., 2002.

Berman, Morris. *The Twilight of American Culture*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Cott, Nancy F. *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*. Oxford University Press USA, 2004.

Crunden, Robert Morse. *A Brief History of American Culture*. Paragon Publishers, 1994.

Daniels, Roger. *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. Harper Perennial, 2002.

Desmond, Matthew, and Mustafa Emirbayer. *Race in America*. Norton W.W. & Company, Inc., 2015.

Johnson, Lance. 2012. *What Foreigners Need to Know About America from A to Z*. CreateSpace, 2012.

Kammen, Michael. *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the Twentieth Century*. Knopf, 1999.

Kerber, Linda K.; Alice Kessler Harris; and Kathryn Kis Sklar, eds. *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays*. University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Kim, Eun Y. *The Yin and Yang of American Culture: A Paradox*. Intercultural Press, 2001.

Lanier, Alison. *Living in the U.S.A.* Intercultural Press, 1996.

Salzman, Jack; David Lionel Smith; and Cornel West, eds. *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*. MacMillan, 1996.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001.

Steigerwald, David. *The Sixties and the End of Modern America*. St. Martin's, 1995.

Stewart, Edward C., and Milton Bennett. *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Intercultural Press, 1991.

Teague, G, and Alan Beechey. *USA – Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Kuperard, 2013.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Saunders and Otley, 1835.

You may also find the following online resources of interest:

- "America's Story from America's Library" Library of Congress. <http://www.americas-library.gov/>

- "Information USA" homepage. United States Department of State. <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa>

- "Why do Americans Act Like That?" A guide to understand the U.S. culture and its values. Dr. Robert Kohls, Director of International Programs, San Francisco State University. http://www.uku.fi/~paganuzz/xcult/values/Amer_values.htm

SUGGESTED READINGS ABOUT U.S. ACADEMIC CULTURE

To help you place your own IIE-SRF scholarly experience in the context of U.S. academic life as a whole, we have appended a short list of books that you may wish to consult.

Barzun, Jacques. *The American University: How It Runs, Where It is Going*. The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Blau, Peter Michael. *The Organization of Academic Work*. 2nd ed. Transaction Publishers, 1994.

Bok, Derek. *Higher Education in America: Revised Edition*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Boyer, Ernest. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Bromwich, David. *Politics by Other Means: Higher Education and Group Thinking*. Yale University Press, 1992.

De Wit, Hans. *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative, and Conceptual Analysis*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.

Duderstadt, James J. *A University for the 21st Century*. University of Michigan Press, 2000.

Forest, James J. F., and Kevin Kinser. *Higher Education in the United States, Volumes 1 & 2: An Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO, 2002.

Geiger, Roger L. *The History of American Higher Education*. Princeton University Press, 2014.

Glassick, Charles E.; Mary Taylor Huber and Gene I. Maeroff. *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (Special Report (An Ernest Boyer Project of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching)). Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Higher Learning in America, 1980-2000. Arthur Levine ed. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Poch, Robert K. *Academic Freedom in American Higher Education: Rights, Responsibilities, and Limitations*. George Washington University, 1993.

Richardson, Richard C. *Achieving Quality and Diversity: Universities in a Multicultural Society*. American Council on Education, 1991.

Thelin, John R. *A History of American Higher Education, 2nd Edition*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Also see *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, published weekly throughout most of the year, for up-to-the-minute views of U.S. higher education and news concerning higher education in other countries. *The Chronicle* is published in Washington, D.C. Your college or university library probably holds a subscription.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS COMMONLY USED ON CAMPUS

A.A.: Associate of Arts degree, awarded upon completion of a two-year, liberal arts program, generally with emphasis on the humanities or social sciences.

A.A.S.: Associate of Applied Science degree, awarded upon completion of a two-year program, generally in a commercial or technical field of study.

A.B.D.: “All but Degree” or “All but Dissertation,” an informal title for someone who has completed all Ph.D. requirements except the dissertation.

Academic: A member of the faculty at a university-level institution. Often used as an adjective to describe something related to higher education.

Academic Year: Period of instruction from the beginning of the school year in September to the end in May; usually divided into terms; may be two semesters, three quarters, or three trimesters.

Accreditation: Education in the United States is not controlled by a national ministry. An educational institution as a whole or one of its academic programs is certified as meeting the standards set by a particular association. Colleges and universities may be accredited by six regional and/or 40 professional accrediting bodies. Examples: Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, American Medical Association.

Adjunct Faculty: Faculty members who teach part-time for a department without appointments in that

department’s regular faculty.

Advisee: A student receiving advice, information and assistance in planning and carrying out educational plans.

Advisor: A member of the college or university staff who is assigned to assist students with educational planning.

Alumni: People who have attended or graduated from a school, college or university (male-**alumnus**; female-**alumna**). Often **alum** is used as a catchphrase term.

A.S.: Associate of Science degree, awarded upon completion of a two-year, liberal arts program with emphasis on the natural sciences.

Assignment: Work required by a professor to be completed outside of class and due by a specific date; also called homework.

Assistantship: A position in teaching, administration or research, usually for graduate students; involves 10 to 20 hours of work per week and part-time graduate study.

Audit: To take a class without receiving a grade or any credit.

B.A.: Bachelor of Arts (or baccalaureate) degree, awarded upon completion of a four-year (occasionally five) program of study, generally with emphasis on the humanities or social sciences.

B.S.: Bachelor of Science (or baccalaureate) degree awarded upon completion of a four-year (occasionally five) program of study,

generally with emphasis on the natural or applied sciences.

Blue Book: Essay tests are often written in light blue exam books that can be bought at campus bookstores.

Board of Trustees: The governing body of a university, composed of prominent citizens; occasionally known as the Board of Regents.

Break: A period such as the winter holiday or the end of an academic term when university classes stop temporarily.

Bulletin: Same as Catalog.

Bursar: Office or person within the university administration to which all fees are paid; also called the Cashier.

Call Number: Code on every library book designating its subject matter.

Campus: The college/university grounds, usually characterized by park-like green spaces.

Card Catalog: Traditionally, a collection of index cards in the library listing books by author, title and subject. Access to collections in most major libraries is now through computerized databases.

Carrel: A small, enclosed desk in the library reserved by individuals doing research.

Cashier: Same as Bursar.

Catalog: The publication issued annually or biannually that gives information about a given school and lists the courses offered; sometimes called the “Register” or “Bulletin.”

Certificate: A form of recognition for

successfully completing a specified program of study, generally one or two years in length.

Chairperson: A professor who administers an academic department; also referred to as the Department Head.

Chancellor: Chief executive officer of an institution of higher education; also called the President.

Class: Referring to the year of study (first year—freshman, second year—sophomore, third year—junior, fourth year—senior); also refers to a group of people who meet with a professor on a scheduled basis.

College: Institution that offers undergraduate, bachelor’s degree programs in liberal arts and sciences as well as first professional degrees; may be an independent college or part of a university; also a generic term referring to all education at the postsecondary level.

Commencement: The graduation ceremony; the event at which degrees are awarded.

Community College: Generally a public, two-year institution of higher learning that offers instruction to meet the needs of the local community.

Comprehensive Examination: A broad examination covering material in an entire field of study; typically, the examination at the end of a master’s degree program.

Conditional Admission: Admission granted to students who do not meet all admission criteria; students may be placed on probation for a specific period of time until they demonstrate the ability to do acceptable work.

Consortium: When there are several colleges and universities within close proximity to one another, they often join in a consortium to share library resources and often courses and other cultural and educational opportunities with one another's students.

Continuing Education: An extension of study at the higher education level for post-high school or college students, usually those beyond traditional university age.

Co-op: A store originally organized and operated by students with the cooperation and approval of the school to sell books, school supplies, computers, clothing and other items useful to students. On many campuses, co-ops have developed into small department stores. Sometimes there are also food co-ops, which are student-operated supermarkets.

Cooperative Education: Substantial practical work experience related to the student's major field. It can be an educational plan that requires the student to alternate periods of full-time study with periods of full-time work, usually related to the major field.

Core Curriculum: A group of courses in varied subject areas, designated by a college as part of the requirements for a specified degree; same as Required Course.

Course: Usually refers to a specific class, for example, Quantitative Chemistry I.

Course Load: The number of credit hours a student carries in one term.

Course Number: The number given to identify a course, e.g., (Chem. 236) Chemistry I. Numbers 100–399 usually refer to

undergraduate courses, and numbers above 400 indicate graduate courses.

Cram (slang): Intense study for a test at the last possible moment.

Credit: The quantitative measurement assigned to a course; the recognition given for successful completion of course work; usually defined by the number of hours spent in class per week; one credit hour is usually assigned for 50 minutes of class per week over a period of a semester, quarter, or trimester.

Cut Class (slang): To be absent from a class; skip class.

Dean: Senior academic officer of a college. A university may have several colleges, each headed by a dean.

Dean's List: List of undergraduate students who have earned above a certain grade point average for a given term.

Department: The faculty group, together with its supporting administrative personnel, that provides instruction in a given subject area.

Discipline: A field of study, for example, the discipline of chemistry.

Discussion Group: A group that meets with a professor or assistant to discuss lectures presented by the professor.

Dissertation: A formal, book length monograph presenting the results of original study and research that is submitted to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree.

Distance Learning: Education in which

students take academic courses by accessing information and communicating with the instructor, sometimes asynchronously, over a computer network.

Distribution Requirement: Predetermined number of courses in specific subject areas required of students for completion of a degree program.

Dormitory (Dorm): Living facilities that are operated by the school or privately, including bedrooms, toilet, and bathroom; often no cooking is allowed. Also called a Residence Hall.

Drop or Add: To withdraw from a course or add a course before a specified date.

Drop Out: To withdraw from all courses; a person who has withdrawn from all study is a “dropout.”

Endowed Chair or Professorship: A specially funded and named faculty position for a distinguished professor who is said to hold the “Chair.”

Elective: Refers to a course that may be applied toward a degree but is not specifically required.

English as a Second Language (ESL): English language training for persons whose first language is not English.

Evening College (or Night School): A division of a college, designed largely for adults, to offer college studies on a part-time basis.

Extracurricular Activities: Activities that are a part of student life, but not part of regular classroom study, such as athletics, the drama

club or the student newspaper.

Faculty: Teaching staff of a college or university. Normally used to refer to a person or people rather than an organizational unit within a university.

Fee: A payment charged for special services, such as late registration fee, graduation fee or application fee.

Fellowship: An award of money to a student, usually for graduate study; provides for tuition and living expenses for full-time study.

Final: Terminal examination in a course.

Financial Aid: Scholarships, loans, grants-in-aid and other financial assistance for students to meet educational costs.

International Student Advisor: Chief liaison officer between the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), university, community and the U.S. government for international students; also counselor to international students with respect to personal and academic problems. Also called an International Student Advisor.

Fraternity: See Greek Organization.

Freshman: A first-year student at a high school, college or university.

Full-time Student: A student who is carrying a normal load of courses. Undergraduate students must take at least 12 credit hours per term and graduate students nine credit hours at most colleges and universities to be considered full-time.

General Education: Courses covering broad

areas of the liberal arts.

Grade: The evaluation of a student's academic work.

Grading "On the Curve": A grading system under which students are measured relative to one another's performance rather than by absolute standards.

Grading System: Schools, colleges and universities in the United States commonly use letter grades to indicate the quality of a student's academic performance: A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (below average) and F (failing). See the Assessment Section of this publication for further explanation.

G.P.A. (Grade Point Average): A system used by many colleges for evaluating the overall scholastic performance of students. It is found by first determining the number of grade points a student has earned in each course completed and then by dividing the sum of all grade points by the total number of course points or hours carried. See the Assessment Section of this publication for further explanation.

Graduate: Description of a post-undergraduate program leading to a master's or doctoral degree; also describes a student in such a program ("graduate student") as well as a person who has satisfactorily completed any educational program ("graduate").

Graduate Student: A student in a graduate program.

Graduate Program: A post-undergraduate program leading to a master's or doctoral

degree.

Greek Organization: Also, **Greek Life.** A social organization of men (**fraternity**) or women (**sorority**) who often live together in large house on or near the campus. Though they are not affiliated with Greece, they are often called "Greeks" on campus due to their Greek-letter names, such as the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity or the Delta Gamma sorority.

Honor Fraternity: Organization honoring students who have achieved distinction in academic areas or service.

Incomplete Grade: A grade given (usually "I") when there is a reasonable delay for the completion of work for a particular course. Another grade is recorded when the work is completed.

Independent Study: A method of receiving credit for study or research independent of any specific course. Such study is often part of an honors program in the student's major and is supervised by a specified professor to whom the student is accountable.

International Student Advisor: Same as International Student Advisor.

Internship: Supervised practical training that a student or recent graduate may take, often for a summer, semester or year to gain experience. May or may not be paid or for university credit.

Junior: A third-year student at a high school, college, or university.

Junior College: A two-year institution of higher education offering liberal arts, sciences, technical, and vocational training;

may be under either public or private control; awards an A.A. or A.S. degree after two years or a certificate after a shorter course of study.

Leave of Absence: Approved leave taken by a student in good standing who plans to continue his or her studies.

Lecture: A prepared talk about a specific topic.

Liberal Arts College: A college that emphasizes a program of liberal arts or general undergraduate studies.

Lower Division: The freshman and sophomore levels, the first and second years of an undergraduate program of study.

M.A./M.S.: Master of Arts/Master of Science degree, awarded upon completion of a one- to two-year program of graduate study.

Major Field of Study (Major): A student's primary field of study.

Make-Up Exam: A late examination for students who missed the test on the assigned date.

Matriculated: Accepted for study in a particular degree program by a college or university.

Mid-Term: Examination given in the middle of an academic term.

Minor Field of Study (Minor): A student's secondary field of study.

Multiple-Choice Exam: Examination in which questions are given followed by two or more answers from which the correct answer is

selected.

Nonmatriculated: Refers to a student at a college or university who is not enrolled as a candidate for a degree; also called a Non-Degree or Special Student.

Open Admission: College or university admissions policy of admitting high school graduates and other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subjects, grades and test scores. Virtually all applicants are accepted.

Open-Book Exam: Examination in which the student is permitted to use the textbook(s) during the test.

Oral Exam: Examination in which the professor asks the student questions that are answered by speaking rather than by writing.

Part-Time Student: A student who carries less than a full-time course load.

Pass-Fail Grading System: The practice at some colleges of rating students' quality of performance in their courses as either passing or failing instead of giving grades to indicate various levels of achievement.

Ph.D.: Doctor of Philosophy; highest academic degree in U.S. education; diploma states Doctor of Philosophy in (subject); generally research-oriented.

Point: Used interchangeably with Credit and Unit; also refers to the grading system (4 points=A, 3 points=B, 2 points=C, 1 point=D, 0 points=F).

Postdoctoral Fellow: A person recently

awarded a Ph.D. appointment to assist the university in its research and teaching functions.

Preliminary Exam: A written or oral examination given to a Ph.D. candidate to determine readiness for the last stages of the doctoral program.

Prerequisite: Prior coursework required for admission to a class, e.g., introductory accounting coursework required for admission to an advanced accounting course.

President: Same as Chancellor.

Probation: Status resulting from unsatisfactory academic work; a warning that the student must improve academic performance or be dismissed after a specific period of time.

Proctor: A person who supervises examinations; also used as a verb.

Professor: The title for all university faculty members, who are ranked as assistant, associate or (full) professors.

Professor Emeritus: An academic title generally awarded to retired faculty.

Professional School: Institutions that specialize in the study of business, medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, music, art or theology; offer two to seven years of training; may be independent or part of university.

Provost: The chief academic officer of the university, who supervises academic policies and budgets.

Qualifying Examination: An examination that

tests students' qualifications for doctoral work.

Quarter: Usually 12 weeks of classes, including the final examination period; the summer quarter is sometimes subdivided into shorter periods of study.

Quiz: A short test that may or may not be announced ahead of time (called "Pop Quiz" if the short test is unannounced).

Reading List: A list of books and articles prepared by each professor for a specific course. Required and suggested texts are usually indicated as such. This list is designed to give the student an overview of the particular course.

Reference Room: Room in the library with reference books, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Register: Same as Catalogue.

Registrar: Official recorder of students' academic information, such as courses taken and grades received.

Registration: Procedure of officially enrolling in classes at the beginning of each term.

Remedial Course: Noncredit courses to help students with weak backgrounds in particular areas prepare themselves for credit courses in those areas.

Required Course: A subject that is chosen for students and that student must complete with a passing grade in order to obtain a degree.

Research Assistant (R.A.): Usually an

advanced graduate student who assists a professor on a research project. R.A.s may receive payment for their services in addition to a waiver of tuition charges.

Research Paper: A written report that includes research findings and the development of the student's ideas.

Reserve: When a book is "on reserve," it means that the book cannot be removed from the library. This is done when the library has a limited number of copies of a book that is required reading for a particular course.

Residence Hall: Same as Dormitory.

Sabbatical: A leave of absence granted to a faculty member, usually at the end of six years of teaching at one university.

Scholarship: Any grant, fellowship or remission of tuition and fees to a student that enables a student to further their education.

Section: One time period of a course that is offered at several times in the same term.

Semester: 15 to 18 weeks of classes, including the final examination period; a typical semester calendar includes two semesters (September-December and January-May) and a summer session (June-August).

Seminar: A course of study in which the class meets and decides what and how they would like to pursue their study; the class decides who will do what research; ideas and research are presented by the class members, and the professor serves as a moderator.

Senior: A fourth-year student at a high

school, college or university.

Skip Class: Same as Cut Class.

Sophomore: A second-year student at a high school, college or university.

Sorority: See Greek Organization.

Special Student: Same as nonmatriculated student.

Stipend: The amount of money given per year to a student or scholar as a scholarship or fellowship.

Student Union: A building on campus used for social and recreational activities.

Summer School: Formal, but reduced, course offerings during the long academic vacation.

Syllabus: An outline of topics to be covered in an academic course.

Take-Home Exam: Examination that may be written at home.

Teaching Assistant (T.A.): Usually an advanced graduate student who assists a professor teaching large undergraduate classes. TA's may receive payment for their services in addition to a waiver of tuition charges.

Technical Institute: Institution offering terminal training in applied sciences and technical subjects of two to three years' duration (no further degree training).

Tenure: The status of a permanent member of the faculty, awarded on the basis of scholarship, teaching or service.

Term: A general word for a division of the academic year; may be a Semester, Quarter or Trimester.

Term Paper: A formal paper required as a part of coursework and often (at graduate level) the major determinant of the student's grade.

Textbook: A book containing a general or specific presentation of the principles of a subject.

Theme: A brief composition or essay on a particular topic.

Thesis: A formal paper presenting the results of study and research that is submitted to fulfill requirements for an advanced degree; usually refers to as the master's thesis.

Transcript: Official copy of a student's academic record at a particular academic institution, including dates attended, courses taken, grades, grade point average, degree(s) earned and academic honors.

Transfer: To withdraw from one institution or program and enroll in another. Often times some credit for courses taken at one institution can be transferred to another institution.

Trimester: Usually 15 weeks, including the final examination period; there are three trimesters (September–September) per calendar year, with students generally

attending class during two of the three.

Tuition: The fee paid by students for their instruction.

Undergraduate: Description of a college or university program leading to a bachelor's degree; also a student in the first four years of college or university study.

Unit: Used interchangeably with Credit.

University: An institution composed of colleges or schools of liberal arts, sciences, and technology as well as professional and graduate schools; offers bachelor's degree programs and technical and professional graduate training.

Upper Division: The junior and senior levels—or the third, fourth, and fifth years—of an undergraduate program of studies.

Withdrawal: Release of a student from enrollment— either from a particular course or from the university in general—without the intention to return.

Work Study: A need-based federal financial aid program whereby students are employed—usually on campus—and the U.S. government subsidizes the pay given.

Source: This glossary has been reprinted and adapted, with permission, from *Pre-departure Orientation Handbook*; Japan-United States Educational Commission, 1983.