Please read all e-mails from ipo@oxy.edu while you are gone!

Financial Matters:
- The Comprehensive Fee will be listed as “IPO Comprehensive fee” on your Oxy bill
- In 2013-14, the estimated Comprehensive Fee is $29,219 + Oxy insurance
- Financial aid applies during study abroad
- Oxy provides for tuition, housing, meals on your behalf
- You may receive a stipend check from International Programs for meals and local transportation, if required.

The Financial Aid Office will contact students eligible for travel grants.

Insurance
All students must have adequate insurance while abroad, and have no gaps in coverage while travelling or upon return to the US. In some cases, determined by IPO, students may be eligible to waive Oxy insurance. **You will be notified by IPO if you are eligible to waive the Occidental insurance coverage.** Call your insurance company to determine how the insurance will function abroad. **Take your insurance card with you.** If you have Oxy student health insurance, check out this link: [http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-student-wellness-center/student-health-insurance](http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-student-wellness-center/student-health-insurance)

Course Registration for Fall 2014
- While abroad, e-mail your academic advisor for your PIN and registration time and register online from abroad at the designated time.
- Be sure to convert your time to Los Angeles time!

Problems? Contact IPO at ipo@oxy.edu.

On Campus Housing for Fall 2014:
Study abroad participants can visit the Res Ed webpages starting in December to register for housing upon return from study abroad. [http://www.oxy.edu/residential-education-housing-services/current-students/study-abroad-participants](http://www.oxy.edu/residential-education-housing-services/current-students/study-abroad-participants)

Academic Policies
- All credit **counts** toward the Oxy graduation requirement – course names and grades will show on Oxy transcript and will be factored into your GPA!
- All students must take a full load abroad, as defined by the program, unless prior permission has been granted.
- Major/Minor/Core credit awarded with approval from academic department – Course Approval form already submitted.
- Take different courses abroad? Complete a Post-Completion Request form upon return.
- Oxy does not take credit for pre-professional courses (applied business, culinary arts, etc.)

**IMPORTANT:** Transcripts can take up to 4 months to arrive at Oxy!
Occidental College International Programs Office  
Orientation Discussion Guide  

CULTURE  
- Cultural Differences  
  - Dress, body movement  
  - Communication, both verbal and nonverbal  
  - Language  
  - Time; schedule; the pace of a day  
  - Gender; race; class; sexual orientation issues  
  - Food  
  - Music  
- Meeting host country nationals – what is the best way?  
- Cultural dos and don’ts  
- Assimilation into student-life  
- Cultural shock  

ACADEMICS  
- Differences in the education system from that of the U.S.  
- Grading and assessment  
- Courses, professors, papers, examinations  
- Library use  
- Computer, printer and e-mail access  
- Field trips, labs, internships/volunteering  
- Credits and taking a course on a credit/ no credit basis  

HEALTH, SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND SAFETY  
- Program director and program staff  
- Group Dynamics  
- Legal and political dos and don’ts  
- Personal Safety; cultural perceptions of Americans by the host country  
- Medical Care: doctors, medical facilities, over-the-counter medicines, 
  prescriptions, vaccinations, health insurance  
- Visa-requirements, working with embassies/ consulates, fees, deadlines  

DAILY LIFE  
- Housing; during orientation and throughout program  
- Meals  
- Money and banking  
- Budgeting – how much do things cost?  
- Telephone and mail  
- Local Transportation and commuting  
- Laundry
ASPECTS OF TEACHING & LEARNING TO CONSIDER

Classroom
Grading (method & frequency)
Professor – Student Communications (hierarchical, formal or egalitarian, informal; office hours, email response time)
Pre-requisite Knowledge (generalist vs. specialist)
Use of Syllabus
Request for accommodation
Tacit Knowledge

CHARACTERISTICS OF US ACADEMIC CULTURE
Dialogue instead of monologue
Big Library 24/7
Question Authority – good!
Activities
Support Services
Discovery of Self is valued – journey
Expectation of “success”
Opinions instead of facts
Amount of information available
Tech & on-line
Syllabus = steps to get an A. Participation
Deadlines are flexible
Who’s in charge – professor’s priorities secondary to students’
Parent involvement
Continual feedback

CHARACTERISTICS OF OXY ACADEMIC CULTURE
Emphasis on diversity, ethnicity, privilege, race, class, power
Small, interactive classes
Prof knows your name
Prof “cares” about your progress in class.

WHERE DOES YOUR PROGRAM FALL ON THIS CONTINUUM?
More elements of US Academic Culture < ------------------------------------------------------------- More elements of Host Culture

H:\OCS FORMS\OCS FORMS - Orientation Study Abroad\Orientation for Spring 2012\Academic Culture\Academic Adjustment.doc
FACT #9: Navigating the dating scene in your own culture is difficult enough, but that increases ten-fold while abroad due to different norms, expectations, gender roles and health risks.

Sex
- The incidence of HIV/AIDS is much higher in some parts of the world, even endemic, than it is in the U.S.
- In some cultures, those who engage in pre-marital sex, especially women, are judged harshly.
- Do you know the words for “condom”, “pregnancy test” and “STD screening” in your host country’s language? You should if you plan to be sexually active while abroad.

Differing Gender Roles
- It’s important to recognize that some cultures rely on gender as a primary way to define identity.
- Be ready to learn, analyze, and adapt to your new culture.

Women Abroad
- Open staring and comments are common in many places.
- Don’t be frustrated if you respond in ways appropriate in the U.S.—glaring, shouting, or ignoring– and they do not have the desired effect.
- Put your safety first, observe what sorts of behavior provoke unwanted attention and observe how local women deflect it.
- Many cultures have the impression that U.S. women are loose due to the fact that U.S. students abroad are more active sexually and more open about it than local people in their host culture, not to mention that movies and television perpetuate this stereotype.
- When used abroad, many non-sexual behaviors common in the U.S. may suggest that you are “available” such as looking a man in the eye, smiling openly at strangers, and visiting night-spots without being accompanied by a man.
- You can avoid some unwanted attention by dressing as local women do. Casual warm-weather dress such as shorts and tank tops may draw unwanted attention.

FACT #10: It’s up to you to make the most out of your experience abroad!

Adapted by Gina Lopardo, Seattle University Education Abroad Office, from CIEE’s Knowledge series 2009.
• Before you go, visit your physician, gynecologist and dentist.
• Get immunizations and hepatitis protection if needed for the region you will be traveling to.
• Check whether medications are available in your host country, if not carry them with you.
• Verify your health insurance coverage and ensure you have medical evacuation.
• Don’t forget to take your regular medications with you as well as copies of the prescriptions including eyeglass prescriptions.
• Pack a small first aid kit with basics like Band-aids, pain reliever, anti-diarrheas, antibacterial ointment, etc.
• Upon arrival don’t be surprised if you feel impatient, confused, or anxious or if you feel emotional highs and lows as you adjust.
• Check health advisories before going by visiting www.cdc.gov/travel.

FACT #3: Health issues that are under control at home can become much worse while abroad.

FACT #4: You need to continue taking all prescription medications that you take at home while you are abroad.

FACT #5: Petty theft is the most commonly reported “threat” (not terrorism!) to students abroad.

FACT #6: There are precautions you can take to stay safe while abroad.

FACT #7: Alcohol is the leading cause of mishaps and accidents that befall students abroad.

FACT #8: Most countries have severe penalties for buying, selling and using illegal drugs.

• Adjustment to time changes, new locations, jet lag, cultural differences, etc. can cause mental and physical stress and therefore it is not the time to change or stop your current medications.
• Bring your medications with you in original containers along with the prescription.
• Take enough medication to last throughout your stay abroad.
• Carry your medications in your carry-on luggage. Do not place them in checked luggage!

• Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present risks when making daily choices and decisions.
• Do not travel alone, notify the program staff of travel plans prior to departure.
• Don’t call attention to yourself as an American and don’t hang out in places frequented by Americans.
• Don’t carry much cash; blend in with locals; use caution and common sense if using alcohol as excessive use can lead to dangerous situations and drug laws in the host country may be much stricter than in the U.S.
• Ask questions about your surroundings like what documentation should be carried at all times, who can be trusted, and the norms for dressing and behavior.

• Both males and females have been attacked or robbed while walking alone at night. Use the buddy system.
• Avoid political demonstrations as you will not know whether the crowd or police will become violent.
• Do not do risky things abroad that you would not do at home such as get in cars with strangers, going to apartments of people you just met, or swallowing something given to you by a stranger.

• One of the most persistent stereotypes of young Americans is that they frequently abuse drugs and alcohol.
• Because of this stereotype, perpetrators of crimes target Americans, especially drunk ones.
• In most cultures, binge drinking and public drunkenness carry very negative stigmas.
• It’s hard to make sound decisions when you’ve compromised yourself due to drunkenness.

• If arrested, the U.S. government cannot do anything to get a citizen out of jail when convicted of a drug offense.
• Even in countries where simple possession is legal or a minor crime, police have been known to arrest students for possessing legal quantities in hopes that they will be willing to bribe themselves out of jail.
• Local police can be corrupt and in collusion with dealers, swooping in to arrest students once a sale has been made.
Academic Advisory: Direct Enrollment Course Selection

As you know, there are many factors that play a role in your academic success and learning experience in a direct enrollment course, but we would like to emphasize the importance that course selection can play. When choosing your course please keep in mind the following suggestions.

Schedule:

Choosing a course solely because it does not meet on a Friday is NOT a good reason. Additionally, not all professors are willing to make special exam scheduling exceptions, therefore you should choose those professors recommended by the on-site staff that are more familiar with international students and are willing to make accommodations.

Location:

Choosing a course based on location is NOT a good reason. Please do not choose a course because it is more conveniently located than a 20 minute bus ride away. You could be missing out on a wonderful class that is only a bus ride away.

Academic Advising:

Please remember that when on-site staff members provide you with support on selecting courses that they are not making suggestions solely on your academic and or language ability. There are several academic cultural differences that they can speak to with their expertise. Please listen to their advice and choose your courses accordingly. Additionally, not all university courses can accommodate study abroad students.
Directly Enrolling in a European, Australian, or NZ University?
Differences Observed. Noted by past participants:

- In most countries overseas, the “Small, private, liberal arts college” does not exist.
- Students pursue higher education at large research-oriented universities, similar to large, public research-oriented universities in the USA.
- A high degree of independence is granted to undergraduate students who pace their studies individually throughout the academic term.
- Students enjoy, but do not abuse the benefit of this approach the freedom to pursue learning independently, directing one’s own reading and progress in the subject.
- Classroom approach is much less interactive than at Occidental. Large lecture classes are common.
- Professors may expect to lecture without interruptions, including questions and comments from students.
- Faculty doesn’t hold office hours nor make themselves accessible to students outside of class.
- Grades for individual courses are usually determined by one final examination or paper.
- Do not expect homework, quizzes, and midterms.
- Foreign standards may differ from American grading norms.
- Professors from the host country may employ their teaching philosophy and style, and bring host country grading standards to the classroom.
- Local students may not emphasize the amount of studying they do independently. They may not talk about pulling all-nighters – this is not culturally important to them. Don’t be fooled – they are working hard, just not talking about it!
### Occidental College Education Abroad ~ Personal Crisis Management Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Avoid &amp; Plan</th>
<th>React</th>
<th>A real risk to me &amp; my plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Disaster</strong></td>
<td>1. Know the common threats specific to your location.</td>
<td>1. Move away, stay away. Monitor local media.</td>
<td>A real risk to me &amp; my plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(flood, earthquake, hurricane, etc.)</td>
<td>2. Plan your reaction and evacuation route from residence and program site.</td>
<td>2. Follow your reaction/evacuation route from residence and program site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Plan a back-up ‘safe place’ in case your evacuation site is compromised.</td>
<td>3. Stay where you are if instructed to do so or if conditions make it more dangerous to travel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Unrest</strong></td>
<td>1. Stay informed!</td>
<td>1. Move away, stay away. Monitor local media.</td>
<td>A real risk to me &amp; my plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(protests, strikes, communication disruption, gov’t closures, etc.)</td>
<td>2. Learn to recognize symbols of local political or activist groups.</td>
<td>2. Plan your reaction/evacuation route from residence and program site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Stay away from areas frequented by American tourists (Hard Rock café, US consulate, corporate headquarters) or targets for local political groups (union or political headquarters)</td>
<td>3. Stay where you are if instructed to do so or if conditions make it more dangerous to travel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(theft, pick-pocket, ATM, violence, fighting, rape, injury, etc.)</td>
<td>2. Adopt gender-specific safety habits.</td>
<td>2. Get medical attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Learn where dangerous areas are and stay away.</td>
<td>3. Report to in-country point-person and/or Oxy IPO.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Learn how the time of day or certain events (athletic events, festivals?) can change a “safe” place to a dangerous one.</td>
<td>4. In case of serious crimes, contact Embassy and IPO.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Injury &amp; Illness</strong></td>
<td>1. Read CDC information for your country</td>
<td>1. Get medical attention.</td>
<td>A real risk to me &amp; my plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(requiring hospitalization or extended absence from classes)</td>
<td>2. Get all recommended immunizations before departure. Take all prophylaxis medications.</td>
<td>2. Present insurance card.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Carry address of hospitals and clinics.</td>
<td>3. Contact in-country point-person, family and IPO for medical oversight and insurance support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Carry insurance card.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Know the local names of medicines you are allergic to. Wear allergy alerts at all times.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Know host country vocabulary for your chronic conditions.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wide-spread Disease/Health Threats</strong></td>
<td>1. Stay informed by reading the local press and balancing with international media sources.</td>
<td>1. Let your US family know the local conditions.</td>
<td>A real risk to me &amp; my plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(water or air quality, radiation, disease)</td>
<td>2. Know your program’s policies for managing risks and if necessary for withdrawing.</td>
<td>2. Adhere to local and international medical recommendations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Follow program guidelines.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Stages of Re-entry Adjustment

We know from the experiences of hundreds of Oxy-Abroad returnees and research on thousands of international students, Peace Corp volunteers, faculty and business travelers that it is not always easy to fit right back in to the life they left at home. This can be upsetting because we think we should easily adjust back to our own culture.

Many students experience an adjustment period somewhat like they did when they went abroad. Does this mood graph look familiar?

1. The *Happy to be home* phase, you may feel excitement at seeing everyone again, eating favorite foods, seeing familiar places.

2. Getting back into the old routines at home and at school, you may feel some unhappiness, withdrawal because no one identifies with your strong feelings about your international experience, can’t share it, feel you are different (more mature?) than classmates, they see you as arrogant. *Reality hits.*

3. Learning how to adapt again, including finding new friends, looking for opportunities for your international interests and keeping up your new language, you will find a *compromise* style of living.

Many of the skills that you have learned as a result of becoming an international student are going to serve you for life! The attached hand-out, “Possible Outcomes of an International Experience” lists a number of skills and qualities you may have strengthened. If you think about the list carefully, you may be able to identify even more areas of learning for yourself. What about the quality of patience, for example! Don’t forget to mention these on your resume and in cover letters. Employees seek these skills and qualities.

Come talk to us! We would love to hear your stories from abroad and feelings now that you are returned. We would like to share your joys and may be able to help you work through any challenges you might be having in the reentry process. Also, do not hesitate to call the counseling center at (323) 259-2657. The professional staff is trained to help you deal constructively with the adjustment process.