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CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
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PREPARING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

The information below may help you in planning effectively for your stay in Syracuse. We advise you to also consult the booklets sent to you by the Admissions Office, the Graduate School, SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry or your academic department. You can also find useful information on the websites for these schools (Syracuse University is <http://www.syr.edu> and SUNY-ESF is <http://www.esf.edu/default.htm>). You can also contact us by mail, telephone, fax, or email with any questions you may have after reading this material.

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IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

Visa: The I-20 or DS-2019 which has been sent to you should be presented to a Consular Officer at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy closest to your home. You will also usually need to have a current valid passport, evidence of financial support for the period of time and amount indicated on the I-20 or DS-2019, proof that you have permanent residence outside the U.S., one or more passport type photographs, and a nonimmigrant visa application.

SEVIS Fee: A SEVIS fee of \$100.00 is generally a one-time fee (see exceptions on website www.fmjfee.com), and is required of those who are applying for an F-1, J-1, or M-1 visa based on an I-20 issued for "initial attendance" or a DS-2019 issued to "begin a new program." Proof of fee payment must be presented at the visa interview. **(This means that the SEVIS Fee must be paid before interview can be scheduled.)** Any dependents who are accompanying you will receive their own I-20 or DS-2019 for F-2 or J-2 visas. There is no SEVIS Fee for F-2 or J-2. Upon receipt of the F-1 or J-1 visa, you may complete your travel plans. *Do not enter the U.S. on the B-2 Visa if you intend to pursue full-time study.* During the trip you should carry your important documents on you at all times (passport, I-20 or DS-2019, financial support documents) as you will be required to present them at the U.S. port of entry. Keep in mind that U.S. immigration regulations regarding the use of visa documents to enter the country are very strict. *Immigration regulations require that you report to the school for which the visa was issued.* Attendance for a full semester may be required before you can transfer to another institution.

Port of Entry Procedures: Upon entering the U.S., you will pass through U.S. Immigration procedures. At this point, your passport, visa, and other documents will be officially reviewed and a photo will be taken of your index finger and face. You should make sure to carry your documents with you and never store them in your baggage. Your Form I-20 or DS-2019 should be stamped with a date of arrival by the Port of Entry Inspector. *Citizens of Canada are exempted from needing a passport or visa to enter the U.S., but should show their I-20 or DS-2019, proof of national identity, and proof of SEVIS Fee payment at the Port of Entry.*

Cost of Entry: You will also be issued a Form I-94 (a white card that is often stapled to your passport) which is an Arrival and Departure Record. The number on this card is also known as your Immigration Admission Number. The cost will be \$6.00 for this form if you are going to enter the U.S. by land and you should have this money readily available to you in U.S. currency since you will have to get it before you reach the foreign exchange window.

Customs: After passing through Immigration, you will collect your baggage and then go through Customs where a Customs Inspector will ask you to declare what you have brought into the country. You should present the completed Customs Declaration Form that you received on the plane before disembarkation. You will not have to pay duty on items you brought in for personal use or minor gifts (up to \$100 total per person). If you are carrying more than \$10,000 in currency, traveler's checks or money order, you should inform the Customs Officer. While there is no limit imposed, you may have to fill out some forms. Agricultural and unsealed food products are forbidden, as are clothing made from the skin of endangered animals, lottery tickets, narcotics and dangerous drugs, obscene articles and publications, seditious and treasonable materials, hazardous articles (i.e. fireworks, dangerous toys, toxic or poisonous substances), and switchblade knives. Please be careful to be honest with Customs as the penalties for concealment of declarable items can be severe.

PACKING & PREPARATION

Money: You should carry with you in the form of currency or traveler's checks (while some cash is helpful, it is safer to have traveler's checks) enough money to cover the expenses of the first week in the U.S. You will incur costs such as transportation, temporary lodging, food, health insurance purchase, housing deposits and rent, clothing appropriate for the climate, and emergency supplies if your baggage is misplaced. It often takes three to four days for a bank draft to be cleared when you open a bank account.

Clothing: Based on what previous international students have said, we recommend that you bring with you most of the personal clothing that you will need, including at least one outfit of your traditional clothing for special programs. Winter jackets and boots however should probably be purchased here if your climate is very different from Syracuse. Most students wear casual clothing such as jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers or gym shoes in the classroom and most informal social occasions.

Documents: If you have previously completed a course of study in the subject you will be studying at Syracuse University or SUNY-ESF it may be helpful to have the major textbooks you used as well as any documentation of such coursework. Also bring official transcripts from schools attended, medical and dental records, information about medical conditions and prescriptions, marriage and birth certificates, and an international driver's license. Make sure to have a set of photocopies of the most important documents in each piece of luggage. Also, try to have a well-filled address book with all the addresses of your friends and relatives from home.

Traditional Items: You may also find it helpful to bring traditional spices (well-sealed for Customs) and other items (decorative such as wall-hangings and pictures or utilitarian such as special cooking utensils) that you will need to feel at home here. You may also find it helpful to bring a set of small and inexpensive gifts from your home country.

Baggage: If you cannot carry everything you want with you, you may ship it so that it will be in Syracuse by the time you arrive. The Slutzker Center for International Services has no space to store shipped luggage. However, as an alternative, **Lazybones Inc.** is available to discuss your storage needs. They will also deliver your boxes and luggage to your place of residence on campus and in a limited distance off-campus. You will have to be present when your boxes are delivered. There is a charge for their service. You may check their website at www.lazybones.net or contact them regarding costs via email at wecare@lazybones.net or fax at (315) 703-0921.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SYRACUSE

Area: Established in 1848, the City of Syracuse is a medium-sized city covering 25.6 square miles (66.4km²) with approximately 147,000 people. Syracuse is located in the geographic center of New York State in the densely populated northeastern United States. New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Hartford, as well as Montreal and Toronto in Canada are all between 200 to 300 miles (1 mile = 1.6km) away (a driving distance of about 4 to 5 hours). The city has museums, zoos, theatres, and parks as well as many cafés and restaurants featuring food from all over the world. There are always events going on such as music, dance, art, lectures, and festivals. The area is considered generally low crime, with the predominant crime committed being larceny and burglary. The area is located in the Finger Lakes region, with hundreds of lakes, waterfalls, wineries, and places to go camping, hiking, and swimming. Syracuse is close to the Adirondacks, the vast wilderness region with mountains, lakes and rivers, as well as the world-famous Niagara Falls.

Climate: Syracuse has warm summers and cold winters. Summer temperatures can climb to 90°F (32.2°C) and in the winter plunge to -10°F (-24.4°C). Another feature is its unpredictability—it has been known to be 60°F (15.6°C) in the middle of November and it has snowed in May! However, you should be aware that most buildings are centrally heated to about 70°F (21.1°C) so that when one dresses for the day during winter, one must actually accommodate a range of temperatures. Most people tend to layer clothing as opposed to wearing one extremely warm outfit. A coat, hat, snow boots, scarf and warm gloves are a necessity for outdoors in the winter. In the warmer months, cotton clothing replaces wool, and shorts, t-shirts, or light dresses are enough.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Academics: Syracuse University is proud to be a Student Centered Research University, with 11 colleges and schools and over 200 majors and minors available. Many of the programs here are ranked very high in the country. The academic year runs from late August through May and is divided into two semesters of approximately 15 weeks in duration. In addition, there are two 6-week summer sessions between May and August, which are supplementary to the academic year. However, courses have the same credit no matter when they are taken. To be a full-time student is required by the Immigration and Naturalization Regulations. Undergraduate students must carry a course load of 12 credits per semester, while a course load of 9 credits is considered full-time for graduate students.

Proficiency in English: All lectures, textbooks, papers and examinations are usually in English and require excellent oral and writing abilities in English. All international students must demonstrate proficiency in English through the TOEFL Examination. They may also take additional courses if their English abilities are considered insufficient based on the results of the English Language Assessment Exam, (still called the Michigan Test), which is taken upon arrival. Classes tend to use a variety of methods for teaching and assessment including lectures, group discussions, videos, multiple choice and essay-type examinations and papers. Student performance is evaluated in a number of ways including regular attendance, participation in class discussions, completion of group projects and turning in timely reports or term papers. To maintain your status as full-time students, you must complete all coursework in a satisfactory manner.

Social Activities: There are several different student organizations (you can look for specific information on the website <http://studentlife.syr.edu/>) that engage in co-curricular activities that have to do with social interests, hobbies, religions, ethnic or cultural identity, arts and entertainment, and much else. In addition, there are often special events such as lectures, concerts, films, dances, festivals, and programs that take place on campus. The Slutzker Center also sponsors special programs for international students that include an Annual Thanksgiving Dinner, International Education Week, special outings/trips, interest groups and English conversation groups. There are also extensive recreation facilities available including soccer, basketball and gymnastics equipment, table tennis, racquetball and squash courts, numerous playing fields, exercise rooms, and swimming pools. In addition, golfing, skiing, and hiking are popular activities in the region.

Religious Activities: Hendricks Chapel on campus is the home for all faiths. There are chaplains at the University representing many major religious groups such as Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. In addition, in the community there are many faiths represented including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Evangelical Christianity. You will find a schedule of services on the Hendricks's Chapel website daily. <http://hendricks.syr.edu>

Advising and Counseling: Students have access to a number of services to support, guide, and help them make the most of their stay at the university. International Student Advisors are available to help any international student. In addition, every student has access to advising resources within their academic department as well as their School or College Dean's Office.

- The Writing Program (<http://iwca.syr.edu/>) helps students with developing and writing papers while the Tutoring and Study Center (<http://www.tutoring.syr.edu/>) provides tutoring in special subjects.
- The Health Services (<http://students.syr.edu/health/index.html>) can help students with health problems as well as advise on nutrition, diet, and provide health education.
- The Counseling Center (<http://counselingcenter.syr.edu/>) assists students with concerns related to personal, educational, relationship, family, substance abuse, and other social or emotional problems.

Employment: Employment opportunities for international students are limited by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the State Department regulations and are available only to students who have maintained their immigration status and academic standing. International students should contact the Slutzker Center before pursuing any kind of work experience. The three kinds of employment available are on-campus, off-campus, and practical/academic training. After academic registration, new international students are eligible to apply for on-campus employment. This work is limited to 20 hours per week during the academic semester and may be increased to full-time (usually 40 hours) per week during approved University vacations and summer. Students must be registered for a full-course of study. Students should not expect to earn enough to pay the cost of tuition through this kind of employment. Under *restricted* circumstances, the immigration regulations allow F-1 students to apply for employment off-campus. This employment is based on immigration definitions of *need*. The student must demonstrate to the USCIS that a severe economic hardship exists, due to unforeseen circumstances. To be eligible for this type of employment the student must: (1) have been in F-1 status for one full academic year, and (2) must have been a full-time student during each semester in the U.S. Only the USCIS can approve this type of employment. Students on J-1 Exchange Visitor visas may be given permission to work by their sponsor, but still need to consult the Slutzker Center prior to seeking employment. The employment status of dependents of international students and scholars is also determined by the visa status. A spouse with a J-2 visa may apply for permission to work, but must obtain that permission from the USCIS after demonstrating that such employment is not necessary for support of J-1 student. A spouse with an F-2 visa is **not allowed** employment of any kind. Students may also apply to pursue practical training employment, or academic training in their field of study, provided such training is recommended by the University and/or sponsor. For more information, please visit the Slutzker Center web site.

Finances: When obtaining a visa for study in the U.S., students need to show proof of financial support for at least the first 12 months. The Visa Officer at the U.S. Consulate, USCIS and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) takes this to mean that the money shown on the I-20 or DS-2019 is guaranteed for the duration of at least 12 months. Please note that health insurance coverage must be purchased upon your arrival. Remember to include this amount in addition to other funds you bring.

- ◆ **For Syracuse University students:** The Bursar Office is the Syracuse University office that maintains student accounts and prepares bills. When sending money or submitting bank drafts, money orders, checks for payment on your account to Syracuse University, the following conditions must be met: 1) Checks must be payable to “Syracuse University”, 2) the amount must be in U.S. Dollars and drawn on a U.S. bank, 3) Student name and SU ID Number should appear on check, 4) Checks can be mailed to ***The Office of the Bursar | Syracuse University | 102 Archbold North | Syracuse, NY 13244-1140 | USA.***

Funds can also be wired by your home country bank directly to Syracuse University. Instruct the bank to wire funds using the following information:

The Chase Manhattan Bank, Attn: Operations Manager, Funds Transfer Services, 4 New York Plaza, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10004. ABA#021 000 021 Credit: Syracuse University, Acct #: 018-000-1182 Attn: Upstate Syracuse Account, Swift Code: CHASUS33.

- ◆ **For SUNY-ESF students:** The Bursar Office is the SUNY-ESF office that maintains student accounts and prepares bills. When sending money or submitting bank drafts, money orders, checks for payment on your account to SUNY-ESF, the following conditions must be met: 1) Checks must be payable to “SUNY ESF”, 2) the amount must be in U.S. Dollars and so indicated on the check, 3) Student name and Social Security Number (if you have one) should appear on check, 4) Checks can be mailed to ***SUNY ESF | 103 Bray Hall | 1 Forestry Drive | Syracuse, NY 13210 | USA.***

Funds can also be wired by your home country bank directly to SUNY-ESF. Instruct the bank to wire funds using the following information:

Routing number # 022000046, A/C # 9835476285, M&T Bank 101 S. Salina St., Syracuse, NY 13221.

On arrival, bring to the Bursar Office the **a)** Name of the originating bank, **b)** Date of the bank transaction, **c)** Name of the sender, and **d)** Correspondent bank in the U.S. (city and state).

There are banks located close to campus and it is easy to open a bank account with bank drafts, money orders, traveler’s checks or cash. Advice and information on banking are available at our website <http://international.syr.edu/finances.htm>

SOME COMMON ITEMS AND PRICES TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR FINANCES

- Hotel room = \$70-\$250 (per night) • Motel room = \$60-\$100 (per night) (Special rates for hotels may apply)
- Rent for a 1 bedroom apartment off-campus = \$350-\$700 per month (depending on location and quality)
- Syracuse University Health Insurance for 1 year = \$1800 per student, student and 1 dependent is \$3684 for a spouse, and for a family (husband, wife, and children) \$5592 (These costs are approximate and are based on 2005-06 figures for a student health insurance plan offered by the University.)
- Rent for a room in a 3 to 4 bedroom apartment off-campus = \$300-\$500 per month
- Heat and water costs (varies by the insulation and size) = \$25 in summer to \$250 in winter per month
- 1 week food expenses for a single person = \$50-\$150 (vegetarian food is less expensive than meats)
- Textbooks = \$20-\$150 per textbook (engineering and science textbooks are especially expensive)
- Blankets = \$30-\$80 • Sheets = \$15-\$60 for a twin size • Pillow = \$5-\$25 for a twin size
- Estimated laundry costs for a single student = \$4.50 per week (for washing and drying two loads)
- Haircut for a woman = \$16-\$60 • Haircut for a man = \$10-\$25
- Used Bicycle = \$25-\$75 • New Bicycle = \$100-\$400
- Winter coat = \$50 to \$250 • Winter boots = \$40-\$100 • Gloves = \$5-\$30
- Jeans = \$25-\$60 • T-shirts = \$5-\$30 • Sneakers = \$15-\$200
- Toothbrush = \$0.70-\$2.60 • Toothpaste = \$2.50 • Soap = \$0.75-\$2.60
- Cup of coffee = \$1.00 + • Daily Newspaper = \$1.25 • 1 gallon of milk = \$2.50

