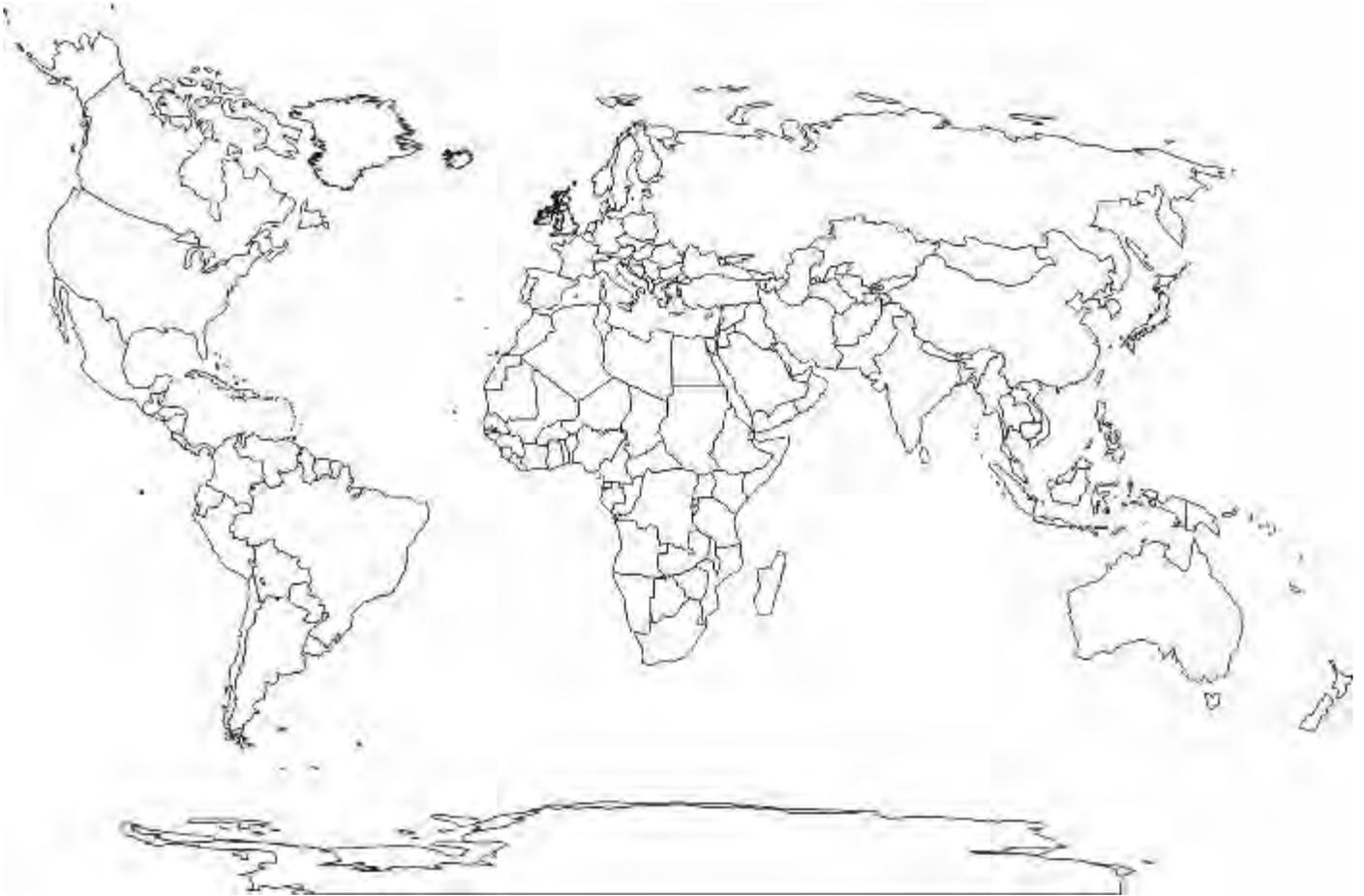


**IMPORTANT INFORMATION INSIDE!**

# **STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK**



**Global Education Office**  
**Elliot Center 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Keene State College, Keene, NH 03435**  
**Tel: 603-358-2348      Fax: 603-358-2469      E-mail: [geo@keene.edu](mailto:geo@keene.edu)**

Dear Study Abroad Participant,

Congratulations on your acceptance to study away through the Global Education Office at Keene State College! You are about to embark on what will surely be one of the most memorable and exciting experiences of your life. We are certain that this adventure will prove to be a turning point in your personal, academic, and professional development.

No doubt you have already given careful consideration to choosing the study abroad program that was right for you. Even though you have chosen your location, there is still more to do! This packet will serve as your guide and will outline the steps that need to be taken from this point forward. It will also serve as a resource while you are away. Additionally, it contains material you will need upon your arrival home. Read it carefully and share it with your family and friends; it will address many of the questions and concerns they have as well.

Nothing will ensure a satisfying, enriching experience more than planning ahead, and educating yourself on what to expect culturally, academically, and socially. Your commitment to and preparation for your study abroad experience will determine the amount of gratification and success that you enjoy.

It's imperative that you begin to think about the differences you will face on a daily basis, not only among a new culture and people, but even in your day-to-day routine and studies. All around the world daily tasks are approached in different ways. What you eat, how you travel, or where you wash your clothes could be very different from your current routine. Academically, you'll face differences too. It's possible you may not receive a syllabus or need to purchase books. You may encounter novel teaching and testing styles as well. Socially, you need to have knowledge beforehand about your new culture so that you can transition into the environment. Before you go, educate yourself on current events, history, and local customs. All this will make your adjustment more harmonious. All study abroad participants experience some form of culture shock. This is very normal, but having prepared for the differences you'll face ahead of time and immersing yourself in the new culture will lessen its intensity.

We wish you a very safe and successful semester abroad!

The Global Education Office

updated 7/19/11

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# CHAPTER 1

## BEFORE YOU GO



## PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

*Now that you have been accepted to a study abroad program, you will need to complete several tasks. Below is a general guideline of things to take care of. There are additional details on the following pages.*

### **To do immediately:**

- Read the handbook and the associated information. Then read it again. Pay particular attention to this checklist.
- Apply for or renew your passport. Make sure your passport will be valid for at least six months after the end date of your program.
- Call your local host country embassy or consulates, and verify information on entry requirements and/or student visa applications. Make sure you take this seriously!
- Begin gathering paperwork for your entry requirements or student visa applications.
- Inform your academic advisor that you have been accepted to study abroad. Decide with your academic advisor what courses to enroll in while abroad. Complete the blue Pre-Approval Course Substitution form. Decide what courses you will enroll in upon returning to KSC.
- Continue researching your host country and visit your host school's website.
- Complete all forms on the checklist. See the Pre-departure Paperwork section for a complete description and explanation of all forms that have been included in this packet. Please return them to the Global Education Office before the deadline.
- Schedule any physical exams that may be required.
- If you have financial aid, meet with Student Financial Services to discuss financial aid applicability towards your study abroad program.
- Begin planning a personal spending budget for study abroad.
- Contact all clubs and organizations you might belong to and tell them you'll be away next semester.
- Continue researching your host country; contact a Study Abroad Alumni. The Global Education Office can let you know who to speak to.

### **To do before the end of the semester:**

- If required, apply for your student visa. You may be required to set up an interview which can take 3-4 weeks. **Be sure to keep copies of all paperwork.**
- Check with the Student Financial Service office of KSC to make sure all your paperwork is in order.
- Have a complete physical and dental check-up. Arrange to take enough of any prescription medication to last for your entire time away – not all medications are available while abroad. You are advised to take a copy of that prescription with you overseas.
- Continue researching your host country. Visit the KSC Global Education Office Library, or the Mason Library, and read newspapers or magazines from your host country.

## **To do one month prior to departure:**

- ❑ Make sure your MyKSC password is activated and working and that you're using your KSC mailcruiser account. *YOU will register for classes for when you return to KSC through MyKSC.*
- ❑ Make travel arrangements and return the **Flight Information** form to the KSC Global Education Office at least thirty days prior to departure.
- ❑ Receive your bill/s from KSC and/or from your program site and pay your program fees.
- ❑ Ensure that all holds on your student account are cleared.
- ❑ Make financial arrangements:
  - Contact your bank to find out their policies on ATM withdrawals: perhaps your bank has a partnered bank overseas that will not charge a fee for withdrawing cash in local currency. ATM withdrawal is the most convenient form for acquiring cash overseas.
  - Contact credit card companies and inform them that you will be abroad; this way they will not close your account for security reasons. Ask your credit card company what benefits you have if items are lost, broken, or stolen, AND the policy for obtaining a cash advance while you are abroad.
  - Give power of attorney to your parents or guardian so your banking needs may be met.
- ❑ Get a travel security pouch to carry your money, passport, and other important documents.
- ❑ For KSC students who currently live on campus and wish to live in KSC housing the semester of their return: Obtain, complete and return the housing form along with any necessary deposit, to the **Residential Life Office**, *not* the Global Education Office.
- ❑ Do you know where you'll be living abroad? If you haven't received notification of your housing placement, please contact the Global Education Office.
- ❑ Begin packing. See our tips that are contained in this packet regarding packing.
- ❑ Continue to research your host country! Purchase travel guides or tour books. Continue to read newspapers. A smart traveler is an informed traveler!

## **To do one day prior to departure:**

- ❑ Make sure you have all your paperwork in order: passport, student visa, Insurance card, plane tickets, travelers' checks, etc. **Make two copies of everything – leave one copy with your family and take one copy with you.**
- ❑ Review arrival procedures and on-site contact information. Leave a copy of your address, email address, the contact information for your study abroad advisor, and your on-site contact with your family. Put your emergency card in your wallet or purse.
- ❑ Confirm your flight reservations and pre-arrange a time to contact your family to let them know you've arrived safely.
- ❑ Arrange with your family when and how you will contact them upon arriving at the program site.
- ❑ Register with the US Consulate in your host country  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration\\_1186.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_1186.html)

## **PRE-DEPARTURE PAPERWORK**

**All forms must be completed and returned to the following address:**

**Global Education Office (GEO)  
Keene State College  
Elliot Hall, 3rd Floor  
229 Main Street  
Keene, NH 03435-2612  
Fax: 603-358-2469  
Email: exchange@keene.edu**

**We suggest that you keep copies of all paperwork you submit for your own records.  
You are required to submit the following to the GEO during the semester prior to  
departure.**

### **Emergency Contact Information Form**

This form contains address, email, and telephone information, as well as very important emergency contact information.

### **Release and Waiver of Liability, Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement Form**

This is a four-page form. Please read, complete, and sign on the last page.

### **Medical History Form for Off-Campus Study**

Complete the form accurately and sign it.

### **Copy of your Passport**

Photocopy the I.D. page of your passport and provide a copy to the GEO office. Don't forget to sign your passport.

### **Pre-Approval Course Substitution Form**

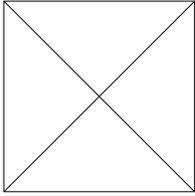
This may be the most important form you fill out! It must be completed if you want the courses you're taking abroad to substitute for one of your Elective, General Education/Integrative Studies, Major or Minor course requirements at KSC. Once abroad, you **MUST** notify the Global Education Office of changes, and get professor approval or else the courses you take may not count towards your requirements. Without approval, "Major" or "Minor" courses would count as electives.

### **Flight Information Form**

Complete with all your flight arrival information, and notify the office of any last minutes changes.

**NOTE:** Your host institution will be sending you paperwork directly or through the GEO. Fill out all necessary forms and return them to your host school promptly. Let us know if you have any questions.

## YOU MAY NOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT



## A VALID PASSPORT

All students who study abroad will need a valid passport. You can apply for a U.S. passport at select locations. The closest location to you is the Keene Post Office on Main Street. You can also download a copy of the application via the U.S. Passport Services Division's home page at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html) You may then file your application at the Keene City Post Office.

Allow yourself 10-12 weeks to obtain your passport. If you already have a passport, you are reminded to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for at least six months **after your planned return to the U.S.** Remember to keep copies of all documentation that you give the passport agency.

If you need your passport urgently, generally in less than two weeks, you may contact the Boston Passport Agency:

Boston Passport Agency  
Thomas P. O'Neill Federal Building  
10 Causeway Street, Suite 247  
Boston, MA 02222

Hours: 9:00 – 4:00 p.m. local time, M-F, excluding Federal Holidays  
Automated Appointment Number: (617) 878-0900

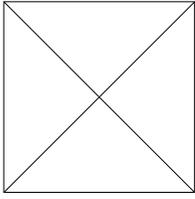
The Boston Passport Agency serves customers who are traveling within two weeks (14 days), or who need foreign visas for travel. You must call in advance for assistance.

### **PASSPORT SECURITY:**

Your passport is your key to travel into other countries, as well as to return to the U.S., and without it you will not be allowed to travel. Students should always carry or store their passport in a secure place, and be very leery of any vendors who might want to hold or examine the passport.

Before leaving to go abroad, it's important to make copies of your passport to take with you. One copy should be kept separate from your passport in case the original is lost or stolen. You should leave one copy with your family. It's also a good idea to bring extra passport photos with you for other student identification cards, or in the event that you should need to replace the passport.

If your passport is lost or stolen, you should report this information to your designated contact person at your host institution. They will be able to assist you in making a police report and contacting the nearest U.S. embassy, or consulate, to start the process of replacing the missing passport.



## **A STUDENT VISA FROM YOUR HOST COUNTRY (or required entry documents)**

### **Student Visas**

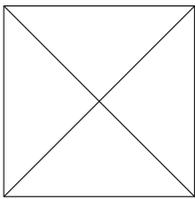
Most students will also need a student visa for the country in which they will be studying. A student visa is a special document from the government of your host country that provides the student with the proper authorization to live and study in that country for a specific amount of time. In most cases, a student visa does not authorize you to work while abroad. If you think you might want to work abroad, find out from the embassy if it is possible to work. In some cases, you can apply for an extra work visa.

A visa application can take an average of 2-5 weeks to process. The visa regulations of each country vary greatly, and it is important that you familiarize yourself with the visa requirements of your host country. Check the Internet for information regarding your host country's visa application process. A number of nations required you to apply for a student visa in person with the embassy or consulate nearest to your place of permanent residence. You may need to make an appointment to be interviewed or arrive early to the consulate if interviews can not be scheduled. Please note that you may need to send your passport with your application and you may not get it back until after the paperwork has been processed. Therefore, if you are planning to travel outside the country during this time, you will need to plan the timing of your application carefully.

### **Entry Requirements**

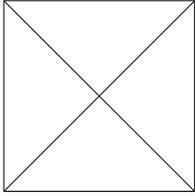
Some countries require that students submit certain documents (entry requirements) to immigration officials upon arrival while other countries require a student visa. These documents are similar to those required for student visa applications. If you fail to submit these documents, you might not be permitted to enter the country. Call your host country embassy or consulate NOW for information on entry requirements and/or a student visa application.

*Remember to keep copies of your passport and all documents that you give the consulate.*



## **INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE**

Students traveling on approved KSC international programs will have insurance coverage that provides for health insurance and medical evacuation insurance and evacuation assistance. Details of this coverage are available in the insurance brochure included in the orientation packet. This coverage will only be valid outside the U.S. and during the official program dates. Students who intend to depart early or extend their stay beyond the official program dates are strongly advised to obtain their own insurance coverage for this extended period of travel. In addition, we also advise that students continue to carry coverage that will provide insurance inside the U.S. in case you are forced to return home for continued care in an emergency.



## AIRLINE TICKETS

The Global Education Office recommends that you price compare. You may use any travel agency you wish. There are a few travel organizations which are geared toward student travelers and tend to be a bit cheaper.

**STA Travel**  
**1-800-329-9537**

<http://www.sta-travel.com>

**Travel Cuts**  
**1-800-592-CUTS**

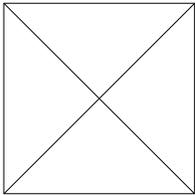
<http://www.travelcuts.com>

**Student Universe**  
**1-800-272-9676**

<http://www.studentuniverse.com>

When purchasing an airline ticket you may wish to ask if you are able to change the dates of travel after purchasing the ticket. This way if you want to stay longer or shorter in your host country, this is a possibility.

Once you have secured your reservations, please don't forget to complete the **Flight Information Form**, and return it to the Global Education Office.



## PAYING YOUR BILLS

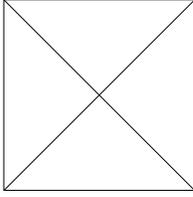
An invoice indicating the remaining balance of the program will be sent to your billing address by the KSC Bursar's Office. You are required to pay the balance of your program fee 30 days prior to departure. Non-settlement may result in your inability to register for courses, transcript holds, or your elimination from the program.

Checks should be made payable to "Keene State College," and all checks should include your name, and KSC ID (or social security number) to ensure the proper credit to your account. Checks should be sent (or taken) to the Bursar's Office to ensure immediate credit to your account.

Billing for fall and summer programs generally begins in July. Billing for spring semester programs is in November. If you do not receive an invoice or have any questions regarding payment of the program fee, you should contact the Global Education Office directly at 603-358-2348.

### FINANCIAL AID

Students who are studying abroad and receiving any type of financial aid should meet with the Student Financial Services office to discuss financial aid applicability for study abroad. The phone number for this office is 800-572-1909 or 603-358-2280.



## **SPENDING MONEY**

Traveling abroad can be expensive, but the key to keeping your costs down is to make a budget and stick to it. You should familiarize yourself with your program and what it includes and then develop a budget so that you'll have a better idea of what financial resources you'll require.

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### **How to carry your money:**

**Cash:** We suggest that you carry a small amount of foreign currency (equivalent to \$100-200) with you to use for immediate necessities such as bus and taxi fare, phone calls, tips, etc. once you arrive in your host country. You may convert money at the airport before departure or upon your arrival abroad.

**Travelers' Checks:** As the popularity of ATM machines is spreading, fewer banks and stores are accepting Travelers' Checks. The advantage of Travelers' Checks is if they are lost or stolen, they are easily replaced. They can also be purchased in U.S. dollars or local currency. Contact your bank or American Express for information on purchasing travelers' checks.

**Credit Cards:** Most major U.S. credit cards can be used worldwide. Many permit you to obtain cash advances at their abroad offices. Make sure that the credit card you carry is in your name and that the necessary PIN codes for cash advances have been activated. Check out the possibilities with your credit card company. Inform your credit card company that you will be traveling internationally so they do not close your account for suspicious international activity.

**Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs):** ATMs are becoming more and more accessible abroad for credit card cash advances. You should check with your credit card company/bank for details on withdrawing cash from abroad before using your ATM card. There will usually be a charge of \$5 or more each time an ATM card is used abroad.

**Joint Accounts:** You may want to open a joint checking/savings account with a parent/guardian before you go abroad. If the account has an ATM card on a major network, you'll be able to access the account abroad while your parent/guardian can access the account from home. This way, it will be easy to have funds deposited in the account while you're away. Also, checks can be written in the U.S., which is helpful in keeping up with monthly bills while you're abroad. Joint accounts are an easy way to effectively manage and access your money abroad, while avoiding the need to bring one lump sum of money.

**Local Bank Accounts:** In some countries, students may be able to open a bank account locally. Please take note, however that banks abroad are not on the same schedule as typical U.S. banks. Often they will close during the mid-day lunch hour, or close for the day in the early afternoon, and/or will NOT be open on weekends.

### **How NOT to carry your money:**

**Personal Checks, Cashier's Checks and Money Orders:** These are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to cash abroad. Do not carry money in this way.

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#### **Spending Money Abroad**

It takes time and money to send cash abroad. U.S. banks will mail drafts in U.S. or foreign currency for you, cashable at specific banks at a specific location for a service charge of \$5 or more. Major travelers' check companies will also transfer sums, but they take several days and have a minimum \$15 service charge. Having your money cabled through Western Union can be even more expensive.

#### **In Case of Emergency**

If you find yourself stranded abroad with no money at all, contact the U.S. embassy or consulate for suggestions, but not money. The embassy personnel are officially prohibited from furnishing cash or

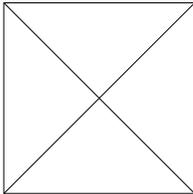
loaning money. However, they can suggest possible sources for financial assistance and they can call someone back home to send money, deducting the cost of the cable or call when your cash arrives.

### **How To Exchange Money**

The key to successful money exchange is advance planning. Try to anticipate how much money you'll need for a particular country. It's costly to convert currency because each transaction carries a service charge. Students may find that many countries use coins more often than paper currency; therefore, you may want to invest in a change wallet to carry the abundance of coins. You can exchange money at exchange houses, banks, travelers' check companies, airports, railroad stations, large hotels, some tourist information centers, and travel agencies. Banks usually offer the best rates, but take note of any minimum amount requirements when exchanging money at a bank. Avoid changing money at tourist shops or restaurants – they usually offer the worst exchange rates. *NOTE: Your passport will be required as identification every time you exchange money.* Always ask what the commission or fee charges are before you change money.

### **Exchange Rates**

Fluctuation is the key word in currency exchange rates today; so make sure your information is current! There are a variety of on-line currency exchange sites that you can consult as necessary. *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* carries a daily list of exchange rates to check out before you leave. The *International Herald Tribune* and other newspapers abroad will also publish exchange rates. Once abroad, shop around at local banks and exchange counters for the best exchange rates. You may even want to have a small calculator on hand to make converting easier.



## **PACKING**

Plan your wardrobe carefully so that you take as few clothes as possible. Remember that you will almost always be carrying your own bags. Most airlines allow you two pieces of checked luggage *call your airline for specific details on weight and size restrictions!* You may also have a small carry-on piece that can fit under your seat. Most students recommend taking a backpack or small duffel bag for this purpose, which will be useful later on. It's also recommended that you carry a toothbrush and a change of clothing in your carry-on bag should your luggage become lost. If you should have a lock for your luggage, it is recommended that you do not place it on your baggage. Due to recent airline restrictions, if your bag is to be randomly selected for a search, the lock will be broken and will not be replaced. *Put your address on a luggage tag both outside and INSIDE your suitcase in case your bag is lost or broken!*

### **GOLDEN RULES OF PACKING:**

**Lay out everything you think you'll need, eliminate half and take more money!**

### **Do's and Don'ts OF PACKING**

**DON'T pack anything you can buy in your host country** (e.g. toiletries, school supplies.) Just bring enough toiletries to last for the first few days.

**DON'T pack as many clothes as you can jam into your suitcase.** Laundry is generally very expensive to do overseas. You'll also want to save room in your suitcase for clothes and souvenirs that you buy abroad.

**DO pack versatile, sturdy, easily interchangeable clothes.** Bring some clothing that you know is going to last through some heavy use. Dark colors are better than whites. Comfortable walking shoes are a MUST! Do pack some nice clothes for when you want to go to the theater, a concert, or a nice dinner. Comfortable clothing should be sensitive towards local customs.

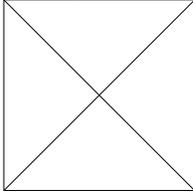
**DO pack clothing that is appropriate for that country's climate.** Find out the traditional weather patterns in the country or regions that you are going to be living. You can check out the weather on the web at: <http://www.weather.com>

**DO pack necessary medications and prescriptions.** Bring a copy of your prescriptions with generic and brand names of the drug. If any medications contain narcotics, carry a doctor's letter attesting to your need

to take it. You may want to bring antacid or anti-diarrhea medication for upset stomach and traveler's diarrhea.

**DO pack a little of yourself.** You will want to share with your host family and/or new friends what your hometown and country are like.

**Additional Packing Suggestions:** **This Study Abroad Handbook**, CDs, sturdy walking shoes/hiking boots, journal & address book, laptop with travel insurance, travel security pouch, battery operated travel alarm, adapters-currency and plug converters, small flashlight, camera, film, and if you are staying in with a host family, you may want to bring gifts for them of an item that they would not be able to buy in their country.



## **RESEARCHING YOUR HOST COUNTRY**

It's extremely important to familiarize yourself with the culture, history and current political situation of the country you will be visiting. Complete the questionnaire below prior to departure and invest in a good guidebook, which provides useful historical background, photos and information on current events and local culture. Watch the international news, purchase an international newspaper, and check the Internet for the local newspaper of your host country on-line. Also, try to be an informed citizen capable of discussing current events in the U.S. with your counterparts abroad who will see you as a primary source of information about what is going on in the United States. Just for fun: can you answer the questions below about the U.S.?

*Before you depart, answer these questions about your host country. Being well informed is crucial!*

### **HOST CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### ***HISTORY***

Give a broad outline of the country's history (major eras and events).  
Name the national heroes and heroines. (Explain why they are considered heroes/heroines).  
What is the history of the country's relationship with the United States?  
What are the national holidays? Can you, as a foreigner, participate?

#### ***POLITICS***

What is the current political structure of the country?  
Who are the major current leaders? What are the major political parties?  
Is military service compulsory? (If so, for whom and for how long?)

#### ***RELIGION***

What are the country's dominant religions? Is there an official state religion?  
What are the important religious ceremonies, observances, holidays?  
Are there religious conflicts in this country? (How do members of the dominant religion feel about the others?)

#### ***FEMALE/MALE RELATIONSHIPS***

Are there separate societal roles for men and women? If not, are men and women considered equal in this country? What are their rules/norms for "romantic" relationships in this country? Do young people date? If so, do they date in groups, in couples? Are such relationships formal or informal? Is dating allowed (can unmarried women and men have a 'romantic' relationship)? What is the norm regarding premarital sex? Is it OK to hold hands, touch, and kiss in public? What are the rules/norms for female/male relationships? In what type of social activities do young women and men participate?

#### ***FAMILY***

What is the common form of marriage ceremony and celebration? What are the attitudes towards divorce? Family planning? Contraception? Abortion? What is seen as the ideal family size? Is the typical family nuclear or extended?

What is the legal age for voting, marriage? Driving a car? Are there differences for men and women? When do children usually move out of their parents' home and establish their own households?

### ***SOCIAL ETIQUETTE***

What are the special privileges of age or sex?

When is one expected to present or accept gifts? What kind of gifts?

How do people greet each other? Are there differences based on social status, age, or sex?

Is there traffic/driving/pedestrian etiquette?

### ***DRESS***

Is there a traditional or indigenous style of dress? If so, describe it. Who wears it and when?

What is appropriate dress for you as a foreigner?

Are there special dress customs you should know about? (i.e.: taking off your shoes in certain places?)

What types of clothing must you have for various occasions you might encounter?

### ***FOOD***

What foods are most popular? How are they prepared?

How do people eat? Manners?

Utensils? Customs?

Are there taboo foods that are not considered edible or that aren't permitted for religious reasons?

### ***LEISURE***

What are the favorite leisure activities of adults? For young people?

What are the popular sports? Is there a national sport?

How available are television and radio? What types of programming are available?

### ***HEALTH***

What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?

Are there common home remedies for minor ailments? What are the attitudes towards folk medicine?

Is the water drinkable?

Which immunizations are required to enter the country? Which are advisable?

Are there official rules regarding the use of health insurance?

### ***VALUES***

What is taboo in this country? What topics are taboo in conversation?

What type of moral code is followed? (Christian, Muslim, Confucian) How does this moral code influence attitudes towards drinking alcohol, drug taking, gambling, and pre-marital or extra-marital sex?

### ***EDUCATION***

Is education free? Compulsory to what age? Available to all?

In schools, do age, sex, race, caste, and class segregate children?

What kinds of schools are considered best--public, private, religious?

What style of teaching prevails in schools (rote learning; importance of exams; lectures...)?

Describe the university system. What is the school year calendar? What is the grading system like?

### ***DAILY LIFE***

Are the prices asked for merchandise fixed, or is one expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted?

Is it OK to touch merchandise for sale? Does touching indicate a desire to buy?

When does the normal workday begin and end? Is there a siesta (break) time?

What is the customary time to visit friends?

### ***ON BEING A FOREIGNER IN THIS COUNTRY***

How will your financial position/social status compare with the majority of people living in this country?

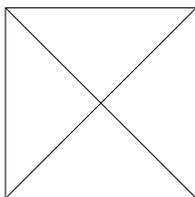
Do these people generally "like" Americans? Other foreigners?

How many Americans live in this country? Are major daily newspapers friendly towards the U.S.?

When you arrive, must you register with city officials? The police? The U.S. Embassy?  
What regulations apply to you as a foreigner? Will you need visas to travel to neighboring countries?  
What should you do if you find yourself in legal trouble?  
Are there special laws governing the activities of foreigners that you should know about?

## CHAPTER 2

# **Planning for a Safe and Healthy Trip Abroad**



### **HEALTH ISSUES**

#### **Schedule a check up with your Doctor and Dentist**

Remember that studying abroad can be stressful both physically and mentally. A healthy mind and body are essential for a successful study abroad experience. If you are experiencing physical or emotional problems, please address them before leaving the U.S. If you haven't been feeling well, make an appointment to see your doctor for a checkup. Have any dental work done before your departure. If you are experiencing emotional, eating, or substance abuse problems, consider deferring your participation in a study abroad program until you have the problem under control. The sorts of pressures that lead to eating disorders, emotional, and dependency problems are only intensified when you are coping with adjustments to a new culture, language, and way of life. Students are encouraged to have complete medical and dental exams prior to departure. For your safety and well-being, it is also vital that you inform us of any physical, emotional, psychological difficulties, or special needs that you have.

Students who have medical problems that are not easily recognized (such as diabetes, allergic reactions to antibiotics or bee stings, heart conditions, or epilepsy) should consider obtaining a medic alert ID tag. These are internationally recognized. Check with your doctor or local hospital for more information.

Some countries require certain immunizations not standard to a normal physical examination in the U.S. If you are unsure where you'll be traveling, check with your doctor and get some basic inoculations (i.e. tetanus) just in case. If you know that you'll be in Africa or in the tropics, you may need a typhoid shot or malaria tablets. Check with your doctor, the **Center for Disease Control International Hotline** (877-394-8747 or <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>), and/or the New Hampshire Department of Public Health, (603-271-4334 or <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us>) for specific health requirements regarding entrance into a particular country.

## **Obtain Copies of Your Prescriptions**

You should be sure to bring copies of prescriptions for medications including eyeglass prescriptions, allergy medicine, birth control pills, asthma medicine, or any other medication you may be taking. Since medications tend to be expensive abroad and it can be difficult to get the appropriate equivalent medication, we recommend that you bring an adequate supply of any prescription medications. Keep medications in their original containers and have the prescription with you in case a customs officer in your host country requests it. Medications should be in the original, properly labeled bottles. If you wear glasses or contact lens, take an extra pair in case you lose or damage your original pair. If you have not already had them removed, you should also get a thorough dental x-ray to make sure your wisdom teeth will not cause you any problems.

## **STDs and AIDS**

Some countries may require an AIDS test before allowing you to enter. Please check this with the embassy or consulate of your host country before you arrive at the airport because they will turn you away if you don't have the proper documentation.

If you require surgery abroad and need a blood transfusion, remember that not all countries require the same standards for screening HIV-antibodies in donated blood. Red Cross offices abroad and U.S. embassies and consulates have information on sources of safe blood.

If you choose to be sexually active abroad, please be careful. Be aware that not all countries sell condoms. Always use a latex condom, preferably treated with a potent spermicide. Women as well as men should bring their own supply of condoms and store them in a dry place away from heat.

## **Psychiatric and Counseling Services Abroad**

You should be aware that the availability and nature of psychiatric and counseling services varies widely at program sites and host institutions around the world. If you are currently receiving some type of psychiatric and/or counseling support and/or if you anticipate needing psychiatric and/or counseling support during your off campus academic experience, you should make sure that you understand clearly what is available at your host site.

Additionally, if you are going to be taking a prescription medication for a psychiatric and/or attention condition during your overseas experience, you should make sure that you either take enough for your entire stay and/or have a clear procedure for getting the needed prescription in a timely manner. It is also advisable that you inform your host program coordinator or director so they can provide better support for you during your overseas experience.

## **Disabilities and Accommodations**

If you have a physical disability and/or a diagnosed learning disability, you should be aware that the regulations and support regarding disabilities may be quite different than at the host program site due both to legal differences as well as educational norms. Especially if you would like to request accommodations of some type, it is important that you become familiar in advance with the program's and site's capacity and willingness to support you during your study away experience.

There are several resources where additional information can be obtained. Mobility International is a useful resource for students with physical disabilities (<http://www.miusa.org/exchange>). Please note that certain programs, such as the Lorenzo de Medici program, ask that notification of learning accommodations be made at the time of course scheduling. Students registered with the Keene State Office of Disability Services, if needed, can request a copy of their documentation to forward to the attending institution.

## **TRAVEL IN & AROUND YOUR HOST COUNTRY**

One of the most wonderful features of your semester will be the opportunity to travel widely and see parts of the world that you haven't seen before. Doing some background reading on the places you're traveling to will also allow you to appreciate the sights and culture better. The following suggestions will help you make the most of your trip:

### **Before you leave...**

- Plan ahead. Research transportation schedules before your trip begins to find the most affordable tickets. Always ask if there are discount student fares.
- Talk to people who have been where you want to go. Get advice from the locals once you arrive.
- Buy a map and learn your country's geography.
- Arrive at the airport 3 hours early for international flights to check-in.
- Bring toiletries on board to freshen up.
- Bring extra underwear, shirt, and socks in your carry-on in case your luggage is lost.
- Wear glasses instead of contacts, as contacts tend to dry out.
- Drink plenty of water, not alcohol. Flying can dehydrate a traveler.

### **While you are traveling...**

- Never hitchhike!
- Flexibility can make all the difference.
- Carry your money and passport in a security belt/pouch.
- Keep abreast of current political situations. Check the U.S. Department of State website for current travel advisories at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.
- Read the local paper if you can get it before you go and once you arrive. Read the *New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune* (available in the Mason Library) to find out what important issues face your host country. Learn something about its history and government and if you do not speak the language, learn some key phrases.
- Never leave your bags alone or accept bags/packages from anyone you do not know.
- Be wary of strangers. Keep an eye on your belongings.

### **Jet Lag...**

The symptoms of jet lag include overwhelming exhaustion that affects memory, concentration and performance, as well as physical symptoms such as headaches, sleeplessness, diarrhea, or constipation. Some general recommendations to help overcome jet lag include:

- **Prior to departure:** Eat lightly for a few days before you leave, reduce or eliminate coffee, tea, caffeine, soda and chocolate. Plan for a good night's sleep before you leave.

- During the flight: Eat little, drink lots of non-alcoholic liquids, relax and try to sleep. Stay hydrated.
- On arrival: Rest if you have to, eat light meals, but stay active and *go to bed when the locals do*. If you go to sleep upon arrival in your host country and it's the morning, you'll make it harder to adjust your "body clock" to the time in your host country.

### **Eating on the Road...**

Because sanitary conditions vary from country to country, not all of the following precautions are necessary everywhere. A few guidelines include:

- Don't eat dairy products unless they have been pasteurized and refrigerated.
- Don't eat "street" foods unless they smell fresh and are cooked in front of you.
- Don't eat raw seafood, shellfish, eggs, meat, or unpeeled vegetables.
- Drink bottled, carbonated liquids that have been opened in front of you. You can drink water that has been brought to a vigorous boil. If you are in a hepatitis zone, the water should be boiled for at least 20 minutes.
- Don't put ice in your boiled water or bottled drinks. Neither freezing nor alcohol kills microbes.

## **Budget Travel**

Traveling by rail and plane is usually simple in most of Europe, and several rail passes are available to students. There are also hundreds of youth hostels around the world where students can spend the night for less money than a hotel and can meet other travelers. Budget travel books are the best source of information on these:

Look for airlines and tickets with flexible dates when purchasing plane tickets: some airlines charge for changing your arrival/departure dates while other tickets you will not be able to change your dates once purchased. If you think you may want to stay longer/leave earlier, contact the airline to find out their policy.

*Let's Go* <http://www.letsgo.com>

*Lonely Planet* <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

*Rough Guides* <http://travel.roughguides.com>

Try these local bookstores for a selection of travel books:

### **Bookland**

45 Main Street  
Keene, NH 03431  
Tel: 603-352-5925

### **The Toadstool Bookshops**

Colony Mill Marketplace  
Keene, NH 03431  
Tel: 603-352-8815

### **Borders**

30 Ash Brook Road  
Keene, NH 03431  
Tel: 603-357-7667

The Internet is also an invaluable resource for investigating your host university and host country. The university website can give you the latest information regarding programs, schedules, and courses. An on-line investigation of your host country will also supply you with the information necessary to be a smart traveler, and will enhance your experience.

## SAFETY & RESPONSIBILITY

You will be entering a city and culture that may be foreign to you. Because of this, you may miss some of the danger signals that a local person would automatically take into consideration. You should realize also that in our shrinking world it is inevitable that many cultures exist within one country. For this reason, one must be aware of and sensitive to the dominant culture as well as to less-dominant cultures in the host country. Please read through the following information carefully and take it with you abroad. It is not meant to frighten you, but rather to inform you of issues about which you should be aware upon your arrival in your new setting.

### **General Safety in Public Places**

Many impressions that foreigners have of Americans come from what they see on television or in movies. For the most part, Americans are seen as wealthy, particularly in developing countries. In many locations you will be monetarily better off than the local population. Locals easily notice Americans. Americans dress differently, speak loudly in groups, and the American accent is unmistakable.

*By following the suggestions below you can minimize your exposure to unsafe situations:*

**Do not leave your bag or belongings unattended at any time.** Security staff in airports or train stations are instructed to remove or destroy unattended luggage. Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone.

**When you travel, use a security pouch to carry your passport, credit cards and travelers' checks.**

Wear the pouch under your clothes. Keep a separate record of your traveler's checks and a photocopy of your passport in another part of your belongings so that you will have a record if the traveler's checks, or your passport, are lost or stolen.

**Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible.** Downplay those elements of your appearance and manner that broadcast that you are American. Observe and mimic the behavior and dress of local people of your own age.

**Try speaking the local language in public, even with other Americans.** Even with a heavy accent you will not attract as much attention, particularly if you take a cue from the locals and speak at their volume.

**Use the buddy system or travel in small groups.** This is wise, especially during the first few weeks of your stay. Walking with someone else helps to deflect approaches from would-be harassers. Try not to travel in large packs, but in small groups of 2-4 people.

**Be careful how late you come home at night.** Try to make it home while public transportation is still running, or plan to take a taxi. If you visit friends alone in the evening, ask them to escort you to the nearest metro station, or even to escort you home if you are concerned. Be extremely cautious about whom you accept rides from.

**Locate the nearest American embassy/consulate.** Also locate the police station, fire alarm box, hospital emergency room and know emergency procedures.

**Be aware of your surroundings.** If you want to visit a new neighborhood, try to go during the day first. Look at a map before you leave and note the nearest metro stops and the bus/trolley routes. Walk at your own pace, but look alert and purposeful. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, try to act like you know what you're doing and where you're going, and move to a place where you're comfortable.

**Be wary of people who seem overly friendly or overly interested in you.** Be cautious when you meet new people and do not give out your address and phone number. Be careful sharing information about other students or group events. Be alert to anyone who appears to be following you or to unusual activity surrounding your place of residence or classroom. Report immediately unusual, suspicious people, or activities to your on-site contact and/or authorities.

**Be careful to observe traffic lights.** Stay on sidewalks away from the curb and walk facing oncoming traffic whenever possible. Drivers in large cities are especially aggressive and often erratic. NEVER assume a car will stop for you or steer out of your way. For those situations in countries where drivers drive on the left-hand side of the road, you will need to make an extra effort to look in the right direction (which is to the left) before crossing the street. We do not recommend that students drive while they are abroad.

### **Registration with Local Police or Embassies**

In most countries, you will be required to register with the local police station upon arrival. The on-site contact will inform you of the local requirements. Also when traveling, you should notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate once you arrive at your destination. The embassy or consulate will provide you with information such as new travel advisories and lists of English-speaking doctors in the area. You should also register online via: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>.

### **Local Transportation and Travel**

Most students will be using public transportation on a regular basis. You may see other passengers who don't appear to be paying for buses or other public transportation. Be careful not to copy them. Many of them have passes that they show only when asked for by an inspector. If you are caught without a bus ticket or pass, you may be pulled off the bus or tram and taken to the police station. Consider buying a monthly pass if you will take the bus or subway everyday. In the long run, it is much cheaper than fines, which can be 50 times the cost of the ticket. Students should save their subway ticket, in many cases the ticket is needed to exit the station. If someone leaves a package unattended on a seat near you in any crowded public place such as the airport, train station, or subway, or other public transportation, notify the driver and get away from it as quickly as possible.

### **Keep people informed of your travel plans**

Before you travel out of your host community, even for a weekend, inform your family at home AND the on-site coordinator of your travel plans. Tell them where you will go, how you will get there, and when you will be back. Include contact information for your hotel/hostel. Inform your family and the on-site coordinator of your cell-phone number. **This information is vital for your family and the study abroad program in reaching you in case of emergency.**

### **Be cautious with money and other valuables**

It is *strongly* suggested that students bring a security belt that can be worn around the neck or waist, concealed under your clothes. Big cities, in the U.S. and elsewhere, can pose problems for the unwary.

Keep your cash and other valuables in a secure place.

Do not take expensive jewelry or things that cannot be replaced. Students have lost jewelry in hostels and dorm rooms- some while wearing it and sleeping. Leave your valuables at home!!

Avoid putting things in the back pocket of your pants or backpack. This is an easy target for pickpockets and, contrary to what you might think, you will not feel the thief picking your pocket or rummaging through your backpack. Wear your backpack in front of you in crowded places. Consider putting a rubber band around your wallet as this will help you feel someone taking it if you are being pickpocketed.

Do not handle or display large quantities of money on the street. Take only as much money with you as you need for the day or night.

Always keep your eye and your hands on your purse, bag or wallet, especially in crowded public areas, such as public transportation, crowded sidewalks, markets, and metro stations.

Be particularly cautious with your things in areas where there have been numerous reports of pick pocketing and purse snatching. Be aware that thieves on mopeds snatch purses, so have your bag face away from the street.

If you suddenly feel yourself being “crowded” in a market, move away from the crowd. Thieves have been known to slice open purses or backpacks with a razor. Be cautious and prudent, just as you would in any big city.

Your housing facility may have a safe available to you. If you are going to be away for a day or more, consider storing your valuables (money, laptop etc) in this safe rather than in your room while you are away. Also, find out if your parents’ homeowners insurance will cover your laptop in case it’s lost or stolen while you’re abroad. Consider property insurance for your computer.

## ADDITIONAL SAFETY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

### **In Times of Political Conflict**

Keep in touch with the current political situations by listening daily to the television or radio or reading the newspaper. The U.S. Department of State lists current travel advisories for all countries at <http://www.travel.state.gov> . In the event of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media. In case of an emergency, remain in contact with the on-site staff or the U.S. embassy/consulate nearest you.

When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, do your best to avoid potential target areas for terrorist activities, especially places frequented by U.S. travelers such as bars, discos, U.S. fast-food restaurants, branches of American banks, American churches, and American consulates or embassies under threat.

Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the U.S. and its allies. Always consult with the on-site contact before traveling to neighboring cities or popular tourist destinations.

Keep away from political demonstrations, which can easily result in clashes between demonstrators and authorities, particularly those aligned with the U.S. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Walk the other way. Go home and watch it on the news.

Do not agree to newspaper or other media interviews regarding political conflicts or controversial issues. It is important to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Do not make reference to your group. If the media approaches you, simply decline to talk and walk away.

### **Alcohol and Drugs**

While abroad, you are not only subject to the standards and policies of Keene State College, but also to the local laws and sanctions of the country in which you are staying. In many countries, the punishment for possession and/or distribution of controlled substances and for driving while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances is much more severe than in the United States. Even in locations where local citizens tolerate substance abuse, study abroad students who are apprehended are dealt with much more severely than locals. Once you leave the U.S., you are not covered or protected by our laws and you do not have the same constitutional rights. ***Be aware! If you are arrested for a crime abroad, there is little that Keene State College or the local U.S. consular authorities can do to intercede on your behalf.***

Avoid consuming large quantities of alcohol (particularly with people you do not know) in public places, cafes, bars or at parties. You should be careful in public places where alcohol is consumed and be constantly aware that you are in another country with another set of social customs. It is better to err on the side of caution. If you consume alcohol, remember that your ability to make sound decisions is impaired and, therefore, you may be putting yourself in danger.

## **Relationships**

Entering into a personal relationship abroad should be approached with the same precautions as at home. It can be very tempting to be charmed by the idea of a once-in-lifetime foreign romance, but you should consider a relationship very carefully, particularly when you are abroad. There are different cultural values and rules regarding dating and relationships. Proceed cautiously, realizing that you are only in the country for a short time. Evaluate your reasons for entering the relationship and those of the other person.

Be aware that in any type of relationship, you could end up with a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS or pregnancy. Be sure that you know the person very well before developing a more intimate interaction, and always demand that you both practice safe sex. Some countries do not admit that they have an AIDS epidemic; assume that AIDS is everywhere. No matter what your current commitments or plans are, take condoms if you are sexually active.

## **Avoiding Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assaults**

### **Both men and women should read this section.**

It is important that men understand and be sensitive to the problems women in the group may face. Also, men from the U.S. have been victims of sexual assaults while abroad.

### **Some Tips to Remember**

Be aware of how you carry yourself and how you dress. Even things as seemingly insignificant as smiling or your stride will mark you as a foreigner. Clothing also makes a dramatic statement. For example: in some countries accepted American female dress could be viewed as that of a prostitute. Avoid looking like a stereotypical American and this will help to deflect some potential harassers.

Try to avoid making eye contact with men in public places. In many parts of the world, meeting a man's gaze is widely viewed as sexually provocative, and you may be followed, verbally harassed, or touched as a result. An effective way to avoid stares while on the subway or bus is to read.

Usually the best response to unwanted stares, comments, or touches is to ignore the harassers and to remove yourself from the situation quickly and calmly. Although verbal responses often work, cursing your harassers in the local language or English may result in your being assaulted. Avoidance is the safest tactic.

If you continue to be followed, spoken to, or touched after repeated attempts to get away, try to remove yourself to a very public place. Tell your harasser firmly and calmly to leave you alone. Threatening to call the police is sometimes effective, but other times the police are less than supportive.

Do not judge the appearance of your local friends by American standards. You may be inclined to trust someone because he or she is nicely dressed, well-groomed, self-confident, and outgoing. Sometimes, however, the most fashionable people are the most skilled con artists.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

We obviously don't like to think about some of the hazards that come along with study abroad, and while the actual incidents of any of the following emergencies are rare, it is important to be armed with the necessary information to help you make sound decisions during a difficult situation. In your Orientation folder you will find a card with emergency numbers, which you should place in your wallet. In addition, you will be asked to give your weekend or holiday travel itinerary to on-site staff a week before you travel. You should also give them your cell phone number if you have one while abroad. For any issue needing immediate assistance, contact the international student coordinator at your host institution or program.

### **Different types of emergencies require different procedures**

1. **Injury, harm, illness, etc...** If you find yourself with a sprained ankle or have the common cold, you should go to the campus health facilities at your host location. If it's something more of an

emergency you should go to the closest hospital emergency room and get there as soon as you can. You will want to keep the number of your insurance card handy at all times. Many insurance companies should be made aware if you need medical assistance while abroad. If you're traveling, you should familiarize yourself with the city you're in and locate the nearest hospital.

2. **Passport Issues...** At least one student per semester either loses his or her passport or has it stolen while abroad. As discussed earlier, you should leave photocopies of your passport with a family member and the Global Education Office, and keep one for yourself that is separate from your actual passport. It's much easier to have another passport issued with a copy of the original. If you need another passport issued, the U.S. embassy or consulate in your host country will be able to help you with that process.
3. **Lost or stolen travelers' checks and other stolen items...** If you have anything stolen you should report it to the local police. If you have travelers' checks you should keep a photocopy of the serial numbers separate from the actual checks. Cash is never recoverable if it's lost or stolen. We recommend that you have your personal items insured before you leave in the event of loss or theft.
4. **Political Emergency or Natural Disaster...** In case of a political emergency or natural disaster, students are required to contact the host university exchange coordinator and contact GEO as soon as you are able. Should an emergency occur at another location to which you have traveled, you should get in touch with on-site staff and contact the GEO immediately so that they may provide assistance to the best of their ability.
5. **Other emergencies...** We obviously cannot predict all the possible emergency situations that may happen during study abroad. In the case of any other emergency, please contact our office at the following numbers:

**REGULAR HOURS:** Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm

Global Education Office

**Phone:** 603-358-2348

**Fax:** 603-358-2469

**NIGHT/WEEKEND HOURS:**

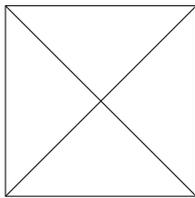
In the event that a situation arises during the hours when the GEO is not open, please call Campus Safety, who will be able to contact the necessary school official. If your crisis is more emotional in nature, you may also contact the Student Counseling Center.

**Campus Safety - 603-358-2228**

**Counseling Center - 603-358-2437**

## CHAPTER 3

# Cultural Adjustment



## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The decision to study abroad is one of the most important choices that you will make, particularly in your college career. It is worth your while to take some time before leaving to investigate the cross-cultural experience and adjustment that you are likely to encounter and to re-evaluate your academic, personal and professional goals for the program.

Having good geographical, cultural, societal and economic knowledge that you take with you will make the transition to living in a different country quite a bit easier. You should read news papers from your host countries online or at our college library which maintains subscriptions to several foreign newspapers, which will give you a different perspective on the news in the country you will visit, and on the U.S. Reading a foreign newspaper, or snooping around online will also help you improve your language skills. The more prepared you are for the trip, the more able you will be to assimilate new experiences into a framework of understanding, optimize your learning experiences, achieve a deeper sensitivity to the new country and minimize the effects of culture shock.

### WHAT IS “CULTURE SHOCK”?

"Culture shock" is the name given to a feeling of disorientation, loneliness, insecurity, or confusion that often occurs when a person leaves a familiar place and moves for a period of time into a culture that is different from his or her own. Culture shock does not only occur after prolonged interpersonal contact with people who are culturally different. For some, the absence of familiar foods or the need to become accustomed to different sleeping habits can be enough to cause culture shock.

Culture shock can cause intense discomfort and is often accompanied by hyperirritability, bitterness, resentment, homesickness, and even depression. In some cases, distinct physical symptoms occur. Following is a list of some of the symptoms of culture shock:

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal/isolationism
- Need for excessive amounts of sleep
- Compulsive eating
- Irritability
- Chauvinistic tendencies
- Stereotyping of host nationals
- Hostility toward host nationals

For some people, culture shock is brief and hardly noticeable. For many of us, however, culture shock is something that we have to deal with over several weeks or possibly months. In a sense, culture shock is a hazard of living abroad that a person risks going through in order to appreciate the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth. Everybody experiences culture shock to some degree, and it is usually at its worst during the beginning of the trip. Students also should know that it will not last forever. You will get used to your new surroundings.

#### How to Adapt to a New Culture:

- 1. Do not travel with misconceptions or stereotypes: be flexible!** Be prepared to find everything quite different from what you expected. Do not have rigid preconceptions of what you will find. Remember that you are the stranger and the burden of adaptation is on you.
- 2. Your total experience will depend on you and what you make of your time abroad.** Begin to look consciously for reasons behind anything in the host culture that seems strange to you.
- 3. Know the host country.** Learn as much as possible about where you are planning to go

**4. Go abroad informed about America.** Be prepared to answer questions about American society and life in general.

**5. Be prepared for a different family life.** Often more traditional habits and courtesies are generally observed. More is practiced in the way of politeness like shaking hands, never walking into a room without greeting everyone, bringing flowers for someone's birthday, etc.

**6. Culture shock is not necessarily an entirely bad thing.** Experiencing culture shock can mean that you are being open to new experiences and that you are recognizing cultural differences. Experiencing culture shock can be an opportunity to reflect on yourself and your surroundings, ask questions, and smooth the process of cultural adjustment.

**Above all, have faith in yourself, in the good will of your hosts and in the positive outcome of the experience.** Abroad success requires adjusting to the differences between your own culture and a host culture, successfully performing your tasks in the new culture and establishing intercultural interaction. Adjusting to such a different situation requires a receptive, uncritical attitude, sensibility, curiosity, inventiveness and originality.

### **Language Acquisition**

Sometimes the most difficult part of being abroad is the frustration you may experience trying to communicate in another language. No longer able to communicate easily on an adult level, your efforts to convey simple requests, not to mention complete ideas, may leave you mentally and physically drained. Don't give up trying to learn the local language. This initial period of vexation will give way to feelings of pride and accomplishment as you begin to make progress in the language.

### **Stereotypes**

When you travel abroad keep in mind that people who do not know many Americans personally may tend to judge the Americans they meet casually by a stereotyped standard "*All Americans are wealthy.... always in a hurry.... ignorant of other countries.... loud... etc.*" Many of these stereotypes come from U.S. television and movies that are available worldwide. When you recognize that you are being judged by an inaccurate stereotype, try to avoid becoming angry or defensive. Just be yourself and hope that your behavior may positively change other people's judgment of you and of other Americans they meet. Remember that stereotypes work both ways – you, most likely, have prejudgments of other nationalities. Try to remain open to the likelihood that these views are *also* inaccurate.

### **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

Institutional recognition and cultural norms regarding sexual orientation and gender identity - including homosexuality, bi-sexuality, lesbianism, transgender and transsexual - can and do vary around the world. It is a good idea for all students to be aware of these differences. GLBT students and other interested students should research and learn about the legal regulations as well as the receptivity and social climate of the host country. While the study abroad office and university in the U.S. may be inclusive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered perspectives, the host program in-country staff and faculty may represent another office and culture with a different climate. Depending on this climate, you may need to look outside of the office for support related to sexual identity issues or LGBT community information. A good website that has general information and provides country specific resources is <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>.

### **Using a Journal to Combat Culture Shock**

Your study abroad experience will give you the opportunity to re-evaluate the way you view yourself and others. All of us have preconceived ideas or beliefs that will come into question while abroad, and you should try to keep an open mind. Being in a new environment and culture will present challenges of many kinds and how you deal with these challenges will ultimately help shape the person you become. Take advantage of this tremendous “growth” experience and **keep a journal** (before, during, and after your trip) that records your impressions of new experiences and the transformations that are occurring.

## Suggestions for Keeping a Journal

(Excerpted from “Writing Across Culture” by Kenneth Wagner & Tony Magistrale, Peter Lang, 1995)

- Record observations of daily life.
- Speculate about connections between what you study in the classroom and what you experience outside of school.
- Respond to what you study in class and what you read.
- Interview natives of the local culture about their values.
- Reflect on ethnocentric moments.
- Reflect on times when you break social norms.

## Writing and Language Acquisition

For those students who must make a linguistic adjustment to their new country, the learning of a language will be the most important step they take toward cultural assimilation. Writing in the language of your new culture is a powerful antidote to culture shock because it expands your ability to use the language as a tool for cultural inquiry and understanding. The more opportunities you give yourself to practice this new language – speaking, reading, and writing it – the more proficient you will become in using it.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS FOR CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

*The Whole World Guide to Cultural Learning*, J. Daniel Hess. (Intercultural Press, Inc., 1994)

*Breaking the Language Barrier*, Douglas Brown. (Intercultural Press, Inc., 1999)

*The Art of Crossing Cultures*, Craig Storti. (Intercultural Press., 1990)

*Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad*, L. Robert Kohls. Intercultural Pr; 3rd edition (June 1996)

*An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*, Fred E. Jandt. (Sage Publications, Inc; Fifth Edition edition., 2006)

## INTERNATIONAL CAREERS

Upon completion of a study abroad program, many students speak of their desire to return to their host country to work, volunteer or travel after graduation. Here are some things students can do during their study abroad experience to explore career options and enhance their future prospects:

**Maintain a notebook of contacts.** Include the name, address, phone number, and email address of every interesting professional you meet.

**Contact alumni.** Meet them at their place of business or socially. Express your interest in staying on after your program of study ends, or your interest in returning after graduation.

**Informational Interviews.** Set up a time to meet for an informational interview at a local company. Learn about what they look for and what types of business operations they are involved in your host country.

**Look for schools that teach in English.** What qualifications do their teachers have?

If in a home stay, **talk with adults in the family about the local economy.** Take every opportunity to meet the family’s friends and extended family, to network.

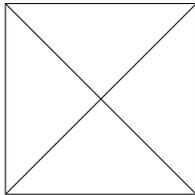
**Practice, practice, practice the local language.** If the language is English, learn the idioms, accent, vocabulary, etc. Speak with natives in all walks of life, constantly. Read the local and national papers and periodicals. When you encounter other Americans living locally, **introduce yourself.** Make note of where they are employed and how they obtained their positions.

**Pay attention to the cost of living,** as opposed to that of the United States. Figure out how much money you would need to live there.

Attend the annual **Reentry Conference** that takes place in Boston each fall. This conference is specifically designed for students who have just returned from study away programs

# CHAPTER 4

## **Academics**



## REGISTERING FOR CLASSES ABROAD

*Note: Registering for classes for your return semester at KSC will be covered in Chapter 5.*

Some of you have already registered for your classes as part of the application process. Others will not be able to register for your classes until you arrive at your host institution. However, most of you will have to look at, think about, and *select* courses from your host institution so that the courses can be pre-approved (using the blue Pre-Approval Course Substitution form) before you go abroad. Keep in mind that pre-approval is very important. In the case of General Education/Integrative Studies Requirements and Electives, pre-approval can be given by the Global Education Office. In the case of major and minor requirements, pre-approval needs to be given by the department head. Make sure to plan with your academic advisor the classes that you need to enroll in: keep on track! We strongly suggest that you have more classes pre-approved than you plan to take, so that in case when you arrive you have options if the course you were planning on attending is not available.

If you haven't already registered for your courses, you can find out your host institution's course offerings in two ways: visit the Global Education Office to look through course catalogs, or visit your host institution's website. If the website hasn't been updated to include the semester you need, keep this in mind: Courses at colleges and universities tend to repeat seasonally. Therefore, if you are studying abroad in the spring semester and that course list isn't available yet, it is far more reliable to look at the *previous* spring as a guide for what courses will be offered. Don't use the semester immediately preceding the one in which you'll be studying. Also, you must register for a full academic load.

It is imperative that before you leave you fill out the **Program Planning Sheet** (available on the Elliot Center Website <http://www.keene.edu/elliott> and via MyKSC). If you haven't already completed this form you should do so in conjunction with selecting your courses. You actually should have done this when you were working with the Global Education Office and/or your academic advisor in your initial course selection. This form is your blueprint or map of all your coursework. It enables you to see clearly what courses you've taken and what you still need to take. *Be aware of what you need to take and what you don't need to take!* Don't waste your courses abroad with those that are unnecessary and which may not count for credit when you arrive back at KSC. That's an expensive mistake.

Occasionally, you will find that a course you have received pre-approval for has been cancelled. You then need to find another to take its place. In this case, you must complete the **Pre-Approval Course Substitution** **AGAIN**, listing your replacement courses. Submit it to the Global Education Office AND to your academic advisor for approval. You have already been given a copy of this form during your interview. You can email the Global Education Office at [exchange@keene.edu](mailto:exchange@keene.edu) regarding this issue. Don't wait until you return from your study abroad experience to try to get approval for a course that you have substituted. If you do this, it's possible your credits won't transfer. Trust us; it's much easier to do while you're still at your host institution.

## GRADES

The grades reported for students' coursework abroad are based on the host institutions transcripts sent to the Global Education Office. The transcript from your host institution will contain the course title, grade and credits granted. When the Global Education Office receives your transcript, it is taken to the KSC Registrar's Office, along with your completed **Pre-Approval Course Substitution**, and the Registrar's Office attaches it to your Keene State transcript. Please note we will ask you to first complete your Post Exchange Evaluation before sending down your transcript to the registrars. The courses that you take abroad will not be listed individually on your Keene State transcript. Rather, your KSC transcript will read, "Approved Study Abroad," and the credits you received will be listed. Individual grades for the courses you took will not be on the *Keene State* transcript. Remember, your GPA does not change to reflect the grades you received while abroad. Your GPA remains unchanged; however, you will receive credit at Keene State College **IF** you receive credit at the host institution **AND** the course was pre-approved.

**Important Note:** Because the individual courses you take while abroad are not listed on your Keene State transcript it is vital that you keep a copy of the host institutions transcript for future reference should you decide to attend graduate school and you need to offer proof of courses taken.

### **Receiving Your Transcript from the Host Institution**

It can take anywhere from 10-12 weeks for the host institution to send your grades to the Global Education Office, sometimes longer. **Please be patient during this process. The Global Education Office can do little to rush the host institution. We will notify you as soon as we receive your transcript!**

## **ON-SITE ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

While abroad, all academic policies of Keene State College apply to your studies at your host program. You must follow the policies set forth by the host institution.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend each class session, tutorial, excursion, internship/practicum, and any other course-related event. Attendance and class participation will influence your grade for the course. If you have been absent from a course excessively, you may be required to withdraw from the course without credit or may receive a failing grade. If you expect to be absent from a class you must notify your instructor and the on-site contact in advance, preferably in writing.

### **Tardiness**

You are expected to be on time for all scheduled meetings and class sessions and should notify the appropriate person by phone or written message of circumstances that result in tardiness.

### **Language Policy**

In non-English speaking countries, students are expected to speak the language of the host country as much as possible. Speaking the host language will improve your proficiency as well as ease cultural adjustments and help you make the most of your program.

### **Coursework**

Students are required to turn in course assignments on time; turning in assignments late will have a negative effect on your grades. All academic commitments must be completed according to the academic schedule of the host institution. As mentioned in the section of this handbook on grades, you will receive credit at KSC for the courses that receive credit at the host institution.

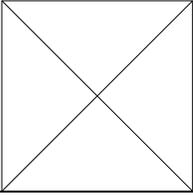
### **Computers**

Most host institutions have a computer facility that is accessible to study abroad participants. However, the facilities may not be as state-of-the-art or as readily available as computer facilities at US universities. Students must often pay for paper when using academic computer labs or photocopying machines abroad. If you have a laptop that you want to take abroad, keep in mind that you'll need an *adapter* for the power system as well as a *converter*. You can purchase both adapters and converters abroad, but they may be more expensive. You can research adapter and converter requirements for your host country through: <http://www.voltagevalet.com/country.html>. If you bring your computer it's also a good idea to consider property insurance. It can sometimes be difficult to travel through airports because of security concerns, and you should take this into consideration when deciding whether or not to bring your laptop.

### **Email/ MyKSC**

All students will have access to email facilities while they are abroad. Continue to check your ksc.mailcruiser.com account, because this is how the Global Education Office will contact you. You will be able to access MyKSC just as you normally do from Keene State. Make sure you know your user name and password and how to log on to MyKSC.

*Students are reminded that they are going abroad to experience life as a student in another country. Not all countries are as reliant on technology as the U.S. Students must be patient and open-minded with this, as with all cultural differences.*



## **STUDY TIPS FOR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS ABROAD**

Higher education systems vary around the world. Realize that these differences are part of the study abroad experience and you will be held accountable to those differences, including: grading, coursework, time schedules, etc. Read the following carefully and be sure to pay attention at all orientations to gain an understanding of the system/department where you are studying.

A few examples of the international teaching approach that you may encounter:

### **Large Lecture-Style Classes**

Many of your classes may be larger than you are used to. The lectures may be based on the text, with little direct interaction between you and the teacher in class. The purpose of your being in the lecture is to take detailed notes. You may not have the opportunity to ask questions of the professor.

### **Discussion Groups or Seminars**

In addition to large lectures, students may be divided into smaller groups for once a week discussion of course materials.

### **Emphasis On Detail As Well As “The Big Picture”**

In U.S. colleges and universities, general concepts are often emphasized over detailed information. Applying the concepts to your own experience or adding your own insights is often the way to academic success in the United States. In other countries, detailed knowledge of a topic area is often expected. This is why the reinforcements of hearing the lecture as well as reading the text are so important.

### **Comprehensive, Essay-type Examinations**

Exams are often cumulative and have a written emphasis. Being able to express the concepts and details covered in class thoroughly and thoughtfully in essay format is important for academic success.

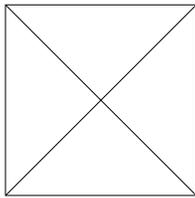
**NOTE: In some countries, your final grades may depend on whether or not you pass the final exam. If you do well in the rest of the course, but fail the final, you can still fail the course. Most foreign universities do not permit appeal of low or failing grades.**

### **Being Called On In Class May Happen - Be Prepared!**

Being prepared for class with homework assignments is expected. You may well be called upon to do a problem at the blackboard or discuss your understanding of concepts in front of the class. Be ready for this! If you find that you are having trouble keeping up in your classes, please speak with your professors or your on-site contact. They may be able to recommend extra practice or tutoring. If you find that you are frustrated by the educational differences, remember, part of the study abroad experience is to become immersed in a new culture. A large part of any culture is their educational system. Keep an open mind and work hard!

# CHAPTER 5

## Returning Home



### **REGISTERING FOR CLASSES AT KSC**

Just like being on campus, students are responsible for registering for classes for the next semester using their MyKSC accounts. You will be notified via email (MyKSC) of the date that you can log on and begin to register. If you are unable to register during this time period, you will be responsible for adding classes during the Add/Drop Period held during the first week of your semester back at KSC.

Again, many of you have a variety of email accounts that you use, but Keene State College and the Global Education Office will only be communicating with you via MyKSC; therefore, **it's important that you check this account regularly for important notices.**

**Registrar's Office: 603 358-2500**  
**[kscregistrar@keene.edu](mailto:kscregistrar@keene.edu)**

## HOUSING UPON YOUR RETURN

If you want to ensure that you will still have on-campus housing when you return, you must contact the Residential Life Office to complete a housing form before you leave for your semester away.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Once you have completed your study abroad experience, you **must** complete a program evaluation. These evaluations are extremely important for the Global Education Office for two reasons. First, the evaluations provide us with feedback on how to improve our programs. Second, the information you provide is invaluable for prospective program participants as they ready for departure.

## RE-ENTRY: RETURNING HOME

If you are reading this before you go abroad or during your first few weeks in your host country, the thought of returning back to the U.S. may be the furthest thing from your mind. And the idea that you may have difficulty readjusting to life in America after a semester abroad may seem laughable. But the truth is that a study abroad experience can change you in ways that are only recognizable when you return home. While abroad, you will learn to live and succeed in a different culture – speak another language, study in a different academic system, shop, eat, travel, and negotiate red tape in a new way. When you return to the U.S., you may need to re-learn how things are done here. And, as is frequently the case, you may need to deal with frustration when you discover that maybe, just maybe, you like the way things are done abroad better.

Your international study and travel experiences can help you become more mature, independent, and worldly than your peers who remained at home. You may be more interested in international events, travel, speaking languages, and meeting new people. You may even be more focused on your studies, in hopes of getting a job that will allow you to return abroad. You may be disappointed when friends and family do not share your interests, or when you find your lifestyle at home to be tamer with less travel and adventure than when you were abroad. In addition, you may have grown close with the other program participants, on-site advisors, and your new friends. You will have shared with them the joys and struggles of your semester abroad—and returning home means saying goodbye to them.

This process of re-adjustment to home after a time abroad is called “re-entry” or sometimes “reverse culture shock.” The symptoms are similar to those that you may have encountered when you first went abroad and experienced culture shock, including frustration, anger, disappointment, resentment, loneliness, and “homesickness” (for your host country).

You may find that people are not as interested in hearing your travel stories as you had hoped and would much rather talk about their own affairs. This may prompt feelings of irritation with others and impatience with your own inability to do things as well or as quickly as you had hoped.

Just as you overcame culture shock and learned to adjust to life abroad, you will also need to give yourself time to re-adjust to life at home. You will need to seek out others who share your new world outlook or have been through similar experiences. You will need to find ways to utilize your new maturity, independence, language, and cross-cultural skills. You will also need to be patient—with yourself, your friends, and your family—as you all adjust to your return.

You can begin preparing for re-entry before you come home. Answer the following questions for yourself:

- How can I help myself adjust to being home?
- How have I changed during my time abroad?
- What is the one idea or experience that I want to share with my friends?

- What is the one experience I want to share with my family?
- How can I help my friends and family understand the “new” me?
- What do I need to do in order to take care of myself during this new transition period?

Take heart—the shock of re-entry is usually not as dramatic as the shock of a first trip abroad. You will have the support of your fellow study abroad returnees, the Global Education Office, and the international students here at KSC—all of whom have been through culture shock, and many who have been through reentry.

The Global Education Office staff will be available to answer any questions, to help you plan for another trip abroad or an international career or to recommend ways to use your new skills.

<p><b>SPREADING THE WORD, SHARING THE EXCITEMENT, &amp; GETTING INVOLVED</b></p>
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Once you return home, you will undoubtedly want to share your excitement and enthusiasm with others. We find students to be so inspired by their study abroad experiences that their energy is contagious. Many students feel passionate about the changes they have undergone, the cultures they have been exposed to, and the talents and skills they have developed. It’s a natural progression to want to utilize this newfound knowledge and Keene State College has a variety of clubs, organizations, and programs through which the study abroad alumni can continue to develop, grow, and support international education.

**Global Ambassador Program:** Students who have studied away are invited to apply for the position of Global Ambassador through the Global Education Office. As a Global Ambassador, you will serve as an official representative of your exchange, and as a contact person for future study away participants. Though very rewarding, this is not time consuming. Other duties may include participation in student orientations, information sessions, or helping to prepare written articles for publication. Whatever your skill, we can use you! It looks great on your resume too! Contact the Global Education Office for details on becoming a Global Ambassador.

**International Friends Club:** The purpose of this organization is to welcome international students to the Keene State College campus, help them adjust to the American atmosphere, and maintain a positive experience with the campus community. International Friends also introduces students to the idea of studying abroad and experiencing different cultures from around the world. Contact the Global Education Office for more information.

**Common Ground:** The Common Ground Multicultural Club is a group on the Keene State College campus who are committed to planning fun activities around the issues of diversity and multiculturalism. All Keene State College students are invited to attend club meetings and attend events.

**Peer Mentor Program:** The Peer Mentor Program is a program supported by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. It is designed to help new incoming multicultural students in their transition to the Keene State community. Students are matched with peer mentors based on their academic, social and personal interests. Peer mentors help acquaint these students with the KSC campus, offer support and advice as necessary, encourage the pursuit of academic excellence, and refer students to the appropriate on and off campus resources. New students are invited to participate in the program on a voluntary basis prior to their arrival on campus.

**Multicultural Resource Library:** The [Multicultural Resource Library](#) contains everything from financial aid information to books, videos, and other diversity resources geared toward the specific needs and interests of ethnic multicultural students.

**International Scholars - Phi Beta Delta:** The purpose of Phi Beta Delta is to recognize the scholarly achievement of international students and scholars, U.S. students who have studied abroad and faculty and staff who are involved in international activities.

**Spanish - Sigma Delta Pi:** The Keene Chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the national Spanish honor society, was chartered in 1982. It promotes excellence in the study of the Spanish language and in the study of the literature and culture of the Spanish-speaking peoples.

**French - Pi Delta Phi:** The Kappa Sigma was chartered in 1991. Its purpose is to recognize outstanding scholarship in the French language and literature, to increase the knowledge and respect for the contributions of France to world culture, and to encourage cultural activities, such as guest speakers, which will lead to a deeper appreciation of France and its people.

**French Club:** The French Club promotes interest in French culture and the enjoyment of speaking the language. Most members are French majors/minors, but club membership is open to all interested students.

**Geography Club:** The Geography Club promotes interest in the field of Geography through field trips to areas of interest, lectures, and other club activities.

**History Club:** The History Club helps to plan, organize and coordinate social functions for the History majors, minors and other members of the Keene State College community.

**Habitat for Humanity – Campus Chapter:** This organization, affiliated with Habitat for Humanity International, performs three main functions: building or rehabilitating houses in partnership with habitat affiliates and homeowners; educating the campus and local community about affordable housing issues and the work of HFH; and raising funds for the work of Habitat for Humanity. The chapter also organizes Alternative Spring Break trips.

**Spanish Club:** The Spanish Club promotes interest in Hispanic culture and the enjoyment of speaking the Spanish language. Most members are Spanish majors/minors, but club membership is open to all interested students

***Have a Wonderful Trip!***