

Going Global @ WPI



A handbook developed by the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division at Worcester Polytechnic Institute for students going to the residential project site:

Costa Rica Project Center B 2010

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Section 1 – WPI and IGSD Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You are beginning to prepare for one of the most meaningful experiences that you will encounter while at WPI. In order to ensure that you have a successful experience, the *Going Global at WPI Handbook* has been compiled from a number of sources to provide as much practical information as possible that may be applicable to all project sites. The Handbook was prepared to inform the student who has been accepted to participate in the Global Perspective Program during the 2010/2011 academic year.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute has been practicing innovative, project-based technological education for over 30 years. WPI requires all undergraduates to complete a series of projects, including one in which they examine how science or technology interacts with societal structures and values - the Interactive Qualifying Project. Because of its commitment to a global perspective, the university offers its students opportunities to complete this unique degree requirement at locations around the world. WPI operates more than ten international project programs where students, with resident faculty advisors, live and work full time solving real-world problems for public and private agencies and organizations. WPI sends more engineering and science students overseas for experiential learning than any other U.S. college or university; during the 2010/2011 academic year, approximately 625 WPI students -- including over half of the junior class -- will travel to a global project site to complete one of these interdisciplinary projects.

A successful off-campus experience does not just occur; it requires careful consideration of things you will need to do before you leave, and while at your off-campus site. The Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division (IGSD) has developed this document to outline these considerations.

For the mutual protection of WPI, the students, and their families, the obligation assumed by each must be carefully defined and understood. You should recognize the fact that you have entered into a contractual agreement with WPI that states the obligations and responsibilities of both the university and yourself. This Handbook was created as the document that should be read carefully and thoroughly to avoid misunderstandings.

The following text is taken from the NAFSA: Association of International Educators' website. NAFSA is the predominant professional association in the world dealing with international education, and the section of the Association that deals specifically with study abroad currently known as the Education Abroad Knowledge Community. A committee of study abroad professionals (the Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad) developed the following document and is included here for your reference. Please keep in mind that while WPI's off campus program is unique in its structure, the University is committed to uphold the standards of the profession.

Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety

Statement of Purpose

Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are primary concerns, these statements of good practice have been developed to provide guidance to institutions, participants (including faculty and staff), and parents/guardians/families. These statements are intended to be aspirational in nature. They address issues that merit attention and thoughtful consideration by everyone involved with study abroad. They are intentionally general; they are not intended to account for all the many variations in study abroad programs and actual health, safety and security cases that will inevitably occur. In dealing with any specific situation, those responsible must also rely upon their collective experience and judgment while considering their specific circumstances.

I. Responsibilities of Program Sponsors

The term "sponsors" refers to all the entities that together develop, offer, and administer study abroad programs. Sponsors include sending institutions, host institutions, program administrators, and placement organizations. To the extent reasonably possible, program sponsors should consider how these statements of good practice may apply. At the same time, it must be noted that the structure of study abroad programs varies widely. Study abroad is usually a cooperative venture that can involve multiple sponsors. Because the role of an organization in a study abroad program may vary considerably from case to case, it is not possible to specify a division of efforts that will be applicable to all cases. Each entity should apply these statements in ways consistent with its respective role.

In general, practices that relate to obtaining health, safety and security information apply to all parties consistent with their role and involvement in the study abroad program. Much of the basic information is readily available and can be conveyed to participants by distributing it and/or by referring them to, or utilizing materials from, recognized central sources. Statements of good practice that refer to the provision of information and the preparation of participants are intended for parties that advise, refer, nominate, admit, enroll, or place students. Statements of good practice that suggest operating procedures on site apply to entities that are directly involved in the operation of the overseas program.

It is understood that program sponsors that rely heavily on the collaboration of overseas institutions may exercise less direct control over specific program components. In such cases, sponsors are urged to work with their overseas partners to develop plans and procedures for implementing good practices.

The use of letters is provided for ease of reference only and does not imply priority.

Program sponsors should:

- A. Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for their programs, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.
- B. Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents/guardians/families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program.
- C. Provide information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.

- D. Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. In addition to dealing with health and safety issues, the orientation should address potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
- E. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- F. Determining criteria for an individual's removal from an overseas program taking into account participant behavior, health, and safety factors.
- G. Require that participants be insured. Either provide health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain such coverage.
- H. Conduct inquiries regarding the potential health, safety and security risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, prior to the program. Monitor possible changes in country conditions. Provide information about changes and advise participants and their parents/guardians/families as needed.
- I. Hire vendors and contractors (e.g. travel and tour agents) that have provided reputable services in the country in which the program takes place. Advise such vendors and contractors of the program sponsor's expectations with respect to their role in the health and safety of participants.
- J. Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services. Provide information about these services for participants and their parents/guardians/families, and help participants obtain the services they may need.
- K. Develop and provide health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral that take into account the nature and location of the study abroad program.
- L. Develop codes of conduct for their programs; communicate codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
- M. In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.
- N. In the participant screening process, consider factors such as disciplinary history that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
- O. Provide information for participants and their parents/guardians/families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends and the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control.

In particular, program sponsors generally:

- A. Cannot guarantee or assure the safety and/or security of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- B. Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of participants.
- C. Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.

- D. Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- E. Cannot assume responsibility for actions or for events that are not part of the program, nor for those that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- F. Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

II. Responsibilities of Participants

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during their program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- A. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country(ies).
- C. Conduct their own research on the country(ies) they plan to visit with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, as well as the social, cultural, and political situations.
- D. Consider their physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program, and make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- E. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- F. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
- G. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- H. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals before and/or during the program.
- I. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- J. Obey host-country laws.
- K. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- L. Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- M. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well being.

N. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in the host county.

III. Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

In study abroad, as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

Parents/guardians/families should:

- A. Be informed about and involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- B. Obtain and carefully evaluate participant program materials, as well as related health, safety and security information.
- C. Discuss with the participant any of his/her travel plans and activities that may be independent of the study abroad program.
- D. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- E. Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- F. Keep in touch with the participant.
- G. Be aware that the participant rather than the program may most appropriately provide some information.

NAFSA: Association of International Education
Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practice for Health and Safety
Guidelines, Revised November 8, 2002

http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/education_abroad_1/developing_and_managing/practice_resources_36/guidelines_for_health

MANDATORY PAPERWORK

The following documents must be submitted to the IGSD office by the stated deadline before you leave WPI for your off-campus project experience. If any forms are missing, you will be in jeopardy of not being allowed to participate at off-campus programs.

Paperwork Deadline -- All paperwork for Costa Rica must be in the IGSD Office by Thursday, October 7, 2010 before 3:00 p.m.

Participant Statement of Agreement

Once accepted to the Global Perspective Program at WPI, every student is required to submit to the IGSD along with his or her housing deposit a signed and dated "Participant Statement of Agreement". The text of that document is included below for your convenient referral. Of course, you may request a photocopy of your signed "Participant Statement of Agreement" at any time.

I understand that my participation in the WPI Global Perspective Program is subject to my agreement to accept and abide by the following conditions of participation:

A. Financial Responsibility

- 1) I understand that my deposit of \$400 is used to secure my place in the program and will be credited toward my housing cost.
- 2) I understand that charges for any damages to housing, WPI property on site, the property of our host institutions, or project sponsors will be charged to my WPI account. When responsibility for damages to housing cannot be assigned to an individual student, all students in the housing unit will be charged an equal share of the cost. I also realize that an official hold will be placed on my records until all payment responsibilities are satisfied.
- 3) I agree to pay all housing charges as requested. The accounting office normally bills housing costs at program sites at the time of the usual billing for Spring, Fall, and Summer terms.

B. Withdrawal, Cancellation, or Dismissal

- 1) I understand that the \$400 acceptance deposit is fully refundable up to 120 business days before the beginning of the program. Notice of withdrawal must be made in writing to the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division. Withdrawals after this time are subject to forfeiture of the entire deposit, plus any unrecoverable portion of the housing costs or other program expenses advanced on my behalf.
- 2) WPI makes every effort to deliver every program offered. However, many circumstances beyond our control could affect the welfare and safety of our participants. WPI, therefore, reserves the right to cancel a program in the event of changes that adversely affect our ability to deliver a quality academic program in which we can reasonably safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of all participants. In the event of cancellation by WPI, all *recoverable* deposits, tuition, and housing costs will be fully refunded.
- 3) Students who are dismissed from a program for any reason will receive no refund of any costs *involved and are* subject to charges for any unrecoverable housing costs or program expenses advanced on their behalf.

C. Behavioral Responsibilities

- 1) I understand that all policies governing acceptable behavior as printed in The Policies section of *The Campus Planner & Resource Guide* apply to me during my participation at an off-campus program site. Failure to abide by these policies, either before or during my participation in an off-campus program, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including my immediate dismissal from the program. I recognize that the authority for adjudicating alleged violations of the WPI Code of Conduct while at an off-campus program site lies with the on-site WPI representative in accordance with basic due process.
- 2) I further understand that as a WPI student at an off-campus program site, I represent my institution and my country and will behave as an ambassador for both. I understand that grounds for dismissal may also be found in behavior disruptive to the group as a whole, or offensive within the host culture: disruptive sexual behavior, or behavior deemed offensive to the host culture; or disruptive, violent, or destructive behavior in student housing.
- 3) I understand that WPI must take steps to ensure that no offensive, disruptive or potentially dangerous conduct occurs while WPI students and faculty are abroad. Accordingly, WPI reserves the right to dismiss a student from the program on the basis of any observed conduct or behavior which causes WPI concern for the safety and well-being

of students or others. The Dean of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies shall have the authority to make the final decision on dismissal from the program.

D. Academic Responsibilities

- 1) I understand that my participation in this program is subject to successful completion of all required preparation classes. I agree to attend all required orientation and re-entry meetings.
- 2) I understand that if I am placed on academic probation, I am no longer eligible to participate. The withdrawal refund policy stated above will apply.
- 3) WPI reserves the right to withdraw acceptance to students who are subsequently placed on academic warning. The withdrawal refund policy stated above will apply.

E. Medical Issues

- 1) I understand that there are certain risks inherent in travel to an off-campus program site and WPI cannot assume responsibility for all of my activities or medical needs. I understand that it is my responsibility to carry medical insurance that is valid at the off-campus site for the length of my stay.
- 2) I accept all financial responsibility for any medical treatment I receive while at the program site and understand that to obtain medical care abroad it is usually necessary to pay when the care is administered and seek reimbursement from my insurance company when I return home.

F. Legal Issues

- 1) I understand that as a non-citizen in a foreign country, I will be subject to the laws of that country. The use or possession of illegal drugs or other substances in violation of the laws of the host country or The Policies section of *The Campus Planner & Resource Guide*, before or during my participation in the program, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including my immediate dismissal from the program and legal action under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and / or the laws of the host country.

G. Travel Issues

- 1) I understand that I am responsible for making my own travel arrangements and for arriving at the program site on the designated arrival date and remaining until the official departure date.
- 2) I understand that while WPI encourages students to travel during their free time, the university can take no responsibility for my safety during independent travel. I further understand that I must inform the faculty-in-residence of my travel plans.

H. Federal Compliance Issues

- 1) I understand there are Federal regulations regarding the export of information to foreign countries or foreign citizens, with which all of us at WPI must comply. WPI's emphasis on engineering programs makes us particularly sensitive to these regulations. If I take a laptop computer (or other type of computer digital storage device, I hereby assure WPI that I will not have any restricted information on that device as such action may be considered an export.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above stated conditions of participation.

Participant Signature	date	site	term
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Printed Name	student number	date of birth*
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**If participant is under 18 years of age, both parents and/ or legal guardian must also read and sign this form.*

I am the parent or legal guardian of the above Participant, have read the foregoing Participant Statement of Agreement Form (including such parts as may subject me to personal financial responsibility), and will be legally responsible for the obligations and acts of the Participant as described in this Participant Statement of Agreement Form, and agree, for myself and for the participant, to be bound by its terms.

X

 Signature of Parent / Guardian Date

X

 Signature of Parent / Guardian Date

Travel Information Form (Appendix A)

The IGSD must have completed Travel Form from each student on file before the student leaves for their site. The office keeps a copy of this itinerary and we send a copy with the faculty advisor. By doing this, the IGSD staff, the advisor and the local coordinator knows when and where every student will arrive and will alert them if a problem arises.

Any students traveling outside the United States to a WPI project site must supply the IGSD with a scanned copy of the information pages of their passport. Electronic copies will be sent with the faculty advisor and kept on file in the IGSD. If a passport is stolen or lost while outside the U.S., having copies of this document will greatly facilitate having new travel documents issued.

Students should understand that they are responsible for making their own travel arrangements and for arriving at the program site on the designated arrival date and remaining until the official departure date. If you are traveling by air, you must have confirmed reservations. Flying stand-by is not acceptable.

Students and their families should also understand that while WPI encourages students to travel during their free time, the university can take no responsibility for the student's safety during independent travel. The student must inform the faculty-in-residence of any travel plans.

Students may not take vacation days off from their project work, even if they have the permission of their project mentor. If they have an urgent family or academic or job related need to travel away from the project site on a project work day, they should consult with the faculty member in residence before making any travel plans.

Health Update and Records Release Form (Appendix B)

The IGSD must have a completed Health Update and Records Release Form on file for each student before the student leaves for her site. The IGSD keeps a copy and sends a copy with the faculty advisor in case of an emergency. The student should list any medical conditions that could affect the student while off-campus (i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, depressive episodes, etc.) Also, the student must list any changes in their health not noted on medical records on file with WPI Health Services. Medical allergies must be listed, as well as prescription medications.

The IGSD strongly recommends that every student who plans to travel outside of the United States should read closely all information put forward by the Center for Disease Control specific to the geographic area where they will be going. This information is included in this handbook.

When traveling abroad it is a good idea to take a supply of your prescription medications sufficient to last for the entire length of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be kept in the original containers with the prescription label intact to avoid problems with customs officials. It is also important to take along a copy of the prescription from your physician, clearly written, in generic terms, and with an indication of the condition being treated.

Two people need be listed as emergency contacts. These contacts should be people empowered to make a medical or legal decision on behalf of the participant (i.e., parent, guardian, living adult relative). Contact information for each must also be provided to the IGSD on this form: name, relationship, address, phone (home and work), and email.

Participants and their families should understand that there are certain risks inherent in travel to an off-campus program site and WPI cannot assume responsibility for every activity or medical need. It is the student's responsibility to carry medical insurance that is valid at the off-campus site for the

length of the stay. Students must accept all financial responsibility for any medical treatment received while at the program site. Students should understand that to obtain medical care abroad, it is usually necessary to pay when the care is administered and they will have to seek reimbursement from their insurance company when they return home.

All students traveling off-campus to participate in a WPI program are required to carry medical insurance that is valid at the program site for the entire length of the program. The IGSD must have the name of your insurance provider and your subscription number. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they are covered for the entire length of the program while they are off-campus.

Voluntary Acknowledgement Form

All participants are required to sign a Voluntary Acknowledgement Form that is kept on file in the IGSD. The text of the form is below for your convenient referral. We hope that by asking participants to read and sign such a form that we remind them of the nature of their participation and the responsibilities which are assumed by the individuals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and RELEASE

I acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in the _____ (the "Program"), which is being offered by Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). I further acknowledge that WPI has provided me with adequate information about the Program, both verbally and through written materials, and that I have read and understand such information. I agree to comply with any immunization or medical treatment necessary to participate in this program. I also acknowledge that any laptop computer (or other form of computer or digital storage device) that I may take abroad cannot contain any restricted information as such action may be considered an export subject to Federal control and regulation.

Assumption of Risk and Release of Claims. Knowing the risks described, and in consideration of being permitted to participate in the Program, I agree, on behalf of my family, heirs, and personal representative(s), to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding my participation in the Program. To the maximum extent permitted by law, I release and indemnify Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and its officers, employees and agents, from and against any present or future claim, loss or liability for injury to person or property which I may suffer, or for which I may be liable to any other person, during my participation in the Program (including periods in transit to or from any site in country where the Program is being conducted).

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS.

Participant Signature

date

Printed Name

date of birth*

*If participant is under 18 years of age, both parents and/or legal guardians must also read and sign this form.

I am the parent or legal guardian of the above Participant, have read the foregoing Acknowledgement and Release Form (including such parts as may subject me to personal financial responsibility), and will be legally responsible for the obligations and acts of the Participant as described in this Acknowledgement and Release Form, and agree, for myself and for the Participant, to be bound by its terms.

X

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

X

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Scan of Passport

You are required to bring your passport to the IGSD office so that staff can scan a copy of the face and information pages. IGSD keeps this on file.

International Student Identity Cards (ISIC)

All WPI students completing course requirements abroad are required to get the ISIC. As you have been charged the \$24.00 cost of the card, it makes the most sense to get yours from the IGSD. If you choose to purchase a card elsewhere you will forfeit the \$24.00. In some countries, the student discount network is highly developed, and an ISIC will entitle students to reduced entrance fees at museums and theaters, special rail or bus passes, and even discounts at hotels and shops. While it cannot be guaranteed that you'll get discounts wherever you go, the ISIC is the most accepted card for international access to all student discounts that are available.

With the ISIC, you gain access to a 24-hour, toll free help line that can provide aid in the case of a medical, financial or legal emergency while abroad. You can call the ISIC Help Line from the United States at (877-370-4742). Outside of the United States, call collect 715-342-4104. The call is free, but be prepared to provide your card number to the ISIC Help Line.

The most important reason for the ISIC requirement is the additional insurance coverage that you get. The ISIC provides a basic sickness and accident insurance policy to students while traveling outside the United States. ISICs also provide students with emergency evacuation insurance, if due to injury or sickness, a legally licensed physician certifies the severity of your condition is such that you must be evacuated for medical treatment. In addition, cardholders are eligible to have expenses covered for the repatriation of remains in the unlikely event of death while abroad. (For more specific coverage information, contact American Home Assurance Company 70 Pine St. New York, New York 10270).

Again, the cost of this card is built into the expenses associated with going off-campus and does not require additional fees to be charged to the student. However, students must supply the IGSD with two photos in order to process the card. These photos can be taken at the IGSD Office.

You are required to come to the IGSD, located in the Project Center, to fill out an application form for the ISIC and turn in your photos (extra passport photos will suffice as well, but please keep in mind the need to carry two other passport photos with you when traveling). IGSD staff will process your card, which will be given to you when all mandatory paperwork mentioned previously has been completed and turned in to the IGSD. If you need the number from your ISIC to book your flight, a photocopy of your card can be provided to you at your request. For more specific information about discounts, go to www.isic.org.

ATC Laptop Form (Appendix C)

WPI will provide one laptop per team if you request it. You do not have to use a WPI laptop – you are welcome to take your own. If you do, however choose to sign out a WPI laptop, you will need to complete the form and turn it in to the IGSD with the rest of your mandatory paperwork.

WPI POLICIES AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AT OFF-CAMPUS SITES

Informal Hearing Procedure at Off-Campus Residential Program Sites

Students at off-campus residential program sites, accused of violating the WPI code of conduct or any other WPI policy as outlined in the annual Campus Planner and Resource Guide shall be accorded an informal on-site hearing before a WPI representative designated by the dean of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division. The following guidelines will be applicable.

(a) Students will be informed of the complaint pending and the time, date and location of the informal hearing, in writing, at least two (2) days prior to the hearing. This notice should include a full description of the incident, names of witnesses, if any, and a reference to the section(s) of the campus code allegedly violated.

(b) The informal hearing shall be conversational in nature and non-adversarial.

(c) Before the hearing, the student shall be given the opportunity to consult with an on-site advisor of their choice or a member of the WPI community.

(d) During the hearing, the WPI representative shall elaborate on the nature of the complaint and present any evidence or witnesses in support of that complaint.

(e) The accused student shall have an opportunity to respond to the complaint and present any evidence or witnesses in response to the complaint.

(f) The WPI representative will make a determination of the student's responsibility for the complaint based on the outcome of the informal hearing.

(g) If the student is found responsible, the WPI representative must contact the dean of students or her/his designee to review the student's past record, if any, before a sanction is determined. The WPI representative must then consult with the Dean of Students Office and the director of global operations in the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division to determine an appropriate sanction for the offense.

(h) All decisions shall be final and not subject to appeal on site. The decision may be appealed to the dean of Interdisciplinary Studies Division once the student has returned to the WPI campus. Appeals may be submitted in writing to the dean of the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division within five (5) days of the start of classes of the term following the off campus project experience. The appeal must be specific and contain a full description of the basis for the appeal. Grounds for an appeal must be based on one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Failure to follow the procedures outlined in the Campus Planner and Resource Guide;
- b. Inappropriate gravity of the sanction in relationship to the offense;
- c. That no reasonable person could conclude, on the basis of the evidence presented, that the accused was responsible.

The appeal will not be reviewed until after the start of the term following the off campus project experience when all parties involved have returned to the WPI campus.

(i) If the on-site WPI representative determines that continued presence at the project center by the student would constitute a danger to the safety of persons or property on the premises of the project center, a recommendation for interim suspension may be made to the vice president for student affairs or his/her designee.

Note: WPI's Academic Honesty Policy and the procedures described therein also apply to the off campus residential programs. The WPI representative must communicate with the dean of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division and Dean of Students Office before taking action.

WPI Housing

If you live in a WPI residence hall, it is your responsibility to notify Residential Services of your intended absence.

Mail Services

All students going off-campus must go to Central Mail to fill out the appropriate card to have their mailboxes closed and their mail forwarded. Failure to do so will result in mail staying in the student's mailbox for the entire term. All students must now be responsible for their own mailbox and mail by signing a forwarding card at Central Mail.

Youth Vote Overseas – Register to Vote in Midterm Elections of 2010

<https://yvo.overseasvotefoundation.org/overseas/home.htm> generates an official form once an overseas address is provided.

Protocol for PCs for Off-Campus Project Centers

Students who participate in the Global Perspective Program are offered the opportunity to borrow laptop personal computers from WPI. This is not an entitlement to students, but rather a privilege extended to students. It is expected that the following protocol will be followed and the proper responsibility will be assumed by the students taking advantage of this opportunity. WPI does not have an unlimited supply of laptop computers to loan to students. If student teams are unable or unwilling to comply with the dates specified by the Academic Technology Center (ATC), the ATC reserves the right to refuse to accommodate that request. One PC per project team for each site as available:

After you have turned in the completed ATC Team form to the IGSD, at least one member of your group (although we suggest the entire group so that everyone takes equal responsibility for the equipment) is required to go to the ATC and reserve a laptop BEFORE pick-up on the specified date.

Procedure

1. Each team will fill out an ATC Team Form (Appendix C). Kelly Donahue (from the IGSD) will send approved names to ATC. Every team member must meet all IGSD paperwork deadlines before names are sent to the ATC.
2. Person(s) responsible for PC will be required to register at the ATC and sign a statement accepting responsibility for the PC.
3. Person(s) responsible for PC should have the tightest travel schedule. Arrangements can be made for one person to pick up the PC and another member of the team to return the PC but, BOTH people must register when the reservation is made with the ATC.
4. It is strongly recommended that everyone in the group sign the ATC's reservation form. The ATC will hold only signing parties financially responsible for damage beyond normal wear and tear and/or any fees incurred.

Reservations

1. Make your reservation early for your PC. You must go to the ATC to make your reservation with your WPI ID card. At the time of reservation you must be specific about the dates and times of pick-up and return of the equipment and about your hardware requirements. Be as specific as

possible about what you will be using the PC for: (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, data analysis, etc.) PCs are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Avoid last minute changes as they may not be able to be accommodated.

2. If two people are responsible (one for pick up, one for return) BOTH must go to the ATC to register before leaving campus. If arrangements have been made for a faculty member to return the PC, then the faculty member must send confirming email to Mary Beth Harrity (mharrity@wpi.edu) before the PC will be released.
3. Modems, ethernet cards and other miscellaneous hardware are in limited supply and must be requested at the time the reservation for the PC is made.
4. Upon request, the ATC can provide external drives that can be attached to the laptop.
5. Pick-up and return deadlines will be strictly enforced. If the laptop computer is not returned to the ATC on the agreed upon date, your group will be charged a \$50 per business day late fee.

Software

1. All PCs will be loaded with Windows, MS Office, Explorer and communications software. The ATC does not provide or load software other than this.
2. If students load their own software it must be removed prior to returning the PC to the ATC.
3. If you significantly alter the original configuration of the laptop (e.g. install a different operating system), your group will be charged a \$50 software re-installation fee.

Picking up the PC

1. You must have your WPI ID card in order to pick up the PC assigned to you.

Acceptable Use Policy Regarding Computers (WPI laptops, sponsor PC's, internet use)

At a minimum, you must adhere to the WPI Acceptable Use Policy (<http://www.WPI.EDU/Pubs/Policies/>) whether using WPI computer resources or your housing provider or sponsor's resources. Your housing provider or sponsor may have more restrictive computer and web use policies and those must be followed. It is your responsibility to determine what your housing provider or sponsor's policy is and to comply with it. Using a housing provider or sponsor's network(s) or computer(s) for recreational use (defined as non-project related use – on or off the web) is not permitted. Violators will be subject to disciplinary actions.

General Policies and Important Things to Remember

- There can be *no overnight guests* in any accommodations acquired and provided by WPI for use by the Project Center students.
- Charges for any damages to housing, WPI property on site, the property of our host institutions, or project sponsors will be charged to your WPI account. When responsibility for damages to housing cannot be assigned to an individual student, all students in the housing unit will be charged an equal share of the cost. An official hold will be placed on all records until all payment responsibilities are satisfied.
- If you are dismissed from a program for any reason, you will not receive a refund of any costs involved and will be subject to charges for any unrecoverable housing costs or program expenses advanced on your behalf.
- All policies governing acceptable behavior as printed in The Policies section of *The Campus Planner & Resource Guide* apply to participants at an off-campus program site. The authority for adjudicating alleged violations of the WPI Code of Conduct while at an off-campus program site lies with the on-site WPI representative in accordance with basic due process.
- You must always keep the resident faculty advisors informed of your whereabouts. If you plan to travel during the term, you must give your advisor a written itinerary.
- **The IGSD will notify your parents if you fail to return from a weekend excursion at the predetermined time. If you are delayed you MUST contact your resident faculty advisor to inform them that you are safe.**
- As a WPI student at an off-campus program site, you represent your institution and your country and will behave as an ambassador for both. Grounds for dismissal may also be found in behavior disruptive to the group as a whole, or offensive to the host culture: disruptive sexual behavior, or disruptive, violent, or destructive behavior in student housing.
- You may not take vacation days off from your project work, even if you have the permission of your project mentor. If you have an urgent family or academic or job related need to travel away from the project site on a project work day, consult with the faculty member in residence before making any travel plans.

Violations of any of these policies can result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal from the program.

What can you expect to pay “out of pocket” toward your IQP while off-campus?

Current WPI policy states that students are expected to contribute \$50 per person per 1/3 unit of IQP work toward any out of pocket expenses encountered. This means that each student is expected to pay \$150.00 towards the completion of the IQP before asking for reimbursement of any kind. If you have a project team of 4 students, then the total contribution before being reimbursed is \$600. If you anticipate that your expenses will exceed this expectation, then you must submit a budget for your project. The on-site faculty advisor and Center Director must approve this budget prior to submission of any expenses to the IGSD. (Commuting costs are not reimbursable.)

Travel Documents and Competencies

Passports

Who needs a passport?

A U.S. citizen needs a passport to depart or enter the United States and to depart and enter most foreign countries. U.S. Immigration requires you to prove your U.S. citizenship and identity when you reenter the United States.

If you are not a U.S citizen, contact the embassy or consulate of the country you are planning to travel to, as well as the U.S. Embassy in order to receive specific entry instructions. International students should consult with Mr. Tom Thomsen, Director of the International Students and Scholars Office, about these issues. His contact information is listed under the heading WPI Offices.

Beware of a passport that is about to expire. Certain countries will not permit you to enter and will not place a visa in your passport if the passport is valid for less 6 months. If your passport is expiring in less than the 6 months, you will need to get a new one. If you return to the United States with an expired passport, you are subject to a passport waiver fee of \$100, payable to U.S. Immigration at the port of entry.

It is your responsibility to acquire your passport. The IGSD does not administer this process for students.

How to get your passport

1. Go to Prime Color Photo located at 1094 Pleasant Street to have your passport photos taken. Show your WPI ID to get the special rate. You can also get passport photos taken at the U.S. Post Office, or other local stores such as CVS.
2. Pick up a passport application form from the U.S. Post Office, Prime Color Photo or download from: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
3. Turn in all required documentation to the nearest federal post office with the appropriate fee.

For Immediate Release

April 2, 2002

**STATEMENT BY PHILIP T. REEKER, DEPUTY SPOKESMAN
U.S. Passports Will No Longer be Issued Abroad**

All passports, except those required for urgent travel, will be issued in the United States using the new more secure photo-digitized imaging system.

Effective April 8, 2002, American citizens residing or traveling abroad, who require issuance of a U.S. passport, will be issued the latest, state-of-the-art passport. It incorporates a digitized image with other enhanced security features. Because this technology is not available at U.S. embassies and consulates, overseas passport issuance is being transferred to the National Passport Processing Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Travel documents in the post-September 11 world have become even more important. The new passport has many features that make it one of the most secure travel documents produced anywhere in the world. Getting these more secure passports into circulation will help minimize the misuse of American passports by criminals, terrorists, and others.

This new procedure will increase processing time at U.S. embassies and consulates, but the Department is committed to ensuring that American citizens receive secure documents in a timely manner. American citizens overseas are encouraged to apply early for renewal of expiring passports.

U.S. embassies and consulates will continue to issue passports that are needed for urgent travel. However, such passports will be limited in validity, and cannot be extended. Bearers will be required to exchange, at no additional cost, their limited-validity passport for a full-validity digitized passport upon completion of their urgent travel.

Information on applying for a U.S. passport, passport application forms and requirements, and other travel-related information can be accessed through the Department of State's web site at: <http://travel.state.gov>.

Visas

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government that permits you to visit that country for a specified purpose and a limited time. You should obtain all necessary visas before you leave the United States, because you will not be able to obtain visas for some countries once you have departed. Apply directly to the embassy or nearest consulate of each country you plan to visit. Passport agencies *cannot* help you obtain visas.

If you are doing your project in Thailand or Namibia, your faculty advisors and the IGSD will help you obtain your non-immigrant visas. In order to take advantage of this, you must be prepared to give the IGSD your passport, a completed visa application (available in the IGSD office) and a passport picture, by the date that your advisors determine. The IGSD will send all documentation with one cover letter to the appropriate embassy to expedite the visa process for your group. The single entry visa fee of has been built into your housing charge.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to determine what other documentation you will need to file to obtain your visa.

How to Take Money

You should take a sufficient amount of living/spending money with you. The IGSD recommends the following modes of carrying money.

Travelers Checks

Rather than carrying large amounts of cash, it is always safer to take most of your money in travelers' checks. Remember to record the serial number, denomination, and the date and location of the issuing bank or agency. Keep this information in a safe and separate place. In case your checks are lost or stolen, you can get replacements quickly with this information.

Credit Cards

Some credit cards can be used worldwide, even for cash advances. However, be sure to monitor your charges carefully, so as not to exceed your limit -- do not forget to account for the exchange rate! Leave all unnecessary cards at home. Record the numbers and expiration dates for the cards you take in a separate place. Always report the loss or theft of your credit cards immediately to the issuing companies and notify the local police.

ATM info:

Making withdrawals from an ATM is generally considered to be the easiest and least expensive way of accessing money while abroad. The biggest advantage is that regardless of the size of your withdrawal, you will receive the wholesale exchange rate which banks use. ATM networks like the Global ATM Alliance, Cirrus and PLUS are used widely around the globe, although you should be sure to verify that your network operates in the country to which you're going. The following websites provide links to ATM locator services for each network:

<http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html>

<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/jsp/SearchPage.jsp>

http://www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,1608,CID8040_LIDen,00.html

Before you leave, you should contact your bank to let them know where you will be and for how long. Many banks view activity such as withdrawals in another country as an alert to possible fraudulent activity on your account. Telling them ahead of time, may prevent your accounts from being frozen -- a massive inconvenience when you're abroad.

Things to consider when using ATMS abroad include the following:

1. Be sure you know the numeric equivalent of your PIN if it contains letters as well as numbers. ATMs abroad may only provide numbers.
2. Some ATMs (especially in Europe) do not accept PINs longer than 4 numbers. You may wish to contact your bank to change your PIN if it is longer than four digits.

There are of course fees associated with using most ATMs, and some of these can be significantly higher than the fees you are used to paying in the U.S. You should check with your bank (be sure to ask if they assess extra fees for international ATM use), and plan for these extra expenses in your budget.

Finally, be sure to keep your ATM card and your money in a safe place. When withdrawing cash from an ATM be sure to do so in a well lighted, safe location so that you decrease your profile as a potential target for theft.

Source: www.independenttraveler.com

Foreign Currency

Before departing, it is recommended that you purchase some foreign currency to use for buses, taxis, food, phones or tips when you first arrive. You can purchase several currencies at the airport, but be advised that they only carry major currencies and that exchange windows may be closed depending upon your time of departure. You may be able to purchase foreign currency at one of your local banks. Do not change all of the money you plan to take while still in the U.S. The exchange rate is always better in the host country.

Section 2 - Health & Safety

Safety Policies

When traveling to an off-campus project site, there are a number of precautions you should follow in order to travel safely:

- Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time. Security in airports and train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended baggage. Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for individuals you do not know well. If someone approaches you to make such a request, tell security immediately. Make sure that no one puts anything in your luggage without your knowledge. Take all questions from airport personnel seriously and do not make jokes in response to security questions.
- Safeguard your passport! Your passport is the most valuable document you will carry abroad. It is your best form of identification and confirms your citizenship. You must guard it carefully. Do not lend it to anyone or use it as collateral for a loan of any sort. You will need it when you check into hotels, embassies or consulates, or when cashing travelers' checks. Some countries require that you carry it with you at all times as a means of identification. When you carry your passport, hide it securely on your person. Do not leave it in a handbag, book-bag, backpack or in an exposed pocket.
- Never keep all of your documents and money in one place or suitcase. You should make a list of all of your important numbers - your passport information as well as credit cards, travelers' checks and airline ticket numbers. Leave a copy at home, and carry a copy with you, separate from your valuables.
- **Always keep the resident faculty advisors informed of your whereabouts. If you plan to travel during the term, you must give your advisor an itinerary in writing. All student need to be accounted for every weekend whether you are traveling or not, see Appendix D.**
- **The IGSD will notify the parents of students who fail to return from a weekend excursion at the predetermined time. If you are delayed you MUST contact your resident faculty advisor to inform them that you are safe.**
- Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as train or airline tickets.
- Always be careful about traveling alone.
- **All WPI students who are participating in the Costa Rica Project Center B2009 are expected to behave in a manner so as to not put themselves at risk.**
- **All students have an obligation to look out for each other and themselves. This means that if one student observes another engaging in risky behavior, that student should report the behavior to either of the faculty advisors. The faculty advisor must then address the issue with the student at risk. Repeated behavior identified as risky will be cause to be sent home.**
- Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. If the host country nationals do not wear baseball caps and sneakers, you will stand out as a foreigner if you do.
- Do not flash money or documents in public places. Be discreet in displaying your passport.

AVOIDING TRAVEL RISKS

Prepared By:
William L. Granahan CIC,LIA,CMC, Senior Consultant
J.H. Albert International Insurance Advisors, Inc.
Two Chestnut Place
72 River Park
Needham Heights, MA 02494-2631

Planning and Preparing:

Do not display provocative luggage tags, overly patriotic displays or any other indications that you are from the United States;

Do not pack anything that could be construed as a weapon, including knives, nail files, razors or other sharp instruments;

Arrive at the airport at least three hours in advance of your flight.

Air and Ground Travel:

Dress casual and look like a traveler; do not dress like a “flamboyant” US patriot;

Spend little time in foreign airports or public transportation areas that carry a high risk of or invite terrorist attacks;

Avoid air, rail and local ground carriers from countries where terrorist groups are based or have grievances;

Avoid flights or trains with intermediate stops, especially stops in hostile countries, which would allow terrorists to board;

In the Country;

Avoid countries, areas of countries and regions, even for leisure travel on weekends, that are hostile or likely to be hostile to Americans;

Study and understand the customs and political environment of the country(s) you are visiting;

Be prudent in your choice of eating and drinking establishments;

Avoid political discussions, confrontation and arguments;

Do not reveal personal information to casual acquaintances;

Beware of overly friendly or flirtatious persons;

Always travel in groups of two or more people;

Should you find yourself present during a coup, uprising or riot, remain in a safe harbor, such as your hotel or residence, that is not apt to be a military target;

Carry the phone number and address of the American Embassy and local police – and a cell phone if possible;

Return to your apartment or living quarters at a reasonable, early hour every night.

Safety Tips from the U.S. Department of State

Crime in many parts of the world seems to be increasing.

Visitors should take common sense precautions:

- Safety begins when you pack. Leave expensive jewelry behind. Dress conservatively; a flashy wardrobe or one that is too casual can mark you as a tourist. Use travelers' checks, not cash. Leave photocopies of your passport personal information page and your airline tickets with someone at home and carry an extra set with you.
- Use a money belt or a concealed money pouch for passports, cash and other valuables.
- In a car, keep doors locked, windows rolled up and valuables out of sight. A common trick is for a thief to reach through a car window and grab a watch from a persons' wrist or a purse or package from the seat while you are driving slowly or stopped in traffic.
- When you leave your car, try to find a guarded parking lot. Lock the car and keep valuables out of sight.
- When walking, avoid marginal areas of cities, dark alleys and crowds. Do not stop if you are approached on the street by strangers, including street vendors and beggars. Be aware that women and small children, as well as men, can be pickpockets or purse-snatchers. Keep your billfold in an inner front pocket, carry your purse tucked securely under your arm, and wear the shoulder-strap of your camera or bag across your chest. To guard against thieves on motorcycles, walk away from the curb, carrying your purse away from the street.
- Use official taxi stands rather than cruising taxis. Illegal taxis can be decoys for robbers.
- Whenever possible, do not travel alone. If you travel in isolated areas, go with a group or a reputable guide.
- Avoid travel at night.
- Money exchangers on the street pass off counterfeit U.S. dollars and local currency. Credit card fraud is growing.
- Do not take valuables to the mountains or on excursions.

Any U.S. citizen who is criminally assaulted should report the incident to the local police and to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

The U.S. department of State has produced a website specifically for students going abroad. This site provides student specific travel tips and advice, and we strongly encourage you to visit it: www.studentsabroad.state.gov.

Drugs and the Legal System

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. Learn about local laws and regulations, preferably before you arrive on site, and obey them. Deal only with authorized outlets when exchanging money or buying items such as airline tickets and travelers checks. Adhere strictly to the local laws because the penalties you risk are severe.

About 3,000 Americans are arrested overseas each year. Of these, approximately one-third are held on drug-related charges. Despite repeated warnings, drug arrests and convictions are still a common occurrence. Many countries have stiff penalties for drug violations and strictly enforce drug laws. You are subject to foreign, not U.S. laws while overseas, and you will find, if arrested, that:

- because you are subject to local laws abroad, there is very little that a U.S. consul can do for you if you encounter legal difficulties
- few countries provide jury trial
- most countries do not accept bail
- prisons may lack even minimal comforts: bed, toilet, wash basin
- officials may not speak English
- nutrition is often inadequate
- physical abuse, confiscation of personal property and inhumane treatment are possible

In other words, it is not worth imprisonment or extradition to break local laws. Be mature. Remember that laws are established for reasons (and you don't need to agree with those reasons), and that you are a guest, and should behave as such.

WPI Code of Conduct

As articulated in the Drug and Alcohol Policy in the WPI Code of Conduct, students may not possess, use, or distribute illicit drugs or possess drug related paraphernalia. If there are any complaints or evidence of illicit drug use, your Faculty Advisor(s) and the Director of Global Operations in the IGSD will initiate and follow the steps outlined in the "Informal Hearing Procedure at Off-Campus Residential Program Sites" to fairly investigate and adjudicate the matter. Drug policy violations are taken very seriously and could result in sanctions up to and including dismissal from the program.

Health Issues: HIV and AIDS information

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a severe, often life-threatening, illness caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The incubation period for AIDS is very long and variable, ranging from a few months to many years. Some individuals infected with HIV have remained asymptomatic for more than a decade. Currently, there is no vaccine to protect against infection with HIV. Although there is no cure for AIDS, treatments for HIV infection and prophylaxis for many opportunistic diseases that characterize AIDS are available.

The universal precaution to prevent infection of either AIDS and/or HIV is to assume that everyone you meet has these diseases. While this may seem extreme, there is no way to judge from looking at someone whether or not they have been exposed to these illnesses or if, in fact, they are infected.

HIV infection and AIDS have been reported worldwide. The number of persons infected with HIV is estimated by WHO to be approaching the range of 18 million worldwide. Because HIV infection and AIDS are globally distributed, the risk to international travelers is determined less by their geographic destination than by their sexual and drug using behaviors.

Transmission and Prevention Information

The global epidemic of HIV infection and AIDS has raised several issues regarding HIV infection and international travel. The first is the need of information for international travelers regarding HIV transmission and how HIV infection can be prevented.

HIV infection is preventable. HIV is transmitted through sexual intercourse, needle or syringe sharing, by medical use of blood or blood components, and perinatally from an infected woman to her baby. HIV is not transmitted through casual contact; air, food, or water routes; contact with inanimate objects; or through mosquitoes or other arthropod vectors. The use of any public conveyance (e.g., airplane, automobile, boat, bus, train) by persons with AIDS or HIV infection does not pose a risk of infection for the crew or other passengers.

Increased risk for contracting AIDS and HIV

Travelers are at risk if they:

- have sexual intercourse (heterosexual or homosexual) with an infected person;
- use or allow the use of contaminated, unsterilized syringes or needles for any injections or other skin-piercing procedures including acupuncture, use of illicit drugs, steroid or vitamin injections, medical/dental procedures, **ear or body piercing, or tattooing**;
- use infected blood, blood components, or clotting factor concentrates. HIV infection by this route is a rare occurrence in those countries or cities where donated blood/plasma is screened for HIV antibody.

People should avoid sexual encounters with a person who is infected with HIV or whose HIV infection status is unknown. This includes avoiding sexual activity with intravenous drug users and persons with multiple sexual partners, such as male or female prostitutes. Condoms, when used consistently and correctly, prevent transmission of HIV. Persons who engage in vaginal, anal, or oral-genital intercourse with anyone who is infected with HIV or whose infection status is unknown should use a condom.

For the information made available by the Center for Disease Control, please go to the following web address

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh4-HIVAIDS.aspx>

WPI Offices

Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division

Project Center, 2nd Floor

T 508-831-5547

F 508-831-5485

- Prof. Rick Vaz, Dean
x 5344, vaz@wpi.edu
- Natalie A. Mello
Director of Global Operations
x 5852, nmello@wpi.edu

Academic Advising & Disability Services

Daniels Hall

T 508-831-5381

F 508-831-5486

- Dale Snyder, Director
X5281, dsnyder@wpi.edu

Accounting Office

Boynton Hall, 2nd Floor

T 508-831-5754

F 508-831-5064

- Constance LaBounty
Accounting Clerk
x 5203, labounty@wpi.edu

Central Mailing Services

Campus Center, 1st Floor

T 508-831-5523

F 508-831-5753

- Celia McLaren, Supervisor
x 5683, cmclaren@wpi.edu

Financial Aid

Boynton Hall, Lower Level

T 508-831-5469

F 508-831-5039

- Monica Blondin, Director
x 5469, mmlucey@wpi.edu

International Students and Scholars Office

28 Trowbridge Road

T 508-831-6030

F 508-831-6032

- Mr. Tom Thomsen, Director
x6030, hartvig@wpi.edu

Academic Technology Center

Fuller Labs, 1st Floor

T 508-831-5220

F 508-831-5881

- Mary Beth Harrity, Director
X5223, mharrity@wpi.edu

Registrar's Office

Boynton Hall, 1st Floor

T 508-831-5211

F 508-831-5931

- Heather Jackson,
Registrar
x 5211, hjackson@wpi.edu
- Marjorie Roncone
x 5457, mroncone@wpi.edu

Residential Services

Ellsworth Residence, Institute Road

T 508-831-5175

F 508-831-5870

- Naomi Carton, Director
x 5175, letendre@wpi.edu

Student Development and Counseling Center

157 West Street

T 508-831-5540

F 508-831-5139

- Charles Morse, Director
x 5540, cmorse@wpi.edu

Student Life Office

Campus Center, Main Level

T 508-831-5520

F 508-831-5581

- Philip Clay, Dean of Students
X 5507, pclay@wpi.edu

Internet Addresses

The following are web addresses that you may find helpful, particularly before you leave for your site.

Health & Safety Sites

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH)

<http://www.astmh.org>

Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)

<http://www.ciee.org>

Travel Safe: AIDS and International Travel

http://www.ciee.org/health_safety/health/AIDS_intl_travel.aspx

Lonely Planet

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services/flights/single_return.cfm

The Travel Clinic

<http://www.drwisetravel.com/index.html>

Travel Health Online

<https://www.tripprep.com/scripts/main/default.asp>

U.S. State Department

<http://travel.state.gov>

Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT)

<http://www.asirt.org/>

StudyAbroad.com Handbook

<http://www.studentsabroad.com/contents.asp>

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

<http://www.nafsa.org/>

Travel Sites

U.S. State Department

http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html

Links to U.S. Embassies and Consulates Worldwide

http://travel.state.gov/visa/questions/questions_1253.html

Services and Information for American Citizens Abroad

<http://travel.state.gov/travel/abroad.html>

Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs_1237.html

Women's Sites

Journeywoman

<http://www.journeywoman.com>

Disability Sites

Access-Able

<http://www.access-able.com/tips/>

Air Travel Tips and Resources

<http://www.miusa>

Advice from the CDC: General Travel Precautions

The following web address should be accessed for health information specific to where you will be traveling: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. We strongly encourage all students to review these guidelines, advice and suggestions carefully. If vaccines are recommended then you should consult with your own personal health care professional (who has knowledge of your medical history) to determine what the best course of action is for you. The IGSD cannot provide medical advice. Any opinions expressed by students, advisors, or center directors with regard to medical issues are only opinions and should not be taken as authoritative.

The preventive measures you need to take while traveling depend on the areas you visit and the length of time you stay. All travelers should take the following precautions, no matter the destination:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively.
- Avoid travel at night if possible and always use seat belts.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Don't eat or drink dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Never eat undercooked ground beef and poultry, raw eggs, and un-pasteurized dairy products. Raw shellfish is particularly dangerous to persons who have liver disease or compromised immune systems.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- If you visit an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals), and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.

To Avoid Getting Sick

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).
- Don't swim in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer.

What You Need To Bring with You

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects (e.g., malaria, dengue, filariasis, and Japanese encephalitis).

- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethylnoluamide), in 30%–35% strength for adults and 6%–10% for children.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See Do's above for more detailed information about water filters.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home

- If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.
- If you become ill after travel—even as long as a year after your trip—tell your doctor the areas you have visited.

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationCostaRica.aspx>

Section 3 – Site Specific Information for Costa Rica

Paperwork Deadline

*All paperwork for Costa Rica B 2010 must be in the IGSD by 3:00 p.m. **Thursday, October 7, 2010***

Arrive WPI housing: by Saturday, October 23, 2010

Depart WPI housing: Thursday, December 16, 2010

Site Specific Information

I. City Lay-out

San José is nestled in the central valley of Costa Rica. Since it is elevated somewhat from both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, it is ideally located to provide a comfortable and pleasant climate. The city boasts a very efficient inexpensive public transportation system and a plethora of relatively inexpensive taxis. Getting around is easy.

II. Mail and Contact Telephone Number

The apartment building in which you will live is located in one of the nicest residential areas in metropolitan San Jose; it is a very short walk to the Avenida Central, the main road where you will find buses and taxis to help you get around.

If you have mail sent the address is as follows:

Your name
c/o Hacienda Bogata
Aptdo. 8-5910-1000
San José, Costa Rica

It takes at least seven days for mail to arrive in San José. Sometimes, it takes as long as three weeks.

Mail will also reach you if sent to you at Aparthotel Tairona
75 Metros Oeste de Taco Bell
Barrio Dent
San Pedro, Costa Rica

Telephone number at the switchboard (from the US) is 011-506-2234-0146

This second address is very reliable, but packages may take a very long time to arrive or not arrive.

Consistent with WPI's Residence Hall policy there are no pets allowed in project center housing. Violation of this policy can result in your termination from a residential project center.

Calling Home

Calling home from a foreign country can be a difficult and frustrating experience. Phones may not be familiar and the costs of calling overseas with local currency may be very high. For these reasons, it is highly recommended that you carry some sort of calling card.

NO MAIL WILL BE FORWARDED TO YOU AFTER YOU LEAVE SAN JOSÉ

What To Do When You Arrive

The hotel can pick you up. We will send them the arrival times, and if you wish the pickup service, you must let us know. If you do not select the pickup service, when you arrive at the airport, tell the taxi driver to take you to the following address:

Aparthotel Tairona
75 Metros Oeste de Taco Bell en Barrio Dent (San Pedro)

It will cost you about \$15, even if there are several of you. The charge is to the location, and you pay at a booth just as you exit the airport. You can pay in American dollars. The airport taxis are regulated.

The building is a white building that has many small windows in the front. The name "Tairona" is visible on the building. Addresses in Costa Rica are given in relationship to a well-known location. For our building, Taco Bell in Barrio Dent, San Pedro is the landmark.

In Costa Rica, outgoing mail is taken to the post office. There are very few post boxes on the streets and pick-up may not be reliable. Do not have anything of value sent to you unless it is done through a courier service. It won't arrive.

III. Once at Your Housing

When you arrive, check the inventory list for what your room contains. No one can vacate the room at the end without going over the list with the housing agent and advisors, so you want to make sure that you know what the inventory is.

Everyone in the room will be held accountable for all items including knives, forks, spoons, etc., and what is missing will be billed to you on your next tuition bill. Make a list of all damaged equipment and furniture in your room and give it to your advisor. This is important so that we can insure that you will not be assessed damages for those that already exist. The rooms will be examined for damages once you have vacated them. If something breaks while you are there, tell the housing agent immediately. You will not be charged for ordinary wear.

Several years ago, some students "borrowed" blankets and towels to take to the beach. The hotel lends such things to the students for field trips **BUT** you have to sign them out. Students are charged for those losses under the current system.

The apartments are well maintained and comfortable. You will have a two-burner hot plate, a microwave and a medium-size refrigerator. The apartments are arranged around a central interior, covered courtyard. In addition, there is a guard at the front door who ensures that only residents come in the building and who will take telephone messages for you. The fax number is 253-6429. Remember from the U.S., you must dial 011-506 first.

You will have to buy a few small things for your apartment, because the equipment is very basic.

Because you are in the tropics, cockroaches and other bugs can be a problem. Therefore, **YOU MUST WASH YOUR DISHES AND TAKE OUT THE GARBAGE AFTER COOKING EACH MEAL. THIS IS MANDATORY AND NOT NEGOTIABLE. ALSO, THE FLOORS IN YOUR BEDROOMS AND THE BATHROOM COUNTERS MUST BE COMPLETELY CLEAR EVERY MORNING BEFORE YOU LEAVE IN ORDER THAT THE HOUSEKEEPER CAN DO WHAT SHE NEEDS TO DO.**

Bring at least one substantial suitcase lock to Costa Rica. Your computer is pretty safe in your rooms. However, when you leave it in your room unattended, lock it into a suitcase. Do not

leave money around or in drawers or on shelves. Please keep it locked into a suitcase, also. While theft is not a problem in the hotel, there is no point in risking your belongings. There is a safe in each room, but it is small.

The housekeeper will sweep as necessary and will clean the bathroom sink and floor each day and leave each of you a clean towel each day except Sunday. All of the towels look alike, so make sure you keep yours apart from the others. You may leave the dirty ones in ONE pile in the bathroom each morning before you leave so that they can be replaced. Sheets are provided and are routinely changed. **MAKE YOUR OWN BED.**

No guests are allowed overnight in our housing. Any breaches of this rule will result in all occupants of the apartment being held equally responsible and liable for disciplinary action. If you are romantically involved with any other student at the center, please be considerate of your roommates. Please, don't embarrass yourself or others.

IV. Faculty Accommodations

The faculty will be living at the same place as you. Since noise carries from your apartments very easily to the central courtyard and then to everyone else's apartment, you should keep the noise under control. Others not associated with WPI will also be staying in the building. The management has its own rules for when you must be inside the building at night and behavior. You must follow those rules as well as the WPI ones.

V. Telephones

The telephone in your apartment is set up so that you can make calls. You will need an international calling card for any long distance calls you make from other phones. Check with your long distance carrier. We are told that ATT has an excellent one. Calls from Costa Rica are very expensive. You might want to investigate the call-back services, too. ICE has a good \$10 calling card that once, upon a time, you could buy at the ICE building on Av2 near the Teatro Nacional. That card is not sold on the street, and you may have to ask at an ICE office where the current location for that purchase is. SKYPE also functions quite well.

We have wireless access to the internet everywhere in the hotel.

VI. Equipment and Laundry

Each bedroom is equipped with sheets, pillows, and blankets. Also, towels are supplied, so all you will need to bring is your clothing and beach towels. If you use a hair dryer, you will need to bring that too. Costa Rica runs on the same electric current as we do, so no converters or different plugs are necessary.

Please note that there are laundry facilities. You can use them after 5:00 in the afternoon when the housekeeping staff leaves for the day.

VII. Transportation

As mentioned above, San José has many buses and taxis. Transportation all over the country is very inexpensive, so you can go from one end of the country to the other for only a few dollars. Travel around San Jose by bus will cost you only few cents.

VIII. Medical Services

*Hospital: Clinica Biblica
San José, Costa Rica
Calle Central y Calle Primera, Avenida 14
San José, Costa Rica
Dr. Juan Bautista Perez Valverde, Director
Dr. Jorge R. Cortes, Assistant Director
Direct Phone No. (506)2221-3922*

Central Phone No. (506)2257-5252
Emergency Phone No. (506)2257-0466
Fax No. (506)2221-0645

Check with your stateside medical insurance company to see if it will cover you in Costa Rica and to find out how you would make a claim. Be sure to tell your carrier the dates of your stay in Costa Rica. In addition, you will have access to the emergency coverage through your international ID card, but make sure you understand the terms of that coverage and how it would work in regards to your primary medical insurance.

There is excellent medical care available at several private hospitals. We have used Clínica Bíblica many times in the past, which is where most of our Costa Rican friends go, too. **You must pay on the spot for service, but you can use a credit card.** Care is cheaper there than here. In many cases, the doctors have been to medical school or have completed residencies in the states or in Spain or other European countries. Our Costa Rican friends can refer us to their own private doctors, if necessary. **Usually, you can claim payments after the fact from your insurance company, so make sure you BRING A CREDIT CARD FOR EMERGENCIES.** We have seen a broken foot; an advisor got an eye infection, one person had to see a dentist for a gum infection, and several students had flu and secondary infections afterwards that required antibiotics. *You can't assume you won't get sick. Do not assume that advisors can front the money for you.*

If you want to be reimbursed, **make sure that the papers you take away from the hospital or from the doctor have a diagnosis written on them.**

Consider getting a flu shot when you arrive. It will be winter there and many of us have gotten the flu in past years. However, those of us who got the shot did not. *Advisors will be able to provide you with the information necessary to get the shot.* It is done by a doctor in a local pharmacy and costs less than \$20.

IX. Banking

The most straightforward way to handle your money is by purchasing travelers checks before you arrive in Costa Rica. If you or your parents are AAA members, you can get the travelers checks without charge. Remember to account for weekend travel, laundry, entertainment, and miscellaneous. Most students' find that the amount they budgeted is not enough--account for miscalculation because you cannot cash a US check. **Some ATM machines are available in Costa Rica, but they don't always work for us. Sometimes, the machines eat the ATM cards.** Our nearby mall has two places that will cash travelers checks, even on Sunday, and there are several ATM machines (though they are fickle). You can change your checks at almost any bank. Banks are used for a variety of services in Costa Rica. Make sure that you carry a photocopy of the front pages of your passport with you at all times. It's the law in Costa Rica that you must carry identification at all times. When you cash a traveler's check or change US dollars to colones, you will need your passport. Your parents can wire money to you through a bank for emergencies.

X. Communication

Communication between faculty and students at the Costa Rica Project Center is very easy since you will be living just feet away from each other. **Bring "post its" for leaving messages on each other's doors.**

XI. Dress Code

It is always warm in Costa Rica. The temperature ranges from the mid-70's to the low-80's in San Jose. Bring summer clothes only and a light sweater or two for the evenings, which can get quite cool. Obviously you will need bathing suits for the beach. **Bring #15 sun block** for both beach and city; the tropical sun is dangerous. This is no joke. You will have a great tan after a few short days even if you wear sun block every day. **No one wears shorts in the city. If you do, you will be marked as an American tourist.** Please observe cultural rules and wear shorts only while traveling to and from the weekend excursions and while away from cities.

You will need hiking boots or sturdy sneakers for rain forests. The latter should have heavy-duty soles with big tread for helping you to keep from slipping if you walk through the inevitable mud. You should also bring jeans and at least one heavy sweater and a windbreaker for visiting volcanoes, the tops of which can be at a very high altitude. You'll need to layer clothes. There, it can be cold. A backpack and water bottle will be very useful for weekend travel. If you plan to do serious hiking, read guide books to know what other equipment you may need.

Professional dress is required at all times at the agencies, but the definition varies from agency to agency. At some of the places, men will wear jackets and ties, although the custom will vary from organization to organization. Follow the custom of your agency. Check with your liaison. If you do not need a jacket at work, you won't need one for other purposes. But men should bring dress shirts and ties, and plan to dress up for the final presentation.

The expectation for women is that they will wear dress pants and dressy blouses to work if they are not wearing skirts. Women in Costa Rica dress more formally than women do here for work, so **khakis, work shirts, and tank tops, are not appropriate.** When you are representing your organization at interviews or at other organizations, you are expected to dress professionally. It is inappropriate for cleavage and midriffs to be exposed in the workplace.

As said on the previous page, no one, neither males nor females will wear shorts in town, either for work or for leisure. That's considered tacky and will clearly mark you as a tourist. The only time shorts are appropriate is when you are on the bus headed for the beach or in our housing, or on-site collecting data if you have cleared wearing shorts with your sponsor.

XII. Meetings

Please note that all Center meetings and weekly faculty meetings at agencies are considered mandatory. If another meeting comes up that conflicts with these, make sure that you have prior approval of your faculty.

Please keep in mind that the time of your organization liaisons is valuable. However, you are entitled to some regular contact with your liaisons. Therefore, if you find that arranging meetings with your liaison is difficult, your faculty should intervene quickly in order to discuss the need for the meetings. If you don't tell the faculty there is a need, they won't know.

Occasionally, a group will feel some pressure from the agency to go beyond the bounds of what reasonably can be accomplished in seven weeks. If such is the case with your team, enlist the help of your advisor early to negotiate with the agency a way to contain the project.

XIII. Required Books and Other Materials

Bring your D-Term ID2050 books and writing cribs. Also bring a statistics manual if you are analyzing statistical data.

1. Dictionaries for both English and Spanish
2. Writing guide from ID2050.

XIV. Sightseeing

Costa Rica is rich in Hispanic heritage. There are numerous guidebooks commercially available to help you plan leisure time. Plan to get out of San José on most weekends, but don't forget that San José has some excellent museums like the Museo Nacional, Museo de los Niños (Children and Science Museum), the Museum de Oro (Gold Museum), the bug museum at the University of Costa Rica, or the various art museums. It even has a zoo. You can fill a weekend easily.

XV. Curfew

Sunday through Thursday every student is expected to be in the housing by 1:00am. Weekend nights, the expectation is that you will return to the housing by 3:00am. If you are delayed and will not meet that time, then you **MUST** call the front desk to tell them when you are to be expected and to provide them with a number where you can be reached in an emergency. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in judicial action on site or back at WPI.

XVI. Getting to Your Agency

Remember that you are responsible for getting directions to your agencies. **Your faculty are NOT responsible for that.** To avoid a problem, get those directions before you leave for Costa Rica.

Consular Information- Costa Rica

May 20, 2010

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Costa Rica is a middle-income, developing country with a strong democratic tradition. Tourist facilities are extensive and generally adequate. The capital is San Jose. While English is a second language for many Costa Ricans, knowledge of Spanish is necessary for legal matters. Persons contemplating a visit to Costa Rica should carefully read the sections on Safety and Security and Crime below. Persons contemplating an investment in Costa Rica should also read the section on Special Circumstances below. Potential visitors or investors should also read the [Overseas Security Advisory Council reports](#) and the Department of State's [Background Notes on Costa Rica](#) for additional information.

REGISTRATION / EMBASSY LOCATION: Americans living or traveling in Costa Rica are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the [State Department's travel registration web site](#) so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within Costa Rica. Americans without internet access may register directly with the Embassy. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy to contact them in case of emergency. The Embassy is located in Pavas, San Jose, and may be reached at (506) 2519-2000; the extension for the Consular Section is 2188. The Embassy is open Monday through Friday but is closed on Costa Rican and U.S. federal holidays. Those seeking information are strongly encouraged to utilize the [Embassy website](#). For emergencies arising outside normal business hours, U.S. citizens may call (506) 2220-3127 and ask for the duty officer.

ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS: For entry into Costa Rica, a U.S. citizen must present a valid passport that will not expire for at least thirty days after arrival and a roundtrip/outbound ticket. Airlines should not permit passengers to board flights to Costa Rica without a roundtrip ticket unless they have Costa Rican citizenship, residency or a visa. There is a departure tax of \$26USD for visitors.

Passports should be in good condition; Costa Rican immigration may deny entry if the passport is damaged in any way. Costa Rican authorities generally permit U.S. citizens to stay up to ninety days. To extend a stay, travelers must submit an application for an extension to the Office of Temporary Permits in the Costa Rican Department of Immigration. Extension requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Tourists who stay more than ninety days, without receiving an extension, may experience a delay at the airport when departing or may be denied entry to Costa Rica on future visits.

Individuals planning to study in Costa Rica can only apply for a student visa from Costa Rican Immigration after arriving in the country. Neither the Costa Rican Embassy in Washington, DC nor its Consulates have the authority to issue student visas. This has led to some confusion by airline employees who mistakenly believe that individuals traveling to Costa Rica as part of a legitimate exchange program must have a return travel date that is less than 90 days from their initial date of travel.

Persons traveling to Costa Rica from some countries in South America and Sub-Saharan Africa must provide evidence of a valid yellow fever vaccination prior to entry. The South American countries include, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

See "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES" for information on requirements to carry identity documentation within Costa Rica and on travel by minors who are dual nationals or legal residents.

The most authoritative and up-to-date information on Costa Rican entry and exit requirements may be obtained from the Consular Section of the Embassy of Costa Rica at 2114 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC 20008, telephone (202) 234-2945/46, fax (202) 265-4795. You may visit the [Embassy of Costa Rica's website](#) or contact the Embassy via [email](#). You may also obtain

information from the Costa Rican consulates in Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Denver. Please also see the [Costa Rican Immigration Agency website](#). It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Costa Rica in Washington or one of Costa Rica's Consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements before shipping any items.

[Visit the Embassy of Costa Rica web site for the most current visa information.](#)

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the prevention of [international child abduction](#) can be found on our web site. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information](#) sheet.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: There have been no recent acts of terrorism in Costa Rica. Visitors to Costa Rica may experience the effects of civil disturbances such as work stoppages and strikes. Although infrequent, these acts can create inconveniences for visitors. On both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts currents are swift and dangerous, and there are few lifeguards or signs warning of dangerous beaches. Every year a number of American citizens drown in Costa Rica due to riptides or sudden drop-offs while in shallow water. Extreme caution is advised.

Adventure tourism is popular in Costa Rica, and many companies offer white-water rafting, bungee jumping, jungle canopy tours, SCUBA diving, and other outdoor attractions. Americans are urged to use caution in selecting adventure tourism companies. The Government of Costa Rica regulates and monitors the safety of these companies, and registered tourism companies with operating permits must meet safety standards and have insurance coverage. Nonetheless, be advised that safety regulations enforced in Costa Rica are not as stringent as safety regulations in the United States. [The Costa Rican Tourism Institute \(ICT\) web site](#) has contact information for licensed tour operators and travel agencies.

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs' web site, where the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#), as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#), can be found.

Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's [A Safe Trip Abroad](#).

CRIME: Crime is a significant concern for Costa Ricans and visitors alike. Local law enforcement agencies have limited capabilities and do not act by to U.S. law enforcement standards. Daytime robberies in public places occur, and thieves have been known to brandish weapons or threaten violence if victims resist. Almost two million foreign tourists, about half American, visit Costa Rica annually. All are potential targets for criminals, primarily thieves looking for cash, jewelry, credit cards, electronic items and passports.

Thieves often work in small groups. The most prevalent scam involves the surreptitious puncturing of tires of rental cars, often near restaurants, tourist attractions, airports, or close to the car rental agencies themselves. When the travelers pull over, "good Samaritans" quickly appear to help change the tire - and just as quickly remove valuables from the car, sometimes brandishing weapons. Drivers with flat tires are advised to drive, if at all possible, to the nearest service station or other public area and change the tire themselves, watching valuables at all times. Another common scam involves one person dropping change in a crowded area, such as on a bus. When the victim tries to assist, a wallet or other item is taken.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to take proactive steps to avoid becoming crime victims. Visitors should not walk, hike or exercise alone, and should bear in mind that crowded tourist attractions and resort areas popular with foreign tourists are common venues for criminal activity. Travelers

should ignore any verbal harassment, and avoid carrying passports, large amounts of cash, jewelry or expensive photographic equipment.

Tourists are encouraged to carry photocopies of the passport data page and Costa Rican entry stamp on their persons, and leave the original passport in a hotel safe or other secure place. Costa Rican immigration authorities conduct routine immigration checks at locations, such as bars in downtown San Jose and beach communities. American citizens detained during one of these checks who have only a copy of the passport may be required to provide the original passport with appropriate stamps.

Travelers renting vehicles should purchase an adequate level of locally valid theft insurance, park in secure lots whenever possible, and never leave valuables in their vehicles. The U.S. Embassy receives several reports daily of valuables, identity documents, and other items stolen from locked vehicles, primarily rental cars. Thefts from parked cars occur in cities, at beaches, at the airport, in front of restaurants and hotels, and at national parks and other tourist attractions.

Travelers should use only licensed taxis, which are red with medallions (yellow triangles containing numbers) painted on the side. Licensed taxis at the airport are painted orange. All licensed taxis should have working door handles, locks, seatbelts and meters (called "*marías*"); passengers are required to use seatbelts. When traveling by bus, avoid putting bags or other personal belongings in the storage bins. Visitors should at all times have their belongings in their line of sight and their valuables in their possession.

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: The loss or theft of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the U.S. Embassy. If you are the victim of any crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the Embassy for assistance. The Embassy staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular personnel can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and provide a list of attorneys if needed.

The Tourist Police are present in many popular tourist destinations and can assist with the reporting of a crime, which can be frustrating for victims due to language barriers and the local regulation that only allows the investigative police ("OIJ") to take crime reports. Hotel staff frequently assist visitors in reporting crime to the proper authorities. Alternatively, Costa Rica's 911 system has English speaking operators who can also provide assistance.

Please see our information on [Victims of Crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Costa Rica's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Costa Rica are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, prosecutable in the United States. Please see our information on [Criminal Penalties](#).

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Land Ownership and Shoreline Property: U.S. citizens are urged to use extreme caution when making real estate purchases, and consult reputable legal counsel and investigate thoroughly all aspects before entering into a contract. Coastal land within fifty meters of the high tide line is open to the public and therefore closed to development, and construction on the next one hundred fifty meters inland is possible only with the approval of the local municipality.

Squatters: Organized squatter groups have invaded properties in various parts of the country. These squatter groups, often supported by politically active persons and non-governmental

organizations, take advantage of legal provisions that allow people without land to gain title to unused agricultural property. Local courts may show considerable sympathy for the squatters. Victims of squatters have reported threats, harassment, and violence.

Documentation Requirements: Visitors are required to carry appropriate documentation at all times. However, due to the high incidence of passport theft, tourists are permitted and encouraged to carry photocopies of the data page and entry stamp from the passport, leaving the passport in a hotel safe or other secure place. However, as noted under CRIME, Costa Rican immigration authorities conduct routine checks for illegal immigrants, especially in bars located in downtown San Jose and in beach communities. An American citizen detained during one of these checks and carrying only the copy of the passport will be required to produce the original passport. Tourists should carry their passports when taking domestic air flights, or when traveling overnight or a considerable distance from their hotel. Tourists who carry passports are urged to place them securely in an inside pocket.

Exit Procedures for Costa Rican citizens and legal residents: All children born in Costa Rica acquire Costa Rican citizenship at birth, and may only depart the country upon presentation of an exit permit issued by immigration authorities. This policy, designed to prevent international child abduction, applies to dual national U.S./Costa Rican citizens as well as U.S. citizens who are legal residents in Costa Rica. Parents of minors who obtained Costa Rican citizenship through a parent or through birth in Costa Rica are advised to consult with appropriate Costa Rican authorities prior to travel to Costa Rica, especially if one (or both) parent(s) is not accompanying the child.

Disaster Preparedness: Costa Rica is located in an earthquake and volcanic zone. Serious flooding occurs annually in the Caribbean Province of Limon, but flooding occurs in other parts of Costa Rica as well, depending on the time of year and rainfall. [General information about natural disaster preparedness](#) is available from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Medical care in San Jose is adequate, but is limited in areas outside of San Jose. Most prescription and over-the-counter medications are available throughout Costa Rica. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services, and U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. [A list of local doctors and medical facilities can be obtained from the U.S. Embassy in San Jose.](#) An ambulance may be summoned by calling 911. Most ambulances provide transportation but little or no medical assistance.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the [CDC's website](#). For [information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad](#), consult the [World Health Organization's \(WHO\) web site](#). Further health information for travelers is available from the [WHO](#).

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Costa Rica.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. Please see our information on [medical insurance overseas](#).

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Costa Rica is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Roads are often in poor condition, and large potholes with the potential to cause significant damage to vehicles are common. Traffic signs, even on major highways, are inadequate and few roads are lined. Shoulders are narrow or consist of drainage ditches. Pedestrians, cyclists, and farm animals are common sights along main roads, creating additional potential driving hazards. Traffic laws and speed limits are often ignored, turn signals are rarely used, passing on dangerous stretches of highway is common, and pedestrians are not given the right of way. As a result, the fatality rate for pedestrians and those riding bicycles and motorcycles is disproportionately high. All of the above, in addition to poor visibility due to heavy fog or rain, can make driving treacherous. Landslides are common in the rainy season. Main highways and principal roads in the major cities are paved but some roads to beaches and other rural locations are not.

Accordingly, many destinations are accessible only with high clearance, four-wheel drive vehicles. Travelers are advised to call ahead to their hotels to ask about the current status of access roads. Travelers should minimize driving at night, especially outside urban areas.

Costa Rica has a 911 system for reporting emergencies. In the event of a traffic accident, vehicles must be left where they are. Both the traffic police and an insurance investigator must make accident reports before the vehicles are moved.

Please refer to our [road safety](#) page for more information or visit the web site of [the Costa Rican Ministry for Public Transport](#).

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The [U.S. Federal Aviation Administration](#) (FAA) has assessed the Government of Costa Rica's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Costa Rica's air carrier operations. For more information, travelers may visit the [FAA web site](#).

BACKGROUND NOTES – COSTA RICA

Official Name: [Republic of Costa Rica](#)



PROFILE

Geography

Area: 51,100 sq. km (19,730 sq. mi.) about the size of the states of Vermont and New Hampshire combined.

Cities: *Capital*--San Jose (greater metropolitan area pop. 2.1 million, the greater metropolitan area as defined by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy includes the cities of Alajuela, Cartago, and Heredia). *Other major cities outside the San Jose capital area*--Puntarenas, Limon, and Liberia.

Terrain: A rugged, central range separates the eastern and western coastal plains.

Climate: Mild in the central highlands, tropical and subtropical in coastal areas.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Costa Rican(s).

Population (2009): 4.299 million.

Annual population growth rate (2009 est.): 1.3%.

Ethnic groups: European and some mestizo 94%, African origin 3%, Chinese 1%, Amerindian 1%, other 1%.

Religion: Roman Catholic 70.5%, Evangelical Protestant 13.8%, other 4.3%, none 11.3%.

Languages: Spanish, with a southwestern Caribbean Creole dialect of English spoken around the Limon area.

Education: *Years compulsory*--9. *Attendance*--99% grades 1-6, 71% grades 7-9. *Literacy*--96%.

Health: *Infant mortality rate*--9.45/1,000. *Life expectancy*--men 74.61 yrs., women 79.94 yrs.

Work force (2009 est.): 2.05 million; this official estimate excludes Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica legally and illegally.

Government

Type: Democratic republic.

Independence: September 15, 1821.

Constitution: November 7, 1949.

Branches: *Executive*--president (head of government and chief of state) elected for one 4-year term, two vice presidents, Cabinet (22 ministers, two of whom are also vice presidents).

Legislative--57-deputy unicameral Legislative Assembly elected at 4-year intervals. *Judicial*--Supreme Court of Justice (22 magistrates elected by Legislative Assembly for renewable 8-year terms). The offices of the Ombudsman, Comptroller General, and Procurator General assert

autonomous oversight of the government.

Subdivisions: Seven provinces, divided into 81 cantons, subdivided into 421 districts.

Political parties: National Liberation Party (PLN), Citizen's Action Party (PAC), Libertarian Movement Party (PML), Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC), and other smaller parties.

Suffrage: Universal and compulsory at age 18.

Economy

GDP (2009): \$29.29 billion.

GDP PPP (2009 est.): \$48.19 billion.

Inflation (2009 est.): 8.3%.

Real growth rate (2009 est.): -2.5%.

Per capita income (2009): \$6,900. (PPP \$11,300, 2009 est.)

Unemployment (2009 est.): 6.4%.

Currency: Costa Rica Colon (CRC).

Natural resources: Hydroelectric power, forest products, fisheries products.

Agriculture (6.5% of GDP): *Products*--bananas, pineapples, coffee, beef, sugar, rice, dairy products, vegetables, fruits, ornamental plants, corn, beans, potatoes, timber.

Industry (25.5% of GDP): *Types*--electronic components, medical equipment, textiles and apparel, tires, food processing, construction materials, fertilizer, plastic products.

Commerce, tourism, and services (68% of GDP): Hotels, restaurants, tourist services, banks, and insurance.

Trade (2009 est.): *Exports*--\$8.096 billion: integrated circuits, medical equipment, bananas, pineapples, coffee, melons, ornamental plants, sugar, textiles, electronic components, medical equipment. *Major markets* (2008)--U.S. 23.9%, Netherlands 13.3%, China 12.9%, U.K. 5%, Mexico 4.9%. *Imports*--\$10.53 billion: raw materials, consumer goods, capital equipment, petroleum. *Major suppliers* (2008)--U.S. 42.9%, Mexico 6.9%, Venezuela 6.3%, Japan 5.4%, China 4.7%, Brazil 4.2%.

PEOPLE

Unlike many of their Central American neighbors, present-day Costa Ricans are largely of European rather than mestizo descent; Spain was the primary country of origin. However, an estimated 10% to 15% of the population is Nicaraguan, of fairly recent arrival and primarily of mestizo origin. Descendants of 19th-century Jamaican immigrant workers constitute an English-speaking minority and--at 3% of the population--number about 119,000. Few of the native Indians survived European contact; the indigenous population today numbers about 29,000 or less than 1% of the population.

HISTORY

In 1502, on his fourth and last voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus made the first European landfall in the area. Settlement of Costa Rica began in 1522. For nearly three centuries, Spain administered the region as part of the Captaincy General of Guatemala under a military governor. The Spanish optimistically called the country "Rich Coast." Finding little gold or other valuable minerals in Costa Rica, however, the Spanish turned to agriculture.

The small landowners' relative poverty, the lack of a large indigenous labor force, the population's ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, and Costa Rica's isolation from the Spanish colonial centers in Mexico and the Andes all contributed to the development of an autonomous and individualistic agrarian society. An egalitarian tradition also arose. This tradition survived the widened class distinctions brought on by the 19th-century introduction of banana and coffee cultivation and consequent accumulations of local wealth.

Costa Rica joined other Central American provinces in 1821 in a joint declaration of independence from Spain. Although the newly independent provinces formed a Federation, border disputes broke out among them, adding to the region's turbulent history and conditions. Costa Rica's

northern Guanacaste Province was annexed from Nicaragua in one such regional dispute. In 1838, long after the Central American Federation ceased to function in practice, Costa Rica formally withdrew and proclaimed itself sovereign.

An era of peaceful democracy in Costa Rica began in 1899 with elections considered the first truly free and honest ones in the country's history. This began a trend that continued until today with only two lapses: in 1917-19, Federico Tinoco ruled as a dictator, and, in 1948, Jose Figueres led an armed uprising in the wake of a disputed presidential election.

With more than 2,000 dead, the 44-day civil war resulting from this uprising was the bloodiest event in 20th-century Costa Rican history, but the victorious junta drafted a constitution guaranteeing free elections with universal suffrage and the abolition of the military. Figueres became a national hero, winning the first election under the new constitution in 1953. Since then, Costa Rica has held 15 presidential elections, the latest in 2010.

GOVERNMENT

Costa Rica is a democratic republic with a very strong system of constitutional checks and balances. Executive responsibilities are vested in a president, who is the country's center of power. There also are two vice presidents and a 20-plus member cabinet. The president and 57 Legislative Assembly deputies are elected for 4-year terms. In April 2003, the Costa Rican Constitutional Court annulled a 1969 constitutional reform which had barred presidents from running for reelection. As a result, the law reverted back to the 1949 Constitution, which permits ex-presidents to run for reelection after they have been out of office for two presidential terms, or eight years. Deputies may run for reelection after sitting out one term, or four years. On January 1, 2009, the U.S.-Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) entered into force in Costa Rica.

The electoral process is supervised by an independent Supreme Electoral Tribunal--a commission of three principal magistrates and six alternates selected by the Supreme Court of Justice. Judicial power is exercised by the Supreme Court of Justice, composed of 22 magistrates selected for renewable 8-year terms by the Legislative Assembly, and subsidiary courts. A Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court (Sala IV), established in 1989, reviews the constitutionality of legislation and executive decrees and all habeas corpus warrants. The last national elections took place in February 2010.

The offices of the Comptroller General of the Republic, the Solicitor General, and the Ombudsman exercise oversight of the government. The Comptroller General's office has a statutory responsibility to scrutinize all but the smallest public sector contracts and strictly enforces procedural requirements. Along with the Sala IV, these institutions are playing an increasingly prominent role in governing Costa Rica.

There are provincial boundaries for administrative purposes, but no elected provincial officials. Costa Rica held its first mayoral elections in December 2002, whereby mayors were elected to 4-year terms by popular vote through general elections. Prior to 2002, the office of mayor did not exist, and the president of each municipal council was responsible for the administration of his/her municipality. The most recent nationwide mayoral elections took place in December 2006. Autonomous state agencies enjoy considerable operational independence; they include the telecommunications and electrical power monopoly and the state insurance monopoly (sectors opened to competition by CAFTA-DR), the state petroleum refinery, the nationalized commercial banks, and the social security agency. Costa Rica has no military and maintains only domestic police and security forces. A professional Coast Guard was established in 2000.

Principal Government Officials

President--Oscar ARIAS Sanchez (President-elect Laura CHINCHILLA Miranda and Vice

Presidents-elect Alfio PIVA and Luis LIEBERMAN will take office in May 2010)
Foreign Minister--Bruno STAGNO Ugarte
Ambassador to the United States--Luis Diego ESCALANTE Vargas
Ambassador to the Organization of American States--Jose Enrique CASTILLO Barrantes
Ambassador to the United Nations--Jorge URBINA Ortega

Costa Rica maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 2114 S Street NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-234-2945 and 202-234-2946).

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Costa Rica has long emphasized the development of democracy and respect for human rights. The country's political system has steadily developed, maintaining democratic institutions and an orderly, constitutional scheme for government succession. Several factors have contributed to this trend, including enlightened leadership, comparative prosperity, flexible class lines, educational opportunities that have created a stable middle class, and high social indicators. Also, because Costa Rica has no armed forces, it has avoided military involvement in political affairs, unlike other countries in the region.

In February 2010, President-elect Laura Chinchilla of the National Liberation Party (PLN) won the popular election with 46.72 % of the vote, defeating principal rivals Ottón Solís of the Civil Action Party (PAC) and Otto Guevara of the Libertarian Movement (ML). Throughout her campaign, Chinchilla's primary message was strengthening security; her platform also included improvement of the country's infrastructure, creation of a progressive income tax and expanding jobs through a "green jobs" initiative, better living conditions for children and senior citizens, and supporting women's issues. Following the 2010 elections, the 57-member unicameral Legislative Assembly fragmented into several parties, with no faction having a plurality--the PLN won 23 seats, the PAC 12 seats, ML has 9 seats, the Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC) has 6 seats, and the remaining seats are split among lesser known parties.

ECONOMY

After experiencing positive growth over the past several years, the Costa Rican economy shrank slightly in 2009 (-2.5%) due to the global economic crisis. The services sector--around 68% of GDP--was the most affected; tourism fell by 8%. However, Costa Rica enjoys the region's highest standard of living, with a per capita income of about U.S. \$6,900, and an unemployment rate of 6.4%. Consumer price inflation is high but relatively constant at about a 10% annual rate in the last decade. Both the central government and the overall public sector ran fiscal surpluses in 2007.

Significant legislative hurdles slow down passage of new laws and present challenges for the country's economic policymakers. Top priorities for the incoming representatives include fully completing the implementation of CAFTA-DR, passing fiscal reform, pursuing responsible monetary policy, and creating opportunities for inclusive economic growth. Costa Rica ranks 121st out of 183 countries in the 2010 World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. This hampers the flow of investment and resources badly needed to repair and rebuild the country's deteriorated public infrastructure.

Costa Rica's major economic resources are its fertile land and frequent rainfall, its well-educated population, and its location in the Central American isthmus, which provides easy access to North and South American markets and direct ocean access to the European and Asian continents. Costa Rica is known worldwide for its conservation efforts with more than 26% of its land under protection, thus safeguarding more than 5% of the entire world's biodiversity.

Costa Rica used to be known principally as a producer of bananas and coffee, but pineapples have surpassed coffee as the number two agricultural export. In recent years, Costa Rica has

successfully attracted important investments by such companies as Intel Corporation, which employs 3,200 people at its \$1.996 billion microprocessor plant; Proctor and Gamble, which employs about 1,200 people in its administrative center for the Western Hemisphere; and Boston Scientific, Allergan, Hospira, and Baxter Healthcare from the health care products industry. Manufacturing and industry's contribution to GDP overtook agriculture over the course of the 1990s, led by foreign investment in Costa Rica's free trade zone. Well over half of that investment has come from the United States. Del Monte, Dole, and Chiquita have a large presence in the banana and pineapple industries. Two-way trade between the U.S. and Costa Rica exceeded \$9.6 billion in 2009.

Costa Rica is a country rich with renewable energy. It gets about 99% of all its electrical energy from clean sources, and it is aiming to become carbon neutral by 2021. Costa Rica has oil deposits off its Atlantic Coast, but the Pacheco administration (2002-2006) decided not to develop the deposits for environmental reasons. The Arias administration (2006-2010) reaffirmed this policy. The country's mountainous terrain and abundant rainfall have permitted the construction of a dozen hydroelectric power plants, making it largely self-sufficient in electricity, but it is completely reliant on imports for liquid fuels. Costa Rica has the potential to become a major electricity exporter if plans for new generating plants and a regional distribution grid are realized. Its mild climate and trade winds make neither heating nor cooling necessary, particularly in the highland cities and towns where some 90% of the population lives.

Costa Rica's public infrastructure has suffered from a lack of maintenance and new investment. Most parts of the country are accessible through an extensive road system of more than 30,000 kilometers, although much of the system has fallen into disrepair. Contamination in rivers, beaches, and aquifers is a matter of rising concern. Although Costa Rica has made significant progress in the past decade in expanding access to water supplies and sanitation, just 3.5% of the country's sewage is managed in sewage treatment facilities, and the Water and Sewage Institute (AyA) estimates that perhaps 50% of septic systems function. In 2007, Costa Rica experienced nationwide blackouts resulting from a severe dry season (which limited hydroelectric resources) and the state electricity monopoly's inadequate investment in maintenance and capacity increases.

Costa Rica has sought to widen its economic and trade ties within and outside the region. Costa Rica signed a bilateral trade agreement with Mexico in 1994, which was later amended to cover a wider range of products. Costa Rica joined other Central American countries, and the Dominican Republic, in establishing a Trade and Investment Council with the United States in March 1998. Costa Rica has signed trade agreements with Canada, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, and several Caribbean Community countries. It began negotiating a regional Central American-EU trade agreement in October 2007. Following a public referendum, Costa Rica ratified the U.S.-Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). It entered into force in January 2009. Costa Rica was an active participant in the negotiation of the hemispheric Free Trade Area of the Americas and is active in the Cairns Group, which is pursuing global agricultural trade liberalization within the World Trade Organization. Costa Rica and China are currently moving toward a free trade agreement. In addition to China, negotiators are in talks with Singapore and South Korea.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Costa Rica is an active member of the international community and, in 1993, proclaimed its permanent neutrality. Its record on the environment and human rights and advocacy of peaceful settlement of disputes give it a weight in world affairs far beyond its size. The country lobbied aggressively for the establishment of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and became the first nation to recognize the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Human Rights Court, based in San Jose. In 2009, Costa Rica finished its third term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

During the tumultuous 1980s, then-President Oscar Arias authored a regional peace plan that served as the basis for the Esquipulas Peace Agreement. Arias' efforts earned him the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize. Subsequent agreements, supported by the United States, led to the Nicaraguan election of 1990 and the end of civil war in Nicaragua. Costa Rica also hosted several rounds of negotiations between the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), aiding El Salvador's efforts to emerge from civil war and culminating in that country's 1994 free and fair elections. Costa Rica has been a strong proponent of regional arms limitation agreements. President Arias has publicly supported self-determination in Cuba and expressed concern about eroding democratic institutions in Venezuela. In 2007 Costa Rica established diplomatic ties with China, ending nearly 60 years of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In 2008, Costa Rica established of diplomatic relations with "The State of Palestine," and in 2009 Costa Rica reopened formal relations with Cuba.

U.S.-COSTA RICAN RELATIONS

The United States and Costa Rica have a history of close and friendly relations based on respect for democratic government, human freedoms, free trade, and other shared values. The country generally supports the U.S. in international fora, especially in the areas of democracy and human rights.

The United States is Costa Rica's most important trading partner. The U.S. accounts for almost half of Costa Rica's exports, imports, and tourism, and more than two-thirds of its foreign investment. The two countries share growing concerns for the environment and want to preserve Costa Rica's important tropical resources and prevent environmental degradation. In 2007, the United States reduced Costa Rica's debt in exchange for protection and conservation of Costa Rican forests through a debt for nature swap under the auspices of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act.

The United States responded to Costa Rica's economic needs in the 1980s with significant economic and development assistance programs. Through provision of more than \$1.1 billion in assistance, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supported Costa Rican efforts to stabilize its economy and broaden and accelerate economic growth through policy reforms and trade liberalization. Assistance initiatives in the 1990s concentrated on democratic policies, modernizing the administration of justice, and sustainable development. Once the country had graduated from most forms of U.S. assistance, the USAID Mission in Costa Rica closed in 1996. However, USAID completed a \$9 million project in 2000-01 to support refugees of Hurricane Mitch residing in Costa Rica.

For decades, [Peace Corps](#) volunteers have provided technical assistance in the areas of environmental education, natural resources, management, small business development, microfinance, basic business education, urban youth, and community education.

Over 50,000 private American citizens, including many retirees, reside in the country and more than 700,000 American citizens visit Costa Rica annually. A few vexing expropriation and U.S. citizen investment disputes have hurt Costa Rica's investment climate and have occasionally produced bilateral friction.

The U.S.-Costa Rica Maritime Cooperation Agreement, the first of its kind in Central America, entered into force in late 1999. The agreement, which facilitates cooperation between the Coast Guard of Costa Rica and the U.S. Coast Guard, has resulted in a growing number of narcotics seizures, illegal migrant rescues, illegal fishing seizures, and search-and-rescue missions. Bilateral Costa Rican law enforcement cooperation, particularly against narco-trafficking, has been exemplary.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials
Ambassador--[Anne Slaughter Andrew](#)
Deputy Chief of Mission--Peter M. Brennan (replacement is Eric Nelson, arrival September 2010)
Political/Economic Counselor--Julie Schechter-Torres
Economic Officer--Mark Kissel (replacement is Jason McInerney, arrival July 2010)
Consul General--Paul Birdsall
Management Counselor--Brian Wilson
Public Affairs Counselor--Mark S. Tauber
Defense Representative--Commander Russ Bowen, USCG (acting)
Commercial Attache--Bryan Smith
Agricultural Attache--Kevin Smith
APHIS--Eric Hoffman
Environmental Hub--Timothy Lattimer
Regional Security Officer--S. Wade DeWitt
Drug Enforcement Administration--Phil Springer
Food and Drug Administration--Paul Seligman
Peace Corps Director--Steven Dorsey
OFDA Director--Tim Callaghan

The [U.S. Embassy](#) in Costa Rica is located in Pavas at Boulevard Pavas and Calle 120, San Jose, tel. (506) 519-2000 or (506) 220-3127.

Other Contact Information

U.S. Department of Commerce
Trade Information Center
International Trade Administration
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20320
Tel: 800-USA-TRADE
www.trade.gov

Costa Rican American Chamber of Commerce
c/o Aerocasillas
P.O. Box 025216, Dept 1576
Miami, Florida 33102-5216
Tel: 506-22-0-22-00
Fax: 506-22-0-23-00
Email: Amchamcr@sol.racsa.co.cr

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings. Country Specific Information exists for all countries and includes information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Alerts](#), and [Travel Warnings](#) can be found. [Consular Affairs Publications](#), which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip

abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the [State Department's travel registration](#) website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The [National Passport Information Center](#) (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4-USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778); TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793. Passport information is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. You may speak with a representative Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) and a web site at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. The CDC publication "Health Information for International Travel" can be found at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowBook.aspx>.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including [Background Notes](#) and [daily press briefings](#) along with the directory of [key officers](#) of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

[Export.gov](#) provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

[STAT-USA/Internet](#), a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the [National Trade Data Bank](#)

Section 4 – Transition Issues

Experiences in Transition

adapted from an article by Janet Bennett, Intercultural Communication Institute, Portland OR

Culture Surprise

Culture surprise are the reactions which occur shortly after arrival in a different culture when we see things that are different than we are used to. It usually occurs within the first few days after arrival as we become aware of superficial differences: modes of dress, signs in a different language, nonverbal behaviors.

Culture Stress

Culture stress manifests itself in the fatigue that occurs when we practice new behaviors in a different culture. This occurs as we respond to the behavior of the new culture and try to fit in by doing our own shopping, understanding comments made about us in the local language, learning to navigate public transportation and other attempts to adjust to the new culture.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in our environment that requires adjustment. It results from confronting values different from our own and from the loss of a familiar network and environment. It is a normal healthy reaction to the stress of living in a different culture. Everyone who has spent time living in another culture experiences some form of culture shock.

Symptoms of Culture Shock

Symptoms can be both physical and psychological, and can include: headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, rashes, nausea, irritability, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, depression, loneliness, withdrawal paranoia, anger, aggression, hatred, fear, crying, complaining, self-doubt, boredom, helplessness, confusion, and feelings of inadequacy. This list is not exhaustive.

Prescription for Culture Shock

adapted from an article by Bruce LaBrack, Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication

1. Understand the symptoms and recognize the signs of culture stress.
2. Realize that some degree of discomfort and stress is natural in a cross-cultural experience.
3. Recognize that your reactions are largely emotional and not easily subject to rational management.
4. Gather information *before* you go so at least the differences will be anticipated. Knowledge is power.
5. Look for the logical reasons behind host culture patterns. Discover why things are done the way they are.
6. Relax your grip on your normal culture and try to cheerfully adapt to new rules and roles.
7. Don't give in to the temptation to disparage what you do not like or understand. It probably won't change.
8. Identify a support network among peers, team members, other students and faculty advisor. Use this network, but do not rely on it exclusively.
9. Understand that this is a passing phase of what will be, in retrospect, a time of great learning and personal growth.
10. Give yourself quiet time, some private space, and don't be too hard on yourself.

In preparation to return home

“In a sense, it is the coming back, the return, which gives meaning to the going forth. We really don't know where we've been until we come back to where we were - only where we were may not be as it was because of who we've become, which, after all is why we left.” - Bernard, *Northern Exposure*

Reentry Challenges and Suggestions

adapted from articles by Dr. Bruce LaBrack, School of International Studies, University of the Pacific

There are lots of reasons to look forward to going home, but there are also a number of psychological, social and cultural aspects that prove difficult - often because they are unanticipated. Re-entry into your home culture can be both as challenging and frustrating as living overseas, mostly because our attitude toward going home is that it should be a simple matter of getting resettled, resuming earlier routines, and reestablishing your relationships. Research has shown that re-entry has its own set of special social and psychological adjustments which can be facilitated by being aware of the process and following some advice from those who have already returned.

Interviewing students who have been through the experience of off-campus study generated the following list of issues and suggestions. Their advice is to take the process seriously by being realistic and thinking about it and your possible reactions.

Prepare for the adjustment process and allow enough time

The more you think about what is to come, and know how returning home is both similar to and different from going away, the easier the transition will be. Anticipating is useful. The process of re-entry will take time, just like adjusting to the new culture did. Give yourself time to relax and reflect on what is going on around you, how you are reacting to it, and what you might like to change.

Overcoming boredom

After all the newness and stimulation of your time away, a return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges which characterize project work off-campus, but it is up to you to find ways to overcome such negative reactions - remember a bored person is also boring.

“No one wants to hear”

One thing you can count on upon your return: no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that once others have heard the highlights, any further interest on their part is probably unlikely because they have no frame of reference for your experiences. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else. Be brief.

Cultivate sensitivity and interest

Showing an interest in what others have been doing while you have been gone is the surest way to reestablish your rapport. Much frustration can be avoided if you become as good a listener as a talker.

You can't explain

Even when given a chance to explain all the things you saw, felt and experienced while off-campus, it is likely to be at least a bit frustrating to relay them coherently. It is very difficult to

convey this kind of experience to people who do not have similar frames of reference, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. You can tell people about your trip, but you may fail to make them understand exactly how or why you felt a particular way. It's okay.

Reverse homesickness

Just as you probably missed home for a time after leaving campus, it is just as natural to experience some "reverse" homesickness for the people, places and things that you grew accustomed to while away from WPI. Feelings of loss are an integral part of returning from an off-campus sojourn and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result of study away.

Beware of comparisons

Making comparisons between cultures is natural, particularly after residence abroad; however, the tendency to be an "instant expert" is to be avoided at all costs.

Relationships have changed

It is inevitable that when you return you will notice that some relationships with friends and family will have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while away, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes as well. These changes may be positive or negative, and may seem even trivial to you, but expecting no change is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.

Feelings of alienation

Sometimes the reality of being back home is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had imagined. When real daily life is more demanding than you remembered, it is natural to feel some alienation, see faults you never noticed before, or even become quite critical of everyone and everything for a time. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

Remain flexible

Keeping as many options open as possible is an essential aspect of a successful return home. Attempting to re-socialize totally into old patterns and networks can be difficult, but remaining isolated and aloof is counterproductive.

Loss/compartmentalization of experience

Being home, along with the pressures of schoolwork, family and friends, often combine to make returnees worried that somehow that will "lose" the experience; somehow becoming compartmentalized like souvenirs only occasionally taken out and looked at. You do not have to let that happen. Maintain your contacts. Talk to people who have experiences similar to yours. Practice your skills. Remember your hard work and the fun you had while off-campus. There are lots of people on campus who have gone through their own re-entry and have had experiences similar to yours. Seek out other returned students from other sites, and look into becoming involved with the Global Ambassadors.

APPENDIX A - WPI OFF-CAMPUS STUDY TRAVEL INFORMATION FORM

WPI Off-Campus Study Travel Information Form

You must attach a copy of your travel itinerary provided by your travel agent or airline, in addition to completing this form. No handwritten itineraries will be accepted.

All students intending to complete a project at a WPI project site are asked to provide the IGSD with information about their travel arrangements. This will notify the faculty advisor, on-site coordinator and IGSD staff of your expected arrival date and time and alert them if a problem arises. *For some sites* this information is needed in order to arrange to have students met at the airport.

You must bring your passport into the IGSD to be scanned, unless you are participating in a project program within the U.S.

Name:	Site:	Term:
Arrival Date on site:	Arriving from (city):	
Mode of travel (air, train, bus, car):		
If traveling by air:		
Airline:	Flight Number:	Airport Destination:
Departure time:	Arrival time:	
Scheduled return date:		
Airline:	Flight Number:	Airport Destination:
Departure time:	Arrival time:	
If you plan to travel independently either before or after the program, please tell us your tentative plans:		

London Project Center Only
Bus Transportation: _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

(PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CHECK ONE OF THESE OPTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION FROM HEATHROW AIRPORT TO IES)

APPENDIX B - OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS' HEALTH UPDATE AND RECORDS RELEASE FORM

Name _____ Project Site _____ Term _____

All students traveling off-campus to participate in a WPI program are required to carry medical insurance that is valid at the program site for the entire length of the program. Please verify this with your insurance company and list the name of your carrier and your policy number.

Carrier _____ Policy Number: _____

Do you have any medical conditions that could affect you while off-campus of which you would like to make the IGSD aware? (i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, depressive episodes, etc.) Also, please list any changes in your health not noted on your medical records on file with WPI Health Services.

Are you allergic to any medications? If so, please list them.

List any prescription medicines you are currently taking.

When traveling off-campus it is a good idea to take a supply of your prescription medications sufficient to last for the length of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be kept in the original containers with the prescription label to avoid problems with customs. It is also important to take along a copy of the prescription from your physician, clearly written, in generic terms, and with an indication of the condition being treated.

In the event of an emergency, please contact:

1. Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Address _____

email _____

Cell Phone #: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

2. Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Address _____

email _____

Cell Phone #: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

I hereby authorize WPI health services to release my medical records to the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division in the event of a medical emergency while studying off-campus. *I hereby acknowledge that it is my responsibility to contact my health insurance provider to determine that I am covered while at an off-campus project site.*

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C - ATC TEAM FORM
(One Per Team)

After you have turned in this completed form to the IGSD, at least one member of your group (although we suggest the entire group come so that the entire group takes equal responsibility for the equipment) is required to go to the ATC and reserve a laptop BEFORE pick-up on the specified date.

Project Site: _____

Pickup person: _____

Return person: _____

names of
team members: _____

If you can not pick up and return this PC within the specified dates, then you will need to make alternative arrangements: the ATC can *not* accommodate you.

Dates:

Pick up on or after: 10/20/2010

Return on or before: 12/20/2010

Pick-up Person

Return Person

Student Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Address: _____

Student Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Phone #: _____

Student ID#: _____

Student ID#: _____

Student Email: _____

Student Email: _____

APPENDIX D - ONSITE TRAVEL FORM

Name	Cell phone number
Destination	
Date & time of departure	Date & time of return

Mode of Transportation – Roundtrip

Train Bus Air Car

Departing from the Site Information			
Time of Departure			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from (name of airport, station, terminal)			
<i>* Connection Information if applicable:</i>			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time

Returning to the Site Information			
Returning from:			
Time of Departure			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from (name of airport, station, terminal)			
<i>* Connection Information if applicable:</i>			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time

Lodging (please call advisor with any changes to your reservations)			
Name of hotel		Name of hotel	
Address		Address	
City and country		City and country	
Phone number		Phone number	

List other students who are traveling with you on this exact itinerary:

Check this box if you are staying on site in WPI provided housing for the entire weekend.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Every student or group of students must turn this form into an advisor before 12:00 noon every Friday – in other words, every student must be accounted for,