

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:

Panama City, Panama B2011 Project Center

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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 2011-2012 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 2011-2012 academic year, approximately 650 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.
- M. In the participant screening process, consider factors such as disciplinary history that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
- N. 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 forms must be on file in the IGSD office before students leave WPI for their off-campus project experience. If any forms are missing, students are in jeopardy of not being allowed to participate at off-campus programs.

Paperwork deadline: All mandatory paperwork for Panama B2011 must be in the IGSD Office by **September 21, 2011 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
Printed Name	student number	date of birth*	

**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.

Travel Information Form (Appendix A)

The IGSD must have a completed Travel Form and itinerary from you on file before you leave for their site. The IGSD keeps a copy of the form and itinerary and we send a copy with the faculty advisor. By doing this, the IGSD staff and the advisor(s) all will know when and where every student will arrive and will be alerted if there is a problem arises. Whenever possible, you will be met at a pre-agreed location depending on your itinerary.

You should understand that you are responsible for making your own travel arrangements, 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.

You and your family should also understand that while WPI encourages you to travel during your free time, the university can take no responsibility for your safety during independent travel. *You must inform your advisor of all travel plans and when you should be expected back on site.*

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.

Health Update and Records Release Form (Appendix B)

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

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.

You and your family 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 your responsibility to carry medical insurance that is valid at the off-campus site for the length of the stay. You must accept all financial responsibility for any medical treatment received while at the program site.

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 your responsibility to make sure that you are covered for the entire length of the program while you are off-campus.

Voluntary Acknowledgment Form

All participants are required to sign a Voluntary Acknowledgment Form, which will be 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.



ACE American Insurance Company
(A Stock Company)
Philadelphia, PA
(Herein called We, Us, Our)

Travel Assistance Program

ATTENTION

**In the event of a medical emergency
call Europ Assistance immediately
and reference plan code: 01AH585**

24-Hour Access

**1-800-243-6124 toll free in the USA or Canada
1-202-659-7803 collect outside of the USA**

Call when:

- You require a referral to a hospital or doctor
- You are hospitalized
- You need to be evacuated or repatriated
- You need to guarantee payment for medical expenses
- You experience local communication problems
- Your safety is threatened by the sudden occurrence of a political or military event

When you call Europ Assistance, please be prepared with the following information:

1. Name of caller, phone no., fax no., relationship to Covered Person;
2. Covered Person's name, age, sex and policy number;
3. A description of the Covered Person's condition;
4. Name, location, and telephone number of hospital;
5. Name and telephone numbers for the treating doctor; where and when the doctor can be reached;
6. Health insurance information, worker's compensation, or automobile insurance information if the Covered Person had an accident.

"Covered Person" means the person insured under the applicable ACE policy.

By requesting assistance you agree to assign to us your rights to recover from any of your responsible insurers any expenses we incurred.

ATTENTION Medical Personnel or Police

In the event of a medical emergency, Europ Assistance will provide the services on the card below. To verify eligibility call the multi-lingual call center 24 hours a day toll free at 1-800-243-6124 if

you're inside the USA or Canada; or if you're outside the USA call collect at 1-202-659-7803.

In addition to the insurance protection provided by your insurance plan, ACE USA has arranged with Europ Assistance USA to provide you with access to its travel assistance services around the world. These services include:

- **Medical Assistance** including referral to a doctor or medical specialist, medical monitoring when you are hospitalized, emergency medical evacuation to an adequate facility, medically necessary repatriation and return of mortal remains.
- **Personal Assistance** including pre-trip medical referral information and while you are on a trip: emergency medication, embassy and consular information, lost document assistance, emergency message transmission, emergency cash advance, emergency referral to a lawyer, translator or interpreter access, medical benefits verification and medical claims assistance.
- **Travel Assistance** including emergency travel arrangements, arrangements for the return of your traveling companion or dependents and vehicle return.
- **Security Assistance** including a crisis hotline and on the ground security assistance to help address safety concerns or to secure immediate assistance while traveling as well as access to a secure, web-based system for tracking global threats and health or location based risk intelligence.

This information provides you with a brief outline of the services available to you. These services are not insured benefits. Reimbursement for any service expenses is limited to the terms and conditions of the policy under which you are insured. You may be required to pay for services not covered. A third party vendor may provide services to you. Europ Assistance makes every effort to refer you to appropriate medical and other service providers. It is not responsible for the quality or results of service provided by independent providers.

In all cases, the medical provider, facility, legal counsel or other professional service provider suggested by Europ Assistance are not employees or agents of Europ Assistance and the choice of provider is yours alone. Europ Assistance assumes no liability for the services provided to you under this arrangement, nor is it liable for any negligence or other wrongful acts or omissions of any of the legal or health care professionals providing services to you. Travel assistance services are not available if your coverage under the policy is not in effect.

ACE TRAVEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For medical referrals, evacuation, repatriation or other services please call:

ACE Travel Assistance Program
1-800-243-6124 (Inside the USA)
1-202-659-7803 (Outside the USA Call Collect)
OPS@europassistance-usa.com

Visit www.ACETravelAssistance.com for access to global threat assessments and location based intelligence.

Username: aceah
Password: security



Plan Number: 01AH585
Employer: Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Policy Number: ADD N04947782
Assistance Provider: Europ Assistance USA

Europ Assistance provides emergency medical and travel services and pre-trip information services. Please call when:

- You require a referral to a hospital or doctor
- You are hospitalized
- You need to be evacuated or repatriated
- You need to guarantee payment for medical expenses
- You experience local communication problems
- Your safety is threatened by the sudden occurrence of a political or military event

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:
 - i. Failure to follow the procedures outlined in the Campus Planner and Resource Guide;
 - ii. Inappropriate gravity of the sanction in relationship to the offense;
 - iii. 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.

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.

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. You can 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 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 not a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to determine what other documentation you will need to file to obtain your visa. Please do so in consultation with IGSD. Do not submit your visa application before checking in with IGSD to ensure that you're submitting the appropriate application.

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 Information

SAFETY

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 Panama City, Panama B2011 Project Center 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://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh4-HIVAIDS.aspx>

RENTAL CAR ISSUES

WPI students working on an academic project while on-site are strongly discouraged from renting a car during their time in the program. Known risks include road safety, familiarity with road conditions, and the condition of the vehicles available for rent the possibility of standing out as a tourist/foreigner. If students choose to rent a car, they do so at their own risk.

Safety If You Rent a Car¹

When you rent a car, don't go for the exotic; choose a type commonly available locally. Where possible, ask that markings that identify it as a rental car be removed. Make certain it is in good repair. If available, choose a car with universal door locks and power windows, features that give the driver better control of access to the car. An air conditioner, when available, is also a safety feature, allowing you to drive with windows closed. Thieves can and do snatch purses through open windows of moving cars.

- Keep car doors locked at all times. Wear seat belts.
- As much as possible, avoid driving at night.
- Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must carry things with you, keep them out of sight locked in the trunk.
- Don't park your car on the street overnight. If the hotel or municipality does not have a parking garage or other secure area, select a well-lit area.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Don't get out of the car if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away.

Patterns of Crime against Motorists

In many places frequented by tourists, including areas of southern Europe, victimization of motorists has been refined to an art. Where it is a problem, U.S. embassies are aware of it and consular officers try to work with local authorities to warn the public about the dangers. In some locations, these efforts at public awareness have paid off, reducing the frequency of incidents. You may also wish to ask your rental car agency for advice on avoiding robbery while visiting tourist destinations. Carjackers and thieves operate at gas stations, parking lots, in city traffic and along the highway. Be suspicious of anyone who hails you or tries to get your attention when you are in or near your car. Criminals use ingenious ploys. They may masquerade as good Samaritans, offering help for tires that they claim are flat or that they have made flat. Or they may flag down a motorist, ask for assistance, and then steal the rescuer's luggage or car. Usually they work in groups, one person carrying on the pretense while the others rob you. Other criminals get your attention with abuse, either trying to drive you off the road, or causing an "accident" by rear-ending you or creating a "fender bender."

In some urban areas, thieves don't waste time on ploys, they simply smash car windows at traffic lights, grab your valuables or your car and get away. In cities around the world, "defensive driving" has come to mean more than avoiding auto accidents; it means keeping an eye out for potentially criminal pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders.

Annual Global Road Crash Statistics²

- Nearly 1.3 million people die in road crashes each year, on average 3,287 deaths a day.
- An additional 20-50 million are injured or disabled.
- More than half of all road traffic deaths occur among young adults ages 15-44.
- Road traffic crashes rank as the 9th leading cause of death and account for 2.2% of all deaths globally.
- Road crashes are the leading cause of death among young people ages 15-29, and the second leading cause of death worldwide among young people ages 5-14.
- Each year nearly 400,000 people under 25 die on the world's roads, on average over 1,000 a day.
- Over 90% of all road fatalities occur in low and middle-income countries, which have less than half of the world's vehicles.

¹ This information was taken from the U.S. State Department's website.

² This information was taken from the Association for Safe International Road Travel's (ASIRT) website: www.asirt.org
Going Global at WPI Handbook Use and adaptation welcome, but please acknowledge WPI and
10/18/2011 [Natalie Mello](#) and tell us of your use.

- Road crashes cost USD \$518 billion globally, costing individual countries from 1-2% of their annual GDP.
- Road crashes cost low and middle-income countries USD \$65 billion annually, exceeding the total amount received in developmental assistance.
- Unless action is taken, road traffic injuries are predicted to become the fifth leading cause of death by 2030.

Annual United States Road Crash Statistics

- Over 37,000 people die in road crashes each year
- An additional 2.35 million are injured or disabled
- Over 1,600 children under 15 years of age die each year
- Nearly 8,000 people are killed in crashes involving drivers ages 16-20
- Road crashes cost the U.S. \$230.6 billion per year, or an average of \$820 per person
- Road crashes are the single greatest annual cause of death of healthy U.S. citizens traveling abroad

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
- Anne Ogilvie, Director of Global Operations
X4944, atogilvie@wpi.edu
- Leanne Johnson
Assistant Director Global Perspective Program
x 6089, ljohnson@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

- Lynn Beauregard, Bursar
x 5741, lbeauregard@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/singapore_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 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.org/>

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://www.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 (diethylmethyltoluamide), 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.

CDC Travel Notices in Effect Panama

- [2011 Measles Update](#) June 23, 2011
- [Update: Dengue in Tropical and Subtropical Regions](#) May 02, 2011

Safety and Security Abroad

- [Registration of Traveler Emergency Contact and Itinerary Information](#) January 13, 2011
- [Transportation Security Administration](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#)

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Preparing for Your Trip to Panama

Before visiting Panama, you may need to get the following vaccinations and medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination: (Note: Your doctor or health-care provider will determine what you will need, depending on factors such as your health and immunization history, areas of the country you will be visiting, and planned activities.)

To have the most benefit, see a health-care provider at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect and to start taking medicine to prevent malaria, if you need it.

Even if you have less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see a health-care provider for needed vaccines, anti-malaria drugs and other medications and information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

CDC recommends that you see a health-care provider who specializes in Travel Medicine. [Find a travel medicine clinic](#) near you. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with any doctors you are currently seeing for other medical reasons.

If your travel plans will take you to more than one country during a single trip, be sure to let your health-care provider know so that you can receive the appropriate vaccinations and information for all of your destinations. Long-term travelers, such as those who plan to work or study abroad, may also need additional vaccinations as required by their employer or school.

Be sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date. Check the links below to see which vaccinations adults and children should get.

Routine vaccines, as they are often called, such as for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) are given at all stages of life; see the [childhood and adolescent immunization schedule](#) and [routine adult immunization schedule](#).

Routine vaccines are recommended even if you do not travel. Although childhood diseases, such as measles, rarely occur in the United States, they are still common in many parts of the world. A traveler who is not vaccinated would be at risk for infection.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Vaccine recommendations are based on the best available risk information. Please note that the level of risk for vaccine-preventable diseases can change at any time.

Vaccination or Disease	Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
Routine	Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.

<u>Hepatitis A</u> or immune globulin (IG)	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high level of hepatitis A virus infection (see map) where exposure might occur through food or water. Cases of travel-related hepatitis A can also occur in travelers to developing countries with "standard" tourist itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behaviors.
<u>Hepatitis B</u>	Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission (see map), especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).
<u>Typhoid</u>	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in Mexico and Central America, especially if staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas where exposure might occur through food or water.
<u>Yellow Fever</u>	<p>CDC yellow fever vaccination recommendation for travelers to Panama:</p> <p>Recommended for all travelers ≥9 months of age traveling to all mainland areas east of the Canal Zone, encompassing the entire comarcas (autonomous territories) of Emberá and Kuna Yala, the entire province of Darién, and areas of the provinces of Colón and Panamá that are east of the Canal Zone (see Map 2-4).</p> <p>Not recommended for travelers whose itineraries are limited to areas west of the Canal Zone, the city of Panama, the Canal Zone itself, the San Blas Islands, and the Balboa Islands (see Map 2-4).</p> <p>Panama requires travelers arriving from <u>countries with risk of yellow fever virus transmission</u> to present proof of yellow fever vaccination. Vaccination should be given 10 days before travel and at 10-year intervals if there is ongoing risk. Find an authorized U.S. yellow fever vaccination clinic.</p>

Rabies vaccination is only recommended for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, carnivores, and other mammals. These travelers include wildlife professionals, researchers, veterinarians, or adventure travelers visiting areas where bats, carnivores, and other mammals are commonly found.

Malaria

Areas of Panama with Malaria:

Majority of transmission in provinces east of the Panama Canal towards the border with Colombia (provinces of Panama east of the canal and Darien). Transmission also in provinces of Veraguas, Chiriqui, C. Ngobe Bugle, Cocle, and Kuna Yala. None in urban areas of Panama City or in the former Canal Zone

([more information](#))

If you will be visiting an area of Panama with malaria, you will need to discuss with your doctor the best ways for you to avoid getting sick with malaria. Ways to prevent malaria include the following:

- Taking a prescription antimalarial drug
- Using insect repellent and wearing long pants and sleeves to prevent mosquito bites
- Sleeping in air-conditioned or well-screened rooms or using bednets

For provinces east of the Panama Canal in Panama, primaquine is the preferred antimalarial drug (only after G6PD testing). Atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline, and mefloquine are alternative choices. For detailed information about each of these drugs, see [Table 2-23: Drugs used in the prophylaxis of malaria](#). For information that can help you and your doctor decide which of these drugs would be best for you, please see [Choosing a Drug to Prevent Malaria](#).

For all other areas with malaria in Panama, the risk of malaria is low and taking an antimalarial drug is not recommended. However, you should protect yourself from mosquito bites ([see below](#)).

To find out more information on malaria throughout the world, you can use the [interactive CDC malaria map](#). You can search or browse countries, cities, and place names for more specific malaria risk information and the recommended prevention medicines for that area.

Malaria Contact for Health-Care Providers

For assistance with the diagnosis or management of suspected cases of malaria, call the CDC Malaria Hotline: **770-488-7788** (M-F, 9 am-5 pm, Eastern time). For emergency consultation after hours, call **770-488-7100** and ask to speak with a CDC Malaria Branch clinician.

More Information About Malaria

Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. Humans get malaria from the bite of a mosquito infected with the parasite. Prevent this serious disease by seeing your health-care provider for a prescription antimalarial drug and by protecting yourself against mosquito bites ([see below](#)).

Travelers to malaria risk-areas in Panama, including infants, children, and former residents of Panama, should take one of the antimalarial drugs listed in the box above.

Symptoms

Malaria symptoms may include

- fever
- chills
- sweats
- headache
- body aches
- nausea and vomiting
- fatigue

Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your trip.

Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria infections with *Plasmodium falciparum*, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Despite using the protective measures outlined above, travelers may still develop malaria up to a year after returning from a malarious area. You should see a doctor immediately if you develop a fever anytime during the year following your return and tell the physician of your travel.

A Special Note about Antimalarial Drugs

You should purchase your antimalarial drugs before travel. Drugs purchased overseas may not be manufactured according to United States standards and may not be effective. They also may be dangerous, contain counterfeit medications or contaminants, or be combinations of drugs that are not safe to use.

Halofantrine (marketed as Halfan) is widely used overseas to treat malaria. CDC recommends that you do **NOT** use halofantrine because of serious heart-related side effects, including deaths. You should avoid using antimalarial drugs that are not recommended **unless** you have been diagnosed with life-threatening malaria and no other options are immediately available.

For detailed information about these antimalarial drugs, see [Choosing a Drug to Prevent Malaria](#).

Items to Bring With You

Medicines you may need:

- **The prescription medicines you take every day.** Make sure you have enough to last during your trip. Keep them in their original prescription bottles and always in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to follow security guidelines, if the medicines are liquids.
- Antimalarial drugs, if traveling to a malaria-risk area in Panama and prescribed by your doctor.
- **Medicine for diarrhea**, usually over-the-counter.

Note: Some drugs available by prescription in the US are illegal in other countries. Check the US Department of State Consular Information Sheets for the country(s) you intend to visit or the embassy or consulate for that country(s). If your medication is not allowed in the country you will be visiting, ask your health-care provider to write a letter on office stationery stating the medication has been prescribed for you.

Other items you may need:

- Iodine tablets and portable water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See A Guide to Water Filters, A Guide to Commercially-Bottled Water and Other Beverages, and Safe Food and Water for more detailed information.
- Sunblock and sunglasses for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays. See Basic Information about Skin Cancer for more information.
- Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- To prevent insect/mosquito bites, bring:
 - Lightweight long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat to wear outside, whenever possible.
 - Flying-insect spray to help clear rooms of mosquitoes. The product should contain a pyrethroid insecticide; these insecticides quickly kill flying insects, including mosquitoes.
 - Bed nets treated with permethrin, if you will not be sleeping in an air-conditioned or well-screened room and will be in malaria-risk areas. For use and purchasing information, see Insecticide Treated Bed Nets on the CDC malaria site. Overseas, permethrin or another insecticide, deltamethrin, may be purchased to treat bed nets and clothes.

See other suggested over-the-counter medications and first aid items for a travelers' health kit.

Note: Check the Air Travel section of the Transportation Security Administration website for the latest information about airport screening procedures and prohibited items.

Other Diseases Found in Mexico and Central America

Risk can vary between countries within this region and also within a country; the quality of in-country surveillance also varies.

The following are disease risks that might affect travelers; this is not a complete list of diseases that can be present. Environmental conditions may also change, and up to date information about risk by regions within a country may also not always be available.

Dengue epidemics have affected most countries in Central America in the past 5 years. Filariasis, leishmaniasis, onchocerciasis (River blindness), and American trypanosomiasis (Chagas' disease) are diseases carried by insects that also occur in this region, mostly in rural areas. Risk to the usual traveler is low. Myiasis (botfly) is endemic in Central America. Protecting yourself against insect bites (see below) will help to prevent these diseases.

Gnathostomiasis (roundworms) has increased in Mexico, with many cases being reported from the Acapulco area, infection has been reported in travelers. Humans become infected by eating undercooked fish or poultry, or reportedly by drinking contaminated water.

Foci of active transmission of leishmaniasis (predominantly cutaneous) are present in all countries in Central America. West Nile virus has been found in Mexico and may spread in Central America.

Diarrhea in travelers is common and may be caused by bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Diarrhea caused by enterotoxigenic *E. coli* predominates, but other bacteria and protozoa (including *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidia*, and *Entamoeba histolytica*) can also cause diarrhea.

Cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome have been reported from Panama.

Outbreaks of [leptospirosis](#) have occurred in travelers to the area (including whitewater rafters in Costa Rica and U.S. troops training in Panama). Sporadic cases and outbreaks of [coccidioidomycosis](#) and [histoplasmosis](#) have occurred in travelers to Central America. Risky activities include disturbing soil and entering caves and abandoned mines. Cutaneous larva migrans occurs in visitors, especially those visiting beaches.

Staying Healthy During Your Trip

Prevent Insect Bites

Many diseases, like [malaria](#) and [dengue](#), are spread through insect bites. One of the best protections is to prevent insect bites by:

- Using insect repellent (bug spray) with 30%-50% DEET. Picaridin, available in 7% and 15% concentrations, needs more frequent application. There is less information available on how effective picaridin is at protecting against all of the types of mosquitoes that transmit malaria.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outdoors.
- Remaining indoors in a screened or air-conditioned area during the peak biting period for malaria (dusk and dawn).
- Sleeping in beds covered by nets treated with permethrin, if not sleeping in an air-conditioned or well-screened room.
- Spraying rooms with products effective against flying insects, such as those containing pyrethroid.

For detailed information about insect repellent use, see [Insect and Arthropod Protection](#).

Prevent Animal Bites and Scratches

Direct contact with animals can spread diseases like rabies or cause serious injury or illness. It is important to prevent animal bites and scratches.

- Be sure you are up to date with tetanus vaccination.
- Do not touch or feed any animals, including dogs and cats. Even animals that look like healthy pets can have rabies or other diseases.
- Help children stay safe by supervising them carefully around all animals.
- If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound well with soap and water and **go to a doctor right away**.
- After your trip, be sure to tell your doctor or state health department if you were bitten or scratched during travel.

For more information about rabies and travel, see the [Rabies chapter](#) of the [Yellow Book](#) or [CDC's Rabies homepage](#). For more information about how to protect yourself from other risks related to animals, see [Animal-Associated Hazards](#).

Be Careful about Food and Water

Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- 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, learn how to [make water safer to drink](#).
- Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Make sure food is fully cooked.
- Avoid dairy products, unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea. Make sure to bring diarrhea medicine with you so that you can treat mild cases yourself.

Avoid Injuries

Car crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers. Protect yourself from these injuries by:

- Not drinking and driving.
- Wearing your seat belt and using car seats or booster seats in the backseat for children.
- Following local traffic laws.
- Wearing helmets when you ride bikes, motorcycles, and motor bikes.
- Not getting on an overloaded bus or mini-bus.
- Hiring a local driver, when possible.
- Avoiding night driving.

Other Health Tips

- To avoid infections such as HIV and viral hepatitis do not share needles for tattoos, body piercing, or injections.
- To reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases always use latex condoms.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot, especially on beaches where animals may have defecated.

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After You Return Home

If you are not feeling well, you should see your doctor and mention that you have recently traveled. Also tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

If you have visited a malaria-risk area, continue taking your antimalarial drug for 4 weeks (chloroquine, doxycycline, or mefloquine) or seven days (atovaquone/proguanil) after leaving the risk area.

Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. If you become ill with a fever or flu-like illness either while traveling in a malaria-risk area or after you return home (for up to 1 year), you should seek **immediate** medical attention and should tell the physician your travel history.

Section 3 – Site Specific Information for Panama

Paperwork Deadline

All paperwork for Panama B 2011 must be in the IGSD by Wednesday, September 21, 2011 by 3:00 p.m.

Arrive WPI housing: Saturday, October 22, 2011

Depart WPI housing: Saturday, December 17, 2011

Site Specific Information

I. City Information

Panama City is the capital and largest city in Panama. The city has a metropolitan population of approximately 1.7 million, and the country population is approximately 3.3 million. Panama City is located on the Pacific coast at the southern entrance to the Panama Canal. The country has a tropical maritime climate, with an average daily high temperature of 30°C (87°F).

II. Transportation

The primary way to get around is via taxi. Taxis are readily available at the airport, at hotels, and in populated and tourist areas of the city. You can also call a taxi to pick you up at any location. Taxis at hotels tend to be well-maintained cars with air conditioning, while taxis hailed on the street tend to be less so; however, taxis at hotels routinely charge twice as much money. The majority of taxi drivers do not speak much English.

In Panama City, taxis may be hailed on the street. The taxis are not metered and thus fares must be negotiated in advance. Prior to getting in the taxi, tell the driver where you want to go and ask how much the fare will be (Cuánto?). If you do not like the price, then offer something lower. The driver will either accept it or not. If the price is too high, you can say no and hail a different cab. Some drivers will overcharge Americans – if you are clear and confident on an appropriate price (in Spanish, even if your language skills are poor) you can usually negotiate a fair amount. It should not cost more than a few dollars to get most places in the city.

For getting to/from your sponsoring organization, it is recommended that you set up a daily pick up with a taxi driver and negotiate a daily or weekly rate with that driver. Find a driver you like/trust, and have the driver meet you at your residence every weekday morning at a fixed time for a fixed rate. It is also recommended that you carry one or two taxi company cards with you at all times, in case you find yourself needing transportation in an area where taxis are not routinely available.

Drivers can also be hired to wait for you (if you want to run errands, or are going somewhere where taxis are not available and do not want to get stranded) or provide hourly transportation. All fees can be negotiated.

City buses have traditionally been called “Diablos Rojos” (Red Devils). They are decoratively painted school buses, some with Diablo themes on them. They are crowded, typically do not have air conditioning, and have a reputation for being unsafe. In recent years, the government has been implementing a regulated public bus system, but this is not fully in place at this time.

III. Currency

The official currency in Panama is the Balboa, which is fixed at parity with the U.S. dollar. In practice, the dollar is the only paper currency used in Panama, while both U.S. and Balboa coins are used. You should arrive in Panama with enough money for the taxi ride from the airport and your first day of food and incidentals. After that, you can obtain money through ATMs (check with your bank on international withdrawal fees) or cash advance on your credit card

(check with your card on fees for this). In Panama City, credit cards are accepted at most retailers, though cash is needed for taxis, street vendors and local marketplaces.

IV. Arrival in Panama

You will arrive at Tocumen International Airport, which is located about 15 miles from Panama City. Tourist Taxi Service are the only taxis at the airport because they are used exclusively to provide service to tourists and to guarantee passenger safety. Fares to Panama City are \$25 for 1 – 2 persons or \$10 per person for a group of 3 or more (as of July 2011). Because there is a small group of students (6) participating in the Panama Project Center, we strongly recommend that all students book their travel together to arrive in Panama City together, and share taxis to the residence.

After passing through customs and immigration, exit the airport and take taxi service to the residence. Have enough cash on hand for the taxi ride.

V. Residence

The address for your residence will be: Costa del Este, Green Bay Building Tower N. 4, Panama City, Panama. 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. No guests are allowed overnight in the 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.

VI. Phone Service

The phone number for your residence will be provided during the PQP in A 2011.

Please check with your service provider prior to departing to determine if your cell phone will work in Panama. Some do, some don't, and some need new SIM cards. If your phone does not work, phones with prepaid service may be purchased in Panama for a reasonable fee (~ \$20) from Cable & Wireless Panama. Minutes are added on an as-needed basis.

Calling Panama from the U.S.:

Land line: 011 + 507 + 7-digit number

Cell phone: 011 + 507 + 8-digit number

Calling the U.S. from Panama:

0 + 1 + area code + 7-digit number

Making calls within Panama: Area codes are not used (the entire country of Panama is 507). Simply dial the 7-digit (landline) or 8-digit (cell phone) number.

VII. Dress Code

It is always warm in Panama. The dry season occurs from December to April, and the wet season is the rest of the year. The normal daily temperature is approximately 30°C (87°F), with evenings slightly cooler. High humidity is common in the wet season, with afternoon thundershowers that tend to be short in duration but intense. Bring summer clothes and a light sweater/jacket (which you may want for places that are air conditioned, or travel to higher elevations).

Bring SUNSCREEN to use EVERY DAY. The tropical sun is very strong and it is very easy to get sunburned.

The dress in Panama is somewhat conservative, and more formal than one might expect given the warm climate. Generally, Panamanians do not wear shorts in the city. Please observe cultural norms and wear pants or dresses/skirts in the city area (shorts are appropriate for weekend excursions to tourist locations and the beach).

You may wish to bring hiking boots and clothing for forest excursions, and layers if you plan on heading to any higher elevation areas where the temperatures can be much cooler. 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 sponsoring organizations. However, the dress code may vary from agency to agency. Follow the custom of your sponsor (you can inquire with your liaison before departing). It is always better to dress too formally than not formally enough. Note that if you do any field excursions for your project, you may need hiking boots. Regardless of the expected day-to-day dress code, you should plan to dress up for the final presentation.

VIII. Medical Services

There are a number of hospitals and facilities available in Panama City. The following have been recommended by our Panama Liaisons:

HOSPITAL NACIONAL (medical and mental health facilities)

Ave. Cuba entre Calle 38 y 39

Tel. 507-207-8383 (international office)

Contact person: Diana Lasso

www.hospitalnacional.com

CLINICA ARANGO ORILLAC (dental health facilities)

Albrook Plaza

Tel. 507-315-1881

Contact person: Dr. Roberto Sanchez (rsanchez@arango-orillac.com)

Main office: Marbella, Tel. 507-263-8166

www.arango-orillac.com

Check with your medical insurance company to see if it will cover you in Panama and to find out how you would make a claim. Be sure to tell your carrier the dates of your stay in Panama.

IX. Safety

As quoted from Fodor's website:

"Most of the city is safe for walking, even at night, especially Vía España, El Cangrejo, the Area Bancaria, and Paitilla, where the bulk of the city's hotels and restaurants are located. The Casco Viejo and Avenida Central pedestrian mall are safe by day, but after dark you should limit your wandering to the area around Plaza Bolívar and Plaza Francia, which is where all the restaurants and bars are. Even during the day you should lock your fancy jewelry and watch, passport, and most of your credit cards and cash into your hotel safe before heading to the Casco Viejo, just to be on the safe side. Areas that should be avoided at all times are El Chorillo, which lies immediately to the west of the Casco Viejo, and all of Santa Ana aside from the Avenida Central and Plaza Cinco de Mayo area. At night you should travel to and from the Casco Viejo only by taxi or rental car, but by day walking there from Plaza Cinco de Mayo on Avenida Central is fine. Keep out of the southwestern half of Caledonia, including the Avenida Balboa west of the Balboa Monument; and Curundú, which lies to the northwest of Caledonia. You don't need a map or a Geiger counter to realize when you're headed into a bad neighborhood, though some areas look more dangerous than they actually are. If you're on foot and feel any apprehension about where you've ended up, flag down the first taxi, even if it has another passenger in it, and go someplace you know is safe."

Country Specific Information – Panama



May 31, 2011

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Panama is a constitutional democracy with an executive branch led by a president who is elected to a 5-year term, a unicameral legislature, and judicial branch. The country is divided into 9 provinces and three indigenous territories known as comarcas. It became independent from Colombia on November 3, 1903. Panama has a rapidly developing economy but suffers from a weak, non-transparent judiciary. Outside the Panama City area, which has many first-class hotels and restaurants, tourist facilities vary in quality. The U.S. dollar is the paper currency of Panama, and is also referred to as the Panama Balboa. Panama mints its own coinage, though U.S. coins are also accepted. Read the Department of State's [Background Notes on Panama](#) for additional information regarding the people, culture, government, economy, and history of Panama.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP) / EMBASSY LOCATION: If you are going to live in or visit Panama, please take the time to tell our embassy about your trip. If you check in, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. Here's the link to the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

Local embassy information is available below and at the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#).

U.S. Embassy Panama

Physical location: Avenida Demetrio Basilio Lakas, Building No.783 in the Clayton section of Panama City.

International mailing address: Apartado 0816-02561, Zona 5, Panama, Republic of Panama.

U.S. mailing address: U.S. Embassy Panama, 9100 Panama City Place, Washington, DC 20521-9100.

Telephone: (011) 507-207-7000 or (011) 507-207-7030

Emergency after-hours telephone: (011) 507-207-7000

Facsimile: (011) 507-317-5568 or (011) 507-207-7303

You may also [send the Embassy inquiries by e-mail](#).

ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS: U.S. citizens traveling by air to and from Panama must present a valid passport when entering or re-entering the United States. Sea travelers entering Panama must have a valid U.S. passport. Complete information for U.S. citizens is available on the [Passport Information page at travel.state.gov](#) or by calling 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778) for information on applying for a passport.

Panamanian law requires that travelers present a passport valid for at least three months. U.S. citizens entering Panama as tourists will be charged \$5.00 for a tourist card when they purchase their travel ticket. To obtain a multiple entry visa, please contact the Panamanian embassy or Panamanian consulate before

traveling. Further information on visas other than tourist visas may be obtained from the [Embassy of Panama or its Consulates in the United States](#). The Panamanian Embassy is located at 2862 McGill Terrace NW, Washington, DC 20008, tel. (202) 483-1407. As of April, 2010, U.S. tourists are allowed to stay in Panama for 180 days, without extension. If you want to stay longer, a “change of migratory status visa” should be requested through a Panamanian lawyer before the expiration of the 180 days in country. An initial fee of \$250.00 must be paid for the “change of migratory status visa.” Please note that the approval of the change in migratory status falls under the Panamanian Immigration Office’s discretion.

More information on visa types and the necessary steps to take in Panama is available at the [National Migration website](#).

U.S. citizens transiting the Panama Canal as passengers, regardless of their intention to disembark from the ship or not do not need to obtain visas, or pay any fees. If you are piloting a private craft or plane, then you need to have a pre-stamped visa from a Panamanian Embassy or consulate, as do persons crossing into Panama by land. U.S. citizens piloting private craft through the canal should contact the Panama Canal Authority at (011) 507-272-4567, (011) 507-272-4200, (011) 507-272-1111 or consult the [Canal Authority web site](#) to make an appointment.

Minors who are citizens (including dual-citizens) or legal residents of Panama are required to present birth certificates and notarized consent from both parents (in Spanish) in order to exit the country if not accompanied by both parents. This documentation is required at all land, sea, and air ports. Even if minors are not documented as Panamanian citizens and are documented as U.S. citizens, they may be denied departure. If your consent documents are notarized in the United States, they still need to be authenticated in the U.S. with an [Apostille stamp](#).

Visit the Consular Services tab of the [Embassy of Panama](#) website for the most current visa information.

Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of Panama. Panamanian immigration does not require an HIV/AIDS test, but Panamanian law does allow for deportation upon discovery by immigration. Embassy Panama is not aware of any U.S. citizens who have been deported due to HIV/AIDS. Should you have questions, you may wish to inquire directly with the [Embassy of Panama](#) before you travel.

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

SAFETY AND SECURITY: U.S. citizens are warned not to travel to remote areas of the Darien Province off of the Pan American Highway. Embassy personnel are only allowed to travel to the restricted border areas of the Darien and San Blas Provinces on official business and with prior approval of the Embassy’s Regional Security Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission. This restricted area encompasses the Darien National Park as well as some privately owned nature reserves and tourist resorts. The general remoteness of the region contributes to the potential hazards. Due to scarcity of roads, most travel is by river or by foot path. This combined with spotty medical infrastructure outside of major towns makes travel there potentially hazardous. While the number of actual incidents remains low, U.S. citizens, other foreign nationals and Panamanian citizens are potentially at risk of violent crime, kidnapping and murder in this general area. Moreover, all around the Panama-Colombia border area the presence of Colombian terrorist groups, drug

traffickers and other criminals is common, increasing the danger to travelers. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) operates in Panama's Darien Province, including in areas far removed from the immediate vicinity of the Panamanian-Colombian border. Note: The Secretary of State has designated the FARC, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

U.S. citizens are similarly warned to not travel to the area of Panama referred to as the "Mosquito Coast," an extremely remote and inaccessible area along the Panamanian north coast bounded by Boca de Rio Chiriquí on the west and Coclé Del Norte on the east and stretching inward from the coast for 5 kilometers. Embassy personnel are only allowed to travel to this area on official business and with prior approval of senior Embassy management. Access to the region is almost exclusively by boat and/or aircraft. The area may also have a few unimproved roads and/or paths which are not marked on maps. This may be particularly true in the mining area along the Petaquilla river. Sections of this coastline are frequently used for narco-trafficking and other illegal activities.

From time to time, there may be demonstrations protesting internal Panamanian issues or manifestations of anti-American sentiment by small but vociferous groups. While most demonstrations relate to labor disputes or other local issues and are typically non-violent, it is nonetheless a good security practice to avoid demonstrations. The Panamanian National Police generally do not use force to breakup demonstrations, but there have been occasions where tear gas has been used. Demonstrations and marches can and do occur in many locations around the country, to include areas along the Pan-American highway. U.S. citizens are advised to exercise caution near the campus of the University of Panama, the Presidential Palace, and the National Assembly which have been the scenes of frequent protests. Protestors have been known to block remote roadways, sometimes for periods lasting several days. During these extended road closings the security situation is always tense and the potential for violence between Panamanian authorities and protestors is always a very real possibility.

Visitors should be cautious when swimming or wading at the beach. Some beaches, especially those on the Pacific Ocean and those in Bocas del Toro Province, have dangerous currents that cause drowning deaths every year. These beaches are seldom posted with warning signs or monitored by lifeguards.

On the Pacific Coast and Atlantic coasts, boaters should be wary of vessels that may be transporting narcotics, illicit materials, and illegal immigrants to and from Colombia. Bales and specially wrapped packages containing narcotics have been found floating in the ocean or lying on remote beaches. Boaters and beachgoers are warned to steer clear of these items, to not pick up or move these packages and to immediately report their location to the Panamanian authorities. Special permission is needed from the Ministry of Government and Justice and the National Environment Authority to visit the National Park on Coiba Island. The island is an abandoned penal colony, although on occasion, prisoners are sent there to care for the animals. Boaters should avoid the southeastern coast of Kuna Yala Comarca (San Blas Islands), south of Punta Carreto, on the Atlantic Coast.

Local maritime search and rescue capabilities are limited and well below U.S. standards.

Stay up to date by bookmarking our [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and become a fan of the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well.

You can also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Take some time before travel to improve your personal security—things are not the same everywhere as they are in the United States. Here are some useful tips for [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: Crime in Panama City is increasing and the Department of State maintains its evaluation at “High” for purposes of providing increased resources to protect Embassy employees housed in Panama City. Violent crime has steadily increased from 2007 to 2009 and this increase is primarily related to narco-trafficking related violence. However, the rate of violent crimes has diminished somewhat during calendar year 2010. It is too early to tell whether this positive trend will continue or reverse course and continue its previous upward spiral. The entire city of Colon is also a high crime area; travelers should use extreme caution anywhere in Colon. Based upon reported incidents by local police, the high-crime areas around Panama City are San Miguelito, Rio Abajo, El Chorrillo, Hollywood, Curundu, Veracruz Beach, Panama Viejo, Casco Viejo (particularly at night), Santa Librada, San Miguel, Cabo Verde, and the Madden Dam overlook.

Crimes are typical of those that plague metropolitan areas and include shootings, rapes, armed robberies, muggings, purse-snatchings, thefts from autos, thefts of unsecured items, petty theft, and "express kidnappings" from ATM banking facilities, in which the victim is briefly kidnapped and robbed after withdrawing cash from an ATM. There has also been a recent spike in the number of credit card and ATM card fraud reports. Criminals are capturing credit and ATM card information to credit fraudulent cards. There have been several targeted kidnappings, including in Panama City.

Panama City has a curfew for those under 18 years of age, which is being enforced with new vigor since July 2009. Under the law, students attending night classes must have a carnet or permit, issued by the school or, if employed, a Certificate of Employment. Minors who are picked up for a curfew violation are subject to detention at a police station until parents or legal guardians can arrange for them to be released into their custody. Parents or legal guardians may be fined up to U.S. \$50.00 for the first violation.

Panamanian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Panama of items such as firearms and ammunition, cultural property, endangered wildlife species, narcotics, biological material, and food products. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Panama in Washington or one of Panama's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, if you purchase them you may also be breaking local law. The [Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Division in the U.S. Department of Justice](#) has more information on this serious problem. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information page](#).

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (see the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#)). If your passport is stolen we can help you replace it. For violent crimes such as assault and rape, we can help you find appropriate medical care, contact

family members or friends, and help them send you money if you need it. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime are solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if you need. The Panamanian Government also sponsors a program to assist victims of crime. The program is managed by the Oficina de Asistencia a Víctimas de Crímenes, located at the Policia Tecnica Judicial in the Ancon area of Panama City. Its telephone numbers are (011) 507-262-1973 or (011) 507-512-2222.

As in the United States, the emergency line in Panama is 911.

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

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in another country, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. In some places you may be taken in for questioning if you don't have your passport with you. In some places driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. These criminal penalties will vary from country to country. There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States, and you can be prosecuted under U.S. law if you buy pirated goods. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime [prosecutable in the United States](#). If you break local laws in your host country, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It's very important to know what's legal and what's not where you are going.

If you are arrested in Panama, authorities of Panama are required to alert the U.S. Embassy of your arrest. If you are concerned the Department of State may not be aware of your situation, you should request the police to notify the closest U.S. embassy or consulate of your arrest.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Anyone not bearing identification at all times, including tourists from the United States, will be penalized by the Panamanian authorities. U.S. tourists need to provide an original, valid passport at entry in Panama. While in Panama, American tourists should carry either their original passport or an original, valid photo I.D. such as driver's license **with** a photocopy of the bio-data page in their U.S. passport **and** a photocopy of the page in their passport that contains the entry stamp to Panama.

The U.S. Embassy in Panama has received numerous property dispute complaints. The complaints include lost property, broken contracts, additional payments, accusations of fraud and corruption, and occasionally threats of violence. There are two root causes for a large proportion of the complaints – title issues and weak judiciary. The majority of land in Panama and almost all land outside of Panama City are not titled. The lack of clear title leads to competing claims to property and frequently to lawsuits. The judicial system's capacity to resolve contractual and property disputes is weak and open to corruption. Americans should exercise more due diligence in purchasing real estate than in the United States. Engaging a reputable attorney and licensed real estate broker is strongly recommended. For more information, please see our [Property Information Sheet](#).

Panamanian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Panama of items such as firearms and ammunition, cultural property, endangered wildlife species, narcotics, biological material, and food products. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Panama

in Washington or one of Panama's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. Please see our [Customs Information](#) page for more information.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Panama City has some very good hospitals and clinics, but medical facilities outside of the capital are limited. When making a decision regarding health insurance, U.S. citizens should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the U.S. may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties, whereas travelers who have purchased overseas medical insurance have found it to be life-saving if a medical emergency occurs. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death. In Panama, most hospitals accept credit cards for hospital charges, but not for doctors' fees.

During May 2009, Panamanian health authorities placed travelers suspected of carrying the H1N1 flu in quarantine.

Except for antibiotics and narcotics, most medications are available without a prescription.

The 911 call center also provides an ambulance service, however, the ambulance might not always be available and given difficulties in transitting traffic jams and poor road conditions, it might arrive too late to do much good. There are also private ambulance services people can subscribe to.

You can find good information on vaccinations and other health precautions, on the [CDC website](#). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

MEDICAL INSURANCE: You can't assume your insurance will go with you when you travel. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave whether or not your medical insurance will cover you overseas. You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

- Does my policy apply when I'm out of the United States?
- Will it cover emergencies like a trip to a foreign hospital or a medical evacuation?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors' and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy doesn't go with you when you travel, it's a very good idea to take out another one for your trip. For more information, please see our [medical insurance overseas page](#).

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States The information below concerning Panama is provided for general reference only, and may not be applicable for a particular location or circumstance. Travelers should carry identification with them at all times and be prepared to stop for unannounced checkpoints throughout the country, especially at night.

Panama's roads, traffic and transportation systems are generally safe, but traffic lights often do not exist, even at busy intersections. Driving is often hazardous and demanding due to dense traffic, undisciplined driving habits, poorly maintained streets, and a lack of effective signs and traffic signals. On roads where poor lighting and driving conditions prevail, night driving is difficult and should be approached with caution. Night driving is particularly hazardous on the old Panama City – Colon highway. Riding your bicycle in the streets is not recommended, but there are a number of parks throughout the country where riding is permitted and safe.

Buses and taxis are not always maintained in a safe operating condition due to lack of regulatory enforcement. Third party liability auto insurance is mandatory. If an accident occurs, a recent law requires that the vehicles be moved off the roadway, failure to do so could result in a fine. Individuals involved in non-injury accidents should take a photo of both cars and then pull their vehicle off the roadway. Exchange information with the other driver and wait for the police to arrive. Emergency response in Panama is not regularly reliable. Police may take hours to respond to routine accidents, and response is often quicker for serious accidents. Ambulances will take all injured persons to a public hospital for treatment unless proof of health insurance is provided at the time of arrival. Traffic in Panama moves on the right, as in the U.S., and Panamanian law requires that drivers and passengers wear seat belts.

Flooding during the April to December rainy season occasionally makes city streets impassible and washes out some roads in the interior of the country. In addition, rural areas are often poorly maintained and lack illumination at night. Such roads are generally less traveled and the availability of emergency roadside assistance is very limited. Road travel is more dangerous during the rainy season and in the interior from Carnival through Good Friday. Carnival starts the Saturday prior to Ash Wednesday and goes on for four days.

There is often construction at night on Panama's portion of the Pan American highway. There are few signs alerting drivers to such construction and the highway is not well lit at night. When traveling on the highway, travelers should be aware of possible roadblocks. The Pan American Highway ends at Yaviza in the Darien Province of Panama and does not continue through to Colombia.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. Also, we suggest that you visit the websites of [Panama's Tourism Authority](#), [Transportation Authority](#), and [the national authority responsible for road safety in Panama](#), for helpful information on road conditions in Panama.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the government of Panama's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Panama's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA safety assessment page](#).

Background Notes: Panama

Official Name: **Republic of Panama**

PROFILE

Geography

Area: 78,200 sq. km. (30,193 sq. mi.); slightly smaller than South Carolina. Panama occupies the southeastern end of the isthmus forming the land bridge between North and South America.

Cities: *Capital*--Panama City (1.7 million, metropolitan area). *Other cities*--Colon (204,000), David (179,674).

Terrain: Mountainous (highest elevation Cerro Volcan Baru, 3,475 m.--11,468 ft.); coastline 2,857 km. (1,786 mi.).

Climate: Tropical, with average daily rainfall 28 mm. (1 in.) in winter.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Panamanian(s).

Population (May 2010): 3,322,576.

Annual population growth rate: 1.503%.

Ethnic groups: Mestizo (mixed African, Amerindian, and European ancestry) 70%, Amerindian and mixed (West Indian) 14%, Caucasian 10%, Amerindian 6%. *Origins*--36.5% African, 37.6% indigenous, and 25.9% Caucasian.

Religions: Roman Catholic 84%, Protestant 15%, other 1%.

Languages: Spanish (official); 14% speak English as their native tongue; various indigenous languages. Many Panamanians have a working knowledge of English and many professional college-educated Panamanians in Panama City are bilingual.

Education: *Years compulsory*--primary grades 1-6, or through age 15. *Attendance*--95% for primary school-age children, 62.2% for secondary, 34.9% for tertiary. *Literacy*--92.6% overall; urban 94%; rural 62%.

Health: *Infant mortality rate* (2010)--11.97 deaths/1,000 live births. *Life expectancy*--77.61 yrs.

Work force: 1.392 million: Commerce (wholesale and retail)--17.9%; agriculture, cattle, hunting, silviculture--15%; construction--9.8%; industries (manufactures)--18%; transportation, storage, communications--6.9%; private home domestic services--5.8%; public and defense administration--5.6%; hotels and restaurants--5.4%; other community and social activities, teaching--4.9%; real estate activities, business, and rentals--4.8%; social and health services--3.5%; financial intermediation--2.0%.

Unemployment (2009): 7%.

Poverty rate (2006): 28.6%.

Government

Type: Constitutional democracy.

Independence: November 3, 1903.

Constitution: October 11, 1972; amended 1983 and 1994 and reformed in 2004.

Branches: *Executive*--president (chief of state), vice president. (A second vice presidential slot was abolished starting with the 2009 electoral cycle.) *Legislative*--National Assembly (unicameral; 71 members, reduced from 78 to 71 members for May 2009 elections). *Judicial*--Supreme Court.

Subdivisions: Nine provinces and five (indigenous) territories.

Political parties: Panamenista Party (formerly the Arnulfista Party (PA); Democratic Change (CD); National Liberal Republican Movement (MOLIRENA); Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD); Patriotic Union (UP).

Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy

GDP (2008 est.): \$25.04 billion.

Annual growth rate: 5.6% (2010 projected); 2.4% (2009); 11% (2008); 12% (2007).

Per capita GDP: \$11,900 (2009 est., purchasing power parity); \$10,900 (2007); \$9,900 (2006).

Natural resources: Timber, copper, gold.

Services (67% of GDP): Finance, insurance, health and medical, transportation, telecommunications, Canal and maritime services, tourism, Colon Free Zone, public administration, and general commerce.

Agriculture (6.2% of GDP): *Products*--bananas, corn, sugarcane, rice, coffee, shrimp, timber, vegetables, livestock.

Industry/manufacturing (14.2% of GDP): construction, brewing, cement and other construction materials, sugar milling.

Trade (2009): *Exports (goods)*--\$821 million in exports, with salmon/tuna as the largest dollar amount, followed by beef, watermelon, shrimp, and pineapples. *Export partners* (as a percentage of total export value in 2009)--U.S. 42%, China (P.R.C.) and Taiwan 5.3%, Costa Rica 7.3%, Sweden 5.4%, Netherlands 6.5%, Spain 6.2%. *Imports (goods)*--\$7.8 billion was imported in 2009: petrol and fuel oils capture the largest percentage by weight (21%) and in dollar amount (8.5%). Capital goods, foodstuffs, chemicals, and consumer and intermediate goods are the remaining imports. *Import partners* (2009)--the top five countries include the U.S. 29%, Costa Rica 5.2%, Mexico 4.5%, China 4.2%, and Japan 3.6%. *U.S. exports to Panama* (2009)--\$4.3 billion: primarily oil and capital- and technology-intensive manufactured goods. *Panama exports to U.S.* (2009)--\$350 million: primarily seafood and repaired goods.

Foreign direct investment (2009): \$1.8 billion.

PEOPLE

Panamanians' culture, customs, and language are predominantly Caribbean Spanish. The majority of the population is ethnically mestizo or mixed Spanish, indigenous, Chinese, and West Indian. Spanish is the official and dominant language; English is a common second language spoken by the West Indians and by many businesspeople and professionals. More than half the population lives in the Panama City-Colon metropolitan corridor.

Panama is rich in folklore and popular traditions. Lively salsa--a mixture of Latin American popular music, rhythm and blues, jazz, and rock--is a Panamanian specialty, and Ruben Blades its best-known performer. Indigenous influences dominate handicrafts such as the famous Kuna textile *molos*. Artist Roberto Lewis' Presidential Palace murals and his restoration work and ceiling in the National Theater are widely admired.

As of 2009, more than 105,000 Panamanian students attended the University of Panama, the Technological University, the Autonomous University of Chiriqui (third-largest in the country), and the University of Santa Maria La Antigua, a private Catholic institution. Including smaller colleges, there are 88 institutions of higher education in Panama. The first 6 years of primary education are compulsory. As of 2007, there were there were about 445,000 students enrolled in grades one through six. The total enrollment in the six secondary grades for the same period was about 260,000. More than 90% of Panamanians are literate.

HISTORY

Panama's history has been shaped by the evolution of the world economy and the ambitions of great powers. The earliest known inhabitants of Panama were the Cuevas and the Coclé tribes, but they were decimated by disease and fighting when the Spanish arrived in the 1500s.

Rodrigo de Bastidas, sailing westward from Venezuela in 1501 in search of gold, was the first European to explore the Isthmus of Panama. A year later, Christopher Columbus visited the Isthmus and established a short-lived settlement in the Darien. Vasco Nunez de Balboa's tortuous trek from the Atlantic to the Pacific in 1513 demonstrated that the Isthmus was, indeed, the path between the seas, and Panama quickly became the crossroads and marketplace of Spain's empire in the New World. Gold and silver were brought by ship from South America, hauled across the Isthmus, and loaded aboard ships for Spain. The route became known as the Camino Real, or Royal Road, although it was more commonly known as *Camino de Cruces* (Road of the Crosses) because of the abundance of gravesites along the way.

Panama was part of the Spanish empire for 300 years (1538-1821). From the outset, Panamanian identity was based on a sense of "geographic destiny," and Panamanian fortunes fluctuated with the geopolitical importance of the Isthmus. The colonial experience also spawned Panamanian nationalism as well as a racially complex and highly stratified society, the source of internal conflicts that ran counter to the unifying force of nationalism.

Building the Canal

Modern Panamanian history has been shaped by its trans-isthmian canal, which had been a dream since the beginning of Spanish colonization. From 1880 to 1890, a French company under Ferdinand de Lesseps attempted unsuccessfully to construct a sea-level canal on the site of the present Panama Canal. In November 1903, with U.S. encouragement, Panama proclaimed its independence and concluded the Hay/Bunau-Varilla Treaty with the United States.

The treaty granted rights to the United States "as if it were sovereign" in a zone roughly 10 miles wide and 50 miles long. In that zone, the U.S. would build a canal, then administer, fortify, and defend it "in perpetuity." In 1914, the United States completed the existing 83-kilometer (52 mile) canal, which is one of the world's greatest feats of engineering. The early 1960s saw the beginning of sustained pressure in Panama for the renegotiation of this treaty.

Military Coups and Coalitions

From 1903 until 1968, Panama was a constitutional democracy dominated by a commercially oriented oligarchy. During the 1950s, the Panamanian military began to challenge the oligarchy's political hegemony. In October 1968, Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid, twice elected president and twice ousted by the Panamanian military, was ousted for a third time as president by the National Guard after only 10 days in office. A military government was established, and the commander of the National Guard, Brigadier General Omar Torrijos, soon emerged as the principal power in Panamanian political life. Torrijos' regime was harsh and corrupt, but his charisma, populist domestic programs, and nationalist (anti-U.S.) foreign policy appealed to the rural and urban constituencies largely ignored by the oligarchy.

Torrijos' death in 1981 altered the tone but not the direction of Panama's political evolution. Despite the 1983 constitutional amendments, which appeared to proscribe a political role for the military, the Panama Defense Forces (PDF), as they were then known, continued to dominate Panamanian political life behind a facade of civilian government. By this time, General Manuel Noriega was firmly in control of both the PDF and the civilian government.

The United States froze economic and military assistance to Panama in the summer of 1987 in response to the domestic political crisis in Panama and an attack on the U.S. Embassy. In April 1988, President Reagan invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, freezing Panamanian Government assets in all U.S. organizations. In May 1989 Panamanians voted overwhelmingly for the anti-Noriega candidates. The Noriega regime promptly annulled the election, and embarked on a new round of repression. By the fall of 1989 the regime was barely clinging

to power, and the regime's paranoia made daily existence unsafe for American citizens.

On December 20, 1989, President George H.W. Bush ordered the U.S. military into Panama to protect U.S. lives and property, to fulfill U.S. treaty responsibilities to operate and defend the Canal, to assist the Panamanian people in restoring democracy, and to bring Noriega to justice. The U.S. troops involved in Operation Just Cause achieved their primary objectives quickly, and Noriega eventually surrendered to U.S. authorities. He completed his sentence for drug trafficking charges in September 2007. In August 2007, a U.S. federal court in Miami found Noriega extraditable to France to serve a sentence imposed there after an *in absentia* conviction for money laundering. Noriega was extradited to France in 2010 after exhausting all his appeals in U.S. courts, and was sentenced to a 10-year prison term.

Rebuilding Democracy

Panama's Electoral Tribunal moved quickly to rebuild the civilian constitutional government, reinstated the results of the May 1989 election on December 27, 1989, and confirmed the victory of President Guillermo Endara and Vice Presidents Guillermo Ford and Ricardo Arias Calderon.

During its 5-year term, the often-fractious Endara government struggled to meet the public's high expectations. Its new police force was a major improvement over its predecessor but was not fully able to deter crime. Ernesto Perez Balladares was sworn in as President on September 1, 1994, after an internationally monitored election campaign.

Perez Balladares ran as the candidate for a three-party coalition dominated by the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), the erstwhile political arm of military dictatorships. Perez Balladares worked skillfully during the campaign to rehabilitate the PRD's image, emphasizing the party's populist Torrijos roots rather than its association with Noriega. He won the election with only 33% of the vote when the major non-PRD forces splintered into competing factions. His administration carried out economic reforms and often worked closely with the U.S. on implementation of the Canal treaties.

On September 1, 1999, Mireya Moscoso, the widow of former President Arnulfo Arias Madrid, took office after defeating PRD candidate Martin Torrijos, son of the late dictator, in a free and fair election. During her administration, Moscoso attempted to strengthen social programs, especially for child and youth development, protection, and general welfare. Moscoso's administration successfully handled the Panama Canal transfer and was effective in the administration of the Canal.

The PRD's Martin Torrijos won the presidency and a legislative majority in the National Assembly in 2004. Under Torrijos, Panama continued strong economic growth and initiated the Panama Canal expansion project.

In May 2009, Panama held general elections and selected Ricardo Martinelli as president. President Martinelli assumed the presidency on July 1, 2009 and promised to promote free trade, establish a Panama City metro system, reform the health care system, and complete the expansion plan for the Panama Canal.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Panama is a representative democracy with three branches of government: executive and legislative branches elected by direct vote for 5-year terms, and an appointed judiciary. The judicial branch is organized under a nine-member Supreme Court (each judge is appointed for a 10-year term) and includes all tribunals and municipal courts. An autonomous Electoral Tribunal supervises voter registration, the election process, and the activities of political

parties. Anyone over the age of 18 may vote.

Principal Government Officials

President--Ricardo MARTINELLI

Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs--Juan Carlos VARELA

Ambassador to the United States--Jaime E. ALEMAN

Ambassador to the Organization of American States--Guillermo COCHEZ

Panama maintains an **embassy** in the United States at 2862 McGill Terrace, NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel: 202-483-1407), and consulates in Washington DC, Honolulu, Houston, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Juan, San Diego, and Tampa.

NATIONAL SECURITY

As of July 2010, the Panamanian Security Forces consisted of the Panamanian National Police (PNP), the National Frontier Service (Servicio Nacional de Fronteras or SENAFRONT), the National Aero-Naval Service (Servicio Nacional Aero-Naval or SENAN), and the Institutional Protection Service (SPI--a secret service equivalent). A constitutional amendment passed in 1994 permanently abolished the military.

The lead criminal investigative entity is the Judicial Investigative Directorate (DIJ). Previously under the nominal direction of the autonomous Attorney General and known as the Technical Judicial Police (PTJ), the DIJ is now part of the PNP though it maintains investigative links with the Attorney General's office.

ECONOMY

Panama's economy is based primarily on a well-developed services sector that accounts for nearly 70% of GDP. Services include the Panama Canal, banking, the Colon Free Zone, insurance, container ports, flagship registry, tourism, and medical and healthcare.

In October 2006, Panamanians voted overwhelmingly in favor of a \$5.25 billion Canal expansion project to construct a third set of locks, which is expected to be completed in 2014. The Government of Panama expects the project to be a transforming event for Panama that will provide 7,000-9,000 direct new jobs during the peak construction period of 2009-2011 and increase economic opportunities for years to come. The expansion is financed through a combination of loans from multilateral institutions and current revenues. In July 2009, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) awarded the contract to build the locks to an international consortium led by Spain's Sacyr Vallehermoso. The locks will be 60% wider and 40% longer than the existing locks so the Canal can handle all but eight of the world's container vessels, along with supersize tankers and bulk carriers of ores and grains.

GDP growth in 2009 was 2.4%, reflecting a slowing of the robust growth of 11.0% seen in 2008. Although growth slowed in 2009, due to the global economic downturn, it has improved in 2010 and is still one of the most positive growth rates in the region. Growth has been fueled by the construction, transportation, maritime, and tourism sectors and Panama Canal-related activities. As a result of this growth, government deficit as a percentage of GDP dropped to 43% in 2009, and government-issued debt is classified as the lowest rung of investment grade. A recent United Nations report highlighted progress in poverty reduction from 2001 to 2007--overall poverty fell from 37% to 29%, and extreme poverty fell from 19% to 12%.

Panama has bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) in force with Chile, El Salvador, Taiwan, Singapore, Guatemala,

Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Panama signed an FTA with Canada in May 2010, but it has not yet entered into force. Panama is exploring free trade negotiations with Mexico, Colombia, the Mercosur countries, the Andean Community, the European Union, and CARICOM. The U.S. and Panama signed a Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) in June 2007. The agreement was overwhelmingly approved in July 2007 by the Panamanian National Assembly, but has yet to be ratified by the United States Congress. Once implemented, the agreement will promote economic opportunity by eliminating tariffs and other barriers to trade of goods and services and will provide a framework for any trade disputes.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Panama is a member of the UN General Assembly and most major UN agencies. It maintains membership in several international financial institutions, including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Panama is a member of the Organization of American States and was a founding member of the Rio Group. Although it was suspended from the Latin American Economic System--known informally both as the Group of Eight and the Rio Group--in 1988 due to its internal political system under Noriega, Panama was readmitted in 1994 as an acknowledgment of its democratic credentials.

Panama is a member of the Central American Integration System (SICA). It is in the process of withdrawing from the Central American Parliament (Parlacen). Panama joined its six Central American neighbors at the 1994 Summit of the Americas in signing the Alliance for Sustainable Development, known as the Conjunta Centroamerica-USA or CONCAUSA, to promote sustainable economic development in the region.

U.S.-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS

The United States cooperates with the Panamanian Government in promoting economic, democratic, security, and social development through U.S. and international agencies. Cultural ties between the two countries are strong, and many Panamanians come to the United States for higher education and advanced training. In 2007, the U.S. and Panama partnered to launch a regional health worker training center. The center provides training to community healthcare workers in Panama and throughout Central America. About 27,000 American citizens reside in Panama, many retirees from the Panama Canal Commission and individuals who hold dual nationality. There is also a rapidly growing enclave of American retirees in the Chiriqui Province in western Panama.

In the economic investment arena, the Panamanian Government has been successful in the enforcement of intellectual property rights and has concluded a Bilateral Investment Treaty Amendment with the United States and an agreement with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Although money laundering remains a problem, Panama passed significant reforms in 2000 intended to strengthen its cooperation against international financial crimes.

The Panama Canal Treaties

The 1977 Panama Canal Treaties entered into force on October 1, 1979. They replaced the 1903 Hay/Bunau-Varilla Treaty between the United States and Panama (modified in 1936 and 1955), and all other U.S.-Panama agreements concerning the Panama Canal, which were in force on that date. The treaties comprise a basic treaty governing the operation and defense of the Canal from October 1, 1979 to December 31, 1999 (Panama Canal Treaty) and a treaty guaranteeing the permanent neutrality of the Canal (Neutrality Treaty).

The details of the arrangements for U.S. operation and defense of the Canal under the Panama Canal Treaty are spelled out in separate implementing agreements. The Canal Zone and its government ceased to exist when the treaties entered into force and Panama assumed jurisdiction over Canal Zone territories and functions, a process that was finalized on December 31, 1999.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--**Phyllis M. Powers**

Deputy Chief of Mission--David Gilmour

Counselor for Political Affairs--Debra Hevia

Counselor for Economic Affairs--Andrew Plowman

Counselor for Public Affairs--David Searby

Counselor for Management--JoAnn Scandola

Consul General--Mark Fry

The **U.S. Embassy** in Panama is located at Edificio 783, Avenida Demetrio Basilio Lakas, Clayton, Panama City (tel: 507-207-7000). Personal and official mail for the embassy and members of the mission may be sent to: U.S. Embassy Panama, Unit 9100, DPO AA 34002. E-mail: Panamaweb@state.gov. The Embassy's information for travelers is available at http://panama.usembassy.gov/american_citizens_service_unit.html.

Other Contact Information

American Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Panama

Apartado 0843-00152

Panama, Republica de Panama

Tel: 507-301-3881

Fax: 507-301-3882

E-mail: amcham@panamcham.com

U.S. Department of State

Office of Central American Affairs

2201 C St. NW

Washington, DC 20520

Tel: (202) 647-3482

Fax: (202) 647-2597

U.S. Department of Commerce

International Trade Administration

Office of Latin American and the Caribbean

14th and Constitution, NW

Washington, DC 20230

Tel: 202-482-0057

800-USA-TRADE

Fax: 202-482-0464

Home Page: <http://trade.gov>

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

Travel Alerts, Travel Warnings, Trip Registration

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://travel.state.gov>, where current **Worldwide Caution, Travel Alerts**, and **Travel Warnings** can be found. The travel.state.gov website also includes information about **passports**, tips for **planning a safe trip** abroad and more. More travel-related information also is available at <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.



The Department's **Smart Traveler** app for U.S. travelers going abroad provides easy access to the frequently updated official country information, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, U.S. embassy locations, and more that appear on the travel.state.gov site. Travelers can also set up e-itineraries to keep track of arrival and departure dates and make notes about upcoming trips. The app is compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad (requires iOS 4.0 or later).

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 (a link to the registration page is also available through the Smart Traveler app). 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.

Passports

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.

Health Information

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>.

More 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 more **Background Notes**, the Department's **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.

Section 4 - Transition

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

Going Global at WPI Handbook
10/18/2011

Use and adaptation welcome, but please acknowledge WPI and
[Natalie Mello](#) and tell us of your use.

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

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:		

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.

London Project Center Only

Bus transportation will be coordinated for students arriving at Heathrow before 7:45 am on Saturday. Students who arrive at Heathrow Airport before 7:45 a.m. will be taken by bus directly to IES. Bus drivers are not authorized to take passengers not on their list.

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: 10/20/2011

Return on or before: 12/20/2011

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,