PART 2: GET CONNECTED AND INVOLVED

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ISSS NEWS

Binghamton University

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Immigration Regulations
Employment Opportunities
Funding Opportunities
News From The Office of International Student & Scholar Services

AS SOON AS THEY ARE AVAILABLE!

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The Office of International Student and Scholar Services sponsors a variety of programs for our students. We encourage you to participate in as many as possible. You will find them informative, interesting, and often a lot of fun! It's a wonderful way to broaden your exposure to US culture and add to your understanding of your temporary "home." More information on these programs will be sent to you later this summer and throughout the year.

**ENGLISH CONVERSATION PAIRS**
Co-sponsored with the English Language Institute Program, it matches English Language Institute (ELI) students with native speakers to facilitate the practice of conversational English.

**INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR**
International Coffee Hour is usually held on the first Friday of each month during the academic year. The Coffee Hour provides a space where members of the entire University community can meet in a relaxed atmosphere. Each Coffee Hour is sponsored by a different University department or office. Refreshments are free.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS**
Co-sponsored with the Fleishman Center for Career and Professional Development, this series of workshops explains federal regulations governing practical training, and strategies for a successful job search.

**INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE**
U.S. tax law is very confusing, and not just to international students! Glacier Tax Prep is a web-based income tax preparation product that is available at no cost to international students. On-line income tax webinars provide a general overview of income tax rules and line-by-line assistance with state income tax forms.

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING INFORMATION**
The ISSS offers a variety of programs for international and domestic students. For updates on workshops and events, please visit the ISSS [B-Engaged page](#). For additional information on campus wide programming, please visit and ‘Like’ the ISSS [Facebook page](#) and ‘follow’ the ISSS on [Instagram](#). For more information regarding programs, please email Christina MacDavitt, ISSS Programming Coordinator, at [cmacdavitt@binghamton.edu](mailto:cmacdavitt@binghamton.edu)
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If you have any questions about International Coffee Hour, please feel free to contact Christina MacDavitt, at cmacdavitt@binghamton.edu

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Culture:
Culture is a complex concept, it is often compared to an iceberg where a large part is visible and seen above water (music, art, literature, language, customs, cuisine, sports, clothing). This part manifests only the tip of the iceberg. Then there is the hidden part beneath the surface (beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions, concepts like the self, time, modesty, faith and more). These visible and hidden cultural differences can affect everyday interaction and lead to confusion and frustration.

Adjusting to a New Culture
Living in a new country is an exciting experience; nonetheless it comes with many obstacles and difficulties. Many international students struggle when coming to the United States. Struggle is a normal experience for anyone traveling abroad. Trying to adjust to the U.S. American culture while balancing academic studies, social events, and exploration of a new location can be quite a challenge for some. Differences in language, people, customs, food, surroundings and/or climate can create a culture shock to many students. Again, please know that it is normal for students and travelers to experience this when they are in a new location. As a new international student, it is important to familiarize yourself with the signs of culture shock, as well as the resources needed to overcome it.

Culture Shock:
The feeling of disorientation after having to leave a familiar space and move to an unfamiliar one.

Signs of Culture Shock:
1. Frustration and confusion
2. Overwhelmed with homesickness
3. Loneliness and the desire to avoid social settings
4. Insomnia and fatigue
5. Anxiety and hostility towards the host culture
6. Lack of confidence and insecurity

Phases of Culture Shock:
Remember that not everyone goes through all or any of these phases and that people experience culture shock differently. Some are more affected by it than others.

1. Honeymoon: You arrive to the new culture and everything seems exciting and fun. You are interested in the differences and in the new experience. This stage ends very quickly when a student starts struggling to adapt to the new place.
2. Frustration: These differences become a barrier when trying to adjust to the new culture making things difficult and frustrating to handle. A student may feel confused and start to dislike the new culture and sometimes reject it.
3. Adjustment: At this stage, the student will begin to adjust to the new culture and become more comfortable with the new environment.
4. Acceptance and Mastery: When the new student has a sense of belonging to the new culture.
Here are some TIPS that could help you when dealing with Culture Shock!

1. Be flexible and open-minded. Ask questions if you do not know.
2. Be healthy and active. Taking care of your physical health will help you have a better attitude when trying to adjust to the life here.
3. It’s okay to make mistakes.
4. Have a good sense of humor.
5. Stay in touch with family and friends back home or seek support from other students that are going through the same stage. The University Counseling Center is well equipped to help as well if things become too severe for you to handle.
6. Try to keep yourself busy. Get involved, visit B-Engaged and participate in campus life.
7. Understanding the culture enables you to fit in the culture better.

The transition can be frustrating, and although culture shock is an awful feeling, just remember that this feeling is temporary and will pass. Be patient and try to look at the positive side of the experience.

The U.S. American Culture:
The United States is often referred to as a melting pot due to the diversity in the culture and customs. But nonetheless, there are some characteristics that describe the general attitude of its people.

1. **Space**: U.S. Americans maintain a distance between one another during conversations and social meetings. An arm-length is considered the most appropriate space.
2. **Time**: U.S. Americans value time and being punctual for a meeting is important. Arriving late for a meeting is not socially acceptable unless you have already notified the person whom you are meeting.
3. **Independence and stressing individuality**: U.S. Americans value these attributes and will often strive to achieve them within their own personal life.
4. **Tipping**: Tip is not added to your bill in a service charge, however it is customary to tip the waiter or waitress 10%, 15% or 20% of the amount of the bill depending on the type of service (Was the service good, bad or great?).
5. **Informality**: Americans are more casual than formal. They are casual in the way they dress, talk and in their relationships. If you are ever unsure of whether a class or social meeting will be formal or informal, ask the organizer.
6. **Greetings**: When you are introduced to someone, it is appropriate to look at that person in the eye, smile and shake hands. In the U.S., a quick “How are you” is a greeting more of a question to inquire about health and wellbeing.
7. **Directness**: U.S. Americans are clear and frank when voicing their opinions.
8. Try to have a positive and cheerful attitude when dealing with people.
U.S Education System and Classroom Culture
Classes in the U.S. are more interactive and sharing your opinion is encouraged and highly recommended. The system is not harder, just different. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your instructor if you find yourself in a situation where you need further assistance in this matter.

U.S. Holidays
The U.S. celebrates federal holidays and other holidays that are specific to the country. On federal holidays, schools, government offices, workplaces and some stores are closed. Please note that the University Blue Buses and white city buses do not run on some holidays. Check transportation in part 2 of this handbook.

Sports
Sports is an important aspect in U.S. American culture and an integral part in the U.S. University experience. Over history it has brought the entire country together, seen as a way of socializing. The typical U.S. American sports include; American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey. These sports have been refashioned in the 19th century to represent the American culture and values. Whether it is a tailgate party before a football game, watching the Super Bowl, NFL (American football in the National Football League), MLB (baseball in the Major League Baseball), NBA (basketball in the National Basketball Association), NHL (ice hockey in the National Hockey League), or just playing frisbee on campus, sports has been an important part of the U.S American tradition.