September 11, 2008

Dear Exchange Student Directors and Student Participants,

2009-2010 applications and administrative materials, with instructions for our standard procedures, are now available. This letter is intended to amplify instructions on the forms and anticipate some basic questions students may have.

Normally we like to receive completed applications by March 15 for the fall semester and by October 15 for the spring semester. In the spring we can handle applications later, but do suggest that they be prepared as quickly as possible. If applications are very late, we could have difficulty issuing visa-related documents in time and students may be closed out of on-campus housing.

The application form states that a TOEFL score is required if English is not the first language. A letter from a faculty member attesting to the nominee’s English proficiency may be substituted for the TOEFL score as long as the student is not using the exchange program to apply for admission to a Binghamton degree program. **Note: This requirement is waived for students from partner institutions where English is the language of instruction.**

We ask that a photocopy of the student’s passport be included with the application, in order to avoid having to reissue visa application documents due to discrepancies in name spelling, etc. **Students should apply for their passport as soon as they begin to consider studying abroad.**

The State University of New York Foreign Student Financial Statement is an essential component of the application. I am enclosing an Estimate of Costs sheet, which explains what Binghamton provides and what the student must cover. On the reverse side of the Financial Statement form, there are instructions regarding the required documentation the student needs to present to prove sufficient financial resources for the period spent studying at Binghamton.

We are including the University Health Services forms in the application packet this year. Forms do not need to be turned in with the application, and can be brought to Binghamton by the student to be turned in during orientation. **However, we strongly encourage students to complete the forms and send them as soon as possible before their arrival, as it will greatly facilitate the process of course registration if they are received in advance.**

Our graduate and undergraduate admissions offices will not proceed to admit a student until all parts of the application are assembled, and we cannot assist with any other arrangements before formal admissions. Students should send all materials to the Office of International Programs and not to a department or one of the admissions offices.
On-campus housing is very much in demand and in short supply. In order to receive housing on campus, students MUST complete the on-line housing application and request in a timely manner. Instructions for completing the housing application will be sent upon acceptance. Graduate students are not permitted be housed on campus and must find accommodations off campus.

All exchange students are required to enroll with a full load of courses according to U.S. immigration law. At Binghamton, twelve credits per semester is considered to be a full load. Most courses are four credits, so the minimum number of courses is usually three.

The Office of International Programs coordinates the admissions procedure for the exchange students and assigns each student a faculty academic advisor. Students should be encouraged to explore our homepage where all departments list their courses, and where the schedule of classes for the next semester appears. The University website is [http://www.binghamton.edu](http://www.binghamton.edu).

Registration for courses normally takes place just prior to the start of classes, after consultation with the academic advisor. However, if possible, we will register exchange students during our early registration period soon after their admission. Students should identify a number of second choice courses in case the most desired courses are closed or restricted. There is a short “add” and “drop” period, during which the student may adjust their course selection at the beginning of the semester.

The Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), directed by Ms. Ellen Badger, prepares the DS-2019 form so students may apply for the visa. In the weeks prior to the beginning of the semester, ISSS sends information to the student that is helpful for their preparation for study at Binghamton University, including arrival instructions.

ISSS also provides an international student orientation program, which covers important information on immigration, academic and practical matters. The orientation program includes several social activities with other Binghamton students. The ISSS staff is available to assist with individual questions or needs that may arise during the orientation, so it is very important for new exchange students to attend.

The Office of International Programs also holds a welcome breakfast and orientation for just the exchange students on the first morning of the international student orientation. **Attendance at both orientations is mandatory.**

I hope these materials and information are helpful to you. Please let me know if you have questions about our academic programs, student life, or the necessary admissions procedures. We look forward to welcoming and working with each exchange student.

Sincerely,

Susan B. Lewis  
Assistant Director