

2018-2019

Bluefield State College Handbook for International Students



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES
BLUEFIELD STATE COLLEGE
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Office of International Initiatives
Bluefield State College
Basic Sciences Building, Room 308
219 Rock Street
Bluefield, West Virginia 24701

DEAR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

Thank you for choosing to attend Bluefield State College. We hope you will find all aspects of your stay with us to be positive, rewarding, safe, secure, comfortable, and meaningful.

Should you have any concerns or issues, academic and non-academic, please know that the Office of International Initiatives (OII) is here for you from the application for admission phase to your final semester at Bluefield State College.

The Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) at Bluefield State College, Dr. Jo-Ann Robinson, VP for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, may be contacted at (304) 327-4567.

Additionally, the following are Designated School Officials (DSO):

Interim Senior Admissions Counselor Jennifer Johnson (304-327-4066)
Registrar Terry Thompson (304) 327-4062
Office of International Initiatives Coordinator Dr. Sudhakar R. Jamkhandi (304) 327-4036.

I encourage you to engage in as many on-campus activities as you can during your academic pursuits at Bluefield State College. Your participation in the International Student Organization (ISO) will be welcomed by ISO Advisers faculty and staff advisers Kim Reed (304-327-4114), Angie Wassum (304) 327-4450 and Campus Life Director Joan Buchanan (304-327-4186).

Sincerely



Sudhakar R. Jamkhandi, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Office of International Initiatives
SEVIS-Designated School Official
Alternate Responsible Officer for J-1 Visas
Professor of English

SEVIS ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICES

Person/Office Responsible	SEVIS Action
Admissions	Initial I-20a for new students and dependents
T. Thompson, Registrar & S. Jamkhandi, OII	Alert Registrar about address updates
T. Thompson, Registrar	Change of Major in SEVIS after Counseling Center has changed in Banner
S. Jamkhandi, OII	SEVIS Registration/Check in (attendance verification) within 30 days of beginning of every semester; updates: address, financial guarantees
S. Jamkhandi, OII	Financial guarantee must be shown during SEVIS Registration every semester and recorded in SEVIS
T. Thompson, Registrar	Graduation (Completion of program but NOT deactivated from SEVIS Active Student List)
S. Jamkhandi, OII	Transfer out
J. Robinson, VP/PDSO	Termination
S. Jamkhandi, OII	Curriculum Practical Training (CPT with 1 credit hour course during summer sessions only); Student must request Instructor to turn in grade to Registrar at end of Summer II session
S. Jamkhandi, OII	Optional Practical Training (OPT; post-graduation if desired). Only STEM candidates are permitted to engage in 24-month OPT.
S. Jamkhandi, OII	Dependents and Letters of Invitation to families
S. Jamkhandi, OII	Status Monitoring: Registrar sends all drop requests to Jamkhandi/Robinson to ensure status not affected)
T. Thompson, Registrar	Driver's license
J. Robinson, VP/PDSO	SSN (to be obtained after updated I-20 issued); questions about I-94
VPAA, S. Jamkhandi OII, J. Robinson, VP/PDSO, T. Thompson Registrar	Extend program
S. Jamkhandi, J. Robinson	Authorization to drop below full time (Reduced Course Load)
T. Thompson, Registrar; S. Jamkhandi, OII	Shorten program (early graduation)
J. Robinson	Off campus employment (during fall/spring semesters)
J. Robinson	Request change of status (reinstatement, green cards, etc.)
J. Robinson	Recertification for I-20 issuance
S. Jamkhandi (if not available, any DSO)	Yearly signature on I-20

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SELECTED OFFICES

Office of International Initiatives	304-327-4036
Primary Designated School Official	304-327-4567
Designated School Officials	304-327-4066/4062/4067/4036
Public Safety	304-327-4180/4181
Admissions	304-327-4067
Registrar	304-327-4060/4061/4062/4063/4064
Student Health Center	304-327-4178 or 4170
Student Government Association	304-327-4185
Student Residential Housing	304-327-4185
Counseling Center (for Tutoring)	304-327-4444 or 4424
Business Office	304-327-4047
School of Arts and Sciences	304-327-4027
School of Education	304-327-4173
School of Business	304-327-4081
School of Engineering Technology and Computer Science	304-327-4120
School of Nursing and Allied Health	304-327-4136
Virtual College and Technology Division	304-327-4057 or 4578
Moodle Administrator	304-327-4591
Center for Extended Learning, IVN Tech Support	304-327-4058
Institutional Computer Services Help Desk	304-327-4090
Library Services	304-327-4054
Vice President-Academic Affairs/Provost	304-327-4161
Vice President-Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	304-327-4567
President	304-327-4030
Maintenance	304-327-4195
International Student Organization Advisors Kim Reed, Angela Wassum	304-327-4129/4450
Campus Life	304-327-4186
City of Bluefield Police Department	304-327-6101
Princeton Police Department	304-487-5000
Bluefield Regional Medical Center	304-327-1100
Princeton Community Hospital	304-487-7000

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

New international students: Please email oii@bluefieldstate.edu your arrival date and time **AT LEAST TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE PRIOR TO ARRIVAL** at Charlotte, North Carolina or Roanoke, Virginia or Charleston, West Virginia. You will receive a confirmation email about transportation from the airport of arrival and your residence in Bluefield.

After settling in at your residence, please call the Admissions Office (304-327-4066) and the Office of International Initiatives (304-327-4036) to notify them of your presence in the community. Schedule an appointment with both offices **before classes begin** to make sure all the necessary paperwork, admission, and registration issues have been taken care of so that you can focus on your studies.

Currently enrolled/returning international students: At least two airport-Bluefield-airport transfer dates will be provided well in advance (by the Athletics department) to accommodate international travel itineraries.

WELCOME RECEPTION/SOCIAL MIXER

A welcome reception/social mixer coordinated by the International Students Organization, the BSC Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, the VP for Academic Affairs-Provost, and the OII will be held in early fall.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

While on campus, you should contact the Office of Security at 304-327-4181 for all safety and security concerns.

If you live at the MountainView Residence and Conference Center, please contact the General Manager at 304-324-3800 Extension 1 if your safety and security are endangered.

For major safety and security concerns or health-related emergencies, please call 911.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISING

BSC is committed to provide you advice about your academic pursuits. It is our goal to assist and promote the success and wellness of international students at BSC. The PDSO and DSOs are here to assist you regarding questions or concerns related to your student visa status, regulations and opportunities, and adjustment to the campus culture and community.

DOCUMENT REQUESTS

There are times when you or your family may require documentation showing that you are a full time student at BSC. The PDSO or OII Coordinator can provide a letter verifying your international student status, or a letter of invitation for a close family member (parent, spouse, brother or sister) to visit you while you are pursuing your studies. Please see the Appendix for additional information.

If there is a change in your program or funding, you are required to report that change to the PDSO and Admissions Office within 10 days of the change occurring. In many cases, this will result in the issuance of an updated form I-20. You will also receive a new form I-20 if you request a program extension or apply for curricular practical training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT). Please see the Appendix for additional information. Please have all forms completed and signed for CPT and OPT **PRIOR TO COMING TO THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES**. You are also requested to call this office to set up an appointment to complete the CPT and/or OPT procedures in SEVIS, which takes about 30 minutes to complete. [Please note: The OII Coordinator is also a faculty member and is not available for such SEVIS related functions on Tuesdays and Thursdays.]

HEALTH AND WELL BEING (SELECTED LIST)

Health Insurance:

All international students enrolled at BSC—short term or degree seeking—are REQUIRED TO have a health insurance plan.

If you are ill on a weekday and are on campus, please take advantage of the campus-based Student Health Center located in the Physical Education Building, Room 210. For office hours, go to the Health Clinic Resources page <http://bluefieldstate.edu/student-life/health-clinic/resources>.

If you are ill and are at your residence, you may wish to come to the campus-based Student Health Center for diagnosis or treatment. But first call this Center at 304-327-4178 or 4170 to make sure it is open. You may also refer to the Bluefield State College website www.bluefieldstate.edu, click on the Student Life tab, then click Health Clinic and Resources. If the Student Health Center is not open, then below are other options for medical care in the area.

General and Family Practice:

Dr. Jana Peters, 365 Courthouse Road, Princeton, West Virginia 24740, Phone: 304-425-3922.

Bhasin Prompt Medical Care, 1609 Stadium Drive, Bluefield, West Virginia Phone: (304) 325-7460

Bluefield Family Medicine, 106 Huffard Drive Bluefield VA Phone: 276-322-3427

Dentists

Lutz Family Dentistry, 215 Central Street, Tazewell, Virginia Phone: 276-988-4549

Eye-Care: Dr. Frank Britton, 3101 Cumberland Road, Bluefield Phone: 304-325-3603

If you need medical care from a specialist, these doctors will suggest someone they personally know. For **Non-Medical Emergencies**, first please call your health insurance company so as to obtain approval for treatment.

For Medical Emergencies:

For serious medical emergencies, go to Bluefield Regional Medical Center in Bluefield or Princeton Community Hospital in Princeton. Remember, if you do not have a personal vehicle and must be rushed to the hospital, call 911. Most likely, an ambulance will take you to the hospital. You will be taken to the hospital closest to your residence. Make certain you have your medical (health) insurance ID card prior to setting out to either of the two local hospitals.

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Please see the **Student Residential Housing** list provided in the Appendix of this Handbook. If you do not own a personal vehicle, make certain your residence is close to the bus route of the Bluefield Area Transit Authority. Please note that ANYWHERE ALONG THE BUS ROUTE you can motion to the driver to stop and he/she should oblige.

GROCERY SHOPPING

If you wish to purchase spices to prepare your national cuisines, efforts to make one trip per semester to Oasis World Market in Blacksburg, Virginia will be made.

SHOPPING FOR PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

You can take the city buses AT NO COST to area shopping centers and Mercer Mall as long as you present your current student I.D.

LAUNDROMAT: If you live at the MountainView, you are allowed to use the laundry facilities.

In Princeton, E-Z Way Laundromat is located at 700 Stafford Drive.

In Bluewell, Coin-Op Laundromat is located opposite King's Tire on Rt.52.

Opposite Bluefield Regional Medical Center on Cherry Street is a Laundromat too.

In Bluefield, Virginia, College Coin Laundry is located on College Avenue near Comcast Telecommunications, Inc.

SEASONS AND CLOTHING

Southern West Virginia and southwest Virginia enjoy four distinct seasons:

Spring (March 21 – June 20): Typical weather – wintry, rainy, and occasionally sunny with temperatures ranging from the 15 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. You may still need a jacket.

Summer (June 21 – August 30): Hot but temperatures rarely above 90 degrees Fahrenheit with occasional heavy rainfall and flooding. Most Americans wear shorts and short sleeve shirts.

Autumn (September 1-October 20): Mild temperatures, occasional heavy rains. Clothing may be similar to what you might wear during the spring.

Winter (October 21 – March 20): Very cold, occasional heavy snowfall, windy. You will definitely need warmer clothing along with scarves, gloves, a thick winter coat, hats (toboggans), and boots with good soles.

You may want to bring your own traditional national clothing to showcase your nations and cultures on *United Nations Day* in October and during *Agora – A Celebration of Creative Expression*, in April.

COMMUTING TO THE COLLEGE CAMPUS

Most international students who live at the MountainView Student Residence and Conference Center take the city bus (Bluefield Area Transit Authority) which comes to the lobby area every hour. You can catch the bus anywhere along its route since there are no specific bus stops. Generally, the buses stop near the Rte. 52 college gate or in the Student Center parking lot. Get more specific information from the bus drivers about the bus service. Keep in mind that around 5:00 P.M. is the last bus pick up from the campus. **You can ride the city bus at no cost but are required to show your college ID to the driver.**

On city holidays when classes are being held, the college will arrange van shuttle services from MountainView Residence to the campus and back.

ENSURING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

If you listen carefully to your professors and also read their course syllabi, you will learn very quickly that you will have plenty of home assignments, quizzes, and tests throughout the semester. Keep up with the

assignment deadlines because it is very difficult to catch up. Make sure you set aside at least two to three hours every evening/night to complete all home assignments or required reading for all your classes.

If you know you are not doing well in any of your courses, first schedule an appointment with the professors, discuss your problems with him or her, and if this does not prove helpful, then also discuss your concerns with your faculty advisor. You could also seek help from the subject-specific tutors in the Counseling Center in Conley Hall, 3rd floor.

Remember, you are responsible for your own academic success. If you are unable to attain the high grades you desire or think you deserve, it is your responsibility to study hard.

Some international students excel in certain subjects. If you do, you are encouraged to apply to be tutors in Student Support Services located in the Basic Sciences Building, Room 110.

MAINTAINING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Bluefield State College, honesty and integrity are fundamental values that guide and inform us as individuals and as a community. The culture of academia requires that each student take responsibility for learning and for producing course assignments that reflect their intellectual potential, curiosity and capability. Students must represent themselves truthfully, claim only work that is their own, acknowledge their use of others' words, research results, and ideas, using the methods accepted by the appropriate academic disciplines and engage honestly in all academic assignments. Anything less than total commitment to honesty circumvents the contract for intellectual enrichment that students have with the College to become an educated person, undermines the efforts of the entire academic community, and diminishes the value of an education for everyone, especially for the person who cheats. Both students and faculty are responsible for ensuring the academic integrity of the College.

Misunderstanding of the appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct. If a student is in doubt about appropriate academic conduct in a particular situation, he or she should consult with the instructor in the course to avoid the serious charge of academic misconduct.

PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

You are encouraged to participate in campus activities. But learn to manage your time between study and play. Only you can determine how difficult some of the subjects you are enrolled in are, so you determine how involved you wish to be in campus activities.

BSC STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION: You are encouraged to run for office and be involved in significant decision-making regarding the college and student life at the college. Please feel free to visit the SGA Office in the Student Center, Room 118. The phone number for this office is 304-327-4185. You can also email the SGA at sga@live.bluefieldstate.edu.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION: You are encouraged to participate in this group activity. Faculty/staff advisors will guide you in this endeavor. You will be provided more information about this club during the Orientation every fall semester.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Bluefield State College encourages students to engage in community service or volunteer activities. The International Student Organization may wish to formally opt to engage in specific activities.

International students who would like to speak about their countries and cultures at area schools and at civic organizations' meetings are asked to notify the OII in early fall so that preparatory steps may be undertaken and adequate transportation logistics are made available.

Some courses require such community and volunteer service, so please review all course syllabi thoroughly to see if your community/volunteer service qualifies for course credit.

RELIGIOUS NEEDS

As you will note when traveling around the two Bluefields and Princeton, there are many Christian churches.

There is a masjid/mosque in Green Valley on Route 460 en route to Princeton.

An Interfaith Group meets every Thursday evening at different locations. If you wish to belong to this group, please contact Dr. Robert Merritt at: robmerritt202@gmail.com.

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Bluefield and Princeton, West Virginia, are growing communities of art. Local artists feature their work at area art galleries and even on buildings. If you wish to learn more about what is going on in the area or wish to attend local events, please write to the Mercer County Visitors and Convention Bureau (info@visitmercercounty.com) and the Chuck Mathena Center (marketingdirector@cmcwv.org) to be included in their mailing lists.

WORKING ON CAMPUS DURING THE FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS

Many campus offices employ international students. You are encouraged to request administrators, faculty, and staff to help you procure a campus job.

SUMMER PLANS

If you are planning on returning home during the summer, please make certain your I-20 is in order and that the OII Coordinator's/other DSO's signature is included on page 2 of your I-20. Please see the Appendix below for more information.

STAYING IN TOUCH BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER ACADEMIC PURSUITS AT BLUEFIELD STATE COLLEGE

In order to ensure positive academic and personal success at Bluefield State College, you are encouraged to immerse yourself in the life of the college.

Please provide the OII your current, up-to-date contact information. If you should change residence, phone, or email addresses, please notify the OII immediately so that you will receive timely notifications about important BSC activities which require your participation.

During your last semester at Bluefield State College, please come by the OII to provide updated contact information. The OII hopes you will participate in EducationUSA Fairs in your home country to help recruit students to BSC.

QUESTIONS?

Remember, it is better to ask questions about issues and concerns. Most Americans do NOT mind being asked questions, so don't hesitate to ask. You will probably interact with personnel in every college office during your academic pursuits at Bluefield State College. We are all here to ensure your success, safety, security, and well-being.

A P P E N D I X

MAINTAINING YOUR STATUS AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEVIS)

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' FAMILIES

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MAINTAINING YOUR STATUS AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Complying with U.S. Immigration Regulations

As an international student, you are required to comply with U.S. immigration regulations. Maintaining your immigration status is **your** responsibility.

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

F-1 Students - What YOU Must Do to Maintain Your Status:

Report Address Changes to the PDSO, the Admissions Office, the Registrar's Office, and the OII within 10 days of arrival. This includes address changes of any of your dependents as well.

Maintain a full course load (12 credits) at all times. Students must attend classes in the fall and spring semesters at BSC. Attendance during the summer sessions I and II is optional.

Report any reasons for interrupting your program of study to the Admissions/Registrar's Office and OII in advance. You must notify the Admissions/Registrar's Office and OII if you leave before the date indicated on your I-20.

Report any change of major and/or degree objective as well as any change in financial sponsorship to the Admissions Office, Registrar's Office, Business Office, your faculty advisor, and the OII.

Do not engage in any unauthorized off campus employment. You may work no more than **20 hours per week on-campus while school is in session. You are not permitted to work off-campus without receiving PRIOR authorization from the U.S. Federal Government. NO CURRICULUM PRACTICAL TRAINING WILL BE APPROVED DURING THE FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS.**

Keep your passport and I-20 valid at all times.

File the appropriate federal and state income tax returns by April 15 of every calendar year, or as appropriate. [You may wish to take advantage of the free tax assistance program offered by BSC's School of Business.]

Complete immigration transfer procedures in a timely manner. Students who transfer to BSC from another college/University in the United States must complete an immigration transfer. They must meet with the BSC Admissions Office prior to registering for classes and also report to the Office of International Initiatives.

Students who plan to transfer from BSC to another institution must notify the BSC Admissions Office, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of International Initiatives in advance so their file can be released and the I-20 (SEVIS record) is transferred to the school that they plan to attend. SUCH TRANSFER REQUESTS ARE INITIATED BY A DSO AT THE RECEIVING (YOUR NEW) INSTITUTION.

Dependent Reporting Requirements

- **Separate Entry of Dependents of NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

For immediate family members (children and spouses) planning to arrive separately, specific forms must be completed.

For all visa holders, a Dependent Information Form must be completed to provide the name, relationship, date of birth, country of birth, and if applicable, the passport number and expiration date for EACH family member who intends to join you.

In addition, your dependent must be entered into the SEVIS system and a SEVIS generated I-20 must be issued to them. They will then use this I-20 Form to apply for a visa at the United States Embassy/Consulate in their home country.

Specific guidance for this can be obtained through BSC Admissions Office.

- **Reporting Dependent Arrivals and Change of Residential Address**

You are required to report your dependent(s) arrival in the United States and local residential address to the BSC Admissions Office, the PDSO, and the OII. Regulations require BSC Admissions Office to record and update this information in SEVIS. Therefore, please complete a Dependent Form immediately upon dependent arrival. Please ask about this at the BSC Admission Office (or call 304-327-4066).

- **Separate Entry of Dependents of CONTINUING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

For immediate family members (children and spouses) planning to arrive separately, specific forms must be completed.

For all visa holders, a Dependent Information Form must be completed to provide the name, relationship, date of birth, country of birth, and if applicable, the passport number and expiration date for EACH family member who intends to join you.

In addition, your dependent must be entered into the SEVIS system and a SEVIS generated I-20 must be issued on their behalf. They will then use this I-20 Form to apply for a visa at the United States Embassy/Consulate in their home country.

Specific guidance for this can be obtained through the Office of International Initiatives and /or the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

- Reporting Dependent Arrivals and Change of Residential Address

You are required to report the arrival of your dependent(s) in the United States and local residential address to the BSC Admissions Office, the PDSO, and the OII. Regulations require BSC Admissions Office to record and update this information in SEVIS. Therefore, please complete a Dependent Form immediately upon dependent arrival. Please ask about this at the BSC Admission Office (or call 304-327-4036 or 4567).

STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEVIS)

SEVIS is an electronic reporting system that sends information about international students and scholars who hold F, J, and M visa status in the United States to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). SEVIS also tracks entries to and departures from the United States. Every change you make in your academic program must be reported to SEVIS. Academic status, employment, and residential and mailing address are also reported and updated. All information on your I-20 must remain accurate and up to date. If there are any changes on these forms (if your name has changed or the source and/or amount of your financial support is different, etc.) you must contact the PDSO.

SEVIS Fee Receipt

Congress mandates the SEVIS I-901 (SEVIS Fee) to support the SEVIS program office and the automated system that tracks and records changes of students and exchange visitors and ensures that their status is maintained while in the U.S. After October 26, 2008 any student or exchange visitor who is issued an initial Form I-20 or DS-2019 is responsible for paying the SEVIS Fee. It is very important for you to keep this receipt.

SEVIS Reporting Requirements

BSC is required by law to report and update certain information about international students into SEVIS. The information that we are required to report includes:

- Withdrawal from the college
- Failure to register for classes
- The information on your I-20
- Your residential address
- Full-time or Part Time enrollment
- SEVIS Registration: we must confirm each semester that you are registered full time (at least 12 credits each semester)
- Your employment authorization information (if applicable)

Reporting Changes

You may report changes in your local address, overseas address, or employer address to the BSC Admission Office and the OII. Bring the appropriate documentation to the Admissions Office when updating your program (major, degree objective), funding, or making a name change.

We report only what we are required to report by federal law. Any other information remains confidential and private.

TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

Immigration Forms and Validity

Passport Validity

You must maintain a valid passport at all times for the duration of your stay. If your passport expires while in the U.S., you should obtain an extension through the nearest Consulate or the Embassy of your home country.

What is an I-20 form?

An I-20 Form is a certificate of eligibility used by students to apply for an F1 visa to enter the United States. Your I-20 Form must remain valid while you are a student in the United States.

The Form I-20 contains information about the student (item 1), the school (item 2), the student's academic program (item 4 and 5), the length of time the student has to complete an academic program (item 5), and the student's expenses and funding (item 7 and 8).

The date in item 5 on the I-20 indicates when the student must have his or her academic program completed, unless the student requests additional time from the Registrar's Office or the Office of International Initiatives at least 4-6 months before the expiration date. If your Form I-20 expires before you complete your academic program, you and your dependents will be in violation of immigration laws.

What is an I-94 Card and what does D/S mean?

When you enter the U.S. via air or sea and present your I-20, your travel information is electronically recorded and kept by Customs and Border Patrol. After arriving in the U.S. you should access and print your arrival information by visiting <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>. You should place the print-out inside of your passport. If you enter the U.S. by land, you will receive a paper version of this form, called the I-94 card. This is your Arrival/Departure Card and it is usually stapled inside your passport at the port of entry. It is extremely important to verify that all information on your I-94 is accurate, as the form determines your admission status in the U.S. If the information is not correct, please contact the PDSO for guidance.

You will also receive a stamp inside your passport, which is marked "F-1 D/S." D/S stands for Duration of Status and indicates that you may stay legally in the U.S. as long as you follow all the F-1 rules and regulations. The F-1 visa holder has 60 additional days from program completion date for short travel in the U.S., transfer processes, or departure preparations. **This "grace period" may not be used for employment or re-entry into the United States.**

Visa Validity: Can the U.S. entry visa that is stamped in my passport expire while I am in the United States?

Yes, as long as you are maintaining your F-1 student status in every other way as required by law. Please think of the F-1 visa stamped in your passport as an entry permit. It is necessary to have a valid visa to enter the country, **but it does not need to remain valid while you are here**. If you travel outside of the United States with an expired visa, however, you will need to apply for a new F-1 visa before returning to the United States.

Before You Travel

Check the validity of your passport, visa and I-20. Make sure your passport has at least 6 months remaining from your date of return to the U.S.

Obtain a travel signature from the PDSO/DSO for your I-20 **if the previous signature is over 6 months old** from your date of return.

Make sure to prepare any necessary visa application documents if your visa has expired or will expire before you return. (See next section for details.)

Check the location (if it is a country other than your own) to see if a visa is required for entry.

Consult the PDSO if your situation or your travel circumstances are unusual (traveling/returning after a withdrawal, traveling while on OPT, etc.).

Applying for a Visa

My visa is expired. How do I apply for a new visa to reenter the United States?

If your US visa is expired, you must apply for a new one in your home country. You will need the following documents when applying for a US student visa*:

- 1) Valid I-20 with a signature from the PDSO/DSO
- 2) Valid Passport (at least 6 months prior to expiration date)
- 3) Proof of financial ability
- 4) Letter from PDSO/DSO certifying full-time status (helpful)
- 5) Transcripts

*These items may vary if you are eligible for mail-in or drop-off visa renewal services. For more information, check with your local U.S. consular office.

You can go to the US State Department's website and find information relating to visa applications: WWW.TRAVEL.STATE.GOV. This website can also be used to make appointments for visa applications at border posts in Mexico or Canada. Please consult with the PDSO/DSO before deciding to apply for a visa in Mexico or Canada. For any visa application, planning in advance is highly recommended. Most Consulates/Embassies are required to give in person interviews to most visa applicants.

Automatic Revalidation

If you visit Canada or Mexico for a trip of less than 30 days, you may be eligible to return to the United States with an expired visa via automatic revalidation if:

You are not a citizen of a country that the U.S. Department of state classifies as a sponsor of terrorism.

You do not surrender your Form I-94 during departure. This form must be kept for reentry. Do not give your I-94 card or print-out away at the border or on a plane. Bring a copy with you to give to the airline.

You have a valid passport with at least 6 months remaining from your date of return and a valid form I-20 with a PDSO/DSO (travel) signature that is less than 6 months old.

You **DO NOT** apply for a visa while in Canada or Mexico. If you do, you are no longer eligible to return to the U.S. under automatic revalidation.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' FAMILIES

Many students have families that join them while they pursue their studies at BSC. The OII would like to welcome our students' spouses and children to Bluefield and the area community.

If you would like your spouse and/or children to join you in Bluefield, please contact the BSC Admissions Office (304-327-4066) for information on obtaining a form I-20 for the F-2 visa.

Reporting Requirements for Dependents

You are required to report your dependent(s) arrival in the United States and local residential address to BSC Admissions Office and the OII. Regulations require us to record and update this information in SEVIS. Therefore, please complete a Dependent Form immediately upon dependent arrival. You can obtain this form from BSC Admission Office. After completing the Dependent Form, call 304-327-4066 to schedule an appointment to meet with the Admissions Counselor DSO.

Employment for Dependents

Dependents of F-1 visa holders (F-2s) are not permitted to work.

Study for Dependents

F-2 spouses are not allowed to pursue a degree program in the United States; however, they would be eligible to take non-credit Survival English courses within the **English for International Students** program overseen by the OII. F-2 children may attend elementary and secondary schools (K-12) in the United States. F-2 spouses and F-2 children (beyond secondary education) are only allowed to participate in courses that are recreational or vocational in nature.

Medical Insurance

As healthcare can be very expensive in the United States, all family members need to be covered by health insurance. You may be able to add your dependent family members to your insurance policy for an additional fee. Please consult with the BSC Admission Office DSO for details.

Schools and Day Care Services

Check the yellow pages of the local phone books for pre-schools and daycare centers.

School-Age Children

Families with school-age children should bring all previous academic records (original and English translation) and records of immunization, either issued through the World Health Organization or from

your physician. Before your child can be enrolled in school, records of immunization must be shown; otherwise the child will be required to receive inoculations prior to enrollment. Your child will be assigned to a school according to the location of your residence in the area. In West Virginia, please call the Mercer County Board of Education at 304-487-1551 for specific information regarding enrollment and attendance guidelines. In Virginia, please call Tazewell County Board of Education at 276-988-5511 for specific information regarding enrollment and attendance guidelines.

Getting Involved

Dependents are welcome to join in the fun in our events! Many of our events are designed with our students' families in mind such as **United Nations Day** in October and *Agora—A Celebration of Creative Expression* in April.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

Employment opportunities for international students are regulated by United States Immigration Law and are therefore very limited. Students must maintain their non-immigrant status and be in good academic standing for any type of employment. With the exception of on-campus employment, **all off campus employment opportunities for F-1 students require approval from the PDSO**. While an international student, you may not be self-employed.

On Campus Employment

F-1 students who maintain status may work part-time on-campus while classes are in session. "Part-time" means not more than 20 hours per week. F-1 students do not need special authorization to work on-campus.

During vacation periods and academic breaks, you may work full-time (over 20 hours) on **campus if you are returning to classes the following term, which means you may not work on-campus after completing your course of study (i.e., your degree program)**.

Off Campus Employment

Working off-campus requires special authorizations and is only available in certain situations. Working off-campus without authorization **from ICE** is a direct violation of United States Immigration Regulations and could result in deportation.

Practical Training is temporary employment that allows international students to gain some practical experience in their field of study, before or after completion of studies. Practical training is divided into two categories: (1) **curricular practical training** before completion of studies and (2) **optional practical training** both before and after completion of studies.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is work experience defined as part of your integral curriculum. Therefore, you must enroll in a course and receive unit credits towards your degree. Please **COMPLETE THE CPT APPLICATION FORM** (which requires your faculty advisor's/Dean's signature) which is available at www.bluefieldstate.edu on the International Initiatives page. You must obtain the OII Coordinator's authorization before you begin employment. CPT can be part time or full time (during summer and vacation periods). However, if it exceeds 12 months full-time, you will lose the opportunity to obtain Optional Practical Training.

If you wish to engage in Curricular Practical Training (CPT) during the summer, please notify the Dean of your School and Faculty Advisor and the OII in the fall semester so that appropriate internship courses by BSC's five Schools can be scheduled during Summer I and II. Please note that international students

must pay for 1 credit hour and formally enroll in a 1 credit hour summer internship course in order to engage in CPT.

COMPLETE THE CPT APPLICATION FORM THAT IS AVAILABLE at www.bluefieldstate.edu on the International Initiatives web page and call 304-327-4036 PRIOR TO COMING TO THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

To be eligible, you must have been in lawful student status for one academic year and be in good academic standing. Approval and recommendation by the OII Coordinator are required. If you meet the requirements, **you are eligible for up to a total of 12 months of practical training for each subsequent higher level of education you pursue.**

You may use OPT:

- during your studies; OR
- after completion of your studies; OR
- a combination of both.

Pre-Completion OPT is available part time (20 hours/week) if you have not yet completed your course of study. However, most students prefer to wait and use their 12 months of OPT after they graduate (Post-Completion OPT). Part-time practical training is deducted at a half-time rate from the total 12 months available. Additional information regarding OPT is available from the OII Coordinator.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Extensions

In 2016, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) amended its F-1 nonimmigrant student visa regulations on optional practical training (OPT) for certain students with degrees in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) from U.S. institutions of higher education. Specifically, the final rule allows such F-1 STEM students who have elected to pursue 12 months of OPT in the United States to extend the OPT period by 24 months (STEM OPT extension). This 24-month extension effectively replaces the 17-month STEM OPT extension previously available to certain STEM students. STEM OPT extensions are authorized only for students employed by employers who participate in E-Verify.

Cap-Gap Extension: available to an F-1 student on OPT who has an H-1B petition filed in a timely manner on his/her behalf and whose OPT may expire prior to the H-1B taking effect.

Please COMPLETE THE OPT APPLICATION FORM THAT IS AVAILABLE at www.bluefieldstate.edu on the International Initiatives page. Call 304-327-4036 before setting out for the OII so that the Coordinator is available to assist you in compiling OPT application materials for shipment to the address provided with this form.

KEEP YOUR DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION SAFE!

- Make a copy of ALL documents.
- Store the original and the set of copies in two separate and safe locations.
- Carry a wallet-size copy of your I-94 with you at ALL TIMES.
- Take your original documents with you when traveling outside of the country and even when traveling inside the United States.
- Never carry your Social Security card with you.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND TAXES

Obtaining a Social Security Number

A Social Security Card/Number (SSN) will be issued to you only if you have employment with compensation. There is no application fee to get the SSN, but you must apply **in person with your passport** and the following documentation:

1. I-20
2. I-94 print out or card
3. Verification of Employment
 - a. If you are working on-campus, Verification of Employment will be in the form of a letter. Your on-campus employer and PDSO must both sign this letter. The format for the letter is established and available from your on-campus employer or the Human Resources Office.
 - b. If you have CPT (F-1) authorization, you do not need a letter. You instead need to provide your CPT I-20 that shows you currently have work authorization.
 - c. If you have received authorization for OPT, you do not need a letter. You should instead present your EAD card in addition to your passport with I-94 card or print-out.

The closest Social Security Administration (www.socialsecurity.gov) office is located at:

3014 East Cumberland Road (next to US Post Office), Bluefield, West Virginia 24701 Phone: 888-475-0295

Office Hours: M-T: 9am-3:00pm except federal holidays
W: 9am – 12pm except federal holidays
T-F: 9am -3:00pm except federal holidays

Federal and State Income Tax

For those who will be employed with salary at BSC, be aware that the salary indicated is your gross income. Federal and state tax will be deducted from your gross income.

Yearly income tax filing is required of all individuals earning income in the United States, regardless of the National's home country, or tax-exempt treaty. The deadline is April 15th of each year for both West Virginia State Income Tax and Federal Income Tax filings.

Banks and Money Transactions in the U.S.

There are several banks in Bluefield and Princeton, West Virginia, and Bluefield, Virginia. Contact information for these is available in the yellow pages of local phone books.

Savings Account

All banking institutions offer savings account options. Savings and loan associations usually offer a slightly higher interest rate. The interest rates, amount of deposit, and the length of time required for deposits vary with the different banking institutions. It is important to read the benefits AND requirements before opening a savings account. Some banking institutions will charge a fee for savings accounts while others do not.

Checking Account

You will have a choice of several different types of checking accounts with different service fees or even no fees. For example, you may get a reduced service charge if you use a small number of checks per month or no service charge if you are able to maintain a certain balance in your account. In addition, interest-earning checking accounts are available. Ask about the qualifications for this type of account.

Personal checks are a safe way to carry money. The checking account can be used to pay bills and provides a record of your payments.

ATM

There are ATM stations at various locations in the area. Please ask your bank to share this information with you.

Foreign Money Exchange

Foreign money may be exchanged at BB&T in Princeton, West Virginia. It is also possible to cash foreign checks, as well as international drafts and money orders at this bank; however, there may be a long waiting period to clear the money.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are sold at most area banks for a fee.

DRIVER'S LICENSE AND AUTOMOBILE LICENSE PLATES

In West Virginia, go to the West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, 198 Davis Street, Princeton, West Virginia 24740. For help, call 304-926-380.

If you live in Bluefield, Virginia, go to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, 953 Tazewell Avenue, Tazewell 24651.

Also call the Town of Bluefield (112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia 24605) at 276-322-4626 and ask when the Virginia DMV Mobile Office will be in their parking lot to process driver's licenses, automobile license plates and other related services.

Take the following documents with you

Passport with visa

I-94

Current I-20

Letter stating enrolled at college from Registrar

Either Social Security Card or denial letter from Social Security Administration

Two proofs showing WV physical address (not P O Box address)

If on OPT, letter from employer and the employment authorization

STUDENT RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

Students are urged to make arrangements for a tour of prospective rental properties and to ask pertinent questions, prior to signing rental or lease agreements. (Note: Some participating landlords provide statements of assurances for selected properties only. Prospective student renters/lessees are encouraged to request that Property Managers show them only those properties covered by the statement of assurance.)

The College assumes no responsibility, other than to list contact information for landlords who have provided the assurances referenced above. The contact listings are not presented in any prioritized order.

PLEASE GO TO www.bluefieldstate.edu, click on Student Life and then click on Housing for updates to this list from additional landlords.

The BSC Office of Campus Life coordinates the Program of Alternative, Off-campus Housing for Students. Ms. Joan Buchanan, Director of Campus Life, is assigned to oversee the Student Housing Program. She may be reached at jbuchanan@bluefieldstate.edu or at 304-327-4186.

CURRENT PARTICIPATING LANDLORD CONTACTS (as of June 12, 2013)

<p>Steve Hylton 2124 Cumberland Road Bluefield, VA 24605 Telephone: 276-322-3179 Email: dgilley@bluefieldstate.edu</p>	<p>Leatherwood Manor/Tinco Leasing Corp. Frank Tinder 1922 Leatherwood Lane Bluefield, VA 24605 Telephone: (304) 323-3379 Fax: (304) 327-5824 Email: ftinder@frontiernet.net</p>
<p>Perry Rental Properties LLC Robert L. Perry, Property Manager P.O. Box 958 Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: 304-324-5566 Email: perryapartments@comcast.net Website: www.perryrentalsllc.com</p>	<p>Presidential Hall c/o M & M Uptown Development, LLC 309 Neville St. Beckley, WV 25801 Kyle McCausland - Owner Charles Frye - Manager Telephone: 304-929-4300 Cell. 304-222-3791 Website: www.presidentialhall.com</p>
<p>DCI Management, Inc. 2980 Big Laurel Hwy Suite 7B 460 Plaza Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: (304) 323-1996 Email: dcileasing@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Mercer County Choppers, LLC 4156 Coal Heritage Rd. Bluewell, WV 24701 Telephone: 304-589-6222 Cell: 304-952-1408 Fax: 304-589-6223 Email: mcchoppers@frontiernet.net Website: www.mercercountychoppers.com</p>
<p>Rick and Connie Saunders 402 N Street Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: (304) 325-3369 Email: saundersem@earthlink.net</p>	<p>Tommy Hicks 2504 Laurel Ford Rd. Rocky Gap, VA 24366 Telephone: 276-928-0142 Email: txhicks@ntelos.net Rental Location: Bluewell, WV</p>
<p>Community Action of South Eastern WV Kennedy Center 525 Bland Street Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: (304) 325-2023 Email: abell@citlink.net Website: casewv.org</p>	<p>Braveheart Real Estate, Inc. PO Box 5047 Princeton, WV 24740 Contact person: P.J. Short Telephone: 304-673-8079 Email: braveheartrealestate@yahoo.com</p>

<p>Ridgeview Apartments Kathryn White, Manager VA Line, LLC 102 Montvale Avenue Bluefield, VA 24605 Office: (276) 228-7888 Cell: (276) 620-8621 Fax: (276) 228-7884</p>	<p>McGonagle Properties, LLC 1159 Bland Street Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: 304-327-6440 Email: hcmcgonagle@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Bolin Investments, LLC PO Box 1963 Princeton, WV 24740 Telephone: 304-887-1772 Fax: 888-393-3245 Email: mbolin2003@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Steve and Marilyn Buchanan 1221 Highland Avenue Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: 304-575-1271 Cell: 304-921-0114</p>
<p>Tremont Park Apartments 400 Tremont Park Circle Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: 304-589-3186 Fax: 304-431-7148 Email: NA</p>	<p>JJM Properties. LLC 114 Franklin Avenue Beckley, WV 25801 Josh Canady/Mike Canady 304-890-6262 304-228-5820 Email: jjmpropertiesllc@gmail.com Facebook: JJM Properties, LLC Property Location: 608 Union St., Bluefield, WV 24701</p>
<p>Flair Development, LLC 413 Raleigh Street Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: 804-822-5809 Email: allenpeacock@hotmail.com Larry Oliver/Sandra White</p>	<p>Mountain Crest Townhouses Leo Lane Bluefield, WV 24701 Phone: 304-327-7441 Cell: 304-920-0457 Web: www.Mountaincrest.Info</p>
<p>Hale Manor Apartments PO Box 2254 Bluefield, WV 24701 Contact person: Mr. Lynn Hale Telephone: 704-307-8462</p>	<p>MountainView Student Residence and Conference Center Bluefield State College Research and Development Corporation 2000 Upper Classman Drive Bluefield, WV 24701 Telephone: 304-324-3800 Fax: 304-324-3801 Email: manager@mountainviewsrc.org Website: www.mountainviewsrc.org</p>

HELPFUL TIPS WHEN RENTING HOUSING

What You Need to Know Before Renting an Apartment

This information is designed to acquaint you with the rights and responsibilities involved when renting a house or apartment in the area. Please read this information thoroughly. It is meant to help avoid misunderstandings between landlord and renter. These misunderstandings can become costly.

IMPORTANT! Under the law, no person may be denied the right to rent property because of race, color, creed, religion, sexual persuasion, national origin or ancestry, **NOR** because such person is blind, visually handicapped, or physically disabled.

Common Rental Terms to Know

FURNISHED: To provide what is necessary for basic apartment living. Housing is equipped with furniture and large appliances: bed, dresser, couch, table, chairs, refrigerator, and stove. Kitchen utensils (pots, pans, etc.) and bedding supplies are generally not included.

SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING: Housing that restricts residence to the immediate family (husband, wife, and children): This may also include a single grandparent, but not a brother, his wife, and children.

UTILITIES: Electricity, water, gas, trash/sewer, telephone, internet, television. **If you are responsible for these utilities, ask the landlord for the contact information of utility companies.**

DEPOSIT: A landlord usually requires a tenant to pay a damage deposit when renting an apartment or house. This deposit is an amount of money used either as a security that the terms of the agreement will be met or for cleaning upon termination of the tenancy. The landlord may not use, invest, or retain its earnings until he is legally entitled to the money.

When a tenancy is terminated, a landlord can keep the deposit (part or all of it) to cover only the following:

- 1) Damages caused by tenant.
- 2) Utility bills the tenant has failed to pay.
- 3) Any rent the tenant has not paid.
- 4) Any cleaning or repair work that must be done.

It is the tenant's responsibility to clean the premises thoroughly before moving out. Protect yourself by taking care of your apartment or house, and leaving it in a clean condition.

CHECK-IN SHEET: Before moving into your apartment you should complete a check-in sheet. This sheet is a written document that states the condition of rooms, furniture and appliances. The sheet should be

dated and signed by both tenant(s) and landlord. This is for your protection so you do not get charged for damages remaining from a previous tenancy. Each party should keep a copy. It is also recommended to take photos and /or video of the premises before you move in.

LEASE: A lease is a legal and binding contract between you and your landlord. Failure to abide by the terms of the agreement can lead to legal complications. Example: the contract states that you are to rent the apartment an entire year and you decide to move out after six months. You are then legally obligated to pay the remaining six months' rent unless the contract is re-negotiated.

In order for the lease to be legal and binding, the following must be included:

- 1) The names of the landlord and tenant(s),
- 2) A clear description of the premises to be leased,
- 3) A specified leasing period that includes both commencement and termination dates,
- 4) A specific amount of rent to be paid, including time and manner of payment,
- 5) A provision for the transfer of use and possession of the premises to the tenant, and
- 6) The signature of the landlord or his authorized agent and the signature of the tenant(s).

Read your lease carefully so that the following are understood:

- 1) Whether the premises are to be furnished or unfurnished
- 2) Who is responsible for plumbing and electrical repairs?
- 3) Who is responsible for yard work and what lawn equipment is to be provided?
- 4) Who pays utility bills?
- 5) Who pays for trash removal?
- 6) Number of days' notice required prior to termination of tenancy
- 7) Restrictions as to the number of people who may occupy premises
- 8) Check for a clause in the lease that allows you to sublease
- 9) Are you allowed to have pets?

SUB-LEASE: To lease premises to another person for a certain period of time while remaining under the same documented regulations from the initial lease. Make sure you check to see if you are liable for the sublease if he/she does not pay rent or follow other regulations stated in the initial lease.

Responsibilities as a Renter

PAYMENT OF RENT: You are responsible to pay the rent each month, even if you are on vacation. Failure to pay your rent could result in eviction.

MAINTENANCE: You are responsible for general up-keep of your house or apartment. Ask your landlord what tools or services are provided.

PLUMBING: Never put anything except toilet paper down the toilet. Most plumbing units cannot take disposable diapers, garbage, tampons or sand.

CARPETING: If your apartment is carpeted you should vacuum at least once a week. Ask your landlord if one is available or whether you will be required to purchase your own vacuum cleaner.

DRAINS: Avoid using caustic drain cleaner in any drain (baking soda cleans well). Leaking faucets can waste considerable water.

APPLIANCES: Make sure you read instructions thoroughly before using appliances. Use caution; immersion of electrical appliances in water can cause electrical shock.

HEATING SYSTEM: You may control your heating system by properly setting the thermostat or heat control valve. When you are not at home turn your thermostat down to conserve energy.

TRASH REMOVAL: Your lease may state that you are responsible for trash removal. Do not leave trash outside your apartment in bags. Animals and wind scatter trash.

UTILITIES: If utilities are not provided for in your lease or rental agreement, you must register for service yourself at local utility companies. There is a deposit and service fee for hook-up. The account will be in your name.

STOVES: Tenants should make an effort to clean stoves and ovens on a regular basis. Soaking burner grills in soapy water will prevent build-up of grease deposits. If your kitchen has an exhaust fan, use it when frying and cooking strong smelling foods.

REFRIGERATORS: Continual cleaning of the refrigerator is recommended. A solution of bicarbonate of soda (1 tablespoon soda to 1 quart of water) works well.

GARBAGE DISPOSAL: When operating an electric garbage disposal, cold water must be left running for a few minutes after shutting off the disposal. Do not put the following down your disposal: metal, glass, bones, paper, string, banana peelings, celery, corn husks, and meat fat.

ROOMMATES: Selection of a roommate should not be taken lightly. This is someone you will be living and interacting with regularly, as well as sharing legal and social responsibilities. To avoid conflict, it is important to meet with a potential roommate before signing a lease. Many tenants assume that when they sign a lease they are responsible only for their own share of the rent. **This is not true.** If all roommates sign one lease, they are each responsible for the entire rent. **This means that if your roommate leaves, you can be held responsible for his or her share of the rent as well as your own. To be sure you will not be held responsible for your roommate's share of the rent if he/she leaves, you must sign a separate lease.**

NOISE AND NEIGHBORS: It is important that you are not overly noisy if you have close neighbors. It is considered reasonable to expect people to be quiet before 8:00 am and after 10:00 pm on weeknights: check with apartment management for specific hours set aside for quiet times.

PERSONAL SAFETY

General Safety at Home

Install Strong Door and Window Locks

Apply the following recommendations **ONLY** with the approval of your landlord. Some of the recommendations may not be feasible for your particular circumstance.

- Install deadbolt locks on all outside doors. The bolt should extend at least one inch when in the locked position.
- Install auxiliary patio door locks to secure sliding glass doors. You may also use a snug fitting piece of wood in the tracks for added protection.
- Secure your garage and tool shed. Burglars can enter your home through an attached garage, or they can use your tools to break in.
- Use your locks. Make sure all doors and windows are secure when you leave your house.

Teach Your Children Safety Tips

- Teach your children:

How to call the police.

Not to talk to strangers or accept rides from them.

Not to play alone in lonely or deserted places.

- Make sure your children carry some form of identification.
- Make sure your children fully understand the consequences of getting caught shoplifting or taking drugs.

While at home when the doorbell rings:

- Inspect who is at the door through the “peep-hole.” Ask the visitor to identify himself.
- Make sure the safety chain is attached before opening.
- Before talking to salesmen or repairmen, ask to see their credentials.
- If a stranger asks to use your phone, do not permit him/her to enter. Offer to make the call for him/her.

Keep your valuables locked in a safe and concealed place. Remove wallets from pants left near the bedside.

- If a burglar gains entrance to your home:

Do not try to capture him.

Lie still if you are in bed, or if you prefer, make some small noise to let him know you are awake.

The burglar's main interest is most likely to escape.

Neighborhood Safety Tips

- Get your neighbors to keep an eye on your house when you are away.
- When you see a suspicious person in your neighborhood, call the police to check him/her out. While waiting for the police to arrive, obtain the license number of his/her vehicle and a full description.
- When you witness a crime or traffic accident, call the police right away. Do not depend on others to call.

While on Vacation

- Discontinue all home deliveries either by telephone or in person -- NEVER leave notes indicating you will be away.
- Leave a key with a neighbor and ask them to check the house occasionally and take in the mail and circulars.
- Make your home look occupied. Install an automatic timer to turn lights on and off during usual hours.
- Leave an emergency number where you can be reached.
- Notify the police department that you will be gone and ask them to check your residence, as time permits, during your absence.

Identify and Mark all Valuables

- Report stolen or lost items to the police as soon as possible.
- Maintain a detailed description or photos and serial numbers of all your valuables including your credit cards.

If You Discover Your Home Has Been Entered

- Do not disturb the scene.
- Call the police immediately and report the burglary.
- Leave everything exactly as you found it. Otherwise, you may destroy valuable evidence such as tool marks, fingerprints and footprints.
- Provide the police with the serial numbers of your stolen valuables and a description of the articles taken.

General Safety in the Community

This section is full of tips that can help you avoid becoming a victim of a crime when you are out in the community, studying or working at your job. By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself, and also discourage those who commit crimes.

Be Prepared

- Always be alert and aware of the people around you.
- Educate yourself concerning prevention tactics.
- Be aware of locations and situations, which would make you vulnerable to crime, such as alleyways and dark parking lots.

Street Precautions

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you – especially if you are alone or it is dark.
- When possible, travel with a friend. There is safety in numbers.
- Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys where someone could hide.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- Make eye contact with people when walking.
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street – continue walking.
- If you carry a purse, carry it securely between your arm and your body. Should a purse snatcher grab your purse, LET IT GO – your personal safety may depend on NOT fighting for it.

Bicycle Safety (IF APPLICABLE)

- Use bicycle pods or bike racks when parking your vehicle.
- Lock your bicycle frame and wheels to a bike rack/pod and double check that it is secured.
- Utilize a quality lock. The “U” type locks are very strong and usually cannot be easily cut.
- Remove any lighting equipment or accessories that can be easily stolen while your bicycle is unattended.
- Keep a record of the make, model, serial number and value of your bike.

Car Safety (IF APPLICABLE)

- Always lock car doors after entering or leaving your car.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Have your car keys in your hand so you don't have to linger before entering your car.
- Check the back seat before entering your car.
- If you think you are being followed, drive to a public place or police station -- honk the horn to attract attention to you.

- If your car breaks down, open the hood and attach a white cloth to the car antenna. If someone stops to help, stay in your locked car and ask them to call the police, sheriff or a tow-trucking service.
- Don't stop to aid motorists stopped on the side of the road. Instead, use a telephone and request help for them.

While Waiting for a Bus

- Try to avoid isolated bus stops.
- Stand away from the curb until the bus arrives.
- Don't open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus – have your pass or money in your hand before boarding the bus.
- Don't invite trouble! Keep ALL jewelry hidden as much as possible – turn your rings around so the stones won't show and keep necklaces inside your shirt.

While On the Bus

- During off hours, ride as near to the bus operator as possible.
- Stay alert and be aware of the people around you.
- If someone bothers you, change seats and/or tell the driver.
- Carry your wallet inside your coat, or in a front pocket. A comb, placed horizontally in the fold of your wallet will alert you if someone tries to remove it from your pocket.
- Keep your handbag in front of you and hold it close to your body with both hands.
- Check your purse or wallet if someone is jostling, crowding or pushing you.
- If you see any suspicious activity, tell the driver.

Office Safety (IF YOU WORK ON CAMPUS)

- Never leave your purse or billfold in plain view or in the pocket of a jacket hanging on a door.
- Don't leave cash or valuables at the office.
- Lock your office when it is left unattended.
- If you work alone or outside the normal business hours, keep the office door locked.
- If you work late, try to find a coworker or call for an escort to walk out with you.
- If you are in an elevator with another person, stand near the control panel. If attacked, press the alarm button and pick up the elevator telephone.
- Report all suspicious persons and/or activities to the Office of Security at 304-327-4181
- Be aware of escape routes for emergencies and post police and fire department numbers near telephones.
- If a Crime Occurs: **REPORT IT!**
- Everyone should consider it his/her responsibility to report crime. Many criminals develop favorite areas for working, as well as predictable methods of operation. When you report all the facts about

a crime, it helps the security officers in the places where crimes are occurring or where they are most likely to occur.

- At least one out of two crimes in the United States goes unreported, either because people don't think the police can do anything about it, or because people don't want to get involved. If you don't report crime, this allows the criminal to continue to operate without interference.

Safety on Campus

- Should you observe ANY suspicious person or activity – **CALL THE OFFICE OF SECURITY AT 304-327-4181 IMMEDIATELY.** This allows the Campus Security Officers the opportunity to investigate as quickly as possible.

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM FRAUD

Please review the following information from the Federal Trade Commission:

Tips for Guarding Against Fraud

Do:

- Sign your credit cards as soon as they arrive.
- Carry your credit cards separately from your wallet, in a zippered compartment, a business card holder, or another small pouch.
- Keep a record of your credit card account numbers, their expiration dates, and the phone number and address of each company in a secure place.
- Keep an eye on your credit card during the transaction, and get it back as quickly as possible.
- Void incorrect receipts.
- Save receipts to compare with billing statements.
- Open bills promptly and reconcile accounts monthly, just as you would your checking account.
- Report any questionable credit card charges promptly and in writing to the credit card issuer.
- Notify credit card companies in advance of a change in address.

Do not:

- Lend your credit card(s) to anyone.
- Leave credit cards or receipts lying around.
- Sign a blank receipt. When you sign a receipt, draw a line through any blank spaces above the total.
- Write your credit card account number on a postcard or the outside of an envelope.
- Give out your credit card account number over the phone unless you're making the call to a company you know is reputable. If you have questions about a company, check it out with your local consumer protection office or Better Business Bureau.

Reporting Losses and Fraud

- If you lose your credit or charge cards or if you realize they've been lost or stolen, immediately call the issuer(s). Many companies have toll-free numbers and 24-hour service to deal with such emergencies. By law, once you report the loss or theft, you have no further responsibility for unauthorized charges. In any event, your maximum liability under federal law is \$50 per card.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION WHILE LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

TIME

THERE ARE FOUR TIME ZONES IN THE CONTIGUOUS United States (Eastern Standard, Central, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Time), each an hour's difference from the neighboring time zone. Alaska and Hawaii are on a separate time zone (four hours earlier in Alaska and five hours earlier in Hawaii than Eastern Standard Time).

Time in the U.S. is measured on a twelve-hour basis. Time is expressed in a.m. (Ante Meridian) and p.m. (Post meridian). The hours 24:00 to 11:00 are expressed as 12:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

The hours 12:00 to 23:00 are expressed as 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. For example, 2:00 would be 2:00 a.m. and 14:00 would be 2:00p.m.

Daylight savings time is also practiced. Most of the regions in the U.S. turn back their clocks one hour on the last Sunday of October, and turn their clocks forward one hour on the first Sunday of April.

Standard hours of business are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00p.m., in the local time zone. Rush hour is generally from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

FEDERAL HOLIDAYS

Banks, government offices, and public schools are closed on the following holidays:

Labor Day	First Monday of September
Columbus Day	Second Monday of October
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday of November
Christmas	December 25
New Year's Eve	December 31
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Third Monday in January
President's Day	Third Monday in February
Easter	A Sunday in Spring
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4

Stores and restaurants may be open for fewer hours on some of these days. Public transportation often follows a limited schedule on federal holidays.

OTHER HOLIDAYS OBSERVED IN THE U.S.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur	mid-September through mid-October
Halloween	October 31
Election Day	First Tuesday of November
Hanukkah	Eight days of December
Presidential Inauguration Day	January 20, every 4 years
Groundhog Day	February 2
Valentine's Day	February 14
Saint Patrick's Day	March 17
April Fools' Day	April 1
Passover	Eight days in April
Mother's Day	Second Sunday in May
Flag Day	June 14
Father's Day	Third Sunday in June

TEMPERATURE

In the U.S., temperature is measured in degrees Fahrenheit. To convert Fahrenheit to Centigrade (Celsius), subtract 32 and divide by 1.8. To convert centigrade to Fahrenheit, multiply 1.8 (9/5)

DEGREES CENTIGRADE		DEGREES FAHRENHEIT
0	Freezing point of water	32
10	A warm winter day	50
20	A mild spring day	68
30	Quite warm-almost hot	86
37	Normal body temperature	98.6
40	Heat wave conditions	104
100	Boiling point of water	212

LENGTH

U.S.	Metric	Multiply by	
Inches	Millimeters	25	
Feet	Centimeters	30	(1 foot = 12 inches = .3048 meters)
Yards	Meters	9	(1 yard = 3 feet = .9144 meters)
Miles	Kilometers		(1 mile = 1.6 Kilometers)

MASS

U.S.	Metric	Multiply by	
Ounces	Grams	28	(16 ounces = 453.59 grams)
Pounds	Kilograms	.45	(16 ounces = 453.59 grams = 1 pound = 2.2 kilograms)

LIQUID VOLUME

U.S.	Metric	Multiply by	
Ounces	Milliliter	30	
Pints	Liters	.47	(1 pint = 16 ounces = .47 liters)
Quarts	Liters	.95	(1 quart = 32 ounces = .95 liters)
Gallons	Liters	3.8	(1 gallon = 64 ounces = 3.8 liters)

CLOTHING SIZE: WOMEN

Blouses and Sweaters

U.S.	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
British	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
Continental	40	42	44	46	48	50	52

Coats and Dresses

U.S.	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
British	30	32	34	36	38	40	42
Continental	36	38	40	42	44	46	48

Shoes

U.S.	5-5 ½	6-6 ½	7-7 ½	8-8 ½	9
British	3-3 ½	4 ½-5	5 ½-6	6 ½-7	7 ½
Continental	36	37	38	39	40

Stockings

U.S. &						
British	8	8 ½	9	9 ½	10	10 ½
Continental	0	1	2	3	4	5

CLOTHING SIZE: MEN

Shirts

U.S. &							
British	14	14 ½	15	15 ½	16	16 ½	17
Continental	36	37	38	39	41	42	43

Shoes

U.S.	7	7 ½	8	8 ½	9	9 ½	10	10 ½	11
British	6 ½	7	7 ½	8	8 ½	9	9 ½	10	10 ½
Continental	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47

Socks

U.S. &

British	9 ½	10	10½	11	11 ½	12	12½
Continental	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

Suits and Coats

U.S. &

British	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
Continental	44	46	48	50	52	54	56

WATER & ICE

Water from public sources is treated for human consumption. In general, most people in the U.S. drink tap water and drink bottled water for the sake of taste or purity. Any cold beverage you order at a café, fast food or regular style restaurant will be served to you with ice unless you request otherwise.

FOOD/MEAL TIMES

In the U.S., meals are usually served at the following times:

Breakfast:	between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	between 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
Dinner:	between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

If you live in a residence which has a kitchen and you plan to cook your own meals, then the above information does not apply to you.

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UPDATED VERSIONS OF THIS HANDBOOK WILL BE POSTED ANNUALLY BY THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES.