CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on your acceptance to Albright College! The International Student Office welcomes you to the Albright College community. You are embarking on a new journey and we are pleased to be able to assist you as you begin an important educational experience. While you are here, you will learn not only through your academic pursuits, but also from your relationships with U.S. American people and institutions. Your presence here and your sharing of ideas and cultural heritage will make a significant contribution to our community. Please take advantage of the many opportunities to learn about a new society and culture and to teach others about your own.

In order to take full advantage of all the opportunities that await you upon arrival, the International Student Office has planned an orientation program especially for international students. International Student Orientation precedes Albright College orientation for all new first year students and transfers. For your information, a tentative schedule is included. Please take time now to consider each of these sessions carefully and make plans to take advantage of the information provided. The orientation will be an opportunity not only to learn some basic information you will need, but an excellent way to meet new friends.

SEVIS
Since September 11, 2001, the USCIS, formerly the INS, has been required to update its information reporting system to the new Student Exchange Visitors Information System or SEVIS. This new way of reporting to the USCIS requires all U.S. Schools, Colleges and Universities to input important information concerning international students directly into the USCIS computer. Once the student is in the U.S., it is the task of the institution’s DSO to assist students in remaining in status or USCIS compliant.

Getting to Albright
Students arriving at the Philadelphia airport should follow the “Ground Transportation” signs at the airport to arrange for transport to Albright College. The approximate cost for one-way transportation from the Philadelphia airport to Albright College is US$100.00 and takes about 90 minutes.

For transportation from the airport, you may choose to contact Michael’s Classic Limousine at 610-372-5410 or Andrew’s Transportation Service at 610-374-7955.

Once on campus, international students should report to the International Student Office in Selwyn Hall South, 1st Floor. Students should check in at the Public Safety Office. Please fax your travel plans and estimated time of arrival to Albright at 610-921-7659 so that we know when to expect you. Any travel questions or difficulties should be directed to the International Student Office at 610-921-7795.

There may be times during the breaks (Thanksgiving, Spring, Winter) that students will not be permitted to stay on campus. The ISO will keep you informed and assist you with options during these breaks.

Staying Healthy/Medical Insurance in the U.S.
The United States does not have a national health plan and the government is not a major provider of medical care. Arranging and paying for medical care is your responsibility. The cost for quality medical care in the United States is very expensive. Without medical insurance, the cost of treatment for an illness or an injury resulting from an accident can be devastating. Indeed it is often difficult to receive proper treatment if you do not have health insurance. During orientation you will have an opportunity to learn more about the U.S. system of healthcare and explore different insurance policies. The average annual cost for medical insurance for an international student is $600. The cost of health insurance should figure into your assessment of expenses during your stay in the U.S.

Higher Education in the United States
In the United States, students begin "higher education" after completing 12 years of primary and secondary education. Institutions of higher education include two-year colleges known as “community” or "junior" colleges, four-year colleges, universities, institutes of technology, vocational and technical schools and professional schools such as law and medical schools. Higher education is available in public and private institutions, institutions affiliated with religious groups and profit-making institutions – a wide variety. Size varies, too. Some excellent colleges enroll fewer than a thousand students; many large universities enroll fifty thousand or more students. Because post-secondary institutions in the United States are not regulated or managed by the federal government, their philosophy, policies and practices vary considerably.
ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Immigration Status
It is important to enter the United States in the proper immigration status. You do this by applying for the proper visa at the U.S. Consulate nearest to your hometown. Once you have arrived in the U.S., it can be difficult to change your immigration status. F-1 student is the most common immigration status for international students attending U.S. colleges and universities.

Important Documents
Passport: be sure to keep yours in a safe place. It is your most important document. While you are in the U.S., it is your responsibility to keep your passport valid at all times. Six months prior to the expiration date of your passport you should contact your consulate in Washington, D.C. or New York for instructions to extend the validity date. Remember: if your passport expires, you will be in the U.S. illegally and subject to deportation.

Visa: a visa to enter the United States, as a nonimmigrant is a stamped or affixed entry on a page of the passport. It enables you to request the immigration official at the port of entry to grant you admission to the United States under conditions specified for the type of visa you hold (F-1).

Form I-20: also referred to as the "Arrival/Departure Record." This is the small white card that will be stapled into your passport after you pass through the port of entry into the United States. This card will show your immigration classification (F-1) and endorsements made by the immigration official to indicate the place and date of your admission and the initial period of stay authorized. This card is the document that proves that you entered the country legally. It must be kept valid.

Form I-194: also referred to as the "Nonimmigrant Alien Registration." This is the small green card that you will receive that contains your personal information, place and date of entry, and your period of authorized stay in the U.S.

Obtaining a Visa
In order to enter the country legally as a student in the U.S., you must apply for the F-1 visa at a U.S. consulate. In Taiwan application is made at the American Institute in Taiwan. A personal interview with the consular officer may or may not be required. As the visa applicant, you will be required to present a valid passport and Form I-20. In addition, be prepared to present proof of English-language proficiency and verification of financial support to establish that all the requirements for nonimmigrant status are met. More importantly, an applicant for an F-1 visa must be prepared to demonstrate that s/he has a residence in a foreign country that s/he has no intention of abandoning. Applicants must also submit passport photos as part of their visa application. Visa issuing procedures differ slightly from consulate to consulate. It may be wise to call the consulate to determine what supporting documentation is required to make a complete application. If the visa application is approved a visa stamp is placed in the applicant’s passport noting the period of validity and the name of the school whose Form I-20 the applicant used to obtain the visa. The Form I-20 will be returned to the applicant to be used for admission into the United States.

Entering the U.S.
When you arrive at the U.S. port of entry, you will present a passport, visa, evidence of financial support and the Form I-20 to the immigration official. Upon admitting the student to the U.S., the immigration official issues the student the Form I-94 showing the date and date of entry. You will be admitted to the U.S. for "duration of status," noted as "D/S" on both the I-94 and the I-20 ID. Duration of status means the time during which you are pursuing and making normal progress toward completing a full course of study or engaging in authorized practical training.

The International Student Office
The International Student Office is one of many departments in the Albright College administration. Student Affairs offices provide a wide variety of services to students to facilitate their academic objective. The International Student Office is responsible for the development, coordination and administration of services designed to assist international students and many others of various cultural perspectives and will be a very important source of information and service to you while you are a student at Albright. You should visit the office as soon as you arrive at Albright and whenever you have questions about living and learning in the United States.

The International Student Office has many responsibilities. It is Albright’s official link with the USCIS, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, advising students, faculty and staff on regulations affecting students from abroad, completing forms as necessary and filing reports as required by law. The International Student Office provides advice and counsel to international students on financial matters, immigration/visa problems, academic concerns and personal issues such as adjustment to U.S. society and education. Orientation programs, including ongoing and short-term orientation and activities are designed and conducted for all new International students to the College community. Through social and cultural programming, this office helps international students find opportunities to learn more about U.S. American culture and each other’s culture outside the classroom.

Finally, the International Student Office serves as a representative, advocate or spokesperson for international students in dealing with U.S. and foreign government agencies, other campus offices and departments and the larger community. It is our job to help you make the most of your stay in the United States. Our door is always open.

Contact information:
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