



Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs Office

...celebrating diversity on campus...

Albright College MESA Bulletin

From the office of
Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS ATTENDING ALBRIGHT COLLEGE

pre-arrival fall



IN THIS ISSUE:

*Role of the
Multi-Ethnic Student
Affairs Office*

*New Extended Stay
Housing Policy*

*International
Students at
Albright College*

*Entering the
Country*

*Choosing Your
Arrival Date*

*What to Bring
From Home*

*Getting to
Albright College*

*Maintaining
Immigration
Status*

2009-2010 Academic Calendar

2009 Fall Semester

Classes begin	Monday, August 31
Labor Day (Classes held)	Monday, September 7
Mid-Term	Friday, October 16
Fall Break	Monday, October 19- Tuesday, October 20
Classes Resume	Wednesday, October 21
Thanksgiving Vacation	Wednesday, November 25- Sunday, November 29
Classes Resume	Monday, November 30
Classes End	Friday, December 11
Final Exams	Monday, December 14- Friday, December 18
Semester Ends	Friday, December 18
Commencement	Saturday, December 19

2010 Interim

Classes Begin	Monday, January 4
Classes End	Thursday, January 21
Final Exams	Friday, January 22

2010 Spring Semester

Classes Begin	Monday, January 25
Mid-Term	Friday, March 12
Spring Break	Saturday, March 13- Sunday, March 21
Classes Resume	Monday, March 22
Easter Break	Friday, April 2- Monday, April 5
Classes Resume	Tuesday, April 6
Classes End	Friday, May 14
Final Exams	Monday, May 17- Friday, May 21
Commencement	Sunday, May 23

OFFICE SUPPLIES

Calculator
Dictionary
Reference books
Stamps & stationery
Addresses/phone numbers
Desk pad & blotter
Pen/pencil container
Pens & pencils
Erasers
Paper clips
Rubber bands
Scotch tape
Masking tape
Stapler & staples
Ruler
Notebooks & notepads
Loose-leaf binder & Paper
Hole puncher
Folders/files
Scissors
Backpack or tote bag
white-out
Photo album
Paper
Day planner

SMALL APPLIANCES

Stereo
Radio
IPOD/Speakers
Alarm clock
Camera
Hair dryer
Curling iron-brush
Shaver/razors
Shaving cream
Telephone
Iron
Computer/Printer
Circulating fan

NO toaster ovens, open burners, candles, etc. permitted. Halogen lamps are prohibited due to fire regulations.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on your acceptance to Albright College! The Admission Office has informed Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs of your acceptance. The Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs 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.

Before you depart for the United States, there are many things to do. If one is available in your area, attend a pre-departure orientation. Contact a U.S. educational advising center, such as the bi-national cultural center, Fulbright Commission, or other advising agency to arrange for an orientation. Try to locate vacationing students or alumni who have studied in the United States. Talk to them about the adjustments that they thought were necessary to achieving academic success in the U.S.

In order to take full advantage of all the opportunities that await you upon arrival, the Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs has planned a wonderful 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.

THE OFFICE OF MULTI-ETHNIC STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs (MESA) 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. MESA is responsible for the development, coordination and administration of services designed to assist international students and many others of various cultural perspectives. MESA 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. MESA has many responsibilities. It is Albright's official link with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), advising students, faculty and staff on regulations affecting students from abroad, completing forms as necessary and filing reports as required by law. Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs 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 Internationals to the College community. Through social and cultural programming, MESA helps international students find opportunities to learn more about U.S. American culture and each other's culture outside the classroom. Finally, MESA 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. At MESA, it is our job to help you make the most of your stay in the United States. **Our door is always open.**

Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs

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ITEMS NEEDED AT COLLEGE

The following is a comprehensive list of items most students bring to college. We suggest that you use it as a checklist of things to buy once you get here. It is particularly important to purchase your appliances in the U.S.

LINENS

Pillows
Sit-up pillow
Extra long twin sheets/
pillowcases
Blankets/comforter
Curtains (blinds provided)
Towels & Washcloths
Dish towels
Any rug

TOILETRIES

Hand or vanity mirror
Band-aids
First-aid ointment
Skin care lotion
Aspirin
Cold medication
Tissues
Sewing kit
Umbrella/poncho
Instant foods & beverages

HOUSEWARES

Desk light & bulbs
Extra light
Flashlight & batteries
Chair or bean bag
Drying rack with tray
Laundry bag/basket
Detergent
Bucket for shampoo, soap, etc.
Soap dish (covered)
Wastebasket (plastic)
Wastebasket liners
Coffee mug(s)
Plastic tumbler(s)
Dishes/bowls
Silverware
Drink container
Can opener
Pot scrubber
Room decorations
Ironing board
Plastic utility trays for drawers/
table tops
Dust cloths
Storage boxes
Hangers
Extension cord
Locking storage box/trunk

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.

What to Bring

Alarm clock, pillow, towels, sheets, blanket and desk lamp. You can purchase these items at local stores if it is inconvenient for you to bring them from home. The climate in this area moves through the four seasons so bring clothing for both hot and cold weather. If your country has a national dress, instruments, crafts or other traditional items, please bring them with you if luggage space permits. We offer opportunities for you to introduce and share culture and customs with U.S. citizens and other Internationals. Other items that are useful: a **calculator**, especially if you are not familiar with U.S. currency. You can carry it with you when shopping and use it to convert prices in order to have some sense of how much you are spending. It will also prove useful in calculating a gratuity or tip at restaurants and other places. A **dictionary** is necessary for all students and may be especially useful to those whose native language is not English. It is good to have a small basic dictionary to carry around with you and a more comprehensive one for your academic work. **Pictures** from your home country, hometown, your family and other people/places/things you love will be useful. Many people will ask you about your home and will enjoy seeing pictures. Many U.S. Americans place family pictures on their desk at work and around their home. Students often include such mementos in their residence hall rooms and apartments. These pictures may help you describe your family and friends to new friends and provide comfort and encouragement during times of homesickness and other difficulties that accompany adjustment to a new culture and language. Finally, it is a good idea to bring any **medicine** you are familiar with until you find a U.S. equivalent and become accustomed to medicines available in the U.S.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT ALBRIGHT

You are about to join a campus community that is culturally and ethnically rich! During the 2008-2009 academic year, 131 international students were enrolled at the College. In addition, 230 U.S. American students of color were enrolled. This student population represents the rich national diversity in the United States. U.S. American students with Asian, African and Latino heritage are well represented on campus.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

August 25-26, 2009

Albright College plans a mandatory orientation program for all new international students. It is important that you arrange to arrive to Albright on or before Monday, August 24, 2009. International Student Orientation really begins by reading this pre-arrival newsletter from beginning to end. Once you arrive on campus, the International Student Orientation helps you get settled in your new environment and provide important information and services that aid in your adjustment to a new society and educational system. Here are some of the programs being offered during the fall 2009 International Student Orientation:

Welcome
Campus Tour
English Placement Testing
Communication/Responsibilities
Housing/Community Standards
Classroom Etiquette
Understanding Higher Education in the U.S.
Staying Healthy and Safe
Counseling Center
Banking

Thursday, August 27 - Sunday, August 30 New Student Orientation

Monday, August 31, 2009 Classes Begin

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 non-immigrant is a stamped or affixed entry on a page of the passport. It enables you to request the immigration officer 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-94: 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 officer 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-20: Once you are accepted at Albright, you receive the Form I-20 or Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status. This form is a very

important document for you as an international student in the United States. **When traveling, your I-20 must have a valid signature signed within the last six months.** Keep your I-20 in a safe place with your passport.

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 place 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.

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.

Not Subject to Passport/visa Requirements

Canadian nationals who are entering the U. S. from the Western hemisphere, citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, British subjects who reside in Bermuda, the Bahamas, or Canada, or citizens of the Commonwealth countries who reside in Canada or Bermuda are not subject to passport and visa requirements.

A student in one of these categories applies directly to an immigration inspector at a port of entry or pre-flight inspection center for admission as an F-1 student. The procedure is the same as that followed by students subject to passport and visa requirements except that the student need not present either document.

Canadians who enter the United States from outside the Western Hemisphere must have passports; they are not required to have visas. They should have their Form I-20 to enter the U. S. as an F-1 student.

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 Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs 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 Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs at 610-921-7650.

All students are expected to set up their campus voicemail. It is important you do this so we are able to contact you with vital information.

The campus closes during the Thanksgiving Break, Spring Break and Easter Break and all students must leave campus. ONLY STUDENTS WHO HAVE SIGNED UP FOR EXTENDED BREAK HOUSING MAY STAY DURING THESE BREAKS. Additional charges apply for these breaks. All students must leave campus during the Christmas break.