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# WELCOME TO THE QUERÉTARO PROGRAM!

Dear Querétaro Program Participant:

Congratulations on your admission to the group of students who will represent Dickinson College at the Universidad Autonoma de Querétaro (UAQ). An academically challenging and personally rewarding time awaits you. We wish you all the best!

This **Querétaro Orientation Handbook** has been prepared to make your transition to Querétaro and the Mexican educational system a little smoother. The handbook covers general topics affecting all students who study abroad: health matters, insurance, safe behavior, code of conduct and other policies, Dickinson course registration and room draw while abroad, and absentee voting. It also contains specific information about studying in Mexico: packing tips, homestay advice, lifestyle abroad, an academic calendar, course information, and much more. Sections on cultural perspectives will help you put your observations and experiences into context. This program specific information will also help you to understand better and adapt more quickly to your new environment and culture. Everything in this handbook is very relevant, so please read it carefully. A copy of the handbook will be mailed to your parent(s)/guardian(s) at your home address.

If you have any questions, contact the Office of Global Education at (717) 245-1341 or [global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu). The Office of Global Education is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (EST).

## Important Reminders:

If you plan to be at a different address during the winter break, or, if your insurance information has changed since you completed the Student Agreement form, let the Office of Global Education know right away.

You will need your passport to check in at departure and when you arrive in Mexico. Do not pack it in your luggage!

As you read this handbook, if you feel anything has been left out that you wanted to know, or that some of this information is out-of-date, please let us know.

**Take this Handbook with you to Querétaro!**

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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**On-Site Contacts:** (Use (011-52) for direct dial access to Querétaro from the U.S.)  
To Be Determined

**On-Campus Coordinator:**

**Professor Kjell Enge, On-Campus Coordinator**  
Department of Anthropology, Dickinson College  
Tel: 717-245-1207 E-mail: [enge@dickinson.edu](mailto:enge@dickinson.edu)

**Global Education:**

**Brian Brubaker, Director of Study Abroad**  
Office of Global Education-Dickinson College  
P. O. Box 1773  
Carlisle, PA 17013-2896  
Tel: (717) 245-1341 FAX: (717) 245-1688  
E-mail: [brubakeb@dickinson.edu](mailto:brubakeb@dickinson.edu)

**Major Emergency Protocol:**

If you need to contact the Office of Global Education after hours for emergency assistance in a very serious situation, call the Dickinson College Public Safety 24-Hour Hotline (**717-245-1111**), identify yourself and the program, describe the emergency briefly, and give a number for call back. The operator will locate the proper Office of Global Education staff member, who will return the call.

**Office of Global Education's Travel Agency:**

Advantage Travel  
313 East Willow Street  
Syracuse, NY 13203  
TEL: (800) 788-1980  
Contact: Mary Anne Clark [maclark@advantagecny.com](mailto:maclark@advantagecny.com)

**Mexican Embassy in the U.S.:**

Embassy of Mexico  
1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
Telephone: (202) 736-1000 Web site: <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/eua/>

Consulate General of Mexico in New York  
27 East 39th Street  
New York, NY 10016  
Telephone: (212) 217 6400  
Web site: <http://www.sre.gob.mx/nuevayork/>

**U.S. Embassy in Mexico City**

Embajada de Estados Unidos  
Paseo de la Reforma 305  
Col. Cuauhtémoc  
06500 México, D.F  
Telephone: (01-55) 5080-2000  
Web Site: <http://mexico.usembassy.gov/>

# GENERAL INFORMATION

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## General College and Office of Global Education Policies

### **College Non-Discrimination Policy:**

Dickinson College is an academic community that values justice, free inquiry, diversity, and equal opportunity. It is a fundamental policy of Dickinson College to respect pluralism and to promote tolerance, civility, and mutual understanding within its community. On that basis, Dickinson College does not discriminate as to race, color, sex, political and religious beliefs, marital status, age, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origins, veteran's status, or disability.

### **Student Agreement Form (see Appendix VI):**

The Student Agreement form, which applicants filled out as part of their application process, acknowledges awareness of inherent risks associated with foreign travel and that the student is participating in the program voluntarily. By signing the form, the participant agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Dickinson College from and against any claim that the participant, the participant's parents or guardian or any other person may have for any losses, damages, or injuries arising in connection with participation in the overseas program. Signing this form automatically enrolls the student in the Dickinson College's "Supplemental Emergency Travel Assistance and Medical Evacuation Insurance Program." (See Appendix IV for more information on this insurance.)

### **Status of non-Dickinson Students:**

Students from other institutions who participate in Dickinson College Study Abroad programs are considered "guest students" of the College for the duration of the program; as such, they will enjoy all the rights and privileges granted by the program (the only restriction is ineligibility for Dickinson grant money and endowed scholarships).

### **Program Cancellation Policy:**

All decisions concerning the cancellation (or required modification) of a Dickinson College program will be made by the Office of Global Education in consultation with responsible authorities on campus and overseas. These decisions will be based on, but not limited to, State Department warnings. In the unlikely event of an emergency program cancellation, every effort will be made to accommodate the academic needs of program participants by offering an alternative to enable students to complete their course work. For example, one possible alternative would be to offer suitable coursework on-campus during the summer.

Students whose program is cancelled prior to the start date will receive a full refund of the program fee, including the confirmation payment.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative for credit completion is offered, no refund will be given.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative credit completion is NOT offered, the student will receive a full refund including the confirmation payment.

# Conduct and Discipline Policies

## **What is this all about? (IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ!!)**

At Dickinson College, study abroad is not about travel to an exotic destination. It means becoming an active participant in the life and culture of a foreign locale in order to gain useful knowledge about a place and its people. By applying to a particular program, you have taken a significant step toward expanding your mind, engaging other cultures, and becoming a more active participant in our global society.

In a very real sense, you go abroad as an ambassador of Dickinson College. Your attitude, interactions, and presence abroad will speak volumes about you and about us. You are privileged to be there as a full-time learner, both academically and in all other aspects of daily life. Many study abroad participants are used to being the “majority,” and once they become a minority abroad they realize their actions are viewed as representative of their entire group. Resist playing the role of the “ugly American” stereotype. Resolve instead to develop understanding and show respect for the culture you are visiting.

## **Code of Conduct:**

All students studying abroad are expected to abide by the code of conduct as expressed in the Student Agreement form that you have signed. This form is reprinted as Appendix VI of this handbook. Please read it again.

It is a fundamental expectation that students will respect the norms of the host culture with regard to behavior and dress and will obey host country laws as well as all policies and regulations of the host institution and/or Dickinson Center. It is further expected that students participating in Dickinson programs will:

- attend and participate in classes and complete assignments
- participate in planned group excursions
- observe the rules and respect the property of the host institution, housing accommodations, and any temporary program accommodation such as hotels or hostels
- for safety purposes, provide the on-site staff with contact information and/or itinerary to the extent possible when they leave for private travel.

Students shall respect the rights of other students whether on the program or at the host institution, as well as those of homestay families, staff, and faculty. Dickinson College policies regarding student conduct as outlined in the Dickinson College Student Handbook, including academic infractions such as plagiarism, apply to students enrolled overseas as well. In Dickinson programs abroad, the on-site staff/on-campus coordinator will serve as the Judicial Hearing Officer for alleged violations.

## **Drinking and Drug Use:**

Most cultures have well-established customs with regard to acceptable social drinking. Mature behavior and respect for local customs is expected of all students. The misuse of alcohol will not be tolerated and can result in dismissal from the program. The use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs is prohibited. A student caught using, purchasing, or selling drugs will be sent home immediately without refund.

Legal penalties with regard to drugs and alcohol may be more severe in the host country than in the U.S. and may entail fines and/or jail time. A student charged with breaking local laws will be subject to the rulings of local courts. U.S. laws and constitutional guarantees do NOT apply. The ability of program staff or U.S. Embassy personnel to assist is very limited. In most countries, release on bail while awaiting trial is not an option.

### **Removal from Program for Disciplinary Reasons:**

Students can be dismissed from programs for violating policies, rules or regulations, for engaging in disruptive behavior, for academic infractions or failure, and for conduct that could bring the program into disrepute. The Executive Director of Global Education will make the judgment in consultation with the Program Director/On-Campus Coordinator.

## **Extension of Stay and Early Withdrawal: Process and Penalties**

### **Student Status and Changes of Status:**

All students approved to participate in an academic year/semester program off campus continue enrollment as Dickinson students with “off-campus” status, and are expected to keep their commitment to participate in an academic year/semester program for the full term, and to return to campus following their semester or academic year away. To return early requires changing status, a process initiated by the Office of Global Education.

#### **Early return or withdrawal:**

- A compelling medical or academic reason is required for leaving a program early. You should consult first with the Program Director/on-campus coordinator, and then with the Office of Global Education. The Office of Global Education will notify your class dean about your change in status.
- Whenever possible, students should complete the semester that has already begun. Students risk not receiving credit if they withdraw from a program mid-semester or before completing scheduled instruction and examinations.
- Financial consequences for early withdrawal are described in the following section, “Refund Policy and Financial Consequences for Early Withdraw,” and in Appendix VII “Refund Policy for Overseas Programs.”
- When you are certain of your decision, communicate your reasoning in writing to the Office of Global Education at [global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu). Please also e-mail the Office of Global Education to confirm the last date you attended class on the program.
- The Office of Global Education will then officially notify the campus of your change in status. If you are asked to follow-up directly with certain offices-please do so.
- If your withdrawal occurs prior to the end of the first week of classes at Dickinson, you may be granted permission to return to campus. If so, you can contact Campus Life to arrange for housing on a last-in-line basis.
- Students returning early from study abroad will register during the add/drop period of the following semester.

### **Refund Policy and Financial Consequences for Early Withdrawal:**

Early withdrawal from a program will have financial consequences. Both the \$25 application fee and \$300 confirmation payment are non-refundable. Before making a final decision to withdraw, you should read the Refund Policy for Overseas Programs, which is reproduced as Appendix VII of this handbook. **These policies apply in all cases of early withdrawal from study abroad programs, regardless of the reason for withdrawal.**

Students receiving Title IV federal financial aid will have funds returned to federal aid programs according to the policies outlined in the Dickinson College Bulletin. It is important to understand that, since the financial aid refund and the refund to the student’s account are calculated using different methods, the refund to the student account may not fully cover the required refund to the financial aid programs, and the student may end up owing funds to the college after the refund to the financial aid programs has been made.

### **Non-traditional Off-Campus Study:**

Off-campus study in the senior year that precludes meeting the senior residency requirement requires special approval from the Academic Program and Standards Committee.

Special approval is also necessary for participation in more than two semesters of study off campus. Petitions should be addressed to Brian Whalen, Associate Provost of the College and Executive Director, Office of Global Education and should include the following:

- An essay describing how your specific study abroad plans fit in with your overall academic goals and plans
- Letters of support from your academic advisor(s), department chair(s), on-campus coordinator and/or Program Director, as applicable
- An audit showing in detail how off-campus courses will fit in with graduation requirements.

## **Program Fees/Financial Aid Information**

### **Payment of Fees/Financial Aid:**

The total cost of the program for the 2010 spring semester is \$24,930. Students at Dickinson College will receive invoices from the Student Accounts Office that show credit for the \$300 confirmation fee and any applicable amounts from your financial aid package.

**The program fee includes the following:** tuition and fees, room and board in a Mexican home, and scheduled group excursions. **Not included in the program fee are:** travel costs to/from Mexico, required health and accident insurance (purchased in the U.S.), books, clothing, entertainment, vacation travel, meals and other expenses during independent travel, and all personal expenses.

Arrangements for any type of monthly payment plan options should be made as soon as possible through Tuition Management Systems (1-800-722-4867, x 775, or [www.afford.com](http://www.afford.com)). If the balance due on your account is not paid by the deadline noted on the billing, or if special arrangements have not been made with Student Accounts (Tel. 717-245-1953 or email: [stuacct@dickinson.edu](mailto:stuacct@dickinson.edu)), you will not be allowed to participate in the program.

### **Student Budget Sheet (Appendix II):**

The Office of Global Education prepares a student budget sheet for each Dickinson program to help students and parents anticipate expenses not covered by the program fee. At the top of the sheet the program fee is given, followed by a list of what is included in it, and below that is a table of estimated costs not included in the program fee. These estimated costs are then divided into required and optional cost sections. The estimate for personal expenses is an average amount, and you may not actually incur all expenses listed; some students get by with less, whereas others spend a lot more.

### **Financial Aid Information:**

Dickinson grant money and endowed scholarships are available only to Dickinson College students on Dickinson programs. Students from other colleges and universities should check with their own financial aid office to determine eligibility.

# PROGRAM PREPARATIONS

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## Things to Take Care of at Dickinson

### Declaring a Major:

Before you can study abroad you must officially declare a major. The applicable text from the Dickinson College Bulletin reads as follows:

“A student must be accepted for a major field of concentration by the time he or she earns junior standing. A student who does not have a declaration of a major on file in the Registrar’s Office by the end of the semester in which the 16th course (counting towards the degree) is completed may be required to withdraw from the college.”

To declare a major you must complete the necessary paperwork available from the Registrar’s office. The declaration of a major is only official when the completed paperwork has been turned in to the Registrar’s office. A conversation with someone in the major department about your intentions is NOT sufficient. To avoid being dismissed from your study abroad program, be sure to attend to this well before your departure.

Now is also an appropriate time to look over the requirements for your major(s)/minor/general education. Make sure to note courses that you need to take while abroad, especially if you are planning to double major.

### Student Accounts and Financial Aid Loans:

Two very important things to check on prior to departure:

- If you are applying for financial aid, make certain you have completed all necessary applications and responded to all requests for information from the Financial Aid office.
- Call the Office of Student Accounts (717-245-1953) to make sure your student account is clear. If you have a hold on your account, you will not be able to study abroad until it is released.

### Career Center Resources:

The Career Center offers a variety of resources to help assist you before you go abroad or while you are abroad. Please see the important information below about Career Center resources that you can utilize.

The Career Center is available to assist you in any way possible while you are abroad.

- **Resume/Cover Letter/Personal Statement Reviews:** If you would like to have a resume, cover letter, or personal statement reviewed, just email it to [career@dickinson.edu](mailto:career@dickinson.edu).
- **Phone Appointments:** Phone appointments can be set up if you would like to speak with a counselor – either email or call (717-245-1740) to schedule a phone appointment. Be sure to schedule the appointment for Eastern Standard Time and please provide a phone number where you can be reached.
- **Career Center Updates:** You will continue to receive emails from the Career Center about upcoming events, programs, deadlines, etc. Pay attention to these emails – there may be opportunities that you can take advantage of.
- **Career Center Website:** Periodically review our website, [www.dickinson.edu/career](http://www.dickinson.edu/career), for resources, and [www.dickinsonconnect.com](http://www.dickinsonconnect.com) for job and internship postings, interviews and events, job fairs, on-campus employment, scholarship and fellowship information, and volunteer opportunities.

### *Graduate & Professional School Advice*

Studying abroad during the junior year and beginning graduate school immediately after graduation from Dickinson can be accomplished - with careful planning. But, before you make the decision to apply, here are some things you should consider:

1. What are your career goals? Do you need an advanced degree to accomplish them? This is important, irrespective of studying abroad.
2. Will you have enough time to prepare for the entrance exams you need to take? Are you willing to spend time doing that while abroad?

3. Some students find that trying to prepare for graduate or professional school while abroad is a difficult challenge. For those students, delaying graduate school might be a good idea. Graduate school will always be available, but this might be your only chance to study abroad, so make the most of it.

The typical timeline for applying to graduate/professional school is available at [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/gradtimeline.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/gradtimeline.html). Review the timeline to see what you can do before, during and after your abroad experience. If you are studying abroad for the fall semester only, you should be able to follow this timeline easily. In either case – one or two semesters abroad - you should plan to meet with the Graduate and Professional Studies advisor in the Career Center during the spring semester of your sophomore year to make sure you are on track.

If you are applying to medical, dental or veterinary school – or any of the allied health professions – be aware that your deadlines will likely be earlier, so plan to adjust your own timeline. For more information on applying to these professional degree programs, go to [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/healthapplyingtoprof.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/healthapplyingtoprof.html).

Taking entrance exams - the GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, PCAT, DAT, etc. – before you return to campus for your senior year is always a good idea. The GRE Subject Test is paper-based and only available in October, November and April. It is administered on the Dickinson campus. But don't take any exam before you have thoroughly prepared for it. Schools will have access to all of your scores, not just your highest ones! For more information on the entrance exams, go to [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/gradexams.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/gradexams.html). For more information on applying to graduate or professional school, go to [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/graduate.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/graduate.html).

### ***Internship Advice***

If you plan to undertake an internship upon your return, you can search and apply to opportunities while you are abroad. You can search online by going to [www.dickinsonconnect.com](http://www.dickinsonconnect.com). Login instructions are on the left hand side of the page. Additional resources and information about the internship program can be found on [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/internships.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/internships.html). You will find registration options and deadlines on this page. If you have questions about the internship program, please email [career@dickinson.edu](mailto:career@dickinson.edu).

### ***Job Search Advice***

You can start your job search while you are abroad, but make sure to start early-on. The Career Center has many resources available online to assist you, and networking – the number one job search method – can be very effective electronically. One of the first steps in job searching is researching organizations to which you will want to apply, and learning their application processes. Some application deadlines will approach as early as the fall semester senior year; it's important to conduct research prior to returning to campus in the fall. Some key resources to utilize in your research include Vault and GoingGlobal, both available through the Career Center's website. Please note – to access GoingGlobal, you must be on a Dickinson networked computer or you must have created a personal account from a Dickinson networked computer. Check out many other job search resources at [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/jobsearch.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/jobsearch.html).

### ***Networking Advice***

Networking is one of the most effective methods of job searching! Take the opportunity to meet and talk with as many people as possible who are working in your desired industry. Additionally, individuals who work in industries that aren't of interest to you can also be of assistance in putting you in touch with people who can help. The primary networking tool available through the Career Center is Dickinson Works. This is a database of alumni who have agreed to provide career-related information or assistance to other Dickinsonians. Please note – this is NOT a job searching database, although networking can sometimes turn into a job lead, the primary purpose is to assist you in connecting with alumni in your desired career field and learning from them. More information on how to use Dickinson Works can be found at [www.dickinson.edu/career/student/dickinsonworksindex.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/student/dickinsonworksindex.html). Time spent abroad could be viewed as a networking opportunity. If you plan to network during your time abroad, you might want to consider having

business cards made before leaving.

### ***On-Campus Student Employment When You Return***

Departments and offices on-campus are continually seeking student employees and are often looking to fill positions a semester ahead of time. Make sure you check the on-campus student employment section of DickinsonConnect the semester before your return.

### ***Using DickinsonConnect***

**DickinsonConnect** ([www.dickinsonconnect.com](http://www.dickinsonconnect.com)) is the online recruiting system that will help you to:

- Apply and sign up for on-campus interviews
- Apply to resume referrals
- Search for jobs (full-time, part-time or summer opportunities)
- Conduct an employer search
- Search for internships
- Search on-campus student employment
- Search for graduate scholarships and fellowships
- View and sign up for events/programs
- Upload resumes and cover letters easily from a Microsoft Word file for employers to review
- Manage and edit your job/internship preferences (job type, level or location).

DickinsonConnect is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students must complete a user profile in DickinsonConnect before being able to utilize the system.

Getting started with DickinsonConnect is quick and easy. To begin, follow these basic steps:

Go to the Career Center webpage at [www.dickinson.edu/career](http://www.dickinson.edu/career).

1. Click on the link for Dickinson Connect under “Quick Links”.
  - a. You may also access DickinsonConnect directly at [www.dickinsonconnect.com](http://www.dickinsonconnect.com).
2. All students are pre-registered to use the DickinsonConnect system.
3. Log in to Dickinson Connect as a current user on the upper right side of the page.
  - a. Your “Username” is your full Dickinson email address (i.e. *studenta@dickinson.edu*).
  - b. Your password is your HUB Box Number.
4. After you have successfully logged in for the first time, your student profile will appear and must be completed before you will have full access to the system.
5. After your profile has been completed, you will see the Student Center Home Page.
6. The Quick Links on the left side of the page and the Student Icons at the top of the page will allow you to navigate and to utilize the DickinsonConnect system.

For assistance on using the system, go to the “**How to Guide for Students Using the DickinsonConnect System**” at [www.dickinson.edu/career/dsonconnectguide.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/career/dsonconnectguide.html).

## **Legal Matters**

### **Limited Power of Attorney:**

In case your signature is needed for any reason during your absence, such as for a Stafford loan check, you should consider making arrangements for "limited power of attorney" to be held by an appropriate person stateside to act on your behalf. This is usually a parent or guardian, but can be another relative or close friend. It must be someone you trust to act responsibly on your behalf in legal and financial matters. You may use a standard “Limited Power of Attorney Form” (A240), available from the Office of Student

Accounts or at the Office of Global Education in the Stern Center. Examples of the kinds of things you might want to authorize the person(s) to do would be: acting on your behalf in federal loan matters or withdrawing or transferring money from a specific bank account. You should have the statement(s) notarized and request a couple of originals in case the bank or other entity requires an original.

### **Income Tax Declaration:**

If you have taxable income for the year ending 31 December, you will have to file a tax return for that year.

Options are:

- to have the forms sent to you so that you can meet the 15 April deadline
- to file on-line
- to file for an extension of the deadline.

### **Absentee Voting:**

If you want to vote by Absentee Ballot, you need to register to vote before leaving. Check with the Board of Elections or the Secretary of State in your home state about the procedures for voting by Absentee Ballot. It is important to get this information before going overseas since there are usually several steps involved with specific due dates for the Absentee Ballot. Remember to make a note of your Party, Ward, District, and Voter Registration Number.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program offers extensive information about registering to vote by absentee ballot online at <http://www.fvap.gov/>.

## **Insurance Information**

### **Health Insurance:**

**You are required to purchase primary health insurance in the United States** that is valid overseas to protect against the costs of hospitalization and medical care in the event of sickness or an accident while abroad. **This cost is not included in the program fee.**

The following section includes a list of things to consider with regards to your current health insurance coverage:

- Selecting and paying for adequate primary health insurance coverage is your responsibility. You should read your insurance policy to determine what is and is not covered. Pre-existing conditions, sports injuries, and dental care, for example, may not be covered by basic medical insurance. It is your responsibility to determine whether your policy meets your particular needs.
- Before deciding to use your health insurance policy, you should contact the provider to determine whether the policy will cover you **overseas** for the **duration of your stay**. Find out what sort of documentation you must present for reimbursement of costs incurred overseas. You may also purchase the policy used by Dickinson students during the academic year\*. Please contact the Office of Student Accounts for further information about the Dickinson health insurance plan. (\*This is for Dickinson students only).
- On the **Student Agreement form**, which you signed when you applied, you provided the **insurance company name and policy number** for your medical coverage. **If that information should change, please notify the Office of Global Education immediately.** Up-to-date, accurate insurance information is needed in case of emergency and is also mandatory if your program requires a letter issued by the Office of Global Education in support of your student visa.
- Make note of your insurance company contact information and policy number in your own essential records, which you take with you overseas. Also leave the information with someone at home.
- If you have **special health needs**, discuss them with the On-Campus Coordinator and/or the Office of Global Education before departure. Thinking ahead about how you will cope with special health needs is essential. Do not assume that the same services or medications you use at home will be

available in the host country.

- As a rule, an insurance card will not be accepted for payment of medical expenses overseas. Be prepared to **pay cash for treatment and keep receipts** to present to your insurance company for reimbursement. Before going overseas, contact your insurance company to know exactly what you will need to send them in order to be reimbursed. Verify if the documents provided by doctors and pharmacies from another country will have to be translated into English.
- In some countries with socialized medicine, country-specific student health insurance coverage is required and is included in the program fee. While this usually covers most routine care, it is NOT a substitute for the required primary health and accident insurance purchased in the U.S.
- Canceling your policy while abroad puts you at serious health and financial risk, in the case that you become ill or need medical attention while abroad and have no health insurance coverage.

To evaluate personal sickness and accident insurance coverage, we offer the following questions:

- Does the plan include hospitalization for accidents and illnesses while abroad?
- What is the maximum amount of coverage provided?
- Are there deductibles? If so, what are they?
- Will the plan include emergency room expenses?
- What is explicitly not covered?
- Does the plan cover visits to the doctor or medication prescribed while abroad?
- What is the procedure for filing a claim, and how long does it take to be reimbursed?
- When does the plan begin and end?
- Does the plan have continuous coverage before, during, and after you go abroad?
- Is there a publication explaining the coverage in detail?
- Is there coverage for medical evacuation or for repatriation of remains?

### **Supplemental Travel Assistance and Medical Evacuation Insurance:**

Dickinson College provides "Supplemental Travel Accident and Medical Evacuation Insurance" for all students participating in a program overseas. Please see Appendix IV at the back of the handbook for an overview of coverage and limitations.

### **Liability Insurance for Belongings:**

Students are not covered by the College for personal liability, including the loss or theft of personal property. It is the responsibility of each program participant to purchase liability insurance, if needed. Students who bring laptops are advised to purchase adequate coverage. Check first to see whether the homeowner's insurance of your parents/guardian will cover personal liability while overseas. Normally, a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft will be required by the insurer before any claim will be considered.

## **Health Matters**

### **Medical Check-ups:**

Before leaving the United States, you should visit your physician, gynecologist, eye care specialist, and dentist. Make sure you are in good health before going abroad so that you can avoid any potential problems.

### **Immunizations/Inoculations:**

You should inform yourself as soon as possible about vaccinations and other health precautions required for travel to your study abroad site at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov>. Please print out CDC information and take it with you when you meet with the campus Health Center and/or your personal physician. Make sure that all of your routine inoculations are up-to-date. These include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and diphtheria, polio, and tetanus (DPT). It is strongly recommended that you ask about other types of inoculations, such as Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, or any medicines that are advisable. **See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before departure to allow time for immunizations to take effect.** Please also see the Health Issues while Traveling handout in Appendix V.

### **Medications:**

Prescription/non-prescription medication(s) should be in the original container from the pharmacy and labeled with your physician's name, your name, and the medication name and dosage. **Do not transfer any medication into an unmarked container.** You should also carry a written letter or prescription from your physician verifying that this medication was prescribed by a licensed practitioner and is necessary for medical reasons. If you are on prescription medications or take particular over the counter medications, such as a certain kind of painkiller or cold medicine, you should take enough with you to last the duration of your stay. It is neither advisable nor legal in some circumstances to ship medications by mail. It is your responsibility to make sure that your medications are legal in your host country. You can find this out by consulting the consulate website of the country you will be visiting. You may also want to take along some cold/flu medication, anti-diarrhea, and anti-fungal medicine. Women prone to gynecological infections should take a supply of medication. Be aware of recent changes in airport security regulations limiting the type of liquids or gels that can be transported in carry-on luggage.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that students with diabetes or health situations that require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes sufficient to last their stay abroad. If you carry narcotics or syringes, you should also bring a copy of the prescription and a statement from the prescribing physician.

### **Mental Health, Stability, and Stress:**

For students under the care of a counselor or psychiatrist, please be sure that you see him/her before you depart from the US. Participating in a study abroad program in another country will not lessen any emotional issues that you may presently be experiencing. When you are abroad, you will probably experience various states of excitement and frustration as a result of the opportunities and differences presented by the new culture. These alternating emotions are usually related to the natural phenomenon of culture shock, which occurs when people adapt to a new culture and surroundings. As you become accustomed to your new surroundings and establish a routine, these feelings will begin to subside. If homesickness, depression, or eating disorders persist, consider seeking out professional assistance.

### **Special Accommodations:**

The accommodations available to students with disabilities in the United States may not be available to students studying abroad. It is unlikely that you will find the same medications, medical and/or psychological care, or support services at your study abroad site that you would at home. For you to fully assess whether you will be able to successfully complete a study abroad program, we encourage any student with special needs to review the program descriptions and to visit websites about the community in which you will be living and learning. If you wish to have assistance from Dickinson College in helping you to assess your ability to succeed in studying in a particular program or in identifying programs where more support may be available, you are encouraged to disclose your situation on the medical forms you completed during the application process or to come talk to the Office of Global Education. Such disclosure is completely voluntary. If you travel to an abroad site, you will be expected to fully participate in the program. Therefore, you need to inform yourself about the demands of the program in order to plan ahead and to prepare to cope with your health needs in a new environment.

### **Health and Safety in Flight:**

For safety and comfort, wear loose-fitting, natural-fiber clothing during your flight. Do not wear snug-fitting or heeled footwear! If possible, avoid wearing contact lenses. Low humidity in flight tends to remove the moisture from the eye's surface. It is helpful to do seat exercises or to walk in the aisles in order to maintain good circulation. One easy exercise you can do is to tap your toes while keeping your heels on the floor. This pushes blood up your legs and reduces swelling. Tap for several minutes every hour or so.

It is always advisable to sleep during long flights. You should avoid alcoholic beverages in flight because they cause dehydration. Recycled air also has a drying effect, so you should stay hydrated with non-alcoholic beverages. If you require a special diet, be sure to notify the airline at least 72 hours before departure.

The most common difficulty or problem that can result from flying is known as jet lag, which is the sudden sense of fatigue or wakefulness at the “wrong” time. Jet lag is more pronounced flying east than flying west. Veteran international flyers recommend going to bed and getting up at the customary local time from the beginning. This helps the body adjust quickly. Avoid naps until fully adjusted to the new time zone; the body confuses naps with night sleep.

### **Health Tips:**

By using common sense and taking everyday precautions, you can safeguard your health. Here are some tips:

- Inform yourself about the particular health risks of the country you will be visiting and be meticulous in observing recommended precautions.
- Students with existing medical conditions should consult their personal physicians regarding special precautions they may need to take. It is important to tell your physician the location(s) you will be visiting.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take along an extra pair, plus a copy of your lens prescription. Pack enough lens cleaning solution for the entire trip.
- Always carry a wallet card or wear a necklace or bracelet stating any special conditions you have (such as diabetes, asthma, etc.). Be sure to list allergies to specific medications.
- If you are sexually active, use a condom. You may have trouble finding reliable brands of condoms abroad; consider taking a supply.
- Take care of yourself while traveling: try not to wear yourself down, avoid excessive exposure to the sun, drink plenty of liquids to stay hydrated, and try to get enough sleep.

## **TRAVEL PREPARATIONS**

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### **Passport and Visa Information**

**The responsibility for ensuring that you have a valid passport and visa in time for your program is ultimately yours.**

#### **Passport Information:**

A valid passport **that does not expire for 6 months beyond the end date of the program** is required to enter any country. If your passport expires before the required validity, you will have to acquire a new passport before departure and/or before applying for a visa. **If you have not applied for your passport, you must do so immediately.** You can find more information and the passport application at the Office of Global Education, or you can contact the Prothonotary’s Office at the Cumberland County Courthouse at 717-240-6195.

If your program requires a visa, before sending your passport through the mail to apply for a visa, sign in the signature line provided with an ink pen, and also write in pencil your current address and daytime telephone number in the blank space provided opposite your photo page. This will help the U.S. Postal Service return it to you, if it should become separated from the envelope during processing. Be sure to use some traceable form of mail.

#### **Visa Information:**

A visa is a stamped endorsement placed in your passport by the embassy or consulate of a foreign government that allows you to enter that country for a specific period of time. All students going to Mexico are required to get a visa. **Please see Appendix I for the Querétaro visa guidelines.** Please refer to this when applying for your visa. However, please note the following:

The information in the visa guideline is current to date and is to be used as a general guideline only. Each consulate has specific rules that must be followed and that you must comply with. Before submitting your visa application, you will need to check and recheck the consulate website to be sure that nothing has changed. Please note that the responsibility for submitting all documents required by you or your parents for your student visa ultimately rests in your hands. If necessary, the Office of Global Education will supply the supporting documents required from the College or your host institution.

## Information for International Students

If you are not a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to research your status, and whether or not you need to obtain a visa, obtain any special entry papers, or other documentation that may be required for entry. Contact the host country embassy in your country of citizenship for assistance. Depending on the country's requirements, you may have to apply in person at that Embassy/Consulate.

### SEVIS Information for International Students at Dickinson:

Since you will still be a Dickinson Student while abroad, you are required to pursue a course of study that is considered a full course load at your abroad institution in order to maintain your F-1 status. You will be registered in SEVIS each semester, just as you are while on-campus at Dickinson.

Also, please remember to have your I-20 endorsed for travel prior to your departure from campus this semester.

## Packing Tips and Travel Information

### Packing Tips:

When planning what to take with you, the first rule is to take the minimum amount of clothes possible. You will accumulate things while abroad, so when in doubt – leave it at home! Be practical and focus on the essentials of a wardrobe. Clothing should be comfortable and warm without being cumbersome. Layers are the key to comfort; they provide warmth and will help you adapt to changes in weather.

Travel with no more baggage than you can carry! Keep in mind that airlines have cut back on the number of checked baggage allowed and the weight limit. Check with your airline to confirm luggage allowances in order to avoid extra charges. See more details below on TSA and airline requirements.

### Here are some suggestions:

- a sturdy, comfortable pair of walking shoes that have been broken in (you will do a great deal of walking); a nice pair of shoes; hiking boots
- a pair of rain shoes
- a “nice outfit” (coat and tie for men) and a semi-casual outfit as well, especially for men; people rarely go out for an evening wearing sneakers or flip-flops
- 6-8 everyday bottoms (slacks, jeans, corduroys, khakis) that are wrinkle resistant
- 10-12 shirts/tops/blouses, several sweaters (dark colors are best)
- 15-18 pairs of underwear and socks/stockings
- shorts (Bermuda-length is preferable)
- warm sleepwear, bathrobe and slippers/house shoes
- a pair of sweats for studying and/or sleeping – heat, if there is any, may be turned down or off in the evening
- a light jacket & scarf
- 2 towels/2 wash cloths
- a sturdy folding umbrella
- swim suit(s), sandals/flip-flops, and a beach towel (especially for traveling)
- **sufficient contact lenses, eyeglasses and prescription**

### Other Useful Suggestions:

- a laptop with wireless capabilities
- Mexico is wired with 110V electrical outlets, so you do not need an adapter if you plan to use U.S. appliances.
- space/vacuum bags (can be found at Walmart or Target and condense the amount of space your

clothing takes up in your luggage)

- swiss army knife with corkscrew, bottle opener, and scissors (packed in your checked luggage)
- money belt and/or pouch to carry valuables
- International phone numbers for computer and credit cards
- travel alarm clock with extra batteries
- a portable music device with extra batteries
- a travel sewing kit with safety pins
- a small supply of toiletries/beauty products
- all medications (both non-prescription and prescription) need to be in their original, labeled containers.

Take copies of all prescriptions with you.

- a small first aid kit
- shower sandals
- a camera
- playing cards
- sunglasses & sunscreen
- bug spray
- a few favorite photos of your family and friends (to decorate your room and show to new friends)
- a few token gifts, something from Dickinson College, typically American or representative of the area in which you live in the U.S. – an especially good gift for your host family
- a portable USB memory device for transferring photos and documents between computers
- a day bag/book bag for traveling
- notebooks, school supplies, etc
- a Spanish-English dictionary
- luggage ID tags inside and outside of your luggage

For the first few days, pack basic toiletries, toothbrush, toothpaste, and a washcloth in case you are not able to get to a store right away. **If you have a particular type of toiletry that you like to use, you may want to bring it with you.**

### **Packing tips from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA):**

- Do not pack oversized electronics (laptops, full-size video game consoles, DVD players and video cameras that use cassettes) in your checked baggage when possible. However, please be advised that you will be required to remove these items from your carry-on bag and submit them separately for x-ray screening. Small electronics, such as iPods, can remain in your carry-on.
- Prepare your 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag of liquids before arriving at the airport, following the 3-1-1 guideline (place liquids into 3.4 ounce bottle or less (by volume); all bottles should be carried in one 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag)
- Pack all your coats and jackets in your checked baggage when possible. All coats and jackets must go through the X-ray machine for inspection.
- Do not wrap gifts. If a security officer needs to inspect a package, they may have to unwrap your gift. Please wait until you've reached your final destination to wrap gifts.
- Undeveloped film should go in your carry-on bag. You will be able to declare film that is faster than 800-speed to a transportation security officer for physical inspection to avoid being X-rayed.
- You are required to remove footwear for X-ray screening so wear shoes that are easy to take off and put back on.
- Double check the contents of your pockets, bags, and carry-on luggage to ensure no prohibited items were inadvertently packed.
- When in doubt, leave it out. If you're not sure about whether you can bring an item through the checkpoint, put it in your checked bag or leave it at home.
- For more information, visit [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov).

### **Carry-on and Checked Luggage:**

**BAGGAGE REGULATIONS:** You should call the airline directly or go online to inquire about baggage regulations. A backpack with a frame must be checked as one of these allowed pieces. (It should be noted that this type of “backpackers” backpack has been found useful by past participants due to the amount of traveling you will be doing). Attach a label on the outside of your luggage and place a name and address label inside.

In most cases, you are allowed one piece of carry-on luggage not to exceed 45 total inches, which must fit under the seat in front of you or in an overhead bin. Make sure your luggage follows TSA regulations. Remember that bags should be small enough to go up narrow stairways, go down crowded train aisles, and fit on luggage racks. A coat and a handbag, briefcase, or laptop may be carried on. In case your luggage is delayed for a few days, be sure to pack a change of clothes and any medicine or toiletries you would need in your carry-on bag.

**LAPTOP:** If you bring a laptop, it will be considered one of your carry-on items. You should purchase insurance to cover it in case it is stolen or damaged.

**VALUABLES:** Carry extra cash and travelers checks in a money belt or neck pouch. Do not carry all your cash in one place. Never pack money, valuables, or important documents in your checked luggage!

**LOST LUGGAGE:** Make a list of everything you pack, then bring a copy of the list with you and leave a copy at home. This will be helpful if your luggage is lost and you need to identify the items and cost of your luggage. If your luggage is lost or mishandled, you must file a claim with airline personnel immediately. Do not leave the airport thinking it will be easier to do so at a later time. It won't be.

Airlines don't refund lost baggage unless there are original receipts, so keep the things you care about with you at all times during travel.

### **Travel Documents:**

Before departure you should make copies of all of your important documents. Leave one set of copies with your family and take one with you to keep in a safe place separate from your original documents.

- The information page of your passport
- Any entrance visas (if applicable)
- Insurance policies and contact information
- Your airline ticket
- Front and back of credit cards and phone numbers for credit card replacement (you cannot dial an 800-number from overseas so you will need a direct number)
- Travelers check numbers
- Contents of your wallet
- Prescription medications
- Rail passes

### **Immediate Cash/Travel Funds:**

You may need some ready cash before you arrive at your program site. It is recommended that you have with you \$50.00 to \$75.00 in cash and \$200.00 in traveler's checks (in small denominations). You may want to purchase local currency (about \$50.00 worth) at your departure airport to have some cash on arrival; the exchange rate may be high at the airport upon arrival. You can find more information in the Financial section of the handbook (page. 26).

# Flight and Arrival Information

## **Travel Arrangements:**

All students are responsible for arranging and paying for their own international flight to/from Mexico.

**Please make sure you are at the Mexico City airport on Wednesday, January 6 before 5pm.**

If you would like the assistance of a travel agent to arrange your flight, you can contact Global Education's travel agent, Advantage Travel (contact information on page 4). As soon as you know your itinerary, send it by e-mail to the Office of Global Education ([global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu)).

In general, passengers on international flights need to be at the airport at least 3 hours before departure. Be sure to leave yourself plenty of time for potential delays due to increased security measures. You will need your passport to check in and when you land, so have it available.

**In case you miss your connection or your flight is delayed, make a note of the On-site Coordinator's contact information** and carry it in your wallet so that you can get in touch with him.

## **Clearing Immigration and Customs at Mexico City:**

Your luggage will be checked through to the Mexico City airport. Upon arrival you will go through an immigration check point and have your passport stamped.

After clearing immigration, you will proceed to the baggage claim area where the group will travel as a group to Querétaro.

## **Registering with the Authorities:**

You must register your presence in Mexico with the U.S. Embassy. This will enable you to receive e-mail updates on travel and security within Mexico from the US Embassy in Mexico City. Registration also makes it easier for the Embassy to contact you in an emergency and also enables you to replace a stolen passport more quickly.

The Embassy address is:

U.S. Embassy  
Paseo de la Reforma 305,  
Colonia Cuauhtémoc,  
Mexico City  
Tel: (from the U.S.) 011-52-55-5080-2000; (within Mexico City) 5-080-2000;  
(long distance within Mexico) 01-5-080-2000.  
e-mail: [ccs@usembassy.net.mx](mailto:ccs@usembassy.net.mx)

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## THE PROGRAM

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### **The City of Querétaro:**

Located 128 miles northwest of Mexico City in the fertile agricultural region known as the Bajío, Querétaro is 6,080 feet above sea level. For the most part, its climate is comfortable year round. Summer is the rainy season, with cool nights and hot days. Expect frequent and sometimes dramatic afternoon thunderstorms or showers.

The city, now about 1,600,000 people, was originally inhabited by the Chichimeca Indians before being established as a Spanish town in 1531 by Hernán Bocanegra. It was important in Mexico's early independence movement; in 1810, Querétaro's *Corregidora*, Josefa Ortiz De Domínguez, notified conspirators that their plans had been discovered. This prompted Father Miguel Hidalgo in the town of Dolores to call his people to rise up in arms (the famous "Grito de Dolores"), beginning the war that eventually led to Mexico's

independence. Important treaties have been signed in Querétaro, and it was here that Emperor Maximiliano, sent by France to rule over Mexico, met his death on the Cerro de las Campanas. In 1917, towards the end of the Mexican Revolution, the nation's constitution was written in Querétaro's Teatro de la República.

Beginning in the 1970's Querétaro's governor established a historic preservation district in the center of the city. Zoning legislation made possible the restoration of many square blocks of buildings dating from the 18th century. The system of *andadores* (pedestrian walkways), coupled with restricted traffic on some streets, has brought the heart of the old city back to life.

Querétaro can be reached by train and highway. Because it is economically stable, the city attracts new residents from all over the country. For this reason, it is hard to generalize about the type of culture you might expect; you will see a variety of influences from different regions. It is commonplace to observe that Querétaro is a very "Mexican" city, and it is equally common to hear native Queretanos complain about the invasion of *chilangos*, residents of Mexico City. Even though it has a colonial heritage, it is not a tourist town. It is, rather, a modern industrial city that has grown up (hastily) around a beautiful colonial town.

**The Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (UAQ):**

The UAQ is a comprehensive, modern, well-equipped university of approximately 17,000 students, although it has the feel of a much smaller school. A socioeconomic cross-section of Mexican students study at the UAQ, a public institution, whereas private universities tend to attract the upper middle-class of Mexican society.

Dickinson students participating in the program take classes in a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to anthropology, economics, business, sociology, literature, foreign languages, and natural sciences. All students will enroll in Latin American Studies 202, a course taught specifically for Dickinson students that focuses on Latin American and particularly Mexican culture. Additionally, all students take an obligatory Spanish grammar class.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

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**The Tentative 2010 Program Calendar (THESE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE):**

6 January 2010	Students depart the US and arrive in Mexico City by 5pm
7-8 January 2010	On-site orientation and move in with host families
11 January 2010	University courses begin
29 January 2010	Last day to send Course registration to Professor Enge
5-16, April 2010*	Holy Week/Spring vacation - no classes *(There is a field trip that all students must take with Professor Yolanda Correa. Professor Correa teaches the course on Mexican History and Culture.)
3 May 2010	Deadline to notify the Facultad de Lenguas y Letras if you will need transportation provided by UAQ back to the Mexico City airport on 19 June
28 May 2010	Last day of classes
31 May 2010	Final Exams begin
18 June 2010	Final exams end
19 June 2010	Students depart Mexico for the US

The UAQ academic calendar is available on-line at <http://www.uaq.mx/inf-gral/calendario/semestral.html>.

**\*Parental visits should not be scheduled while classes are in session.** During the first week of Easter vacation there are no university classes and students may plan private travel. This would be the appropriate time for parents or friends to visit. **Reminder:** the Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo trip occurs during the second week of spring vacation.

### **Academic culture:**

It will not take long for you to notice that the academic culture is not what you are used to. It is not uncommon for professors to arrive late for class or cancel a class without notice. Student attendance may be sporadic and there may be no one taking attendance. Sometimes a professor may not show up for a week, then return and continue the lectures. What should you do? First of all, don't enroll in a course if the professor is not there during the first week. Secondly, attend class. Be there. Do the work. Read. Do research. Adjust. Take responsibility for your own learning. Participate in class. Be respectful of the professor and the culture, remember you are a guest and you are there to learn. Observe the differences in perspective and seek to understand them.

### **Course Selection and Enrollment:**

Each student will enroll in four classes, two of which are required for all program participants. Each successfully completed course earns 1 credit. Each student must register for a full course load of four credit-bearing courses during the semester. All courses are taught in Spanish.

The **two required courses (1 credit each)** are taught by faculty of Lenguas y Letras:

- LAS 202, History and Culture of Mexico. Because this is a "Dickinson course," grades earned will be calculated in the Dickinson GPA. This course will fulfill the Dickinson writing intensive requirement.
- Spanish language and grammar course. Course placement is determined by your score on a placement exam taken when you arrive in Querétaro.

In addition, each student must enroll directly **in two regular UAQ courses** related to your major or your academic interests. During the first week of classes you will visit several possible classes and select two of them to complete for credit. You will be aided in your selection of classes by the on-site coordinator. The on-site coordinator will help you enroll in classes for which you have the linguistic and disciplinary prerequisites and he/she will report all registration requests to the Facultad de Lenguas y Letras.

When your course enrollment is settled, **no later than January 29**, each student must **e-mail a list of the courses for which you are registered to [enge@dickinson.edu](mailto:enge@dickinson.edu)**. Registration information will be compiled from these lists and forwarded to the Dickinson Registrar.

A popular folk dancing course and other non-credit-bearing cultural or non-academic courses are offered at UAQ for an extra fee. As with any courses that do not earn academic credit at UAQ, **the folk dancing course cannot be transferred to Dickinson for academic credit and will not count as one of the four courses you must take**. However, since the folk dancing course offers a worthwhile cultural experience, interested students are encouraged to enroll.

### **Credit Transfer Policy:**

- Dickinson students who have been granted permission to study abroad must take a **normal full load of classes** as defined by their program or host institution.
- Dickinson students enrolled in a Dickinson Program abroad may receive up to a maximum of 4.5 course credits for one semester.
- To take more than 4.5 credits per semester, a student must petition Brian Brubaker, Director of Study Abroad. In his absence, students may also address their petitions to Brian Whalen, Associate Provost and Executive Director of Global Education. **If a student registers for more than the maximum allowed without permission of the Office of Global Education, the course credit will not transfer.**
- Only **liberal arts classes** will qualify for transfer credit.
- Generally speaking, courses must have an equivalent at Dickinson. Exceptions include classes that focus on the culture and/or history of the country in which a student is studying.
- Transfer credit will not be awarded for coursework that duplicates what a student has already completed at Dickinson.

- Transfer credit is awarded only for classes in which a student earns a grade of “C” or better. However, *all* courses for which a student is registered will appear on the transcript, along with the corresponding grades.

The LAS 202 course, as stated above, is a “Dickinson course” and the letter grade earned will count towards your GPA. All other transferable courses taken at UAQ are recorded on the transcript with course titles and equivalent letter grades earned. UAQ course grades equivalent to a Dickinson “C” or better will receive credit, but will not count toward the GPA.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES:** Students who take formal instruction in physical education or play on an organized university team in Mexico and have written proof of successful completion of the program may receive credit from the physical education department on the Dickinson campus. Official standards regarding credit from the physical education activities abroad are as follows: 1) the activity is currently offered; 2) the student secures the approval of the Dickinson On-Campus Coordinator; 3) the student participates in an activity for a length of time equivalent to (or greater than) that of a similar activity at Dickinson (as a guideline, 20-22 hours of supervised instruction = 1 block); 4) the student chooses an activity which does not duplicate an physical education course already completed at Dickinson; and 5) the student's participation is documented by the instructor of the class or by the Dickinson director. Credit for self-paced activities will not be permitted.

Upon return to campus, the student should present to the chair of the Physical Education Department the appropriate documentation of participation. Alternatively, the On-campus Coordinator may verify to the department chair that the student has participated in a supervised, structured program of physical activity for which credit should be given. In either case, the department chair will notify the Registrar's Office of those persons who are to receive physical education credit.

### ***What to Do BEFORE Going Abroad***

Dickinson College does not formally pre-approve courses for transfer. However, students should discuss their study abroad plans with their academic advisors prior to leaving Carlisle. Students should talk with their advisors about what may or may not fulfill Dickinson transfer credit requirements, specifically which courses taken abroad may fulfill major, minor, or distribution requirements. In some cases, conversations with appropriate department chairs may also be helpful. Departments on campus may require extra work for some courses, especially for advanced-level credit. It is the student’s responsibility to inquire about extra work required. Global Education staff are available to answer general questions about transfer credit policies.

### ***What to Do WHILE Abroad***

Students should maintain e-mail contact with their academic advisors while abroad, especially during the first weeks of the semester when they are in the process of finalizing course schedules. To document coursework at cooperating institutions, students should keep a portfolio for each course, including a syllabus, reading list, completed projects, written work, examinations, journals, etc.

### ***What to Do AFTER RETURNING to Campus***

Upon return to the Carlisle campus, students must complete the Enrollment in Another Institution form. Seniors are required to submit this form prior to the course request period for their last semester. If the form is not in the Registrar’s Office at that time, the student will not be permitted to participate in course request. Please note that this form is required **only** when a student is seeking major, minor, or distribution credit for coursework completed at a cooperating university. The form is *not* required for Dickinson Center courses, or for courses at a cooperating university for which a student is seeking only general credit. After obtaining the required signatures, the student should bring the form directly to the Registrar’s Office.

**For non-Dickinson students:** The Registrar’s Office will automatically send an official transcript of work completed with grades and course titles to the home institution once grades have been posted. Transcripts

are usually sent to your institution later in the fall semester following your return. Know your home institution's policy on transferring credits beforehand, as you may have to get pre-approval. Your institution's policy will govern whether the credit will be counted toward the GPA. You should focus on your interests and credit needs before arriving at your program site. If you plan to take courses in a department other than your major, check the requirements with the respective department at your home institution before departure. However, please note that you may not know what the course descriptions are before the school year begins, so you may have to take care of this once you are abroad.

### **Academic/Cultural Excursions:**

In connection with the LAS 202 Mexican History and Culture course, academic excursions are arranged to major cultural sites such as Sierra Gorda, Zihuatanejo and *la playa* and Mexico City/Teotihuacan over the course of the semester. The excursions are led by the professor who teaches the Mexican History and Culture course. Bus transportation, accommodations and meals are provided. All program excursions involve experiential learning and attendance is obligatory. **Students' friends or family are not allowed to join these excursions.**

### **Accessing College Library Resources from Dickinson Global Library:**

If the libraries at your abroad site do not have the resources you need, or if you have trouble getting the assistance you need for your research projects, please remember that you can access all the resources and services from Dickinson College Library no matter where you are. All you need to do is to go to the Dickinson Global Library page

([http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/Global\\_Library/LibraryResourcePage.htm](http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/Global_Library/LibraryResourcePage.htm)).

You can access the page on the library website under "For Students," or "For Faculty," or "Doing Research."

From the Dickinson Global Library page, you will find detailed information on

- How to find journal articles through the online databases
- How to find books and have them sent to you
- Research resources available online such as subject guides and online reference works
- And most important of all, how to get in touch with a Dickinson College librarian via phone, email, and instant messaging and get the assistance you need.

The library liaison to all Global Education programs is Yunshan Ye. He can be reached at 717-245-1838 or [yey@dickinson.edu](mailto:yey@dickinson.edu).

## **HOST FAMILY ACCOMMODATIONS**

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### **Living Accommodations:**

Students will live with host families in Querétaro and will move into their new homes the day after arrival. Please read the section below on Getting Along With Your Host Family. Occasionally, a mismatch between host families and students occurs; such an event needs to be addressed as early as possible. The on-site coordinator will assist with any adjustments that may be needed with homestay placements. Please speak with her if you have questions about the adjustment process or if you have concerns about how to bring up an issue with your homestay family.

You will eat all of your meals with local Mexican families. It is customary in Mexico to eat a substantial breakfast and midday meal, followed by a very light supper in the evening. The evening meal is not the major meal of the day and is more like a snack; you will need to adjust to Mexican cultural habits in this regard. To modify a rule of thumb: "When in Mexico, eat as the Mexicans do!"

### **Getting Along with Your Host Family:**

Living with a host family overseas can be an intensely rewarding experience, but students need to be prepared for a period of challenging inter-cultural adjustment. Your host family has a different way of life and a different set of rules from what you are used to at home or on campus. Naturally, it will take you a while to feel 'at home' in this new environment. In the beginning, you may act like and be treated like a boarder. Whether you remain that way or whether you eventually integrate yourself into the life of the household will depend upon your initiative, adaptability, and acceptance of traditional habits and attitudes toward life in general. As you interact, you will notice differences. Some of these will be easy to accept and adjust to, while others may at first feel uncomfortable. Flexibility and openness to learning the family's ways of doing things will increase your success in learning about your new culture.

Although each host family is different, most host families generally expect to have an adult relationship with the students they house. They will respect your independence while remaining open to exchanging ideas and conversation. Mutual trust and open communication is essential for a successful relationship. There is no infallible recipe for the success of your home stay, but the tips below may help you to adjust more smoothly and quickly.

#### **In the beginning...tips for daily life:**

1. Do not hesitate to ask your host family questions or to start conversations with them. Remember, your host family is there to help you. By starting conversations, you are initiating an immediate rapport. Communication is the key to a successful relationship with your host family.
2. The first few weeks are very important in establishing a "base" with your host family. Therefore, try to avoid planning long trips the first few weekends. If you really want to travel, right away, day trips are a lot of fun and still leave you free time with your family. The key is to settle in before you start moving around.
3. Although you might feel awkward at first, it is very important to communicate openly with your host family. A problem that seems complicated for you to solve (the heat is not working correctly in your bedroom) may be very easy for your host family to fix (the radiator works differently than what you are used to and your family can show you how to use it). Your host family would surely prefer that you ask for their help rather than be unhappy in their home!
4. We suggest keeping your schedule as flexible as possible in order to take advantage of family activities. By joining your family when invited, you will get to know each other better while improving your language skills at the same time.
5. Be yourself with your family, and be polite. Remember, although you are living with them and would like to be a member of the family, you are still a guest in their home. Do not assume immediately that you are afforded certain privileges just because you live with them. When you take meals with your family, ask if you can help set the table, clean up, etc. Be sure to ask to watch TV and to use the family phone. If you do not want your host family to clean your room, tell them that you will clean it yourself and ask them for what you need (vacuum cleaner, dust cloths, etc.). Be sure to leave the bathroom clean after each use.
6. Be open-minded and flexible; there will be differences, so accept them. Adopt your family's patterns, such as keeping doors closed at all times and being careful not to waste hot water and electricity.

The following categories are frequent causes of friction between students and their host families:

**TELEPHONE:** You should ask permission and determine if there are any rules or restrictions before using the telephone. Generally, telephone use is more expensive overseas than in the U.S., and long, wide-ranging telephone calls are not the custom. Be aware that there may be a charge for local calls, not just for long distance. Most families have only one line and no call waiting. Therefore, be considerate, learn the family's expectations, and go by them. However, since Ladatel or Saludos phone cards and public phones are inexpensive and easy to access, they are an easy alternative. These cards can be purchased in the Centro.

If you receive permission to use the home telephone for incoming calls, you should discuss with your host family when it is appropriate for your family and friends to call. Inform your family and friends of these

times as well as the time difference between the U.S. and your location. Friends should be asked not to call during mealtimes. It may be necessary to use an international pay telephone for your long-distance calls. Other means of communication, such as Skype, can be more convenient. (please see the Communication Information section on page 28).

**ELECTRICITY/WATER:** The cost of electricity overseas is much higher than it is in the U.S. The people you are staying with will most likely be energy conscious and want to conserve energy because of a general belief in conservation. Be respectful of this in your behavior. Switch off lights and other electrical devices when you leave a room. If you come in late at night, do not leave the lights on in the corridor or hallway. Do not be impatient or annoyed when reminded about leaving lights on or about energy consumption in general. Open your curtains during the day to make use of the sun's rays.

Similarly, you may notice greater concern for water conservation as well. In most families, you may be allowed to shower (or bathe) every day, but you will soon notice that they may not do so, nor are they in the habit of taking extended showers. You should try to follow the example of those around you and remain flexible and understanding as you adjust. Do not let friends shower at your place unless you have been given permission first.

**VISITING HOURS:** Before inviting friends over, always ask permission from your host family and check for their plans and expectations. Consideration for others is always a good rule to follow. During the week, visitors should not remain past the appropriate end of dinner time, unless your host family has given you special permission. The people you are living with have to get up early and must consider their neighbors living close by or small children in the house or building. You can expect restrictions in the number of visitors you may have at one time. Moreover, you cannot assume you will be permitted to invite friends of the opposite sex. Be sure to discuss these things with your family first so that you understand what is expected. Do not invite guests to your host family's home without their permission when your host family is absent.

Another frequent source of tension is when friends or family members arrive on visits from the U.S. Your host family is not required to accept these visitors in their (or your) rooms. Permission to have someone stay overnight would normally be an exceptional occurrence, not generally or lightly given. Do not make the mistake of regarding your room as a hotel.

**KITCHEN PRIVILEGES:** Kitchen privileges are usually not included in the home stay agreement, even if you are eating meals with the family. You might want to wait awhile and observe family customs and practices in the kitchen before you ask permission to use it. In any case, you should not expect more than very limited use. If you are granted permission, be appreciative and remember the following useful hints:

- Restrict yourself to light cooking. If allowed to use the oven, make sure you know how it works and how to convert the temperature settings (in necessary).
- Cook at reasonable (what your family considers reasonable, of course) hours and always ask permission so that you do not interfere with the normal household cooking.
- All pans and cooking utensils should be washed and put back. Stove, oven, and other areas of the kitchen should be left spotlessly clean.
- Do not use household cooking supplies (e.g., sugar, butter, oil), unless you have first asked and received permission to do so.
- Turn off lights and appliances when you are done.

**LAUNDRY:** Here again, discuss with your family what the arrangement is. While access to a washing machine is provided, you should not expect your Mexican family to do your laundry unless they offer. It is rare for a Mexican home to have a drying machine. Most laundry is line dried. The water is also different in Mexico. Be prepared to have some clothing not look as nice when you take it home. Items get worn out from the laundry, so don't bring valuable clothing.

**PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:** As stated on page 13 in the Liability Insurance for Belongings section, the program does not cover personal liability. So, when using appliances in your home stay, take care. Accidents happen and you will be held personally responsible for damage whether negligence was a factor or not.

**CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS:** Be aware of contractual arrangements between the program and your host family. You should find out at what time meals are served, whether you are responsible for some meals on your own, and what to do if you choose or are forced to miss one. Be sure to let your family know when you cannot be there or that you might be late for a meal. Find out as well about your family's schedule for changing/washing bed linens and towels.

**FINAL REMARKS:** This section reviews only some aspects of life with a host family, so be aware that this new experience will require adjustment in many ways. One could say that adjustment is the primary vehicle of cross-cultural learning. The homestay experience will reward you richly if you remain flexible, keep an open mind, and maintain a sense of humor. Your family will be ready to help you, but both sides must share in making your stay a success, and both must realize that it takes time to establish a routine and achieve integration.

Open communication with your host family is key to a successful stay in Mexico. While you should take care not to insult your family, you should not be afraid to express and discuss confusion, doubts, or questions with them. PLEASE LET THE ON-SITE COORDINATOR KNOW if you're having serious problems or if you feel the terms of the arrangement are not being fulfilled. She can serve as a mediator between you and your host family and can help open lines of communication. You may want to also talk to other students on the program to see if any problems or conflicts you are having are normal or not. If problems cannot be resolved, a move to another home can be arranged.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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### **Allowance:**

Students receive an allowance to help defray some of the cost of public transportation to and from the University and for photocopying materials required for classes. The allowance is not intended to cover personal travel, either within or away from Querétaro. The first half of the allowance will be granted as a credit on your student account at Dickinson. The second half will be distributed by the on-campus coordinator at about the half-way point of the semester in late March.

### **ATM:**

Most ATM cards from U.S. banks can be used in Querétaro; you should inquire at your bank to be sure that your card will allow withdrawals abroad. Usually an ATM card will give the best exchange rate, although most will charge you a transaction fee. The ATM card must access a checking account (not a savings account) and must be in your name. Major credit cards are accepted in some hotels, shops, and restaurants. The best exchange rate can be found in local banks like Bancomer or Bannamex.

Be cautious when using ATM cards and machines in Mexico. ATM machines should be used only during the business day at large protected facilities (preferably inside commercial establishments, rather than at a glass-enclosed, highly visible ATM machine on streets).

### **Travelers Checks:**

Although it is easy to find an ATM in Querétaro, it is best not to rely on them exclusively. Therefore, it is a good idea to have some money in traveler's checks. Always sign the first signature line on traveler's checks as soon as you buy them. Otherwise, they can be signed and cashed by anyone. In order to cash them, you will usually need to present your passport at the bank.

### **Credit Cards:**

Many major credit cards (e.g. Visa and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, depending upon the country. However, it has been noted by past participants that credit cards are sometimes not accepted in restaurants, shops, and hotels, therefore, make sure you always have cash with you. When you use a credit card it should be in your name and you should verify your credit limit before you depart the US.

### **Check on Fees with Bank and Credit Card Companies:**

Before leaving the U.S., check with your local bank and credit card companies about fees for using your card overseas. Many banks and credit card issuers impose additional charges on foreign transactions; others such as Capitol One (at least at print time) do not. If the fees are hefty, consider withdrawing larger amounts of cash from the ATM and taking only what you need and keeping the rest in a safe place. Only use credit cards with high fees for big purchases or in emergencies.

You should notify your bank and credit card companies that you are going abroad for an extended period of time, and be sure to inform them as to which countries you intend on traveling. Otherwise, when they see charges on your card from a foreign country, they may assume that your card has been stolen and suspend your account. Keep a separate record of your credit card numbers and phone numbers of the companies so you can report theft or loss of your card quickly.

### **Spending Money:**

Students sometimes ask how much spending money they should plan to have during their time abroad. This amount depends, of course, on the lifestyle you adopt and how much you plan to travel. In general, you should plan on a **minimum** of a \$1,500 for the semester. Many students do it for less. Please consult the Student Budget Sheet in Appendix II for more information.

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## **COMMUNICATION INFORMATION**

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Students sometimes tell family/friends that they will phone home the minute they arrive. However, plans often go awry because of plane or train delays, unavailability of an international phone line, etc. To save parents and loved ones worry, we suggest an agreement to call at the earliest convenient time, rather than promising to call at once.

E-mail and cell phones allow students to keep in closer touch with family and friends back home than ever before. As well as new technologies such as Skype, which is mentioned on the following page. There is a good side to this, but it is possible to overdo it so that you focus too much on home to the detriment of your abroad experience. Consider writing frequent letters, postcards or a blog instead. These can be reread and kept as a record of your time abroad.

### **Mail:**

All correspondence between you and family/friends should be sent via air mail in both directions. Pre-stamped aérograms or airmail stationery are cheaper than regular letters; ask at the post office for details. Mail service in Mexico is irregular; on average, it takes about 3 weeks for regular mail to arrive. Any important mail, especially correspondence with deadlines, should be sent via Federal Express, UPS, or another carrier. All of your mail should be sent to you at your home stay address. Packages sent via regular mail as well as FedEx and UPS deliveries, however, will have to be picked up at their mail service's office or you may need to pay a fee to accept the package.

### **Telephone:**

The cheapest way to call home from Mexico is to use public phones marked "Ladatel" or "Saludos" calling cards. To use these phones a phone card must be purchased. Cards are sold at nearly any **farmacia** or store in denominations of 30-pesos, 50-pesos and 100-pesos (one peso = one minute). One option you may want to consider is having your parents arrange for a low cost international calling service and arrange for a time for your parents to call you. For more information about using a phone if you are living with a host family, please see the "Telephone" section on page 24.

### Cell Phones:

Many students purchase cell phones while in Mexico. This is an excellent way to communicate with other students on the program, to be accessible to family and friends at home, and to be reachable in the event of an emergency. Some calling plans allow incoming calls to be free. It may, however, be very expensive to make international calls from your cell phone. Students can check with their current cell phone provider to see if their phone has international calling capabilities. If so, you will have to find out the procedures for using your cell phone abroad. More than likely, you will purchase pre-paid cell phone minutes that do not require subscribing to an overseas cell phone service.

### Skype:

One of the most inexpensive ways to make international phone calls is through the internet. Skype is one of the most common programs for this type of phone service. All that is required is a computer with an internet connection and a headset or external microphone. Skype offers several options:

- 1) **Skype to Skype:** Have your family and friends download and register with Skype. Once you have both registered and have a headset or external microphone, you can talk for FREE!
- 2) **Skype Out:** A low cost way to make calls at a local rate to people that have traditional land lines or mobile phones.
- 3) **Skype In:** For a small fee, you can receive a local U.S. phone number that your friends can call. When someone calls, you will receive the phone call on your computer where you can communicate with your friend using a headset or an external microphone. This option also has free voicemail.

For more information, visit the website at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). Please note that this might not be appropriate for all programs due to privacy or access issues.

### Computers and Internet Access:

You will have access to computer facilities with internet access at the University. There is no guarantee that there will be internet access in your homestay, but students who have laptop computers will find them useful for word-processing, storing photos, playing music, etc. We recommend buying insurance for laptop computers. In any case, you are encouraged to limit your Internet use to create a healthy balance between staying in touch with your friends and family in the U.S. and taking advantage of the time you spend.

### E-mail:

At UAQ you will be given a university computer account that includes 150 hours of Internet access, with which can access Gateway from the Dickinson web site. Cybercafés are available in Querétaro; prices vary but should average 10-15 pesos per hour. Keep in mind that computer access in Mexico will not be the same as it is in the U.S.

Remember that official communications from Dickinson College (for example, instructions from the Registrar, Campus Life, or the Office of Global Education) will be sent to your Dickinson e-mail account. If you ordinarily use another e-mail account, remember to check your Dickinson account regularly for messages or have your Dickinson account forwarded your personal e-mail account. Also, be sure to clear your Dickinson Inbox regularly so that messages can reach you. Make sure you also empty your Sent and Deleted messages box regularly.

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## TRAVELING WHILE ABROAD

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### Vacation Travel:

If you decide to travel away from Querétaro, it is recommended that you do not go alone but **travel with at least one other person**. Travel by bus in Mexico is fairly safe and relatively inexpensive; **opt to go first class**. Primera Plus buses are the cheapest, easiest, and safest way to travel according to former students. During the two week spring vacation there will be no classes. If you wish to stay at home during the first week and spend time with your Mexican family, room and board will continue through the spring vacation period. The LAS 202 excursion to Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo usually occurs during the second week.

Since you are free during the first week of vacation to receive visitors from the States, you may want to plan an excursion away from Querétaro. Remember that you are responsible for all expenses involved in personal travel, so plan ahead financially. **There will be no reimbursement for room and board while you are not at home with your Mexican family.**

**Travel Guides:**

There are many travel guides that are geared towards the student traveler, especially Let's Go or Lonely Planet. To help save money, check [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.half.com](http://www.half.com) for used travel books.

**Hostels:**

You can save money and meet other young travelers by staying in youth hostels. One popular hostel network is the Youth Hostel Federation, which has a network of hostels all over the world. You can purchase a membership card to the Youth Hostel Federation and receive discounts on hostel accommodations and other travel offers. For more information, you can go to <http://hihostels.com/>. Other websites that offers reviews of hostels throughout the world are [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com) and [www.hostelbookers.com](http://www.hostelbookers.com).

**International Student Identity Card (ISIC):**

The ISIC card, or International Student Identity Card, can be used internationally to identify oneself as a student, thus qualifying in many countries for discounts on airfare, museums, theaters, and the like. Other benefits include a Help Line for emergency assistance, as well as supplemental hospital and accident insurance. ISIC cards can be purchased on line at [www.istc.org/sisp/](http://www.istc.org/sisp/). Students will also be given a University ID card that provides these types of discounts.

**Safety while Traveling:**

Whenever you travel, take care of your belongings and safeguard your credit cards, cell phone, and cash at all times. One of the safer places to carry your passport and money is in a breast pouch tied at your neck or in a money belt strapped at the waist, under your shirt. A word to the wise: keep a small amount of money easily accessible so you do not have to dig into your hidden money in public.

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILE ABROAD

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### Health Care

There is a Health Center on the UAQ campus that will be available to you with your University student ID. There are also two good hospitals in Querétaro. If you must visit a doctor or a hospital while in Querétaro, be prepared to pay cash up front. You will need to ask for a receipt, which you can present to your insurer back home for reimbursement.

If you have ever suffered from diarrhea, mild or otherwise, you know just how unpleasant it can be. It is not uncommon to come down with a mild case when you first arrive in Mexico, due to stress, fatigue, and changes in the food, schedule and altitude. With proper rest and a more regular schedule, symptoms will usually subside after just one or two days. One way to avoid coming down with “Montezuma’s Revenge” is to practice common sense and be aware of what you consume. Avoid non-bottled water and ice in drinks. Your host family will probably use bottled water for everything, including cooking and in ice cubes. Almost all restaurants will give you purified water or bottled water. Also, avoid strawberries and lettuce. Do not eat food from street vendors.

Along with any other treatment for diarrhea (Pepto-Bismol, Immodium, or other over-the-counter remedies), replacement of lost fluids and salts is most important. Keep dairy products, fat, alcohol, and spicy/rich foods out of your diet until you are better.

### **AIDS and STDs Overseas:**

You are at the same risk for AIDS and STDs while abroad as you would be at home since your risk of infection depends on your behavior. Therefore, if you are sexually active, use good judgment and common sense. It is also highly recommended that you carry a personal supply of condoms and birth control, especially if traveling to underdeveloped regions of the world.

### **H1N1 Virus While Overseas:**

On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that a global pandemic of H1N1 influenza (sometimes labeled “swine flu”) was underway, and it raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6, its highest level. This action was a reflection of the spread of the new H1N1 virus across the globe, not of the severity of illness caused by the virus.

Throughout the past several months, the H1N1 virus has continued to spread, particularly in the southern hemisphere, where the winter season has provided an ideal host environment for influenza. As Dickinson’s new academic year approaches, as well as the northern hemisphere’s winter season, the Office of Global Education is monitoring the situation surrounding the H1N1 virus and working with on-site staff abroad to be prepared for any possible impact influenza may have on individual programs.

The Office of Global Education will work with our partner institutions, program staff, and colleagues to operate our programs with the health and safety of our students continuing to be our main priority. Academic mission and standards as well as host country laws and regulations will be important and additional considerations if we need to make programmatic alternations due to the H1N1 virus during the coming year. Due to evolving policies and guidelines of many countries and organizations around the world, it is not possible for the College to develop one response to meet the situations of students and programs worldwide. However, the Office of Global Education will monitor local situations through regular contact with our on-site coordinator(s), university and local officials, as well as a host of credible sources (CDC, WHO, etc).

The primary means of reducing the spread of the H1N1 virus is to avoid becoming infected by using good hygiene, identifying the illness as early as possible and isolating ill people from those who are not ill. Once H1N1 vaccines are available, vaccination will become a part of the prevention plan as well. Students studying abroad are reminded to follow the same, sensible precautions as students in Carlisle. Among these recommendations are:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Rub gel into hands until dry.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Use tissues one time only.
- Put used tissues in a wastebasket immediately after use.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay at least six feet away from anyone you suspect is sick.
- Do not shake hands or kiss others as a greeting or farewell and take efforts to limit your physical proximity and contact with others.
- Avoid crowded and closed-in public places with lots of other people.
- Follow the explicit recommendations of the Program Resident Director and administrators at the partner institution, which may include restrictions on personal travel outside of the study abroad program’s host city.
- Eat a balanced diet and drink lots of water.
- Exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of rest.

If you would like additional information regarding the H1N1 virus, The World Health Organization (WHO), US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and US Department of State are excellent sources. Please consult the following websites:

- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_4493.htm](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4493.htm)

The Office of Global Education will share information with students and their parents through direct email contact as well as through information posted here. As the fall semester approaches, we will post any relevant host country -specific information below.

## Safety and Emergency Procedures

### **Overview of Emergency Precautions:**

The Office of Global Educations has always taken seriously our students' safety while studying abroad. In the wake of the September 11 events, safety concerns are even more urgent. With the continuing threat of terrorism around the world, we are obviously concerned about the global security situation and continue to monitor it, and we encourage students and parents to do likewise.

We depend on a variety of sources to assess situations overseas, including the news, our own Resident Directors, and other on-site contacts abroad, as well as professional colleagues and publications. One of the most important sources is the U.S. State Department. Please review the Department of State web site (see next section), as well as any other information you may find useful.

All past decisions about canceling or closing programs have been informed by Department of State or World Health Organization recommendations. Only one program, our partner program with Hebrew University, is suspended as of this writing.

We consider it essential that students take responsibility for their own safety, and we expect their cooperation. For example, students are asked to share flight itineraries with our office; our Resident Directors ask students to inform them of any travel plans away from the site. We share DOS warnings and announcements with students and remind them frequently to review common sense safety and security measures, such as those printed below in this section. Each student is given a key chain with emergency phone numbers and instructions and is asked to carry it at all times. In a serious emergency, administrative staff of the Office of Global Education can be accessed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

Dickinson Centers and partner institutions are in regular contact with the Office of Global Education in Carlisle, and contact information is updated routinely for students overseas, on-site staff, partner institutions, and local emergency officials at our program sites, as well as U.S. Consulates and Embassies. Our staff abroad remains in contact with local university and civic officials on an ongoing basis.

Dickinson College has developed emergency plans that can be implemented in the event of a crisis directly affecting any of our programs abroad. In the unlikely event that it became necessary to return students to the United States, every effort would be made to offer alternative means for students to complete their academic program. For important information about Program Cancellation, see page 5, and the refund policy in Appendix VII.

Dickinson College is concerned about the health and safety of its students traveling abroad. We review our approach frequently and make every effort to anticipate health and safety issues. This said, it remains true that many of the risks in traveling abroad cannot be reasonably anticipated or prevented.

## **Department of State Announcements:**

Department of State travel information and publications are available on the Web at <http://travel.state.gov>. Every student going abroad is responsible for becoming familiar with the Department of State web site and the information available there. At this time, there is a travel alert for Mexico, which can be found in Appendix IX.

- **Before leaving, read the Consular Information Sheet for your host country.**
- For your safety, do the same while abroad for all countries you visit.
- Current Travel Warnings and Public Announcements are accessible through the State Department web site.
- The DOS home page links to their Travel Safety Information for Students page, which has good advice and many links, including the fact sheet Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad.

The Office of Global Education occasionally sends students Department of State announcements that are relevant to their host country. These announcements are not to alarm students (unless warranted), but instead to inform them of current situations in their country or surrounding countries that they may possibly travel to.

(U.S. travelers may hear recorded information by calling the Department of State in Washington, DC at 202-647-5225 from a touchtone phone.)

## **Key Chains for Emergencies:**

Lightweight key chains are distributed to all students participating in an off-campus program.

Students are asked to attach the key ring to the key(s) that they carry with them at all times. On one side of the tag is the Dickinson College 24-hour Hot Line number (001 717-245-1111). (The digits 001 are the International Country Code for the United States.) On the reverse side is the phone number of the Office of Global Education (001 717-245-1341). A Program Center number or other emergency number can be entered in the blank space. For obvious security reasons, the overseas home address or phone number should NOT be entered. The emergency numbers on the key chain make the following easier:

- calling for help at any time in a serious emergency
- contacting the Office of Global Education during office hours with matters of concern
- identifying “who he/she belongs to” if injured seriously while not carrying identification.

Obviously, the first step in an emergency is to react to the emergency itself, i.e., go to the hospital, call the police, contact the Program Director or other on-site contact, etc.

Any student abroad, whether a Dickinson student or a guest student in a Dickinson program, may call the 24-hour Dickinson College Public Safety number collect in a serious emergency and ask for assistance. The student should identify himself/herself and the program, and give a brief description of the emergency and a call-back number. The operator will locate the proper Office of Global Education staff member, who will then return the call.

## **Parents and the Public Safety number:**

Parents, too, may use the 24-hour Dickinson Public Safety number if they need assistance in contacting their son or daughter after hours in a serious emergency, or if their son or daughter has contacted them because of such an emergency. The procedure would be the same as above.

## **Requests for Contact Information and Itineraries:**

To have emergency contact information at our fingertips, we prepare emergency books for each program. Parents' work and cell phone numbers and email addresses are extremely useful, should we need to contact

parents quickly. We therefore ask you to cooperate with our requests for parental contact information as well as your host-country mailing address and phone numbers.

We also need to know student flight itineraries, therefore, please share your itinerary with us by sending it to [global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu).

## Safe Behavior Abroad

Travel abroad is always an adventure for students. A common sense approach to the risks involved goes a long way toward assuring safe travel and pleasant memories. We offer the following suggestions for your own safety:

- When you travel during vacations, give a copy of your itinerary to your Program Director. Even if your plans are vague, leave whatever information you can, such as the names of travelers, expected destinations, lodging, phone numbers, and if available, mode of travel and dates of departure and return.
- Check State Department advisories on the web for all countries you will be traveling through to be prepared for any special conditions or dangers, visa requirements, etc.
- Travel with at least one other person.
- Carry passport, travelers checks, money, and other important papers in a pouch around your neck or waist under your clothing.
- Avoid travel in large, predominantly American groups. It is easier to meet local people. It is also easier to organize trips and sightseeing in smaller gatherings. It's also safer.
- Always carry some local currency. Keep the equivalent of at least \$50 cash in reserve while traveling.
- DO NOT HITCHHIKE. Travel by bus, train, local transportation, or car.
- Don't leave money, tickets, your passport, or other valuables in a hotel room while you are out. Take them to the front desk and ask them to be locked in a safe.
- Keep a low profile in demeanor and dress. It is wise to adapt to local dress codes; avoid clothes and behaviors that call attention to yourself as a foreigner who doesn't know the culture.
- Leave expensive jewelry at home. It's best to wear little or none.
- Every year backpacks are stolen from students who set them down at their feet or sling them over the back of the chair in a café. Be careful with your belongings because replacing your passport, credit cards, keys, etc., is quite a hassle.
- Be polite, low-key, and sensitive to local customs; always observe signs and regulations in public places.
- Speak the local language wherever possible.
- Student guidebooks such as Let's Go or Lonely Planet are generally a good source of information.

### In Troubled Times...

Avoid the following:

- controversial discussions/situations in public places such as pubs
- street gatherings, demonstrations, picketing, etc.
- dangerous areas, shortcuts, narrow alleys, or poorly lit streets
- walking around in a large group speaking English
- heated sports matches and public events characterized by crowd excitement.

In times of heightened political, religious, or ethnic tensions, be particularly careful in:

- identifiable American institutions such as Embassies, American Express, McDonald's, Hard Rock Cafés, discotheques, lobbies of American chain hotels, and other places such as bars and restaurants identified with Americans or where Americans usually gather
- military and diplomatic installations; war memorials
- highly visible and crowded churches, mosques and synagogues
- train stations and airports; do not hang around ticket offices or airline counters--go quickly to your train or the lounges beyond the passport controls.

Some advice concerning terrorism:

Be especially careful to help maintain security both at your study site and while traveling. Because terrorist actions are usually preceded by a surveillance period, the U.S. State Department asks all American citizens "to be alert to anyone who might appear to be following them, or anyone whom they notice in the same place repeatedly, or anything unusual near their vehicles, workplaces, or locations frequented by Americans. Any unusual activity of this sort should be reported to local police."

Remember that terrorist attacks are usually planned months in advance. They often involve innocent accomplices. Students in foreign countries are considered easy to recruit. Be cautious when you meet new people. Do not give your address, your telephone number, or contact info for your study site.

Further recommendations when traveling:

- Do not accept any package, parcel, or suitcase from anyone asking you to carry, look after or store items for them.
- Do not borrow suitcases; make sure that no one has put anything in your luggage. A few years ago, a bomb found at Heathrow Airport in England had been planted in the bag of a young woman by her boyfriend whom she had known for over a year.
- Never drive a car for someone else, especially across national borders.
- Remain alert in public places; look around; get away from any package or bag which appears abandoned, and notify the employees or local police.
- Do not leave your own bags unattended, not only because they may be stolen, but also because the police may consider them dangerous and confiscate or destroy them.

### **Health and Safety information resource online:**

Check out the Student Study Abroad Safety Handbook at <http://www.studentsabroad.com/>.

This is a resource intended for students' and parents' direct use. It offers exhaustive checklists and resources covering all kinds of topics related to safety abroad.

### **Personal Safety in Mexico:**

While Querétaro is a relatively safe city, crime in Mexico continues at high levels, especially in Mexico City. Metropolitan areas other than the capital have lower but still serious levels of crime. The most frequently reported crimes involve taxi robberies, armed robbery, pick-pocketing and purse snatching.

Be alert to new surroundings. In large cities, take the same precautions against assault, robbery, or pickpockets that you would take in any large U.S. city. Be vigilant in bus and train stations and on public transport. You should not hitchhike, accept rides from, or offer rides to strangers. You should not hike alone in backcountry areas, or walk alone on lightly frequented beaches, ruins or trails. All bus travel should be done during daylight and on first-class.

While in Mexico you are subject to Mexican laws and to prosecution under the Mexican judicial system. Sentences for possession of drugs in Mexico can be as long as 25 years, plus fines. Persons charged with drug offenses can be detained for up to one year before a verdict is reached. The Mexican list of controlled medication differs from the U.S. list; possession of excessive amounts of some controlled medications can result in arrest if officials suspect abuse. It is against the law to be drunk in public in Mexico.

For information about safety precautions and warnings, see Tips for Travelers to Mexico on the web at <http://www.travel.state.gov/mexico.html>.

If you have an emergency while traveling, contact the on-site coordinator for advice. If she is unavailable, you should also not hesitate to contact on-site coordinator for assistance. In a medical emergency, be prepared to pay in cash and submit receipts to your insurer for reimbursement later. In case of the loss or theft of your passport, immediately contact the on-site coordinator, the local police, and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate (see contact details on page 4).

### **Family Emergencies:**

Since you will be far away from home for an extended period of time, it is good to discuss with your family what to do in the case of a family emergency while you are overseas. This should include what you would do if a family member becomes ill or dies. It is important to consider how your family will respond if you are involved in an accident or suffer from a severe illness while abroad. We advise one or both parents to obtain

a current passport in case of emergency. This should be done before you depart the U.S.

### **Final Thoughts:**

Observing these mentioned precautions will be reassuring to you and to your parents, relatives, and friends at home. However, being overly concerned with safety should not interfere with the enjoyment of life and study in another country.

## **CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Being Informed about the Host Country and World Affairs**

What do you know about your host country?

1. Can you name the capital city and the head of state?
2. Can you name the major political parties and what they stand for?
3. How is the government organized in your host country as compared to the U.S.?
4. Name five large cities, identify their location and a feature they are famous for.
5. What are the key historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century in your host country?
6. What are the major religions in your host country and what role do they play?
7. Who are the major literary and/or cultural figures of the last two centuries?
8. What is the state of the economy? What are its problems, successes, and how is it organized?
9. Can you identify on a map the major rivers, mountain ranges, and other significant geographical features?
10. Can you identify on a map the states, provinces, or other political subdivisions of the country?
11. How is the educational system organized and funded?
12. What is the predominant view in your host country regarding current U.S. foreign policy?

Without researching the answers, most of us would do poorly on this little quiz. However, most local people at your study abroad destinations could probably answer most of these questions about U.S. Think about it!

Before you leave, do some serious research to educate yourself about your host country. Travel guidebooks and encyclopedias offer a respectable starting point. Read books, magazine articles, and newspapers about host country history, literature, geography, cuisine, etc. Foreign films are also a good resource. Take the initiative and get acquainted with international students at Dickinson's campus before going abroad.

No matter where you go, you will be asked hard questions about U.S. foreign policy. It is crucial that you have an understanding of what is going on internationally. Read newspapers and magazines that cover international affairs in depth. Include foreign news sources to expose yourself to other perspectives and a different set of facts abroad. The point is that you do not want to arrive abroad poorly informed or be caught off-guard by an encounter with viewpoints sharply different from your own. You especially need to be knowledgeable about the situation in Iraq and the Middle East, and how your host country and the United States stand in relation to those areas. People will have strong opinions and want to engage you in dialogue. Prepare for these situations and recognize their value as learning opportunities.

### **New York Times e-delivery:**

The New York Times runs an email service that provides daily delivery of the International section of the New York Times to your email box! You receive a brief overview of the article and a link that takes you to the full article.

To subscribe to the service, go to <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

Down the left side of the page, there is a MEMBER CENTER, where E-Mail Preferences are listed. You have to "sign-up" with the NYT, which is free. Once you sign up, you can click on a box that says "International" and you will receive an email with headlines from the NYT every day.

Now is the time to prepare for your study abroad learning experience. We urge you to engage in learning about the world now!

### **Adjusting to Mexican Culture:**

You are a guest in a foreign country. Courtesy and thoughtfulness go a long way; being critical is resented. Being overly judgmental is a likely indicator that you expect everything to be the way it is back home. On the other hand, you do not have to “do as the Romans do” if something goes against your personal ethics or sense of propriety.

Mexicans, like many other Latin Americans and people from Mediterranean countries, are generally much more animated in their speech than U.S. citizens and northern Europeans. You’ll find your personal space to be greatly reduced. Touching, a hand on the shoulder or an embrace is common in conversations and greetings, and the most common greeting is the kiss on the cheek. Unless blatant, there is probably no impropriety intended.

**TIME:** The favorite phrase of a stereotypical Latin American is “mañana,” an idea that reflects a different attitude toward time. Many Mexicans don’t focus on time the way people in the U.S. do, and this difference in time perception is one of the most difficult cultural challenges for an U.S. citizen. We tend to view lateness as a sign of irresponsibility or rudeness. This isn’t the case in Mexico, so keep in mind that people have a different relationship to schedules and time. Along with “mañana,” another Mexican favorite is “ahorita.” Literally translated, this means “right now.” However, it can signify anything from “right away” to “hours later.” Someone may say “Regreso ahorita” and, to your surprise, you do not see them until the next day. Don’t be offended if someone is late (by the U.S. definition) or maybe doesn’t show up at all. Just accept it as being different and try to adapt to it.

### **Racial/Gender Issues:**

**RACIAL ISSUES:** Mexican society is quite varied and very interesting. Nearly all Mexicans are multi-racial with varying proportions of Spanish and Indian blood, meaning that divisive racism is not a prominent feature of Mexican culture. Blonde Americans whose skin is very fair will stand out. Those whose skin is distinctly black will stand out even more, since people of African descent are quite uncommon in Mexico.

**GENDER ISSUES:** Young (foreign) women may be the object of unwanted attention, usually in the form of propositions or catcalls, from Mexican males. The best response to verbal harassment is not to respond at all; any replies may be misinterpreted. If you ever feel like you are being followed, go into a store or other populated areas.

### **Suggested Reading/Web Sites:**

#### ***BOOKS:***

Understanding Cultural Differences, by Edward T. and Mildred Reed Hall (Intercultural Press, 1990)

Women Travel and More Women Travel, edited by Miranda Davies and Natania Janasz (The Rough Guides, 1990; 1992)

50 Things You Must Know Before You Travel to Mexico, by James Truett (Lulu.com, 2006)

Whereabouts: Notes on Being a Foreigner, by Alistair Reid (White Pines Press, 1990)

#### ***WEB SITES:***

City of Queretaro: <http://www.intelnet.com.mx/queretaro/index.html>

Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro: <http://www.uaq.mx> or for English readers:

<http://www.uaq.mx/ingles>

Mexico Travel Guides: <http://www.go2mexico.com>, <http://www.mexico-travel.com/>,

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

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### **Stranger in a Strange Land...**

Students head out into the global village, armed with sensible shoes, sharpened pencils, and bright hopes. They arrive at their destination, settle in, and head out again to discover local charms. They buy a Tube pass. Eat borscht or sushi. All goes well ... a few minor complications ... that begin to pile up ... until suddenly CULTURE SHOCK strikes! and the notion of “Home” gains an unprecedented, intense appeal.

Some form of this experience awaits almost everyone who goes abroad for the first time (and also for the second and every other time to follow). Culture shock is a natural phenomenon, the frustrating, but temporary first step toward the profound personal growth and broadening of horizons that is a central reason for studying abroad. A great deal depends on how you respond to it.

The two articles reprinted in this section are intended to help you navigate the experience of cultural adjustment you will soon face. If you are studying in a non-English speaking country, be sure to read the story of the woman who overcame her fear of using her clumsy beginners’ Russian.

# CULTURE SHOCK

## What is it?

Culture shock is the mental, physical and emotional adjustment to living in a new environment. It is the coming to terms with different ways of approaching everyday living—everything from fundamental philosophical assumptions (one's worldview) to daily chores.

Anyone living in a new environment long enough cannot ignore the differences. They become frustrating, and possibly infuriating, until recognizable patterns emerge and an understanding of why things are done differently develops.

Culture shock can be charted on a U-shaped curve that encompasses five separate phases: fun, fright, flight, fight and fun. When you first arrive in Britain, everything is wonderful. You're excited that you've arrived, finally seeing firsthand all those places that previously were just one-dimensional pictures. This is the 'fun' stage.

After a while, all those wonderful, cute customs become aggravating. There is no point to them. You think your own culture's way are much better, more efficient, more sensible. While British people seem friendly, at first, it's just superficial warmth, not a real interest in establishing a friendship. You begin to miss your family and friends. This is the 'fright' stage.

Then it gets worse. You're really homesick. You can't find anything good about the UK. Everything stinks. You're convinced that nothing beats your home country, and you remember how good you had it at home. You may even come to believe that all your problems will go away if you can just pack up and go home. This is the 'flight' stage. It's serious but usually temporary.

You give yourself a pep talk and decide to stick it out awhile longer. This experience deserves a fair chance. You become a bit more active in the clubs you joined earlier. You make more of an effort to get to know the people on your dorm floor. You decide to be less furious with those stupid policies (like post offices and stores that close early). Now you're into the 'fight' stage.

Know what? You begin to like the people on your residence hall floor. In fact, those acquaintances are more like friends. They tell you why those stupid policies are the way they are. In fact, those policies make sense and don't seem too stupid. You're no longer inconvenienced by them and have trouble understanding why they bothered you so much. You suddenly realize you like it there and want to stay forever. You've arrived at the fifth and final stage -- and have made it through the emotional roller coaster ride of culture shock.

## Possible Symptoms of Culture Shock

Sometimes people don't realize when they're suffering from culture shock. This confusion can be

the result of looking at several symptoms as isolated problems rather than as related components of a single affliction. Some signs which you may notice that could indicate culture shock are:

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal (spending too much time in your room, only seeing other U.S. students, avoiding your host family)
- Negative feelings and stereotyping of nationals
- Inability to concentrate
- Excessive sleep or insomnia
- Compulsive eating or drinking
- Lack of appetite
- Irritability
- Crying uncontrollably or outbursts of anger
- Physical ailments, such as frequent headaches or stomachaches

## Dealing with Culture Shock

There are ways to prepare for, and thereby lessen the extremes of, culture shock.

First, know that you will experience some degree of culture shock (even if you don't believe it now). Everyone does. Carefully read the process outlined so that you'll recognize the symptoms and feelings. Most importantly, understand that those frustrating feelings will pass.

Second, expect things to be different. Some differences will be quite

obvious, others less so. You're probably prepared for the major cultural differences -- religious and socio-economic differences. It's the apparently trivial differences that will become the most grating. Try not to allow yourself to blow them out of proportion.

Third, don't label differences as "good" or "bad." Because the American way is the predominant (if not the only) way you know, you will inevitably compare everything there with the ways and approaches you know in this country. Realize that you are not looking objectively at your new culture. Rather, you're seeing (and judging) it from the American perspective. Instead of judging what you see as better or worse than what you know in America, try to focus on the differences and ask why they exist.

Fourth, maintain the ability to laugh at your mistakes. It will take some time to adapt to the point you can maneuver without making cultural missteps. After all, it took quite a bit of training by your parents and effort on your part to be comfortable in your own culture! Finally, you don't have to "do as the Romans do" and accept all the differences. You'll like some of the British ways and incorporate them into your daily routine. Other ways won't fit your values or outlook, and you'll decide that they're not appropriate for you. You are free to make choices, and doing so is perfectly acceptable.

#### Taking the Sting Out

Culture shock occurs because, unconsciously, we expect everyone to be like us. Inevitably, something will occur in a new culture that will not fit your frame of reference

and therefore won't be fully comprehended. This sort of ambiguity is threatening and frequently causes fear, anger, repulsion or some strong emotion.

The key to coping is to become aware of these reactions as they arise. Instead of allowing extreme emotional reaction to control, try to determine the cause of your reaction. By focussing on the cause instead of the reaction, you can frequently cause the emotion to abate. Then you can experience the situation more objectively, without the American presumptions which caused the emotional reaction in the first place.

Careful observation, not clouded or skewed by your own cultural presumptions and expectations, will help you develop an understanding of the new culture and will facilitate your inclusion in that culture. This is a general overview of culture shock. *The Art of Crossing Cultures* by Craig Storti (Intercultural Press, 1989) discusses culture shock and coping strategies in more detail.

#### American Cultural Patterns

Culture shapes everything -- the ways in which you think and analyze, what you value, how you do things, what's considered proper behavior. It's difficult to assess all the effects of a culture while you are enmeshed in it. When you're abroad, you'll discover important aspects of the American culture that you were unaware of before you left. Since you'll be viewing your new culture from the American perspective, it is helpful to have a good grasp of the American perspective and how it shapes you.

Being aware of your own cultural biases and presumptions will enable you to understand your reactions to ambiguous events that occur while you are abroad. While you won't escape culture shock, you can be well-prepared to face it and dilute its effects. You may think this is obvious, but take a look anyway. Tacit knowledge can only be of help to you if you're cognizant of it. Time in America is linear. The clear division between past, present and future allows for a chronological frame of reference. Time is a tangible thing. It can be "used," "spent," "wasted," and "managed." It is a commodity to be carefully monitored. The faster something is done, the better.

#### Cultural Variations

Most western cultures share many of the same assumptions with Americans, but some variations do exist. Be prepared for "efficient and quick" to be a very different concept from what you're used to. While everyone likes an idea that works, some cultures value aesthetics over practicality or emphasize the process over the end result, and family ties and social obligations are often given priority over individual needs and wants.

#### You're Not Alone

Remember that everyone else on your program will experience similar feelings to yours. Don't hesitate to look to them for moral and emotional support. In addition, the staff of both your host institution's international student office and our offices abroad can help you if you're feeling particularly stressed or anxious. Please seek them out.

From the Beaver College Orientation Handbook

# A Bit of Nerve, and Plenty of Pleases

*A traveler to Russia finds that attempting the language, however haltingly, opens doors and prompts smiles*

By JOAN CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

**A**BOUT five weeks into my evening class in Russian, I came to a hard truth. I knew, abruptly and positively, that I was never going to speak this language.

When I started my course, friends said with awe, "You mean you're going to learn a whole new alphabet?" The Cyrillic alphabet, for all its idiosyncrasies, like the capital letter "I" that becomes a small "i" in script, turned out to be conquerable. My classmates and I got a kick out of standing at the blackboard writing words embellished with hooks and loops and dots. But my middle-aged brain gave up when it came to the grammar, with its three genders and six cases for nouns and adjectives, its confusing verbs of motion and its different verb forms for I completed and uncompleted actions.

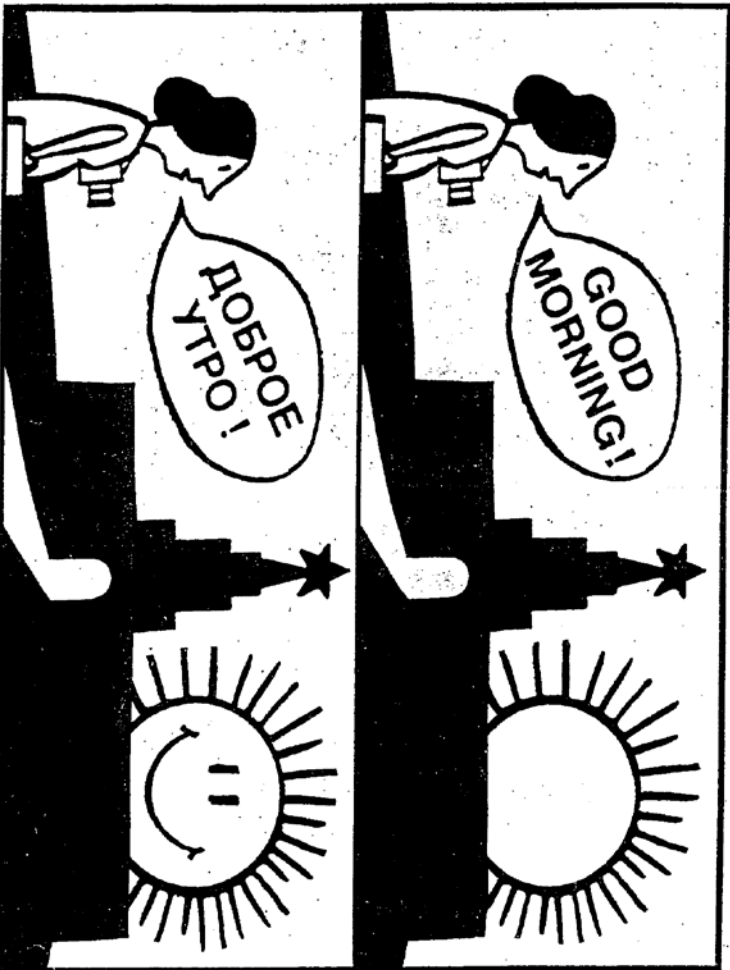
I had been in school, taking Russian for credit. I would have panicked. Instead I was a 20-year-old evening-school, non-for-credit student at the University of California Extension class in San Francisco. My classmates, ranging in age from 20 to 60, were taking the course for the sheer pleasure of learning new sounds. Nicki one was planning to move to Moscow or make a fortune in the Wild West of Russia, commerce, although there were some hints of cross-cultural romance.

If there was little exterior pressure to excel, there was still the matter of self-respect. I was still the maker of self-fulfilling prophecies. I had believed that to speak a foreign language was perfectly, I felt a little disgusting triton of pride when I French people as if I teach French or if I'm from another French-speaking country. Clearly, no Russian was going to mistake my Slavic mutterings for the real thing.

Nevertheless, I continued to study Russian. I just changed my goals. As my Russian-speaking daughter put it: "Wow, you are never going to learn this language perfectly. You just want to make Russia less opaque."

Less opaque. Those were the magic words that kept me listening to my tapes and filling in my workbook. The class moved from the university's extension campus to the teacher's home next to Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco's oldest Russian Orthodox church. We drank tea and admired his array of icons and painted Easter eggs in this informal setting, we no longer had written tests and our homework was

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corrected but not graded.

The real test for me came when I made my second trip to Russia. During my first trip, before I started the course, I had been content to struggle with the Cyrillic alphabet, walking slowly down St. Petersburg's Nevsky Prospekt trying to decipher signs. I stopped at one that seemed to say "one," "Backus Pomanuc." After at least one minute of decoding, I started to plop. BASKIN ROBBINS. My favorite word looked like B&P, which turned out to be good place to get a shot of BODKA.

Ten months later, as my plane bounced into Moscow in a blizzard, I was frantically rereading my Russian textbook. On the way down, I began to read billboard ads. Suddenly, I felt a surge of confidence and an unseemly interest in cell phones, snack foods, banks, computers and other New Russia status symbols. I understood almost everything, with the help of an extremely basic vocabulary and the helpful, historical notes of the Russians to borrow words from other languages. Even under the heavy disguise of the Cyrillic alphabet, the word for a hotel floor is plain English, etage. Nor does it take much linguistic brilliance to

figure out that fotoapparat is just a fancy way of saying camera. One cannot live by billboards alone, however. The more interesting challenge came when we decided to take a walk. I approached the elderly hotel security guard near the door, took a deep breath and asked "Where is the Stary Arbat?" In what I hoped was Russian, he looked at me with a mixture of relief and astonishment, smiled and not only gave me directions but drew a map highlighting the underground passages that save Moscow pedestrians from certain death on the city's many-laned streets.

Walking along the Arbat, Moscow's favorite pedestrian mall, in a flurry of snowflakes, we were approached by the woman who wanted to tell us about the Easter services at her cultural center. As she talked on, I realized that I was getting the drift of the conversation. Unfortunately, we had not reached the future tense in class, so I was unable to tell her politely that we were leaving for St. Petersburg in a few days. Buoyed by the experience, I spent the next two weeks producing bits and pieces of Russian. I asked for directions. I bargained with taxi drivers. I mastered the Moscow metro, starting with the central station where four lines meet. I translated for my friends when the charming docent at the Romanov Boyars house explained the life of a noble family in 18th-century Moscow. I smiled a lot, and, almost without exception, everyone smiled back and tried to help with directions, information, advice. Russia was indeed less opaque.

I remembered other countries where a few words of the language had had dramatic effect. My best moment in Turkey came in a pretentious, dark restaurant in Istanbul. As we struggled to read the menus in the penumbra, our waiter ignored our requests in English for more light. Suddenly I remembered that my 40-word Turkish vocabulary included both *lutfen* (please) and *muayn* (include). When I said firmly, "Lutfen, muayn," his amazement was lovely to behold, and so were the candles that promptly graced our table.

**E**XPERIENCES like these have made me a firm believer that speaking languages badly or barely is better than not speaking at all. It takes some nerve, of course, although my own experience has been that people react with a smile rather than a snort, particularly if you're stumbling about in relatively obscure languages. Speaking badly required a dramatic change in responsibility. Gone was the perfectionist with a Graciel subjunctives and catinly idioms. I, now smile a bit. I begin every conversational exchange with these perched bursts of conversation, one with please, thank yous and excuse me. I growl, linguistically speaking.

It has been worth it. Even a handful of words, chosen almost at random, is empowering. Russia, that mysterious and intimidating country, became a friendlier place as it became less opaque. So have Turkey, Costa Rica, Italy, Denmark, Morocco and a dozen other countries where I opened my phrase book, tamped down my shyness and began, however haltingly, to speak.

## **Cultural Adjustment: Response to Living Abroad**

In order to understand what culture shock is, you need to remember that your ability to function in the world depends on your being able to read hundreds of signs, to respond to subtle cues, and to behave according to countless explicit and implicit rules. At home, much of what you do in your daily life is automatic and requires little thought. Overseas, the reverse is true, and simple tasks can become difficult. Because you are not always able to understand the messages you receive and cannot always communicate what you mean, you may suffer anxieties. When you are confronted with new ways of thinking and acting, including oftentimes a different value system, you can become disoriented. Your 'normal', 'common-sense', or 'logical' way of looking at things suddenly may not apply. Suffering culture shock can, at its worst, lead to severe stress and depression. Even a light case of culture shock will manifest as frustration and irritation.

Culture shock usually manifests itself as a cycle of readjustment phases that may last quite a while before one adapts. Most people experience at least two lows during a stay overseas, but the length and severity of these vary greatly for each individual. Fortunately, culture shock is both predictable (it will happen) and manageable (you will survive it). If you are prepared for it, you can do a great deal to control it or at least understand its effect. The best advice may be to remain flexible and open-minded to new things, maintain a sense of humor about the mistakes you will make (and you will make some), and try to integrate as quickly as possible into your new culture. Whatever happens, the program director is available to help you through rough periods. We encourage students to talk to the on-site staff when they meet problems and not to wait until the problem gets bigger and more complicated.

### **Responses to Living Abroad:**

- 1) First weeks, riding high with enthusiasm. Commonly known as the "honeymoon stage."
- 2) Possible entrance of a slight anti-American streak such as thorough disgust with all American tourists... or "I am never going to go back to America again."
- 3) Feeling of being overwhelmed by all the possibilities presented in your host country, i.e. cultural events, restaurants, student clubs, traveling in your host country and elsewhere, etc.
- 4) Realization of aloneness, some independence, absence of family, problems of communicating by letter, struggle with the language, utilizing free time, heating and housing discomforts, etc.
- 5) This often coincides with mid-semester examinations adding academic pressure to all of the above, which results usually in a very low period or dark depression. Psychologist L. Oberg states that some of the symptoms of this period are: "Excessive washing of the hands; excessive concern over drinking water, food, dishes, and bedding; a feeling of helplessness, fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations; delay and outright refusal to learn the language of the host country; excessive fear of being cheated, robbed or injured; great concern over minor pains and eruptions of the skin; and finally, that terrible longing to be back home, talking to people who really make sense."
- 6) Hostility or aggressive phase. Complaints about the local people, their customs and attitudes. Complaints about the program, regulations, and attitudes. This phase can become extremely petty.
- 7) Identity crisis. Searching within oneself, "Why am I here?", "Am I in the right major?"

### **Recovery:**

- 1) Slowly finding a balance between academic work and other compelling interests. Better organization of one's time, and separation of the romantic preconceptions from the reality.
- 2) Oberg again says, "The recovery stage usually finds a growing sense of humor, with the visitor able to joke not only about the host country, but also about his own difficulties. In the final stage, adjustment, the visitor learns to accept the foods, drinks, habits, and customs of the host country and even to enjoy them."
- 3) Important realizations include getting to know the local people as individuals and not as stereotypes, suddenly realizing the great personal freedom and appreciating it, making deep friendships with fellow students and the local people, finally leaving America and trying to learn something about the host country with an accompanying decision to appreciate the best of both countries.

### **Our Advice:**

Here are some additional thoughts concerning cultural adaptation:

Soon after arriving, you will undoubtedly confront the temptation to withdraw into the American group. Work hard to resist this crutch. Extreme dependence on the American group will limit ties and friendships outside your immediate circle. You should make a genuine and constant effort to penetrate and become part of the host culture. Opportunities are there from the moment you arrive, but you must take the first step and probably the second and third.

Look for clubs and activity groups, which provide opportunities for meeting people and for doing things that you enjoy. If you do join a group, realize that you are the one who will have to fit yourself in. People will not necessarily go out of their way to accommodate you. Even if you are not a "joiner," you should get involved in things that interest you.

Beware of cultural stereotypes! They can operate against you, as well as against the culture you are living in. Stereotypes are destructive because they can interfere with getting to know the local people and prevent you from getting to the rich reality behind the surface.

Avoid making negative comparisons with how you do things or what you have in the U.S. It can be a challenge to understand why things are done differently, but try to be patient and figure out what the difference is and why. Remember, you are not going abroad just to find the same things that exist here in the States. Beware of ethnocentrism, the attitude of superiority of one group over another. We tend to think our culture and society is the most important, worthy, and civilized in the world, and you may be surprised to find that others do not share our view.

Your experience abroad will not always be a bed of roses, and you may experience great loneliness at first. There will be a vacuum of comfortable social, cultural, and political structure. Activities and status symbols that make you who you are at home and on campus will be missing or meaningless: meetings, contacts, cars, sororities and fraternities, and extra-curricular recognition. There will be the void of a familiar routine in your life.

What can you do to survive with grace? Re-organize and learn to budget your time and avoid the temptation of too much travel. Keep a journal for future reference. Be patient; you will not learn the language perfectly or make friends in the first two weeks after arrival. Accept that you cannot become totally submerged in host culture. Be proud, although not intrusively so, of being an American. You will unavoidably carry your American cultural background with you. Accept that wherever you are is the center of the world for the people who live there. Behave as a guest, and show the inhabitants that you feel lucky to be there, in the center of their world.

And most importantly, remember that early disorientation is normal, healthy, and perfectly OK.

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# KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR TIME ABROAD

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## **Keeping a Journal:**

You are about to embark on a journey where you will be a foreigner. As you interact with the people and customs of your new surroundings, your views of yourself and some of your most cherished values will be challenged and undergo subtle changes.

One of the best tools for gaining insight into these changes is to keep a journal. There you can reflect on the puzzling and wonderful things you have seen, experienced, and overheard that sticks in your mind. A custom that appears strange at first will often become understood as you continue to observe it in its own context. Writing down incidents, thoughts, questions, ideas, and reflections will help give depth and insight to your experience and can be therapeutic. A journal can be especially helpful when traveling because it will be easier to remember the amazing places you visited – and a great reminder of your time abroad when friends and family ask about your experience.

It is always a challenge to put this experience into words, but make a start and stick with it. Go beyond the mere recording of incidents to recording your feelings and conjectures. Why did that comment sting? Why did people react so strangely to my shirt, or smile, or joke? You will see sights that strike you as barely imaginable back home. What does that say about the host culture? What does it say about your own? A month later you may see things differently and you should write that down too. Record stories or poems you are inspired to write, etc. The journal will capture your thoughts at a specific moment. Years later the journal will be a treasure. Keep a journal, you will not regret it!

## **Taking Pictures:**

Some people may not be particularly fond of writing or just can't find the time to keep a journal regularly. Keeping a camera close at hand is another great way to document all the memories you will make while abroad. Upon returning to campus, there will be a photo contest for returned studied abroad students during which your photos will be displayed and eligible for prizes. More details about the photo contest will be sent out upon your return from studying abroad.

## **Dickinson Study Abroad Blog:**

Dickinson College has a blog for students participating in study abroad programs. You may want to consider keeping a journal on the blog and to share your experiences and insights with your friends or other students interested in going on your program. It also serves as a good tool to keep you connected with Dickinson students studying at different locations and to exchange information. Please find the blog link here:

<http://itech.dickinson.edu/blog/>. If you are interested, send an email to Todd Bryant at [bryantt@dickinson.edu](mailto:bryantt@dickinson.edu). He will create your blog and send you the basic instructions to get started.

## **Dickinson Study Abroad Wiki Page:**

The blog is a great place for individual journals; however, if you and some of your fellow Dickinsonians would like to publish something together such as a newsletter or paper the wiki is a better bet. No technical knowledge is required. You can get an idea of how it works by looking at the example of the Málaga program: [http://wiki.dickinson.edu/index.php?title=Toulouse\\_Study\\_Abroad\\_Program](http://wiki.dickinson.edu/index.php?title=Toulouse_Study_Abroad_Program).

If you're interested, send an email to Todd Bryant. He'll make sure you have the access you need and the very basic instructions. (Hint: it starts by clicking the "edit" tab at the start of each page).

# RETURNING BACK HOME

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## Things to Take Care of at Dickinson before Returning Home

### Course Request Process when Returning to Campus:

Information regarding the course request period will be sent via e-mail to students' Dickinson e-mail addresses, announcing when the course request period will take place. Course requests will be made through the web, and the site will be accessible from off campus.

### Room Selection at Dickinson:

The following information about room selection has been provided by the Office of Campus Life. Like other offices on campus, Campus Life relies on e-mail to convey information to students away from campus. You may contact the Office of Campus Life by phone (717 245-1556) or email ([campuslife@dickinson.edu](mailto:campuslife@dickinson.edu)). Communications will be sent to Dickinson students off-campus at their Dickinson e-mail address.

**Remember to check your Dickinson account regularly for important messages from the College.**

- **If you are going abroad for *fall semester* and returning for spring**, you will receive an email from the Office of Campus Life during the fall semester, requesting housing preferences for your spring semester return. These include roommates, type of room, building, and if you have plans to switch with someone going abroad for the spring. Campus Life tries to honor all requests, but it is not always possible because available spaces vary from year to year.
- **If you are going abroad for *the entire year* or for *spring semester* and returning for next fall**, it is important that you make arrangements for a housing proxy for the next year **before you leave**. Make sure that you send Campus Life the name of your housing proxy. This can be done by emailing [campuslife@dickinson.edu](mailto:campuslife@dickinson.edu). Your proxy will pick your room assignment during room selection.

If you wish to live off campus, your proxy will fill out and hand in your off-campus housing application. Applications will become available in the spring semester. NOTE: Not all students who apply will be able to live off-campus. Only a limited number of off-campus permissions will be granted.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

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### 24-Hour Clock/Time Change:

Official time in Mexico is based on a 24-hour clock. Mexico is one hour behind U.S. (EST) for most of the year. The Rocky Mountain time zone coincides with time in Mexico.

### Currency:

The units of money are based on the decimal system. The currency in Mexico is the **peso**.

Coins come in denominations of 10, 20, and 50 **centavos** and 1, 2, 5, and 10, **pesos**. Bills in denominations of 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 **pesos** are available as well. Bank notes also come in 1000, 2000, 5000, and 10,000 **pesos**. Don't expect exact change when dealing in **centavos**. It is common for vendors and cashiers to take 1 **peso** and give no change even when it costs 80 **centavos**. By the same token, they are usually willing to overlook it if you are short a few **centavos**.

### Metric Conversion Tables:

Please see page 46.

<b>APPENDIX I:</b>	<b>VISA GUIDELINES (pages 47-48)</b>
<b>APPENDIX II:</b>	<b>STUDENT BUDGET SHEET (page 49)</b>
<b>APPENDIX III:</b>	<b>MEMO ON HEALTH INSURANCE (page 50)</b>
<b>APPENDIX IV:</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL TRAVEL INSURANCE (page 51)</b>
<b>APPENDIX V:</b>	<b>HEALTH ISSUES WHILE ABROAD (page 52-53)</b>
<b>APPENDIX VI:</b>	<b>STUDENT AGREEMENT (pages 54-55)</b>
<b>APPENDIX VII:</b>	<b>REFUND POLICY (pages 56-57)</b>
<b>APPENDIX VIII:</b>	<b>STUDENT GUIDED CREATED BY PAST PARTICIPANTS (pages 58-68)</b>
<b>APPENDIX IX:</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRAVEL ALERT FOR MEXICO (pages 69-71)</b>

## METRIC CONVERSION TABLES

<u>Thermometer Reading</u>		<u>Kilometers - Miles</u>	
C	F	Kilometers	Miles
38	100.4	1	0.6
37	98.6 (body temp)	3	1.8
35	95	5	3
30	86	10	6
25	77	15	9
20	68 (room temp)	20	12
10	50	25	15
5	41	30	18
0	32 (freezing)	40	24
-5	23	50	30
-10	14	100	60
-15	5	150	90
-20	-4	200	120
-25	-13	250	150
-30	-22	500	300

[To convert centigrade to Fahrenheit: multiply by 9/5 and add 32]
[To convert kilometers to miles: multiply by .6]

OR, observe the simple rhyme: “ 30's hot and 20's nice, 10 is cool and zero's ice”

### Weights and Measures

Metric	U.S.
1 gram (gr)	0.035 ounces
500 grams (= ½ kilo)	1.1 pounds
454 grams	1 pound
1 kilogram (= 1000 grams)	2.2 pounds
5 kilograms	11.0 pounds
1 liter (l)	2.113 pints
1 liter	1.056 quarts
3.785 liters	1 gallon
1 deciliter	0.21 pint
1 meter	3.28 feet
1 meter	39.37 inches
1 centimeter	0.394 inches
2.54 centimeters	1 inch

#### Kitchen Hints:

1 cup sugar = 200 gr. 1 tsp. = 5 gr.  
 1 cup flour = 150 gr. 1 tbsp. = 12 gr.

[To weigh yourself: double the number of kilos and add 10%]

# APPENDIX I: VISA GUIDELINES

## GENERAL VISA GUIDELINES- FM-3 STUDENT STUDY VISA

The responsibility for submitting all documents required by you or your parents for your student visa ultimately rests in your hands. The Office of Global Education will supply you with the supporting documents required from the College or your host institution.

**THIS INFORMATION IS TO BE USED AS A GENERAL GUIDELINE ONLY. EACH CONSULATE MAY HAVE DIFFERENT GUIDELINES AND APPLICATIONS. YOU MUST FOLLOW THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE CONSULATE THAT SERVES YOUR HOME JURISDICTION. WE USE THE GENERAL GUIDELINES FROM THE PHILADELPHIA CONSULATE WHICH SERVES THE JURISDICTION FOR PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS AND STUDENTS.**

Past experience has shown that you should ALLOW NO LESS THAN SIX (6) WEEKS FOR VISA APPROVAL AND PROCESSING BEFORE YOUR DATE OF DEPARTURE. If you do not receive your visa in time for your departure, you will be responsible for all costs associated with changing your flight and may, ultimately, jeopardize your ability to participate in the program. **Do not wait until the last minute; allow plenty of time.** Be aware of any Consulate holiday closings that may delay the processing of your visa. You **may** need to appear in person or make an appointment to submit or receive your application.

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:** For the latest entry requirements, contact the Embassy of Mexico web site in the United States that serves your home jurisdiction for their most current information.

**CONTRARY TO WHAT THE WEBSITE MAY SAY, A STUDENT VISA IS REQUIRED FOR ALL STUDENTS PLANNING TO STUDY OR DO RESEARCH IN MEXICO FOR A SEMESTER.** THE VISA MUST BE STAMPED UPON ENTRANCE TO MEXICO THROUGH CUSTOMS. IF THE VISA IS NOT STAMPED, IT WILL NOT BE VALID.

**THE CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION HAS FULL AUTHORITY TO REQUEST MORE DOCUMENTS THAN THOSE LISTED IN THEIR GUIDELINES. CHECK WITH THE CONSULATE NEAREST YOU TO VERIFY THE REQUIREMENTS AND OBTAIN THE AMOUNT OF ANY REQUIRED VISA FEE BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION.** \*ALSO, WITH THIS TYPE OF VISA YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WORK ON OR OFF CAMPUS DURING THE PROGRAM.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

CONTACT THE CONSULATE THAT SERVES YOUR JURISDICTION. REMEMBER TO CHECK AND RE-CHECK THEIR REQUIREMENTS BEFORE APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA. HERE ARE SOME USEFUL CONSULATE WEBSITES:

General Travel/Visa Information by Country: <http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. Mexican Consulate/Embassy Contact Information: <http://www.sre.gob.mx>

New York: <http://www.sre.gob.mx/nuevayork>

Philadelphia: <http://www.sre.gob.mx/filadelfia>

Washington, DC: <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/washington/>

## HELPFUL INFORMATION:

- Remember, **everything** is subject to change. Check and recheck the website frequently **before** you submit your application.
- Fill out the application as accurately as possible and be sure to have extra copies with you. You may be asked to complete additional required forms at the Consulate. Neglecting to include a document or to fill out the forms correctly may extend the processing time.
- Dickinson College will secure the required letter from the University of Querétaro that you will need as **part** of the overall visa process. It will be mailed to you as soon as we receive it.
- You may be asked to supply proof of economic solvency: A notarized letter stating who is going to be economically responsible for you during your stay in Mexico. This would be a notarized letter from your parent (s) stating this requirement. Sometimes the amount (\$500 U.S. dollars per month) is a standard amount required. A sample letter is attached to these guidelines. However, you must follow and comply with the guidelines and rules of your home jurisdiction Consulate. At this time, the Philadelphia Consulate does not require an Apostille on this document.
- Some documents **may or may not** require an “apostille” issued by the appropriate Department of State or Secretary of State. This is certification that the person who has notarized your documents is legally registered by the State. In order to obtain the apostille on your document issued in the United States, you will need to follow these steps:
  1. Bring your document to a Notary Public to be notarized
  2. Request the Apostille from the Department of State or Secretary of State of your home state.
- INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: If you are NOT a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to obtain any special entry papers or documentation that may be required for the visa. Contact your Embassy for assistance. You may have to apply in person at the Embassy/Consulate in your home country. It will be your responsibility to research information regarding your status and obtaining a student study visa.

# APPENDIX II: STUDENT BUDGET SHEET

Student Budget Sheet: Spring 2010  
Dickinson in Mexico: Querétaro

	<i>Semester</i>
<b>Program Fee:</b>	<b>\$ 24,930</b>
<i>Program fee includes:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition and fees</li> <li>• Room (host family)</li> <li>• Board (meals with host family)</li> <li>• Limited local transportation (daily bus fare to/from UAQ)</li> <li>• Bus transportation to/from Mexico City airport</li> <li>• Scheduled program excursions</li> <li>• Allowance for photocopying course materials</li> <li>• Limited computer and Internet access at UAQ (180 hours/semester)</li> <li>• Emergency Medical Insurance (see orientation handbook appendix for more information)</li> <li>• Pre-departure and on-site orientation</li> <li>• Orientation Handbook</li> </ul>	
<i>Estimated costs(both required &amp; optional) not included in Program Fee (in U.S. dollars)1</i>	<i>Semester</i>
<b><i>REQUIRED costs not included in Program Fee:</i></b>	
Required primary health and accident insurance purchased in the U.S that will cover students overseas <sup>2</sup>	\$ 1,100
International airfare (roundtrip from east coast airport)	700
Visa fees (for U.S. Citizens) <sup>3</sup>	92
Books and materials	70
<b><i>Sub-total of Required Expenses (This total does not include the varied cost expenses and will vary on an individual basis.)</i></b>	<b>\$1,962</b>
<b><i>OPTIONAL costs not included in Program Fee:</i></b>	
Additional local transportation	180
Cell phone purchase	30
Cell phone usage (est. \$35 per month)	175
Phone Cards (1 peso/min) – necessary to have or do students just use skype?	100
Additional internet usage at a Cyber café (10pesos/hr.)- necessary?	100
Out of pocket costs for prescription drugs (be prepared to pay cash and submit receipts to your U.S. insurer)	Varies
Personal expenses including independent travel, entertainment, and meals during vacation periods	1,500
<b><i>TOTAL: PROGRAM FEE + ESTIMATED REQUIRED and OPTIONAL COSTS</i></b>	<b>\$28,977</b>

1 The list of estimated costs is intended as a rough guide for planning and is not all-inclusive. Actual costs will vary depending on many factors that are determined by individual circumstances and choices. The Total Fee assumes all listed estimated costs in the grid apply.

2 Estimates reflect the anticipated cost of the Dickinson College Student Health Plan 2009-10, which covers students overseas and for the duration of their stay. For further insurance guidance, see the Health Insurance section of the Querétaro 2009-10 Handbook.

3 The cost for a visa varies on an individual basis depending on your nationality. The listed visa cost is estimated for a U.S. Citizen. The fee may increase depending on if you have to travel in person to the consulate or mail materials for your application.

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## APPENDIX III: MEMO ON HEALTH INSURANCE

### MEMORANDUM

From: Office of Global Education  
Subject: Primary Health and Accident Insurance Information

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Students who are covered by the Dickinson Student Health Insurance are covered overseas by this policy. While it satisfies the minimum requirement for primary health and accident insurance for our students on overseas programs, you are advised to examine the policy to see if the coverage meets your specific needs.

For students participating on fall or academic year programs, you will initially be billed for the Dickinson student health insurance. Follow the directions for “waiving out” of the Dickinson student health insurance if you plan to rely on a family policy. Information on waiving out can be found at: [www.dickinson.edu/departments/finops/healthinsurance.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/finops/healthinsurance.html).

Students, who wish to “waive out” of this coverage and be covered instead by their family health insurance policy, will find helpful information about evaluating health insurance in the *Health Insurance* section of their handbook. Your policy must cover you **overseas** and **for the duration of your stay**.

For those going overseas during the spring semester, if you would like to sign up for the Dickinson Student Health Insurance, please contact United Healthcare at 1-800-505-4160.

Like Dickinson students, guest students attending Dickinson programs from other colleges and universities must also have primary health and accident insurance coverage. Non-Dickinson students **do not** have the option of purchasing Dickinson student health insurance.

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## **APPENDIX IV: Supplemental Travel Insurance**

### **Emergency Travel Assistance Program**

**and**

### **Supplemental Travel Accident and Medical Insurance**

Under the auspices of the ACE American Insurance Company (A Stock Company), Dickinson College provides world-wide travel assistance services and travel medical emergency insurance to persons acting officially for the College (e.g., program directors, trustees, faculty, administrators, academic professionals, staff, or students).

Afforded under the *world-wide travel services* are the following: Pre-departure Services such as information on immunization requirements, passport and visa requirements and Overseas Assistance such as telephone advice about lost baggage or passport, emergency cash service, assistance during a medical emergency, emergency legal advice-assistance, and emergency message service. For further information, consult the "Travel Assistance Program" brochure available from the Office of the Vice President for Campus Operations. For travel service assistance in the U.S. (or Canada), call 888-293-9229. If outside the U.S., call 001-610-293-9229

Also provided is *world-wide travel medical and emergency insurance* which includes: up to \$10,000 for accidental death & dismemberment, in-hospital medical and surgical services and out-of-hospital medical expenses up to \$25,000\* per event, up to 100%\* of usual and customary charges for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. *Note:* This insurance coverage (ACE policy #GLM N0 48 49 06 1) is effective ONLY AFTER the person has left the United States. For a complete schedule of benefits, deductibles, and policy limitations and/or exclusions, please consult with the Office of the Vice President for Campus Operations.

To process an insurance claim: a) written notice of the claim must be sent to the Company (ACE) within twenty (20) days after the occurrence or commencement of any loss covered by the policy; b) the Company, upon receipt of the claim, will furnish the appropriate forms to the claimant(s); c) written proof of the loss must accompany any claim; d) payment of the claim will be made to the claimant(s) or to a beneficiary.

Contact Address: Office of the Vice President for Campus Operations, Dickinson College, P. O. Box 1773, Carlisle Pa 17013-2896. Telephone 717-245-1943; FAX 717-245-1903;

\* These benefits apply only after all other valid and collectible insurance benefits are exhausted and are subject to policy limitations and/or exclusions.

September 2009

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## APPENDIX V: HEALTH ISSUES WHILE TRAVELING

### HEALTH ISSUES WHILE TRAVELING

Mary Arthur, CRNP, MPA  
Dir. Student Health Services

#### Travel Clinics

*Holy Spirit Hospital, Camp Hill*  
Phone: 717-972-4222

*Hershey Medical Center Clinic*  
Phone: 1-800-243-1455

#### Internet Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm><http://www.travelhealth.com>

#### Prior to traveling

Check the CDC web site to get information on the country you are going to. Read about any epidemics or outbreak in progress. Read about water and food precautions. The CDC site will also give you the immunizations you need to be up to date along with any additional vaccinations needed for that specific country. Some vaccinations need to be given weeks before departure, so don't wait, make an appointment as soon as you know where you will be going, so that any needed vaccines may be given in the appropriate time frame.

#### Immunization

All the following immunizations should be up to date:

- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) - within the past 10 years or 5 years if you will be doing work outside around soil or potentially rusted material
- Hepatitis B (series of three shots)
- Polio

For persons who have received a complete series of polio vaccine, an additional single dose of vaccine should be received by persons 18 years of age and older traveling to the developing countries of Africa, Asia (East and Southeast), and Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent, and the majority of the new independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Additional immunizations are recommended for those over 65 or anyone at high risk such as asthmatics, or immuno-compromised people (HIV, long-term steroid use due to organ transplant, chemotherapy treatments, etc.). They are:

- Influenza (flu) vaccine
- Pneumococcal vaccine

#### Malaria

Medication for Malaria must be taken before, during and after your trip to be effective. Expose as little skin as possible.

**\*\*THERE MAY BE ADDITIONAL VACCINES THAT ARE SITE SPECIFIC, SO CHECK THE CDC WEB SITE\*\***

#### Medications

If you are taking prescription medication you should keep the medication in its original container from the pharmacy which will have your name, the medication name, dose, and the practitioner's name who prescribed the medication. Do not transfer any medication into any unmarked container. You should also have a written letter or prescription from your physician also verifying this medication was prescribed by a license practitioner and is

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necessary for medical reasons. You should calculate the amount of medication you will need while you are away, and bring enough so you do not run out.

### Food and Water

The number one cause of illness in travelers is from food and waterborne diseases. Diseases from food and water can cause diarrhea, vomiting, fever and liver disease (hepatitis). Tips on how to stay healthy when abroad can be found on the CDC site.

Some suggestions include:

- Drink only bottled water, boiled water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself
- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors
- Don't drink beverages with ice
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized
- Don't handle animals especially monkeys, dogs, and cats
- Don't brush your teeth with tap water

### Items to take on your program

- Over the counter anti-diarrhea medicines such as Pepto-Bismol, or Imodium. Stronger prescription medications may make your condition worse.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat

### Common Sense

- Automobile accidents account for fifty percent of fatalities and medical evacuations
- Wear seat belts
- Don't drive OR SWIM drunk
- Do not walk on dark roadways at night
- Look both ways several times before crossing the street. Many countries drive on the opposite side of the road from the US, and students have been hit because they look one way only due to habit, and step into the path of an oncoming car.

### Other Points

- Make sure you will have health insurance while abroad. Call your insurance carrier to find out procedure and get it in writing.
- Diabetics need to know country's regulations on needles.
- **TB screening after returning is a good idea.**
- Certain countries require HIV testing to enter country.
- Antibiotics cause oral contraceptives to be less effective. Always use a backup method if you have to be on an antibiotic.
- Emergency contraception and birth control pills may be illegal in some Islamic countries. If the country allows it and there is even a remote possibility you will be sexually active, women should take ECP's with them. Please call the Health Center to ask about this.

In Tropical areas don't walk around barefoot. Spray yourself and cloths with DEET, and cover skin completely with clothes. Wear hats.

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## APPENDIX VI: Student Agreement Form

I In consideration of my selection for participation in a Dickinson College Study Abroad and/or Domestic Off-Campus Program, I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to the following conditions of responsibility:

1. I acknowledge that the Dickinson College study abroad and domestic off-campus programs represent the broad values of liberal education and bonds between cultures. As a guest in a host country or with a host family, I will strive to understand and respect norms of conduct and patterns of the host culture. I agree to represent the College responsibly and to abide by dress and cultural codes suitable to the cultures visited.

2. I agree to abide by all policies and regulations of the host institution/Program and/or the regulations of the Dickinson Center I may be attending. I understand that as a participant in a study abroad or domestic off-campus program I remain enrolled at the College and will continue to abide by all College policies, rules or regulations outlined in the *Student Handbook*. I understand that the College has the right to, and will, withdraw me from the program at any time if, in the judgment of the Associate Provost of Global Education, on the advice of the Program Director, I have violated such policies, rules or regulations or have engaged in disruptive behavior, academic infractions, or conduct which could bring the program into disrepute or disrupt the operation of the program. I agree, specifically, that I will have no involvement with illegal drugs, will not engage in illegal or abusive use of alcohol, and will participate in all classes and scheduled activities. I agree further that a decision to withdraw me from the program is final and that I am not entitled to any refund.

3. I further agree that the College may withdraw me from the program and send me home at any time during the program at my expense if the College determines that my continued participation in the program will adversely affect my health, safety or welfare, or the health, safety, welfare or enjoyment of the program by others. I agree further that a decision to withdraw me from the program is final and that I am not entitled to any refund.

4. I understand that the procedures outlined in this section for dealing with discipline and well-being are different than those outlined in the *Student Handbook*, and I agree that the procedures outlined in this agreement shall apply while I am a participant in a study abroad or domestic off-campus program. Further, I understand that a determination made by the Associate Provost of Global Education may be the basis for further disciplinary action by the College, in addition to causing my withdrawal from the program.

5. I understand and agree that in order to be assessed and receive credit for academic work completed while studying off campus, I must participate fully in the program. I also recognize that I am expected to complete the entire program and may forfeit credit should I choose to arrive after the program begins or leave the program early without the prior consent of the Program Director, the host institution, and the Office of Global Education.

6. I agree to indemnify and hold the College harmless from and against all claims and actions for property damage or personal injury sustained by me or any other person or entity, which arise out of my participation in the program, including but not limited to, violations of the policies and regulations of the host institution, violations of the policies, rules and regulations of Dickinson College, violations of law, and/or which are due to my sole or concurrent negligence with the College.

7. I, on behalf of myself, my heirs and personal representatives, hereby release Dickinson College and any cooperating institution and each of their officers, employees, successors and agents from any and all claims and causes of action for inconvenience, damage to or loss of property, medical or hospital care, personal illness or injury or death arising out of my participation in the study abroad program and/or travel or activity conducted by or under the control of Dickinson College or any cooperating institution.

8. I understand and acknowledge that there are risks and delays common to travel abroad and that there may be special health risks associated with living and studying in the country or area I have chosen. I understand that I have a responsibility to exercise due caution in my behavior while in the program and agree further that I am personally responsible for obtaining adequate health insurance, health information, instruction, immunizations, and prophylactic medications appropriate to my study abroad program.

9. I have read and understand the refund policies of Dickinson College as outlined in the program orientation

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handbook published by the Office of Global Education, and I understand that the application fee and confirmation payments are non-refundable.

10. I understand and agree that I will provide all completed materials, forms, and payments by the due dates specified and recognize that failure to do this may result in either added costs or in my being withdrawn from the program. Further, I have read or will read and understand all general information provided on this program by the Office of Global Education, and will attend and participate in all orientation meetings and other pre-departure briefings.

11. This agreement shall be construed in accordance with the substantive laws of Pennsylvania without regard for its conflicts of laws provisions. The Courts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Cumberland County or the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any issue or dispute arising under or out of this agreement. Still further, each of the undersigned individuals hereby consents and submits to the personal jurisdiction of the courts set forth in this provision and waives any challenge to the venue or jurisdiction of such courts over them.

12. I grant permission to the Office of Global Education to request on my behalf an official or unofficial transcript from the Registrar's Office at Dickinson College for the purpose of reviewing my GPA or to send the transcript directly to the institution to which I am applying. If I am from another school or have a transcript through another school, it is my responsibility to request a transcript with current information to be sent to the Office of Global Education.

13. I grant permission to the Office of Global Education to release my name and contact information to fellow program participants and to future students interested in applying to study off-campus.

14. I hold the following health insurance coverage which is valid overseas for the duration of my study abroad program. I understand that if this information should change I must notify the Program Director and the Office of Global Education at once; further, that if this insurance should lapse because of unpaid premiums during my stay, I and my parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for health expenses incurred.

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read and agree to the above:**

**Participant signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note that your signature must be original. Faxed or photocopied signatures cannot be accepted.*

Please list the first person to contact in case of emergency for the time the participant is abroad.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX VII: Refund Policy: Early Withdrawal/ Cancellation

### Refund Policy for Early Withdrawal From Dickinson-Sponsored and Dickinson-Partner Programs (Semester/Academic Year) Administered by the Office of Global Education

A student's date of withdrawal is determined by one of the following:

- 1) The date the student notifies Global Education in writing of his/her decision to withdraw, or
- 2) The date the student is officially dismissed from the program by the Office of Global Education, or
- 3) If a student leaves the program without notifying the Office of Global Education, the date of withdrawal is determined by either: the mid-point of the semester or the student's last documented attendance at an academically-related activity, whichever is later.

A student who withdraws 61 days or more prior to the begin date of the Semester/Academic Year Program will receive a 100% refund, less the non-refundable confirmation payment.

A student who withdraws during the 61 days prior to the begin date of the Semester/Academic Year Program will receive a 95% refund of the Program Fee less the non-refundable confirmation payment.

A student who withdraws after the program starts will forfeit the non-refundable confirmation fee and 5% of the Semester Program Fee. Refund of the remaining Semester Program Fee will be determined on a daily pro-rata basis until 60% of the semester has been completed. No refunds will be calculated after 60% of the semester has elapsed. Weekends are included in counted days, except when part of a scheduled period of non-attendance of five days or more, such as spring break.

For example, if a semester includes 110 days from the start date through the end date and a student withdraws on the 50<sup>th</sup> day, the College will retain the \$300 confirmation payment, 5% of the semester fee and a pro-rate portion of the remaining fee.

$$\begin{aligned} & (\$ 300) \\ & (5\% \times 19,925) \\ & \underline{(50/110 \times (19,925-300-996.25))} \\ \text{Total retained by Dickinson} = & \quad \$8,466.77 \end{aligned}$$

In all cases, Dickinson also retains the right to deduct non-recoverable costs from any applicable refund. For students receiving Financial Aid, please see the "Financial Aid Refunds" section below.

#### Financial Aid Refunds

For students receiving Financial Aid, the financial aid refund rules apply as stated in the Dickinson College Bulletin under the Dickinson College Refund Policy. It is important to understand that, since the financial aid refund and the refund to the student's account are calculated using different methods, the refund to the student account may not fully cover the required refund to the financial aid programs, and the student may end up owing funds to the college after the refund to the financial aid programs has been made.

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**Refund Policy for Emergency Cancellation  
Dickinson College Semester/Academic Year Programs  
Administered by the Office of Global Education**

All decisions concerning the cancellation (or required modification) of a College program will be made by the Office of Global Education in consultation with responsible authorities on campus and overseas. These decisions will be based on, but not limited to, State Department warnings. In the unlikely event of an emergency program cancellation, every effort will be made to accommodate the academic needs of program participants by offering an alternative to enable students to complete their course work. For example, one possible alternative for Semester/Academic Year programs would be to offer suitable coursework on-campus during the summer.

Students whose program is cancelled prior to the begin date will receive a full refund of the Program Fee, including the confirmation payment.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative for credit completion is offered, no refund will be given.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative credit completion is NOT offered, the student will receive a full refund including the confirmation payment.

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## APPENDIX VIII: Student Guide created by Past Participants

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## Academics

### Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro—Facultades

- Ciencias políticas y sociales
  - Ciencias Políticas y Administración
  - Periodismo y Comunicación
  - Sociología
- Química
- Psicología
- Lenguas y Letras
  - Lenguas Modernas
- Ingeniería
- Informática
- Filosofía
  - Antropología
  - Filosofía
- Enfermería
- Derecho
- Contaduría y Administración
  - Contador Público
  - Administración
- Ciencias naturales
  - Biología
  - Nutrición
  - Médico Veterinario
- Bellas artes
  - Música
  - Artes Visuales

#### *Courses taken by previous participants:*

Many of these courses are only offered occasionally. They may not be offered during your semester.

<u>Clase</u>	<u>Inglés</u>	<u>Facultad</u>
Clase de Cultura	History and Culture of Mexico	Lenguas y Letras
Gramática	Advanced/Intermediate grammar	Lenguas y Letras
Literatura III:	Contemporary Mexican Literature	Lenguas y Letras
América latina en Contexto Mundial	Latin America in World Context	Ciencias Políticas
Bailaza folklórica	Folklore Dance	Bellas Artes
Fotografía	Photography	Bellas Artes
Historia de América Latina	Latin American History	Ciencias Políticas
Antropología de la Religión	Anthropology of Religion	Antropología

no course number indicates General Credit -- (it won't let me leave comments) can this be clarified?

#### Other courses students have taken:

- Economía (Economics)
- Etnohistoria (Mexican Ethnic History)

- 
- Psicolingüística (Psycholinguistics)
  - Finanzas(Finance)  
Estadísticas I (Statistics)
  - Música Vocal (Vocal Performance)
  - Restauración-- producción del los bienes culturales II (Mexican Art History part 2)
  - Historia Regional y de Querétaro (History of Querétaro and Its Surroundings)
  - Anthropología de la Globalización (Anthropology of Globalization)
  - Historia del Arte IV (Art History IV)
  - Etnia, Nación, Estado (Ethnics, Nation, State)
  - Psicología Social (Social Psychology)
  - Cambio y Desarrollo Político (Political Changes and Development)
  - Comercio Internacional (International Business)
  - *Grabado* (Printmaking)
  - *Traducción* (Translation – Spanish to English)

Comments about previously taken classes:

- Facultad de Bellas Artes: good for a new experience, different types of people, and a perfect way to socialize with Mexicanos.
- Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales: really good classes, very challenging level of Spanish
- Flamenco classes can be taken in the Centro - a place called the "Centro Cultural Sol y Luna." Cost ≈ 50 USD/month. Awesome place for live music, dancing, and people who are very into flamenco.

## *Services in Querétaro*

### ***General information:***

- Useful website: [www.venaqueretaro.com](http://www.venaqueretaro.com)
- Querétaro is located 120 miles northwest of Mexico City (2.5-3 hours by bus)
- Population: approximately 1,600,000
- Climate: comfortable year round; cold mornings/warm days/cold nights in January, becoming very hot into the summer (end of April onwards)\*\* to what do the asterisks refer?
- Accessible by highway, train, plane, and bus.

### ***Description:***

Querétaro is a rapidly growing, economically stable, safe, clean city attracting new residents from all over the country. For this reason, it is difficult to generalize about the type of culture you might expect, but you will see a variety of influences from different regions. It is commonplace to observe that Querétaro is a very “Mexican” city with a colonial feel.

While it has a colonial heritage, it is not a tourist town. Rather, it is a middle-class, industrial city where Sears, Walmart, Burger King and Chili’s Restaurant have recently found their homes among more traditional commerce. Traffic gets intense during the rush hour time. Rush hours, however are very different from typical U.S. cities. Traffic is heaviest between 1-2:30pm (the hottest part of the day) as most people head home for *la comida*. Many times you will get places faster by walking than by taking the bus, especially in the Centro, but beware: unlike at Dickinson, PEDESTRIANS DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY (and cars or buses WILL NOT stop)!

### ***Getting Around the City:***

The on-site coordinator, and a representative from the Facultad de Lenguas y Letras will spend time orienting you to the city, the university and the bus system when you arrive. You will be given maps and will see that the main east-west avenues that intersect the *Cerro de las Campanas*, are located near the UAQ (pronounced *la woké*) Facultad de Lenguas y Letras. The *entrada principal* to the UAQ is on Hidalgo. It is between 20-30 minutes walking distance from the Centro and camiones are easily accessible from most gates. Other entrances can be found off Avenida Universidad, Tecnológico, and Avenida 5 de Febrero.

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### ***Transportation:***

The three most common ways to get around town are walking, buses, and taxis.

Los Autobuses/Camiones (buses): The buses are essential to your transportation around the city; after a short group orientation you should find them relatively easy to use. There are several bus companies, all of which are less expensive than taking a cab. In the past, the bus fare has been 5 pesos, but with a student ID (from la UAQ) it was only 3 pesos. All buses have route lines in the upper left corner of the front window and your family will show you where to catch a bus near your house in order to get to school. In order to get on you have to flag it down (often times, they will stop at non-designated areas) and to get off you have to either ring a bell or, if there isn't one, yell "***Baja por favor.***" The buses do not run after 10pm, so cabs are the source of transportation during the night hours. The program will give a transportation stipend to defray the cost of transportation, but this will not be sufficient for cab rides to and from school, etc.\*\*\* to what do the asterisks refer?

Los Taxis: Taxis are generally available at all hours of the day and night. Hail a taxi the same way you would hail a bus. When taking a taxi, always ask how much it will be to go where you are going before entering the cab. Some *taxistas* (drivers) will try to rip off a *gringo*. Generally speaking, taxis should charge no more than 25-30 pesos to get around town during the day. At night prices should be anywhere from 30 to 40 pesos. If you're going to a house, try to know the number and the block, corner, or some other directional marker. For example, a student living at Abeto 5, Alamos 2a, and few taxi drivers knew how to get there, so the student said "Álamos 2a por Corregidora." That way the taxi drivers knew the best way to enter the neighborhood and the student could give directions from there. Also, talk to the taxistas. They are always interested to know why a *gringo/a* (or a *güero/a*) is staying in Querétaro; and many have been to the US for work and they will have stories to tell! Some of your most interesting and engaging conversations will be with them.

### **Drugstores and Farmacias:**

The local pharmacist will helpfully recommend and sell you drugs and antibiotics, but he will usually be unable to provide dosage information. You will most likely need a prescription; drugs are cheap, but be careful of allergies and dosage. The best thing to do is take all prescription drugs with you, as well as a list from your doctor of all of your prescriptions. In addition to the neighborhood *farmacia*, the drugstores in Querétaro are Sanborne's, VIP's, and Farmacias del Ahorro, which will probably have the best prices.

### ***Teléfono:***

Although recently privatized, ***Telmex*** is still the only phone company in Mexico and still has complicated billing restrictions and overall high prices. Many of the household phones still charge for local service. Consequently, there are general cultural differences regarding phone communication and unlike the U.S.; it is not common to call just to chat. Therefore, your host family may be hesitant to allow you to use the phone often. The contract you sign restricts your use of their telephone to make OUTGOING phone calls to two calls per day (incoming phone calls are free). Calls should have purpose and be quick and to the point. MAKE SURE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR PHONE USE FROM DAY ONE. There are public phones EVERYWHERE and you can even call long distance on them (calls to the US are around 5 pesos cada minuto). Payphones do not accept change, but **LADATEL** calling cards in 30 and 50 peso denominations can be purchased almost anywhere.

Do not call long distance from your host family's house unless you are calling collect or using a calling card toll-free access number. Otherwise, to call the U.S., use a **LADATEL** card from a pay phone. It is advised to bring your own phone cards; however, you may purchase them there or purchase international phone cards online and use the access numbers. Often times, it is easier and cheaper (and safer than running to the corner to call home at night time) for the U.S. to call you. Most students establish days and times to be home, and let their host families know that they will be expecting a call.

Like in the U.S., cell phones are becoming very popular among the Mexican middle class and many of the students at the university will have their own cellular phone. In the past, some Dickinson students have purchased a cell phone while in Mexico or made arrangements with a Mexican dealer to transfer coverage plans. While certainly convenient, it is by no means necessary and often times, the pricing and "deals" offered by cell phone companies are expensive and not as comprehensive as those in the states. There are also certain U.S. cell phone companies, such as Verizon that offer extended North American service to Mexico.

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To call the United States from Mexico:

**001-(3 digit area code)-7 digit phone number** (001=country code)

To call Mexico from the United States dial:

**011-52-442-(7 digit phone number)** (52=country code, 442=city code)

### ***El Correo (Mail and Post Offices):***

Packages coming from the US, via USPS Air Mail (i.e. through the US Post Office), can take up to a month. Faster service is available through DHL and FedEx, although it is much more expensive. Letters and postcards going both to and from Mexico can take anywhere from 10-21 days, depending on the whims of the postal gods.

The prices for letters and postcards depend on the size and weight. Generally these prices range from 10.50 pesos (postcard/letter) to 197 pesos (big letter/small package). A useful website for determining prices is <http://www.sepomex.gob.mx/Paginas/default.aspx>.

The cost of sending a package depends on weight and how soon you want it to arrive in the States. Although FedEx, UPS and other international couriers have offices in Mexico, they are much more expensive than the Mexican postal service and unless you want an overnight or specific time delivery, not worth the hassle. Also, past experience proves that packages sent FROM the US to Mexico are extremely pricy due to restrictions on what can be sent, weight, etc; and there are often taxes and fees to be paid upon arrival.

### **Post offices:**

- Arteaga 17 poniente near the Biblioteca del Estado and the Alameda
- Colonia San Javier

There is also MexPost, which offers 2 day delivery to the U.S. in Edificio Orbit on Ignacio Perez (between Zaragoza and Constituyentes).

### ***Banks and Changing Money:***

It is recommended that you only carry the money that you expect to use that day, rather than carrying your credit card, debit card, and large amounts of cash. The banks are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, and most are located in the Centro. However, the hours for changing money or cashing traveler's checks are very limited. Most banks and "casas de cambio" only exchange money in the morning (9am-3pm). A PASSPORT IS ALMOST ALWAYS REQUIRED TO CHANGE MONEY.

Personal checks are of no use because they require 4-6 weeks to clear. Typically students set up accounts with home banks that issue ATM cards. 24hr-ATM machines are available outside of most banks, and there is also an ATM located at the *la entrada principal* of the UAQ.

It is also a good idea to bring a credit card for emergency purposes as well as some cash in traveler's checks. Before departure, be sure to explain to your bank and credit card company that you will be abroad so as not to arouse suspicion when withdrawals from Mexico appear on your statement. You should also keep one credit card in a safe place in your homestay for emergencies or in case you lose your primary card.

### ***Gym Memberships:***

There are a multitude of small gyms available throughout Queretaro in small neighborhoods. Jardines de la Hacienda has 3. They go for about 30 USD/month. The Unidad Deportiva has a gym and track that is free for students, but with rather restricted hours. There are lots of places to run throughout the city. Also, most gyms lack cardiovascular equipment. There aren't very many that have this type of equipment and those that do are more costly – about \$60 a month. The gym most like a U.S. gym is Aerofitness.

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There is always something fun and exciting happening in the Centro, whether it is a museum exhibit, musical performance or a special celebration. At most local bookstores as well as in the *Oficina de Turismo* (located on Pasteur 4 Norte near Plaza de Armas) you can find a useful booklet, called *ASOMARTE*, which outlines the month's cultural events by type, date, and location. Try to keep Sundays free because these are the biggest Centro days.

**Plazas:**

- ❑ Jardín Zenea – center of town where all come to stroll and chat
- ❑ Plaza de la Independencia/de Armas – music and food
- ❑ Mercado de la Cruz – 15 de Mayo – Centro Histórico
- ❑ La Alameda – (local park: vendors, gardens etc. DON'T GO ALONE) Constituyentes y Corregidora

**Los Museos:**

- Museo de Arte
- Museo de la Ciudad (near Jardín Zenea)
- Museo Regional
- Galería Libertad (Plaza de Armas)
- Galería Municipal

**Food:**

- ❑ VIPS – (the Mexican Denny's) – Jardín Zenea, Constituyentes, Centro
- ❑ Compadres (cheap, tasty Mexican food in a cozy, friendly setting)
- ❑ La Bisnaga (near Templo de la Cruz) – artsy, relaxed, relaxed atmosphere, playing cards and board games available, serves anything from salads to quesadillas to good milkshakes
- ❑ El Jardín de los Conejos – (a true Mexican diner with all-you-can-eat tortillas) – Plaza de Toros y Plaza Boulevares
- ❑ La Reliqui –(good, cheap breakfast)
- ❑ Tacos de Francia – (the best street tacos and gringas) – Colonia San Javier
- ❑ Sushi Ito – (sushi) – Bernardo Quintana, Plaza Boulevares
- ❑ La Mariposa – (panadería y helado) – Hidalgo y Corregidora (un poquito caro)
- ❑ El Globo – (panadería) – Corregidora y Plaza Boulevares
- ❑ El Punto Café – (amazing salads y sandwiches) – Centro
- ❑ El Heron – (vegetarian café) – Centro
- ❑ La Michoacana – (helado, nieves, y licuados) – por toda la ciudad
- ❑ The Antojería – (really good, inexpensive traditional Mexican food) – Centro

**Cafés:**

- ❑ The Italian Coffee Company (like Starbucks) – Plaza de Armas, Plaza Boulevares y Alamos 3ra
- ❑ Meix – (smoothies) – Independencia
- ❑ Café Amadeus – Jardines de la Hacienda y Calzada de los Arcos #102-7, Carretas
- ❑ La Bisnaga – Gutierrez Nagera, before Calle Independencia near Templo de la Cruz –artsy, relaxed hangout with great coffee, smoothies, and appetizers
- ❑ Café Marrón – Plaza de Armas

**Cines:**

- ❑ Cinemark – Plaza Boulevares
- ❑ Cinopolis en Plaza de Toros – on Wednesdays tickets are half price and they offer student discounts with an ID
- ❑ Plaza del Parque
- ❑ Dos Gemelos – Plaza de Dos Gemelos – Constituyentes
- ❑ Cineteatro Rosalio Sotan – Centro – international films

**De Compras (Shopping):**

- ❑ Mercado de Artesanía – the side streets branching off Plaza de Armas have many local artisans selling anything

- 
- from paintings to jewelry most days of the week
  - ❑ Plaza de las Américas – Constituyentes
  - ❑ Plaza del Parque – Bernardo Quintana
    - Sanborns, Suburbia, Comercial Mexicana, y muchas joyerías
  - ❑ Wal-Mart, Sam's Club y Office Depot – Bernardo Quintana
  - ❑ Plaza de Toros – (with Sears) – Galerías de Querétaro
  - ❑ Plaza Boulevares – Bernardo Quintana

### Night life:

Many of the places require the presentation of ID because legal drinking age is 18.

- ❑ AMERICAN
  - Carlos & Charlies – (very American) – Bernardo Quintana
  - Irish Pub
- ❑ *Antros*/Discotec clubs
  - Mambo Café – (live Caribbean music) – Constituyentes
  - Metro – (very *fresa*, techno) – Plaza Boulevares
  - 4-Play – (cheaper than Metro, also *fresa*) – Bernardo Quintana, Alamos 3ra
  - El Alebrije – (club) – Constituyentes
  - 442, Iconos
- ❑ Bars
  - Freedom – (bar) – Constituyentes
  - Pretzel Bar – (bar and free food every night with purchase of drinks)
  - Cuadros – (classy, live music, wines) – Andador 5 de mayo
  - La Tasca – (*taquitos*, beer, and music) – Constituyentes
  - Carousel – (Tuesday night special, pool hall) – Bernardo Quintana
  - Cantina de los Remedios – (Tuesday night special) – Constituyentes
  - Los Columpios – (true Mexican hotspot – live music and dj; Banda, Salsa, and Cumbia music; jeans and cowboys hats generally worn by locals)
  - La Excusa (live bands)
  - La Vecindad de las Josefas
  - Lo Botica (great dancing)
  - Barracud

## *Other Helpful Hints*

### *Family:*

Your family can provide you with the greatest opportunity for cultural exchange and can be your most valuable resource. Treat your family with respect and they will return the favor. Be sure all rules and expectations are clearly defined. Be aware of energy conservation by not taking long showers and use only the necessary amount of lights. Spend time talking with your family and go out with your siblings. This interaction can be a huge tool in learning about the language and culture. It is recommended that you bring a small housewarming gift to your host family. This could be something personal, such as a photo book about your hometown or Dickinson College gear.

### *School:*

The UAQ is by no means Dickinson. The teaching style, classroom norms and student/teacher, student/students relationships are not comparable. Some of your classes may or may not be as intellectually challenging as at Dickinson. However, it is your personal responsibility to gain academically from this experience. Therefore, do not be afraid to make mistakes and ask questions. Trying is best way to learn.

The students and *profesores* will understand that you are not *mexicano* and will expect you to make mistakes and with few exceptions, will be more than willing to help you. Keep a pocket notebook with new words and try to use them. Even if you are fluent in Spanish you will soon learn that Mexico has its own unique phrases and slang – learn them and use them.

---

### ***Food and Water:***

Because those comments everyone makes about the water in México are true, no one in México drinks the tap water. Your families will use bottled or specially treated, filtered water for everything, including drinking, cooking and food preparation, so there is no need to worry. Brushing your teeth with tap water isn't a problem, but you may want to keep a bottle of water by the sink for when you are finished. Bottled water can be purchased at almost all stores for \$5-10 pesos depending on the size of the bottle.

Also, be very cautious of eating out at street vendors. Although you will adjust with time to the food, at first the food will be "picante" and street food will probably make you sick. Ask your families which vendors near you are good. Specifically, try to avoid lettuce and fruits on the street. They are normally sprayed with something during harvesting that makes unaccustomed stomachs ill.

### ***Drinking:***

Remember that while drinking is part of being young and having fun, being drunk and stupid is not looked upon highly. Although you will be of age in the community (the legal drinking age is 18), you will no longer be in the safety of the Dickinson campus. Be aware of your surroundings and company when you plan to consume alcohol in order to remain as safe as possible. Most Mexicans have only experienced young Americans who are traveling for spring break (literally labeled by Mexicans as *spring breakers*), and it can be easy to reinforce these stereotypes.

### ***Poverty:***

Poverty may be shocking upon arrival. There are people sleeping in the streets and children who beg in the plazas; they will come into the restaurants to try and sell you flowers and candy. While you may feel bad, their parents are sometimes sitting nearby and sending them to take advantage of you. If you want to give them something offer them bread or food. If you give them money they will come back, and others will come with them. One past participant noted that if a child tries to give you a sticker and you accept, you must give him or her money. If you do not want the sticker, you must give it back gently and say, "No, gracias."

On any given day you will see a clown (*payaso*) performing at a traffic light, or a guitarist will enter your bus, tell a story, sing songs and then ask for a charity (*una caridad*). If you enjoyed the show, give them something. If you didn't, give them a little something anyway.

## ***Useful Vocabulary***

### **FOOD**

- **Aguas** – de Jamaica, melon, naranja, etc...(natural juices mixed with sugar water)
- **Naranjada, limonada** – combo of juice (orange or lime) and seltzer water
- **Limón** – lime! most people put it on nearly everything
- **Jarra** – pitcher (of beer/juice)
- **Jarro** – glass (of beer/juice)
- **Me pica** – it's spicy for me
- **Tomar** – to drink (alcohol)

### **TRANSPORTATION**

- **Camión** – bus used to travel outside of the city.
- **Taxibus** – buses around the city, like the ones you take to school

### **MODISMOS**

#### **La Gente – People**

- **Guey (pronounced way)** – the closest English translation is ‘dude’ or ‘man’. Used between men of all classes and ages and between women of the upper classes (or *fresas*). Between not-so-good friends it is a huge insult. It can be used to say something or someone sucks: **¡que guey!**
- **¿Qué onda guey?** – what’s up dude/man? (be careful; not everyone uses this and some don’t like the word “guey”)
- **Güero/a** – a person with light skin or hair coloration. This will be a common name for most of you when you are in public; try not to take offense to it. Mexicans themselves can be **güero/a**.
- **Naco/Fresa** – these are two types that the Mexican youths classify each other as. **Naco** means someone who is ignorant, poor, badly behaved, of a lower social status or dresses as such. **Fresa** is the other extreme, denoting someone who has money and nice clothes and is snobby. The terms apply to both females and males and can also be used about objects or to say someone is acting in one extreme or the other. A not so PC translation of the types is *ghetto* and *preppy*.
- **Gringo/a** – a North American; this is sometimes offensive, sometimes not.
- **Gustar** – when you want to say you like a person, never say “Me gusta/ me gustas” unless you mean you are sexually attracted to them. To say you get along well/ not well with someone, use CAERSE BIEN/ MAL, ex. “Tú me caes bien.”
- **Chaparro/ a** – the least insulting way to say someone is short.
- **Platicar** – to talk, discuss
- **Crudo/a** – refers to hung over

## EXCLAMATIONS

- **¡qué chido!** – this is how you really say “cool.” very informal and used among friends.
- **¡guacala!** – [gwah-ka-la] “Yuck!”
- **¡no manches!** – “No way! Get out!” This is informal but can be used in all company. **¡No mames!** is a more vulgar version of no manches. Be careful with usage; it is typically only used among youth and friends.
- **¡que padre!** – this is sort of like saying “cool,” but probably more like “neat;” it is a phrase used by all age groups.
- **¡ya voy!** – “I’m coming!” Often said by host-siblings in an irritated tone, this is useful when being called for dinner or the phone.
- **¡que milagro!** – “what a miracle/ surprise!” You’ll probably learn about Mexican sarcasm through this phrase.
- **¡que poca (madre)!** – This has two distinct meanings, said when someone is offended by something, roughly meaning “that stinks” or it could mean the opposite: “that’s awesome, etc.” Usually only young adults will use it in the second sense, but you’ll learn quickly which is which.
- **¡órale!** – “wow!” (more positive connotation)
- **¡jole!** – “wow” (more negative connotation)
- **andale** – “all right, okay, well” (used often)

## TIME

- **Ahorita** – Right now, in a little bit, soon. This can mean anything from literally right this second to a few hours.
- **Rato/ ratito** – small amount of time.  
**Nos vemos al ratito** – See you very soon.

## EMOTION

- **Espantar** (no te espantes) – don’t freak out, don’t worry.
- **¿qué fue?** – “What’s up?”
- **¿qué tienes/traes?** – “What’s wrong?” Caution: in the wrong tone “**Que te traes?**” means “what’s your deal? Bring it on!”
- **Estar emocionado/excitado** – If you want to say “I’m excited” it’s “estoy emocionado/a.” However, if you say “estoy excitado/a,” you’re really saying “I’m horny.”
- **Estar embarazado/ tener vergüenza** – If you want to say “I’m embarrassed,” it’s “tengo vergüenza.” If

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instead you say, “Estoy embarazado/a,” you’re saying you’re pregnant.

- **Me vale (madre, nada)** – no me importa
- **Darse Coraje** – expresses anger

## OTHER

- **Lana** – money
- **Cursi** – corny
- **Chingar** – the F-word
- **Este...** – used when trying to think of what to say. Their version of “um.”
- **Coger** – for students that studied abroad in Spain in the fall semester, it is important to understand the different meanings of “coger” in different Spanish speaking countries. Although your Spanish host mom may have encouraged you to “coge pan,” if you tell your Mexican host mom that you’re going to “coger el autobus,” it will not only not make sense to her, but it will be seen as vulgar and inappropriate. Coger in Mexico refers to sex in a lewd manner.

## Outside of the City

Over weekends and during breaks, there will be opportunities to travel around México. The easiest (and cheapest) way to do so is by *camión*. Any taxista will be able to take you to the *Central de Autobuses*. From there you can get to almost anywhere in the country. First class buses, such as Primera Plus and Omnibus, are safer, more reliable, guarantee a seat and come with a free lunch. Be aware that the buses, especially first class, are extremely prompt. You should have your ticket purchased no later than 30 minutes before a bus is scheduled to leave.

Below are some suggestions for local trips. Remember that México is a huge country and there are many places to visit if you have the time!

## México, DF

El D.F. (El Distrito Federal) is more populated than New York City with over 22 million inhabitants. It is congested, polluted, sprawling, and quite fascinating. It never seems to end, whether you are flying over it or driving through it. One out of four Mexicans lives in the City. All cultural, governmental, and social roads in the Republic lead here (it’s true; pay attentions to road signs when you travel!). *Tiempo Libre*, a bi-weekly publication announces information on what is happening in the arts and entertainment world, and special events. This magazine can be purchased at VIPS or Sanborns in Querétaro. **It is generally difficult to see DF without a native, and it is very dangerous both day and night.**

Although the culture class will be making a trip to D.F. during the semester, here are some suggestions for things to see if you want a weekend away.

- Chapultepec Park
- Homes of Frida Kahlo and Leon Trotsky
- Museo de Antropología
- Ballet Folklórico – Bellas Artes theater
- Teotihuacan
- La Ciudadela Mkt (Balderos metro stop), some of the best artesanías
- The Aztec Templo Mayor
- Shopping in the Zona Rosa (Insurgentes metro stop)
- Plaza de Coyoacán
  - The Parnaso bookstore (where revolutions have been planned)
  - Colectivo Sto. Domingo-Coyoacán
- Cineteca nacional – Avenida México-Coyoacán 389, southern extension Avda. Cuauhtemoc
- La Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe – huge tourist site, religious and cultural icon of México

## Other Trips

- Puebla

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- Guanajuato
  - Cuernavaca
  - San Juan del Río
  - San Miguel de Allende (small colonial town known for its beautiful cathedral and for the presence of many Americans)
  - Taxco (silver)
  - Tequisquiapan (known for *artesanía*)
  - León (leather markets)
  - Bernal (world's third largest monolith-plus a beautiful tiny town)
  - San Luis Potosí
  - Zacatecas
  - Oaxaca

#### Beaches

- Puerto Vallarta
- Ixtapa
- Puerto Escondido
- Zihuatanejo
- Acapulco
- Huatulco
- Veracruz

**Good traveler's books:** Frommers, Let's Go México, Lonely Planet or Foder's

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## APPENDIX IX: Department of State Travel Alert for Mexico

### Travel Alert

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Bureau of Consular Affairs

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*This information is current as of today, Thu Nov 19 10:02:33 2009.*

### Mexico - Security

**August 20, 2009**

The Department of State has issued this Travel Alert to update security information for U.S. citizens traveling to and living in Mexico. It supersedes the Travel Alert for Mexico dated February 20, 2009, and expires on February 20, 2010.

While millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year (including tens of thousands who cross the land border every day for study, tourism or business), violence in the country has increased. It is imperative that travelers understand the risks of travel to Mexico, how best to avoid dangerous situations, and who to contact if one becomes a crime victim. Common-sense precautions such as visiting only legitimate business and tourist areas during daylight hours, and avoiding areas where prostitution and drug dealing might occur, can help ensure that travel to Mexico is safe and enjoyable.

Recent violent attacks have caused the U.S. Embassy to urge U.S. citizens to delay unnecessary travel to parts of Michoacán and Chihuahua (see details below) and advise U.S. citizens residing or traveling in those areas to exercise extreme caution. Drug cartels and associated criminal elements have retaliated violently against individuals who speak out against them or whom they otherwise view to be a threat to their organization, regardless of the individuals' citizenship. These attacks include the abduction and murder of two resident U.S. citizens in Chihuahua in July, 2009.

#### Violence Along the U.S. - Mexico Border

Mexican drug cartels are engaged in violent conflict - both among themselves and with Mexican security services - for control of narcotics trafficking routes along the U.S.-Mexico border. In order to combat violence, the government of Mexico has deployed military troops in various parts of the country. U.S. citizens should cooperate fully with official checkpoints when traveling on Mexican highways.

Some recent Mexican army and police confrontations with drug cartels have resembled small-unit combat, with cartels employing automatic weapons and grenades. Large firefights have taken place in towns and cities across Mexico, but occur mostly in northern Mexico, including Tijuana, Chihuahua City, Monterrey and Ciudad Juarez. During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area. The U.S. Mission in Mexico currently restricts non-essential travel within the state of Durango, the northwest quadrant of Chihuahua and an area southeast of Ciudad Juarez, and all parts of the state of Coahuila south of Mexican Highways 25 and 22 and the Alamos River for US Government employees assigned to Mexico. This restriction was implemented in light of the recent increase in assaults, murders, and kidnappings in those three states. The situation in northern Mexico remains fluid; the location and timing of future armed engagements cannot be predicted.

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A number of areas along the border are experiencing rapid growth in the rates of many types of crime. Robberies, homicides, petty thefts, and carjackings have all increased over the last year across Mexico generally, with notable spikes in Tijuana and northern Baja California. Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana and Nogales are among the cities which have experienced public shootouts during daylight hours in shopping centers and other public venues. Criminals have followed and harassed U.S. citizens traveling in their vehicles in border areas including Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, and Tijuana.

The situation in the state of Chihuahua including Ciudad Juarez is of special concern. The U.S. Consulate General recommends that American citizens defer non-essential travel to the Guadalupe Bravo area southeast of Ciudad Juarez and to the northwest quarter of the state of Chihuahua including the city of Nuevo Casas Grandes and surrounding communities. From the United States, these areas are often reached through the Columbus, NM and Fabens and Fort Hancock, TX ports-of-entry. In both areas, American citizens have been victims of drug related violence.

Mexican authorities report that more than 1,000 people have been killed in Ciudad Juarez in the first six-months of 2009. Additionally, this city of 1.6 million people experienced more than 17,000 car thefts and 1,650 carjackings in 2008. U.S. citizens should pay close attention to their surroundings while traveling in Ciudad Juarez, avoid isolated locations during late night and early morning hours, and remain alert to news reports. Visa and other service seekers visiting the Consulate are encouraged to make arrangements to pay for those services using a non-cash method.

U.S. citizens are urged to be alert to safety and security concerns when visiting the border region. Criminals are armed with a wide array of sophisticated weapons. In some cases, assailants have worn full or partial police or military uniforms and have used vehicles that resemble police vehicles. While most crime victims are Mexican citizens, the uncertain security situation poses serious risks for U.S. citizens as well. U.S. citizen victims of crime in Mexico are urged to contact the consular section of the nearest U.S. consulate or Embassy for advice and assistance. Contact information is provided at the end of this message.

### Crime and Violence Throughout Mexico

Although the greatest increase in violence has occurred on the Mexican side of the U.S. border, U.S. citizens traveling throughout Mexico should exercise caution in unfamiliar areas and be aware of their surroundings at all times. Bystanders have been injured or killed in violent attacks in cities across the country, demonstrating the heightened risk of violence in public places. In recent years, dozens of U.S. citizens living in Mexico have been kidnapped and most of their cases remain unsolved. U.S. citizens who believe they are being targeted for kidnapping or other crimes should notify Mexican officials, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, or the nearest American Consulate as soon as possible. Any U.S. visitor who suspects they are a target should consider returning to the United States immediately.

U.S. citizens should make every attempt to travel on main roads during daylight hours, particularly the toll ("cuota") roads, which generally are more secure. When warranted, the U.S. Embassy and consulates advise their employees as well as private U.S. citizens to avoid certain areas, abstain from driving on certain roads because of dangerous conditions or criminal activity, or recommend driving during daylight hours only. When this happens, the Embassy or the affected consulate will alert the local U.S. citizen Warden network and post the information on their respective websites, indicating the nature of the concern and the expected time period for which the restriction will remain in place.

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U.S. citizen visitors are encouraged to stay in the well-known tourist areas. Travelers should leave their itinerary with a friend or family member not traveling with them, avoid traveling alone, and check with their cellular provider prior to departure to confirm that their cell phone is capable of roaming on GSM or 3G international networks. Do not display expensive-looking jewelry, large amounts of money, or other valuable items.

### Demonstrations and Large Public Gatherings

Demonstrations occur frequently throughout Mexico and usually are peaceful. However, even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate to violence unexpectedly. Violent demonstrations have resulted in deaths, including that of an American citizen in Oaxaca in 2006. In 2008, a Mexican Independence Day celebration was the target of a violent attack. During demonstrations or law enforcement operations, U.S. citizens are advised to remain in their homes or hotels, avoid large crowds, and avoid the downtown and surrounding areas. Since the timing and routes of scheduled marches and demonstrations are always subject to change, U.S. citizens should monitor local media sources for new developments and exercise extreme caution while within the vicinity of protests.

The Mexican Constitution prohibits political activities by foreigners, and such actions may result in detention and/or deportation. U.S. citizens are therefore advised to avoid participating in demonstrations or other activities that might be deemed political by Mexican authorities. As is always the case in any large gathering, U.S. citizens should remain alert to their surroundings.

### Further Information

For more detailed information on staying safe in Mexico, please see the [Mexico Country Specific Information](#). Information on security and travel to popular tourist destinations is also provided in the publication: "[Spring Break in Mexico- Know Before You Go!!](#)"

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), and [Travel Alerts](#) can be found. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada, or, for callers from Mexico, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). American citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to register with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the State Department's travel registration website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/>.

For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the U.S. Embassy or the closest U.S. Consulate. The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000. You may also contact the Embassy by e-mail at: [ACSMexicoCity@state.gov](mailto:ACSMexicoCity@state.gov) The Embassy's internet address is <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/>.