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Amended Incoming International Student Orientation for the College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine

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SIT Graduate Institute

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**AMENDED INCOMING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION
FOR THE COLLEGE OF THE ATLANTIC, BAR HARBOR, MAINE**

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PIM 71/72

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for a Master of Arts in International Education
at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, U.S.A.

December 2014

Raymond Young

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Monica Hamm
October 10, 2014

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Abstract

This proposal was created in order to design and implement a theory-based Incoming International Student Orientation program for the College of the Atlantic (COA) Office of International Student Services in Bar Harbor, Maine. This is a Course-Linked Capstone Proposal (CLC) for the two-day orientation that prepares incoming international students for life at a small American college and touches on aspects of immigration regulations, culture, transitions, and student development.

After reviewing the program Needs Assessment and past orientation programs for incoming international students at COA, it was clear that there was an active need for an orientation that touched on more pertinent information for the students as well as a better design that is geared towards the transitional state the incoming international students are in when they arrive at the college for the orientation. This proposal highlights the theory-based orientation program that I designed.

The COA Incoming International Student Orientation is designed and led by the Coordinator of International Student Services each year with the help of various aides. The Orientation takes place primarily on the COA campus each August prior to the general student orientation. After the Incoming International Student Orientation, the participants are asked to fill out an Evaluation of their time and experience in order to aid in future program design and evaluation of the Orientation.

Cover Letter

Board of Trustees
College of the Atlantic
105 Eden Street
Bar Harbor, Me 04609

Dear COA Board of Trustees,

As the international students at COA make up 18% of the total student body, it is clear that they are a very important part of COA and her unique culture. In preserving the tradition of growth and advancement here at the college, the International Student Orientation is in need of undergoing a full modification in order to meet the needs of the international students and to prepare them better for their time here at COA and the U.S.

As the Coordinator of International Student Services, it is my department that creates and implements the orientation each year and I would like to take this opportunity to propose to you the following amended International Student Orientation for the College of the Atlantic's incoming international class.

After a Needs Assessment, created using two years of knowledge and information on the orientation, I based this program on student development and transitional theories. I outline this new orientation program below. Should this proposal be approved, the plan is for it to be implemented in the fall of 2015, for the next incoming class of international students. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,



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Introduction

In the fall of 2013, I accepted the position of College of the Atlantic's (COA) new Coordinator of International Student Services. As the new Coordinator I began working one week prior to the arrival of the incoming international students on campus for their International Student Orientation. I did not even have an office before I needed to make and then immediately execute the orientation for the college. I quickly realized that there was not much of a template program in place to base a new orientation on, so based on this need as well as a Needs Assessment, I decided to design a new orientation for the incoming international students based on my experience along with student development and transition theories. Some specific theories that I based my orientation design on include Baxter Magolda's theory of Self-Authorship and the three questions student who are on the journey towards self-authorship ask. For my orientation, I have identified the international students as being on this journey due to their ages and the transitional period they are going through by coming to the U.S. to study. The three questions deal with Epistemological "How do I know", Interpersonal "How do I want to construct relationships with others" and intrapersonal, "Who am I", all of which can easily come in to play during an international student orientation, regardless of the program's length (King, P.M., Baxter Magolda, M.B., 2011). For the transitional theories, I have focused on the authors L., Moores and N. Popadiuk, (2011), in terms of looking at the international student's acculturation, motivation, and expectations of their education in the U.S. as well as communicating to the students what might be expected of them while studying here.

Background

College of the Atlantic is a small (350 students) college in Down-East Maine. It is informal, personal, and hosts around 60 international students through its one-person office of International Student Services. COA allows students to create their own pathway in their degree by encouraging cross-disciplinary exploration and creativity. It confers on the students just one degree when they graduate: Human Ecology. This degree allows the student to create their own customized program focusing on the broad field of Human Ecology and allows students to take paths as varied as genetics research or folk cinema.

The majority of the international students at COA (currently 52 out of the 60) come from one of the United World Colleges (UWC). The United World College is a conglomeration of more than 14 institutions worldwide that offers the International Baccalaureate and other programs to pre-university students from all types of backgrounds. Students are considered Davis United World College Scholars due to a generous scholarship given to students from any of the UWC schools around the world who decide to attend a designated UWC college or university in the U.S., of which COA is one. As the students are chosen from countries all over the world to go to these institutions, the UWC has a very global structure and therefore generates students who come from many different cultures. UWC schools conduct all their classes in English and their graduates come to COA with a high degree of proficiency. They are also a diverse group representing different cultures and nationalities.

The Coordinator of International Student Services is a one-person office, and is required to create and run the international student orientation for all new international

students. The need to create a new orientation for the incoming international students at COA was clear. After researching the needs and requirements of undergraduate international students coming to a United States college for the first time, it was decided to develop a holistic, streamlined, effective, and very straightforward orientation for the incoming international students in fall 2015.

Rationale: The Need for a Better Orientation

By proposing to create a new international student orientation program for the College of the Atlantic, it was acknowledging the need for a fully revamped program to meet incoming international students as soon as they arrive in the United States. As a one-person office, the International Student Orientation can only be designed by the current person in the position of Coordinator of International Student Services. COA's International Student Orientation was originally just a partial-day event that was fit into the schedule of the general school-wide first-year orientation. Through the years the orientation has expanded, but mostly has been added to and built upon year to year as each successive Coordinator decided something was lacking. Although the final product of this process worked fine as an orientation, it would benefit the students much better to design a new orientation in order for it to have a higher level of intentionality and be more tailored to the needs of the incoming international students.

It is possible to still use elements from the older program designs that fit properly, only update them. The design of the International Student Orientation would be partially based on program planning from the School of International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. This based the flow of the design and activities involved on theories from

courses such as Design and Delivery, approaches and facilitation techniques from the Training Design for Experiential Learning, and psychology and ice-breakers/team-builders from Youth Program & Leadership Development. As only one person is in charge of the Design AND Delivery of the orientation, it is necessary for that person to think of everything from the student's mental state of having just arrived in the U.S. and the college for the first time, to the fact that some students might know each other from their United World College days, while others wouldn't know anybody.

Using some of the same parameters as from the former orientations, this new program would of course be designed each year around the information that the Coordinator's office receives mid-summer about the incoming international student class. This information is usually how many students are coming, what countries they are from, and their ages. As the time gets closer to the orientation, the Coordinator is in contact with all the students in order to convey important immigration information, as well as receiving a personal profile from each student. This means that any orientation design needs to be created in order to accommodate anywhere between 10 and 20 students from any country in the world (in the past this has ranged from the more common Canada and Mexico to the less common Myanmar and Oman). As for integrating more specific information about the students, such as whether they are vegetarian, this information will need to be accommodated by any orientation design very late and therefore a design will need an inherent flexibility in many aspects.

This proposed orientation focuses on examining the theory of student development and international student needs. It touches on aspects such as what culture shock is and what can be done about it, aspects of general American culture that the

students will come in contact with (sometimes for the first time upon arriving for the orientation), along with necessary logistics and immigration information. On top of all this, it will allow for things like jet lag, homesickness, loneliness, and other aspects that can be helped by careful design and organization with everything from icebreakers to snack time and even rest time.

Learning Objectives for the Students

The Learning Objectives for the International Student Orientation are many and varied. There is a lot to cover in a short amount of time, but as the Coordinator is the first contact that all the students would have with the college, and possibly with the culture of the U.S., the first meeting must be carefully planned, and not include much in the way of informational speeches.

The focus as far as what information to impart to the students during orientation is four-pronged. First, there will be cultural exercises in order to facilitate easing the culture-shock/culture engagement the students will possibly be experiencing. Second, to make sure the students have the necessary information they require in order to function well on a personal level. Not just for understanding the basics of being in a US college, but also on an essential living level; staying warm in a colder climate, where to buy milk, how the COA compostable toilets work, etc. Third, introduce the students to the school itself a little, not so much the things that would be covered in the general incoming student orientation, but things that would raise questions for an international at COA. Lastly, but very importantly, go over the immigration regulations with the students. This needs to be done in a way that will not bore them too much but that they might also

manage to remember the information, since the rules can be very particular and the results of failing to comply are drastic, such as losing one's status and having to leave the country.

Objectives for the international students to take away from the orientation:

- Make the arrival and immediate days following as helpful and smooth as possible for the new international COA students,
- Create structure right away,
- Inform the students of the important immigration regulations and what is required from them on that point,
- Give a brief American cultural orientation,
- Inform them about culture shock; what it is, what it feels like, what you can do about it,
- Allow the students to create a base of friends with each other,
- Aid the first-years by allowing them a time to speak with upper-class international students in order to answer questions that only someone who has experienced what they are going through could,
- Introduce the students to the culture of COA,
- And allow time before the academic year begins where I am present and can be asked any questions that come up

Theoretical Foundation

There are many theories that can be used to aid in creating an orientation, but there are less that focus on the specific student development of international students

with different cultural norms coming to study in the U.S., which presents a problem when researching student-learning theories. Student development not only needs to be researched in preparing to design an international student orientation, but also theories of student transitions and how that affects a student experience (Gillespie, Braskamp, & Dwyer, 2009; Glass, 2012; Moores & Popadiuk, 2011). In focusing on what, specifically, needed to be achieved in the orientation for the international students, it was crucial to understand information that dealt not only with international student development, but also with the individual experience of encountering a new/foreign culture. For international students entering the country to attend college, there are many factors that can determine the route of an orientation and what the students need to get out of that time. For some of the theory that the orientation is based on, observations of what occurs to international students before, during, and after transitioning to another country to study were looked at. Personal feelings and experiences when dealing with the culture shock and emotions that the students might be dealing with when arriving in a foreign country to live and study were also drawn upon for the design.

The pedagogical approach followed in the orientation program design focused on being experiential and holistic. An experiential, holistic curriculum would work the best with the population of incoming international students and it would be the most conducive towards those participants getting the most out of the orientation (Gillespie, 2011).

Developing the orientation around a social and informational foundation helps to establish an environment in which to build the experience of the orientation, as per Bloom's Taxonomy. Although two-and-a-half days is a very short amount of time to be

able to create a program that can adequately go through the process of the Taxonomy, the orientation works hard to allow for a certain flow of knowledge, comprehension, analysis, and even evaluation (Forehand, M. 2005).

The learning involved must also be an also an active, ongoing process, not based solely on lecture or discussion. There will be time allowed in the schedule for those who need to be on their own, with no new information coming at them in order to process what they have learned and/or observed. This will also help the international students who happen to be introverted and need time to decompress and have down time. This is done by scheduling breaks and snacks throughout both full days, making time for walks and purposefully not scheduling anything after dinner on all three evenings (Torres, 2011). While the curriculum for the orientation has been created beforehand, an experiential curriculum allows for learning through separate experiences. The Coordinator should allow many of the discussions during the orientation to lead in the direction the group takes it, only bringing them back to the focus points when they feel it is necessary to stay on track.

Even though there is never a huge age difference among the international students, the fact that they come from such different cultures and educational backgrounds means there will be participants on the program who will likely be at different life stages in their psycho-social development than others (Evans, 2011). In taking into account the different life stages as well as separate cultural or social backgrounds of a participant, it is important to understand that each person may need individual attention at some time. Constant debriefing, or discussion will allow for a higher level of understanding for the participants. The orientation will also have

discussion time to generalize so that students can understand other experiences and position themselves in their worldview accordingly (Baxter Magolda, & King, 2011).

In taking into account the levels of emotion and confusion of the newly arrived international students, a point is made to incorporate plenty of physical activity in the program. This activity allows the participants to not need to concentrate the whole time, and allows them to wake up in the morning and energize them after downtime. It can also serve as a great way to cement relationships or create a feeling of trust with the other students (Baxter Magolda, & King, 2011, Gillespie, 2011).

International Students who choose to study at the College of the Atlantic are usually a very unique group in that they have self-selected themselves a majority of the time to come to a U.S. college that is rather unusual. As COA grants only one degree and is based strongly in the liberal arts and theories of experiential and hands-on learning, it is not a typical American college or typical college in any country. This can cause trouble, as many parents of students might not find a degree in Human Ecology or the work the students do at COA that applicable to either real life or finding a job after graduation. That is sort of the point of COA, making the focus more on individual and life development than just the practical job placement. This, however, not only can rub some parents the wrong way, it also can go against many cultures in the world that value a concrete education that IS focused on finding a job or the upcoming and more lucrative fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). Although students do sometimes study these at COA, they can basically mold their degree to any (and every) interest or focus they want. This freedom and flexibility can also be difficult for many to handle, especially if they have only experienced very traditional, structured education in

their past (Baxter Magolda, & King, 2011). It is for this reason that if an international student looks into COA and decides that the school is right for them, they are already self-selecting themselves out and a certain type of individual who is different from their international friends who are applying to colleges or universities such as Yale University, for instance. With this self-selection, it is important to acknowledge the unique nature of the international student who is choosing to go to COA.

The international student who is choosing to matriculate at COA, and who also was able to get into COA based on their high International Baccalaureate scores and fluent English must be a student who is relatively smart, aware, engaged, and individualistic. This of course isn't always the case, but it does tend to cover most of the international students who enter COA. Keeping all this in mind, student development theory is included on top of transitional theory in developing the orientation so as to allow for possible processing of the college experience within the international student perspective (Baxter Magolda, & King, 2011; Evans, 2011; Evans, Forney, Florence, Patton, & Renn, 1998; Kolb, 1984; Torres, 2011).

Goals and Objectives

Program Goals

The goal of the orientation is to provide incoming international students with a formal welcome from COA, and important information that will facilitate their transition to American culture and the COA. It is also to impart necessary information to them, such as important immigration information and logistics of living in the U.S.

Participant Goals

The orientation will: 1. Strengthen COA's International Student Orientation and the mission of the college by aiding participants in becoming acquainted with general American culture at COA. 2. Helping participants understand what is required for their immigration status, and keeping that status. 3. For participants to effectively transition to their new home. 4. For participants to establish a group of friends to help them adjust.

Objectives

The objectives for the COA International Student Orientation are several. Aside from imparting to the students the material that each of them must know, such as immigration information for them to stay in status, It is important to consider what their psychological state is in arriving at COA, as well as in America for the first time and being required to function right away.

Program Objectives

- Get necessary immigration information to the students, and introduced in a way that it is understood.
- Let them understand that the International Student Coordinator is their advocate at the school, and they can contact that person for anything.
- Review the individual student, to see what they might need at this confusing time.
- Allow the students to meet each other and develop their own peer support group.
- To prepare students for introduction to the American Educational system.
- To introduce information about the area in which the students will be living, including where important places are, where resources can be found, certain U.S. laws, etc.

Participant Objectives

- To learn about the culture of COA and the U.S.
- To know what is required for immigration status and to keep in-status.
- To have a practical introduction to the local town and its culture (where the grocery store is, what can a student find in the dorm kitchens, conversions of measurement systems).
- To keep some things in mind for the future (winter clothes, how to function in cold weather, Social Security Applications, etc.).
- To relax and get to know new international friends from all over the world as well as the International Student Advisor/Coordinator.
- To keep busy so there isn't time to feel lonely/sad/homesick.
- To fill out the Evaluation form for the International Student Orientation in a timely manner.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment was done through various methods. The methodology included the informal review of what had been done in my position in past years, as well as what was considered to be missing from the previous orientation. From my observations as Coordinator of International Student Services I decided there were various things that were strongly needed in the orientation, as the current international students at COA did not possess certain knowledge or tools to help them as students studying at COA from other countries. I also conducted informal interviews of various

international students in their third and fourth years as undergraduates at COA and used their responses in considering what should be included in my own orientation design.

One aspect I wished to alter in my orientation was how the program was geared towards a student body made up of solely former UWC students. Prior to my first year at COA all international students at the school were also UWC students. Since this is no longer the case at COA with four non-UWC students who entered in 2013 and four more in 2014, I wished to change the orientation from being very UWC student focused to being just international student focused so as not to isolate the non-UWC students further.

Another reason for wanting to recreate the International Student Orientation at COA was because of feedback I received from the international student upperclassmen. Not only did discussions with current international students show me that there were many things they wish had been introduced to them as early as possible in their time at COA, but I also observed a lack of understanding in the upperclass international students in areas of their immigration knowledge, understanding of culture shock and transitions for international students, and their ability to integrate with the domestic student body. Although not everything can be solved in a two-day orientation, I wished to do my best to address as many factors as I could in order to allow for the smoothest transition to the college for the international students as possible.

I also found lacking an intentionality to the orientation program in general. I wished to create a program that was designed using relevant student theory and integrating ideas that would benefit the students in their difficult transition. By incorporating an intentional design from its inception, I made sure that I could organize

the program to allow for the best use of the short time allowed and impart the most information and positive experiences to the students.

This year, fall 2014, was the first implementation of my new orientation program and will certainly result in the adjustment in future years from the gathered theory of what may be best in practice. In addition to my hoping to add a third day to the program, I will also need to adjust the orientation each year as the number of students and the countries they come from changes.

Program Description

Scope

The scope of the COA International Student Orientation program proposed for fall 2015 is a two-day mandatory orientation for all incoming first-year international students. Students who are international transfer students must also attend this orientation even if they are second or third-year. It is intended to be the international students first contact with the institution of COA, and often is their first contact with the U.S. and it's culture as well. This program is planned to give the students the necessary help and information that they would require as international students prior to having the domestic first-year orientation programs. The program is design solely for undergraduate students, the majority of which are first-year students, and is facilitated by the Office of International Students at COA. As this is a one-person office, the main design and delivery of this program is to be done by the Coordinator of International Student Services.

Timeline

The orientation itself does not begin until the last Thursday in late August each year, and goes until the following Sunday morning. However, the overall timeline of the process of orientation begins much earlier in the summer. On top of greeting the students when they arrive, the International Student Office also provides bedding for the students, which an aide and the Coordinator place in their dormitories prior to the student's arrival. This is done because it is known that the students usually arrive with no bedding and it is not possible to purchase this in the local town of Bar Harbor, therefore the majority of the students would not have bedding if it were not provided for them. The bedding is donated from the school and community, and the International Student Office chooses the bedding (sheets, blankets, pillows, etc.) in the best shape, and has it laundered before placing it in each student's room. The Coordinator also places a Welcome Bag in each student's room. Inside are a Welcome Letter (Appendix L), a map of the COA campus and the local town, emergency contact numbers, time and place to first meet, and some snacks, juice, a bottle of water and tissues. In the evaluations, the international students claim that this bag is a very helpful and highly appreciated as many of them have just come from the airport or bus station after many hours of traveling and are hungry and tired. It is a small but useful way to welcome students to the personal culture that COA works hard to embody.

On the evening of the last Thursday in August each year the students arrive and come to the Deering building for the first meeting and dinner (provided by the Office of International Student Services). This allows for the students to meet the Coordinator and each other. Not much important information is given at this point, as many students are

very tired, having just arrived. The Coordinator discusses the various roles their position plays at the school, and reminds the students to bring their immigration documents for review the next morning. The Coordinator and the orientation aides also take this time to answer any pressing questions the student usually have or to ask if all went well in their crossing of the U.S. border and if there needs to be any immediate action taken as far as contacting a Port of Entry or Deferred Inspection site on behalf of a student.

The following two days are filled with the Curriculum of the orientation (see Appendix B for orientation schedule). After the International Student Orientation, the students leave for their Outdoor Orientation Program that COA runs for first-years. Then they return and take part in COA's general academic student orientation, and following this the school year finally begins. As part of the International Student Orientation, the Coordinator meets with the first-year international students throughout the fall term. This includes a shopping trip after their first week of term, a trip to the Social Security Administration, various office visits of each student, and finally a meeting at the end of their first term to review the immigration information, and check-in with how each individual student is doing and evaluate the term.

Participants

The COA International Student Orientation consists of the incoming first-year international students, an aid, drivers, upperclassmen international student volunteers, the on-campus Student Health Advisor, and the Coordinator of International Student Services. The aid, who is often a upperclass COA international student, is present the full orientation length of two-and-a-half days, and often begins several days earlier in order to help with preparations. The drivers and the other upperclassmen international student

volunteers are present at various times throughout the program, such as traveling to the grocery store on the first day, and when the older international student speak to the first-years for an hour about their experiences coming to COA. The on-campus Student Health Advisor should come speak with the students for one hour about the health care system in the United States and the student's new health insurance policy while at COA. Other than this, there are no other direct participants in the orientation.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the orientation program is non-academic and is spread out throughout the program in order to allow time for focus on the information in the curriculum to be processed and not overwhelm the participant with too much at once. In order to aid in the delivery of the information in the orientation curriculum, there is a folder for each student that is filled with paperwork corresponding to the discussions that will occur, making up the curriculum. Allowing for snack/rest times throughout the day, most of Friday is used for getting logistical information to the students. The immigration information is discussed and the handouts (all brightly colored) in the folder are reviewed. These handouts included the student's immigration status basics (See Appendices D, E, and F), a student Health Insurance packet and brochure, a Social Security Card Application, several handouts about culture shock and cultural adaptation, a sheet about U.S. classroom culture, a worksheet on cultural stereotypes, a basic weights and measurements conversion sheet, a fun phonetic casual American English pronunciation sheet, and a packet on details about how to handle a Maine winter (Appendices G, H, I, J, and K).

The Friday curriculum begins with going over the most basic rules and regulations of the immigration requirements for F-1 students (Appendix D). This allows for some of the pertinent questions that the students may have from just entering the country to be answered. Then the mood is lightened by going over some fun phonetic pronunciations of common American sayings, for example: WHADDJA = WHAT DID YOU, as in “Whaddja do over the weekend?” (Appendix J).

Afterwards, the COA student health insurance is reviewed and questions answered on the healthcare system in the United States. After lunch, as students might be having a more difficult time concentrating right after eating, there is a discussion on aspects of American life that require adjustment by most international students. This is a section that the Coordinator facilitates but does not take as much part in as there are upper-class international students at COA invited to come and speak/answer questions for the incoming freshmen about their transition. The discussion could be begun by asking the first question for the upper-classmen to answer, “What was the most difficult thing about first arriving at COA? And what did you do that helped the situation?” This aides in helping the incoming class understand how international students feel on arrival at COA, or in some cases any U.S. college. The discussion can then move on to more practical matters such as how to get a laptop/cell phone and other similar information.

Then, because the students will have been sitting for some time, there is a walk through the college campus to the COA pier down on the ocean to allow them time to clear their minds, and then back to the Deering building (where the whole orientation takes place) for more F-1 status information (See Appendices E and F) and to fill out their Social Security Applications. After this the students have dinner and free time

afterward, since some are exhausted from just arriving, and others who might not be tired likely would need some down time or social time.

The second and last full day of orientation began with breakfast and then Wake-Up Activities that consisted of both ice-breakers and then fun team-builders to allow for the students to get to move and wake them up but also further develop any bonds between them that could aid in reducing the stress of dealing with so many current unknowns. Included is a game with water balloons to aid with involvement, which ends in prizes being given. The team builders that are used to help the students create a peer support network by properly introducing them to each other are facilitated carefully by the Coordinator and aides in order to make sure that there are multiple ways for the individual students to participate should a certain activity ask the students to engage in a level of contact that is not appropriate for some cultures.

After this is a group discussion on stereotypes where the students write down their perceived stereotypes on America and Americans and then discuss with each other, asking any possible questions to the Coordinator. Then they write down any stereotypes that they thought others have had about their country/culture and whether they have experienced other people projecting these stereotypes on them, and how it made them feel. This is then discussed at length, whether they thought those stereotypes were accurate or not and where they thought they had originated. This group discussion has been noted in evaluation forms as the most interesting, helpful, and eye opening of any activity or discussion during the orientation.

Later that evening Culture Shock is reviewed, what it is and what to do when you are experiencing it. Also are reviewed are the various states that occur when a student

studies in another country for any extended period of time, and what are good ways to improve the difficult times. Then specific information on winter in Maine is discussed, what things such as layering clothes, black ice, frostbite, and Seasonal Affective Disorder are and how to combat it. This concludes the curriculum for the International Student Orientation program.

Logistics

Staffing

Staffing for the ISO will involve the Coordinator and one or two part-time employees (called aides). These aides are informally trained and usually have been and will consist of current upperclass international students. They are currently paid, but will also be housed in COA dormitories during the orientation in 2015 and the future. This solves an important problem with hiring aides, which was that not many students were able to find short-term affordable housing for the time at which the International Student Orientation occurs.

The aides will help the Coordinator with such things as program preparation, organization, paperwork, food prep, etc. They will also be paid from the Coordinator's orientation budget, as will the drivers.

As being an aide is a position in an intensive program that requires full-time commitment working up to 14-hour per day, they are trained by the Coordinator in the orientation preparation time. The aides are also required to have a certain level of leadership, in order to help organize the international students, as well as knowledge of ice-breakers and team-builders to take part in those sections, allowing the Coordinator

time to do other work. Using older international students is also very helpful as they have a wealth of knowledge and experience to contribute to the discussions and have experienced the transition of arriving at COA themselves as an international student.

The drivers are required to have a clean record and their driving ID's on file with the college. It is not easy to find drivers who are on the campus in August as most students are not there and drivers are usually hired students. That said, there are some programs occurring at the same time as the orientation so that allows for one or two possible drivers to be found. It would be most helpful if in future years the aid was also a licensed driver, but being an international student, this is not always a possibility due to driver license restrictions for F-1 non-immigrants.

Housing/Residential Advisors

Housing is a continuous issue for the International Student Orientation. In the past the incoming students would arrive at the college and go straight to their dorm rooms that they were issued for the year. In the 2015 orientation, all the international students will be housed in one dormitory together, and then move to their assigned rooms after the orientation ends. This allows for all the international students to sleep where the program occurs, where the meals are cooked, and to be with each other as a full support group. As the first orientation of the fall, the international students arrive on campus several days prior to all the other first years.

Along with solving the emotional aspect of arriving on-campus prior to all other students and being shown to a room in an empty dorm where you must sleep by yourself, it solves the necessity of requiring all Resident Advisors to move in to each dormitory on

campus early that houses an international student. If all international students are housed together for orientation, it means one of the hired aides could be a temporary advisor and help them adjust during that time, without causing the Resident Advisor training to end several days early.

This decision to change the housing was made for several reasons. One, the logistics of the placement did not make much sense, as housing the students together helps with various aspects of running the orientation. This way allows for the RA training to continue longer than it has in past years, and it solves the housing placement for the orientation aides. Another reason was the feedback received from former international students. Arriving on the campus and being isolated immediately was causing trouble psychologically to some of the students. Being alone right away was very hard for them, and were they to arrive and be immediately welcomed in a dormitory full of all the other incoming internationals and an aid who is present at all hours (some students arrive in the middle of the night) is a much more pleasant and less stressful experience.

Meals

Prior to students being on-campus, there is no food for the international students to eat. This is a problem especially if the students arrive early, since the campus cafeterias are not open, and they must find their way to the grocery store on their own if they arrive hungry and want food before they can be met by the Coordinator or an aid to help them out. For the orientation itself, the meals are provided, but outside the orientation, they are on their own. During the school-wide orientation and when school is

in session, there are several places to get food, and quite nice kitchens to cook food in the dorms, but as a smaller institution, the cafeteria closes during the summer months and does not open until the term begins in the fall.

As the school is positioned on an island where there are not a lot of food options, the students normally eat on campus or cook for themselves prior to school being in session and on the breaks. Occasionally they eat out in the town of Bar Harbor, but as that is mostly for tourists, it can be too expensive for most students.

Since the International Student Orientation takes place prior to the COA cafeteria being open, the orientation includes meals partially prepared for the participants and partially cooked by the participants for themselves. This is as an opportunity for the students to get to know each other as well as their local grocery store, at the same time practicing teamwork and adaptability.

The first evening of the orientation, the students sign up for cooking and cleaning up after a meal during the orientation. This, of course, would need to be adjusted widely depending on how many students come each year and how many orientation meals are cooked by the students.

The students sign up to help facilitate and cook a meal, and then have a short amount of time to brainstorm before everyone heads as a group to the grocery store in two vans. The Coordinator goes with them to aid with any questions that arise. They have a budget, and go through the store to get their ingredients. The Coordinator pays from the orientation budget, and everyone heads back to the school. This has resulted in some very country-specific dishes, which have been quite good, such as Spanish chicken

and Israeli lentils, and allow for some students to show their creative side, such as with Banana Soup and a student who makes his own large bread loaves from scratch.

The Coordinator and aids supervise throughout this process, to answer questions, make sure everyone is safe, and to offer help when needed. This process of working with each other and having to learn the resources in order to create something in groups aids in developing the essential relationships that can aid in a smooth transition as well as build confidence in the student and allow them to make something based on their own abilities in a brand-new environment (Moores, L., & Popadiuk, N. 2011).

Transportation

There are luckily not many places that need to be visited during the orientation as it occurs on campus and the campus is small and relatively compact. The first transportation that is organized is the students' individual arrivals. The Coordinator has contact with each student earlier in the summer and requires the students to send their Travel and Arrival Itinerary (See Appendix C). This allows organization with the Admissions Office who sends vans to the airport and bus stations in Bangor, Maine, which is the closest large airport near the school and an hour away. This is done for the international students, but this is also done for many domestic students if they arrive by plane/bus because of the location of COA being so isolated.

Once the international students arrive at COA, they are deposited in their rooms in the communal dormitory and then meet in the Deering Common room. The first night everyone goes to the local grocery store to purchase food for the meals, and for this two drivers in the school's vans are used.

One week after the on-campus orientation, the students are brought to the nearest large town, Ellsworth, which is half an hour away for an all-day shopping trip on the first Saturday of the term. This also requires scheduling drivers, and has its own troubles, as most student drivers are very busy the first weekend of term.

After the international students have been registered in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for at least ten days, they can also then be driven to the Social Security Administration in Bangor, Maine, to apply in person for a Social Security Card (necessary for an F-1 student to be paid for workstudy).

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety of the students in the orientation is paramount. There is a section in the orientation curriculum about health and safety in the US, which covers things from how to understand health insurance in the U.S. to wearing a helmet, and the pedestrian rules of the town. This is important especially because it has been noted that the international students do not like to wear bike helmets (and do get in accidents), as well as some students who have simply not gone to the doctor when they needed to because they were worried about getting a bill since the health care system here is so confusing.

The school is already in possession of emergency contact numbers and home addresses and numbers. It also has the student's allergies and medical information. It is always possible, however, for the student to not have voluntarily disclosed certain information to the school, which usually arises at some point in the future, occasionally during the orientation process. If a problem arises, COA has nurse practitioners who

come to campus and can be seen for free by students who are on the school's health insurance. There is also a counselor who works regular hours on campus and can be booked by the students. Should the counselor believe a student requires more in-depth help, they may recommend a psychologist or psychiatrist in-town, in which case the school offers help to the student in determining prices and transportation should they need it.

As Bar Harbor is a very safe place to live, there is not a large amount of orientation time spent instructing the students on personal safety. Were this a more dangerous town, or possibly a city, this would be different. More time is spent on information such as frostbite, biking safety, and other more regional safety issues.

Crisis/Emergency Management

In the case of a crisis, which would be defined in student death, serious injury/illness, assault, serious crime resulting in jail time, etc. the COA International Student Orientation would use the resources available at the College of the Atlantic to handle the situation. COA has its own Emergency Protocol in place for the various situations that could arise on its campus. Should such emergency arise during the International Student Orientation, the Coordinator would begin the protocol by calling the Emergency Number where there is a COA contact person on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year. Then, depending on the specifics of the emergency, that individual would begin the protocol appropriate to the situation.

Budget

Date	Description	Amount	Where Purchased	Type of Purchase
8/20/2015	Materials	55.45	Hannafords	Grocery Card
8/25/2015	Materials	43.99	Hannafords	Grocery Card
8/28/2015	Orientation Food	173.22	Hannafords	Grocery Card
8/28/2015	Orientation Food	300.25	Hannafords	Grocery Card
8/30/2015	Orientation Food	14.10	Hannafords	Personal Card/Reimbursement
8/30/2015	Orientation Food	22.48	Hannafords	Personal Card/Reimbursement
8/30/2015	Orientation Food	181.00	Pat's Pizza Bar Harbor	Personal Card/Reimbursement
8/30/2015	Orientation Food	52.01	Ben & Bill's	Personal Card/Reimbursement
8/30/2015	Orientation Aid	150.00	Campus	Payment Voucher
9/13/2015	Shopping Trip Drivers	50	COA-Ellsworth	2 Payment Vouchers
9/17/2015	Bangor SSN Trip Drivers	80	COA-Bangor	2 Payment Voucher2

Total = \$1122.50

Notes

The budget for the COA International Student Orientation varies from year to year. This is because it comes directly from the Coordinator of International Student Services' yearly budget and can be adjusted as required. The yearly budget of the Coordinator is \$4500 for the International Student Services Office and all programs, and the amount that is scheduled for the orientation is around \$1000. The above table is a projection of the 2015 possible budget, based on the 2014 orientation budget, with an

allowance for an increase in several areas. It should be noted that included in the budget are the two van trips that occur one to two weeks after the orientation ends, as those are considered extensions of the orientation process.

Evaluation Plan

The plan for evaluating the orientation program is fairly straightforward. As there are no other leaders or members of COA staff who are present throughout the International Student Orientation, it is imperative that the Coordinator does not lose the opportunity to ask the students and aid about how things went. To a certain extent, it is possible to evaluate the program simply from observation; on the other hand it is not always possible to know how much information is being received. For receiving an evaluation of the orientation from the aid, there is a short debriefing in order to ascertain their thoughts and comments on the program. For the students, there is an evaluation handout, which is placed in the back of their folders and which they are reminded to fill out after the orientation has finished. (See Appendix A for the Evaluation Form)

Another signal of how evaluating the orientation takes place at the end of the students' first term is the meeting for the first years at the end of fall term to go over their first term at COA and see what they learned, what helped from their orientation, what they might have wanted in the orientation, and just overall how they did in their first term. This is a very helpful meeting to not only check-in with how each student is doing after being at the college for one term, but also to ask about the orientation and see what they thought was helpful, what they could remember, and what stood out from a few months later.

Much of the evaluation takes place from simply observing the students during and after the program. This can also be a useful way to continue evaluation throughout the student's time at COA, and to see what information is retained from the orientation, and what types of subjects would be helpful to include in future orientations as well.

Results

The results of the evaluations are based on the Coordinator's experience, along with the aid and the new students. A lot of the evaluation results are based on the evaluation forms that were filled out and returned in previous years. The Evaluation form consists of seven questions:

1. Did you find this two-day orientation effective and helpful? If so, why? Please expand.
2. Is there anything specific that you learned that you feel will benefit other intl. students in the future?
3. Was I a clear and informative facilitator for you? If not, how could I accommodate your needs or preferences?
4. Is there anything you would suggest for next time? Or change for next time?
5. Was there too much information presented in one day?
6. Did the order of the days, events, flow well for you? If not, why?
7. Additional Comments: ?

Design

An evaluation form is used because it allows there to be a little time between the orientation itself and the filling out of the form (they are placed in the orientation folder along with the other important handouts). A form is useful because it can be handed in anonymously or not, depending on the decision of the student filling it out. This allows for there to be a more direct form of feedback, should someone want to critique the orientation. Also the feedback is generally more honest this way. The form is also

designed to allow for as little or as much feedback as the student wishes to give. Questions are repeated in different forms as well to make sure and offer multiple chances for a student to explain how they felt about the program.

Conclusion

At the College of the Atlantic, the individual matters a lot. The international students are a very important part of the student body, and make up more than 18% of the total students on campus. The International Student Orientation is the first introduction to the college for the students, as well as to the U.S. for most. It is critical that the design as well as the execution of the orientation convey the welcoming message of the college and work hard to help and empathize with the international students as much as possible.

The Incoming International Student Orientation will be a more intentional and tailored program for the incoming group of international students. The program will likely prove successful in allowing students time to think about cultural stereotypes, make quick friends with each other, understand resources, provide important information on their immigration status, and allow them time to adjust to the culture of the school and country they have just arrived in.

Findings, Final Remarks

The orientation for the international students focuses on specific areas of content in order to guarantee that the experience each student leaves with is as holistic and helpful as possible. First, it is helpful to focus on knowing one's audience. What countries are the students coming from, are there certain cultural aspects are needed to

keep aware of at all times, should research be done on the areas the students are coming from? The small number of incoming international students allows for this type of tailoring in the orientation each year. This helps to create discussions and watch for touchy topics or situations that might arise. Second, focus on communication. Did each student understand what was said/meant? Are the students understanding each other, is the message getting across? Etc. This is key because an enormous amount of problems can easily step from miscommunication. Third, preparation is key. This means not only being prepared for what is on the schedule, but being flexible enough when things do not go according to the schedule. Lastly, observation is paramount. Whatever has been planned or is happening, it is imperative to be fully aware of the events that occur right around you as you deliver a program. Transactions, comments, individuals, must all be noted and assessed in order to manage a group of students who are going through such a transition together with a group of strangers in order to be sure that proper adjustments can be made to aid each person in the best way.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The Evaluation Form



Evaluation of the International Student Orientation Fall 2014

Note: Your honest thoughts and feelings help me reflect on our days together and prepare for future international students. I appreciate your time and energy to do this, thank you!

8. Did you find this two-day orientation effective and helpful? If so, why? Please expand.

9. Is there anything specific that you learned that you feel will benefit other intl. students in the future?

10. Was I a clear and informative facilitator for you? If not, how could I accommodate your needs or preferences?

11. Is there anything you would suggest for next time? Or change for next time?

12. Was there too much information presented in one day?

13. Did the order of the days, events, flow well for you? If not, why?

14. Additional Comments: ?

THANK YOU AND WELCOME TO COA! ☺ Monica

Appendix B

The Orientation Schedule

Orientation Preparation

- **June/July** – Gather sheets, blankets, pillows, and winter clothes for students. Ask departing seniors for any “like-new” bed sheets, etc., with a work-study’s help, wash, fold, and separate sheets/blankets into piles for each student.
- **August** – Book restaurant for second night, order food for first night from local grocery store, book drivers and double-check on an orientation student aid.
- **Week prior to Orientation** – Pack welcome bags, put sheets/blankets/pillows in dorm rooms of each student along with bags. Create handout folders and fill with all information for students. Check on flight schedule/admissions van pick-up.
- **Day prior to Orientation (Wednesday)** – Aid students who have arrived early with figuring out where things are, how to get food, etc. Setup large common room and café kitchen for events.
- **Day of Orientation (Thursday)** – Pick up food platters from grocery store for dinner, set up dinner, keep in contact with van drivers who are picking up students, keep checking phone for any problems such as flight changes.

Orientation

- **7:00 PM** - Dinner in Deering building with international students and some upperclassmen (Pablo, Clara, Khristian, Klever, etc.)
- **8:00 PM** - Welcome and Review of Schedule for Orientation. Aid and other students help cleanup after the dinner. Give Welcome to COA and introduce myself and the “hats I wear”: I do immigration, cultural, personal, adviser, etc.

Explain Orientation schedule for the next couple days.

- **8:30 PM** - Sign-up for meal prep/ cook/ clean on board provided and leave to shop for groceries at Hannafords (local grocery store). Explain how garbage and compostables work at COA, and that there is a sense of “do it yourself” at this school, which can be fun. Gather students and leave in 2 vans for store, with pre-arranged drivers. Remember to remind students to bring their immigration documents/ paperwork next morning (passport, visa, I-20).

Friday

- **8:00 AM** Breakfast Prep Deering Common, first floor
- **8:30 - 9:00** Breakfast, Clean up
- **9:15** Introductions & icebreakers, schedule for the day, collect immigration documents and Basic Immigration/ Terminology. Electronic I-94's.
- **11:00** Introduction to Lauren Rupp and review of Health insurance plan/US healthcare
- **12:00 - 1:00 PM** Lunch Prep, Lunch, Clean-up
- **1:00** COA Life and Culture in the United States with current international students. Perspectives/ Transitions to the U.S.
- **3:00 – 4:00** Walk to COA pier and quick look at campus, weather permitting
- **4:15** Review F-1 Status, Tips for international students at COA, fill out SSN Application, Snack
- **6:00** Dinner Prep
- **7:00 PM** Dinner/ Clean-up

Saturday

- **8:00 AM** Breakfast Prep in Sea Urchin Kitchen
- **8:30 – 9:00** Breakfast in Deering Common, Sea Urchin Café/ Clean-up

- **9:30** Fun Wake-up Activities!
- **10:45** Break and Snack
- **11:00** Team Building/ Intercultural Communication
- **12:30 - 1:45 PM** Lunch Prep / Lunch/ Clean-up
*Bring all of your Gear after lunch for a gear dump and review.
- **2:00** Review of OOPS Trip gear with Nick Jenei OOPS Coordinator, see what may be missing!
- **2:30 – 3:30** Tips for living in Maine, COA in the winter
- **3:30** Head to Town for Bar Island walk/ Ice cream. Bring a flashlight for walk back to campus!
- **6:00 PM** Dinner at Pat's Pizza and then head back to campus

Sunday

- Organize your own group picnic breakfast with leftover orientation food before campus registration and Outdoor Orientation Programs!



Appendix C

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL FORM

Name: _____

Country of Residence: _____

DEPARTURE

Country/City of Departure: _____ Date of Departure: _____

Flight Number/Airlines: _____

ARRIVAL (PORT OF ENTRY ONLY)

City of Arrival (USA): _____ Date of Arrival (USA): _____

Flight Number/Airlines (USA): _____ Time of Arrival (USA): _____

COA PICK-UP

Will you need COA pick-up and transportation to campus? Yes No

If you checked "NO," please list the DATE, TIME and MEANS (mode of transportation) by which you will arrive at COA: _____

If you checked "YES," COA will pick you up from one of the following locations. Please check the location from which you would like to be picked up (you are responsible for getting yourself to one of these locations):

- Bar Harbor Airport
- Bangor International Airport

Please List the following information for your Airport Pickup

Date: _____ Time: _____

Flight Number/Airline: _____ Departure City: _____

- Concord Coachlines Bus Station (Bangor)
- Vermont Transit/Greyhound Bus Station (Bangor)
- Bus/Shuttle drop off — Bar Harbor (for those who take the Bar Harbor Shuttle or Greyhound connector to Bar Harbor)

Please list the following information for your Bus/Shuttle Pick-Up:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Shuttle/Bus Number: _____ Departure City: _____

Please save this form as a PDF, attach a photocopy (or scan) of your travel itinerary, and **email both no later than August 1st**, to Monica Hamm (mhamm@coa.edu)

College of the Atlantic, 105 Eden St., Bar Harbor, ME 04609, USA
Contact number during your travels; call free to the COA line 1-800-528-0025

Appendix D

Important Immigration Documents / Basic Terminology

It is the **responsibility of the student** to maintain the **validity** and **security** of relevant immigration documents. If anything should happen to your documents (loss or damage) or your documents expire, please consult with Monica Hamm, Coordinator of International Student Services, as soon as possible. Without valid documents, you are not legally "in-status", which can carry serious consequences including deportation and exclusion from the United States.

Passport: Your passport proves your identity and citizenship. It is usually required that your passport be valid for 6 months beyond the date of your anticipated entry into the United States. It is often possible to renew your passport while in the United States without returning to your home country. So if your passport is nearing its expiration date we can plan ahead so that it does not expire. It is much easier and safer to renew your passport while it is still valid, than it is to wait until it expires.

SEVIS 1-20: Your 1-20 is the document issued by COA that contains information relevant to your acceptance and enrollment as a student. This document proves that you are eligible to obtain an F-1 student visa. Your 1-20 is also the document that has to be signed before you travel outside of the United States to go home, or for study abroad. Work authorization is also shown on your 1-20. Your 1-20 should be valid for the full 4 years required for your COA degree. If it is not, consult with the Coordinator of International Student Services.

Electronic 1-94: Your electronic 1-94 is a document that is issued to you online. You are required to look up and print it yourself for your (and my) records. This form indicates that you are legally entered the country. Your 1-94 will become invalid when you leave the United States, and a new one issued for you to print out when you return. Your I-94 can be found online at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>.

United States Visa: The visa that you obtained through the U.S. Embassy or Consulate is a document that tells the immigration official at the US border that you are eligible for entry to the United States and the terms of that eligibility. The visa is only important when you are attempting to enter the United States. If your visa expires while you are present within the United States, you do not need to worry. An expired visa will only be a problem if you leave the United States and need to return. To do so, you will be required to apply for a new visa. If you need to apply for a new visa, please consult with Monica Hamm, Coordinator of International Student Services.

Receipt of SEVIS Fee (1-901) Payment: The receipt is proof of payment of the SEVIS fee that was paid for you by the COA. When you enter the United States, immigration officials may request to see proof that you have either paid or do not need to pay the

SEVIS fee prior to admitting you. Please keep this form with your other immigration documents and carry it with you when you travel.

Duration of Status (D/S) When you enter the U.S. in F-1 status, your Form I-20 and your visa/passport should be stamped and marked with the notation “D/S”, which stands for Duration of Status. This term refers to the period for which you are pursuing your program of study, and when marked on your immigration documents, you are being granted permission to be in the U.S. in F-1 status for the length of your program of study, providing you take care to maintain this status by complying with the Federal Regulations. If your Form I-20 or visa/passport does not say “D/S” please see the Coordinator of International Student Services as soon as possible.

Port of Entry (POE) If traveling to the U.S. from abroad, your POE is the first airport (or land or sea border) where you arrive in the United States. You may then fly on to another airport in the U.S. to arrive at your final destination, but it is at your POE that you will go through immigration and customs.

Appendix E

Quick Information about your F-1 Status

Maintaining F-1 Status

It is the responsibility of each international student to be familiar with the immigration requirements related to their status.

In order to maintain your F-1 status you must:

1. Keep the following documents valid (with the exception of the visa, which is only needed to enter the country. If you are leaving the U.S. and plan on returning under the same status you will need to get this renewed before you re-enter).
 - Passport – valid within 6 months of expiration.
 - I-20 – needs DSO or PDSO signature every six month, when traveling.
 - Visa (with the exception of Canadians) - Should state student is D/S or Duration of Status. Some countries require renewal yearly.
2. Maintain a full-time course of study, or 3 credits each term. Make sure that a study abroad program complies with this if you are planning on studying away from COA.
3. If studying away from the college, either on internship, study abroad, residency, etc., you must hand in the proper forms to the Coordinator of International Student Services, as well as have documented contact with the CISS within the first 30 days of term.
4. Do not work more than 20 hours/week during the academic year. During college breaks (including summer) you may work 40 hours/week. Do not work illegally.
5. Follow proper procedures should you travel, transfer colleges, require an extension, change your degree level, or require work authorization. *Remember that work authorization rules and processes are the same during the summer as they are in the academic year.
6. Keep your immigration records (address in the U.S., home country info., etc.) current, and notify the CISS of any changes so that your SEVIS record remains up-to-date and accurate.
7. Keep your US address updated. This must be reported to the Coordinator of International Student Services within TEN days of your moving.

SOME WAYS TO FALL OUT OF STATUS

Do not let this happen to you! Avoid:

- Failing to register for a full course of study
- Working Illegally (YOU CANNOT REINSTATE AFTER THIS)
- Failing to comply with United States Customs and Immigration Services regulations as reported to you by your Coordinator.
- Failing to have contact with your CISS while studying away in order to be registered in the SEVIS system.
- Driving illegally in the U.S., you must have a Maine driver's license or an international driver's license (which translates your home-country license and is valid for ONE year only). Remember it is also illegal to drive a car in the U.S. without registration and insurance. The COA vehicles are fine, if you have your license, as they are under the school's insurance.

If you have any questions at any time about immigration issues, your documents, or your status, please consult with Monica Hamm, Coordinator of International Student Services. There is more detailed information in your International Student Handbook.

Appendix F**Helpful Tips for International Students****1. ALWAYS remember how to maintain your F-1 Status:**

- a) Register for and complete 3 credits every semester (full time)
- b) Get your I-20 signed, if needed, before leaving the U.S.
- c) Never work off-campus without authorization
- d) Update the International Student Advisor with residential and home country address changes

2. ALWAYS consult your international Student Advisor before dropping a class or withdrawing from a course or from the college.

If you withdraw without getting the International Advisor's permission FIRST, you will fall out of status!

3. UNDERSTAND the difference between a visa, a status, an I-20, and an I-94

You have been given a sheet that explains the difference. For example, your F-1 visa can expire, but your I-20 cannot! Ask if you are confused.

4. NEVER ASSUME that other faculty and staff at COA understand all the immigration rules you have to follow as an international student.

Your professor might tell you to drop a class—but it is not their job to know you must be full-time

Other offices are experts at their own jobs (academic advising, student payments, etc.) Your International Advisor is the only expert on immigration issues. Ask me before making any big decisions!

5. NEVER ASSUME that your other international student friends understand the rules *you* have to follow

Many people make BIG mistakes because “my friend said....” And they assume it's the same for them.

Everyone is different. It depends upon when **you** entered, **your** nationality, **your** grades,.....ask your International Student advisor!

6. ALWAYS make extra copies of ALL of your important papers, and copies of papers you mail away.

Keep copies of your I-20, passport, and visa in a separate place in your residence.

Keep copies of any form you submit to a college, immigration, or other offices, for proof of what you submitted. Get proof of all special arrangements (exceptions, extensions) in writing or email, not just verbally.

7. ALWAYS get the name of the person who helps you (in COA offices, with Immigration, etc.)

If something goes wrong, you will know who to talk to right away. It will also help you solve the problem quicker.

8. NEVER put something off until the last minute.

You cannot assume that your International Advisor, or other staff, can give you what you need right away.

Some immigration deadlines are absolute, and your advisor might not be able to help you if you wait too long.

9. TRY to find ways of getting to know Americans, especially if most of your friends speak your language.

Suggestions: Join or start a club or organization. Get involved, take risks, reach out to the entire COA community. There are a ton of opportunities here to do it. Ask other students.

10. Don't be afraid to speak up in class, or to ask the professor a question in class or during office hours.

American professors almost always want you to ask questions or make comments, even if you disagree with them.

If you don't understand something, it is more responsible to speak with the professor early in the semester. Many professors grade you on "class participation". If you are too shy to talk in class or to talk to the professor, the International Student Advisor can be a 'third party' support person for you.

HAVE FUN! TRY NEW THINGS! TAKE RISKS! BE SAFE! GROW!

Appendix G

Cultural Adaptation

Adapting to a new environment takes time and the pace of transition varies from person to person. The typical pattern of cultural adjustment often consists of distinct phases: Honeymoon, Crisis, Recovery, and Adjustment. Notice that this cycle is then repeated upon re-entry to one's home country or culture of origin. The effect these phases have on one's mood is illustrated in this "w-curve" figure:



Based on Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn & Gallahorn (1963)

The Honeymoon Phase

This phase is best described by feelings of excitement, optimism and wonder often experienced when you enter into a new environment or culture. While differences are observed, students are more likely to focus on the positive aspects of the new environment.

The Crisis Phase

This is what is often termed as "culture shock." Culture shock has been defined in different ways by many social scientists. In general, it is a term used to describe the anxiety and feelings (of surprise, disorientation, confusion, etc.) felt when people have to operate within an entirely different cultural or social environment. It grows out of the difficulties in assimilating to the new culture, causing difficulty in knowing what is appropriate and what is not. Often this is combined with strong disgust (moral or aesthetic) about certain aspects of the new or different culture. Culture shock does not necessarily occur suddenly, but may gradually begin to affect a person's moods over time. The length of time a person experiences culture shock depends on how long they stay in the new environment, as well as their level of self-awareness. The thing to keep in mind is that this is a normal process of adjusting and will pass with time and maybe some effort.

Symptoms of Culture Shock:

Culture shock manifests itself in different forms with different people but some symptoms can be:

- changes in eating habits and sleeping habits
- acute homesickness; calling home much more often than usual
- being hostile/complaining all the time about the host country/culture
- irritability, sadness, depression
- frequent frustration; being easily angered
- self-doubts; sense of failure
- recurrent illness
- withdrawing from friends or other people and/or activities

The Recovery & Adjustment Phases

Recovering from culture shock is handled differently by everyone-we each have our unique circumstances, background, strengths and weaknesses that need to be taken into consideration. With time and patience, we can experience positive effects of cultural adjustment, like increasing self-confidence, improved self-motivation and cultural sensitivity.

Suggestions for easing the transition:

- **Realize that what you are going through is normal.** Remember that the unpleasant feelings are temporary, natural and common to any transition that a person makes during their life. Be patient and give yourself time to work through the process.
- **Keep in touch with your home country.** (In moderation! Too much of this can actually make things worse) Read newspapers from home, international magazines, etc. Watch international television channels or surf the internet. Have familiar things around you that have personal meaning, such as photographs or ornaments.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep!
- **Talk to someone.** Find friends who are going through a similar process, call your family back home, speak to the Program Director.
- **Have fun and relax!** Join your friends on a dinner out. Get out of your room, read, meet locals, exercise, etc.
- **Improve your language skills.** Cultural adaptation is greatly enhanced by practicing your language skills. Not being able to clearly communicate can create isolation and loneliness. Make a point to join activities that give you the opportunity to share in conversation and express your identity.

Appendix H

U.S. Classroom Culture

Source: Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Levine, Deena R. and Adelman, Mara B., Prentice Hall, 1993.

Active class participation is acceptable. In many courses, professors even expect the students to ask questions and use critical reasoning. It is seen as part of the learning process. Complete silence may be viewed as a lack of interest or preparation. Be ready to ask questions when preparing for the class, jot down a couple of questions that you might ask. Some courses will even include a discussion session where students are expected to participate in an open discussion on a particular topic.

Taking initiative. In some courses, you may be asked to do most of the work yourself and the professor may have only a managerial role, as in the case of graduate seminar courses. It is common for teachers to serve as a guide in the student's learning. Students pursuing advanced degrees are particularly encouraged to critique theories, formulate models and interact with the professor.

Diverse teaching styles. The teaching style of the professor can determine the amount of student participation in each class. Some instructors prefer a more formal style of lecture with a possible question and answer period at the end. Others prefer a more conversational style and encourage interaction throughout the class. In general, instructors who are confident and experienced are comfortable with students who disagree. When expressing your views in class, be ready to defend your ideas.

Hands-on involvement. Classes can sometimes have a practical as well as a theoretical component. Lectures account for the theoretical, and workshops, labs, or study/work groups take care of the practical. Instruction in science and mathematics tends to be of a more formal lecture style, but applied courses or even theoretical courses, can include hands-on projects that actively involve the students.

Responsibility & self-motivation. Students are expected to be motivated to learn for the sake of learning, not just to receive the highest grade. Therefore, when a reading is assigned, a professor expects the student to do it on his or her own. Anything you are assigned, even if it is not covered in class, might appear on your exams. Keep in mind that in the U.S., courses are not designed simply for students to pass exams. It is expected that you will attend every class because of self-motivation.

Informality. Equality is a main value in the U.S., and although students are subordinate to professors in the U.S., it may not be readily apparent. The relationship may appear to be more casual. Informal behavior on the part of a professor does not indicate a weak or poor relationship with his or her students. Some instructors are very relaxed in their behavior with students. Walking around the classroom, sitting next to the students, drinking coffee, or sitting on the table are common manifestations of this egalitarian

American attitude. Use of first names is also common between professors and students. If your academic adviser or professor asks you to call him or her by the first name, then you may feel perfectly comfortable in doing so. Otherwise it is best to use the last name (for both male and female professors) as in, "Excuse me Professor Smith, may I talk to you about something?"

Student - Professor relationships. Professors may have a social relationship with students outside of the classroom. They may go for coffee together, or have other kinds of social outings. However, it is still expected that students will be respectful of the student-professor relationship within the classroom and will continue to meet all deadlines, do all homework, and attend all classes. Extra help or attention in no way signifies that a professor will treat the student differently when evaluating homework, papers or tests of any kind. Also, American professors generally do not mix work with social time. If you become friendly with your instructor, be ready to interact more formally when in more professional student-professor context - such as in the professor's office or in the classroom with other students.

American students. American students may behave towards professors in ways that seem disrespectful. In class they may look sleepy or sit in very relaxed positions, eat food, be inattentive, or even noisy. American professors may not appreciate this behavior, but it is often tolerated because of the American concept of individual expression. Respect for the professor is often shown in subtle ways, by choice of vocabulary or tone of voice for example.

Ask if you don't understand. If a student is confused about something in the class, it is expected that he or she will ask the professor before or after class. If the issue requires a longer conversation, the student may make an appointment to see the professor during office hours. In U.S. academic culture, there is no shame associated with not understanding something in the course, even if it has been presented in a class lecture. Professors respect students who work hard towards fully understanding the material, so don't wait until just before the exam to seek clarification. Ask as soon as you realize that you don't completely understand the material.

Appendix I

Weights, Measures and Sizes

Length:

1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
 1 foot = 12 inches = 30.48 centimeters
 1 yard = 3 feet = 36 inches = 91.44 centimeters

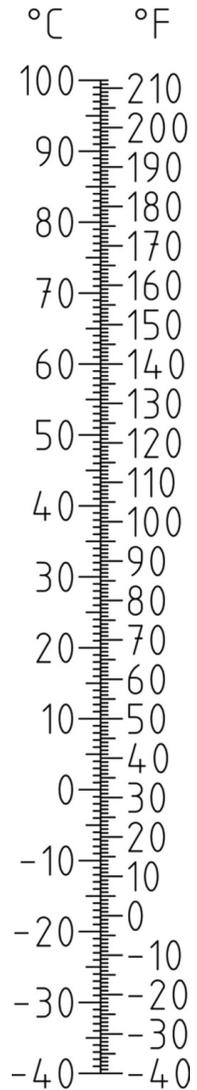
Weight:

1 ounce = 28.35 grams
 1 pound = 16 ounces = 454 grams
 1 ton = 2,000 pounds
 2.2 pounds = 1 kilogram

Liquid:

1 cup = 8 ounces
 1 pint = 2 cups = 4.73 liters
 1 quart = 4 cups = .946 liters
 1.057 quarts = 1 liter
 1 gallon = 4 quarts = 3.785 liters

U.S. cooking measures are given by *volume* rather than by weight. Measuring cups and spoons are available at discount and grocery stores.
 tsp = teaspoon; tbsp. = tablespoon; 3 tsp. = 1 tbsp.
 c. = cup; oz. = ounce; lb. = pound



Women's International Sizes

U.S	U.S	U.K	France	Italy	Japan	China	India
OO	XXXS					超小码	
O	XXS					加小码	
2	XS	4	32	36	5	加小码	80
4	XS	6	34	38	7	小码	80
6	S	8	36	40	9	小码	85
8	M	10	38	42	11	中码	90
10	M	12	40	44	13	中码	90
12	L	14	42	46	15	大码	95
14	L	16	44	48	17	大码	95
16	XLG	18	46	50	19	加大码	100

Explanation:

X = Extra
 S = Small
 M = Medium
 L = Large
 P = Petite - for women who are 5'3" (about 160 cm) or shorter

Men's International Sizes

<u>Men's Trousers</u>		<u>Men's T-Shirts</u>			
Inches	Centimeters	U.S.	U.S. / UK	Europe / Japan	China
28	71	S	34	87	XXS
30	76	M	36	91	XS
32	81	M	38	97	S
34	86	L	40	102	M
36	91.5	XL	42	107	M
38	96.5	XL	44	112	L
40	101.5	XXL	46	117	L
		XXL	48	122	XL

An online metric converter is available at:
<http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/conversions.html>

Appendix J

American Phonetic Pronunciation of Common Phrases

TAKE HOME EXERCISE

Relaxed English Sounds: "Speak English as Americans do"

Forewarning: All languages have spoken forms which are unacceptable when written but completely acceptable when spoken. If you're having trouble understanding the pronunciation of American friends, this list may help you interpret what is being said.

BIN=BEEN How have you "bin"?	SHOULDA= SHOULD HAVE You shoulda told me he was your boyfriend!!!!	GIMME= GIVE ME Gimme a few minutes to think it over.
Y=YOU Y'know what I mean?	COULDA= COULD HAVE You coulda come with us. The party was a blast!	OUTTA= OUT OF Get outta here
WHADDJA= WHAT DID YOU Whaddja do over the weekend?	MIGHTA= MIGHT HAVE She mighta gotten sick.	LOTTA= LOT OF I have a lotta friends
WHADDYA= WHAT DO YOU Whaddya say?	PROLLY= PROBABLY He is prolly working now.	CUP A LOVE= COUPLE OF I have a cup a love friends
HAFTA= HAVE TO I have to go now.	KIN= CAN I kin stay here with you.	IZZY= IS HE? Izzy your brother?
WUTCHER= WHAT IS YOUR Wutcher name?	WATCHA= WHAT DO YOU Watcha mean?	DOEZZY= DOES HE Doezzy like you?
TSKO= LET'S GO Tsko to the movies!	WHADJUH= WHAT DID YOU Whadjuh say, Sir?	YOUSTA= USED TO He usta come here every day.
TSUP= WHAT'S UP?	BETTA= HAD BETTER I betta go now.	SOUN SCOOD= IT SOUNDS GOOD!
DUNNO= DON'T KNOW Does she go with you? I dunno.	MELP YOU= MAY I HELP YOU? Melp you, Sir?	CUZ= BECAUSE Cuz I don't like you.
KINDA= KIND OF It's very kindavoyou.	GOTTA= HAVE GOT TO I gotta go now.	SUM= SOME Dyav sum for me?
SORTA= SORT OF She is sorta cool. DJA= DID YOU Dja ever notice she is quite beautiful?	GONNA= GOING TO I'm gonna write to you.	FUR= FOR Dyav sum fur me?
WOULDNA= WOULD NOT I wouldna notice the use of this Relaxed Forms if...	WANNA= WANT TO I wanna see ya again.	
WOULDA= WOULD HAVE I woulda gone but she showed up and I had to stay home.	DJUHVA= DO YOU HAVE A Djuhva wife?	
	LEMME= LET ME Lemme show you something!	

Appendix K



THE WEATHER...

Bar Harbor winters are typical of those elsewhere in the northeastern United States--in general, extremely cold! When the strong winds of the ocean combine with low temperatures it becomes harder to keep warm. For example, if the temperature is 20°F (-7°C) but the wind is blowing at a speed of 35 mph (56 kph), then the wind-chill temperature is -20°F (-29°C). The snow also makes winter uncomfortable. There are usually one or two days each winter when brisk winds combine with very low temperatures to produce potentially dangerous conditions. Very occasionally COA will even close, due to the weather. Usually because of black ice.

1. Make a habit of checking on weather forecasts on TV, radio, or computer so that you will be able to dress appropriately each morning.
2. On days that are bitter cold, limit the length of time that you are exposed to the cold. When you are out in very cold temperatures **BE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL FOR FROSTBITE** which is an injury to the body caused by freezing. Most often, frostbite affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes, and can permanently damage the body
3. Black ice, sleet, freezing rain, dry air, slush, etc.

THE TERRAIN...

You will be doing a lot of walking while at COA. The winter snow and ice, combined with the hilly terrain make it very difficult to walk, so a good pair of boots is essential.

Leave plenty of extra time to get your destination. Whether by foot, bicycle, or car, colder weather and snow/ice can substantially increase travel times. You don't want to be late for classes!

HOW TO KEEP WARM...

1. Layering is warmth: Wear many layers of loose clothing, as this ensures that there are pockets of air between the clothing layers that insulate your body from the cold. For the upper body, a long sleeved shirt worn over an undershirt and topped

with a sweater and coat is best. For the lower body, a pair of long underwear underneath a pair of pants will keep you warm. Underwear made from silk is very comfortable, and polypropylene is good for outdoor sports, although both of these materials tend to be expensive. Pants need to be loose-fitting--remember that the idea is to keep warm air close to your body. Tight fitting pants and jeans do not help to keep you warm.

2. **Keep your head covered:** Wearing a hat is very important for keeping warm. A wool hat is a necessity; if you really feel the cold buy a sheepskin hat--this will give you full protection against the icy winds that blow across campus. Do at least wear a pair of earmuffs to protect your ears.
3. **Close "gaps":** neck and wrist openings are potential sites for heat loss. Wearing a scarf around your neck and long gloves or mittens can help you close these gaps.
4. **Ventilate to cut down on perspiration:** Because you will be exerting a lot of energy walking all over campus, you are likely to perspire and overheat. If you do become overheated, periodically loosen, remove or open your outerwear. Remove your hat first and then loosen the neck opening for a short period of time.
5. **Make use of your body heat:** Wear mittens instead of gloves. Since mittens expose a smaller surface area to the cold, your fingers will stay warmer with mittens.

Dressing in removable layers which you can take off or put back on as you need will help you to cope with the temperature differences you may encounter in entering and leaving campus buildings, which are often overheated.

WHAT TO BUY...



Your comfort depends on the quality of your clothing. All clothing is required to have a label which describes clothing fiber content and clothing care, so you can always find out exactly what you are buying.

Down jackets and full-length down coats are warmest, and since most of them already have a nylon outer shell, they provide the best protection against the wind. Even though down garments are costly, they are a good investment. Wool is the next best insulator

and, although not effective against the wind, it is warm even when wet. Leather is very effective against the wind, but it is a poor insulator and inadequate for Bar Harbor's winters.

You may be tempted to buy cotton and acrylic sweaters, since they tend to be cheaper than wool. Cotton and acrylic have less insulating value, so these will not keep you as warm. It's often worth paying a little more for a good wool sweater.

Your feet will become wet and cold if you do not wear good foot protection. It's best to buy hiking-type boots with insulated lining and thick rubber soles with lots of tread (thick rubber grip on the bottom). These will keep your feet warm and will make walking on the ice easier, but they will not keep your feet dry unless you waterproof them yourself with silicon spray or buy snow boots which come weatherproofed. You can buy silicon spray at the shoe store when you buy your boots. Vinyl boots are waterproof but will not keep your feet as warm. Avoid wearing boots that have high heels or smooth soles. For safer walking on the snow and ice, wear boots with lower heels and treaded soles. If you're not sure what to buy, ask a friend who has been here for at least one winter season.

BUYING OUTERWEAR...

Clothing in Bar Harbor tends to be expensive, but there are some places where you can buy good-quality clothing fairly inexpensively. You may want to try Reny's, Goodwill, Walmart, Mardens, etc. There is also always the free box. If you are in trouble and caught in cold weather with no proper clothing, come by my office and we can sort something out for you as I keep some coats and other cold weather gear for international students.

The best time to shop is during a sale. Some stores have pre-season winter clothing sales in October, and most have sales right after Christmas. Don't think that this will be too late--January and February can be Bar Harbor's coldest months!

HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL...

It will get dark. Being so far northeast, the sun can sometimes set around 3:30 in the dead of winter! This means not a lot of daylight and a lot of time spent in the darkness. It is sometimes difficult to get outside, especially if you are not used to winter sports/activities. This all lends itself to Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.), which can show itself in cabin fever (feeling squirrely! Really need to stop being cooped up inside!) or a type of seasonal depression, which is the most common and affects a lot of people, including those who have experienced long winters their whole life. Most of this is due to the lack of movement, as well as lack of light and vitamin D that we normally receive from the sunlight. Seasonal depression can show itself in various ways: lack of interest in things you used to enjoy, not wanting to wake up, always feeling tired, dropping grades, difficulty concentrating, not wanting to be in company, etc.

One solution is getting outside. Even though it can be quite cold, there are many things to do outside at COA in the winter! Build a snowman, go sledding, make a snow angel, go cross-country skiing, go snowshoeing, go ice-skating, have a snowball fight, take a

walk in the woods, go ice-fishing, winter camping, etc. Lots of outdoor gear for these things can be rented easily from the gear shed for no cost.

Another possible solution is to use a “Happy Light”, or winter light, that simulates sunlight (no harmful rays though), that allow your body to stop producing so much melatonin (sleep hormone the body produces when it is dark and makes you tired) and allows you to combat S.A.D. This has been proven to be very helpful if used no more than 20 minutes a day. The library owns two of these, and winter term fireside Fridays has a happy lamp setup for use by anyone interested each Friday in winter term.

Another helpful solution is to make sure you are eating well. As it is cold and dark outside, we naturally want to eat heavier, thicker, foods. These can be nice, but when we have too much, they can keep you from feeling good and healthy and make you bloated. It is smart to always remember fruits and vegetables with the meals, even when it is cold out and they aren't as appealing as the chicken pot pie!



Appendix L**WELCOME INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS!**

Hello and Welcome to the U.S., Bar Harbor, and the COA community!

Please join myself and other 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year COA international students in Deering Common building for dinner on Thursday, (DATE) at 7:00 PM. Not everybody from the incoming group will be here yet, but there are eager current intl. students who would like to meet you!

There are printed maps of the COA campus and Bar Harbor town, along with emergency numbers in your welcome bag. **Our orientation will begin on Friday, August (DATE), in the morning at 8:30 AM in Deering Common (located in Kathryn Davis Student Village) for breakfast.** We have a full two days together and I hope we will help you adjust to the East Coast time zone and other aspects of the COA experience in this time. **Please be on time!** More information, resources, and fun will occur as we dive into orientation.

IMPORTANT: Please bring your immigration documents to breakfast, August 29th: passport, I-20, and Visa (in passport), along with any other forms I should see if something came up at the border. Also, please bring a pen and a notebook or paper to write on if you have it.

*Wear comfortable clothes and layers as Maine weather can be changeable and we will be doing lots of sitting, activities (running around) and walking around campus/into town.

Please enjoy yourself! Resident Advisors (RA, in your dorm buildings), current international students, and I are here to support you with any questions and curiosities, so please don't hesitate to ask!

All the Best,

Monica Hamm
Coordinator of International Student Services
Office on the 3rd Floor of Deering (Student Life Corridor)
207-801-5673, mhamm@coa.edu