

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES



GUIDEBOOK TO STUDY ABROAD FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are pleased that your student has chosen to study abroad, and we look forward to working with him/her. We also recognize that parents form an integral part of the study abroad experience, and we hope that you will come to think of our staff as your contact for any questions you have both now and later.

In preparation for departure, students are required to read the student handbook that takes them through the planning process and is a guide for their time abroad. The more informed the students are about the city in which they will live, the better prepared they will be to become acclimated to a new culture. **Please talk with your student about studying abroad.** Though we do everything we can to make the study abroad experience educationally and personally rewarding, the single best thing you can do to get your student ready is discuss what it means to be abroad. Things will, and should be, very different from what we are accustomed to in the United States. The net result is that studying abroad opens the door to a new world and a new cultural experience. Encourage students to dive headlong into it, of course, but also make sure that they are prepared for the realities of a different country, with different expectations, attitudes, and customs.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (901) 321-3461.

Sincerely,

Emily Mathis Forsdick
Office of International Initiatives
Christian Brothers University

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY ABROAD

In your eyes your student may already be a very capable and independent adult. However, during time abroad, all students will need your support in one form or another. They will have the exciting opportunity to explore a new country, and depending on the program, this exploration will occur with unusual tools as well as unfamiliar language and culture. This guidebook informs friends and family on ways to support your student during this exciting endeavor.

THE BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD

In a recent report on *Current Trends in U.S. Study Abroad & The Impact of Strategic Diversity Initiatives** by the Institute of International Education (IIE) researchers reported that, "to succeed and prosper in a global economy and interconnected world, U.S. students need international knowledge, intercultural communication skills, and global perspectives." The skills gained by students traveling overseas are numerous and crucial to our developing global society. Studying abroad enhances students' personal knowledge and educational experiences through cultural immersion. And, while some students study abroad in order to fulfill a major requirement, there are many others who travel in order to advance their understanding of a specific culture or to develop fluency in a language. Whatever the specific reason your student may have for wishing to study abroad, the benefits are clear: studying abroad allows students to learn about other cultures, make new friends, and develop tangible career benefits. They can develop real competitive advantages over students who never venture abroad to study, including:

- ❑ Improved foreign language skills
- ❑ A global perspective
- ❑ A broad worldview that can lead to greater tolerance of other viewpoints and cultures
- ❑ Ability to think more originally
- ❑ Greater self-reliance and self-confidence
- ❑ More comfort with complex situations, the ability to cope well with ambiguous information, and greater flexibility

Career Benefits

International experience benefits those seeking careers in almost any field. In fact, employers recognize skills that are acquired overseas. Study abroad identifies students as informed, confident, self-sufficient, and able to learn quickly and adapt to changing conditions. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Thomas Friedman stated in the wildly popular book *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, "In the future, *how* we educate our children may prove to be more important than *how much* we educate them. [...] The first, and most important, ability you can develop in a flat world is the

ability to 'learn how to learn'" (302). Indeed, many employers cite characteristics such as

"adaptability," being a "team player," and "self-direction" as highly desired traits in a successful candidate – all characteristics that students who choose to study abroad are given the opportunity to acquire.

Experts also suggest your student cite studies abroad on a resume. In job interviews, students can discuss how overseas experience made them more independent, responsible, organized, and innovative. CBU career counselors can provide assistance to your student with these aspects as they prepare to enter the job market.

Other Benefits

- ❑ **Friendships and contacts** developed overseas allow one to understand views other than one's own. These friendships, both with locals and students from other programs, can serve as future networking opportunities.
- ❑ **Students can make a difference** in everyday lives. Some study abroad programs offer social and community outreach programs. For example, students might have the opportunity to teach refugees or the underprivileged to read and write.

The opportunity to study abroad is a gift with continual benefits! A semester or a year is better, but even short trips abroad can be life-changing experiences.

It is clear that the skills gained from studying abroad will be required by future generations. In the study on *Current Trends* by IIE, experts also reported: "A survey conducted by the American Council on Education found that 90 percent of the U.S. public agreed that knowledge about international issues would be important to careers of younger generations." The tangible ability to enhance career skills and opportunities through study abroad make it an attractive option for many students seeking long-term success.

**IIE is an independent organization with no ties to CBU. For more information on IIE visit their web site at <<http://www.iie.org/>>.*

3 TIPS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

1 Know Your Student's Program

Be informed about your student's study abroad decision. Continue to be informed about your student's program while he/she is abroad.

2 Be Aware of Health and Safety

Communicate with your student and discuss travel plans independent of the study abroad program. Also discuss any safety and behavior issues related to travels and activities.

Keep yourself updated by visiting the State Department website for specific information pertaining to an individual country and general information about travel and safety.

Informative link/Safety Web site: <http://travel.state.gov>

3 Keep Contact and Student Information

Make sure you have multiple contacts such as student's contact number, cell phone and email address.

Your student will have CBU contact information. Obtain contact information from your student once he/she has arrived.

Have a copy of student's passport and flight itinerary.

3 Tips taken from CEA website:
(<http://www.gowithcea.com/safety.html/itemid=tips>)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- ❑ Obtain and evaluate safety information concerning the study abroad location.
- ❑ Be involved in the decision of the student to participate in a particular program.
- ❑ Engage the student in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues related to the program overseas.

WHAT CHRISTIAN BROTHERS UNIVERSITY/PROGRAM PROVIDERS CAN NOT DO

- ❑ Guarantee the safety of participants.
- ❑ Assure that risk abroad will not be greater than at home.
- ❑ Monitor the daily personal decisions, choices and activities of individual participants.
- ❑ Stand in place of parents.
- ❑ Prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.
- ❑ Assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed by or otherwise engaged by the study abroad program director.
- ❑ Assume responsibility for events that are beyond the control of the director and their subcontractors.
- ❑ Assure that participants will only be accepted to sites that are appropriate to their personal limitations.
- ❑ Assume responsibility for situations that arise due to the failure of a participant to make full disclosure of pertinent information prior to departure.

- ❑ Assure the adherence to U.S. norms of what is appropriate and acceptable behavior in matters of due process, individual rights, “political correctness” and sensitivity to others, relationships between the sexes, and among diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic groups.

Contact CBU and/or program director with health and safety related questions.

THE PROCESS: WHAT TO EXPECT ON LONG TERM EXPERIENCES

Cross Cultural Cycle – Each stage in this process is characterized by "symptoms" and / or inward signs in representing certain kinds of behavior:

Honeymoon Period: At first your student will be very excited by the new scenery and culture.

Culture Shock: Your student may become stressed, possibly as a result of comprehending the language, transportation methods, and familiarizing his / herself with new food and friends. Your student may question the choice to study abroad.

Initial Adjustment: The student may not yet be perfectly fluent in the language spoken or completely settled into a foreign location, but basic ideas can be expressed.

Mental Isolation: Your student might be frustrated because of the separation from family and friends. At this point your student may need encouragement. Keep in mind that some students do not move past this stage.

Acceptance and Integration: Your student feels comfortable with friends and has a stable routine.

Return Anxiety, Re-Entry Shock, Re-Integration: The student who has adjusted the best to the new culture will probably find the return home difficult. Upon return your student will want to maintain cultural connections gained abroad.

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Each student will need a passport to travel overseas, and it is recommended that the passport be valid for 180 days beyond the end of the program. Have your student make copies of the information pages and leave them in a known location prior to departure. Consider keeping a copy of airline tickets, rail passes, traveler's check numbers, visas and other important information with a copy of your student's passport. A visa is a document attached to the student's passport obtained from the country of residence. Some programs recommend the student obtain an International Student I.D.

Study abroad programs require proof of medical insurance. For international travel, your insurance should cover major medical, emergency evaluation, repatriation, and emergency help line.

MONEY MATTERS

ATM's and Credit Cards

In many countries, the simplest way to access cash is through an Automated Teller Machine (ATM). An ATM card, either for your student's account in the U.S. or a shared account with you and your student, provides access to funds from any bank that is linked to an international ATM system such as PLUS or CIRRUS.

Be aware that not all ATMs abroad are linked to international systems, so check with your student's bank before your student departs. Some smaller towns may not have service available at all. Your student's local bank will be able to provide information on cash-point locations and procedures for using the ATM card overseas. Some banking institutions will deactivate debit and/or credit cards if they were not notified of unusual travel arrangements and begin seeing charges overseas, assuming that the card(s) was stolen. The student will also need a PIN number.

If your student finds him/herself short of money during the study abroad experience, there are a number of ways to transfer funds overseas; ATM cards and credit cards are the most convenient. If you do not have a credit card or access to an international ATM network, you must explore other options such as traveler's checks.

Here are a few expenses **NOT** included in the cost of a CBU study abroad program:

- Meals (some programs)
- Textbooks
- Independent Travel
- Museum Entrance Fees
- Incidental personal needs
- Cell Phones and Communication Costs
- International Connections
- Medical Insurance

MAIL

There is nothing like receiving a traditional hand-written letter in the mail sent with thought and love when one is away from home for a long period of time. You can obtain and confirm your students mailing address once he/she has arrived at the destination location. Yet, if you would like to reach your student abroad in a timely manner mail may not be the most effective choice, and international shipping prices, determined by weight can be costly.

E-mail is a great way to contact your student while abroad. With e-mail you can correspond with your student on a regular basis without the hassle of time difference.

TELEPHONE CARDS

In some summer or semester locations setting up a cell phone may be cost efficient and convenient, but when in doubt a phone card always works. Calling cards can operate in various ways depending on the company. A couple of the types are pay as you go and prepaid telephone cards. A calling card is easy to carry and the international dialing instructions are on the card.

Here are the basics:

1. International access code: 011
2. Country code (2 – or 3 – digit number)
3. Area / city code (1 – to 5 – digit number)
4. Local number abroad

VISITS

During the student's overseas experience, time will be his/her most precious commodity. Attendance is important, and your student's grades will be affected if he/she is absent during regularly scheduled courses and mandatory field trips. If you or family friends are planning to visit the student overseas, we encourage visitors to delay their trip until the mid-semester break or after the semester is over, when the student will have more time. Family members should not expect to stay with the student's host family, or in his or her apartment.

LEVEL OF DISTANCE TO MAINTAIN

It is by overcoming any difficulties that your student will quickly rise to a new level of independence, so avoid the temptation to become too involved. Ultimately, this is his or her learning experience.

CORRESPONDENCE

You may have to help handle some things for your student while he or she is abroad for an extended time, some examples include:

- Renewing a driver's license
- Registering to vote or requesting an absentee ballot
- Filing income taxes
- Paying monthly credit card bills

- Preparing for next semester at the home school (open mail from the university and remind your student)
 - Registering for classes
 - Selecting a housing option
 - Preparing forms to continue financial aid

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much will Study Abroad cost?

1. Christian Brothers University Programs

When applicants are approved to study abroad on a CBU program federal and state financial aid will be applied, though university aid is not applicable. Students are required to pay for the following:

- Full-time CBU tuition and fees, in addition to room and board for the semester of study. Room is included in most programs, and board will be covered in most locations if it is available at the chosen locations. If not, students will be responsible for housing and food
- A study abroad fee if costs exceed CBU charges
- Spending money while students are abroad
- Full cost of the flight
- Health Insurance

2. Lasallian Study Abroad Consortium Programs

When applicants are approved to study abroad on Lasallian Consortium programs, federal and state financial aid will be applied, though university aid is not applicable. Students are required to pay for the following:

- Full-time Christian Brothers' tuition, in addition to room and board for the semester of study if it is provided at the chosen locations. If room and board is not provided at the host institution, students will be responsible for those expenses
- A study abroad fee if costs exceed CBU charges
- Spending money while students are abroad
- Full cost of the flight

3. Exchange Programs

When applicants are approved to study abroad on an exchange program, federal and state financial aid will be applied and most CBU awards as well. Students are required to pay for the following:

- ❑ Full-time CBU tuition
- ❑ Additional fees regained by the host institution (if any)
- ❑ Housing and food while abroad
- ❑ Spending money while students are abroad
- ❑ Full cost of flight
- ❑ Health insurance

4. Non-Christian Brothers University Program

When applicants are approved by CBU for a non-Christian Brothers University study abroad program, government financial aid may apply; however, no CBU aid will transfer. Students take a leave of absence from CBU and pay all cost directly to the Program Provider.

Will all grades / credits be accepted by the home university?

Prior to the acceptance of a study abroad program, be sure to have all the information regarding the credit/grade approval process requirements from the home institution. Generally, the courses/classes the student plans to take abroad must be pre-approved by their study abroad advisor, the registrar, financial aid office, business office, faculty advisor, and dean or admissions officer, to ensure the maximum amount of credit for the courses taken will be received. If the course information is not available until arrival at the study abroad location, be sure to find out what specific information is needed upon return to make sure the home institution accepts the courses. Students are **required** to get approval in writing prior to enrolling in any off-campus course.

What questions should I/we ask the student's advisor?

- ❑ Will all of the classes my student plans to take fulfill his/her graduation requirements and count towards his/her academic major/minor where applicable?
- ❑ Does my student's current institution require that he/she enroll in a defined number of courses/credits in order for transfer credits to be accepted?
- ❑ What is the minimum course grade that will be accepted for credit transfer?
- ❑ Is it required that course related information such as a syllabus, notes, exams, papers, fieldwork, etc. be furnished upon return?
- ❑ Will the grade points from classes taken abroad be included in the GPA at his/her home institution, or will only the credits be accepted?
- ❑ Will my student need to "withdraw" from his/her current institution if the chosen program is through another school, and then reapply in order to return the following semester/session? If so, what paperwork will need to be completed prior to departure to make sure he/she is correctly reinstated upon return? Do course selection forms for the next semester/session need to be completed prior to departure?

How long is a study abroad program?

The program duration depends on the program chosen. Study abroad programs generally range from four to five months. The amount of time the student is able to spend abroad and the time of year he/she chooses to go abroad can be determined by answering a few simple questions (Note: Questions are not applicable to Spring and Fall break trips):

- ❑ How much time will the home institution approve for travel abroad and still accept the credits?
- ❑ Will he/she be focused enough to fulfill a specific curriculum and still fully experience the culture if the stay is only a few weeks? Will there be enough time for independent travel within this timeframe?
- ❑ Will he/she be disciplined enough to follow through on courses if too much time is spent abroad? Will he/she have enough spending money to stay for a long period of time and still be able to eat, travel independently, etc?
- ❑ Will the weather be comfortable enough in the country of choice at this time of the year?

NOTE: Be sure your student knows if his/her home institution requires that a certain number of credits be fulfilled at the home campus immediately prior to graduation, or if he/she may need to spend an extra semester or two on campus after returning from the study abroad location!

Why does one need study abroad insurance?

Most universities and exchange organizations require that all students have a good health insurance plan while studying outside of their home country. During an international educational experience or exchange program, the student may need to see a doctor, have a prescription filled, receive care at a hospital, or deal with an unexpected medical emergency.

How much spending money is needed?

The amount of money that will be needed for the trip depends on the expenses that the student may be required to pay while abroad. It is a good idea to create a budget prior to departure that separates any known living and school expenses such as food, housing, transportation and textbooks from general spending money that can be used for independent travel, tourist attraction entrance fees and souvenirs. Keep in mind that having a budget does not mean that the student needs to carry cash around for each of these expenses – just know about how much is allotted to each so money for meals is not spent carelessly on souvenirs!

NOTE: Traveling with large amounts of cash is not recommended.

The student should consider using several different forms of payment for expenses. Traveler's checks, credit cards, ATM cards and cash are accepted almost everywhere. Although U.S. dollars are also widely accepted throughout the world, the student should make every attempt to use the local currency.

How can I exchange money?

To obtain foreign currency, any of the following can be used:

AIRPORT EXCHANGE BUREAU – Currency exchange offices are available at almost all international airports. Although the rates may not be the lowest, it is probably the most convenient location to exchange money when the student first arrives. Note: because the destination airport is certain to have a large supply of the local currency, its rates for exchange may be lower than the rates at the student's home airport, which may only have a limited supply of the foreign currency.

BANKS / ATM / CREDIT CARDS – After the student has had a chance to get accustomed to his/her new surroundings, a national bank or an ATM machine can be found, which are known to offer the lowest exchange rates. Using a credit card can also secure a decent exchange rate and is often safer than carrying around a lot of cash. American express, Visa and Master Card are all widely accepted around the world. Keep in mind, however, that using an ATM/debit card may incur additional bank/commission charges.

LOCAL STORES / RESTAURANTS – Travelers checks can be used for payment at a variety of stores or restaurants. If U.S. dollar travelers' checks are being used instead of foreign currency traveler's checks, make sure the student knows the merchant's exchange rate and is aware of how much change should be returned.

With all the money changing options available, the best thing the student can do is to be an educated traveler. Know what the current exchange rate is and be able to calculate how much should be received in return for each transaction. Also, be safe when carrying money and do not carry all of it at once.

What are Travelers Checks and where can they be obtained / used?

Travelers checks can be purchased at a bank or local travel agency (American express, AAA, etc.) in a variety of denominations and currencies. They can be used for payment at many local establishments or can be exchanged for cash at any bank or exchange agency. Travelers checks come in both US Dollars and in many foreign currencies and can be replaced if lost or stolen. Make sure to keep a list of the serial numbers from each check in a safe place so it can be given to the bank representative for replacement! More information about travelers checks can be found on the American Express website.

What are the housing options?

The housing options depend entirely upon the program that is being offered. Many students are expected to live on campus in either single or double occupancy dorm rooms. Others may have the option to live off campus in apartments or participate in a home stay and live in the home of a nearby family. If the student is expected to arrange his/her own housing, ask for recommendations from the sponsoring institution because student housing in foreign countries is not always easy to come by and may be expensive. It is also a good idea to find out what is included in the housing package (meals, linens, etc.) so your student will not be caught off guard with any unexpected expenses. This is not applicable to break trips, which are shorter in duration than semester trips.

What documents are needed to travel abroad?

Please note that this is only a sample list of documents that may be required for international travel. The actual documents your student will need vary depending on the location of the program. Be sure to contact the hosting institution for official pre-departure information. In all cases, fill out any applications and make all necessary appointments for each document well in advance as it can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months to complete the process.

PASSPORT – The most widely used form of identification used for international travel is a passport. Almost all foreign countries require that visitors have a passport. For more information regarding the application/renewal process, check out the following web site: travel.state.gov/passport_services.html, or call the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778.

VISA – A visa is a permit from an international country that allows visitors to enter and leave their borders and may be required for the chosen program or by any countries that the student plans to visit while traveling independently. Visas often list planned travel dates and do expire, so be sure to have these dates available when applying. For more information about visas and how to apply, look online at travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html. **Please note:** A visa must be obtained prior to departure, so check with the hosting institution as soon as possible to verify if one is needed.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC) – Although not usually required, the ISIC may be a valuable document for which to apply. In addition to being a form of student identification, it may also help your student qualify for discounts on airfare, travel insurance, medical and health assistance, and entrance fees to museums and other cultural sites around the world. This card can be purchased through various Web sites, travel agencies or from many US colleges and universities.

Search the following Web site for more information about how to obtain a card: www.internationalstudentidcard.com. An ISIC is not necessary for break trips.

INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF VACCINATIONS – The student may be required to obtain a number of different vaccinations prior to entering a foreign country. The list of required vaccinations obtained from the study abroad department of the hosting university. When traveling to developing countries, the following vaccinations are usually required: typhoid fever, hepatitis A and B, cholera and yellow fever. Anti-malarial medication may also be recommended. It is also suggested that a list of childhood immunizations be obtained from your family physician (these may include: tetanus, polio, diphtheria, etc.) and update these immunizations if needed.

Will the student be able to communicate without having a firm grasp of the language?

It is possible that wherever the student goes, he/she will be able to find someone that speaks even a little English, but it is always beneficial for the student to make every effort to learn the local language, or at least some key phrases, as it will enable him/her to make the most of the study abroad experience. If your student is not comfortable with the language, a program should be selected where the courses are taught in English. Another option is to enroll in an intensive language class prior to departure.

What will the food be like?

Chances are, the food in the country abroad is not going to be like the food many of us are used to eating at home. Although this can be a wonderful part of the experience, it may be difficult for some. Be sure to follow the host school or host family's guidelines about what precautions to take when sampling local foods and drinks. (Note: in areas where it is not safe to drink the water, remember that ice, fruit juices and even vegetables and fruits washed in the water should be avoided if at all possible.) Your student will be surprised, however, to find that many popular fast food chain restaurants from the United States can also be found all over the world. Visit www.cdc.gov/travel/foodwater.htm for more information about food and water precautions.

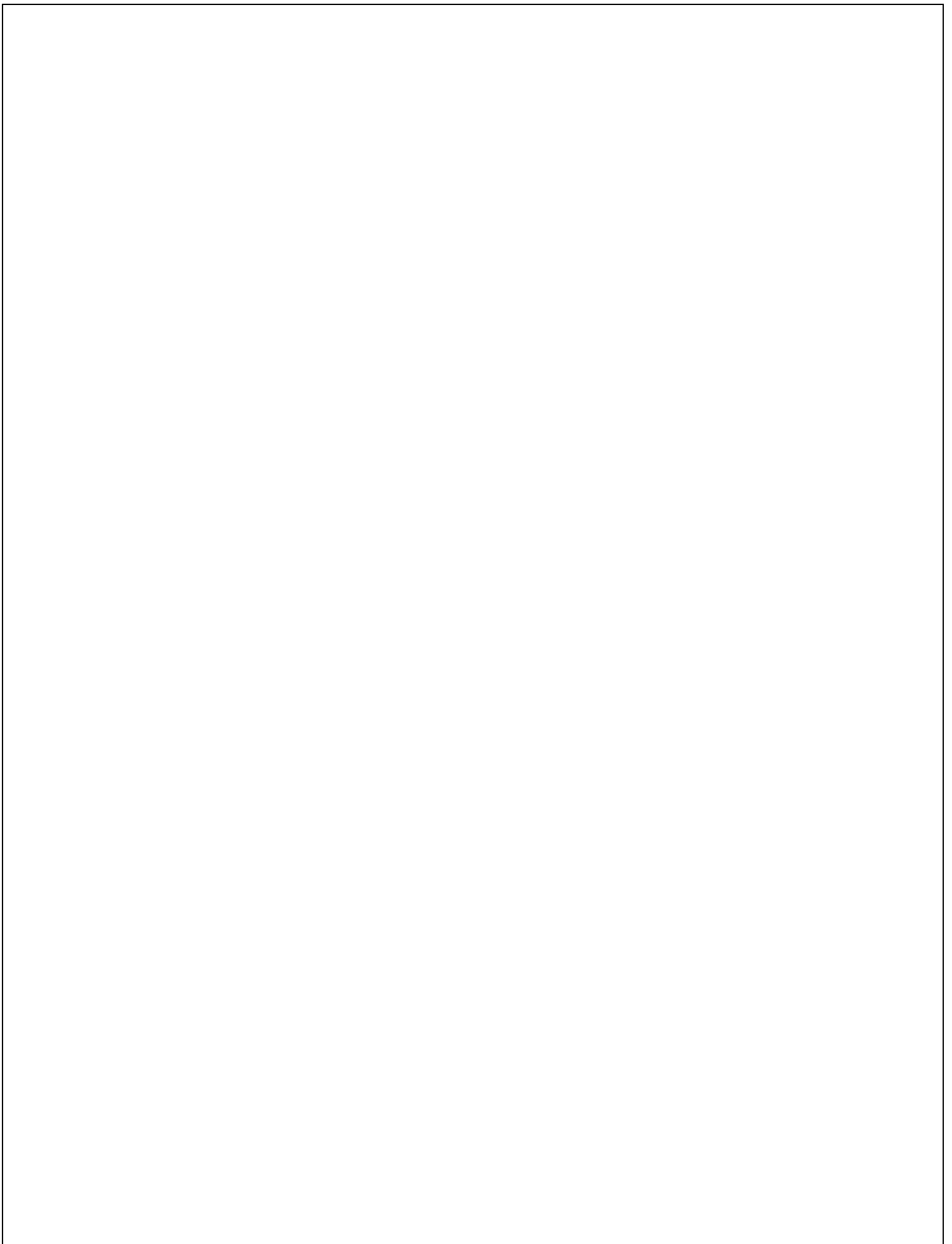
How can we keep in touch with the student who is abroad?

Postal mail for long-term trips, telephone, faxes and emails are all available means by which to communicate with students abroad. While rates may be higher to connect overseas, the services work very similar to those here in the United States. A popular option used by many students is to obtain a phone card/calling card from your current long-distance carrier. Be sure to find out the appropriate access numbers for the United States as they vary from country to country.

Here is another tip from the *It's Your World* handbook:

"Remember to remind the people at home that you may not have a phone immediately available. As a result you may not be able to phone them as soon as you arrive. Agree on a time by which you definitely will have called home."

The full version of the "It's Your World" handbook by Bill Hoffa, is available online courtesy of <<http://www.StudyAbroad.com>>.



CONTACT INFORMATION

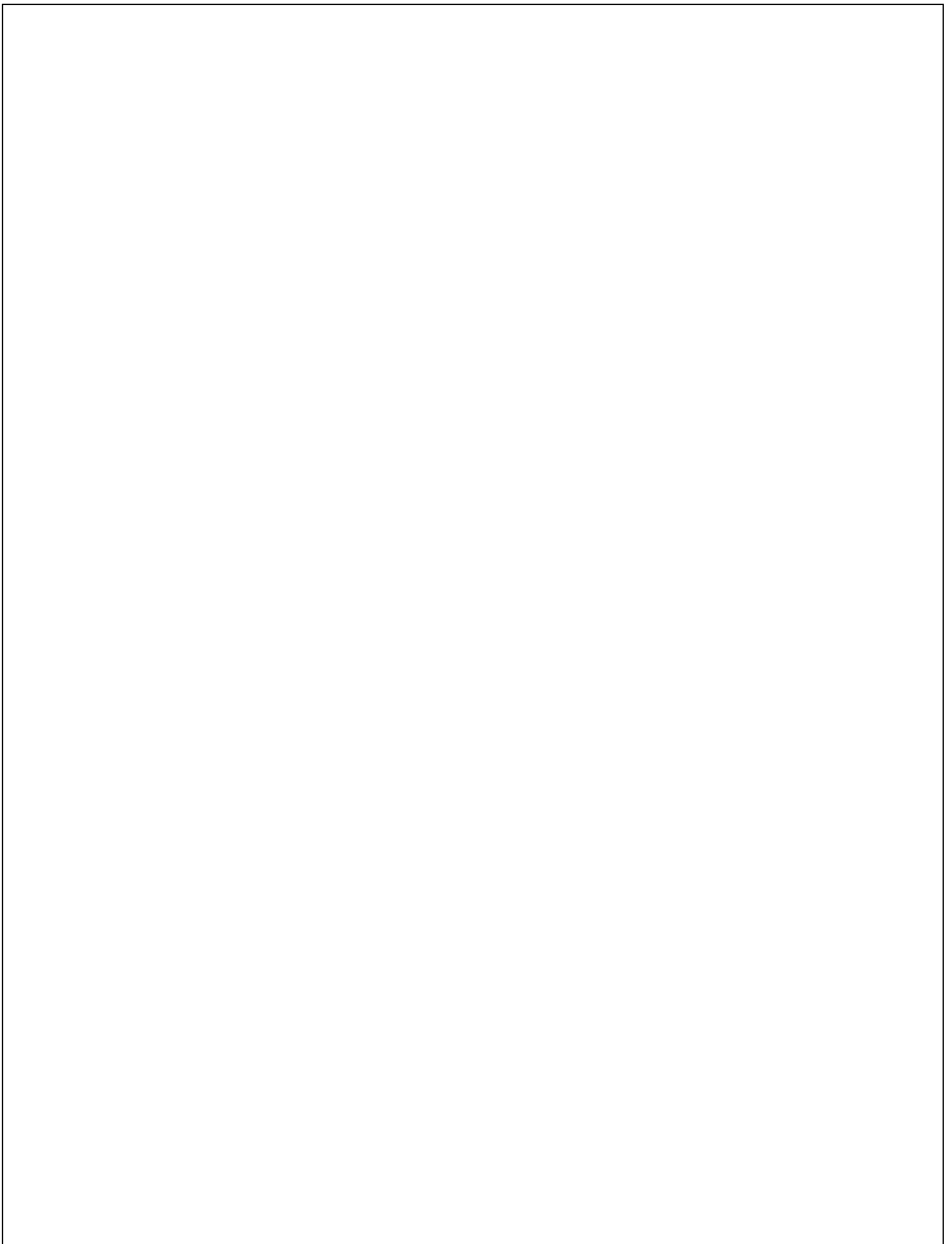
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"The best advice I can give anyone wanting to study abroad is to plan on doing it. I wish for those even a bit intrigued by the thought of going to Galway, Ireland, or any other place abroad, to make it happen. This semester has been the most challenging, the most fun, the most eventful and the most splendid of my college career."



- Susan Mohan, National University of Ireland in Galway, Ireland, Class of 2008

THINK GLOBALLY. LIVE RESPONSIBLY. STUDY ABROAD.

The Study Abroad Program at Christian Brothers University seeks to promote global learning by exposing students and faculty to other countries, cultures, and languages. The long-term benefits are clear:

- ❑ **Employers** believe students that study abroad display desirable traits such as being informed, confident, and self-sufficient.
- ❑ **Students gain a broad worldview** that can lead to greater tolerance of other viewpoints and cultures.
- ❑ **Friendships and contacts** developed overseas allow one to understand views other than one's own.
- ❑ **Students can make a difference** in everyday lives. Some study abroad programs offer social and community outreach programs.



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