

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PROGRAM



handbook

Welcome I.S.P. Students!

As the Director of the College of the Canyons International Students Program, I am very proud to share this handbook with you. College of the Canyons is a wonderful institution which is very proud of its faculty, staff and students. Since the International Students Program was started in February 1997, our program has grown tremendously. We hope to further increase our international student population in years to come.

This handbook is a very important document designed to assist our international students in many ways and is only effective if it is used. I urge you to read all the information in this handbook. When problems arise and you need questions answered, please look in this handbook for the answer to your question. Also, please let us know if you think of additional information that should be added at the next printing.

And remember, the ISP staff is here to serve you, so keep in touch with us!



Staff Members

Dr. M. Bruce Pelkey (From U.S.A.)
PDSO/Director

Ms. Naomi Taniguchi-Ruiz (From Japan)
DSO/Program Specialist

Ms. Evis Wilson (From Albania)
DSO/Student Services Specialist

Nairy Bouyadjian (From U.S.A.)
Academic Counselor (Part-time)

The information provided in this handbook has been collected from several resources including the College of the Canyons ISP staff, the Internet, and information provided by other colleges. It is to be used for informational purposes only. The information contained in this handbook is subject to change without notice. We hope that through the sharing of ideas and information, International Students will adjust more easily to life in the United States of America.

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USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

(all area code 661)

Admissions and Records

A-101 362-3280

ACCESS Center

Cyn. Ctry. 362-5800

Student Development (Computer Lab)

S-102 362-3238 (5050)

Bookstore

S-134 362-3255

Campus Escort

362-3225

Canyon Call (School Newspaper)

M-120 362-3265

Career Services

C-103 362-3286

Community Extension (Traffic School)

TY-102 362-3304 (3456)

Counseling

A-101 362-3287

CWEE Office

TY-105 362-3309/3681

Fitness Center

PE-202 362-3396

H.I.T.E. Honors Office

S-123 362-3333/5333

Housing

S-103 362-3261

Library

R Building 362-3359

Security (Lost&Found)

X-10 362-3229 or 3239

Student Health and Wellness Center

S-116 362-3259

Switchboard

A-111 259-7800

Transcripts

A-101 362-3283

Transfer Center

C-103 362-3455

Tutoring, Learning, Computing (TLC) Lab

I-209 362-3344 (Computers)

362-3349 (English)

362-3345 (Math)



COLLEGE INFORMATION

College of the Canyons

26455 Rockwell Canyon Road

Santa Clarita, CA 91355

661-259-7800

<http://www.canyons.edu>

International Students Program

C-101

(661) 362-3580 or 3581

Email: isp@canyons.edu

powell_c@canyons.edu

Fax: (661) 362-5539

Before The First Day Of Class

Find Your Classrooms. Take a tour of the campus before the first day of classes. Use the enclosed map to locate your classrooms. If you have trouble locating a room, come by the ISP office (C-101) and we'll help you. It is also helpful to locate the cafeteria, bookstore, library and Admissions Office.

Books. Buy the books that are required for your classes before the first day of school. Sometimes there is a shortage of books by the end of the first day of classes. The bookstore salesperson can tell you how to find the books that are needed for your classes if you provide them with a list of your classes and the instructors.

Recording Lectures. If you would like to record your lectures during class, you must ask your instructor for permission to do this prior to recording the lecture. You can contact your instructors by leaving notes in their mailboxes. Instructors' mailboxes are located at the switchboard in the Administration building. It is possible that some instructors will not allow you to record their lectures.

First Week Of Class

Be Early. You will need to report to your classes between 5-10 minutes before the class begins. This will give you time to find the room and get settled into your seat.

Be Prepared. Bring a pencil, pen and paper. This will enable you to take notes about the class.

Do Not Miss The First Class. Most instructors will drop you from the class if you do not attend the first class meeting. Usually there are students who are waiting to take the place of someone who drops out of the class.

Save All Papers. You should start a file each semester in order to save all papers that are given to you by your instructors and by College of the Canyons. Important papers like the "Attendance Policy" will explain the number of class absences you are permitted to have and how your absences will affect your grade. The "Course Syllabus" will explain what material the class will cover, the books needed for the course, and possibly test dates and lecture material dates. The "Grading Policy" will explain what factors will be considered in determining your final

grade. Another good idea is to keep Xeroxed copies of papers that you turn into your instructors, so in the event of a misplaced paper, you will be able to give your teacher a copy of your work.

Photo ID

School identification cards are issued at the Office of Student Development in the S-building. All students, when on campus, are required to carry a photo identification card provided by College of the Canyons. Many departments providing student services such as Counseling, the Student Health and Wellness Center and the Library use this card. This card should be kept the entire time that you attend College of the Canyons. You do not get a new card each year. The Office of Student Development will issue validation stickers at the beginning of each semester. You will have to pay another fee to replace a lost I.D. card.

Method Of Instruction

Every teacher has their own way of teaching their course to their students. It's very important for you to understand the method of teaching for each of your teachers. The better you understand your teacher's method of instruction the better the chance you will have of receiving good grades.

The traditional method of instruction is lecturing. The instructor will discuss and clarify important points that have been assigned as homework or that will help you better understand the class material. If after the lecture you still do not understand the material, you can ask the instructor to re-explain the point or you can make an appointment with your instructor to go over the material during their office hours. Also, it's always helpful for students to read the class material prior to the lecture being given. By doing this you will be better prepared to understand the content of the lecture.

Grading System

In the United States the grading system is as follows:

- A = 4 Grade Points per unit. = Excellent
- B = 3 Grade Points per unit. = Above Average
- C = 2 Grade Points per unit. = Average
- D = 1 Grade Points per unit. = Below Average/
Passing
- F = 0 Grade Points per unit. = Fail

If you are confused by this system, please contact the International Students Program Office for further explanation.

Office Hours / Contacting Teachers

Most instructors have certain times during the week when they are available for appointments. You can use this time to ask questions about the course material or to discuss your grade. The instructor's syllabus will usually provide a voice-mail phone number and/or an email address.

Finding Out Your Grades

There are several ways to find out what your grades are after each semester. Access your school account either Online or calling STAR by dialing 1-888/206-STAR or 255-2867. Grades are usually available about 5 weeks after the end of the semester. Self-addressed and stamped postcards can be given to your instructor on the last day of class, if your instructor will mail it back to you. Email is another option if you have the instructor's email address.

Tutoring / Learning / Computing - "TLC Lab"

Located in room I-209, the TLC Lab provides no-cost tutorial assistance in English, mathematics, and many other subjects on a walk-in basis. This lab also provides access to students for computer use on IBM computers.

Campus Cafeteria

The cafeteria is located in the S-building. Types of food offered there are: hot meals, sandwiches, hamburgers, salads, pizza, spaghetti, burritos, fruit, chips, pastries, and drinks.

Student Health And Wellness Center

Located in the S-building, the Student Health and Wellness Center offers the services of a Nurse Practitioner in the following areas: first aid, pregnancy test, TB skin test, discount pharmacy referrals, HIV/AIDS testing, and referrals to physicians, specialists and other health agencies. Other services are also available. Look in the COC catalog for further information.

Campus Activities (Clubs and Organizations)

There are many opportunities for involvement through membership and participation in student clubs and organizations. Over a dozen clubs and organizations cur-

rently exist on campus. Music programs, dances, sporting events and other activities are offered throughout the school year. Announcements of these events are made in the COC newspaper, "Canyon Call," and in the school website.

Campus Security

College of the Canyons Security Department provides a safe and secure instructional environment. The office is located off the West Road, between the baseball field and the Maintenance Facilities Department in Modular X-10. You can reach security by dialing extension 3229 or 3239; "0" for the switchboard; or in the event of an emergency, dial 7.

Parking Permit

Permits are required in all student lots seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Student permits are valid in student lots only. Permits must be displayed clearly from the interior rear view mirror when parking in the college parking lots. Failure to do this may result in a parking citation in the amount of \$25 or more.

Adding A Class

Once the semester begins, you need to receive an Add Code from the instructor to add a class. Submit the *Add Form* in person to the Admissions Office by the Add deadline that is listed on the calendar page of the class schedule. Take your printout of classes to the next class meeting.

Very Important! Ask for a printout of this new class schedule from the Admissions Office as proof of the addition. Keep this copy for your records!

Dropping A Class

Before you actually drop any classes, please make an appointment with the ISP Counselor for academic counseling. We want to make sure that you are not falling out of compliance as an International Student. A twelve-unit minimum is the amount you must maintain for your F-1 status. It is your responsibility to officially withdraw from a class whenever you decide that you can no longer attend the class. Failure to drop a class early may result in a failing grade.

Request a *Drop Form with an ISP authorization stamp* and process it in the Admissions Office. Make sure to get an official printout of your classes with the changes from Admissions. Keep this copy for your records!

“STAR” and Online Registration

Dial 888-206-STAR or 661-255-2867 to register by STAR. A voice response will guide you through each step. Have your Social Security or student ID number and your credit card available (if you are going to pay for your classes in this manner). To register, you need to call during your assigned date and time. To complete your registration, do not hang up the phone until you hear the recording voice say “Good-bye.” Another way to register is by online and this might be easier since you get all the information visually and be able to do search on open classes while register. You will have a chance to learn this method when the ISP staff help you with your first registration.

Finding Your Priority Registration Date

There are several ways to find out your registration date and time for an upcoming semester. COC mails registration postcards to all continuing students with the date and the hours that you can register or you can request Admissions Office to send you an email. Secondly, if you have a Social Security number and know the number of units that you have completed, you can look inside the new class schedule for the page that contains the “Priority Registration Grid.” If you do not have a social security number, you can call 1-888-206-STAR or 661-255-2867 as soon as the class schedule is made available to students. By using your student identification number, you will be able to determine your date and time. Also, these information are available online. Go to “Online Registration” window, select “My Registration Appointment” and log into your account. If you forget your user name and password, go back to the previous window and create a new one.

Time Window for Priority Registration

You will be assigned a 6-hour period (7 am to 1 pm or 1 pm to 7 pm) to register for classes and you will have an additional 4-hour window (7 pm to 11 pm) in the evening of the same day to make any changes to your schedule. After this day, a block from the system will be applied to your school account until the Open Registration period. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of registering during your priority registration day! By the time Open Registration occurs, many classes are filled. This would make it very difficult for you to get an ideal schedule.

“HOLDS” Placed On Registration

A “hold” will be placed on your school account and registration if you have not submitted the proper information for that semester. “I-Holds” are frequently put on International Students registrations due to health insurance not being updated. Other departments in the school (Admissions office, Student Business office, Library, etc.) can also put a “hold” on your registration. The library may put a “hold” due to books not being returned or the Bursar may put a hold on a student due to a problem with money not being paid. The ISP Office sends out an email letting students know that our office has put a “hold” on their registration, so it is very important to read all the email we send you immediately. Contact the ISP Office if you find that a “hold” has been placed on your registration.

Methods Of Payment

There are many ways to pay for registration. Cash, check, or credit cards can be used to pay for registration at the cashier’s window in the Admissions Office. Make sure to keep a receipt from your payment especially for cash payments. You can also use your credit card while using STAR Registration or Online Registration. You will need the credit card number and the expiration date.

DAILY LIFE NEEDS

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Whenever you move or change your mailing address you must do the following things:

Notify Post Office. File a “Change of Address Card” at the closest post office to your former address. The post office will forward your First Class mail free of charge (domestically only) for one year after your move. Periodicals (Second Class Mail) will be forwarded for 60 days. Third class mail is not forwarded.

Notify Important Companies. All utility companies, credit card companies, banks, magazines and newspapers that you may receive must be notified in order to receive their mailings in a timely manner.

Notify the International Students Program Office. Fill out a change of address form with our office as soon as you know your new address. Not filing this form with COC will cause problems with delivering your registration cards in time for you to register on your designated date. This may lead to not being able to get the specific classes that you need. Many classes are closed to further enrollment before “Open Enrollment” begins. We always need to know how to contact you.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Mobile phones (called cell phones in the US) prepaid or plan; Land lines and Skype

You may choose to bring your cell phone from your home country to the U.S. If you decide to do so make sure that the phone is compatible with the US standard. To quote Wikipedia “There are three major technical standards for the current generation of mobile phones and networks, and two major standards for the next generation 3G phones and networks. All European and African countries and many Asian countries have adopted a single system, **GSM**, which is the only technology available on all continents and in most countries and covers over 74% of all subscribers on mobile networks. In many countries, such as the United States, Australia, **Brazil**, Canada, **Costa Rica**, India,, South Korea, and **Vietnam**, GSM co-exists with other internationally adopted standards such as **CDMA** and **TDMA**, as well as national standards such as **iDEN** in the USA and **PDC** in Japan. Over the past five years several dozen mobile operators (carriers) have abandoned networks on TDMA and CDMA technologies, switching over to GSM.”

The companies that provide mobile telephone services in the US require that their customers subscribe for a period of time (usually 1 to 2 years) and provide cell (mobile) phones for nominal fees. These phones will not function if you transfer service to another company unless you unlock them. The plans are varied and customizable. Subscribers who do not have a social security number often pay a sizable deposit. It is advisable to comparison shop before deciding on a plan and be prepared to pay a substantial deposit to initiate an account if there is no account holder social security. Some of the major cell phone companies: Verizon, T-mobile, AT&T Sprint and Virgin provide prepaid mobile phones. In this case purchasing the cell phone will be necessary along with the prepaid minutes Their

information can be found on each company’s websites and various physical locations throughout town. Skype telephoning is an economical way to place international phone calls. You may learn all the requirements and benefits of using skype by going to the company’s website www.skype.com Land Lines are provided by providers such as AT&T and Verizon and sometimes by mobile companies such as T-mobile. One normally needs a land line when trying to access dial-up or DSL (Digital Subscriber line) internet services. Fees and equipment payment varies by company.

Local Phone Calls

Local phone calls are those within the area of Santa Clarita (Valencia, Newhall, Saugus, Canyon Country, Stevenson Ranch), Castaic, and Agua Dulce. You are not charged for these specific calls on your bill.

Long Distance Calling

You will need to choose a long distance carrier to cover any calls made outside of the 661 area code. There are many long distance carriers to choose from but the following are some of the popular long distance carriers:

SBC 1-800-310-2355 - www.sbc.com

MCI 1-800-950-5555 - www.worldcom.com

Verizon 1-800-483-4000 - www.verizon.com

When dialing all long distance calls in the United States you must first dial the number 1, followed by the three digit “area code,” and then the seven digit phone number. This applies only to calls that are in an area code that is not “661.”

Telephone Directory

Telephone directories are also called “phonebooks.” If you do not receive a free phone book from your telephone company, you can call your telephone company to request a phonebook. These books will have phone numbers and addresses for residents and businesses of the Santa Clarita Valley only. If you do not want your information listed in this book, contact your phone company and ask that your information be omitted from the phonebooks. Names and businesses are listed in alphabetical order in the white pages. Businesses are listed in the “Yellow Pages” of the phonebook by their specific category of business. In the front of the phone book you will also find an area that is

titled "Customer Guide," which has important information.

Telephone Assistance (411)

If you cannot find a local phone number, you can obtain it by dialing "411" on the telephone. For calls that are outside of our area code, you will need to dial 1, then the area code the person or business is located and then 555-1212. The information operator will first ask you for the city, then the last name of the person or the name of the business that you desire. A recording will then give you the information that you requested. You are allowed 3 free local telephone assistance requests a month. This is referred to as "calling information." After your third use of 411, you will be billed 46 cents for each local number that you request during that month. All out of area telephone assisted requests cost \$1.99. None are free.

International Information Directory

To find an international phone number dial 1-800-321-0288.

Toll Free Numbers

"Toll free" numbers are phone numbers that are free long distance calls. These numbers are usually business phone numbers given to consumers who wish to obtain information or to place orders for merchandise. If you need to find a toll free number, call 1-800 555-1212 and the operator will give you any toll fee number that you request.

Internet

When looking for an Internet company for your home computer, you have many from which to choose. They can be found in the phone book's Yellow Pages under "Internet-Service Providers."

Popular Internet companies currently available are:

America On Line	1-800-827-6364
SBC Yahoo	1-866-SBC-YAHOO
Comcast	1-800-266-2278
Earthlink	1-800-511-2041

Places to access the Internet on Campus

S Building
TLC Lab (Room I-209)

Library Computer Lab
Student Services Computer Lab (Room C-103)

Each one of these labs works on a walk-in basis. They are open all week except for Sundays. Their hours vary so it would be a good idea to call ahead for the hours that they are open. There is no charge to use these computers; you only need your COC school identification card. Kinko's, a local business, is open 24 hours a day and provides PC and MAC rental stations, Internet access and scanning. Call for information about the cost of rentals. There are 2 locations near COC:

24125 Magic Mountain Parkway, Valencia 254-1097
24949 Pico Canyon Rd, Stevenson Ranch 255-3224

Mailing Letters And Shipping Packages

Letters and packages can be mailed using the US Postal Service or one of several private delivery services. For information on postal services, rates and fees, zip codes, and local post office locations and hours call 1-800-275-8777. This is a 24-hour postal information line. The post offices that are located near College of the Canyons are:

Valencia Branch
25842 N. Tournament Road (South of McBean)
Monday-Friday 9:30am-5pm. Closed Saturdays

Main Post Office
24355 Creekside Road (At McBean and Creekside)
Monday-Friday 8am-6pm; Saturday 9am-5pm

Lyons Station
23642 Lyons Ave. Newhall (At Lyons and Peachland)
Monday-Friday 9am-6pm. Closed Saturdays

US Postal Service (<http://www.usps.com>)

The US Postal Service delivers letters and packages. They also sell stamps, postal money orders, and deliver mail both domestically and internationally. The post office also sells envelopes, boxes, packaging tape and other packing and shipping supplies. Letters weighing up to 16 ounces with the appropriate postage affixed can be deposited in the blue mailboxes located throughout the city. Mail is removed from these boxes twice a day. You can also mail letters and packages directly from the post office. International letters and packages must be mailed

from the post office and must be accompanied by a Customs Form. Letters and correspondence are usually sent by First Class mail within the United States. There is no need to pay extra postage for airmail, all interstate first class mail is routinely sent by air. On the other hand, when sending mail abroad you should pay for airmail because surface mail travels by ship and is considerably slower.

Addressing Mail

When addressing mail for delivery within the United States, don't forget to include the zip code. If you don't include a zip code, delivery will be delayed. You can use a five-digit zip code if you don't have the nine-digit zip code. The zip code should be placed on the same line as the city and state, after the state, not before. The address should be placed in the center of the envelope below and to the left of the postage.

MR JOHN STUDENT
1234 MAIN STREET
CITY, STATE 12345-6789

Return Address

Write in your return address in the upper left corner on the front of the envelope.

US Postal Rates

There are four main types of mail, each with a different set of postage rates:

Postcards

Only cards with a maximum dimension of 4-1/4 inches x 6 inches are allowed. Postcards exceeding these dimensions are mailed at the first class letter rate. The maximum allowed thickness of a postcard is 0.016 inches.

Letters

The letter rate applies to letters, flats, and anything else not eligible for postcard rates. Standard letters may not be wider than 6-1/8 inches, longer than 11-1/2 inches, or thicker than 1/4 inch. The smallest size can be 3-1/2 inches high by 5 inches long. If the envelope is nonstandard in size, there is a surcharge.

Parcels and Packages

The cost of mailing a package depends on the weight of the package, the distance mailed, and the class of ser-

vice. The maximum weight allowed is 70 pounds and the maximum size is 108 inches (length and girth* combined). Within the United States packages can be sent by first class mail. This is the most expensive. Packages sent by parcel post travel by surface transportation (truck or train) and arrive within 7 to 10 days. Books can also be sent by third class mail (book rate) at a significant discount, but will take much longer to arrive.

*Girth is the circumference of the package (twice the sum of width and depth).

Frequently Used Postage Rates

Additional information can be obtained at the post office or from the US Postal Service's Rate Calculators. One ounce is about 28 grams. A business-size envelope containing six sheets of 8-1/2" x 11" office paper weighs approximately one ounce.

Priority Mail

This type of mail provides flat rates for first class mail for packages. A package weighing up to 2 pounds costs a certain amount with each additional pound up to a total of 5 pounds adding \$1.00 per pound in postage. After that, the postage depends on the weight and the distance. Mail weighing less than 11 ounces can be sent by priority mail, but there's no real reason to send it priority mail since first class mail will take just as long. All mail weighing over 11 ounces sent first class is handled as priority mail. Delivery confirmation is available for an additional charge.

First Class and Priority Mail

Letters or packages will be delivered within three or four days.

Other Postal Services

Express Mail

Guaranteed overnight delivery for letters and packages. The fee for a 1/2-pound envelope is approximately \$11.75.

Certified Mail

This is used when you need proof of mailing. There is an additional cost for the postage and other fees.

Insured Mail

This insures the package against loss or damage in transit. The fee for this insurance is based on the value of the item being mailed. Call to ask for prices.

Return Receipt

This is used when you need proof of delivery. A return postcard showing to whom the package was delivered, including a signature, date, and address (if different). There is a fee in addition to postage and other fees. These services are often used in combination with certified mail.

Registered Mail

This service is used when sending something with a cash value, such as jewelry or other valuables. It is the safest way to send valuable articles, since the postal service tracks the movement of the article and keeps a delivery record at the destination post office. You must declare the full value of the article at the time of mailing, and the fee (in addition to postage) depends on the article's value. The article is insured for its declared value, up to a maximum insurance liability of \$25,000.

Delivery Confirmation

This service provides a confirmation number that may be used to track packages through the USPS web site or by calling a toll free number.

Restricted Delivery

Delivers the letter only to the individual to whom it is addressed. There is a fee in addition to postage and other fees.

PO Box Rental

You can rent a post office box for receipt of mail. There is a yearly fee, depending on the box size.

Postal Money Orders

Postal money orders may be purchased in any amount for a fee in addition to the face value. Money orders can be issued in amounts up to \$700. Postal money orders may be refunded if lost. Photo identification is necessary to cash a postal money order. International money orders are also available for a fee, depending on the type.

Change of Address Cards

If you will be moving, the post office will forward your first class mail free of charge (domestically only) for one year after your move. Periodicals (Second Class Mail) will be forwarded for 60 days. Third class mail is not



forwarded.

Parcel Post

This type of mail will be forwarded locally at no charge or postage-due if the new address is in a different city.

Hold Mail

If you will be out of town, you can ask the post office to hold your mail at the post office until you return. If you will be away for more than 30 days, someone must come to the post office to pick up your mail once a month.

International Reply Coupons

International reply coupons allow you to prepay replies from a foreign country. The coupons cost approximately \$1.05 each, and may be exchanged by the recipient for postage in his or her country.

Other Shipping Services

In addition to the US Postal Service, there are several companies that offer shipping services for letters and packages. They are much more reliable than the US Postal Service, since they track every letter and package. They also offer guaranteed overnight delivery (early morning, morning, afternoon, and end-of-day) and 2 or 3 day delivery. Guaranteed delivery times are by 8:00 am for early morning, by 10:30 am for morning, by 3:00 pm for afternoon, and by 5:00 pm for end-of-day.

The primary advantage of the US Postal Service is the inexpensive rates for delivering letters. Also, only the US Postal Service can deliver packages to a PO Box. The other shipping companies are only able to deliver to a street address.

Major Shipping Companies

Federal Express (FedEx)

<http://www.fedex.com> 1-800-463-3339.

For information about international shipping from the US, call 1-800-247-4747.

United Parcel Service (UPS)

<http://www.ups.com> 1-800-742-5877

Airborne Express (DHL)

<http://www.dhl.com> 1-800-247-2676

For information about international shipping from the US, call 1-800-229-4685.

All three companies let you track the progress of a package on their web sites using the package's tracking number.

Packaging Items

With any of these services, including the US Postal Service, it is important to package fragile items carefully. Insurance will cover damage to the item only if there is visible damage to the outside of the box. This means wrapping fragile items in bubble wrap and using Styrofoam packing "peanuts" to cushion the item within the box. Use enough packing material so that the item doesn't shift or compress the packing material in transit, or the carton may be damaged upon arrival. Paper may be used for wrapping items, but should not be used as filling around the items. The carton should be made of sturdy corrugated cardboard, with no string or wrapping paper on the outside of the carton. Use shipping tape, not cellophane or masking tape to package your order. Reinforced filament tape is best.

Remove any old shipping labels from the box. Include the origination and destination addresses on both the inside and outside of the box. This is in case the address on the outside of the box gets obliterated.

If you need boxes, many of the delivery services will provide shipping materials for free. If your item doesn't fit in one of the standard sized boxes, you can buy boxes from any stationery supply store such as Office Max, Office Depot, and Staples. Styrofoam peanuts, bubble wrap, and other packing materials are also available from these stores. You can also get boxes for free by speaking to the manager of the local grocery store.

HEALTH CARE

The Student Health And Wellness Center

Phone #: (661)362-3259 or 3243
Location: College of the Canyons
Student Center (S building)
Hours: Hours vary.
Call ahead for open hours.

The COC Student Health and Wellness Center provides health care for the treatment of minor acute illnesses and injuries, mental health counseling, and information on numerous health subjects. A nurse practitioner is available to help you with any health related problems you may be experiencing. The nurse can also give you a referral to one of the facilities listed above. The referral will enable you to avoid paying a "co-payment" at the doctor's office. For severe illnesses and injuries it is recommended that you contact any of the following health providers:

SCV Quality Care, Inc.
Valencia

661-254-0026



First Care

Valencia Industrial Center
661-295-2500

First Care Walk-In Medical Group
Saugus
661-253-8844

The Doctors' Office
Newhall
661-255-9355

The Student Health and Wellness Center offers a number of services such as:

First Aid
Treatment of some short-term illnesses
T.B. Skin Testing

Discount Pharmacy Referrals
Vision Screening
Family Planning Information
Pregnancy Tests
 Condoms Sold Reasonably
Blood Pressure Checks
Whole Health Counseling
Some Vaccinations
Mental Health Counseling
Referrals to Physician Specialists and other
Health Agencies

They provide information on the following subjects:

AIDS
Date Rape
Safer Sexual Practices
Epilepsy
Breast Cancer
Substances and Safety
Mental Health
High Blood Pressure
Eating Disorders
Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Hospital Emergency Rooms

Emergency room treatment is much more expensive than other types of treatment. Use an Emergency Room only if it is an extreme emergency. Most insurance companies want you to notify them as soon as possible that you have received emergency treatment. Failure to notify them of emergency treatment may mean they will not cover the cost. Check your insurance policy to find out about your insurance company's requirements.

Sometimes a problem is not a life or death emergency but it still requires immediate attention. For example, a sprained ankle, a simple broken bone, or something in the eye that is causing pain are not considered life or death emergencies. Call your primary health care physician first, and if that person is unable to provide treatment, he or she will refer you to a specialist. If it is after regular office hours, go to an emergency room for treatment.

IMPORTANT: Always carry your insurance card with you!

Medical Records

If you haven't brought a copy of your medical records with you to the US, send for a copy as soon as possible. Make sure the records include immunization, vaccination records, and prescriptions. Having your records available in the event of a medical emergency is very valuable. It is generally a good idea to visit your doctor before you leave for the US.

Choosing A Doctor

It is a good idea to choose a personal doctor ("General Practitioner") before you actually need to use one. You can ask other international students who they have used as their doctors. Our Santa Clarita Valley telephone book lists all the local doctors in the area. They are listed in the yellow pages under "Physician." Not many doctors will be able to give you an appointment on the day that you call, so be prepared to have to wait a day or two to get to see the doctor.

Health Insurance

Every international student is required to have current health insurance while attending College of the Canyons. Your insurance benefits will depend on the company that has insured you. It is wise to call your insurance company and ask if there is a limitation as to which doctors you can see, if there is a co-payment required with an office visit, if you need to cover a "deductible," if you need to pay a certain amount for each prescription, and what type of benefits are offered for repatriation and for medical evacuation. Some insurance companies will not charge you a deductible if you first go to the school health center and the nurse refers you to a private doctor. If you do not get a referral from the COC nurse the doctor will charge you \$100 in addition to the 20% co-payment. Most insurance companies do not cover dental problems or eye exams.

Co-Payment

When making a doctor's office visit, you may be asked to pay a "co-payment" before seeing the doctor. This will be 20% of the visit charge. Your insurance company can explain this to you more. Make sure to get a receipt for the money you pay and save your receipt for at least a year.

Local Hospitals

The 2 nearest hospitals to College of the Canyon are:

Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital
23845 McBean Parkway
Valencia
661/253-8000

Providence Holy Cross Medical Center
15031 Rinaldi
Mission Hills
818/365-8051

Pharmacies And Drugs Stores

Local pharmacies or drug stores provide a place to have a doctor's prescription dispensed. Drug stores and grocery stores also offer medical supplies and "over-the-counter" medications. Pharmacies locations can be found in our local telephone directory.

HealthWebsite

Health information from A to Z. Find health news, advice, and information. This website features a personal health profile and searchable library. www.healthcentral.com

Emergency/ Crisis Telephone Numbers:

Ambulance or Emergency Medical Care
911 (On any type of phone)

Helpline Crisis Information (24 hours)
800/345-2747

Santa Clarita Valley Community Hotline
661/259-4357

General Health Concerns

International visitors do not have to worry about any unusual health hazards in the United States.

Drinking Water

Tap water is safe to drink nationwide. Our water is treated before it is sent to residences.

Allergies

Due to the dry air and winds that blow through our area, you may experience your first allergy symptoms. These symptoms are very much like cold symptoms: runny or stuffy nose, weepy eyes, headache, nasal drip down the throat, and sneezing. The campus Health and Wellness

Center can make suggestions as to what to do for these allergies. Stop in to see the nurse.

Flu Shots

If you consider yourself likely to get a flu virus during its season, you may want to consider receiving a flu shot before the flu season. Around the months of October or November, COC students Health and Wellness Center may offer a free vaccination shot when the vaccine is available. You can either contact the Center or the ISP Office for this information.

AIDS

AIDS is as much a problem in the US as in other countries. College students are a particularly high-risk group because of unsafe sex practices and unrealistic beliefs about HIV transmission. It is not possible to tell whether someone is HIV-positive just by looking at them. If you have unprotected sex with an HIV-positive individual, you will almost certainly become infected. The condom is the only contraceptive that has been proven to block the transmission of AIDS. But even condoms sometimes fail; they break about 2% of the time. Remember, the COC Health and Wellness Center offers information on all types of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

HOUSEKEEPING

Appliances

If you find that you do not know how to use your stove, oven, refrigerator, heater, air conditioner, dishwasher, garbage disposal, or other appliance, ask your landlord or building manager to show you how to use and clean them.

Gas stoves, when left on without being lit, are dangerous. Gas is poisonous and explosive. If you think you smell gas, check your stove first. If it is not on, call the gas company and they will send someone to check on it free of charge. Remember, burners on an electric stove may be hot without appearing red in color. Electric burners will stay hot for some time after the control has been turned off.

Some freezer compartments on refrigerators will need to be defrosted, others defrost automatically. If you need to defrost your freezer, turn off the freezer for several hours until the ice melts. Make sure to keep the frozen items frozen while defrosting your freezer. Thawed frozen food should be cooked immediately! Do not refreeze

the thawed food. It could be dangerous to your health!

WARNING! Never put any type of metal (pans, foil, utensils) in the microwave oven.

Food Storage

Foods bought in the refrigerated or frozen section on your market should be stored once again in those areas when you bring them home. Foods left over after a meal should be stored in a closed container and placed in your refrigerator. Many different containers or plastic wrap in which to wrap your food can be found at the supermarkets. These plastic containers, plastic wraps, re-closable bags, and aluminum foils will help keep your food fresh and safe for several days.

Garbage

City trucks take away garbage on a weekly basis. Ask your landlord or a neighbor where to leave your trash and on which day you can expect the trash to be picked up. Most apartment buildings have large metal containers located on the premises where you can take your bags of trash. The trash trucks will not take large items such as furniture or appliances. Lining your kitchen trash container with a plastic bag can help to keep your trash area clean and odor-free.

Most apartments and homes are equipped with a “garbage disposal” unit in the kitchen sink. This appliance is useful for disposing of soft food materials. Always run cold or warm water while you have the garbage disposal turned on. Avoid grinding fibrous materials like banana skin, eggshells, bones, and potato skins. Always be sure to clear the disposal of any hidden objects that have fallen in such as spoons, bottle caps, etc. Never reach in when the disposal is on!

Recycling

The City of Santa Clarita sponsors a “recycling” program for paper, aluminum cans, glass and plastic bottles. There may be different colored trashcans that will be labeled with the type of recyclable trash that is to be put in it. Contact your landlord or manager if you have any questions.

Cleaning

Cleaning solutions can be found in all markets. Each are designed for different tasks in the house. Make sure to

read the labels carefully and use a cleaning solution for the specific job intended by the makers of the solution.

WARNING! Mixing chemical solutions together can be extremely dangerous. Poisonous fumes or explosives can be created if the solutions are mixed together. You can also damage a surface if you use too strong a chemical solution than is meant for the surface.

Only use dishwasher soap in the dishwasher. Any other soap will cause the dishwasher to overflow with bubbles. The same applies for the clothes washer. Laundry products should be used sparingly to avoid an overflow of bubbles. Read the labels and never exceed the recommended amount of soap in the washing machines!

Most apartments are carpeted. It would be wise for you to use a vacuum cleaner regularly, at least once a week.

HOUSING OPTIONS

Although College of the Canyons does not have student housing, you can contact the International Students Program Office for information about a Homestay Program that can help you find a room to rent in a private home. Other housing options are motels, apartments, and house rentals.

Homestay Program

Homestay Programs are arranged through private companies that charge a fee to match you with a compatible, prescreened family. Living arrangements will depend on your preferences and those of the host family. Normally, the student would have a private bedroom and share a bathroom with other family members. The host family usually provides meals. The monthly rent is dependent on the facilities offered. A refundable damage deposit can be charged along with the processing fee and monthly rent. COC does not monitor or administer these programs. You must submit applications directly to the organization.

Questions To Ask Homestay Companies

- ▶How far from COC will I live?
- ▶Is there bus service nearby?
- ▶How long will it take to get to COC?
- ▶What are the rules of the house?
- ▶Can I have guests stay overnight?
- ▶Will I be expected to do chores?

- ▶Will I be able to have a private phone line?
- ▶How late at night can people call?
- ▶Do I have to share a bathroom with anyone?
- ▶Are other students being placed in this house?
- ▶What is the curfew at this house?
(The latest hour you can arrive home.)
- ▶Are there animals in the house?
- ▶What language is spoken in the house?
- ▶What religion is practiced in this house.
- ▶Does the host family expect anything of my own religious activities?
- ▶Are there any dietary practices or restrictions?
- ▶In the event that I do not like the food and I pay for meals in the monthly rate, can I get an adjustment in my rent and cook my own meals?
- ▶What is usually served for breakfast, lunch and dinner ?
- ▶If I am not happy with the family that I have been placed with, what will the homestay company do?
- ▶Do people smoke in this home?

If you are not interested in a homestay program, we strongly suggest that you be prepared to spend time in a hotel/motel while looking for an apartment to rent. It is very important that you familiarize yourself with the area in order to find comfortable housing. Remember that securing housing is your responsibility.

Hotels and Motels

The phone numbers for local hotels and motels are in the phonebook. Hotels have nicer accommodations and are more expensive than motels. Daily rates may be higher than weekly or monthly rates so make sure to ask specifically about each rate. Make sure to find out if there is a bus stop close by that will take you to school. If you would like our help in choosing a hotel/motel, just stop by the office and ask one of the ISP office assistants.

Finding A Place To Live

When you are looking for a place to live, think about safety, transportation, and make sure that the things you need like shopping, a post office, and restaurants are easy to get to by bus, bicycle, or walking. If you have a car, check the street signs for any parking restrictions. Many areas will list times when parking is not possible because of street cleaning. It is often better to choose an apartment that provides a designated parking space rather than to hope for parking every day on the street.

How To Find A Place To Rent

The following are places to search for apartment or house rentals:

- ▶In the classified section of the newspapers The Signal, Daily News, Los Angeles Times, PennySaver, and The Recycler.
- ▶On the COC bulletin board (located in the S-Building across from the bookstore).
- ▶In the free publication Apartment/Houses For Rent magazine that you will find at the entrance of local markets and convenience stores.
- ▶On the Internet at: www.rentnet.com

What To Expect When Renting

Renting an apartment usually requires a background check be completed. Bank account information, previous addresses, personal and professional references are required in a background check. Landlords usually require a first and last month's rent, a cleaning fee, and a security deposit. The cleaning fee will not be returned to you, but the deposit will be returned to you if the apartment has not been damaged during your stay. Utilities (water, gas, electricity) may or may not be included in the rental fee. The lease agreement will contain this information. The lease is a legally binding agreement. Make sure to read all of it carefully! Do not sign it until you understand everything on the lease. Ask questions!

About Leases

Landlords meet and interview people hoping to find responsible, and financially secure renters. They prefer to see local references. If there is a problem with this, the International Students Program can give you a copy of your financial statement. Many landlords will accept this in place of local references. There are apartments that require a Social Security number from you. Before you spend time looking at the apartment, ask the landlord if he requires a Social Security number. If you have decided to rent the apartment, you must sign the lease as soon as you can, even before you leave the apartment complex. The landlord is able to rent the apartment to someone else if you have not signed a lease/contract with him. When you finally choose an apartment, make sure to get a lease agreement. A lease or rental agreement should include the following information:

Rental rate
Cleaning fee
Required deposit

Apartment rules
Length of occupancy
Termination requirements

Questions You May Want To Ask A Landlord

- ▶What is the monthly rent?
- ▶What deposit is required?
- ▶Is there a cleaning fee?
- ▶What utilities and services are included in the rent?
(Gas, electricity, water, cable TV)
- ▶How many people can reside in this apartment?
- ▶When is the rent due each month?
- ▶If the apartment is shared, who is responsible if one should leave?
- ▶How can I get the security and cleaning deposits refunded?
- ▶After I move out, how long before I receive the deposit ?
- ▶How long can I occupy this apartment?
- ▶Explain the landlord's right of entry?
- ▶What is the policy on guests and subletting?
- ▶What are the rules about pets, conduct, and the use of the recreational facilities?

Make the rental agreement contingent upon any corrections or repairs that are needed before you move in and agree upon a completion date. This agreement, as with all agreements, should be in writing, dated and signed by both you and the landlord. All rental agreements or leases should be in writing. If there is language you do not understand, ask a reliable person to explain it to you. Pay your rent by check, not by cash. If you must pay by cash, get a signed and dated receipt from the landlord immediately upon payment.

Leasing Versus Month-To-Month

Apartments can be rented under either a lease agreement or a month-to-month rental agreement. Leases are usually one year in length. If you move out before the lease expired, you are still responsible for the entire lease period. Make sure that you are happy with the apartment and the landlord before you sign a lease agreement. Month-to-month rental agreements allow you and the landlord to have more flexibility. The negative side of this type of agreement is that the landlord may decide not to renew your rental agreement. This would force you to move out of the apartment at the end of one month.

Apartment Sharing

Many students choose to share an apartment with other students. Students who wish to share their apartment make their own terms. Be prepared for move-in costs to include first and last month's rent as well as a security deposit. Approximate monthly cost to share an apartment may vary from \$300-\$500, excluding utilities, telephone and Cable TV.

Right-of-Entry

In order to inspect the unit and make repairs, every landlord has the right to enter the apartment at reasonable hours. Your landlord should not enter your apartment without calling to ask your permission first or notifying you that he needs to repair something. California law requires the landlord to obtain a court order before entering an apartment due to the tenant breaking the lease, even if the landlord has a lien on the tenant's personal property.

Damages

Before you move into your apartment, go through the entire place with the manager. Make a list of any existing damages. This will provide protection from being falsely accused of damages. Pay close attention to appliances, cracked plaster, draperies, carpets, lighting fixtures, and cabinet drawers. Ask the manager to sign the damages list and date it. Sign it yourself and make copies for you and the landlord to keep. Should any damages occur to the premises while you are leasing it, you are responsible for making repairs. The tenant is expected to leave the apartment in the same condition as when it was rented, with reasonable wear-and-tear excepted.

Sub-Letting

Sub-letting means you would sign an agreement to rent an apartment and then take rent from another person to live in that apartment instead of you. This would probably occur if you were going to travel for a long period of time during school break, but you do not wish to lose the right to live in that apartment when you return. Sub-letting is only allowed with the landlord's permission. Some landlords do not permit this. Remember, if you sub-let your apartment to someone else, you are still responsible for the rent payment each month whether or not you have collected it from the sub-tenant. Make sure that you know your sub-tenant very well and have them sign an agreement regarding the leasing.

Eviction

The landlord has the right to ask you to vacate the premises regardless of whether or not you have a lease agreement. He needs to give you proper notice of at least 30 days. Eviction usually occurs if you have engaged in illegal activities or violated the rental agreement.

Turning Off the Utilities

California law forbids a landlord from turning off the water, electricity or gas of the apartment of someone he wishes to evict. When you move out of your apartment you must call each utility company and order the service disconnected. You are responsible for any utility bills on your rental until you do this. You must go in person to close these accounts or leave a forwarding address for the final bills.

Giving Notice to Leave

To move from your rental you will need to write a dated letter to your landlord 30 days in advance of the date you plan to leave. Include in the letter your name, address, apartment number, telephone number, and the date you wish to move from your apartment. Deliver the letter in person. Have the landlord sign and date a copy for your records. If you leave any belongings behind or if you keep the keys, you have not legally vacated the premises and you can lose your deposit for every day that you do not comply with the terms of vacancy.

Landlord / Tenant Handbook

Questions on state laws may be directed to the Los Angeles Department of Consumer Affairs at 1-213-974-1452. This office is located at 500 W. Temple Street, Room B96, Los Angeles, CA 90012. You can also call the State Consumer Information line at 1-800-952-5210 for any questions regarding state laws.

Landlords and tenants have rights and laws that they must follow related to raising rents, responsibilities for repairs and maintenance, anti-discrimination, lease agreements, living conditions, security deposits, vacating a rental unit, and evictions. It would be wise to request a copy of the Landlord/Tenant Handbook from the Los Angeles Housing Department, Consumer Affairs Division at 200 N. Main Street, 1600 City Hall East, Los Angeles, CA 90012, 1-213-485-8324.

Utilities

Water

Santa Clarita Water Company (259-2737) serves the City of Santa Clarita. Call the water company directly for service information. The water that comes out of the faucet (inside and outside) has been purified and does not require boiling.

Electricity

SCE (Southern California Electric Company) is the electric company that services the entire City of Santa Clarita. For general services information call 1-800-655-4555 or look in the telephone book under "Edison International" for other phone numbers. The household current in the United States is 110 volts, AC 60 cycles. Adapters are needed for foreign appliances.

Natural Gas.

Natural gas comes from the Southern California Gas Company. For automated services call 1-800-772-5050 or you can look in the telephone book under "The Gas Company" for other service numbers. It's a good idea to know where and how to turn off your gas in the event of an emergency. Learn how to light the pilot light on your heater, stove, and water heater in case they go out. The service representative who comes to connect your gas can give you this information. If you ever detect the smell of gas in your apartment or house and you cannot determine why, call the gas company immediately! They will send someone to check it for you free of charge.

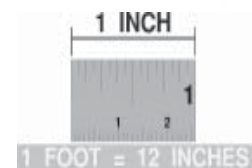
Telephone

Look under the "Communications Systems" section of this handbook, page 9.

MEASUREMENTS

Weight and Measures

Most fruits and vegetables are sold in stores by weight. Recipes are written in units of dry or liquid volume. The units will be cups or fractions of a cup, tablespoons, and teaspoons. Measuring cups and spoons are available at supermarkets. Drinking cups and eating spoons should not be used in place of these measuring utensils. Listed on the next page are abbreviations that are used in recipes.



T or tbsp.=tablespoon

T or tsp.=teaspoon

C=cup

lb.=pound

oz.=ounce

pt.=pint

qt.=quart

gal.=gallon

net. wt. (net weight)=weight of contents not including the weight of the container.

The metric system is not in everyday use in the United States. People think in quarts and inches, not liters and centimeters.

The following charts convert between the English and metric systems for the most commonly used measures.

Lengths:

1 inch = 2.54 centimeters (cm.)

1 centimeter = 0.39 inches (in.)

1 foot = 12 inches

1 foot = 0.305 meters (m.)

1 meter = 3.28 feet (ft.)

1 meter = 1.09 yards (yd.)

1 yard = 0.914 meters (m.)

1 yard = 3 feet

1 mile = 5280 feet

1 mile = 1.61 kilometers (km.)

1 kilometer = 0.62 miles (mi.)

Weights:

1 ounce = 28.35 grams (g.)

1 gram = 0.035 ounces (oz.)

1 pound = 0.4536 kilograms (kg.)

1 pound = 16 ounces

1 kilogram = 2.2046 pounds (lb.)

1 ton = 2,000 lbs

Volume and Liquid Measures:

1 fluid ounce (fl.oz.)=29.574 milliliters (ml)

1 cup (C) = 8 oz.

1 pint (pt) = 16 fl.oz.

1 quart (qt.) = 2 pt.

1 liter (l) = 0.2642 gal = 1.057 qt

1 gal = 3.785 l

1 tablespoon (T) = 15 cubic centimeters (cc)

1 teaspoon (tsp) = 5 cc

Temperature

Temperatures are most often reported in Fahrenheit, and occasionally also in Celsius. To convert Fahrenheit to Celsius, subtract 32 and multiply the result by 5/9. The following table lists a few common temperatures:

°F	°C	Description
212	100	Boiling point of water.
98.6	37	Normal body temperature.
86	30	Very hot summer day.
72	22	Room temperature.
68	20	Mild spring day.
50	10	Warm winter day
32	0	Freezing point of water.

Climate varies considerably across the United States. In the northern cities, such as Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York, Seattle, Washington, Denver, and Minneapolis you will need cold weather and snow gear. In the southern states, such as California and Florida, summers may be very hot and the winters mild. Depending on the part of the country, temperatures during the summer will run from the 70s through the 90s.

No matter where you are in the USA, you will probably need a sweater or jacket for part of the year. Clothing is relatively inexpensive in the USA, and it may be easier to find appropriate clothing at your destination. Wait until you arrive, and watch what the natives wear.

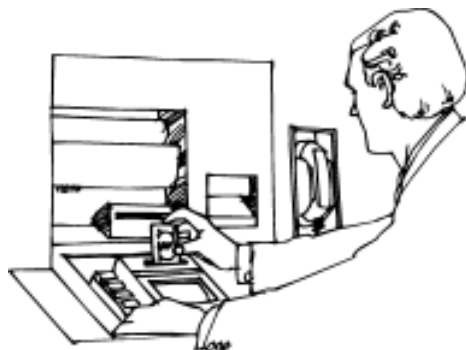
Time

The United States has four main time zones:

Pacific Standard Time (PST),
Mountain Standard Time (MST),
Central Standard Time (CST),
Eastern Standard Time (EST).

When it is 9:00 am in California (PST) it is 10:00 am in Denver (MST), 11:00 am in Chicago (CST), and 12:00 noon in New York (EST). Alaska is one hour earlier than California, and Hawaii is three hours earlier. Puerto Rico is in the Atlantic Standard Time zone, one hour after New York. If you are on the east coast of the US and call someone on the west coast, they are probably still asleep at 9:00 am your time. If you are on the west coast and call someone on the east coast, they are probably eating dinner at 4:00 pm your time.

During Daylight Savings Time clocks are set forward one hour. It begins on the first Sunday in April and ends on the last Sunday in October. The mnemonic “Spring Forward, Fall Back” will help you remember how to set your clocks.



MONEY AND BANKING

US Monetary System

The US Monetary System is a decimal system, with one dollar equal to one hundred cents. One dollar is written as \$1 or \$1.00. One cent is written as 1¢. One dollar and twenty-five cents would be written as \$1.25. Dollar amounts are written with a comma every three digits, so one thousand dollars would be written as \$1,000.00

<u>Coin</u>	<u>Figure on Front</u>	<u>Value (Cents)</u>	<u>Value (Dollars)</u>	<u>Color</u>
Penny	Lincoln	1 cent	0.01 dollars	Copper
Nickel	Jefferson	5 cents	0.05 dollars	Silver
Dime	Roosevelt	10 cents	0.10 dollars	Silver
Quarter	Washington	25 cents	0.25 dollars	Silver
Half Dollar	Kennedy	50 cents	0.50 dollars	Silver
Dollar	Anthony	100 cents	1.00 dollars	Silver

Paper currency is used for amounts of \$1 or more, and coins are used for amounts under \$1. The most common coins and their dollar equivalences are shown below. Because the Susan B Anthony dollar coin is similar in color and size to the quarter, it is easily mistaken for a quarter. To remedy this problem, Congress recently authorized the US Mint to issue a new dollar coin. The new coin will be similar in size to the current coin, but golden in color and with a distinctive edge. In any event, the dollar and half dollar coins are not in common use.

Paper currency is most often circulated in the following denominations: \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. Occasionally you will encounter a \$2 bill. The denomination of all currency is clearly marked on the bottom of both sides of the bill, and on all four corners. Some stores will not accept bills larger than a \$20. Several bills were recently redesigned to make it more difficult to counterfeit, so you will see both the new and old bills in circulation. All currency is green and printed using special paper. The slang term for a dollar bill is a “buck,” so \$20 might be described as “twenty bucks.”

Each denomination includes a picture of a famous American statesman on the front. The following table describes the images on the various denominations.

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Portrait on Front</u>	<u>Illustration on Back</u>
\$1.00	George Washington	Great Seal of the United States
\$2.00	Thomas Jefferson	Declaration of Independence
\$5.00	Abraham Lincoln	Lincoln Memorial
\$10.00	Alexander Hamilton	US Treasury Building
\$20.00	Andrew Jackson	White House
\$50.00	Ulysses S. Grant	US Capitol Building
\$100.00	Benjamin Franklin	Independence Hall

“Paying Cash”

The term “paying cash” means that the method of payment is in currency and/or coins rather than credit cards, checks or any other form of money.

Money Orders and Cashier’s Check

Money orders and cashier’s checks are usually used to make payments if you do not have a checking account or if the merchant or seller does not accept personal checks. Money orders can be bought at some markets or convenience stores. Cashier’s checks can be purchased at your bank. There is a small fee charged for money orders and cashier’s checks.

Opening a Bank Account

When you first arrive, it is a good idea to open a bank account whether it is a checking account or a savings account. There are many banks in the Santa Clarita Valley. You may want to choose a bank that is either near campus or near to where you live. Bank locations can be found in our local telephone directory.

When you arrive at the bank, you will want to speak with the “New Accounts” person to find out about the different account options. Opening balance requirements and monthly fees are different at each bank. You may want to ask them about wiring money from your country to the U.S. Each bank sets its own limit and charge for wiring and transferring of funds. Some of our students have recommended CITIBANK because it has worldwide offices. This would enable you to do banking out of an account that your family may also access in your home country.

Non U.S. Resident New Account Requirements

2 forms of identification required:

- ▶First ID: Passport with photo, Alien Registration receipt card, Student I.D., Student Visa or I-551 form.
- ▶Second ID: International Drivers License, Student ID card, or
- ▶Certificate of foreign status (I-20)

Other possible requirements:

- ▶Provide Permanent Foreign address.
- ▶College student Identification.
- ▶\$100 to open an account.
- ▶Monthly checking fee for unlimited check writing. (Approx. \$6)
- ▶Bank visit fee. (Approx. \$2 per visit)
- ▶Must be 18 years of age for checking account OR 16 years of age if you are working.

Checking Account

A checking account enables you to write checks for your purchases, bills, and other daily activities. It isn't safe to send cash through the mail. It also isn't safe to carry large amounts of cash. You should pay for most of your purchases using a check or credit card. When you open a checking account, you will be given a checkbook containing checks and a “recorder” in which to keep an on-going list of the checks you have written. Additional checks can be ordered in a variety of designs for a fee.

Insufficient Funds / “Bounced Check”

If there are insufficient funds in your account to cover the check, the check will “bounce” and your account will be overdrawn. This means that the bank will refuse to honor the check and will return it to the depositor. In addition, the bank will charge you a bounced check fee of \$15 to \$35, so it is important to make sure you always have sufficient funds in your account to cover any outstanding checks. If the payee tries to deposit the check again (sometimes their bank will do this automatically), you will be penalized with a second bounced check fee for the same check. Many international students expect the bank to pay checks even when their account is overdrawn, and get a rude and expensive shock when they discover that the US banking system handles overdrawn accounts differently. If you want your bank to honor checks even when your account is overdrawn, you must ask for overdraft protection. There is an extra fee for this service, and the amount your account is overdrawn up to a limit is treated like a short-term loan. (You pay interest on the balance due.) This feature can be expensive, but not as expensive as the service charges from bounced checks. Of course, you won't need this feature if you carefully balance your checkbook and make sure that you always have sufficient funds in your account.

Monthly Bank Statements

At the end of the month the bank will mail you a statement showing all deposits and withdrawals from your account, as well as the current (ending) balance of the account. Some banks may return to you any cancelled checks. Other banks will send you a copy of your cancelled checks only if you request specific ones. Cancelled checks are checks you wrote that have been processed. They are stamped (cancelled) to indicate that the money has been withdrawn from your account. Cancelled checks should be saved, since they provide proof of payment. This is especially important when you need a receipt of payment, such as for the security deposit on your apartment. You should reconcile the statement against your checkbook to make sure there are no errors on a monthly basis.

Check Deposits

When you deposit checks into your account, there is a waiting period of a few days before you can withdraw the money. The length of the waiting period depends on the bank upon which the check is drawn. Local banks

will have a shorter waiting period than out-of-town banks. This delay is to protect the bank in case the check bounces.

Writing Checks

When writing a check, the amount of the check is written twice, once using numerals and once using words. If you were writing a check for \$23.35, you would write the words as “Twenty-three and 35/100 dollars,” where the word “and” separates the dollar amount from the cents. You would write \$23.00 as “Twenty-three and NO/100 dollars.” Draw a horizontal line through any leftover space, to prevent someone from adding extra digits to the amount.

Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) Card

Most checking accounts will include a debit card you can use to withdraw money from your account at any ATM, 24-hours a day. This lets you make deposits, withdrawals, and other transactions (e.g., balance inquiries) at any time, even when the bank is closed. ATMs are very convenient because they are located throughout the city near shopping areas and sometimes even inside grocery stores. (Banks like ATMs because it is much cheaper to install and service an ATM than to open a branch office and pay a human teller.) Most people don’t carry a lot of cash, because they can get cash from an ATM when they need it. ATMs limit the amount of your daily withdrawals to a maximum of \$300, as a safety measure.

If your ATM card is ever stolen, notify the bank immediately. Your liability for a stolen or lost card is limited to \$50 if you report the loss promptly. Be careful in selecting an ATM to use, because the bank that owns the ATM can charge a fee (typically \$1.00) in addition to any fees your own bank may charge for ATM withdrawals. It’s best to use your ATM card to withdraw money only from ATMs owned by your bank. Although you can make withdrawals from almost any ATM, deposits should be made only at your bank’s ATMs.

The two national ATM networks are:

PLUS (1-800-843-7587) and
CIRRUS (1-800-4-CIRRUS or 1-800-424-7787).

The networks to which your bank’s ATMs belong are indicated on the back of your debit or credit card. Although you can use an ATM on the other network, your bank will probably charge you a larger fee for using an

ATM that isn’t on the bank’s home network.

WARNING: When using an ATM, be sure no one is near enough to see you enter your “PIN” number.

Debit Card

Some banks offer a debit card that combines the features of an ATM card with a credit card. You can use it like a regular Visa card, except the charges are directly debited from your checking account. This is in contrast to regular credit cards, which provide a grace period of 20 to 25 days for you to pay the bill before interest is charged. On the other hand, it helps avoid the temptation to carry a balance on the card. If you don’t already have a credit card, it is worthwhile to get one at home because international students sometimes find it difficult to qualify for a credit card after arriving in the US.

Savings Account

A savings account earns interest on your money. This type of account usually does not allow you to write checks. ATM cards are usually issued to savings account holders. This enables you to have access to your account without entering the bank.

In order to establish a savings account you will be required to keep a minimum amount of money in the account. Each bank has a different requirement, call ahead for information.

Credit Card Information

Credit cards are such an ingrained part of the American way of life that you will have trouble making certain purchases with anything other than a credit card. If you want to place an order by phone, cash a check, rent a car, or buy airline tickets, you need to have a credit card. It is sometimes better to use a credit card to pay for purchases. But you must take care to pay off your balance in full at the end of the month. Otherwise you will incur interest on the balance. This can substantially increase the balance due.

Many international students find it difficult to get a credit card in the US, because they do not have an established credit history. (Also, the credit card issuers are concerned that international students might eventually return to their home countries and default on the balance remaining on the card.) So if you already have a major credit card

such as a MasterCard (Eurocard, Access, Chargex), Visa (Barclaycard, Carte Bleue), or American Express, it is a good idea to bring it with you. American banks can check your credit limit on the foreign card, and this may make them more likely to issue you a credit card. If you opened a checking or savings account with a bank that offers credit cards, it may be easier to get a credit card from that bank since you have money on deposit with them. Getting a major credit card is very difficult for international students. Take every opportunity to establish a good credit record. Be careful to not bounce any checks. If you open a department store credit card, pay the bills promptly. Mailing your payment late several times or missing a single payment can ruin your credit rating. After you've established a good credit history, it will be easier to get a major credit card. The major credit cards in the US are Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. Visa and MasterCard are offered by many banks and financial institutions. American Express and Discover Card are each offered by only one financial institution, but are accepted by many businesses.

Local Banks

CITIBANK

Phone #: 661/252-4280
Website: www.citibank.com
Location: 19100 Soledad Canyon Rd.
Canyon Country

BANK OF AMERICA

Phone #: 661/254-7304
Website: www.bankamerica.com
Locations: 23929 W. Valencia Blvd.
Valencia

26811 Bouquet Canyon Road
Saugus

19120 Soledad Canyon Rd.
Canyon Country

24740 Valley St.
Newhall

WELLS FARGO

Phone#: 661/222-9417
Website: wellsfargo.com
Location: 25850 North The Old Road.
Valencia

WASHINGTON MUTUAL

Phone #: 661/254-2101
Website: www.washingtonmutual.com

Location: 25882 McBean Parkway.

Valencia

23734 W. Valencia Blvd.
Valencia

24160 W. Lyons Ave.
Newhall

18571 Soledad Canyon Rd.
Canyon Country

WARNING!...Never send cash through the mail! Bills that are paid through the mail should be paid by personal check or cashier's check.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

Most people you meet in the United States will be friendly and helpful. However, there is still a moderate amount of crime against persons and crime against property, some of it directed specifically at foreigners.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

In Santa Clarita as in most communities in the United States, but not all, dialing 911 on any phone will connect you to emergency services such as ambulance, fire, and police. You do not need to put money in a pay phone to dial 911. In cities that do not provide 9-1-1 services, there may be a specific local telephone number. You will have to tell the 911 Operator where you are located and what emergency is taking place.

Another way to get emergency help is to dial 0, which reaches a telephone operator. Tell the operator that you have an emergency and the street address and city where

help is needed. The operator will connect you to the appropriate emergency service.

You can find a listing of local emergency numbers on the first page of the local telephone directory. You should compile a list of the local emergency numbers, including poison control and the local hospital emergency room. Call the emergency telephone numbers if you need help immediately in a life-threatening situation. For example, you should dial 911 if a crime is in progress, someone is badly injured or ill, there's a fire, or you fear for your life.

For non-emergencies you should call the non-emergency telephone number for our local Sheriffs' station 255-1121 or campus police. For example, if a car is blocking your driveway, someone broke into your apartment but is no longer there, or to report vandalism.

Campus Security

See page 7 of this handbook for this information.

Campus Escort Service (Ext. 3225)

College of the Canyons has a Security Escort Service available to all students and faculty. They operate between the hours of 5pm –10:15pm. The escort will meet you at your classroom door and take you to your car or to the shuttle bus that operates through the parking lots. Call the campus switchboard by dialing 0 (zero) or the Security Office at extension 3229 or 3239 for more information.

Home Safety

Remember to lock the doors, and close and lock the windows to your apartment when you are not at home. When you first move into the apartment, have a locksmith change the locks. You don't know who might still have a key to the apartment. It is best to install jimmy-proof locks, because the interlocking jaws on such locks prevent a thief from spreading the frame of the door with a crowbar. You should also install window locks or stops on all the windows, especially if you are renting a first-floor apartment.

Do not allow door-to-door salespeople to enter your apartment if you don't want them to enter. It is perfectly fine to say, "No thank you," politely but firmly. If you do

invite a salesperson in, ask for identification first.

Do not give a telephone salesperson any personal information such as your name, address, credit card number, etc. Report annoying phone calls to the telephone company or to the Sheriffs' Department.

Daily Safety Tips

Leave your passport at home in a safe location. Do not carry it around with you during the day unless you feel that you may need it for a specific task. Instead of using your passport for a picture ID, go to the DMV for a California picture ID. Try not to carry a lot of cash and if you do, do not let strangers see how much you are carrying.

Car Safety

Keep your car doors locked at all times. Even when you stop to get gasoline, lock the doors of your car. Get a map and know where you are going and how to get there before you leave on a trip. If you are involved in an accident, stay in your car with the doors locked until the police arrive. Some criminals will deliberately cause a minor accident in order to rob or hurt you, especially if you seem lost. Likewise, if you pass an accident or someone needing assistance, don't stop. If you are on a busy street or highway, someone with a cellular phone will call the police to summon help. Always park your car in a well-lit area. Never leave valuable articles or packages on the seat; lock them in the trunk. Before getting in your car, look at the back seat to make sure nobody is hiding there. And before getting out of your car, look around to make sure that your surrounding area looks safe.

See information about the American Automobile Association (AAA or "Triple A") under Transportation-Car Safety (Page:32).

Walking at Night

Don't walk alone at night. Try to walk with a group of friends. College of the Canyons offers a campus escort service. Use it! See "Campus Security" on the left. Walk on busy well-lit streets and avoid poorly lit and deserted areas. If you are lost, walk as though you know where you are going and stop at the police station or a gas station for directions. Do not hitchhike, especially if you are female. It is not safe.

Crossing the Street

In the United States, cars drive on the right side of the street, not on the left. So on most streets cars will be approaching you from your left. Many international students have been hit by cars because they expect the cars to approach from the right. Always cross the street at a corner, particularly a corner where there is a crosswalk. Make sure to look both ways before crossing the street. If you cross in the middle of a street you can be fined for “jaywalking” by the police.

Pickpockets

A pickpocket can work in many surroundings, especially at the airport, bus station, or other places with large crowds. They might bump into you or spill something on you to distract you while an accomplice steals your bag. They might use a knife to cut open the bottom of your backpack or bag and steal the contents without your knowledge.

Don't give money to street beggars. There are public agencies and charities that provide food, shelter, and job assistance to the poor.

The following are a few precautions to help protect you from pickpockets and thieves:

- ▶Put your wallet and important documents in your front pocket, not your back pocket. Pocketbooks should have a strong strap and be worn across the front of the body, not over a shoulder.
- ▶At the airport, use a luggage cart if you are having trouble managing your bags. Hold onto your bags tightly.
- ▶Keep photocopies of important documents at home, since this will make it easier to replace them if they are lost or stolen.
- ▶Keep some money separate from your purse or wallet to use in an emergency or if your other money is stolen. For example, if your wallet is in one pocket, keep a \$20 bill in the other or in your sock.
- ▶Be alert as you walk. Keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings. Don't stare at the ground in front of your feet. Walk with a definite purpose.

Scams

If a person you don't know greets you on the street, ignore them. Do not say anything or make eye contact. Just continue walking. They will almost certainly be a

con artist, panhandler, or other hustler. If they persist, call the police. Many International Students become victims of scams because of their generosity and their unfamiliarity with the U.S. Coming from countries with lower crime rates, they assume that all people are honest. They are alone and no longer in close contact with family and friends, so they don't have anybody to ask for advice. They are often desperate to make new friends. They find it difficult to say no and break off a conversation because they are very polite and eager to please. They may have very limited financial resources, and be interested in bargains and ways to earn additional money. They may have heard the United States described as the land of opportunity, and hope to get lucky and strike it rich. They may be a little naive and not have enough experience to distinguish legitimate offers from frauds. All of these characteristics make them more likely to become the victim of a scam.

Con artists can be of any age, sex, or race, and may even look respectable. Sometimes they work alone, and sometimes they work in pairs. Often they will present you with a sob story, such as needing money for a taxi to the hospital to visit a relative or to buy food for their children. Sometimes they will show you a roll of money and ask for your help in returning it. For example, they might say that the automatic teller machine (ATM) disbursed too much money. The story might sound innocuous, but at some point they will try to get you to give them money or something of value. Sometimes they'll just go for the money you have on your person. Other times they ask you to withdraw a larger sum of money from your bank account. Once you give them the money, you'll never hear from them again (except perhaps to bilk you out of even more money). If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

The following are a few precautions to help protect you from scams:

- ▶If you have to pay money to get money, it is probably a scam.
- ▶Don't trust promises from people you don't know. If you receive an unsolicited offer, get a second opinion from someone you know and trust.
- ▶Never give out personal information to any unsolicited caller. Don't give out your name, address, Social Security number, bank account numbers, or credit card num-

bers.

- ▶If you're being pressured to make an immediate decision, that's a good sign of a scam.
- ▶If you sign a contract in your home, you have a right to cancel the contract within three days. So if you do have second thoughts or buyer's remorse and the business is legitimate, you can cancel the contract within the "cooling-off" period. But if the business isn't legitimate, your money and the salesman will disappear.

If you are the victim of a scam, report it to the police. If the scam was more than just a street hustle, you can also report it to the National Fraud Information Center at 1-800-876-7060 or <http://www.fraud.org/>. They pass the information they receive on to the Federal Trade Commission and state consumer protection offices. The FTC and States Attorney General are only likely to take action when there is a pattern of fraudulent activity.



SHOPPING

Supermarkets

Supermarkets are large, indoor, grocery stores, often part of a chain of stores. It is generally less expensive to shop in a supermarket than in a small local grocery, and the selection is larger. These markets carry fresh fruits and vegetables, canned goods, meats and fish, breads, sweets, frozen foods, cleaning supplies, storage materials for food, toiletries, batteries, liquor, cigarettes, and other non-food items. Large grocery store chains are usually open 24 hours a day, except possibly on Sunday. When se-

lecting fresh fruits or vegetables, you should always bag them in the plastic bags that are provided in this area of the market. Do not mix items in the bag. The cashier will need to weigh each bagged item in order to determine the price. Prices for produce are posted on signs near the item and are usually priced by the pound or item.

Meat, poultry and fish are sold in presealed, pre-weighed packages in long refrigerator cabinets. A sticker on the package shows the weight, the price-per-pound, and the total cost of the package. This sticker also offers a brief description of the contents and the latest date that the food should be consumed. If you need to ask a question about the items in this section of the store, you can usually find a button/bell (doorbell style) to push that will summons the butcher. They will be able to help you with your questions.

Bakery goods are sold prepackaged on shelves or fresh-baked in the bakery area of the market. Breads can be sold both by the piece and by the package. Ready-made pastries, such as cakes, muffins, rolls and cookies can be found on the shelf sections.

When shopping, it is not necessary to bring your own carryall or bags. The market and stores provide bags for you. Most markets will have someone "bag" or place your items in the bags. Food 4 Less stores will require you to bag your own groceries.

Paying for Groceries

Supermarkets will accept your cash, check (with a driver's license or California identification card), debit card, or automatic teller card (which draws funds directly from your checking or savings account) for purchases with no other form of identification. These markets may also have supermarket membership cards that the cashier will scan to give you automatic discounts on selected items. For these types of cards you will need to fill out an application form. These cards avoid the need for you to show two forms of identification every time you write a check.

Location

There are many supermarkets in Santa Clarita. Ralphs, Vons, Albertsons, and Stater Brothers are the largest markets. Look in the Yellow Pages of the phonebook or ask a neighbor for the supermarket nearest you.

International Markets

The county of Los Angeles has many internationally diverse neighborhoods. You can try to find markets that sell the types of food found in your country by searching the internet's Yellow Pages or by asking other International students in our program.

Discount Stores

Discount stores sell name brand merchandise at prices less than the prices charged by department stores. The largest discount stores are Costco, Food 4 Less, Smart and Final, Wal-Mart, KMart, Target, Best Buy, Marshall's, TJ Max and Ross Stores. You must become a member in order to shop at Costco.

For extremely inexpensive used clothing and used furniture, go to a Goodwill, Salvation Army, or other thrift stores. The money raised from sale of the merchandise is used for charitable causes. See the Yellow Pages for the names and locations of the thrift stores in our area. You may also want to look out for weekend "garage sales" as they offer you a great opportunity to bargain for items that families are offering for sale. The Signal newspaper and the PennySaver list our local garage sales. Advertisements for specific items can be found in the classified section of newspapers. The PennySaver, which can be found in your weekly mail or the Recycler, which can be found at local convenience stores are other great publications to search for items you may need for your home.

Paying For Purchases

All stores will accept US currency. No stores will accept foreign currency. Many stores will accept US-denominated traveler's checks. Traveler's checks in foreign currency will be refused. Most people pay for purchases with a credit card or a personal check. Most stores will accept the major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, and American Express). Even grocery stores are starting to accept credit cards.

Purchases may also be paid for by personal check drawn on a US bank. The store will want to see two forms of identification, such as a driver's license and a major credit card. Some stores do not accept checks, or charge a high returned check fee if the check bounces. Some stores that accept checks will not accept checks drawn on an out-of-state bank.

Sales Tax

There is no national sales tax in the US, but each state has its own sales tax. The sales tax is charged as a percentage surcharge on purchases, and is printed on the receipt. Here in California the sales tax is currently 8.25% (subject to change). Unprepared foods such as groceries are exempt from sales tax, but prepared food purchased in a restaurant is taxable. Medicine may also be exempt from sales tax.

Return Merchandise Policies

Most stores will accept returns of unopened merchandise, provided that you can present the original purchase receipt. If you received the item as a gift, sometimes a receipt will not be necessary. Some stores will accept returns of opened merchandise, provided that you return it in its original packaging and have not damaged it. If you are returning clothing, it must not have been worn or washed and the clothing must not be soiled. It is always a good idea to keep all your receipts for big purchases (electronics, appliances, or furniture) and clothing. If you think there is a chance that you may have to return the item, ask if the item is returnable and what is needed to return it.

The store will give you a cash refund or a credit toward future purchases in the store. If the item was defective or damaged inside the box, the store may also allow an even exchange with an identical item. If you pay by credit card and want a refund, the refund will be credited to your credit card. Some stores do not give cash refunds, only store credits. The store's return policy should be posted somewhere on the premises. If the store gives cash refunds, they may charge a 15% restocking fee, especially if the box has been opened.

There may be a time limit on returns. If you discover that the item is defective or does not fit properly, almost all stores will accept a return the next day. Some stores will give you a week to return merchandise, and some as much as 30, 60, or 90 days from the date of purchase.

Shoplifting

Taking items from a store without paying for them (shoplifting) is a serious offense in the United States. Offenders may be arrested and punished by large cash fines, prison time, or, in the case of non-citizens, expulsion

from the country. All items that you select must be paid for before leaving the store. Almost all shops, supermarkets and department stores have security systems and plainclothes (without uniforms) guards. All the stores prosecute and will take you to court. When shopping, be sure to use the shopping cart or basket provided by the store, and never put anything into your own bag until it has been paid for and you have a receipt. In this way, you will be sure to avoid any misunderstanding about your intentions to pay for the items.

Alcohol

The legal drinking age in the United States is 21 years. Bars and liquor stores will require proof of age, such as a driver's license, before selling you any alcohol. Alcoholic beverages are labeled with the percentage of alcohol. Beer is not labeled with alcohol content, but is required to have at least 0.5% alcohol, and usually has between 4.5% and 5.5% alcohol.



TRANSPORTATION

City Bus

The City of Santa Clarita busses are an inexpensive mode of transportation, but somewhat limiting. Busses run throughout Santa Clarita only at certain times. Schedules can be obtained in the Student Center (S building) or by calling 294-1287. Currently, bus fare is \$1.00 for a one-way ride (exact change is needed upon entering the bus). Monthly passes can be purchased at College of the Canyon's Student Center. Make sure to have a valid student ID card with you.

There are specific rules to follow while riding the buses; three of which are: no smoking, no eating and no drinking. The rules are posted in the Santa Clarita Transit schedules.

Dial A Ride 294-9327

Dial-A-Ride van services offer a shared curb-to-curb service during limited hours. The current cost is \$2. Student hours are 6pm to 10pm Monday through Saturday and 6pm to 8pm on Sundays. Reservations may be made Monday through Friday, 8am to 3pm, one to seven days in advance of your ride by calling 294-9327. It is very important that you not miss the time that the Dial-A Ride Operator tells you to be ready for pick-up. The van drivers will only wait 5 minutes for you and then they will leave.

More information about Dial-A-Ride is available in the Santa Clarita Transit schedule, or online at www.santaclaritatransit.com

Taxis

Local taxi companies in the City of Santa Clarita are:

United Independent Taxi	255-0800
Yellow Cab of Santa Clarita	260-2227
AV Taxi	255-8825

Taxis are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. As of this printing, the charges are: meter begins at \$1.90 and an additional \$1.60 per mile. Depending on the taxi company, they may wait for a short time while you run an errand. They will charge you per minute. Fares may have increased since the printing of this handbook. Ask the taxi service about fees when you call.

Bus – Long distance 1-800-231-2222

Greyhound Bus Lines services 48 states and Canada. The closest bus stations are Newhall (limited service), Hollywood, Lancaster, and Bakersfield. Call for information or look them up at their website www.greyhound.com.

Metrolink 1-800-371-5465

Metrolink is a long-distance commuter train service that operates five lines between Union Station in downtown Los Angeles and Oxnard, Lancaster, Oceanside, Riverside and San Bernardino. A sixth line operates between San Bernardino and San Juan Capistrano. The Santa Clarita line stops in Lancaster, Vincent Grade/Acton, Princessa, Santa Clarita, Sylmar/San Fernando, Burbank, Glendale and Union Station in Los Angeles.

The Ventura County line stops in Oxnard, Camarillo,

Moorpark, Simi Valley, Chatsworth, Northridge, Van Nuys, Burbank Airport, Burbank, Glendale, and Union Station in Los Angeles.

Tickets must be bought before boarding and are nonrefundable. MetroLink tickets are good for a free, one-zone transfer to connecting transit, such as Metro Rail. Fares are determined by distance and are sold from vending machines at the stations. Cash, credit cards and ATM cards are accepted. Multi-use tickets and monthly passes are available. Trains may leave five minutes earlier than scheduled.

Amtrak

This is a national rail passenger service located at Union Station, 800 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles. For reservations and schedule information call 1/800/872-7245.

Airport Shuttle

To find a shuttle service to take you to and from LAX (Los Angeles Airport) or Burbank Airport, look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book under the heading of "Airport Transportation Service." Call at least 3 of the businesses listed there for prices and restrictions. It is important that you ask the following questions when pricing and scheduling a pick-up and drop-off:

Cost. One-way and/or round trip (to and from the airport).

Notice. This is the minimum amount of time that you are required to contact the shuttle service to schedule pick-up.

Method of Payment. Ask if you can use cash, credit card, or check and by what date you have to pay. Remember to get a receipt for cash or checks!

Luggage. Some services limit the number of pieces, the weight, and the size of luggage.

Hours. Make sure that the shuttle service operates during the hours that you need. Some do not operate between the hours of midnight and 5am.

Stops. If it is important to you, find out how many stops the shuttle you are taking will make.

Driver's License

We strongly recommend getting a local driver's license instead of relying on an international driver's license. Traffic laws and driving habits in the US differ so much that it is best to take a driving class and get a local license. Some

states will require you to get a local license. (If the state doesn't require it, the insurance companies probably will.)

All drivers in California must have a driver's license. If you do not have one you will be ticketed, fined, and your vehicle may be impounded. A driver's license is also used as a form of identification when cashing checks, verifying age, and to verify your identity.

Getting a license to drive is not difficult. Documentation of your true full name, birth date, proof of legal presence in the United States (I-20 or passport), a vision test and proof of insurance on the car you are using for the test are needed. The DMV will also ask you for your Social Security Number (SSN). If you do not have a SSN, you need to prove that you are not able to get a SSN. To get this proof, go to the Social Security Office with your passport, visa, I-94, I-20, and the paperwork from DMV. Then ask for Form SSA-L676. You can then present this form to the DMV as proof that you are not able to get a SSN.

The DMV's tests are written in a few different languages. Ask them which languages they offer. You will need to pass a written test, a driving test with a DMV tester in your car, and a vision test. There is a fee for attaining your license. After you pass the driving test you will be fingerprinted and photographed. Call the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in Newhall at **259-9010** for complete information. Or you can find forms at the website www.dmv.ca.gov. Make sure to ask the people at the DMV if you can take the test in your native language.

Purchasing A Car

You probably don't need to own a car during your stay in the United States. A car is certainly convenient, but only cost effective if you use it almost every day. If you live near school, you will find walking, biking, and public transportation to be reasonable alternatives.

You can get a 10-year-old used car for \$2,000 to \$3,000 and a 5-year-old car for \$5,000 to \$8,000. It will probably need to be repaired frequently, but the total cost will be less than a new car. Used cars are advertised in the classified section of the local newspaper. After you take the car for a test drive, you can usually bargain with the seller, knocking 10% to 15% off the price. If you haven't previously owned a car, bring along a friend who knows something about cars. You may want to pay a mechanic at the

local gas station to inspect the car for you before buying it. An alternative is to buy a used car from a car dealer. Such cars often come with a 90-day guarantee, but cost more than the ones advertised by individuals.

If you want to buy a new car, ask friends about their experiences with different automobiles. Consumer Reports regularly reviews new and used cars, and is one of the few consumer magazines worth subscribing to. You can also find information in the local library.

New and used cars can be found for sale on the World Wide Web. Some of the more popular web sites include Autobytel, AutoConnect, AutoVantage, AutoWeb, CarSmart, Autotrader, and Carbuyingtips.

The following website can give you some important information about buying a used car: www.oft.gov.uk/html/cars/come.htm. This site is presented by the United Kingdom. You can also search the topic of “buying a used car” for further information.

There are several things that you must do when you purchase a vehicle. First, immediately purchase car insurance and register the vehicle in your name with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The DMV is located in Newhall at 24427 Newhall Avenue at Lyons Avenue. Call their office to see what type of documents you need to bring with you in order to register your vehicle. Their phone number is **1-800-777-0133**. You will need proof of liability insurance to transfer the title. You will receive a license plate with a temporary sticker after you complete the paperwork. Attach it to the proper location in the rear of your car. A permanent registration sticker will arrive in a few weeks in the mail.

California law requires a car owner to have car insurance, particularly liability insurance. An annual registration fee, which varies upon the age and type of vehicle, is due at the time of purchase and every year after that. It is also necessary to pay state tax on the amount that you paid for the vehicle. Smog checks are required every two years. Each year the DMV will send a bill to your residence informing you of the amount due, when it is due, and if there needs to be a smog check. Smog checks can be done here in Santa Clarita. Look in our local phone book under “Smog Check.”

When purchasing a used car be very careful about the papers that you sign and any “verbal” agreements that are made. “Verbal” agreements must be put in writing. If possible, have a mechanic check out the car before you agree to purchase it. Look for the amount of miles on the odometer, evidence of an accident, or of a stolen vehicle, noisy rattles, squealing brakes, or fluids leaking from the bottom of the vehicle.

Car Insurance

California law requires all car owners to have car insurance, especially **liability insurance**. There are many insurance companies listed in the local yellow pages of our telephone book under the word “insurance.” Call several companies to find out how much they will charge you. Or you may want to call an insurance brokerage company. They are in contact with many different insurance companies. It is very important to give the same information regarding the type of coverage of insurance that you want to each company that you call. It will affect the amount charged for insurance. Most states require you to maintain certain minimum levels of liability insurance on your car in case you are involved in an accident. The insurance covers your liability for damage to the other car and injuries sustained by all people involved in the accident. We strongly recommend getting insurance that covers more than the legal minimums. You can also get collision insurance to cover the cost of fixing your car and comprehensive (theft) insurance in case the car is stolen, but this is only worthwhile for a new car or a model of recent vintage. If you don’t have car insurance, you won’t be able to register the car.

Due to the number of uninsured motorists in California, you may want to have “**comprehensive**” and “**collision**” coverage. This coverage requires paying a deductible in the event of an accident. Decide on the “deductible” amount that you are willing, or able to pay if you are in an accident. The “deductible” is the portion of the repair bill that you are required to pay if you are in an accident in which you are the one at fault. Normally, the larger the deductible amount, the lower the monthly payments.

We have been told that there are some companies that require Internationals to have a driver’s license from a state in the United States for at least eighteen months before they will issue insurance to them. Make sure that you inform the insurance companies that you are an International Student.

This will prevent any holdup of issuing insurance.

Annual Inspections

You will need to have your car inspected once a year (twice in some states). Some states have an emissions test in addition to the safety inspection. The emissions test measures the exhaust gases coming out of the car's tailpipe. Most gas stations can perform the inspections. The cost runs from \$25 to \$50 a year. The inspection stickers will be displayed on the front windshield of your car. If you don't have the car inspected, you won't be able to renew your registration. The police will also issue you a fine if your car does not have a valid inspection sticker.

Driving Laws

Driving laws differ somewhat from state to state and considerably from what you are accustomed to. Here is a list of some of the more significant differences.

Speed Limits

Speed limits are designated in miles per hour (mph), not kilometers. One mile equals 1.6093 kilometers. Within cities the speed limit is usually 25 mph (40 kph). Major streets with two or more lanes may post a higher limit of 35 mph (56 kph), but you should assume a 25 mph limit unless you see a sign with a higher limit. Highways have a speed limit of 55 mph (88 kph), with some interstate highways posting a higher limit of 65 mph (105 kph). Penalties for speeding are severe and can result in higher insurance premiums and license suspension in addition to large fines.

Driving on the Right

Unlike the UK, Asia, and Australia, in the United States cars drive on the right side of the road, and steering wheels are located on the left side of the car. Even if you don't drive a car, you need to be aware of this rule. As your mother always said, look both ways before crossing the road. Every year a few international students are hit by cars because they step off the curb into the path of oncoming traffic. On most streets, cars will be coming from your left, not your right.

Stop Signs and Yield Signs

You should come to a full and complete stop at both signs and wait until it is safe to continue driving. At a four-way stop, cars may proceed in the order in

which they arrived at the intersection. So you should allow the cars that were there when you arrived to go before driving.

Yield to Emergency Vehicles

(Ambulances, fire trucks, etc.)

If an emergency vehicle approaches with sirens and flashing lights, pull over to the right side of the road to allow it to pass, even if it is approaching from the other side of the road.

Turn Signals

Automobiles in the US are equipped with turn signals that cause the front and rear lights to blink to indicate an impending turn. It is important to indicate your intention to turn left or right or to change lanes by using the appropriate turn signal at least 25 feet before the turn or lane-change. If you don't use the turn signals, you may cause an accident.

Seat Belts

California has adopted a law making the use of seat belts mandatory. A driver can be fined for each person in his/her car that is not wearing a seatbelt.

School Busses

It is illegal in California to pass a stopped school bus if its lights are flashing.

Getting Stopped By The Police

If a police officer stops you for speeding, pay the fine by mail. Do not try to give the money to the police officer, since it would be considered a bribe and bribery is illegal.

Car Safety

Don't leave your driver's license or wallet in the car. Keep a copy of your license plate number, car registration, and vehicle identification number in your wallet. This will help in case your car is stolen. Keep your doors locked at all times and avoid driving in dangerous neighborhoods. Make sure to know exactly where you are going and how to get there. If you are able to afford a cellular phone, you will not need to leave your car if it breaks down on a road or on the freeway in order to call for help.

American Automobile Association "AAA"

You may want to consider becoming a member of the American Automobile Association (AAA, pronounced

“Triple A”). The cost is modest, and they offer numerous services that make it worthwhile. They offer free maps and guidebooks, will transfer a car registration without a notary fee, and provide a free emergency road service (including a tow if necessary), among other services. AAA sells American Express traveler’s checks without a commission. Call our local office at **259-6222** or **1-800-AAA-HELP (1-800-222-4357)** for more information.

Bicycles

Many students survive with just a bicycle. It is economical, can provide transportation over short distances, and provides a good source of exercise. In addition to a bike, buy a bicycle helmet. If you’re in an accident, a bicycle helmet can help protect you from a head or brain injury. Don’t buy too expensive of a bike, since bicycle theft is very common, especially around college campuses. We recommend buying and using a good bicycle lock. The U-shaped locks with cylindrical keys are best, since they are harder to cut through than chains and padlocks.

To indicate a left turn, extend the left arm horizontally. To indicate a right turn, extend the left arm and bend it up at the elbow (or extend the right arm horizontally). Similar signals can be used from a car if your turn signals are broken.



LEGAL MATTERS

California Identification Card

International Students can obtain a California Identification card from the DMV as long as they have a Social Security number or the document form SSA-L676 with its attachment. This form can be obtained from the local Social Security Office. A California I.D. card would be useful for legal identification if you do not have a California driver’s license. Please read the next section on “Social Security Number.”

Social Security Number

A Social Security Number is a means of identification for people who live in the United States. This number is needed to obtain employment. Having a Social Security card does not make you eligible for Social Security benefits that are intended for citizens and permanent resi-

dents. Neither does it allow you to work. The card will state that it is valid for work only with INS authorization.

To obtain a social security card, you should go to the College of the Canyons Career Center to see what jobs are available on campus. After applying for the job and being accepted for the position, the person hiring you will write a letter to you advising you of your hiring. Bring your letter of hire to a scheduled appointment with Dr. Pelkey. He will then write a letter to the Social Security Administration Office to verify the on-campus employment information. You then take the two letters to the Social Security Administration Office that is located at:

**23504 Lyons Ave. #303,
Santa Clarita, CA 91321.**

The phone number is **1- 661-753-9881 or 1-800-772-1213**. Their website is www.ssa.gov (forms and information). It is then up to the Social Security Office to approve your card.

Employment

International students are allowed to work on campus as student assistants for no more than 19.5 hours per week during the school year but may be full time during the summer vacation periods. You are NOT allowed to work off campus in any type of job! Working off campus without INS permission is illegal and may result in endangering your student status. The Career Center in room C-103 lists jobs that are available on campus or ask other International Students who are employed on campus if they know of job openings. Student jobs are limited in availability.

When you begin employment, College of the Canyons will give you a W-4 form to complete. This form gives the employer information about income tax withholding. For further information, refer to IRS Publication 515, Withholding Tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Corporations.

In January, employers send their employees a W-2 form. This form states income for the year and how much tax was withheld. The W-2 form is required in order to file your tax return, and a copy of it must be returned to both the Federal Internal Revenue Service and the State Department of Taxation when you file your tax returns.

Income Tax Regulations

All nonresidents must file a Federal Tax Form 8843. International students who earned income in the U.S. must file a 1040NR form with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a 540 NR form with the State of California. The ISP office will have available a small supply of 1040NR forms, 540NR forms and Publication 519 (U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens) during the month of March. If you earned money while living in the USA during the previous year you must file by April 15th of the present year. If you did not earn money while living in the USA during the previous year, you must mail Form 8843 by June 15th of the current year.

Mail your Federal Form 1040NR to:

Internal Revenue Service Center,
Philadelphia, PA 19255, U.S.A.

Mail your California State Form 540NR/540 with refund or no-payment to:

Franchise Tax Board,
P.O. Box 942840
Sacramento, CA 94240-0000.

For help call 1- 800 - 829-1040.

It is important to sign and date your tax returns and attach Forms W2/1099 to the tax returns. (Refer to the "Employment" section in the left column.) If you did earn a salary this year, attach a copy of your Federal Tax Return to the California State Tax Return. If you are having trouble with your tax papers, the ISP office has some names of local accountants that would be happy to prepare your tax forms for a fee. To order your income tax forms call the Internal Revenue Forms Distribution Center 1-800-829-1040 or Franchise Tax Board Questions 1-800-852-5711 or Internal Revenue Service Questions 1-800-829-1041.

Important: Be sure to make xerox copies of all your paperwork.

IMMIGRATION ISSUES

Each International Student is responsible to become familiar with the regulations that apply to his/her particular visa status. College of the Canyons is concerned that

students know these regulations. International students are expected to consult with the International Students Office if there are any questions or problems regarding immigration matters, and before leaving the United States.

Passport, VISA, I-94, I-20

You are required by U.S. law to have a valid passport while you are in this country. Your passport is your basic international document that identifies you as a citizen of your country. Do not allow your passport to expire. The renewal process should begin six months before the expiration date of your passport. Re-validations or renewals of your passport are obtained through your Embassy or Consulate here in the U.S. Letters to certify your enrollment may be required by your government. The ISP office can provide you with these letters. The Visa is a stamp entered in your passport with certain notations made by the issuing American consul abroad. This visa permits an alien to request one or more entries into the U.S. within a specified period. You do not have to worry if your Visa expires during your stay in the U.S. as long as you are a full-time student. It does not cause you to become illegal. A visa is used for entry to the U.S. only, and must be valid at the time you enter or re-enter the country. If you leave the U.S. temporarily and plan to return, you must determine whether your visa is valid for re-entry. If your visa expires before your planned return to the U.S. or is otherwise invalid, you must obtain a new visa from the U.S. consulate or embassy outside the U.S. If you have questions regarding your Visa status, make an appointment with Dr. Pelkey in the ISP office.

The I-94 form is a small piece of white paper, officially known as the "Arrival and Departure Record," stapled into your passport by an INS Inspector at your U.S. port of entry. This is a very important document because it indicates how long you are permitted to remain in the U.S. Whenever you enter the U.S., the Immigration Inspector will give you an I-94 and mark the date until which you may remain in the United States. Whenever you leave the U.S., the Immigration Inspector (or airline official) will take away your I-94. For students in F-1 status, the notation on the I-94 is "D/S," which means "duration of status." This indicates that you may stay in the U.S. as long as you have a valid I-20 by carrying a full 12 units, or are engaged in practical training with INS permission. If you lose your I-94 or if you have any ques-

tions about how long you may stay in the U.S., please talk to the staff in the ISP office. The I-20 must remain valid while you are a student. Check the expiration date on your I-20. You can find this in Section 5 where it says "complete studies not later than (date)." This is your expected completion date and the expiration date of your I-20. If your I-20 will expire in the near future, (within the next two months) contact an ISP counselor to arrange a program extension. **Do not let your I-20 expire!** Your *duration of status* to remain in the U.S. is your I-20 completion of studies date. Always keep your old I-20 forms.

Traveling Outside The U.S.

When traveling outside the United States, your I-20 needs to be signed for re-entry into this country. Please bring your I-20 to the International Students Program office no less than 2 weeks before you depart for a re-entry signature. Re-entry signatures are valid for one year from the date the signature is made. Students who do not get their I-20 signed prior to leaving the U.S. may be stranded abroad with no way to re-enter the United States.

UNITED STATES LAWS

As you know, laws are designed to protect people. Violations of American laws fall into three categories: infraction, misdemeanor, and felony. An infraction is a fine such as a traffic violation for speeding, illegal turn, incomplete stop at a stop sign, and so on. If you pay your fine before the due date on the ticket, everything should be all right. A misdemeanor is a moderate crime that can carry up to a \$500 fine. Shoplifting, drunkenness or fighting in a public place are a few examples. A felony is a serious crime that can have over \$500 in fines and time in jail. Stealing over \$1000 worth of property or cash, murder, or driving under the influence (DUI), are examples of felonies.

The legal minimum drinking age in California is 21 years. Bars, restaurants, nightclubs, and stores that sell liquor are required to see a picture ID with your birth date for proof of eligibility to drink alcohol. A person is considered to be legally drunk if their blood alcohol level is .08 or above. The use of illegal drugs will not only result in fines and jail time but also deportation.

The United States has many laws. It is important that you understand them and show respect towards the police.

Should you have any questions, feel free to ask the College of the Canyons Campus Security or call the Santa Clarita Sheriff Station.

Legal Aid

If you are arrested in the US for a serious crime, say nothing until you have spoken to an attorney. You have the right to remain silent. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed to you by the court free of charge. You will be given the opportunity to make one telephone call. Use this telephone call to call your embassy or consulate.

The American legal system differs significantly from legal systems in other countries. The accused is considered innocent until proven guilty by the state beyond a reasonable doubt. The accused is also entitled to a trial by jury for serious offenses, such as murder, rape, burglary, and drug trafficking. Attorney-client communications are privileged, meaning that your attorney cannot be called to testify against you and that your conversations with your attorney are private. The United States Constitution guarantees these rights. If you are not already familiar with the U.S. legal system, your attorney can explain it to you. If you plead guilty to a serious crime, or are convicted of a serious crime, you will be subject to deportation.



SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

CULTURE SHOCK

One consequence of traveling to another country is culture shock. The stress of a new situation, confusion due to language difficulties, and a lot of small cultural differences add up to culture shock. You might feel depressed, be homesick for your country and family, have difficulty sleeping or concentrating, and avoid contact with others. If you experience these symptoms, try talking to someone. Talk to the counselor in the International Student Office, a friend, or the staff at COC's Counseling Center. It also helps to participate in activities you enjoy. Write a letter to your family back home. Take a walk in the park.

Read a book. Watch a movie. Eat a good meal at a fancy restaurant. Visit a museum or an art gallery. Play a game with some friends. Try to do some type of physical activity that will lift your spirits.

Adjusting To The Academic Environment

Most international students who are taking classes at an American college may find it to be a very different experience from that of home. The relationship and interaction between instructors and students in the classroom is more casual in the United States. Discussion is a very important part of the class. Every student is encouraged and invited to express and share his/her own ideas and opinions with the teacher and fellow students even if it is different from others.

For most International Students, especially those from Asian countries, facing this type of a teaching and learning method can be a very nerve-racking experience. The following suggestions might help you cope with these challenges:

- ▶ Arrive at class 5-10 minutes earlier than the actual class starting time and try to get a seat in the front row. It will be easier to follow the lecture and also give the teacher a good impression about you as a student in his/her class.
- ▶ Preview and review the text before and after every class. This will help you to follow the lecture better, understand the lecture materials and the comments that are made by other classmates, and know ahead of time what questions you need to ask. Once you find yourself understanding what is going on in the classroom, you will feel more confident in your goals of studying in the United States.
- ▶ Consider tape recording the lecture in class, and review it with your notes later. This may help you to understand the materials and improve your listening comprehension. Make sure to get permission from the teacher before doing the recording, since this is related to the copyright of the person.
- ▶ Participate and ask questions in class, as you feel comfortable. For many international students this is a new and usually difficult behavior. Yet, it is an important skill to have in order to survive in the American classroom. In the beginning, it's all right for you to just listen and observe in the class. As time goes on, you

should try to ask some questions or join the discussions. You can prepare the content of your questions or opinions and practice saying what you'd like to express prior to the class. This will help you to feel more at ease and to better prepare yourself for expressing your opinion clearly.

►Find and utilize the learning resources available on campus. The Tutoring/Learning/Computer Lab (TLC) at College of the Canyons is an area set up for students who need assistance in studying outside of the classroom. For many international students, beginning college in the United States, writing papers or doing homework for classes can be really difficult. The tutors in the TLC Lab can help you with various subjects such as English, Math, Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Psychology, and many more academically related areas. The tutoring service is free for all students on campus. Take advantage of utilizing this learning resource. Make sure you know how to use the libraries that are on and off campus.

The location of the TLC Lab on campus is room I-209. They are open Monday through Saturday. Call College of the Canyons at 362-3344.

Presentation For Class

A presentation for class is another challenge for most of the International Students in an American college. A great emphasis is placed on training students to feel competent in expressing their own ideas and opinions through speech and writing. Public speaking is a very essential skill to have in the American society. Consequently, most classes that are offered in colleges require students to do presentations in a group and individual form. Preparing as early as possible is the key for overcoming this challenge of doing presentations. Use of visual aid materials (transparencies, posters, etc.) and rehearsing (with or without others) as much as you can before giving the real presentation in class can help you feel more confident and prepared for giving a good presentation to the class.

Study Group

Join or form a study group for classes. This will especially be helpful for upcoming tests or exams. In the American classroom, competing with others is not a major issue for most of the students. The idea of giving students a test/exam is to make sure that students under-

stand the material that has been presented. Using a study group or having a study-mate helps in preparing or studying for the material of the course. In addition, studying with Americans and other fellow students in class will not only benefit you in terms of academic learning but also in terms of social learning.

Forms of Address

American names are written and spoken with the given name first and the family name last. So John Smith's family name is Smith, not John. In a formal setting, address men as "Mister" (abbreviated as "Mr."), married women as "Misses" (abbreviated as "Mrs."), and unmarried women as "Miss" (abbreviated as "Ms."). These days many women prefer to be addressed using the abbreviation "Ms.," pronounced "miz". If the person has an M.D., Ed.D. or Ph.D., they will often be addressed as "Doctor" (abbreviated as "Dr."). Faculty members are addressed as "Professor" (abbreviated as "Prof.").

In an informal situation, Americans will introduce each other by first name, without titles. If you are introduced to somebody by first name, you can address him or her by first name the next time you meet. The only exception would be for someone who holds an important position, such as the college president. Unless they tell you otherwise, faculty should be addressed using their title and last name (e.g., Professor Smith, Dr. Smith, etc.).

When in doubt, use the formal manner of address, since it is better to err on the side of formality. It is also appropriate to ask how they prefer to be addressed.

SOCIAL MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Personal Hygiene

Americans bathe daily and expect those around them to do the same. Some people may take a shower or bath twice a day, depending on how much physical activity they have done or if they have a special social engagement in the evening. Clothes should be washed after being worn once. This too, is the American way. Men and women use deodorant daily and most usually wear perfume or cologne.

Dress

The dress code for American college students is casual. Usually, shirts, T-shirts, jeans, and short pants are the

common outfits for students. However, there are some dress codes for specific events that international students may not be familiar with when first landing in this country. Usually, when people send an invitation card, they will also indicate the preferred attire style for that event. The following are the descriptions for dress codes for various occasions:

►Casual: Very comfortable clothing. Shorts, pants, t-shirt, tennis shoes, sandals, etc.

►Semi-Casual: Long pants, shirt, polo shirt, dresses, skirts, blouses, sweaters, socks and shoes, low-heeled shoes, no tennis shoes or t-shirts.

►Semi-Formal / Cocktail: Suit with tie, socks and shoes, dress, nylons, heeled shoes.

►Formal: Tuxedo, long gown, nylons, high heels.

Be Prompt

Punctuality is an important trait for Americans. Arrive on time for any kind of appointment, including social events (movies, dinner, concerts, etc.) and non-social events (meeting with professors, doctor/dentist appointment, etc.). If for some reason you cannot keep the appointment on time, you need to notify the person and let them know how long before you will arrive or if you'll have to cancel. If you fail to do so, it is likely that the person will consider you an irresponsible person. This may harm the relationship between you and the person.

Respect Others' Privacy

A person's privacy is not just a social norm but also a part of human rights from the viewpoint of Western culture. Each individual has the right and is entitled to share whatever he/she wants to share with others. There are certain topics, which are not proper to discuss or ask when first meeting someone. These topics include a person's age, body weight, marital status, why someone does not have children, and how much the person makes for a living. It is strongly recommended that International Students should be aware of this before having a conversation with Americans. You should ask for permission from the person before you initiate talking about these topics. Such expressions like "Do you mind if I ask you...?" or "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to," will help show that you are being polite and respectful of others.

The Meanings of Greetings

For Americans, saying "Hello!" or "How are you?" and

smiling to both friends and strangers is very common. This is different from other cultures where people only greet someone they know or have a particular purpose to do those greeting with others. In the United States, people seem to be more friendly and open when meeting people. Yet, it does not mean and imply that a deeper or closer relationship for later is meant to be pursued. With this in mind, you should adjust the way you perceive, interpret, and respond to both the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of others. It might not be easy to detect and distinguish the difference between or among cultures at the beginning of your stay. Nevertheless, try to keep your mind open and your willingness to learn new things without being critical and judgmental. This will be the best strategy for meeting a new environment.

Individualism

The most distinct characteristic and core value for American culture is individualism. In the United States, people tend to give more credit to those who can be independent and self-reliant. From one's very early time of learning at home and in school, parents and teachers in this country set and provide the environment for children to learn and to be able to demonstrate the qualities of being individuals. Oftentimes, this kind of value system can be new and perhaps odd for students whose cultural background has emphasized group orientation rather than individuality. In fact, there's no absolute good or bad, right or wrong for having a different value system. The most important idea to have when crossing cultures is to try to learn, understand, and appreciate the difference between cultures rather than criticize them.

Assertive Or Aggressive?

Willing to stand up for one's own ideas and opinions is another common characteristic in America. However, in some cultures, there's a vague line between being assertive and aggressive. Some cultures teach and reinforce the concept of holding back ideas rather than insisting or imposing opinions on others. Many international students have trouble with expressing their opinions. They may get offended or begin to feel inferior and powerless because the way to present one's self is so different from their culture.

Being assertive is considered positive in America, while being aggressive is not. When a person is trying to defend, maintain, or affirm his/her points of view or rights,

it's considered as an act of assertion. On the other hand, if someone were pressing his/her opinions by acting in a hostile, pushy or even dominant way, then it would be considered aggressive. It is crucial for you to learn the difference between being assertive and aggressive so that you can adjust your way to express and communicate in a positive way.

Commitment

From the moment when you decided to come and to pursue your study in a foreign country, it is a commitment more than merely a decision. Under the glory that people usually see about studying abroad, it actually contains a lot of challenges, struggles, inconveniences, and even fears. They may come from issues like transferring credits, choosing classes, mastering English, adjusting to a new environment in terms of food choices, living arrangement, transportation availability, building of social life, and so on.

In some ways, your life in the United States can be dramatically changed compared with the life that you originally had in your home country. You may experience and explore a lot of things and situations that you have never encountered in your life or handled by yourself before. Very often, it is easy for you to feel stressful and even frustrated by getting those unfamiliar and unexpected experiences; nevertheless, they are part of being a student studying abroad. With this in mind, if you have made the commitment to come to the United States to study, then it would be much easier for you to think and be flexible in the new environment. Remember, you must adjust to the new environment. Don't assume that it will adjust to you.

Ask! Ask! Ask!

After you arrive and are living in a new environment, it is certain that you will have a lot of questions. Often people may explain things to you but you may not fully understand. This is mostly due to the language barrier that many of the international students have at the beginning of their stay. It is extremely important for you to ask for clarification if you are uncertain or are confused about the information that you have been given. You need to ask for further explanations and try to understand what people are telling you or writing to you as soon as possible rather than to continue to be confused or to believe wrong information. Not asking for further

explanations may cause you to miss something important or create other problems.

Male/Female Relationships

The relationship between genders in the United States is more equal and casual than in some cultures. This is quite different from other countries where the gender role may have more distinctions in terms of social image and expectations for males and females. The Feminist Movement of the past several decades has allowed women in the United States to share opportunities and responsibilities at work and in society in a more equal and balanced way with their male counterparts. It is expected that males and females should treat each other in a respectful way. International students with different orientations in gender issues may find it surprising and even difficult to adjust to this situation. Being aware and sensitive to the difference in gender role between cultures will be a positive act.

Dating - Dos and Don'ts

It's common and natural that you might develop a social relationship with someone who has a different cultural backgrounds than yours. Due to the differences among cultures, it's possible that people would interpret some things differently. "Dating" is one of the issues that are viewed differently from culture to culture.

In the United States, "dating" usually means that the couple has a mutual agreement on doing certain things together. It could be watching movies, attending a concert or other events, having lunch or dinner, or maybe just getting together and talking. However, being a new person in the host country, there are some "dating tips" you might want to keep in mind when dating someone, so that you can better protect yourself from having unnecessary problems and troubles. Here are the tips:

- ▶ Avoid meeting your date in a private place (in his/her or your own place, for example). It is better that the two of you meet in public places, such as a restaurant or the Student Activity Center on campus.
- ▶ If the person starts doing something that was not part of the agreement that you have with him/her in the first place, say "NO" immediately and firmly! You do not have to worry about being rude or disrespectful to that person if you show your ideas clearly. In addition, it is

also your responsibility to let the person know how you think and feel whether it is positive or negative. It will be worse if you are quiet and say nothing at that moment. In that way, people may assume you mean “Yes.” “Dating” does NOT imply anything besides two people simply agreed to do something together. It is not necessary or meant to be that the couple is or will have any relationships other than just being “friends.” In other words, there are no strings attached unless both of you have reached the same kind of conclusion together.

Business Visits

Business visits tend to be extremely punctual. If you arrive late to a business appointment, it will reflect badly on you. So try to arrive on time, or even a little early. If you know that you will be arriving late you should telephone ahead to let them know of the delay.

If a business meeting takes place over a meal, expect the business discussions to begin after everyone has ordered their meal, sometimes as soon as everyone is seated. Socializing tends to occur after the business is concluded, not before. This is in contrast with the practice in many other countries, where the purpose of the meal is to socialize with and get to know each other before any business is discussed.

Many American companies have women in management positions. So don't be surprised if the person who meets you is a woman, not a man. They are just as competent as their male counterparts. If you feel uncomfortable, focus on the business at hand and ignore the fact that she happens to be a woman. Do not, however, ask personal questions as you might with a male colleague. In particular, do not ask whether she is married or has children. Do not flirt with her, refer to body parts, ask her out on a date, or make suggestive or sexual remarks.

When businessmen or businesswomen meet, they usually introduce themselves by shaking right hands. When you shake hands, don't crush their fingers, but also don't hold their hand too lightly. A firm handshake is best.

Business cards are not normally exchanged upon meeting. If you need a colleague's contact information, it is fine to ask them for their card. It is also fine to offer someone your card. But there is not an elaborate ritual of exchanging cards as in other cultures.

American business ethics preclude the acceptance of pay-

ments to sweeten the deal.

Social Visits

Americans often plan social gatherings on short notice so don't be surprised if you get invited to someone's home or to see a movie or baseball game without much warning. If the time is convenient for you, by all means accept their invitation. But if you are busy, do not be afraid to decline the invitation, perhaps suggesting a time that would be better. Your host will not be insulted.

If a friend has invited you to drop by anytime, it is best to call before visiting to make sure it is convenient for them. Do not stay too long, since you do not want to overstay your welcome.

Invitations are usually issued in person or over the telephone. The main exception is for receptions and other formal occasions, in which case a written invitation will be mailed. You would normally receive a written invitation to a wedding or a bar mitzvah.

For a casual dinner invitation, do not arrive more than 5 minutes early, because your host may still be preparing for your visit. Arriving more than 10 minutes late is considered rude if very few people were invited. If many people were invited, it is Ok to arrive a little late, even as much as half an hour late. For example, it is Ok to arrive late for a party, for a potluck dinner or for a social gathering involving a large group of people. The main consideration is whether there are enough people in the group so that your late arrival will not be noticed. At a party, don't be surprised if you are asked what you do for a living. This is a normal opening line of conversation, and not an insult.

If you are invited for dinner, it is appropriate to bring the host a bottle of wine, a gift basket of fruit, a box of candy, or a small potted plant or bouquet of flowers. Do not bring roses, as they have a more intimate connotation; men often give roses to women on a date. If you wish to thank the host for his or her hospitality, it is appropriate to call or send a brief written thank you note the next day.

Telephone Etiquette

When you call someone, it is polite to identify yourself. For example, if your name is John Smith and you were

calling Robert Chen, you would say “Hello, this is John Smith. May I please speak to Robert Chen?”

When you answer the phone, it is OK to answer just “Hello.” After your caller introduces himself, you would say one of the following:

“Hi John, this is Robert. How are you?”

“Speaking.” or “Robert Chen speaking.”

“I’m sorry, but Robert is not able to come to the phone right now.

May I take a message?”

It is not polite to call someone before 9 am or after 10 pm, unless it is an emergency. The only exception would be if he or she told you it is OK to call earlier or later.

Personal Space

When two people are talking to each other, they tend to stand a specific distance apart. Each person has an invisible boundary around their body into which other people may not come. If someone pierces this boundary, they will feel uncomfortable and move away to increase the distance between them. (The major exception is family members and other loved ones.) This personal distance is not due to body odor or bad breath, but because closeness lends a sense of intimacy that is at odds with their relationship to the other individual.

Interestingly, the average personal distance varies from culture to culture. Americans tend to require more personal space than in other cultures. So if you try to get too close to an American during your conversation, he or she will feel that you are “in their face” and will try to back away. Try to be aware of this in case the person to whom you are speaking backs away a little, don’t try to close the gap.

Also, try to avoid physical contact while you are speaking, since this may also lead to discomfort. Touching is a bit too intimate for casual acquaintances. So don’t put your arm around their shoulder, touch their face, or hold their hand. Shaking hands when you initially meet or part is acceptable, but this is only momentary.

Gift Giving

If you are invited to a wedding, baby shower, bar mitzvah, or other celebration, it is expected that you will bring a gift. Unless you know the host very well, the gift should

be modest in value, about \$25.

For a wedding, the bride will have “registered” at one or two local department stores, indicating the items and style she prefers. You can buy the couple a gift that isn’t listed, but most people buy something listed on the registry. If you buy an item listed on the registry, be sure to tell the store that you are doing this, so that the couple doesn’t receive duplicate gifts. For a baby shower, bring a gift appropriate for a newborn baby. For a bar mitzvah, bring a gift appropriate for a 13-year-old boy. Bar Mitzvah gifts tend to be more formal in nature. For example, a gold-plated Cross pen is quite common. Personalizing the pen by engraving the recipient’s full name will be appreciated.

If you wish to return with a gift when you return from your home country, the best gift is something that is unique to your country. It does not need to be especially valuable or rare, just reminiscent of your home. Possibilities include a book about your country, an inexpensive handmade craft or piece of art, or something else that reflects your culture. If a child collects coins and stamps, he/she would be very pleased with a set of your country’s coins or a selection of mint stamps from your country. Items that are common in your country but difficult to find in the United States are also good. If you owe a debt of deep gratitude to an American host family, a common way of repaying it is to take the family to a form of entertainment, such as a baseball, basketball, or hockey game, the ballet, or to a good restaurant.

When giving gifts to a business acquaintance, do not give anything of a personal nature, especially to a woman. Do not give cosmetics. A scarf is fine, but other types of clothing are not. Something appropriate for the office is best. But gift giving is not as important in America as it is in other countries, so there is nothing wrong with not giving a gift.

If you need help selecting a gift, talk to a salesperson at a department store. Tell them about the person who will be receiving the gift and the reason for the gift, and they will help you find something appropriate and within your budget.

Smoking

Smoking has become socially unacceptable in the US, in part due to the health risks. Smoking is prohibited in

government and public buildings. Many businesses, especially restaurants, will not permit smoking on the premises. Those restaurants that permit smoking will usually have a separate section for customers who smoke. College of the Canyons has a ban on smoking within campus buildings or near building entrances.

Tobacco products may not be sold to anyone under 18 years old, and federal law requires stores to ask to see a photo ID for anyone under 27 years old.

If you are a guest in someone's home, you should ask whether it is OK to smoke before lighting up. If there are no ashtrays in the house, it is a good sign that smoking is not acceptable.

Smoking on airplane flights within the US is prohibited. There are severe penalties for smoking on an airplane or in an airplane lavatory. Smoking is also prohibited on interstate trains and buses.

Smoking around children is inappropriate. Buying cigarettes for a child, or giving a child a cigarette is illegal.

It is extremely impolite to blow smoke in someone's face.

If you are smoking and someone coughs, it is often a polite way of asking you to extinguish the cigarette.

Gestures

To wave goodbye or hello to someone, raise your hand and wave it from side to side, not front to back. Wave the whole hand, not just the fingers. Waving the hand front to back or the fingers up and down means "no," "stop," or "go away." Holding your hand up with the palm facing forward but no movement means "stop." Holding your hand with the palm toward your body and wagging the fingers toward the body means "come here." Holding your hand with the palm up with all fingers curled and repeated curling and uncurling the index finger means "come here."

If you want to point at an object, extend the index finger and use it to point at the object. It is not polite to point at people.

If you want the waiter to bring the check, make a writing gesture with one hand as the pen and the other hand

as the paper. If you just want the waiter to come, make eye contact and raise your hand.

Shaking your head from side to side means no. Shaking your head up and down means yes.

Never show your fist with the middle finger extended. This is an insult. Shaking a closed fist at someone is also rude, especially if it is in his or her face and is an expression of anger.

Although showing your fist with the thumb up or your open hand with the tips of the thumb and index fingers together forming an "O" means "OK," this is an overused stereotype.

Winking at a woman is also inappropriate because of the flirtatious nature of the gesture. In other circumstances a wink will signal amusement or that the speaker is kidding. Because of the potential for misinterpretation, winking should be avoided.

When smiling, it is normal to bare your teeth, so long as the facial expression still looks like a smile, not a grimace.

Demeanor

Americans are much more assertive than most international visitors. They use words as tools to express their opinions and to accomplish goals. Speaking for yourself and attempting to persuade someone to adopt your view is expected. The United States is a rather individualistic society, with less social pressure to conform. As a result, you will need to become more assertive and speak out on your own behalf. Take the initiative and volunteer information that will be of interest. In an interview, talk about your goals and accomplishments.

Accordingly, Americans begin a discussion with a focus on accomplishments and concrete facts, and later proceed to the abstract. So you should begin any conversation or proposal with the most important information. Be direct, and reserve the small talk for later.

It is ok to criticize someone's opinion, as long as you are providing constructive criticism. Eye contact is also important. It is not a sign of disrespect, but instead an indication of openness, honesty, and enthusiasm.

Religion

The US Constitution guarantees religious freedom for all faiths. You will almost certainly be able to find a church, synagogue, or mosque near school for people of your faith.

Freedom of religion also means that you're likely to be solicited by religious groups who want to invite you to their church. Some of these groups can be quite aggressive. There are also a few cults that prey on college students. Avoid them, as they can be extremely seductive. If a recruiter for a cult or religious group approaches you, do not make eye contact, do not engage in conversation, and keep walking. They will often ask you a rhetorical question to open the conversation, such as "Do you believe in God?" Either ignore them, or respond with something that will fluster them enough to let you get past, such as "only on Tuesdays and Thursdays." Even if you're interested in their particular brand of religion, it is best for you to seek out the local churches on your own.

Dining

Most Americans eat three meals during the day: Breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breakfast is usually between 7am and 8am, lunch between noon and 1pm, and dinner between 6pm and 8pm. Sunday "brunch" is a combination of breakfast and lunch, typically beginning at 11am.

Breakfast and lunch tend to be light meals, with only one course. Dinner is the main meal.

For breakfast, Americans will eat cereal with milk (mixed together in a bowl), a glass of orange juice and toasted bread or muffin with jam, butter or margarine. Another common breakfast meal is eggs (fried or scrambled), potatoes (hash browns) and breakfast meat (bacon or sausage). People who are eating light might eat just a cup of yogurt. Lunch and dinner are more varied.

When eating a formal dinner, the number of utensils may overwhelm you. How do you tell the difference between a salad fork, a butter fork, and a dessert fork? Most Americans don't know the answer either (it's the number of prongs on the fork). Knowing which fork or spoon to use first is simple: use the outermost utensils first and the utensils closest to the plate last.

Tipping

Restaurants do not include a service charge in the bill, so you should tip the waiter 15% of the total bill. If service was slow or particularly bad, some Americans will tip only 10%. Likewise, if service was particularly good, it is appropriate to tip 20%. If service was so bad that you would never eat in the restaurant again, leave two cents. This is a deliberate insult, because it tells the waiter that you didn't forget to leave a tip. Tipping is only appropriate in restaurants that offer table service. You do not tip the cashier in a fast food restaurant. The words "tip" and "gratuity" is used interchangeably, with "gratuity" having a slightly more formal connotation.

Taxi drivers expect to get a tip equal to 15% of the total fare. If the driver was especially helpful or got you to your destination more quickly than you expected, give a 20% tip.

Hotel bellhops expect a \$1 (per suitcase) tip for helping you with your bags. If you order room service, the gratuity is included in the bill. Coat checkroom attendants expect \$1 per coat. Hairdressers and barbers expect a tip of 15% of the bill. Valet parking attendants expect a \$1 tip.

Bribery is considered inappropriate and often illegal. Attempting to bribe a policeman will certainly get you arrested.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES

If you feel depressed, frustrated, disoriented or angry and this condition lasts for several days, please make an appointment to see the ISP counselor. She can refer you to specialized psychological services. Also, the COC nurse can refer you for help. Remember, in the United States it is not considered a shame to seek psychological advice.

In the beginning section of the Pacific Bell phone book you can find many different "Community Service" or "Help Hotline" phone numbers listed. The edges of the pages are usually blue in color. Listed below are two phone numbers to help-hotlines:

Helpline Crisis Information (24 hours)

800/345-2747

Santa Clarita Valley Community Hotline

661/259-HELP or 259-4357

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

LOSS OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

In the event that you have personal items stolen, you need to contact the proper authorities and report the incident. Notify the COC security officers if something is taken at school. If you find that something has been stolen from your home, car, or if you are robbed while out on the streets, call the local sheriffs office to report what happened. The law officers are here to help you. A report will be taken and they will notify you if they apprehend the person who has taken your belongings. Phone numbers for the different law agencies are listed on page 46.



AUTO ACCIDENTS

If you are involved in an auto accident and you are the driver, you need to do the following things:

- ▶ Write down the names, phone numbers, and addresses of the other drivers and passengers.
- ▶ Write down the driver's insurance company's name, the policy number, and the agent's name and phone number.
- ▶ Write down the driver's license number, the license plate number, and the make, model, and color of the cars involved in the accident.
- ▶ Write down the names and phone numbers of any witnesses that may have stopped to help.
- ▶ Call the local police immediately (if a cell phone is available) so that they can take down an accident report at the scene of the accident while everyone is still there. This is very useful for the insurance companies.
- ▶ Contact your insurance company and the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) to inform them about the accident. You must contact the DMV. **DO NOT** exchange money with anyone at the accident!
- ▶ **DO NOT** agree to handle this outside of the insurance company.
- ▶ **NEVER** leave the accident without giving your information to the people that you have had the accident with! If you hit a parked car, you still need to leave your name and phone number on the car. Both of these are considered to be "hit and run" accidents that are crimes punishable by jail time, fines and possible deportation.

CONTACTING POLICE

In Santa Clarita, as in most communities in the United States, but not all, dialing 911 on any phone will connect you to emergency services such as ambulance, fire, and police. You do not need to put money in a pay phone to dial 911. In cities that do not provide 9-1-1 services, there may be a specific local telephone number. You will have to tell the 911 Operator where you are located and what emergency is taking place.

Another way to get emergency help is to dial 0 (zero), which reaches a telephone operator. Tell the operator that you have an emergency and the street address and city where help is needed. The operator will connect you to the appropriate emergency service.

You can find a listing of local emergency numbers on the

first page of the local telephone directory. You should compile a list of the local emergency numbers, including poison control and the local hospital emergency room. Call the emergency telephone numbers if you need help immediately in a life-threatening situation. For example, you should dial 911 if a crime is in progress, someone is badly injured or ill, there's a fire, or you fear for your life.

For non-emergencies you should call the non-emergency telephone number for our local Sheriffs' station 255-1121 or campus police. For example, if a car is blocking your driveway, someone broke into your apartment but is no longer there, or to report vandalism.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Once again, a medical emergency is when someone is in a life threatening situation. Dialing 911 will summons the police, paramedics and ambulance immediately. If you suspect someone has ingested poison, you can call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-876-4766.

EARTHQUAKE

The City of Santa Clarita has published on their website the following information concerning earthquake preparedness:

During an Earthquake

- ▶1. Stay calm.
- ▶2. Stay where you are. If indoors, stay indoors. If outdoors, stay outdoors. Most injuries occur as people are entering or leaving a building.
- ▶3. If the earthquake catches you while you're indoors, seek cover. Move away from windows and get under a table, desk or bench. As it moves, hold on and move with it.
- ▶4. If the earthquake catches while you are outdoors, stay clear of buildings and utility wires. Stay in the open until the shaking stops.
- ▶5. Don't run through or near buildings. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls.
- ▶6. DO NOT use candles, matches or other open flames either during or after an earthquake. There could be gas leaks.
- ▶7. If you are in a moving vehicle, stop as quickly as safety permits, but stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, underpasses or utility wires.

After an Earthquake

- ▶1. Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move an injured person(s) unless there is danger of further injury.
- ▶2. Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas, open windows and shut off main gas valve. Then leave the building and report gas leakage to local authorities.
NOTE: Do not turn off gas unless there has been a major quake or there is an obvious gas leak; otherwise, it may take days to get someone out to turn it back on.
- ▶3. Check utility lines around, and connecting to, your home for damage. If electrical wiring is shorting out, shut off current at the main box.
- ▶4. If water pipes are damaged, shut off the supply at the main valve. Emergency water may be obtained from sources such as the hot water tanks, toilet tanks, (NOT bowls), and melted ice cubes. If water pipes are damaged, DO NOT drink contaminated water.
- ▶5. Be prepared for additional earthquakes and/or aftershocks.
- ▶6. Stay out of severely damaged buildings; aftershocks can shake them down.
- ▶7. Stay off the telephone. Only use the phone to report an emergency. Tune to radio or television to get the latest emergency information.

Store Emergency Supplies

- After a major earthquake, water and gas may be out of service. Emergency aid may not reach you for several days. Make sure you store the following items in your home. Also, keep emergency supplies at your office and in your car.
- ▶Food - Non-perishable, canned or dehydrated, requiring minimum heat and water.
 - ▶Water - One (1) gallon of water per person per day for drinking. Additional water required for cooking and hygiene.
 - ▶First Aid Kit - Customized, based on family needs, including first aid manual.
 - ▶Prescription Medication - Keep extra supplies on hand; note expiration dates.
 - ▶Portable Radio - Be sure to have fresh batteries on hand.
 - ▶Portable Flashlights - Keep spare batteries and bulbs on hand.
 - ▶Personal Documents and Money - Designate a place to keep all your important documents together: birth certificates, health papers, insurance policies, passports, and social security cards. Also, keep cash on hand because

bank services may be disrupted for an extended period.
►Miscellaneous Items- Can opener (manual), waterproof matches, tools, knife, rope, candles, (not to be used if gas leaks or electrical problems exist), blankets gloves, heating fuel, personal hygiene items.

DISASTER IN HOME COUNTRY

If a disaster strikes in your home country and you can not get through to your family, call the American Red Cross in Valencia at 259-1805 for emergency information. Or come to the ISP office to speak with the director or counselor. We will try to help you contact your family.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS, SERVICES AND HOTLINES

Emergency Calls Only	911
Sheriff	255-1121
Fire	259-2111
Suicide Prevention (Toll-Free)	1-877-727-4747
Poison Control (Toll-Free)	1-800-876-4766
American Red Cross	259-1805

PUBLIC SERVICES

Libraries

Besides the College of the Canyons library, there are 3 public libraries in Santa Clarita. There is no charge to use these libraries or to check out their books. In order to check out books you will need to apply for a "library card." This can be done at the front desk of any of these libraries. Make sure to bring a picture ID (COC student ID card or passport) and verification of your residence (an envelope you have received



from COC that has your name and address on the front or a recent utility bill in your name). The public libraries are listed below. Cal Arts also offers their library services to all students holding a current College of the Canyons student ID card.

Canyon Country Library

18601 Soledad Canyon Road
Canyon Country (West of Sierra Highway)
251-2720

Valencia Library

23743 W. Valencia Blvd.
Valencia
(Corner of Valencia Blvd. and
Magic Mountain Parkway)
259-8942

Newhall Library

22704 W. 9th Street
Newhall
(Corner of 9th St. and Walnut)
259-0750

Los Angeles Consular Corps

Washington D.C., the nation's capital, has an embassy for every country that is represented in the United States. The major cities in the United States have consulates that issue visas, and assist citizens in need of help. For example, if you are hospitalized, arrested, or in need a new passport.

If your consulate is not in Los Angeles, you can call directory assistance for Washington, DC at 1-202-555-1212 to request the phone number for your embassy. Your embassy can then tell you the location of your nearest consulate.

Or you can go to the website www.tyzo.com for more information about consulates and embassies.

Most of the phone numbers listed on the next page are in California. Those numbers with the area code of 202 are in Washington D.C.

If your home country is not listed we apologize. It was not available at the time of printing.

COUNTRY	TELEPHONE #
ARGENTINA	1-323-954-9155
ARMENIA	1-310-657-6102
AUSTRALIA	1-310-229-4828
AUSTRIA	1-310-444-9310
BANGLADESH	1-310-441-9399
BARBADOS	1-213-380-2198
BELGIUM	1-323-857-1244
BELIZE	1-323-469-7343
BENIN	1-202-232-6656
BOTSWANA	1-202-244-4990
BRAZIL	1-202-238-2700
BURKINA	1-202-332-5577
CANADA	1-213-346-2700
CHINA	1-213-380-2508
COLOMBIA	1-323-653-4299
COSTA RICA	1-213-380-7915
CROATIA	1-310-477-1009
CZECH REPUBLIC	1-310-473-0889
DENMARK	1-310-443-2090
ECUADOR	1-202-234-7200
EL SALVADOR	1-213-383-5776
ESTONIA	1-202-588-0101
FINLAND	1-310-203-9903
FRANCE	1-310-235-3200
GAMBIA	1-310-476-0532
GERMANY	1-323-930-2703
GREECE	1-310-826-5555
GUATEMALA	1-213-365-9251
HONDURAS	1-213-383-9244
HUNGARY	1-310-473-9344
INDIA	1-415-668-0662
ISRAEL	1-323-852-5500
ITALY	1-310-820-0622
JAPAN	1-213-617-6700
JORDAN	1-202-966-2664
KENYA	1-202-387-6101
KOREA	1-213-385-9300
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	1-213-626-7738
LEBANON	1-323-467-1253
MALAYSIA	1-213-892-1238
MEXICO	1-213-351-6800
NEPAL	1-202-667-4550
NETHERLANDS, THE	1-310-268-1598
NEW ZEALAND	1-202-328-4800
NICARAGUA	1-213-252-1170
NORWAY	1-202-333-6000
PAKISTAN	1-310-441-5114
POLAND	1-310-442-8500
PORTUGAL	1-310-277-1491
ROMANIA	1-310-445-0043
SAUDI ARABIA	1-310-479-6000
SLOVENIA	1-202-667-5363
SOUTH AFRICA	1-323-651-0902
SOUTH KOREA	1-213-385-9300
SPAIN	1-323-938-0158
SWEDEN	1-310-445-4008
SWITZERLAND	1-310-575-1145
THAILAND	1-323-937-1894
TURKEY	1-323-937-0118
UNITED KINGDOM	1-310-477-3322
URUGUAY	1-310-394-5777
VENEZUELA	1-202-342-2214

AMERICAN HOLIDAYS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT DATES

The American calendar is filled with numerous holidays. The following table shows some of the more popular holidays. Important national holidays have been indicated in bold face. Most non-essential government offices will be closed on these days. (Fire, Ambulance and Police are always open.) Banks, post offices and schools also tend to be closed on these days, and many businesses will give their employees the day off.

New Year's Day: January 1. First day of the New Year.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: The Monday nearest January 15th. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a prominent civil rights leader during the 1960's.

Lincoln's Birthday: February 12th. Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States during the Civil War. His Emancipation Proclamation freed all slaves.

Valentine's Day: February 14. People send cards of affection to sweethearts, family and friend.

Washington's Birthday: February 22nd. George Washington was the first President of the United States.

President's Day: Third Monday in February. The celebration of all the United States' Presidents. Held near the birthdays of the 2 most famous Presidents.

St. Patrick's Day: March 17. The celebration of Ireland's Saint Patrick. Many people wear the color green in recognition of the Irish. Tradition says that a person is allowed to pinch any person not wearing green.

Good Friday: Friday before Easter Sunday. A Christian holiday recognizing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Easter: A Sunday in late March or early April. A Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Celebrated in different ways, some religious, some not. An Easter tradition is to hide colored, boiled eggs or candy for children to find.

April Fool's Day: April 1. A day that people play jokes on each other.

Mother's Day: Second Sunday in May. People send cards and gifts to their mothers and grandmothers.

Memorial Day: Last Monday in May. Commemoration of American soldiers who died in all wars.

Father's Day: Third Sunday in June. People send cards and gifts to their fathers and grandfathers.

Independence Day: July 4. In 1776 the Americans declared their independence from Britain. Fireworks are displayed at parks and beaches in the evening to celebrate. Parades take place in many towns including Santa Clarita.

Labor Day: First Monday in September. This day honors the working person.

Halloween: October 31. At night, children dress in costume and go from home to home saying "trick or treat." Candy is the customary treat given to the children. Adults may also participate in the Halloween festivities by attending parties dressed in costume. There are students and staff at COC who will come to school in costume too!

Election Day: Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Veterans Day: Celebrated on the Monday nearest November 11th. Honor is paid to veterans of all wars, and the end of World War 1 is commemorated.

Thanksgiving: Fourth Thursday in November. Commemorating the first Thanksgiving, a feast in 1621 in which the Indians and Pilgrims shared food. Most families have a big dinner and visitors are especially welcome at this time.

Christmas Day: December 25. A Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. This is a family time and a season of gift giving. Christmas is celebrated in many ways, for some it is a religious celebration, for others it is a time of tradition. People put up pine trees decorated with lights and ornaments. Gifts are placed under the tree and opened on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The "Holiday Season" is usually referred to as the month between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

It is also important to be aware of the holidays of people of other religious faiths. For example, important Jewish holidays include Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkoth,

Chanukah, and Passover. Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, and Sukkoth occur in the fall. Chanukah occurs in December, near Christmas. Passover occurs in March or April, near Easter.

SOUTHLAND ATTRACTIONS (AMUSEMENT PARKS, MUSEUMS, PERFORMING ARTS, and SPORTS)

AHMANSON THEATER/MARK TAPER FORUM,
Los Angeles 1-213-628-2772

AUTRY MUSEUM of WESTERN HERITAGE,
Hollywood 1-323-667-2000

BASEBALL,
Los Angeles Dodgers 1-323-224-1500
Anaheim Angels 1-714-940-2240

BASKETBALL,
Los Angeles Lakers 1-213-742-7400
Los Angeles Clippers 1-213-745-0400

BALBOA PARK,
San Diego 1-619-239-0512

CANYON THEATER GUILD,
Newhall 1-666-298-0058

CATALINA ISLAND,
Avalon 1-310-510-1520

DESCANSO GARDENS,
La Canada/ Flintridge 1-818-952-4400

DISNEYLAND,
Anaheim 1-714-781-4565

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION,
Los Angeles 1-213-972-7211

FARMERS MARKET,
Los Angeles 1-323-933-9211

FOOTBALL,
San Diego Chargers 1-610-280-2121

GETTY MUSEUM Center,
Los Angeles 1-310-440-7300

GOLF, Vista Valencia golf Course,
Valencia 1-661-253-1870

El Cariso Park Gold Club,
Sylmar 1-818-367-6157

Verdugo Hills Golf Course,
Tujunga 1-818-352-3161

GREEK THEATER,
Hollywood 1-323-665-1927

HERITAGE JUNCTION HISTORIC PARK MUSEUM,
Santa Clarita 1-661-254-1275

HOCKEY,
Los Angeles Kings 1-310-419-3800
Anaheim Mighty Ducks 1-714-940-2900

HOLLYWOOD BOWL/LA PHILHARMONIC,
Hollywood 1-323-850-2000

HOLLYWOOD ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM,
Hollywood 1-323-465-7900

HOLLYWOOD WAX MUSEUM,
Hollywood 1-323-462-8860

HURRICANE HARBOR,
Valencia 1-661-255-4111

JAPANESE GARDEN,
Van Nuys 1-818-756-8166

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM,
Buena Park 1-714-220-5200

LANCASTER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER,
Lancaster 1-661-723-5950

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART,
Los Angeles 1-323-857-6000

LOS ANGELES ZOO,
Los Angeles 1-323-644-4200

MEDIEVAL TIMES,
Buena Park 1-714-521-4740

MOVIELAND WAX MUSEUM,
Buena Park 1-714-522-1155

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART,
Los Angeles 1-213-626-6222

NBC 4 STUDIOS,
Burbank 1-818-840-4444

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM,
Pasadena 1-626-449-6840

PANTAGES THEATER,
Hollywood 1-323-468-1770

RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT MUSEUM,
Buena Park 1-714-522-7045

QUEEN MARY,
Long Beach 1-562-435-3511

PARAMOUNT PICTURES,
Hollywood 1-323-956-1777

RAGING WATERS,
San Dimas 1-909-802-2200

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM,
Simi Valley 1-800-410-8354

SAN DIEGO WILD ANIMAL PARK,
Escondido 1-760-480-0100

SAN DIEGO ZOO,
San Diego 1-619-234-3153

SANTA MONICA BEACH,
Santa Monica 1-310-393-7593

SAUGUS SWAP MEET,
Saugus 1-661-259-3886

SEA WORLD ADVENTURE PARK,
San Diego 1-619-226-3901

SHERMAN OAKS CASTLE PARK,
Sherman Oaks 1-818-756-9459

SHUBERT THEATER,
West Los Angeles 1-800-447-7400

SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN,
Valencia 1-661-255-4111

SKI RESORT, Mountain High,
Wrightwood 1-760-249-5808
Snow Summit, Big Bear 1-909-866-5766

SOCCER, LA Galaxy,
Los Angeles 1-626-577-3100

SOLVANG ARTS AND CRAFTS,
Solvang 1-800-468-6765

UNIVERSAL AMPHITHEATER,
Universal City 1-818-622-4440

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD,
Universal City 1-818-622-3801

WARNER BROTHERS STUDIOS VIP TOUR,
Burbank 1-818-954-1744

WILD RIVER WATER PARK,
Irvine 1-949-768-9453

WILLIAM S. HART MUSEUM,
Santa Clarita 1-661-254-4584

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