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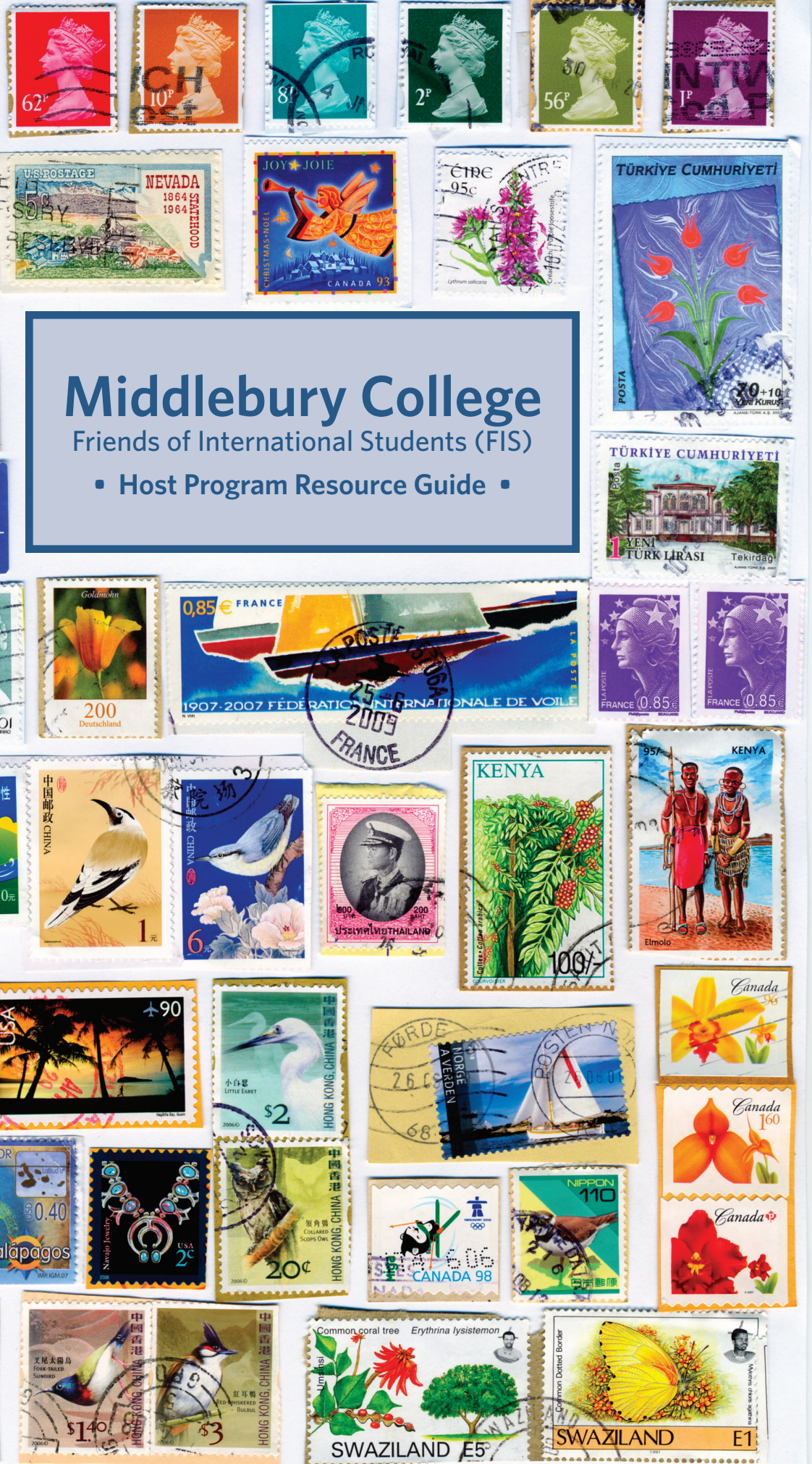
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Middlebury College

Friends of International Students (FIS)

• Host Program Resource Guide •



WELCOME

Friends of International Students

Congratulations! You are embarking on a cross-cultural adventure, all in the comfort of your own home. Welcome to the *Friends of International Students (FIS)* host program.

The *FIS* host program is quickly becoming one of the best venues for these students to share the nuances of their cultures with local hosts. We think you have made a great decision to join the program. The *FIS* host program is coordinated by the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) staff at Middlebury College.

With approximately 275 international students from about 75 countries, Middlebury offers comprehensive advising for all international undergraduate students, including students who need visas to study in the U.S. as well as U.S. citizens who live abroad. The ISSS staff manages visa and immigration document issuance and compliance; advises students on issues that impact their visa status; coordinates programming in support of international students; directs the Early Arrival program for international and exchange students; and advises the International Students' Organization (ISO). Along with other colleagues on campus, the team of ISSS advisors is available and eager to meet with students to discuss issues related to academics, personal issues, and cultural adjustment.

This handbook will provide you with some detailed information about the *Friends of International Students* program as well as some of the Middlebury College campus resources that you might find helpful. We ask you to read through these materials in order to fully prepare for your role as a host. Any questions that are not answered in these pages can hopefully be answered by the ISSS staff.

Feel free to contact us at iss@middlebury.edu or 802-443-5858.



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Expectations

The *Friends of International Students* host program is a friendship program. International students will not live with hosts. Instead, participants will be asked to host their students on visits to their homes and to explore the local area with him or her throughout the academic year. Our hope is that a host will form a relationship that will last beyond the student's first year at the College.

What is Expected of Hosts?

- Attend an FIS host information session organized by International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and submit our online questionnaire.
- Attend the annual "Matching Event" to meet your student.
- During the first year, initiate at least two activities during each term with your international student, and contact him/her at least monthly. While in-person contact is preferred, phone calls, texts and email are also great ways to stay linked and to let the student know you're thinking of him/her.
- Contact ISSS if you have questions about the program or concerns about your student.

Campus Resources

Whom Do You Contact?

If your student is having trouble getting an answer to a question about an academic or campus life issue, be assured that there is someone on campus who can help. The best advice is to suggest to the student that they contact their Class Dean or their Class Dean Coordinator and ask who on campus can answer the question. Many offices have an email address designated for answering daily student inquiries. We ask you to assist us by encouraging students to find the answers to their own questions.

Important Campus Contacts

The following numbers should be used if you are concerned about your student's physical safety or emotional well-being.

Public Safety

non-emergency	802-443-5133
emergency	802-443-5911

Health Services	802-443-5135
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Counseling Services	802-443-5141
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International Student and Scholar Services	802-443-5858
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Residential Life

Living in community with students from across the globe provides opportunities to challenge yourself, learn deeply, develop meaningful relationships, and discover new ways of thinking. As a residential college, students live on campus until they graduate. A limited number of seniors are released to live off campus for their senior year. First and second year students live in traditional residence halls, typically in double rooms with shared community bathrooms. Junior and senior students are able to choose from a variety of housing options, including double and single rooms within shared suites, small houses, and a variety of themed communities.

Residential Life integrates academic experiences with life in our residence halls to encourage open exchange of ideas, perspectives, and intellectual curiosity. This begins with the first-year seminar—as students who are in class together also live in the same first-year community, allowing them to bring classroom discussions and experiences into the residence halls. Residential Life staff host a variety of community activities for students based on community needs, inspired by academic events taking place on campus, and in support of shared interests among residents of a floor or building. There are also an abundance of social and cocurricular opportunities to try new things, build meaningful connections, develop lifelong skills, and explore everything Middlebury has to offer.

Residential Life has a team of professionals and trained peer leaders on campus to help students with the transition to Middlebury and navigating the ups and downs that come with college life. Residence directors (RD) are professional staff that live on campus and work to build supportive and inclusive residential communities. They oversee and support the work of our Residential Life student staff in fostering connection, work with the Office of Community Standards to address student behavioral concerns, and provide after-hours emergency support for students. They also collaborate closely with deans and other campus partners to support students and connect them with important resources.

The Residential Life student staff includes resident assistants (RA), who live alongside and support students in first-year and sophomore communities, and community assistants (CA), who support students living in junior and senior communities. These are students who serve as community leaders and mentors within the residence halls. They work to foster a sense of community, educate students on community standards, uphold residential policies, and help connect students with campus resources.

All students at Middlebury College are also assigned a Class Dean according to their anticipated graduation year. Class Deans are a source for support and guidance for all students as they navigate their Middlebury experience. Class Deans partner closely with other offices on campus to make sure that students are connected to the supports and resources that will allow them to thrive.

Excerpts taken from the Middlebury Residential Life and Student Life websites.

Confidentiality

The perspective of a host on a student's well-being has proven to be a valuable and even life-saving resource. Please know that if you have concerns about your student and feel a need to communicate that concern, we will treat your information appropriately.

If you have concerns about the emotional well-being of your student, you should not hesitate to contact the Counseling Services staff at 802-443-5141. You might consider contacting the counseling staff if you notice that your student:

- seems unhappy or distressed
- has trouble sleeping
- is missing classes
- appears overly stressed

The Counseling Services staff can also speak with you regarding any concerns about particular interactions with your student or about your relationship with him or her in general. Conversations with counseling staff are completely confidential. You can be assured that your concerns will not be reported to other Middlebury departments without your expressed consent. The only exception is when there is reason to be concerned for the safety of individuals.

The Center for Health and Wellness is also required to keep information regarding your student, including health information, even a student's hospitalization, completely confidential. This can be frustrating for hosts who are trying to assist a student. The reality, though, is that once a concerned party shares their knowledge with the appropriate staff member, that staff member will be equipped to intervene on the student's behalf, if necessary, without breaking the confidentiality of your report or the student's private records.

Please note that this includes minor concerns (social adjustment, roommate difficulties) as well as major concerns (depression, eating disorder issues, severe culture shock). The Class Dean and Residential Life systems are designed so that several staff members are in contact with students on a regular basis. Once you share your major or minor concern with an ISSS staff member or the student's Class Dean, they can ensure the situation is being properly handled, and will assist the student if necessary. We also encourage you to direct the student to the ISSS office so the student can be empowered to address their various challenges by accessing the many resources available on campus.

Culture Shock

Stages of Dealing with Culture Shock

First stage: Euphoria Phase

- Situation is a bit confusing yet exhilarating
- Tend to look for and identify similarities between home culture and host culture
- Unusual or unattractive aspects of host culture seen as “quaint”
- Visitor tends to be the focus of attention and activity
- Shown respect and concern which you may seldom receive in your own home community

Crisis Stage: Culture Shock

- Culture shock generally emerges within a few weeks to a month, up to about 6 months
- May start with full-blown crisis or as series of negative experiences and reactions
- Often it is a feeling that grows little by little as interactions with others increase
- Notice feelings of discomfort, anxiety, anger from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social interaction
- Words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, and norms have different meanings
- For a long time, visitor will understand what the national is saying, but is not always sure what the national means
- Difficulties are very real
 - Language trouble
 - Transportation trouble
 - Academic trouble
 - Dorm living/roommate trouble
 - Food trouble
 - Shopping trouble
 - Climate trouble

People in the host country don't realize that these are troubles!

Differences become increasingly apparent:

- What was once perceived as “interesting” or “quaint” is now frustrating and irritating
- Homeland is often glorified—only good things are remembered
- Sometimes it takes a trip home to bring the person back to reality
- Tendency to want to reject that which causes the discomfort = “the ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad”
- Sometimes it's difficult to take responsibility for one's own part in difficult situations
- Person experiencing culture shock often talks as if difficulties are created by the people of the host country for the special discomfort of foreigners
- Sometimes visitor takes superior attitude toward people of the host country

Common Symptoms of Culture Shock

- Extreme **homesickness**—feeling like you want to go home!
- Increasing **disappointments, frustrations**
- Desire to **avoid social settings** that seem threatening or unpleasant
- Anxiety from loss of familiar **social interaction**
- Knowing when to shake hands
- Knowing what to say upon meeting new people
- Knowing when to accept or refuse invitations
- Knowing when to take statements seriously and when not
- **Physical complaints**
- Great concern over minor pains or skin problems
- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Depression** and feelings of **hopelessness**
- Feeling **confused**, disliked by others, treated like a child
- **Difficulty with coursework** and concentration
- **Loss of sense of humor**
- A sense of **lack of control** in life
- Boredom or **fatigue**
- **Anger** or hostility toward the host culture
- **Longing to be back home** in familiar surroundings, to visit one's relatives, and to talk to people who really “make sense”

Acclimation Stage

(Becoming accustomed to different climate, environment or circumstances, as by physiological or psychological changes).

Acclimation is often slow, involving recurrent crises and readjustments:

- It becomes difficult to problem solve in the new culture
- The environment does not change—but one's attitude towards it changes over time
- Acceptance of the culture's ways is achieved with a positive attitude
- Acceptance of the customs and values of the host culture as just another way of living (don't have to like them)

Having the ability to recognize that problems are due to:

- Difficulty understanding, accepting, and dealing with the host culture
- Not liking customs, values, foods, etc. of host culture
- Feeling mistreated or misunderstood
- Discomfort about some nationals keeping a distance

Ways to Cope:

- Taking a step back from certain events that are bothersome; assess the situation and search for an appropriate explanation or response
- **Talking with someone to help organize thoughts, thinking it through** with a friend, dean, counselor)
- **Being curious rather than critical** about what happened
- Taking time to observe how others are acting in same situation
- Describing situations, what it means and what kinds of responses may be appropriate
- Asking Americans how they would have handled the situation
- **Asking what it means in the host culture**
- Planning how you might apply what you have learned in this or similar situations in the future

How to care for one's self

- Read a book or rent a video in more familiar language
- **Get out and experience the new culture**
- Make friends with some Americans
- Take a short trip—explore!
- **Get plenty of rest**
- Write a letter, email, telephone home or send an audiotape
- **Eat healthy food**
- Keep a journal—a concrete way to record specific observations and to look back and track growth in the new culture
- **Exercise**

Culture Shock Eases

Culture shock gradually eases as one begins to understand the new culture

Full assimilation is difficult if not impossible

Effective Acclimation means undergoing substantial personal change, leading to development of a bicultural identity and integration of new cultural aspects

“Losing Culture?”

Some students worry about “losing their culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. It is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which one was raised. Learning about another culture often increases appreciation and understanding of one's own culture.

Sources: Ogami, Noriko (1988) *Cold Water(videotape)*. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc.

NAFSA: Assoc. of International Educators (1998) *NAFSA's International Student Handbook*. Princeton, N.J: Educational Testing Service.

Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook by Craig Storti

Immigration Issues

Most Middlebury College international students have entered the United States in either an F-1 or a J-1 visa status. Maintaining status is very important to each student's long-term study and employment opportunities. A few students are here as dependents on a parents' visa status, and they, too, must adhere to regulations governing their stay.

As a host, all you need to be aware of is the following:

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is available to consult with students who have immigration questions or dilemmas. Students are encouraged to make appointments through the ISSS Calendly appointment page. You can find more information about appointments on the landing page of the ISSS website at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services>.

Restricted Employment

With very few exceptions, international students in these visa statuses are not allowed to work off-campus during the academic year. To accept off-campus employment during vacation periods they would need to make a special application (a lengthy application process with a required fee.) Unfortunately, this means that house-sitting, babysitting, pet-sitting, and so on for pay are not options for most international students. It also means that internships during the summer, while possible, require planning far in advance. You can find more information on the Employment Authorization page of the ISSS website.

Please keep in mind that even though the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is not necessarily in the business of searching for these offenses, you would be putting the student in a precarious position.

Travel Challenges

Traveling to Canada with your student may or may not be a possibility, depending on their home country. Students may consult the Canadian consulate's website to determine what is necessary to prepare for a trip to Canada. You can find out more at the Canadian government's website at <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>.

More travel FAQs are located on the ISSS website at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/frequently-asked-questions>.

Lost!

Lost or stolen travel documents are a nuisance, but not a disaster for international students. The first step is for the student to make a police report to both Middlebury College's Public Safety Office (if on campus), and the local police department and obtain a copy of it. Next, if the student is unsure of what embassy or consulate to contact, he/she may contact International Student and Scholar Services for assistance.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What should I do with my student?

A priority at first is to help your student adjust to life in Middlebury, Vermont. That may mean just being a resource for the student in terms of listening to them and their adjustment issues as well as offering ideas about how to solve some of the challenges they face.

If you work on campus, it may help if you show your student your office so the student knows where they can find you. For those of you in the local area, at some point it might be helpful for them to know where you live/work.

Many international students do not have vehicles, so it is helpful to take them for rides so they can see more of the local area, your home, your favorite places, etc. If you invite them to do something, you should offer transportation or choose to do things on campus or within walking distance. You also may want to discuss the time commitment (with a start and end time) so they can determine if it works with their schedules.

I feel badly that my student has to buy so much stuff. How can I help?

You may be able to offer items you have at home that you no longer need. For example, students could use extra blankets, pillows, jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, tables, fans, silverware, plates, cups, etc. to have in their rooms. One family even had an extra dorm fridge that their student was thrilled to borrow. Most of us have plenty of extra items in our homes, and would be glad to clear them out for a year or more. If you really want them back, be sure to keep an inventory of what goes out and comes back.

If the student feels they need to buy supplies for school or their room, it is nice to bring your student to a store. The options are limited in town. However, Helping Overcome Poverty Effect (H.O.P.E.), Round Robin, Neat Repeats, and other thrift stores also have a lot of what the students need. You may also have advice about the best places to shop in Burlington and Williston. You may want to take students to yard sales, where they can often find useful items at very reasonable prices. Be prepared to explain the concept of a “yard sale” to them.

You can also encourage your student to check out the Recycling Center on campus. Middlebury definitely does not let reusable items go to waste! Anything reusable—from clothes to electronics to school supplies—that comes to the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) is stored in the reuse trailers until someone comes along to find it.

How can I create a closer relationship with my student?

Frequent contact (in person, by phone, text, email, or mail) is the best way. Once all of the “getting settled” details are attended to, you may feel you and your student are drifting apart. Students usually use text and email, so get your student’s email and texting information and communicate in writing. That way your student can reply when they have time so you won’t be interrupting study time. Be sure to ask your student if they use an address other than their Middlebury email so you know your message will be read.

Also, Middlebury is great, but all students like to get off campus for a break. Inviting your student to your house to relax, to go for a hike, or out to dinner are all welcome breaks for hard working college students. Once you get to know your student better, little extras like celebrating their birthdays or special holidays, or alerting them to events that may be of interest to them can really help to establish your friendship.

In addition, having conversations about various academic paths and the possible professions that one may choose can be valuable. The beauty of attending Middlebury College is that students have the opportunity to take courses in a wide array of subject areas. Conversations about considering courses outside of one’s comfort zone can be useful. Sharing your life experience, whether you have gone to college or not, can help a student gain a sense of the options and can give them much-needed perspective.

Students also appreciate when you take the time to learn about their home countries. Some families seek out news and current events about the student’s home country. The Internet makes accessing this information quite easy. You will also find links to country information under the “For Hosts” section of the *FIS* website at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/international-student-and-scholar-services/students/friends-international-students-program>. Finding out interesting facts and history can provide opportunities for lively discussion and sharing.

Finally, if your student is involved in any activities it is important to show your support. Remember, most likely your student’s family will not be able to be at special events, so you are often their only form of family support.

What am I not allowed to do with my student?

As tempting as it may be, it is actually illegal for you to employ your student to care for children, give language lessons, clean and do other jobs if your student does not have the appropriate authorization. It is also important that we abide by the Vermont state alcohol laws, even though many of our students come from countries where there is no age barrier for drinking. Other than that, common sense should lead you to make good decisions. If you have questions, please contact ISSS.

How do I talk to my student about world events?

Since many people have very strong opinions about this topic, it is best to take an unbiased approach. Ask your student how he/she feels about the events so you know what perspective

they are coming from. Ask open-ended questions like, “What do you think of X?” When voicing your own opinions, of course, you can be honest, but to take a very strong position either way may be offensive to your student and may cause problems in your relationship. Your international student will help you see world events from a new light. We may not agree with everything our students believe, but we can learn from our differences.

Will ISSS be in touch with me after I meet my student?

Absolutely! We post updates on our website every few months, and also communicate periodically with host program participants by email. Please be sure to update us if your email address changes. If you have any questions or concerns about the program or your student, please contact us at iss@middlebury.edu.

Do you have any additional bits of advice?

Have fun with and enjoy your student! With a little effort on both of your parts, befriending an international student can be an extremely rewarding experience for you, your family, and your student. Don't be shy. Remember, you are in the host role, so be proactive and make the first move. Many students will be intimidated to make the first call or reach out to you. If you show you are interested in and willing to spend time with your student, he/she will feel more comfortable reaching out to you when they need you most.

Any Questions? Please contact ISSS at 802-443-5858 or iss@middlebury.edu.

Initiated in 2002 by Jennifer Nueder, an *FIS* host, and updated by ISSS (September 2022).



Additional Resources

There are many resources available online and at Middlebury's Davis Library for you to use to find out more about events happening in your student's home country or to learn more about their culture and experience abroad.

A Middlebury College librarian offered this brief list to get you started.

World News Sources

Al Jazeera

www.aljazeera.com/

BBC World News

www.bbc.com/news/world

Canadian News

National Post

www.nationalpost.com/index.html

Montreal Gazette

www.montrealgazette.com/

Chinese News

China Daily

www.chinadaily.com.cn/

Library Press Display

Archive of scanned images of over 700 newspapers from 76 countries in 38 languages. Click on a country to find recent English and foreign language periodicals that include coverage of that country. Find Library Press at: go.middlebury.edu/lpd or <http://library.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/viewer.aspx>

Newspaper Research Guide

Library guide with pages devoted to international news. <https://middlebury.libguides.com/newspapers>.

Books

Crossing Customs: International Students Write on U.S. Life and Culture

Essays written by international students at Dartmouth.

<http://biblio.middlebury.edu/record=b3575552~S2>

Fostering International Student Success in Higher Education

Shawna Shapiro

A resource that provides insight into what international students may be experiencing. It is more focused on teaching, but hosts may be interested in the information.

<http://biblio.middlebury.edu/record=b3699220~S2>

Succeeding as an international student in the United States and Canada

Charles Lipson

A guide to help students navigate American culture and get the most out of their academic pursuits.

Other Resources

Culture Shock [videorecording] : international students in the United States

Directed by Stefan Botchev

A documentary about the challenges international students face when living in the United States.

<http://biblio.middlebury.edu/record=b1840527~S2>

Hosts may also be interested in watching movies.

The library at Middlebury has a way to browse movies by the original language the movie was recorded in here:

<http://biblio.middlebury.edu/search~S3>

Google Earth

This is a virtual globe, map and geographical information program that allows you to identify a location around the world and then zoom in via satellite photography to view the location.

<http://earth.google.com>

Storage

Summer/Winter Term Storage

The College does not provide storage for student belongings. All personal belongings must remain within your assigned bedroom or suite during the academic year and removed when a student departs for summer break, withdraws from the College, leaves to participate in an off-campus study program, or graduates. Items left or not claimed at the end of the term are disposed or donated. Students looking to store personal belongings should explore off campus storage options.

Note: Exceptions for specific items (hunting equipment) are listed on the Public Safety website at: <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/public-safety/our-services#storage-information>.

Student Storage Vendor

Campus Storage is an approved student-run vendor for summer storage. The group will make arrangements to pick your things up right from your residence hall room and then deliver it to your room in the fall. Campus Storage is run by current Middlebury students. Learn more about it at <https://www.middleburycampusstorage.com/>.

Off-Campus Storage Companies

Several local establishments have storage facilities and charge a monthly fee for self-storage compartments (prices range depending on size of compartment). Students often group together with friends to rent a unit and share the expense. We encourage you to do some online research to explore local storage unit options that might best meet your needs.

Bike Storage

Bikes may be stored with the Bike Shop for \$20.00 for the summer. Unwanted bikes may be donated to the Bike Shop—for details email the shop. Bikes left on campus in bike-racks or bike storage rooms will be collected and may be donated to the Bike Shop.

Social, Academic, and Special Interest Houses

Each house has a designated storage area FOR HOUSE ITEMS ONLY. NO personal items may be left in these spaces. Any personal items stored in these spaces will be disposed or donated.

Excerpts taken from the Middlebury Residential Life and Public Safety websites.

Travel Logistics

International Students often face challenges at the start and the end of a term when trying to book affordable flights while abiding by campus exit and entry policies. They also face challenges getting to and from the airport. The following resource list is meant to help you guide your student in facing these challenges. Students should consult with their Class Dean or Class Dean Coordinator if they are facing significant challenges in either arriving or departing from campus on the arrival or departure day designated by the College.

Tri-Valley Transit (TVT)

Middlebury students, staff, and faculty with their Middlebury ID can ride for free on regularly scheduled TVT buses around town and to the Middlebury College Snow Bowl. You can even bring your bike on board! TVT also offers commuter buses to Burlington, Rutland, and neighboring towns. Staff and faculty ride commuter buses for free when they pick up a bus sticker from Human Resources. Students must pay for commuter buses. Check out the map and schedules at <https://www.trivalleytransit.org/or> call 802-388-1946 or 800-685-RIDE (7433). Make sure to look for Addison County to see transportation options around Middlebury and up to Burlington.

Middlebury SGA Break Buses

For most recess periods, the Student Government Association offers discounted chartered buses for students traveling to Boston, New York City, the Burlington International Airport, and the Burlington Greyhound Station. Bus schedules and rates are announced during the semester. You can find more information at <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/arts/box-office/sga-break-buses>.

Amtrak Train

Amtrak stops in the town of Middlebury, connecting the college directly with New York City, Burlington, and 13 other stops in the state of Vermont. You can find a schedule of train times here. You can sign up for the Amtrak student advantage card for discounts at <https://www.amtrak.com/student-discount>. A schedule of train times is also available at <https://observatory.middlebury.edu/jonathan/amtrak/>.

Private Taxis and Shuttles

AA Transportation

802-227-2776; www.taxiinv.com

24/7 service. \$60 flat rate service to/from anywhere in the Burlington area, split the cost between up to 7 passengers. AA Transportation values timeliness and safety. Call for competitive rates to/from Montreal for up to 7 passengers.

Burlington Airport Taxi

802-239-1515; www.burlingtonairporttaxi.com

More information and other transportation options in the area can be found at the College's transportation website at: <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/franklin-environmental-center/sustainability-action/living-sustainably-campus/transportation>.

Campus Events

Arts Events, Lectures, Films...

As part of the host program, we welcome you to the Middlebury College community. You may access information about College-sponsored events by viewing the College calendar: <https://www.middlebury.edu/events/>.

This website offers many ways to locate events—by category, by date, and so on. We encourage you to explore what is available. Many events are free and open to the public. You may want to attend events with your student.

ISO Cultural Show

Save the Date! The International Students' Organization (**ISO**) **Cultural Show** will be held in November at McCullough Social Space. ISO offers two shows - an early evening performance and a later evening one. We will send an email when ticket sales begin.

International Speakers

The Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs sponsors many interesting and provocative events with an international focus. You can find more information about the center at <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/rohatyn>.

If you would like to be on the email list to receive announcements about the lunchtime speaker series and other programs, please email rcga@middlebury.edu to be added to the list.





Our Appreciation

By embarking on this adventure to host an international student, you have made a choice to expand your horizons. In doing so, we know that the lives of Middlebury students will be enriched as well. We want to thank you in advance for the many considerable and little things you will do for the students. We know that it helps the students and in so doing, it helps the College, too. We thank you for your contributions, and hope your involvement with the *FIS* host program is all you expect it to be.



Middlebury
College

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go.middlebury.edu/iss