



Coming to SUNY Cortland

A Guide for International Students



**International Programs Office
State University of New York College at Cortland**

Table of Contents

WELCOME!.....	2
CHECKLISTS: Preparing Yourself for Your Program at SUNY Cortland.....	3
VISAS & IMMIGRATION INFORMATION.....	5
Passports, Visas, and Port of Entry Procedures.....	5
Maintaining Your F-1 or J-1 Status.....	8
Employment.....	9
Payment of the SEVIS Fee.....	10
Tips for Your Visa Interview.....	13
PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION.....	16
Dollar Exchange Regulations.....	16
Carrying Money.....	16
Mail, Luggage and Baggage.....	16
ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES.....	17
Airport/Bus Station Pick-Up.....	17
Port of Entry Immigration and Customs Procedures.....	17
Staying in the Port of Entry City.....	18
Getting to Cortland.....	18
Flight and Arrival Information Forms: Fill Out Yours for Airport/Bus Station Pick-Up!.....	19
ABOUT THE CORTLAND AREA.....	21
HOUSING.....	23
Housing Options for Undergraduates.....	23
Graduate Student Housing Options.....	25
FOOD ON CAMPUS: Dining Halls and Meal Plans.....	26
MONEY MATTERS: Currency Exchange, Bank Accounts, & Budgets.....	29
YOUR STUDENT ACCOUNT: Paying Your Bills.....	30
ACADEMIC MATTERS.....	31
Registering for Classes.....	31
Classroom Culture.....	32
Academic Resources.....	33
Breaks from Classes (Recesses, Holidays).....	34
GETTING CONNECTED: myRedDragon Access.....	35
HEALTH MATTERS.....	36
Student Health Service.....	36
Health Insurance.....	36
Immunizations and Health Forms Required for Registration.....	36
CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS.....	38
A FEW NOTES ON CULTURE SHOCK.....	39

SUNY Cortland

P.O. Box 2000
Cortland, New York 13045 USA

WELCOME!

Congratulations on your acceptance to SUNY Cortland! The International Programs Office is committed to providing you with the support necessary to ease your transition to SUNY Cortland. Your advisor for any immigration issues is Mary Schlarb, assistant director and international student advisor. Mary will assist you with U.S. immigration issues, general campus orientation, cultural adjustment, and course registration.

This guide was developed to help answer many of your questions and provide you with basic information prior to your arrival.

IMPORTANT COLLEGE OFFICES TO HELP YOU WHILE YOU ARE STUDYING WITH US

Immigration-related matters:
International Programs Office

216 Brockway, Ph. (607) 753-2209; Fax (607) 753-5989

E-mail: studyabroad@cortland.edu

Student Health Service

Office: B26 Van Hoesen

Phone: (607) 753-4811

Residence Life and Housing Office

Office: B33 Van Hoesen
Whitaker Hall Director
Fitzgerald Hall Director
West Campus Director

Phone: (607) 753-4724
(607) 753-4163
(607) 753-4152
(607) 753-4164

University Police (campus security)

Office: C17 Van Hoesen

Phone: 753-2111 (emergencies only)
753-2112 (non-emergencies)

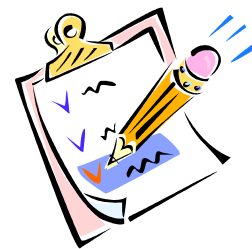
Counseling Center Office

Office: B44 Van Hoesen

Phone: 753-4728

CHECKLISTS: Preparing Yourself for Your Program at SUNY Cortland

To Do Pre-Departure



- Passport:** Obtain a new passport through your government's passport agency, or, if you already have a passport, check the expiration date to make sure that it will be valid for at least six months beyond your expected departure from the U.S.
- U.S. Visa:** Make an appointment to apply for a U.S. entry visa (F-1 or J-1) through the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. For information on how to make an appointment and a detailed list of what types of documentation to bring to your interview, please consult the web site for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will be applying. For contact information, visit <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. (Note for Canadian citizens: You do not need an entry visa; however, you must present the appropriate documents (passport, I-20 or DS-2019, SUNY Cortland acceptance letter, and copies of financial documents) when you cross through the port of entry into the U.S.)
- Arrange your travel and inform us of your plans:** Please keep in mind the following arrival dates when making your plans:
 - **Arrive for Fall 2011 Orientation: August 22 or 23, between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.**
 - **Arrive for Spring 2012 Orientation: January 11 or 12, between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.**

Please send your completed Flight and Arrival Information form, enclosed with this guide, to the International Programs Office as soon as you have arranged your travel to Cortland, no later than August 15 for the fall or January 1 for the spring, so we can arrange to pick you up at the airport or bus stop.

- Select your course preferences** (see Academic Matters section of this guide):
 - If you are an **exchange student**, you should have submitted your Course Preference Form with your exchange application; however, if any of your preferences change, please contact the International Programs Office as soon as possible so we can determine whether seats are still available.
 - If you are an **undergraduate, degree-seeking student**, you will meet with your academic advisor and build your class schedule during the Friday of Orientation Week.
 - If you are a **graduate student**, please contact your academic department for information on required and suggested courses.
- Log on to your myRedDragon account**, your portal for many administrative procedures and your personal record (please see the Getting Connected section in this guide).
- Arrange your housing.** Undergraduate matriculated and exchange students, this requires you to log on to your myRedDragon account and complete your on-campus Housing Preference form. Graduates, this requires you to arrange for off-campus housing. Please see the section on Housing for more information. Students living on-campus will be able to move

into the residence halls during orientation. Students living on-campus should arrange with your property managers to start your lease from the date of your arrival for orientation.

- ❑ **Pay your bill:** Log on to myRedDragon to review and pay your bill (see Your Student Account in this guide). If you do not wish to pay the \$15 Alumni Fee, you must request a waiver through myRedDragon.
- ❑ **Required medical forms:** Send your completed Health History forms to SUNY Cortland's Student Health Services Office. These forms are required to complete your registration at the College. Copies of the forms are enclosed with this guide. Please see the Health Concerns section for more information.

To Do after Arriving in Cortland

- ❑ **International Student Orientation:** We will pick you up if you arrive during the designated arrival dates noted above and you send us your Flight and Arrival form! During the first week before classes start, SUNY Cortland welcomes its new international students to campus for a series of activities designed to help you adapt to the campus, the community and the surrounding area. You will make new friends, learn more about your new life at Cortland and have fun! This orientation is required for all international students. No fee is required to participate.
- ❑ **Check into your residence hall or apartment:** During the designated orientation pick-up days, an Orientation team member will greet you at the airport or bus station to accompany you to your residence hall or off-campus apartment. We are requesting that you arrive between the hours of 9 AM and 9 PM. Please be sure to let us know your arrival plans by returning the enclosing Flight and Arrival information form. **Please notify our office if you are going to be arriving late by calling us at (607) 543-0774 or (607) 753-2209, so we can reschedule your pick-up!**
- ❑ **ID card at Neubig:** Shortly after you arrive, you will go to Neubig Hall where you will be issued an identification (I.D.) card with your photograph (we take the photo) attached. This will be the card you use for meals in the dining halls on campus and for various campus events.
- ❑ **Finalizing registration:** Before classes begin, we will go over your schedule of classes and make any last minute changes. During the first week of classes, you may add or drop classes, if spaces are available and your academic advisor (at Cortland, if you are pursuing a degree here; at your home institution, if you are an exchange student. Please consult with the Registrar's Office or your international student advisor at the International Programs Office if you have questions about how to add and drop classes.

VISAS & IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

Important note: The following information is an overview of visa and immigration procedures and policies. For more detailed information on student visas and immigration status, please contact the International Programs Office international student advisor. To learn the detailed procedures for applying for a visa, contact your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (<http://www.usembassy.gov/>).

Passports, Visas, and Port of Entry Procedures

In order to study in the United States, international students must be in a valid immigration status that allows full-time study. The most common type of student visas are the F-1 and J-1 non-immigrant visas. Most SUNY Cortland international students come to the U.S. in F-1 status. Below is information on the documentation required to enter the U.S. in a student visa status. *Please do not enter the U.S. on the B-2 Visa if you intend to pursue full-time study.*

Passport : Each student must obtain a passport from your government through the appropriate agency. This basic travel document serves as a formal permit to travel abroad, allows for re-entry into the home country, and serves as proof of identification.

Entry Visa: All students (except for Canadian citizens)¹ must apply at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for an F-1 or J-1 Student visa in order to enter the U.S. As soon as you receive your I-20 for DS-2019 from SUNY Cortland, you should schedule an appointment immediately at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy closest to your home. For information on how to schedule an appointment and specific procedures, please visit the web site for the consulate where you plan to apply (see <http://www.usembassy.gov/>). You may typically apply for your visa up to 120 days before the start date on your I-20 or DS-2019. At your visa appointment, you will be required to present your I-20 or DS-2019, current valid passport, SUNY Cortland admission letter, evidence of financial support for the period of time and amount indicated on the I-20 or DS-2019, proof that you have permanent residence outside the U.S., one or more passport-type photographs, a nonimmigrant visa application, and SEVIS fee receipt.

Students or scholars who are being processed through a SUNY Cortland Exchange Agreement or who are sponsored by an agency such as the Institute of International Education or the Agency for International Development, will receive a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status, form DS-2019. This form is used in the same way as the Form I-20 except that an Exchange Visitor visa type J-1 is issued.

SEVIS Fee: A SEVIS fee is generally a one-time fee (see exceptions on website www.fmjfee.com), and is required of those who are applying for an F-1 or J-1 visa based on an I-20 issued for “initial attendance” or a DS-2019 issued to “begin a new program.” The fee is \$200 for those seeking F-1

¹ **Canadian citizens** do not need to apply for entry visas; however, they must present their I-20, passport, and SEVIS fee receipt at the border in order to receive their I-94 indicating their valid F-1 or J-1 student status. Canadian Landed Immigrants, however, must obtain an entry visa.

status and \$180 for those seeking J-1 status. You must present proof of fee payment at your visa interview. **(This means that the SEVIS Fee must be paid before you can schedule your interview.)** Any dependents who are accompanying you will receive their own I-20 or DS-2019 for F-2 or J-2 visas. There is no SEVIS Fee for those seeking F-2 or J-2 status. Upon receipt of the F-1 or J-1 visa, you may complete your travel plans. Please see below for further information on the SEVIS fee.

Non-Immigrant Intent: When reviewing your F-1 or J-1 visa application or documents, the consular official or the port of entry inspector must make an assessment of your non-immigrant intent. Because these are non-immigrant visa classifications, they will want to feel confident that you have no plans to immigrate to the U.S. To demonstrate your non-immigrant intent, be prepared to provide your permanent residence address in your home country or country of permanent residence, and to explain your plans for what you will do after you obtain your degree from SUNY Cortland. If you happen to own property, hold bank accounts, or possess other significant assets in your home country, you could bring proof of those material ties to your home (such as property titles or bank statements in your own name). The officials would not necessarily consider plans such as continuing on to graduate school (if you are an undergraduate) or obtaining a year or less of practical professional experience after you graduate to indicate your immigrant intent; however, they would likely consider plans to stay in the U.S. for a longer period to work or marry to show that you intend to stay beyond the limits of your F-1 or J-1 visa. It is very important that you truthfully present your non-immigrant intent, because this is the primary reason prospective students are denied their student visas. Schools have little if any influence over U.S. consular or immigration decisions to deny a visa or entry, but please contact the International Programs Office as soon as possible if you have been denied a visa.

Security Clearances and Possibly Lengthy Visa Delays: Please note that when you apply for a visa, you may be subject to a security clearance based on your name, country of origin, or field of study, that can cause delays of weeks or even months in the issuance of your visa and your entry to the U.S.; therefore, it is important to apply for your visa as early as possible. If you are delayed by a security check, please contact the International Programs Office immediately. Again, schools cannot influence the process, but we will need to plan for your delayed arrival, including possibly deferring your start date to the next semester.

Travel Documents You Must Carry with You: During your trip to the U.S. you should carry your travel documents on you at all times (passport, I-20 or DS-2019, financial support documents), as you will be required to present them at the U.S. port of entry. Please do not pack them in your checked baggage! U.S. immigration regulations regarding the use of visa documents to enter the country are very strict; for example, you must report to the school for which the visa was issued.

I-94 Arrival/Departure Card: You will receive a white I-94 card on the airplane or ship, or at the port of entry if entering the U.S. by land. This card is very important, because it will serve as your record of valid entry into the U.S. You must retain this card; do not throw it away. When completing your I-94 card, please be sure to write your name exactly as it is noted on your passport. If entering by land: A form I-94 card will be formally issued to you at the cost of six dollars (\$6) in U.S. currency. We strongly recommend that you have the \$6 in cash because the I-94 must be issued before you reach the foreign exchange window, if you are entering the U.S. by land.

Port of Entry Procedures: Upon entering the U.S., you will pass through U.S. Immigration and Customs. At this point, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will review your passport, visa, and other documents and take a photo of your index finger and face. You should make sure to carry

your documents with you and never store them in your checked baggage. Your Form I-20 or DS-2019 and I-94 card will be stamped with a date of arrival by the Port of Entry Inspector. *There is no visa required for Citizens of Canada; however, Canadians must present their I-20 or DS-2019 and proof of SEVIS Fee payment together with passport, at the Port of Entry.*

Canadian Citizens: Citizens of Canada are not required to obtain an entry visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate; however, as with all international students, Canadians must present their I-20 or DS-2019 form and SEVIS fee receipt, and obtain an I-94 card when entering the United States in order to obtain valid F-1 or J-1 Student status. If you do not do this, you will be admitted in tourist status and will not be eligible to study. Each year several Canadian students neglect to present the necessary documents and after arriving in Cortland find that they must return to the border to present their I-20 or DS-2019 and other documents in order to return in a valid student status. Canadian landed immigrants must obtain an F-1 or J-1 visa.

If you are already present in the U.S. in another visa status: Students already present in the U.S. in another visa status may be eligible to study or change to F-1 or J-1 status. Examples include J-2, H-4, and L-2. If you are in a status does not allow study, such as F-2 or B-2, then you may not study until USCIS approves your change of status application. Please note that the USCIS generally denies applications for change of status from B-2 to F-1 or J-1. Please contact the International Programs Office if you have questions about your eligibility to study or change status. If you need or wish to change status, we can advise you on the process.

If you are currently in the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status: If you will be transferring from another school, have recently graduated or will soon graduate from a U.S. high school or higher education institution, or are currently on a period of post-completion F-1 Optional Practical Training or J-1 Academic Training, you may be eligible to have your F-1 or J-1 record transferred in SEVIS. This would allow you to remain in the U.S. during the break in between programs, if you do not wish to leave, and use your current, unexpired F-1 or J-1 visa. Please contact your current school's international student advisor or the International Programs Office to determine if you are eligible for a SEVIS transfer and if so, how to request a SEVIS transfer. If wish to have your SEVIS record transferred and are eligible, please do not use an I-20 issued by the SUNY Cortland for "initial attendance" or a DS-2019 issued by SUNY Cortland to "begin a new program"; rather, SUNY Cortland will issue you a new form that notes your SEVIS transfer.

Customs: After passing through Immigration, you will collect your baggage and then go through Customs, where a Customs Inspector will ask you to declare what you have brought into the country. You should present the completed Customs Declaration Form that you received on the plane before disembarkation. You will not have to pay duty/tax on items you brought in for personal use or minor gifts (up to \$100 total per person). If you are carrying more than \$10,000 in currency, traveler's checks or money order, you should inform the Customs Officer. While there is no limit imposed, you may have to fill out some forms. Agricultural and unsealed food products are forbidden, as are clothing made from the skin of endangered animals, lottery tickets, narcotics and dangerous drugs, obscene articles and publications, seditious and treasonable materials, hazardous articles (i.e. fireworks, dangerous toys, toxic or poisonous substances), and switchblade knives. Please be careful to be honest with Customs as the penalties for concealment of declarable items can be severe.

B-1/B-2 Visitor Visas or Visa Waiver for Business/Pleasure: Please do **not** come to the United States on a B-1/B-2 Visitor visa or on the Visa Waiver Program if you intend to stay in order to

study at this college. Changing from a B to F-1 visa is practically impossible, and it is not at all possible to change status if you have entered on the Visa Waiver Program. More likely, you would have to return to your home country to obtain an F-1 Student visa and then re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status.

Transit Visas: A student planning to visit other countries en route to the United States should inquire about the procedures to be followed at the appropriate consulate in his/her home country. It may be necessary to apply for a Visitor or Tourist Visa for each different country. This should be done several weeks or months before departure.

J visa holders who enter the U.S. in the categories of Short-term Scholar, Professor, Researcher or Specialist are eligible to receive payment from the organization listed on Form DS-2019 as the source of funds and/or the Designated Program Sponsor for the period of validity as stated on the DS-2019 form. Under *limited* circumstances, they may receive compensation from other institutions provided prior written authorization from the Responsible Office (RO) of their Designated Program has been secured. In this case, Form DS-2019 authorizes the employment and an EAD is not required.

Maintaining Your F-1 or J-1 Status

As an F-1 or J-1 student, you must follow the following rules below to make sure you maintain your lawful status in the United States:

1. **Full-time enrolment required:** You must maintain your full-time enrollment each semester, meaning you must take at least 12 credits if you are an undergraduate or 9 credits if you are a graduate student. In some cases, you may drop below full-time, if eligible, but only after you receive proper authorization from the international advisor at the International Programs Office. If you drop below full time without this authorization, you will be out of lawful status. Please note that the regulations only allow you to count up to one three-credit on-line course and count it towards your 12- or 9-credit minimum.
2. **Update your local address:** If you move, you are required to report your updated address to the International Programs Office within 10 days of moving so we can update your record in SEVIS.
3. **Never Work Off-Campus without Prior Authorization:** If you are interested in working, interning, doing a class observation, or even volunteering off-campus, please talk with the international student advisor at the International Programs Office first about whether you are eligible for off-campus work authorization, and if so, how to apply. Please plan ahead, because depending on what type of work authorization you need, the process can take several weeks or months!
4. **On-Campus Work Allowed up to 20 Hours per Week:** All students in F-1 and J-1 are eligible to work for up to 20 hours per week during the semester, inclusive of all on-campus jobs. It is your responsibility to make sure that you do not work more than that, to avoid falling out of status. If you find an on-campus job, but do not yet have a Social Security Number, please contact the International Programs Office for instructions on how to apply for one. J-1 students must obtain a work authorization letter from their sponsor.

5. **Documents Required for Travel:** If you are planning to leave the U.S. (even if it's just to visit Canada for a day!) be sure to contact the international student advisor first. You may need a travel authorization signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 form. More important, you may need a tourist visa to enter the other country. We must also be sure that you are prepared with the proper documentation to re-enter the U.S.
6. **Report Changes to Your Program:** If you are changing your major; transferring to a different school; requesting employment authorization; or are requesting an extension of any kind, you must advise one of the Designated School Officials or Responsible Officers at the International Programs Office, who are the only individuals on campus authorized by the government and the College to sign immigration-related documents. If someone other than one of the persons whose names appear below should sign your immigration documentation that documentation becomes fraudulent and both the student and the person signing will become legally responsible. Both the student and the person signing could be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Penalties could include fines, imprisonment, and/or immediate deportation of the international visitor. Your Principal Designated School Official is Mary Schlarb (mary.schlarb@cortland.edu), Assistant Director and International Student & Scholar Advisor (PDSO); 16 Miller, 607-753-2209.

Employment

F-1 visa holders, while maintaining valid F-1 status, may be employed on the campus of the school they are authorized to attend for a maximum of 20 hours per week while classes are in session. Part-time, on-campus employment is authorized by the school, and prior U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) approval is not needed. During school vacations, students may work on campus for a maximum of 40 hours per week if otherwise eligible and intending to enroll for the next term.

While enrolled, F-1 visa holders may participate in off campus employment directly related to their field of study. This is called *practical training* and must be recommended by the Designated School Official (DSO) on Form I-20. There are two types of practical training, Curricular Practical Training and Optional Practical Training. Students must be enrolled in a full course of study for one uninterrupted academic year before they become eligible for practical training.

- *Optional Practical Training (OPT)* - This consists of employment during or after completion of studies. The total period of employment may not exceed 12 months. OPT requires the recommendation of the DSO *and* approval by USCIS. An EAD (an employment authorization document) is also required.
- *Curricular Practical Training (CPT)* - This is employment required for completion of the student's degree program. It requires the approval of the DSO on form *I-20 ID*. An EAD is not required for CPT and employment authorization is job specific.

F-2 dependents of F-1 visa holders are not permitted to work in the U.S. under any circumstances.

If you entered the U.S. in **J visa status**, you are participating in the official Exchange Visitors Program which is administered through the United States State Department. There are several categories of J visas: Student, Scholar, Short-term Scholar, Professor, Researcher, Specialist and others.

J-1 students maintaining full-time status may engage in on-campus employment for a maximum of 20 hours per week with prior written authorization from the campus' Responsible Officer (RO). They may work off campus *under limited circumstances* provided they have obtained prior written authorization from the RO. J-1 visa holders may be granted off-campus employment by their sponsoring agency only if there is an exceptional circumstance adversely affecting the student since the time of granting the visa (e.g. drastic change in financial support because of unexpected events, etc.). Employment does not require additional permission from USCIS or an EAD. The J-1 student is eligible for 18 months of academic training following completion of his/her program. Dependents of J-1 visitors are issued J-2, J-3, etc. visas.

Payment of the SEVIS Fee

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal SEVIS Fee took effect on September 1, 2004. The fee of \$200.00 for F-1 students or \$180 for J-1 Visiting Scholars is generally a one-time fee (see exceptions, below) and is required of those who are applying for an F-1, J-1 or M-1 visa based on an I-20 issued for "initial attendance" or a DS-2019 issued to "begin a new program."

Proof of fee payment must be presented at the visa interview.

Who needs to pay the new Federal SEVIS fee

- You must pay the SEVIS fee if you are seeking an *initial F-1 or J-1 visa* from an embassy or consulate abroad for initial attendance or initial participation in an exchange visitor program.
- You must pay the SEVIS fee if *you have previously been enrolled at a U.S. school*, but you are no longer enrolled and you have been outside the United States for more than five months, *even if you have an unexpired F-1 visa in your passport*.
- You must pay the SEVIS Fee if you are a *Canadian citizen*, and are therefore exempt from the U.S. visa requirement, before you can enter the United States.
- You must pay the SEVIS fee if you are already in the United States prior to submitting a *change of non-immigrant status application to F-1 or J-1*.
- You do **NOT** need to pay the SEVIS fee if *item 3 on your Cortland I-20 reads "transfer pending from <name of school>"*, even if you will be applying for a new F-1 visa.
- Applicants for *F-2 or J-2 dependent visas* are **NOT** required to pay the SEVIS fee.

SEVIS Fee Rules

The SEVIS fee must be processed *at least three business days* before the visa interview, unless you have a printed receipt from an Internet payment.

The SEVIS fee **cannot** be paid at the embassy or consulate, or at the U.S. Border.

A visa will not be issued unless the visa officer can verify that the SEVIS fee payment has been made. However, you may schedule your visa interview prior to paying the SEVIS fee.

The SEVIS fee is not refundable. If your visa application is denied, and you decide to re-apply for the same type of visa at a later date, you will not be asked to make a second SEVIS fee payment as long as your visa application is made within 12 months of the initial denial.

How to Pay the SEVIS Fee

Currently, there are two payment methods:

- payment in U.S. dollars by credit card over the Internet, OR
- payment in U.S. dollars by check, money order or bank draft, drawn on a U.S. bank, and mailed to an address in the United States.

Payment of the SEVIS fee may be made by you or by any other individual, either in the United States or abroad, including family or friends. However, anyone paying the fee on your behalf will need to have a copy of your I-20 or DS-2019, or a completed copy of Form I-901.

Procedure for Paying the SEVIS Fee

- a. Obtain form I-20 from SUNY Cortland or DS-2019 from SUNY Buffalo
- b. Access form I-901 on the internet at <http://www.fmjfee.com> OR use the form I-901 included with your I-20 or DS-2019
- c. Complete form I-901, answering all questions (you must have an I-20 from SUNY Cortland or DS-2019 from SUNY Buffalo in order to complete form I-901). Be sure that you enter your personal information ***exactly*** as it appears on the I-20 or DS-2019
- d. Pay the \$100 SEVIS fee according to one of the methods described below.

Note: to complete form I-901, you must enter the Cortland School Code of BUF(214F)00274000 if you have been sent an I-20, OR the Buffalo Program Number of P104839 if you have been sent a DS-2019. You must also enter your SEVIS ID number, which is printed at the top right of the I-20 or DS-2019, above the bar code. It starts with the letter "N."

Paying on the Internet

Once you have received your I-20 or DS-2019, you can make the fee payment by submitting form I-901 on-line using a credit card. The web address is <http://www.fmjfee.com>

MasterCard, Visa, or American Express debit or credit cards are accepted. It does not matter if the card was issued in the United States or overseas. Follow the on-line instructions, include the required credit card information, and print out the payment screen to verify your payment. The printed receipt should be presented at the visa interview or at the U.S. port of entry as proof of payment. ***Thus, when paying the fee on the Internet, it is essential that your printer be ready before starting the payment process. Do not exit the receipt page until you have successfully printed the receipt. You will not be able to return to the receipt page.***

Paying by Mail

To pay by mail, you must download and print form I-901 from <http://www.fmjfee.com> or use the paper copy provided with your I-20 or DS-2019, fill out the form and mail it with your payment to the address below.

Your payment must be in U.S. dollars by check, money order or bank draft, drawn on a U.S. bank. Your check, bank draft or money order should be made payable to: "I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee."

Also, be sure to print your name and SEVIS ID number in the lower left-hand corner of the check, money order or bank draft.

The need for a check, bank draft or money order in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank does not mean that only a U.S. bank can issue the document. Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank, because they are chartered in the United States, or because they are foreign subsidiaries of a U.S. bank, or because they have arrangements with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank.

<p>Mail the payment and form I-901 to:</p> <p>I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Visa Processing Fee P.O. Box 970020 St. Louis, MO 63197-0020 USA</p>	<p>To send by courier, use the following address:</p> <p>I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee 1005 Convention Plaza St. Louis, MO 63101 United States Phone Number: 1-314-418-8833 (United States Country Code 011)</p>
--	---

Once the form and fee are processed, a paper receipt will be mailed to you. Return courier service is available for an additional \$30.

Payment by mail is not the recommended process for fee payment from abroad, as it can take as long as four weeks from the day you mail in the fee to the day that you receive

the required receipt in the mail if you are applying from outside the United States, unless you pay for courier service.

Showing Proof of SEVIS Fee Payment at the Visa Interview and/or the U.S. Port of Entry

You must be able to prove that the fee has been paid when you appear for your visa interview, and when you enter the United States. This is done by presenting a printed receipt, either from the Internet if you made an on-line payment, or a mailed receipt if you paid by mail.

Visa officers and U.S. port-of entry inspectors should be able to verify SEVIS fee payment electronically three business days after payment is processed, but in case of problems, having a printed receipt is the best evidence of fee payment. If you lose or did not receive a receipt for fee payment, the U.S. government does retain an electronic record that the fee has been paid.

A visa will not be issued unless verification of the SEVIS fee payment can be made.

For detailed information on the SEVIS fee payment process and for a list of frequently asked questions, visit: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm>

Tips for Your Visa Interview

1. **TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY.** Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your home town, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter which can guarantee visa issuance. If you have applied for the U.S. Green Card Lottery, you may be asked if you are intending to immigrate. A simple answer would be that you applied for the lottery since it was available but not with a specific intent to immigrate. If you overstayed your authorized stay in the U.S. previously, be prepared to explain what happened clearly and concisely, with documentation if available.
2. **ENGLISH.** Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do NOT prepare speeches! If you are coming to the United States solely to study intensive English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.

3. **SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.** Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor applying for a high school program and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.
4. **KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS.** If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.
5. **BE BRIEF.** Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.
6. **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION.** It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.
7. **NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL.** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the US as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the U.S.
8. **EMPLOYMENT.** Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S. Volunteer work and attending school part-time are permitted activities.
9. **DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME.** If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support themselves, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.

10. **MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.** Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

This document taken from: NAFSA would like to credit Gerald A. Wunsch, Esq., 1997, then a member of the Consular Issues Working Group, and a former U.S. Consular Officer in Mexico, Suriname, and the Netherlands, and Martha Wailes of Indiana University for their contributions to this document. NAFSA also appreciates the input of the U.S. Department of State.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION



Dollar Exchange Regulations

The U.S. Government does not restrict the amount of foreign currency which may be brought in or taken out of the country.

However, many governments have restrictions regarding the exchange of their currency into U.S. dollars. Many countries restrict the amount of money that may be taken out of the country, and some require a letter from the college in the U.S. certifying the student's expected arrival and enrollment dates before releasing funds. If this is the case, present your I-20 or DS-2019 Form or contact the International Programs Office requesting a letter to certify expenses for the State University College at Cortland.

Delays in arrival of funds from abroad often occur and can be very inconvenient. It is recommended that each student carefully read the section on expenses in this booklet and be prepared to meet his/her financial obligations at the necessary times.

Carrying Money

It is often advantageous to exchange currency for U.S. dollars prior to departure from one's home country. However, no traveler should carry large amounts of currency or other valuables. There is too much danger of loss or theft.

We recommend that you purchase money orders, traveler's checks, or other forms of currency, the value of which can be restored in case of loss. Make these forms of currency payable to you, not to the college, in U.S. dollars.

It is also advisable while traveling to carry a small amount of U.S. currency on your person. At least ten to fifty dollars should be carried in currency and one or two dollars in coins, or "change." The coins are useful for telephones, baggage lockers, bus fares, tips to porters, etc. U.S. paper money is most commonly found in the following denominations: \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills; coins are 1 cent (penny, \$.01), 5 cents (nickel, \$.05), 10 cents (dime, \$.10), 25 cents (quarter, \$.25) and 50 cents (half dollar, \$.50).

Mail, Luggage and Baggage

All public transportation allows some luggage to be transported with extra charge. On scheduled international flights of regular airlines, each traveler is generally allowed 44 pounds (20 kilograms) of free baggage in Economy Class and 66 pounds (30 kilograms) in First class (subject to change). Since the charge for overweight baggage is extremely high, other arrangements should be made to send extra luggage. Shipping extra luggage can be very complicated and expensive. Be sure to call the carrier directly for updated costs and restrictions.

A simple and less expensive alternative is to arrange for parents or friends to send small packages by surface mail after obtaining the student's address. A package marked "Gift" whose contents are valued at no more than \$25.00 may enter the U.S. duty free. Any duty that may be charged on a mailed package is collected by the post office in the campus community. The U.S. Consul or a travel agent can provide further information and advice on these matters. Note: Please do not send any form of baggage to the International Programs Office.

ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES

Airport/Bus Station Pick-Up

Each student should return the enclosed *Flight and Arrival Information Form* to us before departure. This form notifies us how you plan to travel to Central New York, the date and time of your arrival, and any other information or problems that might be useful for us to know in preparing for your arrival. Please contact as soon as possible if your plans change!



Port of Entry Immigration and Customs Procedures

Upon arrival in the United States each person must pass through Immigration and Customs. The U.S. Immigration Officer checks for valid passport and visas. At this time, a person surrenders his/her I-20 or DS-2019 Form to the Immigration Officer who issues him/her an I-94 Form (arrival and departure record). The date of entry and, *in most cases*, the notation *D/S* (Duration of Status) will both be recorded on the I-94 form, which **must be kept in the passport at all times!** A valid visa is needed only when entering the United States.

Prior to arriving at the port of entry, each traveler is handed a U.S. Customs Declaration. To prepare for the customs inspection in advance, one may obtain a pamphlet entitled "U.S. Customs Hints," free of charge, from a U.S. Embassy. Only personal and/or household items owned at least one year prior to entry may be imported without being subject to import duties. Students are generally allowed to import equipment necessary for study as well as \$100.00USD worth of gifts. There is a high duty on microscopes, medical, dental and other scientific instruments manufactured outside the United States unless it can be proven that these items are for the personal use of the individual and are essential for the course of study to be undertaken. Illegal items include narcotics and narcotic derivatives. To prevent transmission of diseases which could affect agricultural products grown in the United States, it is forbidden to bring in agricultural products, such as plants, fruits, vegetables, and meats.



If, for any reason, your travel documents are not in order, SUNY Cortland students should notify the International Programs Offices, telephone (607) 753-2209 and fax (607) 753-5989.

Staying in the Port of Entry City

If time and money permit, staying in the port of entry city, or any major city, for several days is a pleasant way to begin an international sojourn. Any stay, however, is likely to be very expensive unless it is carefully planned in advance. Specific information is available from travel books which provide detailed information on expenses, places to stay and eat, sightseeing and transportation for virtually any major American city.

In New York City, the Council on International Educational Exchange recommends Jazz on the Park Youth Hostel (36 West 106th Street at Central Park West, New York, New York 10025). You can contact them by phone at 212-932-1700 or through their website (www.jazzonthepark.com). Youth hostel information can be accessed from various web sites, including *hostelling International* (<http://www.hiayh.org/>).

Estimating travel expenses is a prerequisite for enjoying a visit. Students planning on spending several days en route from their port of entry should plan on spending more than five hundred dollars. As a general rule, expect high prices upon arrival; even then, the actual cost may be shocking.

Getting to Cortland

[TIP: Get to New York as early in the day as you can!]

Most international students coming to Cortland fly first into New York City or Newark, both of which are about 225 (or 360 km) from Cortland. Both airports are in the New York City Metropolitan area. If you wish, you can book flights all the way to Syracuse or Ithaca, but you will still have to disembark at your initial port of entry in order to clear U.S. Immigration and Customs, and transfer your baggage, before catching your connecting flight to Syracuse or Ithaca.



Getting to Cortland by airplane from New York City (JFK) or Newark Airport (EWR)

Your destination is Syracuse Airport or Ithaca Airport, which are each about 30 miles (50 km) from Cortland. We advise you not to get into Syracuse or Ithaca too late. This is an important consideration when booking your tickets to the U.S. Keep in mind that bus service from the airports in Syracuse or Ithaca to Cortland is infrequent and may require a time-consuming transfer in the city centre. It is much easier to reserve a seat with *Ithaca Airport Limousine Service* (see information on *Ithaca Limousine* in your application materials). It is advisable to make a reservation with the company as soon as possible and certainly before you arrive in the United States. Be sure to get a firm price and exact instructions regarding where and when to meet the limousine driver upon your arrival at the airport.

If you are traveling in a group, it may be worthwhile to take a taxi from Syracuse or Ithaca to SUNY Cortland, but be sure to get a firm price before getting into the cab. It will probably range between \$60.00 and \$100.00.

If you do not want to fly from the New York area to Cortland, you can get to Cortland directly by bus. Bus transport from the New York City area to Cortland is the least expensive, but takes the longest amount of time and may require several connections.

To Cortland by *BUS* from New York City or Newark airports:

Take the bus [Carey "limo"] from the airport to the Port Authority Bus Terminal at 42nd street and 8th Avenue in Manhattan (New York City). Ask for a bus going to Cortland. The last bus leaves New York City at about 8:30 p.m. and arrives in Cortland at approximately 2:30 A.M. (*Schedules subject to change - be sure to reconfirm*). For up to date bus fare and schedule information, contact Greyhound Bus Lines by phone at 1-800-231-2222 or access their website: www.greyhound.com.

Taxi Services in Cortland:

American Taxi 753-3030

Express Taxi 758-8294

L&M City Taxi 753-1133

Tower Taxi 753-1200

BE FOREWARNED: DO NOT TAKE A TAXI FROM THE NEW YORK CITY/NEWARK AREA TO CORTLAND. SUCH A TRIP WOULD COST SEVERAL HUNDRED DOLLARS!!!

Flight and Arrival Information Forms: Fill Out Yours for Airport/Bus Station Pick-Up!

We will pick you up from the Syracuse or Ithaca Airport or Cortland bus station if you arrive on one of the two designated orientation pick-up days (August 22 or 23 for Fall 2011 or January 11 or 12 for Spring 2012). Please complete the enclosed Flight and Arrival Information Form by August 1 for Fall 2011 or by January 1 for Spring 2012.

AIRLINE LIMO SCHEDULE AND RATES

Ithaca Airline Limousine
www.ithacaairlinelimo.org

RESERVATIONS CAN ONLY BE MADE BY CALLING ITHACA AIRLINE LIMOUSINE AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE.

1-800-273-9197 (in U.S.)

607-273-3030

	To or From Syracuse Airport or Amtrak Station	
Trip #	From Syracuse	To Syracuse
1	5:00 a.m. Except Sun.	3:30 a.m. Except Sun.
2	10:30 a.m.	7:00 a.m.
3	1:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m.
4	3:30 p.m.	12 noon
5	5:30 p.m.	2:00 p.m.
6	8:00 p.m.	3:45 p.m.
7	10:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.
8	1:00 AM Except Sat.	9:00 p.m. Except Sat.

48 HOUR ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED
You can only pay by credit card (Visa or Mastercard). Cash, checks, American Express, Discover, and other cards will not be accepted.

To or From	Ithaca or Syracuse	\$80.00 one way \$110.00 round trip
To or From	Cortland	\$50.00 one way \$70.00 round trip

** Ithaca Limo uses vans, not limos to transport clients.*

ABOUT THE CORTLAND AREA

Geography

We are in the geographical center of New York State, in what is generally known as "upstate" New York. Specifically, we are in the Finger Lakes region, the most beautiful part of the State. Dairy farming is the main industry in our county and in many of the nearby counties. Rolling hills, many with cows grazing on them; small towns and cities; and patches of forest characterize our area. Most visitors (and permanent residents as well!) remark how beautiful the area is.



What's nearby

About a 30-minute drive from Cortland is the city of Ithaca, the home of Cornell University and Ithaca College. The city is very popular with college students and has a cosmopolitan energy. Syracuse, also about a 30 minute drive, is a typical American city; the major attractions are the shopping malls, local theatre, and Syracuse University sports events. There are several New York State parks nearby, and these provide excellent opportunities for non-strenuous hikes in very inviting, natural settings.

What's a little farther away, but close enough...

Boston, Philadelphia, New York City, Washington, D.C., Canada. While at Cortland, you might want to visit Boston, a fairly trendy city which is rich in heritage from the early development of our nation. It is a seven-hour drive from Cortland. New York City is about a five-hour drive and has many, many interesting sights and things for a tourist to do. The District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.), the nation's capital, is a seven-hour drive (one can also take a train or bus) from Cortland. In a few days there, one can visit many historical monuments and see major museum attractions. Trips to Canada may also be arranged. Northwest from Cortland is the Canadian city of Toronto, and to the northeast is Montreal. Toronto is about four hours driving time away; Montreal is about 5 hours from Cortland. Montreal has a distinct European flavor; the official language is French (but people will understand you in English). If you are going to Toronto, Niagara Falls would be on the way, and you would probably want to stop for the view and perhaps the boat trip at the bottom of the falls. ***Check with the International Programs Office to see if you need a visa and to have your DS-2019 or I-20 form signed by an international student advisor before departure.***



Getting to All of These Places

The only public transportation we have within the city of Cortland is a minimal-service bus line and taxi service. You can travel to points out of Cortland city limits by starting off at our local bus terminal. In the past, some students have pooled their money and have rented a car from a rental service in Cortland. The Global Ambassadors (a student run club) has funds that will help reduce travel expenses for organized trips. And, of course, you will get to know people, some of whom will be glad to take you with them as they do a little traveling.

Getting around Cortland

Walk. Be sure to have good, comfortable walking shoes. For students here during the spring semester, boots (for the snow) would be very helpful or, we should say, necessary. Our limited bus service will get you around the city, but it is best to make friends with someone who has a car.

Bicycles: The Community Bike Project is an alternative transportation service on SUNY Cortland's campus. The Community Bike Project takes donated bikes, fixes them up and places them around campus for any campus community member to use. They are all painted the same distinctive yellow and have a sign on them listing guidelines for use. The bikes are not locked, and during the day you can ride a bike to where you need to go on campus. The bikes are available for use during the daylight hours on weekdays.

Weather



Fall Semester- You will arrive in August with daytime temperatures quite warm at 80°F (26°Celsius), evenings are generally quite pleasant. The fall term ends in December with daytime temperatures at a high of the mid 30's Fahrenheit. Snow starts to fall in November, but the heavy snows come in January-February. It is not unusual to get over 100 inches of snow each season. Spring Semester- The weather in January is very cold with snow. Temperatures have been known to go below 0° Fahrenheit (-17° Celsius). The snow and cold conditions last until April, so you will need a very warm coat (preferably made of down, which are goose feathers, or some other insulating material). You will also need a hat, gloves and at least ankle high waterproof boots, as 90% of your body heat is lost through your extremities (head, hands and feet). When the semester ends in mid- May the weather will be much warmer with the average high temperature of 68°F.

What's there to do in Cortland?

There is something interesting going on at the college every day. There might be a play, a movie, public lecture, a musical, sports event, or a program presented by the residence halls. In the city itself, we have a multi-screen movie theatre, providing six first-run films. We have several restaurants offering varied menus, and the downtown stores will have most items you will want or need. If you ski, one of the best ski areas in the Northeast is just 15 minutes away! Of course at the College we have facilities for just about every sport.

Getting Involved

Your experience at Cortland will be all the richer if you get involved in campus activities, or even extend yourself beyond the campus. There are more than 80 organizations; so chances are that there is one you would like. Previous students from other countries have enjoyed Global Ambassadors, the Gospel Choir, as well as the *Neovox* (an online magazine run by students from around the globe (<http://neo-vox.org/>), the college newspaper and radio or television station. Getting involved in residence hall governance and programming, and giving talks to students in the local schools are other ways to become involved. Our local school teachers love to have international visitors talk to students about their homeland. It would be helpful to bring family photographs, regional recipes, and tourist information from home to share with other students during social gatherings.

HOUSING

Housing Options for Undergraduates



Undergraduates and On-Campus Housing

According to current exchange agreements, exchange students will live on campus. If you are a matriculated undergraduate student, SUNY policy requires you to live on campus for the first year. New international undergraduate students have three on-campus housing options; Whitaker, Fitzgerald, and West Campus. Part of your rich experience will be living with American students in one of the residence halls. Each hall has a television lounge and a study lounge.

Laundry

There are washing machines and dryers in each of the residence halls. You will need to deposit money on your SUNY Cortland student identification card to operate these machines. There are places nearby where you can also get items dry cleaned.

Alcohol

Possession of alcohol (beer, wine, whiskey, etc.) by persons under age 21 is against the law in New York. If you are under 21, and are found drinking alcoholic beverages on campus, you will be reported to Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. Off campus, you may be arrested or given a citation. If you are under age 21, you will not be allowed to consume alcohol in your room. If you are over 21, you may be found in violation of the judicial code if you drink in the presence of people under age 21.

Smoking

The State University of New York College at Cortland is a totally smoke-free work environment. Smoking is strictly prohibited in all campus buildings including residence halls.

This means that no one is permitted to smoke anywhere within the residence halls, immediately outside, or in the entranceways to the building, and within 20 feet of the residence halls.

HOUSING PREFERENCE PROCEDURE

All new undergraduate students need to fill out a Housing Preference Web Form.

Important: Students who do not complete this online form will not get housed.

This form is available via myRedDragon. To access the form--

- Log into myRedDragon - see "myRedDragon Access Instructions"
- Go to "Student On-line" - this is a tab located at the top of the myRedDragon page.
- **Go to the Residence Life and Housing** section- located on the right hand side
- In this section you will find a link to the "New Student Housing Preference Form"

The Housing Preference Form asks general questions regarding living habits such as cleanliness, noise level, guests and music preferences in order to attempt to match students on these characteristics. In addition, students can let us know if there are any special-interest housing

options they are interested in, such as 24-hour quiet floors, transfer floors, wellness floors and Over 21 floors. Students are also asked if they are willing to pay the extra charge to live in a designed single room.

All new students are assigned to housing based on an automated computerized system that takes their preferences into account as it matches students. Housing assignments are based upon a combination of acceptance date, student housing preferences, and housing availability.

Please refer to the International Student Housing Brochure for housing options.

Internet and Phone Service in the Residence Halls

Internet Service

SUNY Cortland has partnered with Apogee to provide your internet service in your dorm room (ResNet). All residence halls will have reliable, high-speed access to the Internet with 24/7 customer support.

You will receive the Basic Plan at no additional charge, which will provide you with a 2 Mbps of dedicated wired download speed. This plan is satisfactory for the majority of users. Optional upgraded services with faster speeds are available for an additional fee.

You have the option to sign up for an Apogee account at this time or wait until you arrive on campus. It is recommended that you wait until you arrive on campus so that our orientation staff can assist you, if needed.

To sign up for your Apogee account:

- Go to the Apogee web site <http://www.apogeenet.net/myresnet/>
 - Click on the "Get Started" button and follow the instructions to make your selections
 - Upon completion of the sign up process, you will be assigned an Apogee username and password. Keep this information confidential, do not share it with anyone, and make sure you bring it when you come in the fall.
- NOTE: When setting up your account, it will ask for your home address with zip code. Please enter your SUNY Cortland campus address in this field.

For more information, please go to <http://www.cortland.edu/resnet/>

Phone Options

Your options for telephone service are: personally owned cell phone (most students- both international and domestic choose this option), signing up with Apogee to take advantage of their service, or using any other broadband voice service. For more information about Apogee's phone option go to: http://www.apogeenet.net/services/service_voice.jsp.

Our orientation staff can assist you once you arrive with purchasing a cell phone or signing up with any other phone service.

Graduate Student Housing Options

SUNY Cortland does not provide graduate students with on-campus housing. Students living off-campus make their own living arrangements, which can be challenging for international students coming from abroad.

A few words of advice: If you will not have a car to drive to campus, you should look for housing that is within walking distance. If you do not want to buy furniture, you should also seek out housing that is furnished. Cortland is known for its very cold and lengthy winters and heat and electric bills can be costly. Please keep this in mind when renting an apartment where utilities are not included. Please be cautious when reading leases and housing agreements. Remember that once you sign a lease, you are liable for all costs under US laws, whether or not you actually live in the apartment.

The Campus Activities and Corey Union Offices provide a list of available inspected properties to students as a service to help make off-campus living safer and a little bit easier. All the properties contained in this housing list have been inspected by a New York State code enforcement inspection agency and found to be in compliance with local and state ordinances as they pertain to multiple residencies. **Please note that SUNY Cortland does not inspect, endorse or approve any of these properties**

To access the SUNY Cortland list go to: <http://www.cortland.edu/coreyunion/housing.html>
Resources available on-line and in hard copy at Office of Campus Activities in Corey Union:

Off Campus Living Booklet: <http://www.cortland.edu/coreyunion/Off-Campus%20Living.pdf>

Tenant's Rights Guide, issued by the NYS Attorney General's Office:
http://www.oag.state.ny.us/bureaus/real_estate_finance/pdfs/tenants_rights_guide.pdf

A Guide to Small Claims in The NYS City, Town and Village Courts Issued by the NYS Unified Court System: <http://www.colonie.org/justice/justice.pdf>

Fair Housing Is For Everyone, issued by the City of Cortland's Office of Community Development

Also available for students is a copy of the 2008 Housing Evaluation booklet that was compiled by NYPIRG and the Student Government Association. Please request a copy of this booklet from the Campus Activities Office.

You may also check the following web sites (again, SUNY Cortland does not inspect or endorse these properties):

www.cortlandapartments.com

www.cortlandstandard.net (CHECK THE CLASSIFIED - RENTAL SECTION)

www.mycollegesuites.com -

<http://studenthousingincortland.com/index.html>

<http://www.cornerstoneproperties-cortland.com/>-

FOOD ON CAMPUS: Dining Halls and Meal Plans

Dining Halls

There are three main dining halls on campus, and there are three snack-food areas where you can use your student identification card to pay for your meals. There is a set amount of money deposited in your meal fund, and each time that you make a food purchase using your card, the cost is deducted from your account.

You can learn more about meal plans at www.cortland.edu by selecting the Quick Link *Dining Services* and then *Meal Plans*. We will also explain more about the food plan during orientation. Campus dining services will be limited or maybe even non-existent on breaks until shortly before classes start, so you should be prepared to dine in some of the numerous local restaurants or fast food establishments during breaks if you elect to stay on campus.

Meal Plans

www.cortlandasc.com

Your meal plan: Just the ticket to a good meal or snack while on campus.

Whether you live on campus, over at West Campus, or in your own apartment, eating on campus with a meal plan is less expensive and more convenient.

A few notes:

If you live in a campus dorm, you must purchase a meal plan.

If you live off campus or at West Campus, a meal plan is optional but a good idea.

A meal plan is for your personal use only.

On-Campus Meal Plans

Is that a Dragon roaring in your stomach...or are you just hungry?

Keep the hunger monster at bay with an on-campus meal plan that suits your appetite and budget.

Choosing the right one isn't as difficult as it may look. Just think of your meal plan in three parts:

Meals per week – count is reset weekly, i.e. unused meals don't carry over from week to week.

Dragon Dollars -- for extra items to supplement your meals; these roll over from the fall to the spring semester.

Guest Passes – for sharing meals with visitors (at Neubig dining center only), for friends who forget their IDs, or for yourself when you've used up your weekly meal allotment. These must be used in the semester they're issued.



Now pick your best combo:

Plan Name	Meals/Week	Dragon Dollars	Guest Passes	Price	Best for
Platinum	unlimited	200	5	\$2,270	Athletes
Gold	19	100	3	\$2,145	
Silver (Default)	17	200	3	\$2,115	Typical students

You can supplement your meal plan by adding [Dragon Dollars](#) for use in Dining Services only, or by setting up a [Connections Account](#) for use on or off campus, including Dining Services.

A few notes:

- Your ID card is your meal plan card.
- Your meal plan is for your personal use only.
- Choose Neubig Dining Center where 1 meal buys a smorgasbord. (Best value)
- OR dine in a retail dining facility where 1 meal is equivalent to:
 - \$4.00 from 7:30–10:30 AM
 - \$6.00 from 10:30 AM–3:00 PM
 - \$6.00 from 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Use your Dragon Dollars to cover any overages. You are automatically signed up for the Silver plan if you live on the main campus. You are not required to sign up for a meal plan if you live on West Campus or off-campus.

Do you think you need more meals? You can [upgrade to Gold or Platinum](#).

Off and West Campus Meal Plans

WWW.CORTLANDASC.COM

Signing up for a meal plan: Off-campus and West-campus students

If you live off-campus or on West campus, your kitchen's a long, cold haul away from your classes. Make it easy on yourself and [sign up for a meal plan!](#)

Top reasons it's worth it:

1. Meals are always close by when your stomach starts growling.
2. The food's delicious, whether from your fave franchises or our [other unique dining locations](#) (check out the options!)
3. You get to spend more time with friends over good meals.
4. It's cost-effective.
5. You don't waste valuable study time shopping, cooking, and cleaning up.
6. It's convenient! All you need is your [ID card!](#)

Your ASC meal plan has three parts:

1. Meals per semester
2. Dragon Dollars -- for extra items to supplement your meals
3. Guest Passes – for sharing meals with visitors (in the Neubig Dining Center only)

Just choose the combination that suits your needs best:

Plan Name	Meals/Semester	Dragon Dollars	Guest Passes	Price
Olympic	75	400	3	\$1,000
Collegiate	50	350	2	\$ 750
Recreational	25	300	1	\$ 500

Alternatively, you may choose one of the [on-campus meal plans](#) or pay for meals with a [Connections account](#).

MONEY MATTERS: Currency Exchange, Bank Accounts, & Budgets

Foreign Money Exchange

In the city of Cortland, there is no foreign currency exchange service. You can ask a bank to exchange currency, but they must send your money to a bank in a larger city. The whole business can take 10 days and there will be a \$10 - \$15 fee for their service.

Credit Card Access to Money

Our local banks are electronically linked internationally with the PLUS, NYCE, CASHIER, CIRRUS and/or other systems. If you have a card that is linked to one of those of these systems, you can get U.S. currency just by using your credit card or debit bank card. Remember to alert your credit card company to the fact that you will be traveling abroad. Credit card companies may view unexplained charges abroad as suspicious and deny the charge. This is especially important if you wish to use your credit card to make tuition and fee payments. Make sure you have clearance to charge or withdraw more than \$500.00 USD per day, otherwise you will not be able to make your tuition and fee payment on time and you will incur late fees.



Opening a bank account

Should you wish, you may open a checking and/or a savings account at the campus branch of M & T bank in Neubig Hall. All you will need is your passport and campus I.D. card. The bank is open on Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and on Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. There is an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) located in the entryway to Neubig Hall as well.

Money Needed to Survive

You will need funds for books, personal items, and telephone costs. However, if you plan on traveling or buying souvenirs etc, you really need to have access to money over and above the costs for tuition, fees, room and board. Please keep these expenses in mind when planning for your trip. Remember, it is always better to have extra money on hand for those "just in case" situations.

Refer to the *Estimated Student Budget* for details.

The College Bookstore on the campus accepts MasterCard and Visa credit cards. These cards are widely accepted in the U.S.

Money Needed beyond Survival

International students who have been with us previously strongly suggest that we tell future visitors to have adequate extra funds available. Books, phone bills, travel expenses, gifts, and incidentals can add up quickly! Previous students made a very strong point about our telling future international students to try to bring extra money for unplanned-for expenses.

YOUR STUDENT ACCOUNT: Paying Your Bills

Pay Bill On-line

Your fees will be due in full by mid-August for the fall semester and early-January for the spring semester, prior to your arrival in the USA. These fees may include: tuition, college fees, room, your meal plan, and health insurance. Your bill with all your fees will be posted to your account in early July for the fall semester and early December for the spring semester. **You will not receive a paper bill. It will be your responsibility to log into your account via myRedDragon to view and pay your bill.** (To do this, once you log on to myRedDragon, click on the Student tab and then click on "My Online Account" under Student Accounts in the third column.)

You may pay your fees with a credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover), or bank draft in US dollars drawn from a US Bank or you may have your home bank wire transfer funds to SUNY Cortland. If you wish to pay by bank wire, please contact the international student advisor for necessary information needed to make a bank transfer. You may elect to pay your bill in full, or in installments of five payments over the semester for the one-time fee of \$45.00.

For more information on the billing or payment process, please visit the Student Accounts web site at <http://www2.cortland.edu/cost-aid/student-accounts-office/billing-payment/>.

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

College tuition and fees MUST be paid **before** the start of each semester. If foreign exchange in your country is subject to delay, please alert your sponsor of these financial deadlines. Delay in payment could result in late fees and penalties. All international students are required to show proof of adequate financial support prior to obtaining your I-20 or DS-2019 and visa, so it is expected that you will be able to pay your balance. If you have difficulties, or your financial situation changes after you arrive in the U.S., please contact the Student Accounts Office.



Registering for Classes

Selecting Courses at SUNY Cortland

The course selection process is different for each type of student that comes to SUNY Cortland.

Exchange students submit a Course Preference form with their application materials, which the international student advisor will use to build a course schedule, based on available courses and permission from academic departments.

Undergraduate matriculated (SUNY Cortland degree-seeking) students will meet with their advisor during the international student welcome week at the Advisement and Transition Orientation to build a schedule.

Graduate matriculated students will register online. Please contact your academic department before departing for the U.S. to discuss required and elective course options.

Finding Courses on the *Course Schedule*

In order to look up classes you wish to take online, please go to www.cortland.edu – Quick Links-choose Course Schedule- and be sure to choose the appropriate semester. The course schedule for the fall semester is available in mid-March and for the spring semester in mid-October. For detailed information about all of course offerings please refer to the college catalog at <http://www.cortland.edu/catalog/>.

Understanding the Registration Process

Exchange, undergraduate and matriculated students must register for at least 12 credit hours, but no more than 18.5. Please select courses from the 100-400 prefixes only. All courses must be of the undergraduate level (UG). Graduate students (GR) must register for at least 9 credit hours can take courses at the 500 and 600 levels.

100-199 courses are generally designated for freshmen but may be appropriate for sophomores, usually introductory or the first course taught in a sequence within a specific discipline.

200-299 courses are generally designed for sophomores but may be appropriate for freshmen, usually advancing in a progression as a second course that may require previous knowledge or training.

300-399 courses are generally designed for juniors and seniors, but may also be appropriate for sophomores. Prerequisites are often required for this course level.

400-499 courses are generally designed for juniors and seniors advancing well into upper division work with prerequisite knowledge base required.

500 and 600 level courses are for graduate students only.

Prerequisites

In order to take certain upper level classes, students must have a previous knowledge of the course topic and may be required to have taken certain classes before the desired course. These classes are called prerequisites. Please check the **Course Schedule** for prerequisites for courses you wish to take. A copy is available online at <http://www2.cortland.edu/academics/catalogs.dot>.

Dropping/Adding Courses

During the first week of classes you have the opportunity to drop or add courses. Log onto your myRedDragon account and click on the student tab. Then select “Register or Drop & Add Courses” under Registrar Student Channel. If you wish to drop a course, simply click down the tab located next to the course listing, and choose ‘drop.’ If you wish to add a course, consult the Course Schedule and **make sure there is available space in the class you wish to take**. Type the CRN number into the “add course” box and click submit. **Remember, adding courses or dropping unwanted courses without it showing on your transcript may only be done during the first week of classes**. After the first week of classes, no other classes may be added for the semester, and in order to drop a class, you must receive permission from your professor. Consult myRedDragon for the drop/add period specific to your semester. Please make an appointment to talk with the international student advisor if you have questions about this process.

Classroom Culture

Course Characteristics

In the typical course, the professor lectures, and students are expected to take notes. There may be some class discussion. Some study abroad students have reported more in class discussions than what is typical in their home countries.

Tests

In most courses, you will be tested at least twice—once during the middle of the semester and once at the end. You might have more tests and some quizzes. Most tests are multiple-choice instead of essay. You will also most likely have many small, out of class assignments and papers.

Attendance

Your professors may or may not require attendance, but most will and do take attendance in some way. If attendance is required, and if you miss a certain number of classes, you could have your grade in the course reduced. In general, expect to be present for each class.

Research papers for courses

Some of your professors may require a research paper. If you are required to do papers, we have a good library, and there are many computers for student use. We also have a skills center (ASAP) that provides assistance in preparing students to write effectively. Previous students have told us that U.S. professors require a different style from those employed abroad. If a paper is required, the ASAP program has been exceptionally helpful to our international students.

Academic Resources

The Academic Support and Achievement Program (ASAP)

ASAP offers its services to students who need assistance in learning how to take U.S. American-style exams and prepare U.S. American-style reports or essays. This program also offers tutoring and sessions on how to study, take notes and organize your time more effectively. The services of the Academic Support and Achievement Program are free. Call (607) 753-4309 to make an appointment.

International Student Learning Community

Undergraduate degree-seeking students will be part of the International Student Learning Community, which is designed to help you succeed at SUNY Cortland. All incoming undergraduate international students are required to take *IS Seminar (International Student Seminar)*, a 1-credit course specially designed to help you transition into a new cultural and social environment. Exchange students and graduate students may take the course with permission from the instructor.

Advanced EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses are designed to prepare you for the rigors of SUNY Cortland's content classes and help you improve your academic skills for your entire college career. They are available to all matriculated international students and may be required depending on the results of a mandatory academic language assessment conducted every semester prior to the beginning of classes. Exchange students may take the courses with permission from the instructor.

ICC 145 ACADEMIC LANGUAGE & UNIVERSITY PRACTICES 3 CREDITS 2x PER WEEK
Different majors have different expectations when it comes to writing style and conventions. Learn about the foundations of good writing and apply your knowledge to specially-designed activities related to your major.

ICC 147 ACADEMIC GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY 1.5 CREDITS 1x PER WEEK
Develop a 'dynamite' academic vocabulary and learn how specific grammatical structures 'associate' with specific vocabulary for the production of great writing.

ICC 149 ACADEMIC LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.5 CREDITS 1x PER WEEK
Improve your presentational, note-taking, and academic speaking skills. Learn special strategies to improve your listening and pronunciation.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SEMINAR

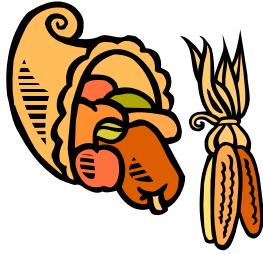
As part of your required course load, you will attend a one credit seminar during your first semester at SUNY Cortland. The seminar has been designed to help in international student transition. American students will also serve as peer mentors in the course.

ICC 143 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SEMINAR 1 CREDIT 1x PER WEEK

CONVERSATION PARTNER PROGRAM!

This extra-curricular activity partners SUNY Cortland International students with SUNY Cortland American students. Students will get together 1-2 hours per week with the goal of fostering interaction, easing the transition of international students into the SUNY Cortland college community, and to provide an opportunity for domestic & international students to practice a foreign language.

Breaks from Classes (Recesses, Holidays)



Thanksgiving

This is a national holiday and is always on the 4th Thursday in November. All offices shut down; many of them remain closed through Sunday. It is the most heavily traveled holiday in the U.S. If you would like, you will have the opportunity to enjoy a traditional dinner with a family in Cortland. On the other hand, you might prefer to travel during this four and one-half day recess from classes.

Semester breaks

Approximately six weeks into the fall and spring semester we shut down the College for a few days. This is a time to travel, visit a friend's home, or remain on campus and catch up on course work.

GETTING CONNECTED: myRedDragon Access

myRedDragon Access

myRedDragon is your personalized portal to campus information and services any time and any place. myRedDragon brings you 24-hour access to your messages, e-mails, campus news, e-learning and BannerWeb.

How to Log in to myRedDragon:

- You will need your Cortland ID number (C#) to start the process. Your C# is noted on your acceptance letter from Admissions and the international student advisor's welcome letter.
- Go to http://bannerweb.cortland.edu/pls/prod/pinweb.get_pin to get your Username
 - Your user name is your firstname.lastname [All lowercase letters. Please note- there are no spaces and there is a "." (dot) between your first name and last name. Your last name is your family name/surname].
- The online instructions will guide you step-by-step to set up your myRedDragon account.
- Once you have set up your account you can access your myRedDragon account at <http://myRedDragon.cortland.edu>

If you have problems logging on to your myRedDragon account, please call the Technology Help Center 607-753-2500 or send an e-mail using the on-line form at <http://www.cortland.edu/acs/mailform.asp?id=19>. (Please note that due to federal student privacy laws, the Help Center can only talk with students themselves about their accounts, so it is preferable that you contact the Help Center directly if you encounter problems.)

HEALTH MATTERS

Student Health Service

The Student Health Service will take care of common ailments, such as fevers, the flu, minor wounds, sprains, and stomach upsets. There is no charge beyond the basic health fee for the services provided. Should you have a major problem, the hospital is a short distance from campus, and your insurance should cover most if not all of the costs.

Health Insurance

You must pay for medical services in the United States. Average hospital costs in the area are about \$2,000.00 a day. This sum includes transport in an ambulance and an overnight stay in a semi-private room. It does not include fees for X-rays, blood work or physician's fees, which are also very high. As an international student, you must purchase SUNY Cortland International Student Health insurance. SUNY Cortland International Student Health insurance covers the majority of health costs you incur (normally 80-100%), so you will not be required to pay all of your expenses up front.

NOTE: SUNY insurance carries a \$100.00 deductible provision. This means you pay the first \$100.00 for services not provided by the student health service. So, be sure to go to the Health Service *first*, before going to see another doctor (except in an emergency, of course). SUNY Insurance does not cover routine optical or dental needs.

Immunizations and Health Forms Required for Registration

All international students are required by SUNY or SUNY Cortland policies to submit certain health forms. Failure to submit forms within 30 days of the start of classes will be deregistered automatically.

Health forms are located at <http://www2.cortland.edu/offices/student-development-center/student-health-service/immunization.dot>. On the Health Services page select the **Health History and Immunization Form**, download, **complete in English** by qualified physician and return to the International Programs Office. **If a document cannot be read, it cannot be accepted.** Although the form is self explanatory, we would like to clarify some issues that seem to have been misunderstood. You may wish to take this letter with you to your physician.

Although the United States Embassy may advise students that they do not need two measles shots, it is not the case! One measles vaccine is sufficient for entry to the United States, but it is not sufficient for people who attend New York State Colleges. You must show proof of two doses of measles vaccine after your first birthday or proof of immunity.

SUNY Cortland requires all international students to have a physical examination completed by a qualified physician.

New York State public health law requires immunization against the following diseases. Proof of immunity consists of the following:

Measles – two doses of live measles vaccine administered after 12 months of age given in 1968 or later, or physician documentation of measles disease, or a blood test showing immunity.

Mumps – one dose of live mumps vaccine administered after 12 months of age, or physician documentation of mumps disease or a blood test showing immunity.

Rubella – one dose of live rubella vaccine administered after 12 months of age or a blood test showing immunity.

Meningococcal Meningitis – have had the meningitis immunization (Menactra or Menomune) within the past 10 years OR complete the meningitis information response form upon enrollment at university or college. The student is **not** required by law to have the immunization, but **is required** to read an information pamphlet about the disease and decline the immunization by signing the Meningitis Waiver (Part III) of the Immunization Form in order to remain enrolled in a New York State college or university.

SUNY Cortland strongly encourages immunization against the following diseases:

Tetanus and Diphtheria –three or more doses required of tetanus and diphtheria toxoids, and a booster within ten years prior to entry.

Hepatitis B

Polio Vaccine – minimum of three doses for all students 18 and under. For those 19 and over, record of previous doses, but no additional doses should be given.

Tuberculin Skin Test – students from some countries*2 must come with proof of a recent Tuberculosis Skin Test (within six months of arriving), or a negative chest x-ray. This is required even if BCG has been previously administered. Anyone with a positive test (generally 10 or more millimeters of induration) is required to have a chest x-ray to prove that he/she does not have active tuberculosis.

Students should submit proof of meeting all of the above requirements prior to starting classes. If, after some time, a student fails to submit his or her forms, SUNY Cortland will be required by law to deregister the student. Fees apply for re-registering after late submission of forms.

2 Categories of high risk students include those students who have arrived within the past five years from countries where TB is endemic. It is easier to identify countries of low rather than high TB prevalence. Therefore, students should undergo TB screening if they have arrived from countries EXCEPT those on the following list: Canada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, USA, Virgin Islands (USA), Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, American Samoa, Australia, or New Zealand. Other categories of high-risk students include those with HIV infection, who inject drugs, who have resided in, volunteered in, or worked in high-risk congregate settings such as prisons, nursing homes, hospitals, residential facilities for patients with AIDS, or homeless shelters; and those who have clinical conditions such as diabetes, chronic renal failure, leukemias or lymphomas, low body weight, gastrectomy and jejunoileal by-pass, chronic malabsorption syndromes, prolonged corticosteroid therapy (e.g., prednisone 15 mg/d for one month) or other immunosuppressive disorders.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Aids Prevention & Awareness (APAC)	Habitat for Humanity
AGAPE	HILLEL
Alliance of Physical Education Majors (APEM)	History Club
Art Exhibition Association (AEA)	International Awareness Club
Asian Pacific Student Union (APSU)	La Familia Latina (LFL)
Asian Culture and Media Experience	Math Club
BACCHUS	M.O.V.E. (men of Values and Excellence)
Biology Club	Model UN
Black Student Union (BSU)	Newman Club
Brothers and Sisters in Christ (B.A.S.I.C)	Non-Traditional Student Union
Caribbean Student Association (CSA)	NYPIRG
Chemistry Club	NSSLHA Speech & Hearing
Colleges against Cancer	Physics and Engineering Club
College Singers	Political Science Club
Cortland Against All Rape (CAAR)	Planet of Women for Equality and Respect
Cortland College Recreation Association	Psychology Club
Cortland College Republicans	Rock 'n Blues Ensemble
Cortland State Television (CSTV)	Social Philosophy Club
Cortland Writer's Association	Spanish Club
Dragon Chronicle	Speak Magazine
Debate and Speech Team	Special Education Club
Economics	Spectrum
Education Club	Sport Management Association
English Club	SUNY Cortland Emergency Squad (SCES)
FIT Club	Student Activities Board (SAB)
French Club	Student Alumni Association (SAA)
Geology Club	Student Government Association (SGA)
Global Ambassadors Club	Women of Color
Gospel Choir	WSUC 90.5 FM

A FEW NOTES ON CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is the disorientation that may result from new and confusing stimuli in the overseas environment. In our own culture, we know what to expect when we go shopping, apply for a driver's license or attend college classes. We understand both the verbal and non-verbal signals of the people we come in contact with without consciously paying attention to their meaning. In other cultures, words, intonation and "body language" may not have the exact same meaning. Everyday acts such as shopping, banking and driving require much greater attention and energy and involve a much higher degree of uncertainty. Obviously when the language is different, much greater ambiguity arises. Frequently you may not understand all that was said, and if you do, you may not know what the appropriate response is. Culture shock comes in four distinct stages and is a result of the uncertainty you experience in another country.

❖ Stage 1 – Excitement

The individual may experience a holiday or 'honeymoon' period with their new surroundings. They:

- Feel very positive about the culture
- Are overwhelmed with impressions
- Find the new Culture exotic and fascinating

❖ Stage 2 – Withdrawal

The individual now has some more face to face experience with the culture and starts to find things difficult, strange and frustrating. They:

- Find the behavior of the people unusual and unpredictable
- Begin to dislike the culture and react negatively towards the behavior
- Feel anxious and start to withdraw, feel depressed
- Begin to criticize, mock or show animosity to the people

❖ Stage 3 – Adjustment

The individual now has a routine, feels more settled and is more confident in dealing with the new culture. They:

- Understand and accept the behavior of the people
- Feel less isolated
- Regain their sense of humor

❖ Stage 4 – Enthusiasm

The individual now feels 'at home.' They:

- Enjoy and function well in the culture
- Prefer certain cultural traits of the new culture rather than their own
- Adopt certain behaviors from the new culture

How to Minimize Culture Shock

Although culture shock is a natural process that every traveler goes through, there are steps you can take to minimize the negative effects it might have on you. The first step is to recognize that the negative feelings you have may be a result of culture shock. If you realize that your reluctance to go out and meet people is a predictable phase of cultural adjustment, it is often easier to cope with. Second, when you pack for your trip, take along one or two things that remind you of home: a favorite DVD, some favorite food, mementoes from home such as photographs or anything else that can give you comfort. Third, plan to rest more. Taking naps or going to bed earlier can help combat the fatigue. Talk about your feelings with other students who may be experiencing the same thing. Last, make an effort to learn at least one thing useful about the language or culture each day. The more you know, the more you feel at home!

We look forward to meeting you and hope you have a safe journey to SUNY Cortland!

Tips and Experiences from Previous International Students

“Don’t be afraid to ask people if they understand what you are saying.”

*Michelle Boylett, Exchange Student
United Kingdom, Fall 2010*

“Coming from a country which has a completely different cultural background, settling here was difficult in the initial few months. But with the support received from the International Students Department and my own department, things started getting easier and I started enjoying my stay here. I can definitely say I am blessed to have met such beautiful and warm people who make me realize that although I am so far away from home, I have a family here. This is my second home.”

*Sonia Chaubal, Graduate Student
India, 2010-2011*

“The experience changed my life. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to meet such great people. It opened so many doors- three pieces of my writing were published and now I have a paid internship, fantastic!”

*Mellissa Houlding, Exchange Student
United Kingdom, Fall 2010*

I must admit that the time I spent in the USA as a participant of this (program) was a unique experience for me; it was so important and challenging that I see my Cortland adventure as a turning point in my life. I became almost totally a different person. I am not saying that I graduated from this program as someone having the potential of being one of the greatest economists in the world, but there is something more important than that: now I am equipped with necessary tools to deal with life and cope with the consequences of even my bad decisions. It is like I feel ready and keen to keep going on my way to the end. Anyway, this program contributed to my life a lot, even if had some hard times adapting to the culture, the college life, the climate etc. ☺

*Ender Ilhan, Undergraduate Student
Turkey, 2006-2010*

Rev. 4/1/11 MS