



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR HANDBOOK



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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE

Dear International Student:

Welcome to the University of Southern Maine!

We are pleased you are joining the university's growing community of international scholars. Your experience here will be filled with adventure and challenge. We hope and trust it will result in a better understanding of yourself and the complex world in which we live and work together.

You undoubtedly have many questions about the United States, about Maine, and particularly about the university and the surrounding communities. *The International Student and Scholar Handbook* is designed to give you background information on matters and situations you will be facing as a new student here. The *University Catalog* and the University of Southern Maine's student calendar, *The Navigator* should answer many of your questions about your academic program and university regulations. Your academic advisor, your professors, we in the Office of International Programs, and other university staff are all resources available for you in obtaining answers to your questions.

We wish you every success in your work here at the University of Southern Maine and look forward to helping you in any way we can. You are always welcome in the Office of International Programs.

Cordially,

Kimberly Sinclair, Associate Director
USM Office of International Programs

Handbook last updated July 29, 2010

YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR

Your **International Student Advisor** is available for counseling on personal, academic, social and financial matters. Your advisor is happy to discuss any matter with you - even very personal problems. It is quite common in the United States for students and others to seek counseling about personal matters that in other cultures might be discussed only within the family. The advisor will listen, give relevant information and offer alternatives to help in your decision making. However, only you can make the decision and take the necessary action. The advisor cannot and should not do it for you.

When your problem is outside the advisor's area of authority or competence, you will be referred to someone who can be of more assistance.

The advisor is knowledgeable about information concerning immigration regulations and university procedures, is a liaison with sponsoring agencies, is available for certification of student status, and is available for other kinds of problem solving. The advisor's office can be a great resource for information about vacation activities in the United States.

All problems and matters of personal concern will be considered confidential and will not be discussed with other people without your permission, unless laws of the United States or regulations of the university require it.

It is ESSENTIAL that you see an International Student Advisor when you first become aware that a problem may be developing. You must not wait until it has become so serious that it may be impossible to do anything about it. For example, if you are failing a course, you should see an advisor about it within the first month of the semester. You must not wait until the final examination when it would be impossible for anyone to prevent your failure.

At U.S.M., Kimberly Sinclair, Larisa Kruze, and Kaoru Phillips serve as the International Student Advisors. Our office is in room 101 Payson Smith on the Portland campus. You are welcome to visit anytime or call us at 780-4959.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MAINE & PORTLAND

A history of Maine is a microcosm of the history of early America. Maine's first settlers arrived in 1609, but they suffered terrible winters and were forced to give up. A few years later, however, in 1620, the Puritans started the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which did survive and shortly expanded to include what is now Maine.

However, both England and France claimed that territory and spent the better part of the century fighting over it in what is known as the French and Indian War. This war lasted until 1763 when the French relinquished all claims to the disputed territory.

Portland, then part of Falmouth, acquired its first house in 1632. By 1675, 40 families had settled there. But twice in the next sixteen years the town was destroyed, once by Indians and again in 1690 by the French and Indians. It was another 20 years before families began to move back. Since Falmouth was favored by an ample supply of trees and the best natural harbor on the east coast, it was natural to begin to build boats and then to use them to transport their goods. As this happened the town began to prosper.

In the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, Portland, like Boston, was quick to rebel against the British. When news of the Battle of Lexington and Concord reached Falmouth, the town immediately voted to send a company of 60 men to join the fight. This involvement in the rebel cause led to her third destruction. On learning that a Tory merchant (an American who supported the British) was rigging his ship with British sails in order to deliver his cargo to England, the people stopped him in his tracks. In retaliation, the British sent four ships to punish the town. Falmouth was ordered to hand over all its arms. Knowing full well that the consequence of refusal would be the destruction of their homes, the town defied the order. Four-fifths of Falmouth's buildings were demolished! In spite of such hardships, Falmouth supported the war and was commended for being so quick to supply men for the Revolution.

After the war, on July 4, 1786, the "Neck" separated from the rest of Falmouth and was named Portland. It now began a period of rapid growth. It was the sea that made Portland thrive and brought her both fame and fortune. Shipbuilders, lumbermen, merchants and fishermen all relied on the sea.¹ However, 1807 marked the end of Portland's commercial boom. To stop the impressments of American seamen aboard British boats, Congress passed the Embargo Act. *No ships could leave U.S. ports.* Businesses failed. The wealthy lost their fortunes. And within fourteen months America was at war with England again.

¹PORTLAND, Greater Portland Landmarks, Incorporated, 1972

During the war, known as the War of 1812, the British took over eastern Maine. Desperate for help, Maine turned to Massachusetts, but help was not forthcoming. This created the animosity which led to Maine's separation from Massachusetts in 1820. The request was granted under the terms of what is known as the Missouri Compromise, which, attempting to ease tensions by keeping a balance between slave and non-slave states decreed that a slave state could be admitted to the Union only if a non-slave state was also admitted. We see here the divisions that led to the Civil War.

By early in the 19th century the U.S. had become the second largest maritime nation in the world and Maine businessmen owned one-fifth of the fleet. In the year 1855 Maine built one-third of the nation's shipping tonnage. In addition to shipbuilding, fishing, and lumbering, factories sprang up along the many rivers.

Maine had a strong anti-slavery tradition and abolitionist societies were active here 25 years before the Civil War. The book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written in Brunswick by the wife of a Bowdoin professor, was especially influential in provoking opposition to slavery. Portland became an important way-station in the Underground Railroad, helping smuggle hundreds of slaves out of the South. Maine sent 70,000 men and two famous generals to the Civil War.

Just after the Civil War ended, Portland once again burned to the ground. But once more the city recovered, becoming, by the end of the century, an important manufacturing center.

Today Maine has a population of about a million and a half. It has 3,500 miles of coastline, 6,000 lakes, and 9 mountains over 4,000 feet. (Mt. Katahdin, the highest, is the northernmost point of the Appalachian Trail.) The state is still one of the largest producers of wood pulp and paper products and is a major supplier of fish, including nearly 90% of the nation's lobsters.

Famous Maine people include artists like Winslow Homer, Andrew Wyeth, Marsden Hartley; the writers Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Edna St. Vincent Millay; Robert Perry, first to reach the North Pole; Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman in Congress; Robert Goulet and Judd Nelson, actors; Director John Ford; Joan Benoit Samuleson, Olympic gold medalist; William Cohen, former Secretary of Defense and George Mitchell, former US Senator and facilitator of the Northern Ireland peace accord.

Maine's motto is "The way life should be." We hope you will find it that way.

ON-CAMPUS ASSISTANCE

These are the most commonly used sources of help for students on campus. Please note that all phone numbers listed below begin with 780 if you are dialing from off campus.

If You Need Help With	Contact Person and Phone Number
Academic Problems and Registration	Your Academic Advisor
Degree Requirement, Course Changes	Your Dean's Office or your Academic Advisor
Your Student Record, Transcript, Grades, Course Schedule, Academic Advising	<u>Student Success Center</u> 4040/5652 119 Payson Smith, Portland 119 Corthell Hall, Gorham
Bills, Tuition, Fees and other U.S.M. Charges	<u>Student Accounts</u> 5200 118 Payson Smith, Portland 119 Corthell Hall, Gorham
Tutoring, Writing, Beginning Math, Note Taking, Time Management	<u>Learning Center</u> 4228 253 Luther Bonney, Portland
Computer Purchases	<u>Campus Computer Store</u> 4164 144 Luther Bonney, Portland
Use of University Computers	<u>Computer Labs</u> Luther Bonney, Portland 4335 Bailey Hall, Gorham 5345
Research	<u>University Libraries</u> Portland: Glickman Library 4270 Gorham: Bailey Hall 5345 Law Library, Portland 4829
On-Campus Housing	<u>Residential Life</u> 5240
	<u>Dining Services</u>

On-Campus Food	Woodbury Campus Center, Portland 4039 Brooks Student Center, Gorham 5420
Health Care and Health Insurance	<u>Student Health Services</u> 110 Upton Hall, Gorham 5411
Personal Matters/ Problems, Drug and Alcohol Issues	<u>Counseling Center</u> 4050 105 Payson Smith, Portland
Safety Problems and Lost Items	<u>Police and Safety</u> 5211 Sullivan Complex, Portland Upton Hall, Gorham
Parking Passes	<u>Parking Office</u> 4718 Parking Garage, 1 st Floor, Portland
Disabilities: physical, hearing, visual, medical, psychological or learning disability	<u>Support for Students with Disabilities</u> 4706 242 Luther Bonney, Portland
Student ID Cards	<u>Campus Card Office</u> 4 Payson Smith, Portland 4054 Upton Hall, Gorham 5600
Long Distance Phone Codes (for those living on-campus)	<u>Telecommunications</u> 4054 4 Payson Smith, Portland
Immigration Questions or any other questions or concerns not addressed above.	<u>Office of International Programs</u> 4959 101 Payson Smith, Portland
Student assistance for women concerning leadership, activism, and education.	<u>Women's Resource Center</u> 4996 131 Woodbury Campus Center, Portland
Education, support, and advocacy for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning, queer, and allied community at USM.	<u>Center for Sexualities and Gender Equality</u> 228-8235 132 Woodbury Campus Center, Portland
Support for students with multicultural backgrounds.	<u>Multicultural Student Affairs</u> 4006 135 Woodbury Campus Center, Portland

OTHER SOURCES OF HELP AND INFORMATION

Campus Newspaper: U.S.M.'s weekly newspaper, *The Free Press*, includes information about campus events and activities.

CULTURE SHOCK

Culture “shock,” is not quite as sudden as most people expect. It is part of the process of learning a new culture that is called cultural adaptation. You may experience some discomfort before you are able to function well in a new setting. This discomfort is called the “culture shock” stage of the adaptation process. The main thing to remember is that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through. With a bit of patience and strategy you will be able to shift cultures and enjoy the experience.

Just as you will bring clothing and other personal items with you to the United States, you will also carry invisible “cultural baggage” when you travel. That baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcases, but it will play a major role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter.

- **ADJUSTING TO THE NEW CULTURE**

If you are living outside your country for the first time, you will be making many adjustments. Many factors, including the loss of a social support system--family, friends, community, etc., can result in your feeling frustrated, isolated and anxious. This discomfort is known as “culture shock”. All international students experience this to varying degrees.

Because of language difficulties, not understanding body language, the loss of familiar value systems and insufficient knowledge and experience with matters like rental leases, phone systems, banking systems, climate, clothing, food, transportation and shopping, difficulty in adjustment is inevitable and is characterized by several phases:

- 1. HONEYMOON:** Newness is exciting, and one feels optimistic and adventurous.
- 2. CULTURE SHOCK:** Excitement is gone. Questions arise about family life, Americans, professors, friendships and dating relationships, etc.
- 3. SURFACE ADJUSTMENT:** Things start to make sense. Communications improve and you make friends and feel comfortable with people.
- 4. UNRESOLVED CONFLICTS:** Unsolved problems surface. You feel bored, confused, frustrated, and isolated. You miss your culture.
- 5. FEELING AT HOME:** Acceptance of new culture. You don't

always approve, but you accept differences and have made real friends.

SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK INCLUDE

- ▶ Excessive concern over food and drinking water
- ▶ Fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations
- ▶ Fear of being cheated, robbed or injured in an unfamiliar environment
- ▶ Fatigue and obsession with minor pain
- ▶ Withdrawal/isolation
- ▶ Refusal to learn language
- ▶ Dependence on other residents of one's own country
- ▶ Excessive sleeping
- ▶ Longing to be home

OVERCOME THESE SYMPTOMS BY

- ▶ Developing a social support system
- ▶ Becoming familiar with environment by reading and relating with people, clubs and organizations
- ▶ Hobbies like reading, woodworking, sports
- ▶ Engaging in artistic or physical activities like walking, jogging or bicycling
- ▶ Increasing language proficiency
- ▶ Active involvement with Americans
- ▶ Overcoming shyness by trying to make friends with other students

Author Peter Adler described culture shock as “the very heart of cross-cultural learning.” Culture shock forces you to reflect upon yourself and your own culture. The net result is a new understanding of values, beliefs and behaviors.

One of the most important skills developed when traveling in a new culture is **tolerance** for the values, beliefs and behaviors of others. You know your own culture: the value system, artistic traditions, technological achievements, philosophical concepts and communication techniques used. If you are comfortable with yourself, you will be willing to accept others as they are. Then living in America will be a wonderful learning experience for you and those you meet.

● CULTURAL VALUES

We must recognize the effect of culture on an individual's values and beliefs. One's behavior, as seen by others, often has its foundation on a cultural value, assumption or belief. To illustrate this, two columns of contrasting values are listed below. For each item, you might choose either a contrasting value or position somewhere between them. This list will serve as a starting point

in understanding similarities and differences between cultures. Knowing one's culture is important in learning about other cultures. As you read through, ask yourself under what circumstances you find these values in your culture. To what degree do people in your country hold these values?

SELF

Sees self as an individual
Youth is valued
Self-reliant
Value is placed on what one does

Sees self as a family member
Age is valued
Depends on family and friends
Value is placed on who one is

FAMILY

Democratic

Authoritarian

SOCIETY

People should be treated informally
Face-to-face confrontation
Men and women are often close friends

People should be treated formally
Confrontation through an intermediary
Close friends are of the same sex

HUMAN NATURE

Human beings are rational
We control our own fate

Human beings are irrational
The future is pre-determined

NATURE

The world can be controlled through science
The future is important

The world is spiritually controlled
The past and present are important

● **WILL I LOSE MY OWN CULTURE?**

Sometimes students worry about “losing their own culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Don't worry: it is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for the understanding of your own culture. Don't resist the opportunity to become bi-cultural, able to function competently in two cultural environments.

Just as culture shock is derived from the accumulation of cultural clashes, so an accumulation of small successes can lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed too strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies and social life and to relax and fully enjoy the experience.

STAYING HEALTHY

- HEALTH INSURANCE

The United States has no national health insurance system. Since medical expenses are very high, it is required and extremely important that you acquire health insurance for yourself and for any family members who are with you in this country.

IT IS MANDATORY FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE for themselves and for any dependents in the United States.

- CHOOSING A HEALTH-INSURANCE PLAN

Some students from abroad, particularly exchange students, may be covered under their current plan and should have the appropriate documentation to prove coverage. If you are not covered by a plan from your home country, the University of Southern Maine offers its own health-insurance plan for students. The Office of International Programs also has descriptive brochures from several insurance companies that offer health insurance specifically for students from overseas. *Please be aware that the staff members in the Office of International Programs are not experts on health-insurance plans and cannot make recommendations as to which plan is best for you. They can only provide information on the various plans available.* You will then want to review the various plans to see which one best suits your needs. Below are a few of the things you should look for when considering a plan:

- ▶ The “premium”: the cost of coverage for the specified period of time.
- ▶ Exclusions for items such as maternity costs, mental-health care, and “pre-existing conditions.”
- ▶ Coverage of preventive care.
- ▶ Limits on the maximum payment the insurer will make.
- ▶ High “deductibles” (an annual amount you must pay before the insurance payments will begin).
- ▶ High “co-payments” (that percentage of a bill for which you are responsible, even after you meet your deductible amount).

All U.S.M. students pay a mandatory health fee which allows free office visits at the U.S.M. Health Services Offices on both campuses and other benefits. This is **NOT** health insurance and you need to carry health insurance in addition to this basic coverage.

- **MEDICAL CARE IN THE UNITED STATES**

When you seek medical care in the United States, you may be offered a choice of doctors or other healthcare providers. Consider whether you would prefer to see a man or a woman, an older practitioner or a younger one, etc. Even if you are not asked, you should make your preferences known. For the best medical care, it is best to choose one health care provider and use it throughout your stay. In this way, all those who see you will know you and your medical history and will be able to treat you most appropriately.

The time you spend with health-care providers may seem very brief, with little opportunity for conversation. The doctor or nurse will ask you many questions; some may appear unnecessary or intrusive, but you should try to answer them as completely as possible. You may think the approach abrupt and impersonal; however, the workers are only trying to be efficient and thorough, characteristics central to American culture. It is expected that patients will ask questions about their health, diagnosis, treatment and costs. American physicians expect their patients to participate in making decisions about medications and treatment choices. If you ever have difficulty understanding anything about your medical status or treatment, ask for clarification. You can ask workers to talk more slowly, to repeat, or to write something down. If you think you will need a translator, ask when you make your appointment if someone can assist you, or bring a friend.

- **WHERE TO GO FOR MEDICAL CARE**

If you are feeling sick, do not hesitate to get help. **When you need medical care, GO FIRST to the HEALTH SERVICE ON CAMPUS.** Because the range of services that Student Health provides, they may be able to treat your illness or injury at their facility. If not, they will refer you to an outside doctor or clinic.

On-Campus Health Centers:

- ▶ 110 Upton Hall, Gorham 780-5411

- **WHERE DO YOU GO WHEN THE U.S.M. STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES IS CLOSED?**

What do you do if you're feeling sick on the weekend, or a holiday when U.S.M. Student Health Services are closed? You have several options:

- ▶ Brighton First Care
335 Brighton Avenue
Hours: 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM, 7 Days a Week
662-8111

- ▶ Mercy Express Care in Westbrook
40 Park Road, Westbrook
Hours: 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, 7 Days a Week
857-8174
- ▶ ASAP Medical Clinic
209 Western Ave, South Portland
Mon-Fri: 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Sat 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sun 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM
553-9071

- **WHAT IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY?**

If you have an emergency and need an ambulance, call 911 or 0 (for operator). The hospitals have emergency rooms which are open 24 hours a day every day.

- ▶ Mercy Hospital
144 State Street, Portland
Emergency Department: 879-3000
- ▶ Maine Medical Center
22 Bramhall Street, Portland
Emergency Department: 662-0111

- **WHAT IF I SWALLOWED SOMETHING POISONOUS?**

For **Poison Control** call 871-2950 or 1-800-222-1222, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For other emergency numbers consult the inside of the front cover of the telephone directory.

- **PANDEMIC CARE**

A **Pandemic** is a disease that spreads all over the world and affects a large number of people. It is important to take some basic steps to protect yourselves and others, and always follow the most current advice of the local Dept. of Health and Human Services.

U.S.M. maintains a website for information and emergency procedures in the event of a Pandemic outbreak: www.usm.maine.edu/pandemicflu.

Some basic symptoms of pandemic flu include:

- ✓ **Fever,**

- ✓ **Cough,**
- ✓ **Runny Nose,**
- ✓ **Muscle pain,**
- ✓ **Shaking chills.**

If you are concerned that may have flu, call your healthcare professional as soon as possible, as they can begin helping you over the phone. In the meantime, be sure to keep well hydrated, avoid smoking or drinking alcohol, and stay home from school.

- **WHERE CAN I GET DENTAL CARE?**

A **Dental Clinic** is available to the general public and is staffed by professional dentists and often those just beginning their dental careers. The fees are minimal and usually reflect only the cost of the materials used. Since most health insurance does not cover dental care you may want to consider a dental clinic for your dental needs. Portland has two dental clinics:

- ▶ **Community Dental Health Portland** 874-1028
 640 Brighton Avenue in Portland
 General, preventive and emergency services.
 8 am to 4:30 pm – Monday through Friday

- ▶ **University of New England Dental Clinic** 221-4900
 716 Stevens Avenue, Portland
 Hygiene and preventive care.

You can also seek care from a local dentist. You'll find them listed in the Yellow Pages of the phone book under "**Dentists.**" You should be aware that a private dentist will cost much more than services provided by the dental clinic, but that the waiting time for an appointment may also be shorter.

- **MEDICAL CARE FOR FAMILIES**

You will need to locate a doctor and dentist in the community to care for your family's health needs. Here are some choices.

- ▶ **Private Doctor:** You may wish to ask someone to recommend a doctor or dentist, or simply look in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory under "**Physicians**" or "**Dentists**" for the name of a doctor or dentist in order for you to make an appointment. There may be a delay in getting an appointment with a local doctor or dentist so try you should try to make an appointment well in advance.

- ▶ **The Family Practice Center** is a special unit affiliated with the Maine Medical

Center in Portland, and provides medical care for all types of family illnesses. The Center is located at 272 Congress Street in Portland. Call 874-2466.

- **PRESCRIPTIONS**

A prescription for drugs may be given out for illnesses by doctors. You can get your prescriptions filled at pharmacies like CVS, Rite-Aid or Walgreens. See “**Pharmacies**” in the Yellow Pages for more detailed listings. Prescriptions can be **very** expensive, but one way to get them filled for less cost is to ask for the generic version of a drug you are supposed to take. This will avoid your having to pay a large sum just to get a specific company’s expensive brand-name drug. Instead, you will get the same drug, but manufactured by a company which takes less profit from its customers.

- **MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**

International students often hesitate to consult professionals about mental-health problems. You may never have had the need to talk to a psychologist, psychiatric social worker, or psychiatrist at home, and you may think only Acrazy@ people with very severe mental problems are treated by such professionals. It is not uncommon in the United States, however, for students or other individuals with emotional problems to seek professional help. As a foreign student, far from home and lacking your usual support system of family and close friends, you may find it helpful to consult a mental-health professional when dealing with issues of depression or stress. The process will be completely confidential. U.S.M. has Counseling Centers on both campuses, located at 105 Payson Smith on the Portland Campus and 110 Upton Hall on the Gorham campus. To make an appointment simply call them at 780-4050. You can also look in the yellow pages of the phone book under **Counselors** if you would prefer to use an off campus service.

- **EXERCISE AND EATING RIGHT**

An important part of staying healthy is eating a nutritional and balanced diet. Finding the right foods in a new country may be difficult. The food everyone is eating may not be appeal to you.

It may help to find some traditional foods from home, especially when you first arrive. International students already on campus can tell you some of their favorite places to shop. If you have special dietary requirements, the campus dining halls may be able to accommodate you. Be sure to check with the food-service director about your requirements if you do not readily find the food you need.

Staying healthy in a new environment, with all the differences in food, climate, and language, is a challenge. If you have adequate health insurance, get medical care when you need it, eat a nutritious diet, and get regular exercise, you will stay healthy and get much more out of your experience as a foreign student in the United States.

SAFETY

Campus life in the United States, especially in urban areas, is sometimes perceived as dangerous by foreign students and their families. This perception is heightened by international media coverage of violent incidents which fortunately occur very infrequently. Universities and colleges in the United States want to provide you with a safe and secure environment in which to pursue your academic and social goals.

“*Better safe than sorry*,” goes the American saying. Although the University of Southern Maine is very safe, you should follow the following safety precautions:

- ▶ Ask fellow students or staff members about areas you should avoid at night.
- ▶ Walk in well-lit areas after dark. Walk in groups of two or more whenever possible. Avoid dark areas, between bushes and recessed doorways.
- ▶ If uncertain of the safety of your route, take a bus, walk with a friend, or call the U.S.M.’s Policy and Safety office for an escort. Police and Safety will provide a free escort to any area within the boundaries of the campus.
- ▶ Know where emergency telephones and public telephone booths are located.
- ▶ If you have the feeling while walking that someone is following you, get to a well-lit, public area (such as a store or a restaurant) as soon as possible. Look behind you to show that you are aware someone is there. Do not lead the person to your home.
- ▶ Always be careful to watch your purse or wallet.
- ▶ Never give your ATM number to anyone and do not write your ATM pin number on your ATM card.
- ▶ Do not carry more money than necessary. If possible, use checks when large sums of cash are needed. Do not display money or credit cards openly.
- ▶ Do not carry important documents with you such as your passport, unless absolutely necessary.
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings

- ▶ Trust your instincts. If a situation feels wrong or uncomfortable, take action to get away and get help.
- ▶ Do not enter a vehicle with someone you don't know well.
- ▶ When you are going to meet with someone you don't know well, make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to return.

* PLEASE NOTE: The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998 requires universities to disclose to three years of statistics regarding campus crime, including off campus buildings the university owns and on public property adjacent to campus in Portland, Gorham, and Lewiston. Our report (Safety and Security Information Report) also includes our policies for campus security, such as those concerning alcohol and drug use, crime prevention, the reporting of crimes and sexual assaults, and other related matters. You may obtain a copy by accessing the following web address <http://www.usm.maine.edu/police/safetyreport.htm> or by calling the Office of Community Standards at (207) 780-5242 to request a paper copy.

- SAFETY AT HOME

- ▶ Do not allow strangers to enter your apartment or building. Do not prop open entry doors to your building, as this may enable strangers to enter the building.
- ▶ Report broken locks, windows and doors, as well as lights that are burned out to your landlord.
- ▶ Identify the hospital emergency room nearest to your home and know what to do in case of an emergency.
- ▶ Keep “emergency” numbers near your phone at home **(911 IS THE GENERAL EMERGENCY NUMBER IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS NUMBER WILL CONNECT YOU WITH THE POLICE, FIRE DEPARTMENT OR AMBULANCE SERVICE.)**
- ▶ If you receive obscene or harassing telephone calls, hang up immediately. If calls persist, notify the police.
- ▶ Make sure all fire and smoke alarms are in working order. Test them on a regular basis. If you are not sure how to do this, ask your landlord.
- ▶ Do not overload electrical circuits by using too many extension cords, lamps or appliances. Be sure that electrical appliances you have brought from overseas can be used safely in this country.

- ▶ Do not smoke in bed or leave a lit cigarette unattended.
- ▶ If you select off-campus housing, consider its safety features such as door locks, street and entry lighting and escape routes.
- ▶ If you are harassed on-line by anyone (known or unknown) do not respond. Save the harassing emails or messages. Delete the person from your friend's list (Facebook) and notify your Internet Service Provider of the harassment. Cyber harassment is a crime.

- **FIRE SAFETY**

Fire is among the leading causes of death in the United States. By attending to the following safety points, you can reduce the risk of fire where you live.

- ▶ Be a good housekeeper. Do not let flammable (easy to catch on fire) materials block exits. Make sure windows are easy to open. Please note that flammable and inflammable mean the same thing.
- ▶ Plan an escape route in case of a fire. By law, there must be two exits from the living unit.
- ▶ For your safety, your landlord is required by law to provide smoke detectors. Be sure to ask where they are located in the apartment or when they will be purchased. If necessary buy them yourself. (Smoke detectors are available in hardware and department stores for approximately \$25.00.) The batteries in your smoke detector should be changed twice a year in order to ensure that it is working properly.
- ▶ Check electrical appliance cords for breaks in the insulation or exposed wires.
- ▶ Keep stoves, frying pans, and vents free of grease.
- ▶ Avoid using candles. Never leave burning candles unattended.
- ▶ Learn the locations of the fire alarms and fire extinguishers in the building.
- ▶ Keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen.
- ▶ Post the number of the fire department next to your phone.

IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

- ▶ Sound the alarm to alert other residents.
- ▶ Call the fire department.
- ▶ Shut all doors and windows.
- ▶ Leave the building quickly by the nearest available exit. Always use the stairs. **NEVER** use elevators during a fire or when you hear an alarm!
- ▶ Pull the street fire alarm box and wait to direct fire department personnel to the fire.

IF YOU HEAR A FIRE ALARM SOUND

- ▶ Leave quickly but calmly. If possible, close all windows and leave the hallway door unlocked.

IF THE EXIT PASSAGES ARE BLOCKED BY FIRE OR SMOKE

- ▶ Stay in your room with the door tightly closed. Push a towel under the door.
- ▶ Open windows for fresh air - **only after the door to the hallway is closed.**
- ▶ Remain at your window until help arrives.

● SAFETY WHILE DRIVING

- ▶ You must have a valid driver's license to drive in Maine.
- ▶ You must have automobile insurance & carry proof of this insurance in your car.
- ▶ Never drink alcohol and drive; you may end up in jail even if you are not in an accident.
- ▶ Always wear your seatbelt -- it's required by law.
- ▶ Children under age six (6) must be securely strapped in a child's safety seat. (If you have an airbag in the front passenger side of the car, always put children in the back seat.)

- ▶ Learn the local traffic regulations and observe speed limits.
- ▶ Always lock your car when you leave it parked. Do not leave packages or other valuables in sight in a car. Leave them under the seat or in the trunk of your car.
- ▶ Keep your car in good operating condition.
- ▶ Keep safety equipment (a flashlight, reflectors, first aid kit, etc.) in the trunk.
- ▶ You should also keep some additional supplies in your car during the winter months in case you become stranded. Items might include: a blanket, extra clothing, power or granola bars for nutrition, etc.
- ▶ **Do not** pick up “hitchhikers” (people/pedestrians who solicit free rides from the side of the road).
- **CRIMES**

The most common crime on U.S. campuses is the theft of property left unattended or in an unlocked room, car or apartment. More serious crimes may also occur. Protect yourself by exercising good sense and caution by using some of the tips mentioned on the previous page.

Spouse abuse, or domestic violence, is a crime in the United States. Domestic violence is when a person uses abusive tactics to control his or her partner. It is a pattern of behavior that includes emotional, psychological, sexual, economic and/or physical abuse. It occurs over a period of time. It can range from chronic insults and belittling to severely violent, life-threatening behavior. You may feel that all domestic matters, especially those that occur within your home, are private matters, but in the United States they cease to be private once one party uses physical violence. In most states, if a couple is fighting and the police come to the scene and find evidence of an assault, they are required to arrest the attacker and put him or her in jail. In some cases, both participants may be arrested. If a spouse feels they are being victimized by their partner or a person with whom they are living, they should seek help immediately.

If you believe that you are in an unsafe relationship seek support and information by calling Family Crisis Hotline at 1-866-834-4357. You don't have to reveal your name when you call, it is completely anonymous. Family Crisis Services offers support in courts, support groups, and if you feel unsafe in your home, an emergency shelter. If you feel that you are in immediate danger, you should call the police by dialing 911. Remember that this Help Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault or relationship violence we

encourage you to seek support. Some local resources are listed below:

- ▶ For Counseling Support contact:
 - USM Health and Counseling 780-4050.

- ▶ To reach a Sexual Assault Advocate call:
 - Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM) 1-800-313-9900.

- ▶ To reach a Domestic Violence Advocate call:
 - Family Crisis Services 1-800-537-6066.

- ▶ For all other questions and support contact the Office of International Programs 780-4959

Stalking is also against the law. Stalking can occur within the relationship or after it is over. Stalking is invading your partner's privacy by physically monitoring her or him or by using phone harassment, technology, and social networking sites.

- **SCAMS**

- ▶ Here are two American expressions that are worth learning “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” And, “You can’t get something for nothing.” Do not be deceived by false statements and “pushy” appeals.

- ▶ Be careful about lending or giving money to anyone, especially strangers. If you are reluctant in the face of a request for money just say, “I am sorry, but I cannot help you.”

- ▶ Unless you have initiated a transaction to obtain a product, service or benefit, never give your credit card number, bank account number, or social security number to anyone. You may be giving it to a person who will use the information illegally.

- ▶ You may be informed that you “have won a fabulous prize” or are eligible to visit a resort for a very low price provided that you send a sum of money or provide your credit card number. Never do so.

- ▶ If you are called on the telephone and you are not interested in or do not understand the caller's offer, just interrupt, say “No thanks,” and hang up the phone. It's easy!

- ▶ Do not be deceived into buying immigration benefits, and beware of services that offer to file immigration forms on your behalf. If solicited by such services, inform your International Student Advisor.

- **THE CIA AND THE FBI**

No doubt you have heard a great deal about the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). These agencies exist to investigate very specific criminal activities. However, the chances of any international student actually encountering agents of either of these agencies is extremely remote. The only federal agency responsible for enforcing the laws and regulations governing the presence of non-immigrants in the United States is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). In addition, you are individually responsible to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the payment of your federal taxes. If you are contacted by other federal agencies for any reason, consult your International Student Advisor about your rights and responsibilities.

THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES

The laws of the United States seek a balance between personal freedom and the requirements of an orderly society. Our system is based on English Common Law and has grown over a long period of time into a very complex system involving the United States Constitution, federal laws, laws of the 50 states, local ordinances, court decisions and various regulations. It is impossible to describe the whole of U.S. law, but certain basic principles of special interest to international students are discussed briefly below.

The Rule of Law: The “rule of law” means that Americans are governed by laws, not by individuals. The people can change the law only through proper and usually lengthy procedures. Once the law is established, it is the law for everyone, including government officials from the President down.

The United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land. All other laws must be consistent with the Constitution. New laws that are not consistent with the Constitution can be challenged in court and declared “unconstitutional.” In this way, ordinances and regulations are constantly tested to be sure they conform to the principles set forth in the Constitution.

Due Process of Law and Equal Protection under the Law: The 5th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution guarantee “due process of law” to all persons, including international students and other aliens in the U.S. By its simplest definition, “due process” means fairness. Due process of law requires that orderly legal procedures be followed to establish guilt before a person can be put in jail or otherwise punished. In the United States, a person is considered innocent until proven guilty.

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees to every person, aliens included, “equal protection under the law.” This means that the law applies to everyone equally, regardless of age, sex, race, or wealth, and that no law may discriminate between persons or classes of persons. There are, however, laws that apply only to certain classes of people, such as aliens. As long as there is a reasonable basis for these laws, they satisfy the requirement of fairness and justice. These laws may limit and modify basic rights. Except for these special alien laws, international students are subject to the same laws as are American citizens. They are also guaranteed the same protection under the laws and the same civil rights as are American citizens.

- **EFFECT OF LAW ON IMMIGRATION STATUS:**

- A. **Violation of the law** - Any violation of the law can affect an

international student's immigration status. Offenses such as petty theft, drunkenness and disturbing the peace ordinarily will not directly affect the student's status, but these offenses are kept on record and are occasionally reviewed by the U.S. Immigration authorities. Although a single offense usually is excused, if a student has committed several minor violations, he or she may be subject to deportation. For a more serious criminal violation, there is always the possibility of deportation. Violations of the drug laws and moral offenses are considered especially serious.

B. Dismissal from the University - International students who violate the rules of the university and are suspended or dismissed are no longer students. Since being a full-time student was one of the conditions of original entry, loss of student status results in a violation of immigration status as well.

C. Revocation of Passport - International students must consider the attitude of their home governments toward conduct while in this country. A government can cancel one's passport, making it impossible to continue to stay in the U.S. It is also important to know that once individuals have been deported from the U.S. they need special permission from the U.S. Attorney General before they are permitted to re-enter.

- **WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF TROUBLE WITH THE LAW:**

Even though you believe that you understand the law or that you are innocent of any violation of the law, if you get in to trouble you should always seek legal advice. The law is so complex that the ordinary person often does not understand the legal issues, and might make matters worse if he/she talks too much or doesn't know what to do. Contact the Office of International Programs. If help is beyond the scope of the office, you will be referred to the appropriate persons who can help. Remember that the full details of the situation must be presented objectively in order for anyone to be able to give you assistance.

- **SOURCES OF LEGAL HELP:**

- ▶ U.S.M. Student Legal Services 780-4792
Woodbury Campus Center
- ▶ Pine Tree Legal Assistance 774-8211
88 Federal Street, Portland
- ▶ Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic 780-4370
59 Exeter Street, Portland

The Office of International Programs also has a list of lawyers who work with immigration issues. Simply ask Kimberly or Larisa if you need a referral.

- **IF YOU ARE ARRESTED:**

If you are arrested by the police, you should be aware of your rights. First you are not required to answer questions except to identify yourself and give your address. It is best to cooperate with law enforcement officials, but you must protect your rights too.

- A. You have the right to know the charges against you.
- B. You have the right to remain silent until you are questioned in the presence of your attorney.
- C. You have a right to an attorney. If you do not have one or if you cannot afford one, the court will provide one for you.
- D. You have the right to a hearing in court the day following your arrest (except Saturday and Sundays). Remember that anything you say may be used against you in court.
- E. You are allowed two telephone calls. Call an attorney or a friend.
- F. Do not resist arrest, since you may be charged with resisting arrest even if other charges are dropped. Do not physically resist a search of your person or home, but if you do not agree to a search, say so. If the police say that they have a search warrant (which is issued by a judge and gives the police the right to search your home), ask to see it.
- G. If questioned about your case by a police officer, answer only, "I wish to see my attorney." The questions may sound unimportant, but you should not answer them unless you have consulted an attorney.

MONEY MATTERS

United States Currency

U.S. currency is based on the metric system. The dollar (\$) is made up of one hundred cents. Coins are used for amounts less than 1 dollar.

1 penny ‘ 1 cent ‘ \$.01
1 nickel ‘ 5 cents ‘ \$.05

1 dime ‘ 10 cents ‘ \$.10
1 quarter ‘ 25 cents ‘ \$.25

These coins are of different sizes and metals. The size of the coin is not based on its value. For example, the nickel is larger than the dime, though it is worth half as much. \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, etc. bills are paper money with the number designating their value in the corners. **All bills are the same size and color.**

- **BANKING**

How to choose a bank or a credit union: Banks offer several kinds of accounts where you can keep your money. You may want to compare the services and costs of a few banks before choosing one at which to open an account. One bank may be more conveniently located than others; another may have more automated teller machines; a third may charge less to maintain a checking account so you should be sure to consider what is most important to you. You may also want to consider a credit union. U.S.M. students are eligible to open accounts at the University Credit Union located only one block from the Portland Campus. **Just what is a Credit Union?** Credit unions are not for profit, full service financial institutions owned by and operated for its members. While credit unions offer a wide variety of savings and loan products and financial services, they may not offer be able to offer all of the services provided by larger banks. You’ll need to speak with the various banks or credit union to make sure they offer all of the services that you will need. Don’t be shy about asking questions.

It is wise to shop around for the best rates before opening an account to get the one that best meets your needs. The kind of account you open will depend, for instance, on the number of checks you will need to write each month and/or the amount of money you plan to keep in the account (your balance).

There are two major types of accounts:

- 1. CHECKING**
- 2. SAVINGS** (also called Fixed Deposit Accounts in some countries)

Many students open both a savings and a checking account at the same bank or credit union so that they can transfer money from the interest-bearing savings account into their checking account as they need it.

1. CHECKING

A checking account will permit you to write checks to make purchases and pay most bills. Checking accounts provide you with immediate access to your money. Most retailers and service providers will accept personal checks drawn on any U.S. bank (it need not be a local bank) as long as you show appropriate identification.

By using checks it's easy to keep track of how you spend your money. It is important to keep enough money in your account to cover all your checks; otherwise you may be fined by the bank. Some banks offer "overdraft protection" enabling you to write a check that exceeds your balance in the account, BUT you will have to pay that money back along with interest.

2. SAVINGS

Unlike checking accounts, saving accounts earn interest on the balance in the account. If you have brought extra money with you for expenses you plan to incur over the academic year or during your entire academic program a savings account is a good, safe place to keep these funds. Plus they will earn interest! You can withdraw money from a savings account either from an ATM machine or by seeing a teller but you cannot write checks against a savings account. You can also transfer funds from your savings account to your checking account as you need them.

3. NOW (NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL) ACCOUNTS

Some banks offer what is called a NOW account that combines the features of both savings and checking accounts. With a NOW account, you can write a certain number of checks per month and the account earns interest on the remaining balance. NOW accounts usually have high fees associated with them if you drop below the minimum balance requirement. When considering a NOW account you should also ask about the current interest rate, as it is typically very low making the combination of a savings and checking account the preferred option over a NOW account.

- **ATM CARDS**

Most savings and all checking accounts offer ATM cards for the easy withdrawal of money. ATM cards are issued by the bank and allow you to access your account through an ATM machine in order to withdraw or deposit money at any time. When you receive your plastic ATM card you will pick or be assigned a password or "PIN" number. You should memorize this PIN since you will need to enter it into the ATM machine in order to access your account. You should keep your PIN number secret and do not store the number in your wallet or purse along with your ATM card. With your ATM card you can check your balance, transfer funds between accounts, or receive cash. ATM machines are located in or outside of banks, supermarkets and shopping centers and there is typically no charge for using those machines that belong to your bank. **If you use an ATM machine that belongs to a bank other than**

the bank where you have your accounts, you will be charged \$1.50 to \$3.00 for each use.

- **DEBIT CARDS**

Your ATM card is actually a debit card - every time you use it, money is taken directly out of your bank account. However, you may want what is known as a DEBIT card which allows you to make purchases at local stores, gas stations, etc. Debit cards work much like credit cards however, with debit cards the money is taken directly and almost immediately out of your account. That means that you should not make a purchase using a debit card unless you have enough money in your bank account to cover it. You should also ask your bank if you will be charged a monthly or yearly fee for using the debit card.

- **HOW TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT AT A BANK**

Banks have customer service personnel who help people open accounts. They have their own departments, so ask a bank teller to point you to the appropriate person.

You will need your passport and at least one other piece of identification. Local banks have forms, called a **W-8**, which will allow you to open a bank account without a social security number. Be sure to ask for one if you need one. You will also need cash, a bank draft, cashier's check, or traveler's check--payable in U.S. dollars. You may also be asked for proof of your local address. If you have nothing else, then a letter someone has mailed to your American address will do.

You will be able to open a savings and/or checking account and obtain paper checks and an ATM card without a U.S. Social Security Number. You will not be eligible to apply for a credit card.

Be sure to read all of the small print before signing any paperwork and be sure to ask questions if you don't understand. Opening an account is like entering a contract so it is important to understand what you are agreeing to. If you are married, you may want to consider opening a "joint account" which allows two people access to the same account(s).

Once you have opened a checking account, you will be given numbered checks imprinted with your name, address, and account number so that you can write checks against your balance. There is a small charge for these checks.

Nearby banks include:

\$	UNIVERSITY CREDIT UNION	772-1906
	391 Forest Avenue, Portland	
	They also have an ATM Machine located on Portland campus, just outside of the Woodbury Campus Center	

www.ucu.maine.edu

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Thursday 9 AM to 4 PM
Friday 9 AM to 5 PM

\$ TD BANK 761-8711
481 Congress Street, Portland
www.tdbank.com

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Thursday 8:30 AM to 4 PM
Friday 8:30 AM to 5 PM
Saturday 8:30 AM to 12PM

449 Forest Avenue, Portland **774-1733**

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Wednesday 9:00 AM to 4 PM
Thursday & Friday 9:00 AM to 5 PM

Drive-Up Service Hours
Monday-Friday 7:30 AM to 6 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM to 3 PM
Sunday 11:00 AM to 4 PM

\$ KEY BANK 874-7322
400 Forest Avenue, Portland
www.key.com

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Friday 9 AM to 4 PM
Saturday 9 AM to 12:00 Noon

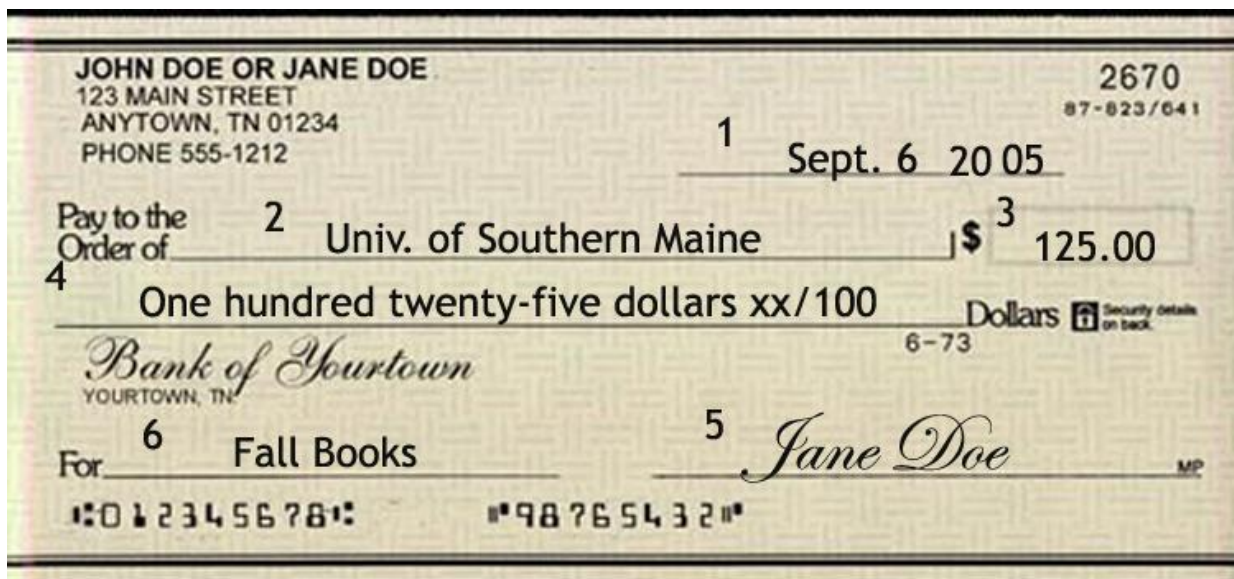
It's important to note that most of the banks we have mentioned in this handbook also have other offices located throughout the state. You should look in the local phone book, under Banks, in the yellow pages to find out the location of their other offices.

● WRITING A CHECK:

Below are the steps to follow when writing a check

1. Write the date on which you are issuing the check.
2. Write the name of the person or business to whom you are making the payment.

3. Write the amount of the payment in numerals.
4. Spell out the number of dollars included in the payment and write the number of cents in the form of a fraction.
5. Sign your name as you signed it at the bank when you opened the account.
6. Note the purpose of the payment.
7. If you are using unnumbered checks issued to you by the bank, be sure to number them yourself -- you should never give someone a check without a number.



- **USING YOUR CHECKING ACCOUNT**

You should record all the information on your check register immediately after you write a check. This includes the check number, the date the check was written, the name of the person or business to whom the payment is being made, amount of the check, and the bank fee for the check, if there is one.

Then calculate the balance remaining in your account. If you overdraw your account the bank will charge you \$10-25 for a “bounced” (insufficient funds) check to cover their time and effort. When you “make a deposit” (add money to your account), you should record that also.

RECORD ALL CHARGES OR CREDITS THAT AFFECT YOUR ACCOUNT							
Number	Date	Description of Transaction	Payment/ Debit (-)	T T	Fee/ If Any (-)	Deposit/ Credit (+)	Balance
							125.00
1977	4/2	Univ. Of So. Maine Fall Books	25.36				99.64
1978	4/5	AT & T Phone Bill	35.00				64.64
	4/8	DEPOSIT				100.00	164.64

- **CASHING A CHECK**

Your bank will cash a check during its working hours but please be aware that it will take a minimum of **four weeks to cash checks from foreign banks.**

The U.S.M. Portland and Gorham Bookstores will cash a personal check up to \$10. You will need to show a picture identification card and you must write your student ID number on the check. Each international student is given a student ID number, which you will receive at the International Student Orientation.

BANKING GLOSSARY

Account - Record of a person's resources in a bank

Balance - Amount of money in the account after a sum has been added or withdrawn

Bank Number - Small code number on checks to identify the bank

Check - Written against the balance in your bank account and used in place of cash

Canceled Check - A check that has been cashed and returned with a statement for your records

Cash a Check - Receive money for a check

Debit - The amount subtracted from the balance of an account

Deductions - Small amounts subtracted by the bank from the balance (service charges and insufficient funds)

Deposit - To put money in the bank

Deposit Slip - The bank form used to accompany the actual deposit. Usually a supply of deposit slips is included in your checkbook.

Depositor - The person depositing money into the bank

Endorse - To sign one's name as payee on the back of a check

Interest - Amount of money earned on a bank account; the earnings are based on a percentage of the account's balance.

NSF - Not sufficient funds in your account to cover the amount of a specific check

Overdraw - Withdraw more money than is in the account

Service Charge - Small charge by a bank for its services. This charge appears on the monthly bank statement and automatically deducted from the balance.

MONEY MANAGEMENT TIPS

- If this is the first time you have had a credit card, beware of over-extending yourself. Remember you may pay from 15-23% per year in interest for amounts not paid within the allowed period, usually 21-28 days.
- Keeping track of your expenses in various categories (food, books, etc.) can help you identify where most of your money is being spent.
- Since you know your income and basic expenses, pay all bills at the start of each month. Then you will know exactly how much remains.
- To save money on food, collect coupons from the Sunday newspaper or from the store itself and give them to the cashier to get money off on the food you buy.
- Before purchasing an item, Consumer Credit Counseling Services suggests you pose the following questions to yourself:
 - ~ Do I need it?
 - ~ Do I have to have it today?
 - ~ What will happen if I don't buy it?
 - ~ How have I managed this long without it?
- Use a notebook to write down purchases you are interested in making. Include a description of the item, the store where you see it, and the price. Then walk out of the store. "Reconsider it." If you decide you can afford it and still want to make the purchase after careful consideration, and then buy it later.
- Don't be tempted by too many credit cards. As a student you should be fine with just one.
- Credit cards are loans. You pay interest on any money you don't pay off when the bill is due. If you can't pay off the balance in full at the end of the month, then at least try to pay more than the minimum balance due.

GETTING IN CONTACT

• E-MAIL

E-mail is the official means of contacting students and distributing information at the University of Southern Maine. You will receive a USM email address (e.g. your.name@maine.edu) that needs to be activated before you can use it. You can do this online at <http://mail.maine.edu> or by going to the computer labs on the Portland or Gorham campus.

E-mail is appropriate for communication with a professor or USM staff person. If you have questions, need to set up or cancel a meeting, you can send them an e-mail. Most professors prefer that you use your U.S.M. e-mail account so they know that it is not junk mail.

• BY TELEPHONE

In the U.S., the telephone is a convenient means of saving time and unnecessary walking, for making reservations, appointments, and for requesting information. It is standard practice to make appointments with doctors, professors, friends, or anyone else you may encounter by using the telephone. You can also call to get bus schedules, open hours for businesses, and countless other uses.

Most students have cell phones and there is a wide variety of companies that sell cell phones and offer competitive plans. Most cell phone plans require you to sign a one-year contract, meaning you agree to pay for their service each month for an entire year. If you will not be in the U.S. for an entire year, you should consider a “pay-as-you-go” plan instead. This allows you to purchase minutes for your phone and you do not have to sign a contract. Shop around before purchasing a phone or cell phone plan and ask the providers about their international calling rates. Popular cell phone companies are T-Mobile, Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, AllTel, U.S. Cellular, and TracFone. The iPhone is only available through AT&T.

There are pay phones in the Woodbury Campus Center in Portland and the Brooks Student Center in Gorham. If you are living on campus, you will have a phone jack in your room. You will be expected to provide your own phone and be responsible for bills and maintenance. If you are living on campus and wish to make long distance phone calls you may use a calling card or you may obtain a long distance authorization code from the U.S.M. Department of Telecommunications. Any long distance calls made using this code will appear on your U.S.M. student bill and you will receive a bill approximately once per month. Please note: When your long distance phone charges reach \$75 or more within one month, your U.S.M. authorization code will be deactivated. In order to reactivate the account you will need to pay the charges in full at the student billing office in Gorham or Portland and notify Telecommunications that the payment has been made.

For more information or to obtain a long distance authorization code please contact the Telecommunications Department located in 4 Payson Smith Hall, Portland Campus or call them at 780-4054.

All telephone numbers in the U.S. have 10 digits: a 3 digit area code and a 7 digit local number. Each state has at least one area code. Maine's area code is 207.

- **THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY**

The telephone directory (book) consists of white and yellow pages, and a section of businesses listed alphabetically. It is distributed free to all telephone users. Several pages in front are devoted to useful information regarding calling cards, billing, repair, and other services.

- The **“White Pages”** section contains residential phone numbers and business listings.
- The **“Yellow Pages”** contain most businesses listed alphabetically by type of business. For example, hotels, banks, doctors, churches, locksmiths (in case you lock yourself out of your home or car!) and more.

If you do not know a number or cannot find it in the Telephone Directory dial “411” for assistance from “Information.” The operator will ask for the city you want to call and then the name of the person or business whose number you need. Then have a pen or pencil ready because the operator will give you the number you requested. **If you know the number but need help making the call, “DIAL 0” for assistance.**

Pay Telephones are usually coin operated. Instructions are printed on the phone itself. If you find it difficult to follow these instructions, dial “0” and ask the operator to connect you to the needed number. A local call will cost \$.50 but it is advisable to have a large supply of coins with you, because your call may require additional coins depending on the location.

To Make a Local Call: Just dial the 7 digit local number.

For example: 780-1111.

Local Calls (*not made from pay phones*) are free.

When calling someone at U.S.M. from an on-campus phone, use only the last four digits of the university extension. For Example: to call the Office of International Programs, use only the last four digits (4959) when calling from a U.S.M. department or dormitory phone.

- **TIME ZONES**

The continental U.S. is divided into 4 time zones: Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific. This means that it may be a different time in the area which you are calling. You should consider this

before placing any long distance call. See the map in the front section of the telephone directory to learn the time zone of a location you may wish to call. For Hawaii and Alaska check with a telephone operator

- **LONG DISTANCE CALLS: THE THREE TYPES**

1. **Station-to-Station**

This is the usual and cheapest way to make a long distance call. To make a call in this manner simply dial **1+area code+7 digit number**. You will speak with whoever answers the phone at that residence or business, so you may need to ask for your particular party. *If you are calling on a pay phone* the operator will tell you how much to deposit for three minutes. If your call is longer than three minutes the operator will tell you how much more money to deposit for additional time.

2. **Person-to-Person**

You tell the operator with whom you wish to speak and pay only if that person is available. **To do so, dial: 0+area code+7 digit number**. An operator will intercept the call. You should say "I am trying to make a Person-to-Person call." The operator will ask for additional information before connecting you.

3. **Collect**

The person you are calling agrees to pay for the call. **To call collect, dial 0+area code+7 digit number**. When the operator intercepts the call say AI wish to make this a collect call. My name is _____. Sometimes your call will be retrieved by an automated system rather than a live operator. In these cases, simply follow the instructions given.

If you think you may make long-distance calls from phones other than your own, the long-distance carriers like AT&T offer telephone cards to make paying easier. With a pre-paid phone card you can make calls from a pay phone without having to deposit money. Pre-paid phone cards have a balance in U.S. Dollars on them and each call you make is deducted from the amount of money on that phone card.

Cheap Long Distance Rates in the U.S.

It is less expensive to call long distance during evenings and weekends. When calling out-of-state you get a 35% discount Sunday through Friday from 5 P.M. to 11 P.M., and a 60% discount from 11 P.M. to 8 A.M. You also get a 60% discount from 11 P.M. Friday through Saturday to 5 P.M. on Sunday. There are no discounts on calls made 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday to Friday.

It is always least expensive to call direct by dialing 1-area code-local number.

Evening and weekend calls within Maine are also discounted, although not as much as out-of-state calls. The U.S.M. calling plan adheres to all discounts offered by the long-distance phone companies.

- **INTERNATIONAL CALLS**

You may dial international calls directly. Each country has a code number (listed in the front of the telephone directory) and each city has a code number. Some major city codes are listed in the front of the directory. To dial a city not listed, **dial 102880** and ask the operator for the city code you need. (From an on-campus phone you'll need to dial 9-102880) A useful website for finding dialing codes is www.countrycallingcodes.com.

- **To place an international call:**
Dial 011 + country code + city code + telephone number
For example, to call a friend in Chiba City, Japan, you would dial 011 + 81 + 43 + the number.

- **USEFUL TELEPHONE HINTS**

- Phone numbers that have a 1-800 or 1-888 before the number are **toll free** numbers and there is no charge to call these numbers.
- Phone numbers with a 1-900 before the number are **toll** numbers. You will be charged for each minute you talk. **1-900 numbers are often very expensive.**
- For an EMERGENCY dial **911** to get police, ambulance or fire departments
- You may receive calls from salespersons seeking money for charity or trying to sell you items or get you to open credit card accounts. Feel free to say **“No thank you”** and hang up. You can also asked to be placed on their **“Do not call list”** which means that they will remove your name from their calling list for a certain period of time. If you are bothered by persistent phone calls, report it to the phone company.

- **FAX SERVICES**

Fax services are available at the U.S.M. Bookstores, Kinko's Copy Center in Monument

Square in Portland and The UPS Store which is located on Marginal Way almost directly across from the U.S.M. student satellite lot.

Sample Costs for Sending Faxes:

U.S.M.	Kinko's
Domestic: \$1 per page for U.S.	Domestic: \$2.49 for the first page and \$1.50 for each additional page,
International: \$5 for the first page and \$1 for each additional page.	International: \$6 for the first page and \$3.99 for each additional page.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICES

The largest Post Office in Portland is located on the corner of Forest Avenue and Portland Street, a 10 minute walk from the campus, and offers all postal services. There are also branch offices at:

- ▶ 1 Post Office Square (in Gorham behind the Hannaford grocery store), 839-3591
- ▶ 400 Congress St. (Downtown Portland), 761-0267

In each campus center, there are postage stamp-dispensing machines, and the bookstores sell envelopes. There is a mailbox near the Woodbury Campus Center in Portland and at the back of Upton Hall in Gorham. All mailboxes are blue. Pick-up times are posted inside the lid of the mail box.

Several the types of mailing services offered by the Post Office are described below. For more details, inquire at the Post Office and ask for the booklet ***“A Consumer’s Directory of Postal Services and Products.”***

Zip Codes: All addresses in the U.S. have a 5 digit zip code according to the state and city. These numbers speed mail delivery. If you don’t know the zip code you can use the directory in the post office. Local zip code information is given on the last page of the telephone directory.

- **CHOICES FOR MAILING YOUR LETTERS/PACKAGES**

Please note that rates change often. Check www.usps.com for current rates.

- ▶ **First Class:** This is for most letters, aerogrammes and cards. An aerogramme is the cheapest way of writing a letter to another country. It can be bought at the Post Office for 75¢. A stamp for an ordinary letter in an envelope weighing less than 1 ounce is 44¢ if sent within the U.S. and 90¢ if sent to another country (except for Canada which costs 65¢ and Mexico which costs 65¢). Post card stamps cost 26¢ if sent in the U.S. and 90¢ if sent internationally (except for Canada at 69¢ and Mexico at 69¢)

- ▶ **Registered Mail:** Send important items, regardless of value, by registered mail. When you use registered mail, you buy protection against loss or damage. You receive a receipt and your letter is monitored from the point of acceptance to delivery. You may also purchase insurance on registered articles up to \$25,000. For an additional fee, a return receipt may be obtained showing to whom, when, and where the item was delivered.

► **Certified Mail:** This provides you with a mailing receipt and record of delivery is maintained at the addressee's Post Office. A return receipt to provide the sender proof of delivery may be obtained for an additional fee. Important documents like passports should always be sent by certified or registered mail with a return receipt requested. Checks are normally sent First Class mail, but may be sent by registered or certified mail.

► **4th Class or Parcel Post:** Use this service for packages which do not contain first-class matter. The Post Office has special mailing rates for books and catalogues. For faster delivery of parcels use priority mail or express mail.

► **Express Mail Service:** There are several options for those who need rapid delivery of letters or packages. Take your shipment to any designated Express Mail Post Office by 5 PM. Your mailing will be delivered by 3 PM the next day, or it may be picked up by the addressee at their Post Office as early as 10 AM the next business day. Express mail is also available to many foreign countries. This service comes with a money-back guarantee and shipments are insured against loss or damage at no additional cost. Other services are also available.

Priority Mail International: There is a flat-rate envelope option - \$11.45 for Canada and Mexico, and \$13.45 for all other countries. There is a 4-pound weight limit for the Priority Mail International flat-rate envelope. Larger packages of up to 20 pounds can be sent for a flat rate of \$26.95 to Canada and Mexico, and \$43.45 for all other countries.

Private companies such as Federal Express (1-800-463-3339) and UPS (1-800-742-5877) will also deliver items overnight. The UPS Store, and some Post Offices act as UPS representatives.

- **\$ MONEY ORDERS \$**

NEVER send cash through the mail. Money orders are a safe way to send money and they provide some additional protections not offered by personal checks. You can buy domestic money orders at all Post Offices for up to \$500. If your money order is lost or stolen, present your customer receipt and it will be replaced. You can obtain copies of money orders for two years after the date they are paid. International Money Orders for payment in foreign countries may be purchased at most large Post Offices.

ACADEMICS

The U.S. academic environment is probably different from your country. Differences may exist in academic requirements, traditions and standards. In many parts of the world, authority, rank and position are not challenged out of respect, fear, or because a hierarchy of rank has been fixed so long that people were trained for generations never to challenge it. In such countries students are not expected to question their teachers in school.

In the U.S., Americans are trained to question, analyze, and research. “Go look it up for yourself,” they are told. In social conversations you may find that people argue, pick apart ideas, ask for sources or challenge your conclusions. Sometimes they will deliberately play “devil’s advocate”-- take an opposing view just for the sake of discussion or argument.

You may find the methods of teaching you encounter here stimulating, while other methods may seem merely confusing. It’s important to pay close attention to the academic guidelines of your particular degree program. Consult your advisor and professors when you have questions about your program of study. They welcome your interest and questions; after all, that’s what they are here for!

- **OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

- ▶ An important academic tradition is the degree of informality in classrooms. Free discussions and critical questions are encouraged by most professors. Professors have regular office hours when they are available to discuss any difficulties relating to their courses, and many prefer a casual environment during visits. Professors will also meet students by special appointment. Students are urged to take advantage of opportunities to become acquainted with their professors.

- ▶ Class attendance is critical. If you miss classes without notifying the professor first, the professor may assume you are disinterested. You should carefully read the course syllabus to learn the professor’s policy on absences. Be sure you understand what you must do if you will be absent (example: call the professor or department in advance) and how any absences will affect your overall grade.

- ▶ Class participation is often considered in determining your grade. You should not hesitate to politely speak up in class, ask questions and take part in discussions.

▶ Most professors wait for students to ask for help rather than offering assistance. However, they are usually very willing to help if you approach them. They can be unsympathetic to students who complain about their grades at the end of the semester but never asked for help earlier. Ask early! The professor won't be offended.

▶ Tests are given frequently in most courses, and you must study consistently from the beginning of the semester. If you fall behind at the beginning, you may not be able to catch up!

▶ The professor will usually tell you in the first few classes how your final grade is determined. Professors differ in the emphasis given to various factors like class participation, attendance, tests and final examinations in determining the final grade. When in doubt, ask!

▶ It is estimated that U.S.M. students need to spend 2 to 3 hours studying for each hour in class. Students still becoming accustomed to reading English will find more study time is necessary.

● CALCULATING YOUR G.P.A. (GRADE POINT AVERAGE)

The Registrar's Office keeps a record on each student called a transcript. This contains a listing of all your courses, grades and your G.P.A. If you need a copy of your record for yourself or to send to another institution, you should visit the Registrar's Office.

A = 4.0 B = 3.0 C = 2.0 D = 1.0 F = 0.0

When you receive a grade, a corresponding number of points (above) will be multiplied by the number of credits that the course is worth. Most courses are worth 3 credits, some are worth more or less. This will give the number of grade points you have received for that course. This procedure is followed for each of your courses.

The total number of grade points you have received is then added, and the total is divided by the number of credit hours you have attempted. There is helpful GPA calculator at www.usm.maine.edu/advising/gpaCalc.html.

For example:	Grade	Credits	=	Grade Points
	4.0 (A)	x 3	=	12
	4.0 (A)	x 3	=	12
	3.0 (B)	x 3	=	9

$$3.0 \text{ (B)} \times 3 = \frac{9}{42}$$

42 is then divided by 12 (total number of credits attempted) to equal 3.5. Your G.P.A. is a 3.5!

The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** of 1974 (*Buckley Amendment*) protects the privacy of your educational records. In general, you have the right to review those records and personal information about you will not be released to others without your consent, except under circumstances specified by the amendment.

- **GETTING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FROM CLASSES**

It is important to gain as much as you can from your classes. Here are some helpful suggestions:

- ▶ **READ IN ADVANCE.** If you have assignments that relate to a lecture, do the reading before the class so you will understand the lecture more. You may have questions from the reading to ask in class.

- ▶ **TAKE NOTES.** Write down the main points the lecturer makes. Many lecturers use phrases that help you identify points they think are important for you to note. Examples of these phrases are: “There are 3 major reasons for this. The first is..,” “The next major development was...” or “The main thing to keep in mind is...”

- ▶ **REVIEW.** After class, go over your notes. Fill in points you left out. Mark areas you still have questions about. Talk to other students if you missed some key points in your notes.

- ▶ **GET HELP IF YOU NEED IT.** If you have specific questions or are having difficulty understanding what is happening in class, get help. Talk to the professor or the graduate teaching assistant. Find another student in the class who knows the material and is willing to answer questions. If you are having serious difficulties, consider going to the department office or the professor to see if they can help you get a tutor--a person to work with you privately on the class material. Other international students may have had the same class and can help you.

- ▶ **DON'T BE DISCOURAGED!** New international students will inevitably have difficulties understanding what is happening in some of their classes. Either the teacher talks too fast or does not give well-organized presentations; the other students are difficult to understand because they use slang terms you are unfamiliar with; or the

setting seems strange and confusing. As time passes and you have more experience, these difficulties will diminish. Be patient and ask questions.

- **QUIZZES AND EXAMS**

Here are some suggestions to help you cope with the quizzes and exams you will have at U.S.M.

- ▶ **Keep up to date on your studies.** If you fall behind, you will have difficulty preparing adequately for tests.

- ▶ **Schedule time for review.** Go over your notes before the test. Anticipate what the instructor will ask on the test by recalling points that were emphasized during lectures.

- ▶ **Rest before the test.** Most people perform better on tests if they had adequate sleep the night before. Be sure to eat well before the exam, as this will improve your performance.

- ▶ **Read the test instructions carefully.** Notice how much time you have, your choices among questions and which questions count more than others. Notice if you are allowed to use scratch paper, calculators or dictionaries. Follow instructions carefully.

- ▶ **Schedule your time.** Decide how much time you have to spend on each question. Avoid spending all your time on just one or a few questions. **Some** instructors allow international students additional time to complete exams if it appears that a language problem prevents the student from completing the exam in the allotted time. **Some** instructors will **not** allow international students extra time. **If you know you have a language comprehension problem, enroll in an ESL (English as a Second Language) class during your first year at U.S.M.**

Mid-Term exams are given in the middle of the semester and Finals are given at the very end. These times are taken very seriously in the U.S. Be sure that you never talk to another student (in any language), open your notes, copy from another student's paper or ask someone to do your work during an exam. You will be accused of cheating. Even asking to borrow a pencil or calculator during an exam can be misunderstood. Penalties for cheating may result in a failing grade or expulsion from U.S.M.!

- **TYPES OF TESTS:**

- ▶ **Multiple Choice Exams:** A series of questions, each followed by several

possible answers. Circle the number or letter preceding the correct answer.

- ▶ **Short Essay:** A series of questions to answer in short paragraphs. You may be given a choice to do only the questions you would like to answer
- ▶ **Long Essay:** Questions that require more detailed or thorough responses. You might write 2 or 3 pages in response to a single question.
- ▶ **Open Book exam:** The professor seeks to discover your response to the materials or your synthesis of them. You are permitted to consult texts and reference books as you write the exam.
- ▶ **Closed Book exam:** No consultation of sources is allowed. You must answer questions using what you know from memory.
- ▶ **Take-home exam:** You take home the professor's list of questions and are told the date the exam is due. Usually it is expected you will use materials in the library to help answer the questions. You may be given 3 or 4 days or even a week to complete the exam.

- **RESEARCH PAPERS**

Professors often assign research papers as part of your course work. This requires going to the library and reading materials on the topic. Students are expected to offer an analysis or discussion of an issue. The professor will tell you how long the paper should be, usually between 5-20 pages long, double-spaced.

- **HOMEWORK**

The typical university course involves three hours of lectures each week, perhaps an additional lab or discussion session, reading assignments, quizzes and tests, a mid-term and a final exam, as well as one or more research papers or projects. Keeping up with the assigned work is very important.

Foreign students can sometimes be overwhelmed by the amount of reading required for each course, particularly if English is not their native language. It is important, therefore, to be clear about the role of reading in a course. In some courses, the reading is critical and you must know the assigned material for exams. In other courses, reading may be optional and supplementary to other assigned work. It may be difficult for you to read everything that has been assigned so you will have to prioritize. Read the most important material first and carefully, then skim the less important assignments.

If you find yourself falling behind or feeling terribly pressured about the amount of work, discuss your problem with your professor after class or during his/her office hours. Don't hesitate to get help if you are having academic problems. Research papers can be overwhelming for some international students, particularly if they have trouble expressing themselves in English or are unsure how to use the research tools in the library. USM's Learning Center does offer workshops on writing and research skills which can be very helpful. (*See the section on the Learning Center later in this section.*)

Sometimes you will be expected to “paraphrase” or summarize another writer’s ideas in your own words. If you are not a native English speaker this can be extremely difficult and you may be tempted to quote your sources word for word. Because this practice can lead to a charge of “**plagiarism**” it is essential that you learn the skill of paraphrasing. You will find that if you truly understand the ideas that you are dealing with you will be able to express them clearly. You may want to consult with an instructor or U.S. student who can read through your papers and point out sections which are unclear and help you find the correct words to help you convey your true meaning.

Plagiarism is using another person’s words or ideas without acknowledging the source or giving the person appropriate credit. Although in some cultures students incorporate the words of other scholars as part of their style of academic writing, in the U.S. it is not acceptable. In fact, it is considered a serious academic violation and can result in a failing grade, or expulsion from the class. If you use another person’s words or ideas this must always be clearly documented.

● ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Learning Center can help you with papers, essays and other writing questions you have. It also provides tutors to help you plan your papers or correct your English. The center is located in Luther Bonney Hall on the second floor.

The Library provides books, magazines, documents and reference materials for research and papers. It is also a quiet place to study. If you need to research a topic in detail, the reference

librarian can help you find resources. You can also have a computer search done to find materials from any library in the country.

The Computer Center is available for you to type papers and class notes. The center has many computers along with appropriate software. You may attend a word processing workshop or try an excellent self-paced tutorial available for each program the computer center operates. The Computer Center is located on the first floor of Luther Bonney Hall in Portland and in the basement of Bailey Hall, under the Gorham campus library.

Students of the university must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated and will be treated in accordance with the following policy:

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to the following violation of procedures which protect the integrity of a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation, such as:

- ▶ Possessing, referring to or employing open textbooks or notes or other devices not authorized by a faculty member.
- ▶ Copying from another person's paper.
- ▶ Communicating with, providing assistance to or receiving assistance from another person in a manner not authorized by the faculty member.
- ▶ Possessing, buying, selling, obtaining, giving or using a copy of any unauthorized materials intended to be used as or in the preparation of a quiz or examination or similar evaluation.

CLASSES MAY BE CANCELED DUE TO BAD WEATHER! If you are uncertain about your class being held or not, call the U.S.M. Storm Cancellation Line at 780-4800 or, if you are calling long-distance you can call toll free by dialing 1-800-800-4876 (1-800-800-4USM).

KEYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Skim: Skimming is looking over your reading very quickly, giving attention to the table of contents, chapter titles and headings of sections in the chapter, the beginning sentences of paragraphs, and the summary or review paragraphs or sections.

2. Read: Go over the material again with more care looking for the main points, conclusions, and contentions. Write notes about the main points, following the outline of the reading.

3. Question: Rather than just accepting what the writer says, ask yourself questions. Why is the author saying this? What is the evidence for that? Does that agree with what the author wrote earlier, or with what another writer said about the same subject?

4. Review: Skim it again, and review your notes. Try to retain the main points of the reading. If you are reading very slowly, or your vocabulary seems inadequate, you can get assistance. Tutors in difficult subjects might be helpful. **The Learning Center at 253 Luther Bonney (780-4228)** has tutors available to help you. This office also runs 1 hour workshops at many points during the year on subjects like time management, test taking, and note taking. Also, your professor or academic advisor can often find another student to tutor you.

○ HINTS FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- ▶ Bring a tape recorder to class, but be sure to ask your professor's permission first.
- ▶ Ask a classmate to review notes outside of class.
- ▶ Make an appointment with the professor to discuss any questions.
- ▶ Don't use your dictionary too often in class or you'll fall behind in the discussion.
- ▶ Participate in study groups with your classmates. This is a great way to review for exams, gain a better understanding of the material and develop friendships.
- ▶ Take a note taking or time management workshop from the Learning Center.
- ▶ Get a good night's sleep before any exam.
- ▶ Begin working on research projects and papers as soon as possible rather than waiting until the last minute.

TRANSPORTATION

- **SIGHTSEEING IN MAINE**

The Convention and Visitors Bureau at 95 Commercial Street in Portland (772-5800) has information on many interesting places to visit in Maine, accommodations, restaurants, maps, etc. and will help you plan your trips.

- **BUSES**

Three major Bus lines serve Portland and provide a low cost means of seeing America. Call them for more information or see **“Bus Lines”** in the Yellow Pages of your telephone directory.

- ▶ Concord Trailways Portland Trans. Center 1-800-639-3317
www.concordcoachlines.com 100 Thompson’s Point Road
- ▶ Greyhound Bus Lines 950 Congress Street 722-6587
www.greyhound.com

- **AIRLINES**

Several air lines service Portland and Boston and connect to flights across the country and the world.

- ▶ Air Tran 1-888-247-8726 www.airtran.com
- ▶ Continental 1-800-523-3273 (domestic) www.continental.com
1-800-231-0856 (intl.)
- ▶ Delta 1-800-221-1212 (domestic) www.delta.com
1-800-241-4141 (intl.)
- ▶ United 1-800-864-8331 (domestic) www.united.com
1-800-538-2929 (intl.)
- ▶ U.S. Airways 1-800-428-4322 www.usairways.com
- ▶ Jet Blue 1-800-538-2583 www.jetblue.com
- ▶ American 1-800-433-7300 www.aa.com
(American does not operate out of Portland)

For other airlines consult “**Airline Companies**” in the Yellow Pages. However, if you prefer to use a ticket agency consult “**Airline Ticket Agencies**” or “**Travel Agencies and Bureaus**” in the Yellow Pages.

- **TRAIN**

The Downeaster is the name of the Amtrak train that serves Maine and Boston. The Downeaster departs Portland from the Portland Transportation Center at 100 Thompson’s Point Road, just a short distance from the Portland campus. The train travels to Boston’s North station with several stops along the way. One of the most popular summer stops is Old Orchard Beach. A round trip ticket costs around \$12 and the train stops just a short distance from the sandy beach and Atlantic Ocean waves.

- **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION**

- ▶ **U.S.M. Shuttle Bus:** This runs between the Portland and Gorham campuses. Schedules are available at the Office of International Programs and are posted on the Portland Campus Center door and at Bailey Hall in Gorham where the bus leaves. These buses stop at the Maine Mall during specific times of day. Consult the driver or the schedule for specific times.

- ▶ **METRO** is the Portland public bus system. The bus stops are denoted by **orange bands** on telephone poles, **yellow Metro signs**, or small shelters in which you may wait. Signal to the driver by waving your hand to get the bus to stop. The fee is 50¢ with a U.S.M student ID, and you must bring exact change only, as the drivers cannot make change. Depending on your final destination, you may need to transfer to another bus. If you are unsure of the bus routes, ask the driver. If you do need to transfer to another bus before reaching your destination, you’ll need to request a transfer ticket when you first get on the bus. You will give this ticket to the second driver, so you won’t pay twice. To let the driver know when you wish to get off the bus, pull the cable which runs along the side of the bus above the windows before your stop. The driver can only let you off at the route’s regular stops. Arrive at the bus stop early, as weather and traffic can vary the arrival time of the bus. For more information, call the **Metro at 774-0351**, visit their website at <http://www.gpmetrobus.com/> or schedules are available in the Woodbury Campus Center on the USM Portland Campus.

- ▶ **Bicycles** can be purchased at many bike, sporting, and department stores. Used bikes may be purchased from students or other individuals or stores. Look for advertisements on bulletin boards on campus, the Classified Ads section of the newspaper, and on Craig’s List (www.craigslist.org). *Uncle Henry’s* is a weekly magazine that carries used items for sale and is usually available in drug and convenience stores. *Play It Again Sports* located at 315 Marginal Way in Portland and sells used sporting

equipment and may have a small selection of used bikes. Their phone number is 773-6063. A large padlocked chain should be purchased to secure your bike. Wearing a helmet is highly recommended, as well as pads for your elbows, knees, etc.

► **Motorcycles** are permitted on streets and highways in Maine. You need a Maine Motorcycle License to drive a motorcycle on the road. Contact the Maine Motor Vehicle Registry at 125 Presumpscot Street in Portland or call 822-6400 for license information. Wearing a helmet is advisable, but not required by law.

► **Taxis:** Portland has several taxi services which cost a lot more than the bus, but get you directly from door to door. A 10% tip is optional, but should be considered especially if the driver carries your bags for example. Look under “**Taxicabs**” in the Yellow Pages for listings.

● DRIVING

Students who have already acquired an International Driver’s License may drive immediately upon arrival in the U.S. But only do so after you have learned the appropriate signals, signs and local driving laws and practices. **Don’t ever drive without a valid driver’s license! You will get into serious trouble.** Please be sure that your International Driver’s License is printed in English. If your license is printed in a foreign language the police may consider it invalid and you may be fined just as if you had been driving with no license at all. If stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation or mechanical malfunction, you will be required to produce your driver’s license, automobile registration, and the proof of auto insurance. (See the important note about insurance under the section on “**Buying A Car.**”) Failure to have all three items while operating a motor vehicle will result in a fine, court appearance, loss of license, or other restrictions depending on the severity of the violation.

To obtain a Maine license or get more information, call the Department of Motor Vehicles at 822-6400. You will need to take both a written exam and perform a driving test with a representative of the Department of Motor Vehicles. To perfect your driving skills, you may take a driver’s education course by contacting any of the “**Driving Instruction**” schools listed in the Yellow Pages. The cost will vary.

Maine has very strict laws concerning driving while under the influence of alcohol. Police reserve the right to stop you if they believe that you are operating under the influence or police may occasionally set up random sobriety check points at various locations throughout the state. The police may request that you take a breathalyzer test in order to determine the amount of alcohol in your blood system.

If you are under 21: Maine has a no-tolerance policy, which means that if any trace of alcohol is found in your system you will automatically have your license revoked and you

may face fines and/or possible jail time.

If you are over 21: Maine's policy requires that your blood alcohol level must be below .08 in order to remain within legal limits. Conviction of OUI (Operating Under the Influence) will result in a large fine, automatic loss of license, and a mandatory jail sentence. Never drink & drive!

Illegal drugs of any type are prohibited and if found in your blood stream or in your possession you will face very serious consequences including fines and jail time.

- **RENTING AN AUTOMOBILE**

Cars can be rented by the day or week. Prices vary greatly based on the type of car you want and the time of the week you want the car. Some agencies only rent new cars. Others rent used but well-maintained cars and are cheaper. **Please note that you must be at least 21 years of age in order to be eligible to rent a car.** Some local car rental agencies include:

▶	Avis	1-800-230-4898 or 874-7500	www.avis.com
▶	Budget	874-7501	www.budget.com
▶	Hertz	1-800-654-3131	www.hertz.com
▶	Rent-A-Wreck	1-877-877-0700	www.rent-a-wreck.com
▶	Enterprise	1-800-261-7331	www.enterprise.com

You will need a **valid Driver's License, passport, and a major credit card** to rent a car. Consult the Yellow Pages under "**Automobile Renting**" for other companies.

- **BUYING A CAR**

Buying and maintaining a Car is very expensive. A car must be registered, insured, have taxes paid on it, and be inspected every year. There are many car dealerships in the area where you can buy new or used cars. They are listed in the Yellow Pages under "**Automobiles.**" Private sales can be arranged for used cars if you find someone selling their car. You can find cars for sale on bulletin boards in Gorham and Portland or in the newspaper.

- **Tips for Buying and Maintaining a Car:** Before buying a used car, have it checked by a gas station or garage for a small fee.

You may want to join AAA (the Automobile Association of America). For about \$63 a year they provide "jump starts" when your car won't start on its own, tire changes when you have a flat, car towing, free traveler's checks, travel advice and free maps, and lots more. For membership information, call 1-800-AAA-HELP.

- **Insurance:** Maine law requires that you have liability insurance and keep a state card as current proof of insurance in your car at all times. You may also want to consider purchasing collision and comprehensive insurance for your car as well. The cost will depend on the value of your car and will vary for each company. It should range from \$600-1300 a year. Insurance companies are listed in the Yellow Pages under “Insurance.”

It’s important to note that in order to purchase auto insurance for your vehicle you must have a valid Maine’s Driver’s License, or obtain one within 30 days of the purchase of your automobile insurance policy. You cannot purchase auto insurance with only an International Driver’s License so you should plan accordingly if you are planning to purchase a car of your own.

▶ **Taxes:** A property (excise) tax is levied on every car by the town in which it is registered. It is paid yearly and the amount varies with the car’s value. Taxes are paid at the City or Town Hall in the town where you live. **(You must pay the excise tax on your car before you can register it with the Department of Motor Vehicles.)**

▶ **Registration:** To register your car, bring proof of car insurance, the bill of sale, and the certificate of ownership (or title) to the Motor Vehicle Registry at 125 Presumpscot Street in Portland (822-6400).

▶ **Inspection:** Cars must be inspected at official inspection stations once a year. The cost will vary depending on the age of your car but averages around \$15.00. Some gas stations and most auto mechanics will have a sign outside their garage which indicates they are an Official Inspection Station. You should call in advance to make an appointment to have your car inspected.

- **PARKING ON & OFF CAMPUS**

A U.S.M. Parking Permit which allows you to park in surface lots can be obtained at the Police and Safety Office in Portland or Gorham with your auto registration and proof of course registration. A transportation fee is included in your student bill which allows you access to the parking garage with your USM ID card.

When parking off campus be sure to read the parking signs on city streets. These signs may set limits on the amount of time you may remain in the space or specify if a certain type of license plate (such as commercial) is required in order to park in a particular spot. Please be careful of days when parking is not allowed because of street cleaning or snow removal. Signs will be posted to alert you to these factors. **Never** park in front of a handicap access ramp or in a handicap spot if you do not have a handicap plate or temporary placard. Fines for this type of

violation are quite steep. Most streets have signs showing when cars can park. During bad weather, local T.V. and radio stations may announce a parking ban on city streets. The time and temperature building located in downtown Portland will also flash the words "**PARK BAN.**" During a citywide ban, vehicles left on the streets after 10pm will be towed at the owner's expense. Parking bans remain in effect until the following morning at 7 am unless otherwise specified. To learn if there is a parking ban in effect and for information on alternation parking locations during a ban call the Parking Ban Hotline at 879-0300.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

If you hire a real estate agent, you may be charged a finder's fee, usually equal to 1 month's rent. Ask about the fee **before** you hire an agent.

Your first month in an apartment can be very expensive. It is common to have to pay the first and last month's rent in addition to a security deposit and the finder's fee before you move in. Be sure you have made the proper financial arrangements before you start your search.

When renting an apartment or room it is usually necessary to sign a rental contract or lease agreement. Read the lease twice before signing; it is a binding document. Ask for a clear explanation of any language unfamiliar to you. The contract should specify:

- ▶ The amount of the security deposit (damage or key deposit) and the conditions for a refund.
- ▶ The amount of the rent and when it is due (weekly, monthly). What late charges can your landlord impose if you miss your rent due date?
- ▶ The division of responsibility for utilities (gas, electricity, telephone and air conditioning).
- ▶ Policy about visitors.
- ▶ Policy on pets; often cats are allowed while dogs are not.
- ▶ Whether children are permitted.
- ▶ The amount of advance notice required before moving out (30 days is normal).
- ▶ Whether you can make changes like painting, hanging decorations, etc. Who is responsible for any needed maintenance?
- ▶ Whether you can sublet and under what conditions.
- ▶ What is the length of the lease?

When you sign a lease, you are obligated to pay the landlord monthly rent for the duration of the lease. Most leases are for 6 months to 1 year and it is typically very difficult to break or change a lease after you have signed it. Therefore, before you sign the lease, you should be absolutely sure that you can live with your decision for the duration of the contract.

When you sign a lease, you will typically be required to pay a security deposit which is usually equivalent one month's rent. This will be in addition to the first month's rent. The security deposit will be returned to you when you move out, provided that the apartment is still in good condition.

Then ask the following questions to help decide whether or not to rent the space:

- ▶ What kind of heat is provided? Can you control the temperature? What will the heat cost if not included in the rent? (It is acceptable to ask for proof like a recent oil or electricity bill.)
- ▶ Is there any furniture, dishes or bedding included?
- ▶ How do you arrange for repairs? What does the landlord clean, and what is your responsibility?
- ▶ Who mows the lawns and shovels snow?
- ▶ Are the apartment and its contents insured? If not, you should purchase renter's insurance through a local agent. Is the building secure? Are the locks and doors secure?
- ▶ Are the kitchen and bathroom facilities complete and in good condition?

- **RENTER'S INSURANCE**

Whether you live on campus or off you should protect your belongings with renter's insurance. You can purchase renter's insurance from a local insurance company and it will pay to replace the contents of your apartment if you lose them in a fire, burglary, or other disaster. It also protects you if someone hurts themselves in your home and sues you. A renter's insurance policy should also cover items that get stolen when you are away from home, like a bicycle stolen from campus or a watch stolen while on vacation. To speak with an insurance representative about renter's insurance look under "**Insurance**" in the yellow pages of the local phone book.

- **SHARING AN APARTMENT**

If you decide to share an apartment with a roommate, ask yourself these questions and any others that you may think of on your own.

- ▶ Does your roommate smoke and/or drink?
- ▶ What are his/her and your sleeping patterns? How do you feel about overnight guests?
- ▶ What is the noise level in the apartment?
- ▶ How will you share responsibilities and expenses?
- ▶ Do you share similar likes and dislikes?

FOOD FACTS

- ON-CAMPUS DINING

U.S.M Dining Services provides a variety of meal plans for the convenience of both resident and non-resident students. Their staff provides a wide selection of nutritious food in the cafeterias. They always welcome your comments and suggestions. Remember to let them know when you like their service as well as when you have problems. **The staff understands that international students may have different dietary needs than Americans. If there is a particular item you would like please talk to their staff. They will do their best to accommodate your needs.**

Brooks Student Center on the Gorham campus is the central hub featuring the Real Food on Campus dining hall upstairs and the Gorham Snack Bar on the lower level. The Resident Dining Hall offers continuous service from 7:00am to 7:00pm Monday through Thursday and 7:00am to 6:00pm on Friday. On the weekends the Gorham Dining Center provides continuous meal service from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

The C Store, or convenience store, is located on the same floor as the dining hall in Gorham. They are open from 12pm noon to 12am midnight. They offer an expanded grocery selection including milk and bread, supplies such as laundry detergent and dish soap, health and beauty aids, snacks, and grab'n go items.

The Gorham Snack Bar offers a variety of grill, deli, pizza and grab'n go items as well as convenience store items. They open at 11:00am and stays open through the late evening hours (12:00am). The Bailey Hall Café is a popular daytime location serving pre-made sandwiches, soups, and frozen entrees. They are open Monday through Thursday from 7:30am to 8:00pm and on Fridays from 7:30am to 1:30pm.

The most extensive food service in Portland is in the Woodbury Campus Center. The dining room offers continuous service from 7:30am to 7:00pm Monday through Thursday and 7:00am to 2:00pm on Fridays. The Woodbury Campus Dining Center is closed on weekends.

Additional locations for food on the Portland campus include the Luther Bonney Cafe (open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 am to 9pm and Friday from 7:30 am to 2:00pm and Saturday 7:45am-1:00pm), the School of Law Cafe (open Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 2:00pm) and the Payson Smith Bistro (open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 2:00pm). The Luther Bonney Café is designed to make picking up a morning wake-up or between class snack and even a quick-on-the-go lunch easier than ever. The Law School Café features daily luncheon specials, fresh soups and sandwiches, beverages and snacks.

Lewiston-Auburn College offers Café LA which is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. Café LA offers full meals include breakfast platters, sandwich combinations, and pizzas.

- **SHOPPING FOR FOOD**

Supermarkets have many varieties of foods you may be accustomed to buying in several different shops. There are fresh fruits and vegetables, canned goods, meats, bread and other baked goods, laundry and cleaning supplies, paper products, personal needs, frozen foods, and non-prescription drugs. Some supermarkets now also have pharmacies where prescriptions can be filled.

The two biggest grocery store chains in Southern Maine are Shaw's and Hannaford. There are many locations in the greater Portland/Gorham area which can be found in the telephone directory. To contact Shaw's you may call 773-0211 and Hannaford can be reached at 761-5965.

Food prices are almost always better in supermarkets than in small grocery and convenience stores. The nearest supermarket to U.S.M.'s Gorham campus is the Hannaford on Main Street, about a 5-10 minute walk from campus. The nearest supermarket to U.S.M.'s Portland campus is the Hannaford Plaza in Back Bay, a 15 minute walk from the Portland campus.

Supermarkets also sell beer, wine, and liquor, but only to those who are at least 21 years of age. On Sundays, alcoholic beverages are not sold before 12 noon, and the sale of alcohol is restricted on Election Day in November.

- **Natural Food Stores & Cafes**

- Lois' Natural Marketplace 885-0602
152 Route 1, Scarborough
- Stonyfield Cafe 781-8889
240 U.S. Rt. 1, Falmouth
- Whole Foods 774-7711
2 Somerset Street, Portland

- **Ethnic Food Stores**

- African Grocery Store 347-4990
803 Congress Street, Portland

- Amei Halal Market 774-3220
269 St. John Street, Portland
 - A & R Halal Market 786-0030
199A Bartlett Street, Lewiston
 - La Bodega Latina Grocery Store 761-6661
863 Congress Street, Portland
 - Micucci Whole Grocers 775-1854
45 India Street, Portland
 - Sun Oriental Market 772-8675
622 Congress Street, Portland
 - Vientiane Eat In & Take Out 879-1614
157 Noyes Street, Portland
- **Bakeries:** Some offer a full range of baked goods and others specialize in certain items. Some also offer light meals. For more shops, see “**Bakers- Retail**” in the Yellow Pages
- Aurora Provisions 871-9060
64 Pine Street, Portland
(Pre-made meals, cheese, wine and baked goods)
 - Big Sky Bread 761-5623
536 Deering Avenue, Portland
28 Monument Square, Portland (inside the Portland Public Market)
(Delicious breads, muffins, and scones)
 - Mr. Bagel 775-0718
601 Forest Avenue, Portland
13 New Portland Road, Gorham 839-2802
(Bagels, muffins, soup, sandwiches & kosher deli items)
 - Rosemont Market and Bakery 774-8129
559 Brighton Avenue, Portland (between Portland and Gorham)
88 Congress Street, Portland (on Munjoy Hill)
(Delicious breads, sandwiches, and fresh local produce)
 - Standard Baking Co. 773-2112
75 Commercial Street, Portland

(Gourmet French pastries)

- Two Fat Cats 347-5144
47 India Street, Portland
(Excellent cupcakes and pies)

- **Coffee Shops:** American coffee is considerably weaker than coffee in other parts of the world. However, there are many coffee shops in Portland specializing in gourmet coffee, including flavored American-style coffee, teas, and European-style coffee (latte, cappuccino, espresso, etc.) Many of these also offer pastries, and some have light meals like soup and sandwiches. You can get coffee to go, drink it there, or get beans to make it at home.

- Coffee By Design 772-5533
620 Congress Street, Portland
67 India Street, Portland 780-6767
- Arabica 879-0792
2 Free Street, Portland
- Gorham Grind 839-3003
18 South Street, Gorham
- Portland Coffee Roasting Co. 761-9525
111 Commercial Street, Portland
- Starbucks's Coffee 761-2797
176 Middle Street, Portland
594 Congress Street, Portland 761-0334
- Zarra's Monumental Coffeehouse 761-2424
24 Monument Square, Portland

- **Convenience Stores:** These are open longer than most supermarkets and some are open all night. They are a lot more expensive, too!

- Cumberland Farms 874-9528
49 Pine Street, Portland
137 Main Street, Gorham 839-2491
- Joe's Smoke Shop 773-3656
665 Congress St.
- 7 Eleven 775-5940
170 Brighton Avenue, Portland

- **EATING OUT**

Portland is home to a thriving restaurant scene and many of Portland’s restaurants and chefs have won top national awards. It has been said that Portland has the second most restaurants per capita in the entire U.S. (second only to San Francisco). “Foodies” or food-lovers often consult www.portlandfoodmap.com for the latest details on new restaurants.

In restaurants where you are waited on at the table, it is customary to leave a 15-20% tip for the waiter or waitress. Tips are not left in cafeterias or fast food establishments.

If you want take-away or carry-out, look under “**Food- Carry Out or Take Out**” in the Yellow Pages.

- **Popular Restaurants**

- Amato’s (sandwiches & pizza)
71 India Street, Portland 773-1682
312 St. John Street, Portland 828-5978
3 Main Street, Gorham 839-2511
- Beale Street BBQ 767-0130
725 Broadway, South Portland
- Dogfish Café 253-5400
953 Congress Street, Portland
- Flatbread Pizza 772-8777
72 Commercial Street, Portland
(Organic Salad & Pizza)
- Gorham House of Pizza 839-2504
214 State Street, Gorham
- Green Elephant Vegetarian Bistro 347-3111
608 Congress Street, Portland
- Silly’s (wraps, burgers, pizzas, vegetarian, and vegan) 772-0360
40 Washington Avenue, Portland
- Sebago Brewing Company 839-2337
29 Elm Street, Gorham
164 Middle Street, Portland 775-2337
- Thatcher’s of Gorham 222-2479
28 School St., Gorham

- The Pepperclub (good vegetarian spot!) 772-0531
78 Middle Street, Portland
- Subway Sandwiches and Salads 839-5422
81 Main Street, Gorham
- Super Great Wall Buffet (Chinese, American & more!) 771-9988
All you can eat buffet
198 Main Mall Road, South Portland

● **Good Ethnic Restaurants**

- Asmara (African) 253-5122
51 Oak Street
- Bogusha's Polish Restaurant & Deli 878-9618
825 Stevens Avenue, Portland
- Fajita Grill (Mexican) 591-8150
857 Main Street, Westbrook
- Fuji (Sushi and Hibachi) 773-2900
29 Exchange Street, Portland
- Greek Corner 772-1551
90 Exchange Street, Portland
- Haggarty's (Brit-Indian Take Out & Delivery) 761-8222
849 Forest Avenue, Portland
- Jewel of India 828-2001
45 Western Ave, South Portland
- Lunch Buffet-
- King of the Roll (Sushi) 828-8880
675 Congress Street, Portland
- Lucky Thai 839-6999
25 Elm Street, Gorham
- Margarita's Mexican Restaurant
242 St. John's Street, Portland 874-6444
11 Brown Street, Portland 774-9398

- Mekong Thai Portland 773-8424
865 Forest Avenue, Portland
- Merry Table Creperie 899-4494
43 Wharf Street, Portland
- Passage to India 772-0072
29 Wharf Street, Portland
- Ribollita (Italian) 774-2972
41 Middle Street, Portland
- Ri Ra Irish Pub & Restaurant 761-4446
72 Commercial Street, Portland
- Saigon (Chinese + Vietnamese) 874-6666
759 Forest Ave, Portland
- Sengchai Thai Cuisine 773-1001
803 Forest Avenue, Portland
- Sapporo (Japanese) 772-1233
230 Commercial Street, Portland
- Star East Café (Middle Eastern) 775-0013
646 Forest Ave. & 539 Deering Ave., Portland
- Thanh Thanh 828-1114
782 Forest Ave, Portland
- Tu Casa (El Salvadorian) 828-4971
70 Washington Avenue, Portland
- Yosaku Japanese Restaurant 780-0880
1 Danforth Street, Portland

- **Breakfast**

- Artemisia Café 761-0135
61 Pleasant Street, Portland

- Bintliff's American Cafe 774-0005
98 Portland Street, Portland
- Becky's 773-7070
390 Commercial Street, Portland
- Local Sprouts Café 615-9970
644 Congress Street, Portland
- The BreaLu Cafe 772-9202
428 Forest Avenue, Portland
- The Bayou Kitchen (Cajun food) 774-4935
43 Deering Avenue, Portland
- Marcy's Diner 774-9713
Corner of Oak & Free Streets, Portland

● **Expensive Restaurants to Impress Someone Special**

- Back Bay Grill (very expensive) 772-8833
65 Portland Street, Portland
- DiMillo's Floating Restaurant 772-2216
Long Wharf, Commercial Street, Portland
- Food Factory Miyake (Sushi) 871-9170
129 Spring Street, Portland
- Fore Street (very expensive) 775-2717
288 Fore Street, Portland
- Hugo's (very expensive) 774-8538
88 Middle Street
- Saltwater Grille 221-5591
231 Front Street, South Portland
- Street & Company 775-0887
33 Wharf Street, Portland

SHOPPING FOR EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED

Most shopping in America is done in **Shopping Centers or Malls**. These are usually located outside downtown areas. Portland's biggest is the **Maine Mall**, which contains around 120 different shops for everything from music to food to jewelry. There are many shops with furniture, clothes, and electrical equipment, plus a fast food wing of the building called the Food Court. The **Maine Mall** is in South Portland, between Portland and Gorham, and the U.S.M. shuttle stops there at certain limited times. (See the U.S.M. bus schedule for days and times.) Some Portland Metro and South Portland city buses also go to the **Maine Mall** at various times.

Near the Mall is Wal-mart, a large discount store with a wide selection of merchandise. This store features "self-service" shopping, where you take the items you want to the cashier to pay for them.

Shopping in the U.S. is somewhat different from many other countries. Prices are generally fixed and bargaining is not practiced. There is no tipping of sales personnel or cashiers. Keep in mind that there is a 5% State Sales Tax added to most items that is not reflected in the quoted price.

Stores have frequent sales. Newspaper advertisements inform you when these are taking place and might include discount coupons. Most store sale flyers can be found in the Sunday edition of the Portland newspaper, called the Maine Sunday Telegram.

Check each store's Returns Policy before purchasing items. Most stores will allow you to return an item if it is defective or if you have not opened the product and can provide a store receipt. Returns typically need to be made within a certain period of time such as 2 weeks or 30 days.

Local churches and organizations sometimes have "**rummage**" sales to raise money. You may find low priced used clothing and household items there or at **Garage or Yard Sales**. These sales usually take place in the yards of private homes as a means of disposing no-longer-needed household items like appliances, dishes, utensils, furniture, and clothing. Prices are generally very low and bargaining is appropriate. Check posters and newspapers in the classified section under "Garage Sales" and "Miscellaneous Sales" for times and places.

Another source of inexpensive used clothing and furniture is the **Salvation Army** and

Goodwill Stores.

- ▶ Goodwill Retail Store
1104 Forest Avenue, Portland 878-1763
102 Main Street, Gorham 839-8503
1035 Lisbon Street, Lewiston 782-3050

- ▶ Salvation Army
333 Clarks Pond Dr., South Portland 761-7068
30 Warren Avenue, Portland 878-8555

● CLOTHING

When shopping for the first time, explain to the sales person that you don't know American sizes and ask for assistance. Sizes vary among manufacturers so ask to try on the clothes before you make a purchase. (Most stores have private changing rooms.) You don't have to buy something because you've tried it on, nor are you required to buy anything you do not want. *See **Clothing Size Charts** at the end of this handbook.*

- **Consignment Shops:** Maine has several consignment shops which can offer some great clothing bargains. Consignment shops specialize in reselling clothing items which are in good condition. All items are pressed and cleaned before they are put out for sale and some consignment shops carry designer and expensive label clothing. While consignment shops are not as inexpensive as Goodwill or the Salvation Army the quality of the clothing is often better and the price is still lower than the items full retail price. Local consignment shops include:

- ▶ Encore (Designer & Select Resale plus Vintage Clothing)
521 Congress Street, Portland 775-4275

- ▶ Forget-Me-Nots (Quality Consignment Fashions & Accessories
For Women, Including Designer Labels)
190 U.S. Route 1, Falmouth 781-8252

- ▶ Material Objects (Men & Women's Clothing)
500 Congress Street, Portland 774-1241

● FURNITURE AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Small appliances, dishes, furniture, and kitchen utensils can be purchased at stores or at

rummage or garage sales. You can get many household items very inexpensively at Wal-Mart (885-5567) at 500 Gallery Blvd. in Scarborough near the **Maine Mall** or on US Route 1 in Falmouth there is another Wal-Mart (781-3879) which is accessible via the METRO bus. Target (871-1156) in South Portland located at 200 Running Hill Road near the Maine Mall also carries lots of affordable household items.

Uncle Henry's is a small magazine in which people advertise items they wish to dispose of. Good buys are often found in it. You can buy it at most drug stores and convenience stores. **Craigslist.org** is another great resource for used furniture. *Craigslist* and *Uncle Henry's* both list items from throughout the state. Before you commit to purchasing an item from someone, be sure to see how far you will need to drive to get the item. Maine is a large state and it can take over 8 hours to reach some points from the greater Portland area!

Upscale Consignment Furniture (774-2900) located on 150 Riverside St. in Portland can offer used furniture as well. This furniture will not be as cheap as Craigslist.org or Uncle Henry's, however it is good quality furniture at an affordable price.

- **BOOKS**

In addition to the sale of textbooks, the U.S.M. Bookstores at Portland (780-4070) and Gorham (780-5476) both “special order” books that are not in stock. Ask an employee to help you place an order.

There is a discount bookstore called **Campus Bookstore** on Forest Avenue just one block away from campus. They buy and sell textbooks for many U.S.M. courses as well as other types of books. For other bookstores, check the Yellow Pages under “**Book Dealers-Retail**” or “**Book Dealers-Used and Rare.**”

You can also order/rent used books online for a very reasonable price from the following websites:

www.textbooks.com

www.cheapesttextbooks.com

www.amazon.com

www.chegg.com (rental)

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

- RECREATION AND SPORTS FACILITIES

▶ **Portland and Gorham U.S.M. Gyms:** Many individual and team sports like racquetball, squash, wallyball, volleyball, table tennis, basketball, softball and soccer are available to U.S.M. students. You can also ice skate at the Portland Ice Arena and Costello Field House or lift weights and do aerobics at the U.S.M. facilities. Sign-up for courts is required before use and small fees may be charged in some instances. If you would like to create a group sport you can post some flyers on campus and wait for replies from others.

▶ **Outdoor Facilities:** Tennis and basketball courts are located on the Gorham Campus. Student use is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The grounds of the university are used as playgrounds for spontaneous games of softball, volleyball and frisbee. Also, Deering Oaks Park, just a short walk from the Portland Campus, has tennis courts, basketball courts, a field for soccer or football, and is a nice place to go in the daylight hours for outdoor activities.

▶ **Art on Campus:** Many shows are presented throughout the year at the U.S.M. Art Gallery on the Gorham Campus from 11am to 4pm, and in the Amphitheatre of the Campus Center in Portland all day and evening. Schedules of these exhibits are available on bulletin boards or by calling 780-5409.

▶ **Music and Theater on Campus:** The U.S.M. Departments of Music and Theater present a wide variety of excellent productions. The Student Activity Fee entitles you to admission to all these events at a reduced cost or for free. For information on upcoming musical events call the Music Box Office at 780-5555 and for information on upcoming theater events call the Theater Box Office at 780-5151.

▶ **Other Cultural Activities:** The university sponsors a variety of lectures throughout the year as well as films and other events in which you can participate. Look for flyers around campus advertising upcoming speakers or events. Visit the USM events calendar by going to the USM homepage (www.usm.maine.edu) and clicking on "Calendar" at the top of the page.

- OFF-CAMPUS ENTERTAINMENT

The local newspaper, the Portland Press Herald, publishes advertisements and announcements of events in the general area, including musical events and cinema schedules.

Video rentals are popular with many students, and a wide variety of stores like **Videoport**, **Home Vision**, and **Blockbuster Video** all service the rental needs of viewers. The average cost is \$4.00 for one night for a new release and \$4.00 for two or three nights for all other movies.

Portland has many cultural organizations which you may choose to become involved in. These groups are made stronger and more enjoyable through the participation of students like you.

- ▶ Japan-America Society of Maine 774-6481 (Yaeko: Japanese)
<http://www.maine-japan.org/> 771-0224 (Lucy: English)

- ▶ Chinese-American Friendship 688-4826
 Association of Maine (CAFAM) dietrich@maine.rr.com

- ▶ Japan-America Society of Maine 774-6481 (Yaeko: Japanese)
<http://www.maine-japan.org/> 771-0224 (Lucy: English)

- ▶ Korean-American Friendship 885-8196 (Joeng K. Yoon)
 Association of Maine

- ▶ India Association of Maine 783-2946

- ▶ Islamic Society of Maine 842-5953
 155 Brackett Street, Portland
<http://icpme.tripod.com>

- ▶ The Portland Language Exchange 772-0405

- ▶ The World Affairs Council 780-4551
<http://www.wacmaine.org/>

- ▶ Watt Samaki Temple, Inc. (Buddhist) 797-8554
 2 Dedham Street, Portland
 Navann Leng, President

- ▶ Maine Irish Heritage Center 780-0118
34 Gray Street (corner of Gray & State Streets) Portland
www.maineirish.com
- ▶ Alliance Française du Maine 773-7583
- ▶ Centro Latino, Maine 749-8823
Contact Person : Blanca Santiago, President
- ▶ Muslim Council of Maine 761-8174
- ▶ Partners of the Americas 767-2819
- ▶ Afghan Mosque & Islamic Center 873-2436
978 Washington Avenue, Portland
Contact: Azini Mohammed, President
- ▶ Archangel Russia Sister City Neale Duffett 775-1515
- ▶ Center for Cultural Exchange 761-0591
<http://www.centerforculturalexchange.org/>

USM Groups: USM also has several students groups and organizations which are a great way to meet other students and make friends. We suggest the following resources:

- Multi-Cultural Student Association
135 Woodbury Campus Center, Portland Campus
<http://usm.maine.edu/eo/culture/>
780-4006
- USM Student Groups & Organizations (there are many!)
<http://student-groups.usm.maine.edu/bsu/groups.html>
- USM Outdoor Recreation (ski trips, white water rafting, sports, etc!)
<http://usm.maine.edu/sullivancomplex/pcrf/op/>
- Student Involvement – stay tuned into what’s happening on campus!
<http://usm.maine.edu/studentlife/involve/>

Portland has many bars and dance clubs. **Remember that liquor laws are strictly enforced in the U.S. One must show proof that you are at least 21 years old to purchase any alcohol in a restaurant, bar, or grocery store. Waitresses, bartenders, and cashiers**

will ask for your “I.D.” as proof of your age. You will need a Maine State Identification Card or a Maine State Driver’s License for this. If you don’t have proof, you will be refused the drinks.

In U.S.M. dormitories, you may drink liquor or beer in your room if you are 21, but no person under 21 may be in your room at that time. You are not permitted to drink alcohol in the room of anyone under 21.

SOME COMMON AMERICAN EXPRESSIONS

411: information

10-4: Okay, right-on

At one's fingertips: easily recalled

Awesome: wonderful, beautiful, currently popular, e.g. "Their music is awesome."

Baggage: personal concerns based on past experience,

Bar: a place where alcoholic beverages are served

Bar-B-Q: an outdoor cooking party, like a picnic; also, food flavored using a spicy sauce

Big shot: a supposedly important person, or someone who thinks he/she is important

Blow it: to do something badly, e.g. "I really blew that exam."

Boonies: the countryside, far from the city

Booze: alcoholic beverages--liquor, wine, or beer

Bounce: to leave in a hurry

Break the ice: to make a beginning; saying or doing something to put people at ease

Broke: to be without money

Brush aside: to ignore, turn away from

Buck: dollar bill; also, a male deer

Bug: irritate, frustrate, e.g. "He really bugs me."

Bummer: something disappointing

Burned out: exhausted from an activity, had enough of something, fried

BYOB: "Bring Your Own Bottle;" sometimes written on a party invitation--it means you should bring whatever you want to drink with you at the party

Call off: cancel

Cash: currency as opposed to checks or money orders

Change: coins (penny'\$0.01; nickel'\$0.05; dime'\$0.10; quarter'\$0.25); also, the money you get back after paying for an item is called your change

Check out: to sign out a book from the library; to pay for purchases in a store; also, to find information about a person or place you are interested in but have no knowledge about

Chill or Chill out: Calm down!; also, to Ahang out@

Commuter: a person who lives at home and uses some sort of transportation to get to work or school

Cool: to be or seem to be in control, calm; also used for something which is in fashion or which is pleasing to the person speaking, e.g. AThose sneakers are cool.@

Cool it: stop the activity

Cop: a police person

Cop out: quit; an act of avoiding responsibility

Couch potato: a person who spends all his/her leisure time watching TV

Crash: to sleep or stay at someone else's place; to go to a party uninvited

Cut it out: stop it; quit doing that

Date: to go out with someone; the person with whom you go out is also called a date (romantic interest is implied if it is called a Adate@)

Dis: to disrespect and/or speak badly of someone or something

Dog: to criticize sharply; to tease or put down; to fail to keep an appointment or date

Dope: illegal drugs such as marijuana or hashish; also, another word meaning cool

Double date: prearranged social activity involving two couples

Down East: the coast of Northern Maine, which is actually to the East

Down in the dumps: feeling depressed

Down to earth: practical, straight-forward

Drag: bad news; something you don't like to do—"That's a drag."; a person who's not fun to be around—"Joe's a drag." also, a puff of a cigarette—"Can I have a drag?"

Drop in: visit without a specific invitation

Drop me a line: write me a letter

Drop off: deliver to a designated location

Drive up the wall: to make someone nervous or upset

Dumb: a derogatory term meaning not intelligent,

FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

Fed up: sick of, disgusted with or tired of something

Feel it in your bones: feel or sense what is going to happen

Fill It Up: fill one's car with petrol/gasoline. Fill it up also implies that one will fill the tank with gas until it is completely full.

For real(s): true, Is it true?

Fraternity: a social organization found on college campuses

Frat House: a house used by a fraternity

Freak out: to lose control of oneself

Gas: gasoline or petrol for a car

Gas up: fill one's car with petrol/gasoline

Gay: someone who is homosexual

Get it together: to get organized

Get lost: go away; usually insulting reference

Get on one's nerves; Get in one's hair; Get under one's skin: to cause irritation; to bother someone

Get on the bandwagon: support an apparently successful cause

Get outta here: You must be kidding!

Ghetto: poor quality; ugly; cheap

Gift of gab: an aptitude for speaking easily and fluently

Ginormous: Gigantic; enormous

Give me a call (or a ring): telephone me

Give the cold shoulder: to purposely ignore another person

Go for it: statement of encouragement

Go to pot: deteriorate

Going steady: going out with (dating) one person exclusively

Goof-off: lazy or idle person who sometimes does silly things

Grass: marijuana

Greek: refers to the common practice of fraternities and sororities to use Greek symbols for their names; also, unknown or baffling, as in “It’s Greek to me.”

Gross: crude, unattractive, disgusting

Gym: gymnasium or physical education building

Had it: to reach a limit of tolerance—“I’ve had it.”

Half-baked: idea or plan not well thought out

Hang in there: to persevere, to keep trying

Hang-ups: worries

Hassle: troublesome, a nuisance

Have an axe to grind: have a personal or selfish interest

Have a bone to pick with someone: have cause to argue or disagree

Have cold feet: to be nervous or uncertain

Have a screw loose: have crazy ideas

Hello!?: Are you there? I’m trying to get your attention.; Are you awake?; Are you stupid?

Hi: hello, an informal greeting

Hit the sack: go to bed, turn in

High: intoxicated by liquor or a drug

Hitch-hike: to get a ride from a stranger who is going to your destination

Hold your horses: slow down, calm down, be patient

ID: identification card

In a nut-shell: very briefly and concisely

Jock: an athlete

Keep in touch: to phone or write occasionally

Keep your fingers crossed: a good luck gesture or expression

Keep your shirt on: be patient, be calm

Kick it: Relax

Know the ropes: familiar with the details of something

Laid back: calm, relaxed, mellow person

Lemon: a bad buy or purchase because it doesn't work

Let the cat out of the bag: reveal a secret, thus ruining a surprise

Like: completely, totally; an interjection used for emphasis

Make a play for; make a move for: flirt with; gain by impressing favorably

Make ends meet: budget within one's income

Make no bones about it: deal in a direct manner, openly

Make-up: to apologize after a fight; to do an assignment after it is due; to retake a test you missed or didn't do well on; also, cosmetics

Mall: a cluster of stores under one roof

Mellow: an easy-going, calm person; also verb, e.g. "Mellow out."

Mess around: to play, relax

Mint: cool, very good, excellent condition

Munchies: hunger, snacks

On the ball: ready, on top of things

On the house: free, no cost

Out of it: distracted or preoccupied; a person who does not fit into a certain group; also, not in control

Out of one's mind: crazy; doing something ridiculous

Out of the question: unthinkable, impossible

Over my dead body: not if I can stop it!

Park: a large grassy area for recreation and picnics;

Pain (in the neck): a big nuisance, bothersome

Phat: cool; very good

Phony: something that is fake or someone who is insincere

The pill: common term for the contraceptive birth control pill

The pits: worst possible state of affairs

Through the grapevine: through gossip

Play second fiddle: be second in importance

Pretty: extremely or somewhat, depending on the tone of voice—"He's pretty cool."

Pot: marijuana

Pot-luck: a dinner where each person brings something to eat

Psyched: excited about something; mentally prepared

Pull someone's leg: chide or tease a person

Pull strings: to use influence to get what you want

Pull the wool over one's eyes: deceive or mislead someone

Put a cramp in one's style: interfere with a plan or idea

Put one's foot in one's mouth: to make a remark that is embarrassing

Put someone on: to fool or try to tease someone

Rag: to tease, put down, criticize; to nag or complain

Raincheck: to accept the same invitation for a later date—“Can I take a raincheck?”

Raining cats and dogs: raining heavily

Rap: to talk; talk, statement; a kind of music sometimes called hip-hop characterized by lyrical talking

Really!: expression of agreement or surprise

Right on!: expression of approval

Rip-off: to steal, in effect

Screwed-up: to not do well on something; also someone with a lot of emotional problems—“He’s really screwed up.”

See you later: often used instead of “good-bye”

Semi-formal: an event at which attire may call for a dress, sometimes long, for women and a coat and tie for men

Sick: Great, excellent, impressive

Single: a dollar

Show: cinema or movie, rock concert, or theater,

Sorority: women’s social or academic organization, found on campuses

Stoked: very happy and/or excited

Stoned: high on marijuana or alcohol; unable to function normally

Sweet: Good

That’s the breaks: a comment about a situation, usually bad, over which a person had no control

That sucks: that’s terrible, no good; may imply meanness

Turn off: something distasteful; as verb, “That turned me off.”

Take for granted: to assume

Tight: good, very good; sharp; cool; dope; attractive

Time-honored: respected because of long continuance

Tired: old, repeated, overused

Totally: very; very much

Trip: something that is strange or unusual; to overreact; to act crazy or surprised

Turkey: someone who is stupid or silly

Under the weather: sick; not feeling well

Uptight: worried, tense

Veg out: relax, withdraw from frantic world—"I vegged out and just watched TV."

Wasted: an extreme lack of energy, to be very drunk

Way: very; too much; yes; positive affirmation to the statement "no way"

Weed: marijuana

What's up?: "What is new?"; "What is happening?"; often used as an informal greeting. Detailed response not necessarily expected

Wicked good: very good

Win hands down: win easily

With flying colors: outstandingly, with style

Women's Lib: the feminist movement, short for "Women's Liberation"

Yes man: someone who tells you what you want to hear

Yo: hey, hi, what's up

Yuh, Yeah, or Yup: yes

ACADEMIC SLANG

Ace a test: do extremely well on an exam

All nighter: stay up all night to do class work

Audit: taking a class without receiving a grade or credit for it

Blow off classes: to not attend classes

Cram: to study hard at the last possible moment

Credit hours: a figure representing the hours and charges for a class; thus a class meeting three times each week for one hour each meeting is designated a 3-credit hour class

Cut: to “skip” a class--to not go to class

Dorm: a dormitory, residence building

Drop: to withdraw officially from a course

Drop/Add: a procedure which allows a student to cancel his/her registration in a class which is given at an inconvenient hour or which the student decides he/she doesn't like and to enroll in another class without repeating the entire registration procedure

Finals: the last exams of a semester

Flunk: to fail (receive a grade of “F”) an exam or a course

Midterm: test given in the middle of the semester

Non-traditional student: student over 24 years old seeking a degree

Open-book exam: an exam during which one can refer to the textbook

Pre-req(uisite): prior work required as a condition of admission to a class

Quiz: a short test, often given without warning, in which case it may be called a Apop-quiz@

Swamped: to have a lot of undone work

Take-home exam: examination which may be written at home

Transfer: academic work completed at another institution and being submitted as a substitute for some requirement

Transfer student: one coming from another school

LIVING AND WORKING WITH AMERICANS

This section attempts to outline the complexity of American life and culture. As an international student, you will learn more about American people and culture than you would through the pages of books. You will also learn much about your own culture as you realize how your own perspectives, values and social habits differ from those of other people.

WHAT AMERICANS ARE LIKE

TRAITS AND ATTITUDES

- ▶ **INDIVIDUALITY:** In many countries people think of themselves primarily as members of a community, class or group, but Americans see themselves as individuals. They dislike being dependent on others and guard their freedom. Independence and individuality make them suspicious of authority. To Americans, the government exists to serve them, not the other way around.
- ▶ **INFORMALITY:** If you come from a more formal society, you may misinterpret the casualness of Americans as rudeness. They frequently address people of all ages and positions by first names. Their dress and their group behavior are most often informal.
- ▶ **FRIENDLINESS:** Americans are very friendly and open. They talk and joke easily. It is common for Americans to “encourage” the person who is speaking by nodding their heads or by adding certain sounds and words at appropriate times (like “mm-hm” or “I see”). People making such sounds are not bored, trying to interrupt, or wishing to speak themselves. They are trying to indicate that they are interested and attentive.

Friendliness is especially noticeable when meeting strangers. It is possible to be addressed and asked questions by people you have never met. These questions may seem personal or even prying to someone not accustomed to this informality. However, the intention is always friendly. The polite response is a smile and a pleasant and brief reply. You may ask a similar question if you wish. The important thing is not to be offended by the gesture and not feel rejected if they end the exchange abruptly.

Real friendship takes time to grow, as “staying loose’ (being flexible) is important to American students. They may be friendly on the surface, but difficult to become close to. They generally have many acquaintances and a few close friends. You may need to put an effort into making friends, but by sharing your views and experiences and through repeated interactions others friendships will come. Once an American becomes your real friend, it is a strong and equal friendship.

The casualness of social patterns allows people to move into new social groups with little ceremony. You should feel as welcome as anyone else. Normally at informal gatherings, a simple “May I join you?” and a self-introduction are sufficient to join a group. Make the most of every opportunity to meet people.

- ▶ **DIRECTNESS:** Honesty and frankness are common traits usually not to be seen as rudeness. There is generally no intent to offend. Discussing issues, events and ideas openly is considered proper in the U.S. Americans also get right to the point in conversation, mostly bypassing polite social talk. They may ask many questions. This is to get to know you better. Conflict is often dealt with by speaking directly to the parties involved.
- ▶ **SILENCE:** This makes most Americans uncomfortable. There is a common practice of “small talk” --topics engaged in simply to make conversation. Such topics include the weather, sports, school, clothing, food, etc. “Small talk” is essential at parties, when meeting new people, or when talk is expected but no “heavy” or serious content is desired.
- ▶ **ENERGY:** The U.S. has a highly active society, full of movement and change. If you are used to a more leisurely pace, you may become exhausted by the fast tempo of American life. On the other hand, you may find it exhilarating!
- ▶ **TIME:** Americans always seem to be in a hurry. Students may wave and say “Hi” to you, but only a few will take the time to stop and visit. They may not spend time on pleasantries and formalities often customary in other countries. They get right to the point. Americans consider time to be precious and they try to make the most of it. Therefore, arriving more than 10 minutes late for an appointment without good reason is considered rude.
- ▶ **EQUALITY:** Americans are taught from childhood that “all men are created equal,” meaning every member of society should have the same opportunities and rights--social, legal and political. That phrase is part of the Declaration of Independence. Equal rights for all are protected by the U.S. Constitution. There are many “equal rights” movements

at this time in the U.S.--equal rights for women, minorities, people with disabilities, and more. You will become aware of these movements. Differences in status are also minimized in America. One may have close friends of both sexes.

- ▶ **ACHIEVEMENT:** Americans respect achievement. You may notice their obsession with sports records. In universities there is an emphasis on grades and grade point averages. People are valued for their achievements, skills and talents.
- ▶ **COMPETITION:** Because Americans value achievement, they are competitive. You will find friendly and unfriendly competition everywhere. Even the American style of joking, “getting the last word” and the quick reply are subtle forms of competition.
- ▶ **COOPERATION:** Although always in competition, Americans have a sense of teamwork--of cooperating with others to achieve a common goal.
- ▶ **HARD WORK:** Given the value placed on achievement and self-reliance, hard work is highly respected. Work is also expected to fulfill one’s personal needs, so changing jobs is common to satisfy one’s needs.
- ▶ **MATERIALISM:** Most Americans seem more concerned with material than spiritual values. Many are deeply religious, but their religion is a private matter rarely to be discussed outside their family and church.

AMERICAN CUSTOMS

- ▶ **GREETING:** Men usually shake hands firmly the first time they meet and often at subsequent meetings. Women generally shake hands with each other and with men when they meet for the first time. If you are not certain, wait for the other person to ask first. “How do you do?” or “Nice to meet you.” are proper greetings. When saying goodbye to someone you’ve just met, it is polite to say “It was a pleasure to meet you.” “Good morning” and “Good afternoon” are often said, but “Hello” and “Hi” are the most common greetings.
- ▶ **SOCIAL INVITATIONS:** These should be responded to quickly by phone or a note. If you receive an invitation with “R.S.V.P.” at the bottom, it means you are expected to reply. Appointment times for social affairs are more flexible than for business matters. For parties, it is customary to arrive shortly after the given time, but you should arrive on time when meeting someone at a public place.

Groups often have “pot-luck” suppers where everyone brings a prepared casserole, salad or dessert. A special dish from your country is greatly appreciated

at such occasions. Helping in the kitchen before or after dinner is considered very natural by American families.

A person who extends an invitation to you and takes you to a restaurant or theater often pays the bill. It is considered polite for you to offer to pay the tip on these occasions (see Tipping). Since students are often short of money, an invitation may mean “we’d like you to join us,” implying you would be expected to pay for yourself. If in doubt, ASK!

- ▶ **THANK YOU:** This phrase is often used even for small favors from someone just doing his/her job. “You’re welcome” is the customary response.

It is not necessary to take a gift to someone who invites you to dinner but it’s always considerate to send a “thank you” note afterwards. If you are invited to a birthday or Christmas party, a small souvenir from your country would be received with delight.

- ▶ **NAMES:** It is acceptable to automatically use the first name of someone within your age or status group or younger. An older person is often addressed as Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. followed by his/her family name until the individual requests that you use his/her first name. Ms. (pronounced Mizz) is used for both single and married women. Some women prefer this form, and it is useful if you are unsure of her marital status. These titles are used with the surname, not with the first name, as in some countries. When in doubt, ask “What should I call you?”

Nicknames are fairly common in the U.S. These are given by family and friends because of a physical or behavioral characteristic, or may just be a contraction of the real name. Being called by a nickname is not uncomplimentary; in fact, it is often a sign of affection.

- ▶ **TIPPING:** Service charges are not added to the bill in the U.S. as is the norm in many countries. In a restaurant, tip 15% of the bill if the service was satisfactory. A tip of 10-15% can also be given to taxi drivers and hairdressers. Delivery people are generally given a dollar or two. Tips are not given in cafeterias, dormitory dining halls, or “fast food” establishments.

- ▶ **TABLE MANNERS:** When at someone’s house for dinner it is perfectly polite for you to accept a second helping of food if offered. If you have had enough, it is acceptable to politely decline the offer. If you have medical, dietary or religious restrictions on certain foods, it is acceptable to inform your host or hostess when you accept the invitation to dinner.

- ▶ **BODY LANGUAGE:** Some cultures consider it demeaning to look directly into the eyes of someone who is speaking, but Americans expect it. They also expect your full attention by putting aside your work to listen. These are considered expressions of attention and sincerity. Another example is distance between people in conversation. Two to three feet, at least, is considered comfortable. Standing closer will make many Americans nervous. Americans also employ less touch in conversation than some cultures. Don't take these behaviors personally. If you would like to read more about them, read Edward Hall's book, The Silent Language.

Americans also use hand gestures frequently. The most common is waving the hand for hello and goodbye. A "thumbs-up" sign (fingers closed with thumb extended up) is an informal gesture meaning "Good job." Young people will also use a "high-five." One person holds one hand, palm out, in the air and the other person slaps his/her palm against the outstretched hand. Often, the person initiating this will say "Give me five!" The informal "O.K." sign is made by making a circle with the thumb and first finger with the other fingers in the air. "Come here" is gestured by crooking the first finger from your fist. When gesturing "Just a minute" you just put your first finger in the air.

- ▶ **HANGING OUT:** It's very common in America for a friend to go to another's house to "hang out" --talk, watch television, listen to music and generally relax.
- ▶ **DATING:** This may seem like a baffling and intriguing custom. Relationships between American men and women in college range from simple, casual friendships to strong emotional and physical commitments. As your friendships develop past acquaintance, you may not always understand what your partners expect of you. Whatever the relationship, the best policy is always honesty and frankness. Although sometimes embarrassing, it is best to express your feelings and intentions so you can avoid a misunderstanding and even greater discomfort.

The purpose of dating is to become better acquainted with someone you find attractive and interesting. Young people have relative freedom to date at an early age. A date may be a cup of coffee after class or a formal dance or banquet. When two people enjoy each other's company they may have many dates. Traditionally, men have initiated the dating process, but now it is acceptable for women to ask men out on a date.

When on a date, the question of who should pay is one that puzzles many Americans. In the past, men were expected to pay for everything. Women are usually as able to pay as men now, and it is common to share the expenses, at least after the first date. If unsure, talk about it with your date.

When you meet someone you like, it is best to invite him/her for coffee or some other

casual meeting to start. Young people often go together in groups, which is more informal and easier if you're unsure of how the other person feels.

When asking for a date be perceptive to the answer you receive. If you are told the person is already doing something that night, it may mean he/she is trying to refuse politely, or he/she may be telling the truth. Don't be put off by a single refusal unless the person makes it clear that he/she is not interested (However, repeated refusals are a pretty clear sign that he/she is not interested). Do not continue to pursue someone who has indicated they are not interested in dating. This can be viewed as sexual harassment.

If your dating relationship becomes sexual, it is important to talk with your partner about what they feel comfortable engaging in and what they do not. Never assume that just because a partner is being intimate with you they want to have sex/intercourse. Always ask to be sure your partner is consenting (saying yes) to intimate acts.

Avoid initiating sexual intimacy with a partner when either you or they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These can impair judgment and can lead to misunderstanding or even to charges of sexual assault. Never use alcohol or drugs to influence someone to have sex with you and never force someone to have sex. This is sexual assault and is a serious crime in the United States.

Social relationships may be different here than at home, but don't feel pressured to abandon customs or beliefs that are important to you in order to fit in. A good general practice is to act in a way that feels comfortable and acceptable to you, while remembering that others may not always interpret your intentions accurately.

- ▶ **LOUD MUSIC:** Young Americans like to play music **loud!** Some choose to do this even while studying. If asked to make it quieter, the student will usually comply--if he or she can hear you!
- ▶ **TELEPHONES:** Americans like to talk on the phone. Not only do they make plans on the phone, but they frequently engage in long conversations. They find this a convenient way to "keep in touch," since they frequently move residences.

- **PARTICIPATING IN CAMPUS LIFE**

Seek out fellow students with similar interests. You may find them in your classes or laboratories, but there are other options. U.S.M. has a wide array of clubs and organizations representing many student interests. You will find cultural and religious associations, sports teams and sports clubs, volunteer service organizations, fraternities and sororities, student government, academic societies, music and theater groups, a student newspaper, radio and TV station.

If you want to enhance your leadership skills, you will find numerous possibilities on campus, whether you choose to run for student-government office or lead the International Student Association or other campus organization. All these opportunities give you a chance to meet and work with other students on issues that matter to you.

- **PRACTICING YOUR RELIGION**

The United States is a multi-cultural society founded on tolerance and mutual respect; you should not hesitate to seek out opportunities to practice your religious beliefs. Organized religious groups of many denominations are likely to be found in the surrounding community. Other international students or the Interfaith Chaplaincy Office may be able to help you locate some of these organizations. USM's Interfaith Chaplaincy is housed in the small white farmhouse, just outside Payson Smith Hall. They have a dedicated staff of part-time chaplains from a wide variety of faiths. They also have a quiet, private space set aside for religious or spiritual activities. To learn more stop by their office Monday through Friday between 8 and 4:30 or visit their website at: <http://usm.maine.edu/studentlife/interfaith/>

Although America has a higher rate of church attendance than most other western societies, many Americans are uncomfortable discussing religion. Some Americans may shy away from the topic altogether. Others will want to share their religious views with you. Most people are sincere and straightforward, but some may try to take advantage of you or convert you to their religious beliefs by offering you their friendship. If you begin to feel uncomfortable in such a situation, politely but firmly explain that you are not interested.

The following recommendations for local churches and/or services were made by USM's current international student population:

- ▶ Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception 773-7746
307 Congress Street, Portland
Sunday noon service in Latin
<http://www.portlandcathedral.org/>
- ▶ Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church 774-0281
133 Pleasant Street, Portland
www.holytrinityportland.org
- ▶ Sacred Heart/St. Dominic Parish Catholic Church 772-6182
80 Sherman Street
Corner of Mellan & Sherman Streets, Portland
<http://shsdp.org>
Services offered in Spanish on Sunday at 12:15. Confession offered on Saturdays at 3 pm and

Sundays at Noon.

- ▶ First Baptist Church 773-3123
360 Canco Road, Portland
<http://firstbaptistportland.org/NEWDESIGN/mainpage.htm>
Services offered in Korean on Sunday at 11:00 AM. For more information please attend the mass instead of calling the church office.
- ▶ Korean United Methodist Church 774-1617
618 Washington Avenue, Portland
- ▶ Portland Chinese Gospel Church 773-3123
First Baptist Church
360 Canco Road, Portland
Contact: Tim Luk at 781-4728
Sunday services and Sunday school in Chinese
- ▶ Green Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
46 Sheridan Street, Portland 227-1409
- ▶ Holy Nativity Russian Orthodox Church 767-2330
967 Broadway, South Portland
- ▶ Islamic Society of Portland, Maine 842-5953
155 Brackett Street, Portland
Call for prayer times
- ▶ Cressey Road United Methodist Church 839-3111
81 Cressey Road, Gorham
<http://www.cresseyrdumc.org>
- ▶ St. Anne's Catholic Church 839-4857
299 Main Street, Gorham
<http://www.stannegorham.com/index.html>
- ▶ Etz Chaim Synagogue 773-2339
267 Congress Street, Portland

● **ALCOHOL AND SMOKING**

U.S. laws concerning the sale and consumption of alcohol may seem very liberal or restrictive to you, depending on your nationality. Remember that you must be 21 years of age or older to purchase or drink alcohol. Waitresses, cashiers and bartenders will ask you for your A.I.D.® as

proof of your age. You will need a Maine State Identification Card or a Maine State Driver's License for this. Not all places will accept a passport as a valid form of identification. Without the proper identification you will be refused the alcohol.

In the U.S.M. dormitories, you may drink liquor or beer in your room if you are 21, but no person under 21 is allowed to be in your room at that time.

Do you smoke? In many parts of the United States, all public buildings are designated as "smoke free," meaning that you cannot smoke in any part of the building. Other buildings may have spaces designed for smokers. Restaurants and bars are also "smoke free" in the state of Maine. If you are a guest in someone's home, room, automobile or apartment, always ask permission before you smoke. Even if you are in your own room, it is polite to ask your guests if anyone objects to your smoking before you reach for a cigarette. Be prepared to see "No Smoking" signs in most offices, classrooms and stores.

IMMIGRATION ISSUES

- **IMPORTANT IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS**

There are four important travel documents: your passport issued by your country; your U.S. visa which is your permission to apply for entry into the U.S.; your I-94 which is your authorization of stay, indicating length of your stay; and your I-20, or DS-2019. NOTE: Citizens of Canada need only present the I-20 or DS-2019 upon entry to the U.S. and will be issued an I-94 immediately. They don't need entry visas.

▶ **PASSPORT:** Issued by your home country, this identifies you as a citizen of that country. For students and their dependents on F visas, the passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the time of your authorized stay in the U.S. To apply for extension of your passport, contact the nearest Consulate or Embassy in Washington, D.C. (The Office of International Programs can provide you with this address.) to obtain any necessary application forms and information about other requirements. The Office of International Programs or Registrar's Office can provide you with an official certificate stating that you are a registered student if such a document is necessary to renew your passport. You should request information about renewal and apply far in advance of your expiration date since considerable time is required for some countries. Any time you mail your passport send it by registered or certified mail.

▶ **ENTRY VISA:** This multi-colored stamp placed in your passport is issued by a U.S. Consulate and entitles you to apply for admission to the U.S. It indicates:

Place of issue

Type of visa

Date of issue

Expiration date (You must enter the U.S. before this date.)

How many times you may enter during that period of validity

▶ **FORM I-94 ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE CARD:** This small white card is issued to all non-immigrants and is stapled in the passport at the time of arrival in the U.S. The I-94 indicates the visa classification and the length of authorized stay in the U.S. This card is surrendered upon departure from the U.S., and a replacement is issued upon re-entry (except for trips to Canada and Mexico lasting less than 30 days).

▶ **I-20 FORM:** The “Certificate of Eligibility for Non-immigrant (F-1) Student Status” is issued to students at the time of acceptance to a school. It is used to apply for an F-1 visa at the U.S. Consulate in the home country and is then presented to the Immigration Officer at the port of entry upon arrival in the U.S. Students are given a copy which documents their valid student status in the U.S.

▶ **FORM DS-2019:** The “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status” is issued to potential exchange visitors when they are admitted to a school. It is used to apply for the J-1 visa at the U.S. Consulate in the home country. It is then presented to the immigration officials at the port of entry in order to be stamped. It can be used for re-entry to the U.S. as long as the visa is still valid. If the visa is not valid, a new DS-2019 can be requested from the Program Sponsor if the program is extended.

● MAINTAINING YOUR STATUS

All students holding F or J visas are required by law to do the following in order to maintain valid status:

1. Always notify the Office of International Programs of any change in address or phone number. You can submit any changes in address via the Office of International Programs website at <http://www.usm.maine.edu/international>
2. Always carry a full credit load of courses. This means 9 credits minimum for graduate students and 12 credits minimum for undergraduate students each semester. You are not required to enroll in summer courses unless you are in the intensive ESL program.
3. Never work illegally. (See section on International Students and Employment.)
4. Always be sure that your passport is valid, and the date in Item #5 of your I-20 (completion date of students) or ending date on your DS-2019 has not passed.

● DO NOT BECOME A “PUBLIC CHARGE”

International students in the U.S. sometimes experience financial difficulties similar to those experienced by American students. Although the U.S. government has benefit programs designed to assist low-income families living in the United States, most of these program are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents. Non-immigrants on F, M, and J visas are not eligible. Unfortunately, administrators of many public assistance programs rarely have the expertise to assess eligibility based on immigrant status.

Remember that when you applied for your non-immigrant visa you had to demonstrate to the consular officer that you had the means to support not only yourself but your family members as well. **Acceptance of public assistance can be a violation of your immigration status under the public charge ground of exclusion.** A public charge is a term used by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department to classify persons who have become dependent on federal or state assistance programs. **If the INS finds that you have become a “public charge” because you have accepted public assistance, you could be denied reentry to the United States after a trip home.** Your non-immigrant visa could even be canceled and you might also be expected to pay back the government for the amount of benefits that you received. Such a decision is extremely difficult to reverse, so be careful. Examples of public assistance programs that are not open to non-immigrants are:

- ▶ Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
- ▶ Medicaid, which provides reimbursement for medical care for low-income persons
- ▶ Food stamps, which provide low-income families with coupons that they use to purchase food.
- ▶ Some federal housing programs.

Remember that even if the administrator of a benefit program finds you eligible for a program and encourages you to apply for benefits, you should not accept them without checking with your International Student Advisor. He or she may not understand that accepting these benefits could affect your immigration status!

● EMPLOYMENT

Although international students will want to work shortly after arrival there are strict regulations which govern the **employment of F-1 and J-1 students** in the U.S. Students must maintain lawful student status. Questions about the definition of lawful student status should be raised with the Office of International Programs.

- **On-Campus Employment:** Students on **F-1 visas** may work on campus up to 20 hours a week during the academic year and full-time during vacation periods. The Office of International Programs will provide letters of eligibility to work on campus. Salaried positions like Resident Assistants and Graduate Assistants must also stay within this limit. Working over the 20 hour limit is a violation of visa status.

International students with **J-1 visas** are on exchange programs which may or may not allow employment. Exchange students must meet with Kimberly Sinclair to discuss any proposed employment search to determine whether they can work on campus as part of their exchange experience.

- **Finding a job:** International students don't have "Work-Study" funds and can't hold these jobs. *International students must be hired on "departmental funds."* Very few departments regularly hire students on departmental funds. Some offices may have a special project for which they have funds. Students can find jobs by talking with other international students who work on campus, by meeting with directors of departments individually or by reading the student newspaper and bulletin boards.
- **Off Campus employment:** Students with **F-1 visas** have limited off-campus employment opportunities. Students must be enrolled for at least one year before opportunities become available. All employment must be recommended and documented by Kimberly Sinclair. Approval by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is often required. Approval is very difficult to obtain, and students should meet individually with Kimberly when off-campus employment appears to be necessary.
- **Practical Training:** Guidelines for Curricular or Optional Practical Training are available in the Office of International Programs. Internships can qualify as Curricular Practical Training.

Questions about individual student employment limits should be addressed to Kimberly Sinclair in the U.S.M. Office of International Programs.

- **TRAVEL AND RE-ENTRY**

Whenever you leave the United States be sure you have the documents you will need to re-enter.

- ▶ Have your I-20 or DS-2019 endorsed by the International Student Advisor or responsible officer on your campus. (*Kimberly Sinclair, Larisa Kruze, Kaoru Phillips*)
- ▶ Verify that the information on your I-20 or DS-2019 is still correct.
- ▶ Check your U.S. entry visa (which is stamped in your passport) to be sure that it is still valid for additional entries. If it is not, you will need to get a new entry visa from a U.S. consulate or embassy while you are outside the U.S. (Special conditions apply when traveling to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean for less than 30 days. For more information see your International Student Advisor.)
- ▶ If you are pre-registered for the upcoming semester, we suggest that you bring a copy of that registration with you.
- ▶ Bring a copy of your transcript.

- ▶ Ask the Office of International Programs to prepare a “Verification of Enrollment Letter” for you. This will verify that you have been attending and are expected to return to continue your studies at U.S.M.
- ▶ When you apply for a new visa the visa officer will ask to see your financial documentation.
- ▶ If you are traveling to a location other than your home country you may need a visa to enter. For more information contact the Office of International Programs or that country’s embassy or consulate well ahead of your planned trip; four months is not too early.

TAXES

All non-resident aliens must file a Federal and a State income tax return for the preceding year, **whether or not they worked**, if they resided in the U.S. for some part of that year.

All income earned in the U.S. will have deductions for Federal and State income taxes withheld by the employer. This “withholding tax” is an estimate of the taxes due on what you earned. This amount will depend on the number of exemptions you claim on the W-4 form you fill out when you become employed. By law, international students are only permitted to claim either 0 or 1 exemption unless they are a married citizen of Canada, Japan, Mexico or South Korea.

Every employer is required to report each employee’s total earnings for the previous calendar year and the amount of taxes withheld for the worker. This report, called a W-2, is sent to the Federal government and to you by early February. Students who receive scholarships in excess of their educational costs, or earned wages exempt because of a tax treaty will also receive a 1042-S form. A copy of this form is sent to you and to the federal government in late February or early March. These forms will be necessary to complete your State and Federal tax returns by April 15. If more has been withheld than what you owe, you will be sent a refund. If less has been withheld, you must pay the difference with your tax forms.

The amount of tax you owe to the U.S. and the state will be affected by: the amount you earn, your immigration status, the length of your residence in the U.S., your purpose for being here, your type of income, and your country of citizenship. The U.S. has a tax treaty with certain countries that exempts from U.S. taxes a portion of your income earned.

IF YOU BROUGHT YOUR FAMILY

Students who bring their families to the United States will encounter issues ranging from finding suitable family housing, child care, and school to coping with additional financial responsibilities.

- HOUSING

Finding and furnishing a new home for your family will probably be one of your first tasks. Apartments and houses are often rented “unfurnished,” which means that they are equipped only with a stove and refrigerator. “Furnished” apartments usually have a stove and a refrigerator, plus some other items which might include chairs, tables, beds, a couch and chest of drawers. Dishes, cooking utensils, sheets and towels are typically not provided and you will need to purchase these items yourself.

Buying new household items can be very expensive, as can shipping items from home. A less expensive option is to buy used furniture. Check the classified section of the newspaper and the notice boards around campus for used furniture sales. You can also buy used furniture from community “thrift stores” such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army. (*See the section “Shopping For Everything Else You Need” for locations and phone numbers.*)

The least expensive way to furnish your home is to buy items at a “garage sale,” “moving sale,” or “yard sale.” Americans hold such sales in their yards or garages to clear their homes of unwanted items. In many university communities, students sell their goods when they finish their studies and move away. Look for notices in the newspapers or posted at street corners. Come early to get the best buy, and yes, it’s OK to barter over the price!

- SHOPPING AND COOKING

Shopping is one of America’s most popular pastimes. In all but the most isolated locations you will find a large selection of new goods and tremendous variations in price. In retail stores, the prices displayed are firm and not negotiable. The following are some tips for shopping on a student budget:

- ▶ Learn to be a “comparison” shopper; that is, check prices at several locations before you buy.
- ▶ Unless you need assistance from a salesperson, shop at discount stores rather than department stores.

- ▶ Wait for items to go “on sale;” watch for ads in the newspaper, in store windows and on television.
- ▶ Talk with other students about where to shop. Students will have tips on where to find the best prices.
- ▶ Be aware that **Maine has a 5% sales tax**. This tax is not included on the price listed on the item, but will be added to the price when you purchase the item.

If you buy new appliances or other large items, keep the store receipts, read the instruction booklets, and fill out the Warranty card that comes with the product. Most products are guaranteed from defects by the manufacturer for a period of time.

Cooking in a new country can be an exciting experience because there are new foods and techniques to try. You may find that you have to adjust to new cooking equipment. Americans used cups and teaspoons instead of weight for measuring ingredients, and, unlike the rest of the world, we express temperatures in degrees Fahrenheit instead of Centigrade. If you cannot find the ingredients you need to fix that special dish from home, ask fellow foreign students who have been on campus for some time. They would know where the specialty stores are located or may have catalogs where you can order these special ingredients by mail.

● CHILD CARE

Once you are settled in your new home, you may need to find appropriate child care. You will also find a listing of “**nursery schools**” or “**day-care centers**” in the yellow pages of the telephone book. Child care facilities in the United States must be licensed by the state. They are inspected for cleanliness and safety and are authorized to accept a maximum number of children.

If you require after-school care for children in elementary school, look for a facility that can transport your child from school to the facility. Inquire about discounts. Some child care centers offer discounts for enrolling two or more children or prepaying several months’ tuition at one time. Fees may also be reduced if your family income is below a certain level.

If you would prefer a more “homey” atmosphere, you might want to find someone who provides child care in his or her home. Look for a trusted friend or a licensed child-care provider. The license means the provider’s home has been inspected by a state licensing agency for cleanliness and safety. It also means that the provider has passed a state background check. If you choose to hire a private “babysitter” to care for your child, check his/her references carefully. Ask for names and numbers of previous clients and call them to see if they were happy with his/her performance.

- **SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN**

In the United States, children between the ages of 5 and 16 are required to attend school. You may enroll your children in public school, however, please be aware that you will be expected to pay full tuition for each child enrolled. This amount will vary per school and you should contact their administrative offices for further details.

The school your children will attend is determined by where you live, unless you enroll them in a private school. To start your children in school you will need their birth certificates, school records or transcripts from your home country, and documented proof of immunizations from a physician noting the day, month and year of immunization. All of these documents will need to be translated into English by a qualified translation service.

Your child will want to take a look at his or her new school before the start of classes. This simple step will be very important in helping your child to adjust. You can arrange to see the school by calling to make an appointment.

- **EMPLOYMENT OF YOUR SPOUSE**

It is often the case that the spouse of a foreign student will want to work while in the United States. Sometimes this is possible, and sometimes it is not. Persons in F-2 status **cannot** work in the United States. Persons in J-2 status may accept employment only if they have been granted employment authorization by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. For more information see your International Student Advisor.

- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Academic and family responsibility in unfamiliar surroundings far from family and friends can often cause stress within the families of foreign students. Sometimes this strain can lead to domestic violence or spouse abuse. Domestic abuse ranges from mildly abusive actions to severely violent, life-threatening behavior. In the United States such occurrences are no longer treated as private family issues. There are laws to protect you from your abuser and there are resources in the community where you can get help. Family Crisis Services in Portland offers a 24 hour phone hotline where you can get support, information & crisis counseling. You don't have to reveal your name when you call, it is completely anonymous. Family Crisis Services also offers other services such as support groups and temporary emergency shelter if you feel unsafe in your home. For help, call the Family Crisis Hotline at 1-800-537-6066. **You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.** If you live outside of the Greater Portland area and need information on counseling, support groups, shelters in your area you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.

If you feel that you are in immediate danger or that your life is being threatened by your abuser you should call the police by dialing 911.

MAJOR HOLIDAYS EXPLAINED

If there is a religious holiday which is celebrated in your country and you do not feel that you should go to class on that day, you can ask your professors if they will allow you to miss class that day. Although most professors will be understanding, it is up to the professor whether or not the absence will affect your grade. Major American holidays are listed below. Government offices and businesses will be closed on those that are noted as “official holidays.”

New Year’s Day: January 1

This is an official holiday for schools, offices and stores. New Year’s Eve, December 31, is more important to Americans than New Year’s Day itself. Everyone gathers with family and friends to “ring out the old and ring in the new,” an expression that reflects the old custom of ringing church bells to greet the new year.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday: January 15

Official holiday that began in 1986. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized and led the civil-rights movement in America during the 1960's.

Groundhog Day: February 2

Not an official holiday. The groundhog is a small burrowing animal that hibernates during the winter months. Legend has it that he emerges on February 2. If he sees his shadow (a sunny day) he will be frightened and return to this burrow. This is supposed to indicate six more weeks of wintry weather. If he doesn’t see his shadow, then spring should arrive soon!

Lincoln’s Birthday: February 12

Official Holiday in many states; often celebrated in conjunction with George Washington’s birthday or “President’s Day.” Abraham Lincoln was president during the Civil War (1861-1865), a period that had a profound effect on the history of the nation. Believing that a “a house divided against itself cannot stand,” Lincoln acted to free the slaves and bring the seceded states back into the union.

Valentine’s Day: February 14

Not an official holiday. A romantic holiday celebrated by sending cards and giving candy or flowers to special close friends and partners.

Washington’s Birthday: February 22 (celebrated on the third Monday in February)

Official holiday. Commemorates the birthday of George Washington, commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Army that freed America from the colonial rule of England. Washington was also the first president of the United States.

Saint Patrick's Day: March 17

Not an official holiday. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, and this holiday was brought to America by Irish immigrants. People celebrate this holiday by wearing something green and getting together with friends to party and sing Irish folk songs.

April Fool's Day: April 1

Not an official holiday. As in many other countries, this day is marked by the custom of playing harmless practical jokes on friends or colleagues.

Easter: A Sunday in March or April

Not an official holiday. A religious holiday for Christians who believe that on this day Christ rose from the dead. Many old traditions are now connected with Easter, including the decoration of brightly colored eggs and giving gifts and candy to children.

Patriot's Day

Celebrated on the 3rd Monday in April, this holiday commemorates the day in 1776 when the Revolutionary War started. There are few celebrations, but both Maine and Boston run marathons on this day. It is an official holiday **only** in Maine and Massachusetts.

Mother's Day: Second Sunday in May

Not an official holiday. On this day Americans honor their mothers by sending flowers, buying small gifts, and taking their mothers out to eat so that they don't have to cook or work around the house.

Father's Day: Third Sunday in June

Not an official holiday. Fathers are honored on this day. Children give them cards and gifts.

Memorial Day: Last Monday in May

Official holiday. Memorial Day is the day on which Americans remember those who died in military service to their country. Many families visit graves and decorate them with flowers. The day is also marked with patriotic parades. This day is considered the beginning of the summer season.

Independence Day: July 4

Official holiday. Independence Day commemorates the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The holiday is celebrated all over the country with picnics, political speeches, and community get-togethers that culminate in fireworks displays.

Labor Day: First Monday in September

Official holiday. This holiday was established in recognition of the labor movement's contribution to the productivity of the country. This day is the last holiday of the summer season and is celebrated with picnics and other outings.

Patriot Day: September 11th

In the United States, **Patriot Day** occurs on September 11 of each year, designated in memory of the nearly three thousand who died in the September 11, 2001 attacks. On this day, the President directs that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff and displayed from individual American homes at the White House, and on all U.S. government buildings and establishments, home and abroad. The President also asks Americans to observe a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 A.M. (Eastern Daylight Time) marking the first plane crash on Sept. 11, 2001.

Note: Patriot Day is different than Patriot's Day, a holiday celebrated in Maine and Massachusetts only to commemorate the Battle of Lexington and Concord during the Revolutionary War.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: Late September/Early October

Rosh Hashanah, commemorating the creation of the world, is the first of the Ten Days of Penitence, which end with Yom Kippur, the most solemn of Jewish holidays. For Rosh Hashanah, families gather for a feast in which an apple is dipped in honey to express hope for a sweet year ahead. In Judaism, Yom Kippur is a day of judgement; on the eve of Yom Kippur, Jews ask forgiveness from those that they may have wronged. The keynotes of the holiday are fasting and a collective confession, repeated several times throughout the day.

Columbus Day: Second Monday in October

This holiday honors Christopher Columbus who is the explorer credited with discovering America.

Halloween: October 31

Not an official holiday. This was originally a religious holiday, but its religious character has been lost in the United States, and it is now celebrated mostly as a children's holiday. Traditions include carving out pumpkins with funny or scary faces, as well as dressing up in costumes and going around the neighborhood to receive candy treats. When people come to the door, children say "trick or treat," meaning "if you don't give me a treat, I will trick you." Neighbors are ready with treats to distribute to these visiting children.

Veteran's Day: November 11

On this day Americans honor the veterans of all wars. This is also the day when the Armistice was signed after World War I.

Thanksgiving Day: Fourth Thursday in November

Official holiday. The first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated by the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1621 to give thanks for the bountiful harvest and their triumph of survival over the wilderness. Now it is a time when Americans give thanks for the good life they enjoy. They celebrate by getting together with family to eat traditional food such as turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie. Since this is the busiest travel time in the U.S. the day following is sometimes a holiday as well so that people can join their families in other cities.

Hanukkah: Eight Days, usually in December

One of the less solemn of the Jewish holidays, but one widely observed even by nonreligious Jews. The only Jewish holiday connected with war, Hanukkah celebrates the victory of Jewish Maccabees over their Syrian ruler in 1678 B.C. Hanukkah is marked with parties, games, gifts

for children, and the lighting of the nine candles of the menorah.

Christmas: December 25

Official holiday. Many people regard Christmas as the most important holiday of the year, with the holiday season extending from a few days before Christmas to New Year's Day. Although its origins are religious in nature, it is a holiday celebrated by almost everyone in the country. Family members travel great distances to be together on this day on which gifts are exchanged, and a traditional dinner is shared. Even families who do not have strong religious convictions decorate a Christmas tree and join in the festivities of the Christmas season.

APPENDIX I: METRIC & U.S. MEASURES

The United States is one of the last countries to convert to the metric system; in fact, the attempt to make the conversion has been unsuccessful. There have been some switch overs, but most units of measure in the U.S. will probably be unfamiliar to you.

Distance/Length

100 kilometers	62.5 miles	1 mile	1.67 kilometers
1 meter	3.281 feet	1 yard*	0.91 meter
1 meter	39.37 inches	1 foot*	30.5 centimeters
1 centimeter	0.39 inch	1 inch*	25.4 millimeters
*1 yard	3 feet	1 foot	12 inches

Weight

1 kilogram	2.2 pounds	1 pound*	0.45 kilograms
1 gram	0.035 ounces	1 ounce*	28.00 grams
*1 pound	16 ounces		

Fluids

1 litre	4 1/3 cups	1 gallon	3.80 liters
1 litre	1.06 quarts	1 quart	0.95 liters
1 litre	0.26 gallons	1 pint	0.47 milliliters
		1 cup	0.24 liters
		1 ounce	29.57 milliliters

Kitchen Measures

Americans use volume rather than weight in measuring quantities for most recipes in home cooking. They use the term ounce as both a fluid measure and a weight. 16 ounces is both one pound and one pint or two cups. It is very easy to get confused! The following tables may help you to decipher recipes.

1 teaspoon (tsp or t)	2 liquid grams	1 tablespoon (tbsp or T)	6 liquid grams
6 and 2/3 tbsp	100 liquid grams	16 tbsp	2 pint
2 cup 1/2 pint (pt)	454 liquid grams	4 cups	1 quart
			907 liquid grams

Centigrade (Celsius) and Fahrenheit

	Celsius	Fahrenheit
Boiling	100	212
Body temperature	37	98.6
Room temperature	20	68
Freezing	0	32

*Fahrenheit temperature $\times 9/5$ (Celsius + 32)

APPENDIX II: CLOTHING & SHOE SIZE CONVERSIONS

Women's Clothing

American	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
Japanese	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21
British	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Continental	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50

Women's Shoes

American	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9
Japanese	23	23.5	24	24.5	25	25.5	26
British	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5
Continental	36	37	38	39	40	41	42

Men's Suits, Overcoats & Sweaters

American	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
Japanese	Small.....	Medium.....	Large.....	LL			
British	34	36	38	40	42	44	46
Continental	44	46	48	50	52	54	56

Collar Sizes, Men's Shirts

American	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17
Japanese	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
British	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17
Continental	36	37	38	39	40	41	42

Men's Shoes

American	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5
Japanese	24.5.....	26.....	27.5	28	29		
British	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Continental	39	40	41	42	43	44	45