

# International Student Handbook

Fall 2011



**Beloit**  
College

Office of International Education  
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Beloit, WI 53511  
608-363-2269  
[www.beloit.edu/oie](http://www.beloit.edu/oie)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION (OIE)</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>IMMIGRATION DO'S AND DON'TS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>REQUIREMENTS TO “MAINTAIN GOOD IMMIGRATION STATUS”</b> .....	<b>4</b>
F-1 Student.....	4
J-1 Exchange Visitor.....	6
<b>ACADEMICS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Useful academic terminology at Beloit College.....	10
<b>MONEY AND BANKING</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Guide to Financial Terminology .....	13
<b>INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Driver's License .....	14
<b>STAYING HEALTHY</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Health Center .....	16
Counseling.....	<a href="#">16</a>
International Student Health Insurance .....	<a href="#">16</a>
<b><u>COMPUTER, TELEPHONE, FAX &amp; MAIL SERVICES</u></b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b><u>RESIDENTIAL LIFE</u></b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b><u>TRANSPORTATION</u></b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b><u>ADJUSTING TO A NEW PLACE AND CULTURE</u></b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b><u>GETTING TO KNOW THE BELOIT COMMUNITY</u></b> .....	<b>23</b>
<a href="#">Host Family Program</a> .....	23
International Club .....	23
Community Outreach Program.....	<a href="#">24</a>
Getting Involved.....	<a href="#">24</a>

**Welcome to Beloit College!** Going to college in a foreign country can be an exciting experience. Apart from attaining an excellent education, you will be exposed to an entirely new culture, meet different kinds of people, and have new experiences; however, it can take time to get used to a new place. This handbook is designed to make life a little easier as you embark on your new adventure.


**Office of International Education (OIE)**

The hub of international programs at Beloit College is the Office of International Education, which provides immigration and programming services for international students and scholars, facilitates other aspects of the College's extensive range of international activities, and administers study abroad programs. Cross-cultural sharing is an essential part of the international focus of the Beloit College community and curriculum.

Other International Education initiatives:

- English as a Second Language program during the academic year
- Advising for students interested in off-campus studies
- Immigration consultation for international professors and short term scholars
- Host Family Program for international students
- Support for student organizations, especially the International Club

**OIE Staff**

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**Office location**

717 Chapin Street (next to the President's house)

**Office hours**

Monday - Friday      8:00-4:30pm

## IMMIGRATION DO'S AND DON'TS

As an international student, you will often hear: “It is very important that you maintain good immigration status.” This simply means that you should not do anything that is inappropriate according to U.S. federal immigration regulations, as this could jeopardize your ability to continue your studies in the United States.



The Office of International Education provides immigration advising to assist you with this and updates your immigration file in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

In order to maintain good immigration status as an F-1 student or a J-1 exchange visitor, it is important to remember these seven basic steps (details for F and J are found below):

1. Report to the Office of International Education (OIE) at Beloit College by the program start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019, also known as the Certificate of Eligibility.
2. Enroll as a full-time student during the academic year.
3. Report any change to your local address to OIE within 10 days of moving, including moving from one residence hall to another.
4. Maintain the validity of your immigration documents:
  - Valid passport
  - Apply for an “extension” before the completion of studies date listed on your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) if you will not complete it by the original date
  - Ensure that your degree program is listed correctly on your Certificate of Eligibility
  - Discuss any plans to transfer to another school with the OIE International Student Advisor in a timely fashion
5. Do **not** work off-campus without authorization.
6. Make an appointment with an OIE International Student Advisor before leaving the U.S. or changing your visa status.
7. Before traveling outside of the U.S. ensure that you have the necessary travel signature from an International Student Advisor for reentry purposes.

## REQUIREMENTS TO “MAINTAIN GOOD IMMIGRATION STATUS”

### F-1 Student

#### 1. Report to the OIE within 30 days of I-20 start date

You are required by law to report to the Office of International Education at Beloit whether it is your first time in the U.S. or if you are transferring from another U.S. institution. If you are transferring to Beloit, you must complete the transfer procedures within 15 days after classes start. OIE will update SEVIS with your transfer information.

The OIE schedules a time for this during the International Student Orientation. Bring your passport, I-94 card (small white card you received on the airplane), and I-20 with you.

#### 2. Always be a full-time student

F-1 students must be registered as “full-time” students every semester. At Beloit College, full-time means you register and complete at least three course units each semester. Please talk to the International Student Advisor before you drop below full time enrollment or take a leave of absence.

### 3. Update your local address

Federal immigration regulations require you to update your local residential address within 10 days of any address change within the U.S. including changes from one residence hall to another. You do this by sending an email to the International Student Advisor (Josie Inaldo, [inaldoj@beloit.edu](mailto:inaldoj@beloit.edu)). *Note:* Post Office Box Numbers (Mail Box) cannot be substituted. If you live on campus, your address for this purpose includes the name of your residence hall and your room number.

### 4. Maintain the validity of your immigration documents

- **Keep your passport valid**

Keep your passport valid for at least six months into the future while you are studying in the U.S. by consulting your country's consulate or embassy in the U.S. You can find the contact information for your country's consulate or embassy at: <http://travel.state.gov>.

- **F-1 extension**

Item #5 on your I-20 is your "program end date," otherwise called your "completion of studies" date. If you are unable to complete your course of study by that time, you must apply for an extension. If you do not file for an extension with the International Student Advisor at OIE before that date, you will be "out of status" and will be terminated in SEVIS.

- **Change of degree program or level**

If you are changing degree levels, for example, from Bachelor's degree to Master's degree, the process will be taken care of when you "transfer out" of Beloit College to attend another school. Notify the OIE and ask the Beloit College International Student Advisor for instructions.

- **Discuss transfer plans with an OIE advisor EARLY!**

If you plan to transfer to another school or to go on to attend graduate school after you graduate from Beloit College, notify the OIE and ask the Beloit College International Student Advisor for instructions.

- **Photocopy your immigration documents**

You should make photocopies of your immigration documents and keep the copies and originals in a safe place. Photocopy:

- the passport photo page
- the visa page of your passport
- both sides of your I-94 Form (even if the back side has no writing)
- Form I-20

### 5. Do not work off-campus without prior authorization from the International Student Advisor

- **On-campus Employment:** F-1 students are permitted to work on campus for 20 hours per week during the academic year and 40 hours per week during summer and winter breaks.

- **Off-campus Employment:** Off-campus employment is any type of work or services performed in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit that does not take place on the Beloit College campus. Work authorization is required before any off-campus work is allowed. See the International Student Advisor at the OIE for advice and assistance. All internships, paid and unpaid, require registration at Career Services and Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

### 6. Notify the OIE when you leave the U.S. or change visa status

When you finish your program and leave the U.S. permanently or you change to another visa status (for instance if an employer plans to do an H1B visa application for you after you graduate or finish your OPT or you obtain U.S. permanent residency), let the OIE know in person or by email.

### 7. Traveling outside of the United States

**Re-entering the U.S. after a temporary absence (less than 5 months)**



To re-enter the U.S., you need to have the following documents:

- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 or F-2 visa stamp (except Canadians)
- Current I-20 with a valid signature (see I-20 Endorsement)
- Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid)
- Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment or transcript).

### Traveling to Canada

Before traveling to Canada, visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) web site to see if you need a visa: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>. You can re-enter the U.S. from Canada with an expired U.S. visa stamp if ALL of the following apply to you:

- You have a valid passport with an expired non-immigrant visa stamp, a valid I-20, and you keep your I-94 card when leaving the U.S. and entering Canada
- Your visit to Canada will be less than 30 days
- You do not apply for a U.S. visa stamp while in Canada
- You are not a national of one of the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, or North Korea.

### I-20 Travel Endorsement

Your I-20 should be endorsed by OIE for travel at the bottom of page 3 of the I-20. Check to make sure that the signature will be valid at the time you plan to reenter the U.S. Each signature is valid for 6 months. (Example: signed 9/15/2009 will be valid until 3/14/2010.)

### The visa stamp

The F-1 visa in your passport was obtained at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad and is used to enter the U.S. You can think of it as your “ticket” to enter the U.S. It is only when you are leaving the U.S. and need to return that you must be sure that your visa stamp is valid. **As long as you are not planning to leave the U.S. and reenter, you do not need to panic about an expired visa.** In most cases you must return home to your home country in order to renew your visa.

### Renewing your visa stamp

If you need to renew your visa stamp in order to re-enter the U.S., you must apply in person at a U.S. embassy or consulate **abroad**. Applicants are required to submit the following documentation:

- Current passport-size photographs (4)
- Valid Form I-20 (3 pages)
- Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, or financial aid letter)
- Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment or transcript, pre-registering for next semester).

### J-1 Exchange Visitor

A J-1 visa stamp is issued to a participant in an Exchange Visitor Program approved by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Participants are classified by their “category”: student, student non-degree, research scholar, and professor. The agency issuing the DS-2019 is called the sponsor. In most, but not all cases, Beloit College is your sponsor. For Fulbright Scholars and ISEP exchange students, your sponsor is NOT Beloit College.

**Fulbright Scholars and ISEP students** will have different protocols and deadlines that pertain to them. Refer to the literature you received from your sending organization about your visa status and contact the International Student Advisor about your particular situation.

To maintain your legal status in the United States as a J-1 exchange visitor, you must remember these important requirements:

#### 1. Report to the OIE within 30 days of the DS-2019 start date

U.S. Federal Immigration regulations require that you report to the Office of International Education at

Beloit College within 30 days of the start date (Item #3) on your DS-2019 whether it is your first time in the U.S. or if you are transferring from another U.S. institution.

## **2. Maintain a “full-time” academic schedule**

J-1 students must be full-time students each semester until they receive their degrees or complete their programs. For most students at Beloit College this means you must register and complete at least 3 full course units each semester. Please talk to the International Student Advisor before you drop below full time enrollment, take a leave of absence, or have any other questions about how many units you need to be considered a full-time student.

## **3. Update your local address**

Federal immigration regulations require you to update your local residential address within **10 days** of any address change within the U.S. including changes from one residence hall to another. You do this by sending an email to the OIE International Student Advisor. Post Office Box Numbers (Mail Box) cannot be substituted. If you live on campus, your address for this purpose includes the name of your residence hall and your room number.

## **4. Maintain the required health insurance**

U.S. Immigration regulations require that all J-1 exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents maintain a specified level of health and accident insurance. The minimum levels are:

1. Medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness
2. A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness
3. Repatriation of remains expenses in the amount of \$7500
4. Medical evacuation expenses in the amount of \$10,000

All of the above are covered by the Beloit College student health insurance plan.

## **5. Keep your immigration documents valid and current**

Keep your passport valid for at least six months in to the future while you are studying in the U.S. Consult your country's consulate or embassy in the U.S. to renew your passport. You can find the contact information for your consulate at: <http://travel.state.gov>.

## **J-1 extension**

The program end date (Item #3 on your DS-2019) marks the end of your J-1 student status. If you are unable to complete your course of study by that time, you must apply for an extension with the International Student Advisor before you reach the original program end date.

### **• Discuss transfer plans with an OIE advisor**

If you plan to transfer to or from another school or sponsor, the OIE and other sponsor will need to complete the immigration transfer procedure. Permission to transfer is granted only if your academic plans at the new institution will continue the pursuit of the exchange visitor's original purpose for entering the U.S. on a J-1 visa.

### **• Photocopy your immigration documents**

You should make photocopies of your immigration documents and keep the copies and originals in a safe place. Photocopy:

- the passport photo page
- the visa page of your passport
- both sides of your I-94 Form (even if the back side has no writing)
- Form DS-2019

## **6. Never work off-campus without prior authorization**

Employment opportunities for international students in the U.S. are restricted by law. In general, there are two types of employment:

- **On-campus employment:** Enrolled J-1 students holding a DS-2019 from Beloit College are permitted to work on campus for 20 hours per week during academic year and 40 hours per week during summer and winter breaks if authorized by the sponsor.
- **Off-campus employment:** Off-campus employment is any type of work or services performed in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit that is not on the Beloit College campus. An authorization letter is required before any off-campus work can take place. The authorization letter must be written by your sponsor (Beloit College or other).

### **Academic Training**

J-1 students in degree programs are permitted a maximum of 18 months of academic training related to their field of study. The amount of academic training used by the student cannot exceed the number of months of his/her academic program.

### **7. Notify the OIE when you leave the U.S. or change visa status**

When you finish your program and leave the U.S. permanently or change to another visa status (for instance if an employer plans to do an H-1B visa application for you after you graduate), notify OIE of your plans.

### **8. Traveling outside of the United States**

#### **Re-entering the U.S. after a temporary absence**

To re-enter the U.S., you need to have the following documents:

- Valid passport (except Canadians unless entering from outside the Western Hemisphere)
- Valid J-1 or J-2 visa stamp (except Canadians)
- Current DS-2019 with a valid signature (see DS-2019 Endorsement)
- Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid letter)
- Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment or transcript).

#### **Traveling to Canada**

Before traveling to Canada, come to the OIE and visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) web site to see if you need a visa: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp> You can re-enter the U.S. from Canada with an expired U.S. visa stamp if ALL of the following apply to you:

- You have a valid passport with an expired non-immigrant visa stamp, a valid DS-2019, and you keep your I-94 card when leaving the U.S. and entering Canada
- Your visit to Canada will be less than 30 days
- You do not apply for a U.S. visa stamp while in Canada
- You are not a national of one of the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, or North Korea.

#### **DS-2019 travel endorsement**

You need to have a valid signature from an OIE International Student Advisor (or from your sponsoring agency if your DS-2019 was not issued by Beloit College) on your DS-2019 for reentry to the U.S. The signature is valid for 6 months.

#### **The visa stamp**

The J-1 visa in your passport was obtained at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad and is used to enter the U.S. You can think of it as your ticket to enter the U.S. It is only when you are leaving the U.S. and need to return that you must be sure to obtain a valid U.S. visa stamp to re-enter the U.S. This means that you do not need to panic about an expired visa, as long as you are not planning to leave the country.

#### **Renewing your visa stamp**

If you need to renew your visa in order to re-enter the U.S., you must apply in person to a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. You CANNOT renew your visa while in the U.S. Applicants are normally required to submit the following documentation:

- Valid passport
- Current passport-size photographs
- Valid Form DS-2019
- Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid letter)
- Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment or transcript).

## ACADEMICS

### Academic advising

Academic advising is a crucial component of the American educational system. Each student is assigned a faculty advisor to assist with program planning, course selection, career choices, academic progress, study-abroad programs, and other educational opportunities. Once you are assigned an advisor, make sure to make an appointment with him/her so that you can establish a relationship BEFORE you 'need' the advisor's help. Students are required to get the approval of their advisors before enrolling in courses each semester.



Besides faculty advisors, students can also turn to the general Academic Advisor and the Dean of Students Office for advice on different educational issues. The Academic Advising and Dean of Students Offices are located in Pearsons Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

### Course selection

Each semester during the advising period, your advisor will help you with your course selection. The normal course load is four one-unit classes per semester. Three one-unit classes are considered full-time for financial aid and immigration purposes (with some exceptions for J-1 students).

### Transfer of Credits

Beloit College grants transfer credit toward the Beloit College degree to students who begin their studies at another college or university, and for high school examinations such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or the Advanced Placement (AP) tests. In some cases, not all credits can be accepted by Beloit College. To find out if you can transfer credit toward your Beloit degree, talk to the Registrar (located in Pearsons Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor).

### Class Attendance

In many countries, class attendance may not be a requirement at the university level. However, learning, discussing, and sharing during class time is crucial to the U.S. education system. Therefore, attendance is expected and failure to attend classes can affect your final grade. Usually, more than three absences per class each semester is considered unacceptable, although different professors have varying attendance policies. Even if a professor is not strict about this, if you are absent, you risk negative consequences.

### Add/Drop Plan

You are allowed to add and drop courses after the initial registration period. Courses may be added up until a week after classes start, and can be dropped up until halfway through the semester. (For more information refer to "Registrar" in the Beloit Student Handbook or [www.beloit.edu](http://www.beloit.edu)). International students CAN NOT drop a class without authorization from the International Student Advisor. You must be registered for 3 units (with some exceptions for J-1 students.). Although the International Advisor is the 2<sup>nd</sup> advisor to all international students, you must get the signature from your primary (academic) advisor, in order to add or drop.

### Academic Honesty

Academic honesty means that all work you hand in to your professors must be your own work, not that of a friend, author, or fellow student. The two most common types of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism. One example of **cheating** is copying from someone else's quiz or test. Testing is not a group effort unless this is specified by the professor. Another is asking someone else to complete your

homework, and handing this in as your own. **Plagiarism** means taking another author's work, calling it your own and not giving credit to the author. This is a common problem for international students because of differences in academic systems and practices from country to country. If you quote or adapt speech from someone else (whether the words were written or spoken) you **must** use a citation to indicate where you got the information. This is true even if you do not quote word for word from the source.

Both cheating and plagiarism have serious consequences. If you cheat or plagiarize, you may fail the assignment or the class, or even be dismissed from the College. Make sure to read the pamphlet on Academic Dishonesty that you receive and ask for clarification if you do not understand. The College's Academic Advisor will be happy to help, as will your professors.

### ***Useful Academic Terminology at Beloit College***

#### ***Academic Advisor***

**4-year degree students** Your academic advisor is your FYI leader for the first 2 years or until you chose a major. This person will assist you in choosing courses, answer any questions and concerns you have about classes, and can assist you with any problems you are having in the classroom. As mentioned above, there is also an academic advisor in the Office of Student Affairs.

**Exchange Students** During New Student Days, your exchange seminar instructor will help you register for classes and she/he will remain your advisor while you are studying at the College

**Transfer Students** During New Student Days, your transfer seminar instructor will help help you register for classes. Once you declare your major, your department will assign an advisor to you.

**Suspension** If your grades are low (determined at the end of the semester's total GPA) you can be placed on suspension or dismissed. If you are suspended, you may not enroll at Beloit College for one or more semesters. Please refer to the Student Handbook under Standards of Academic Progress for details. Be aware that if you do not do what is asked of you during the period of suspension, you may be dismissed. Keep the Office of International Education updated because your immigration status will be affected. You can also be suspended for disciplinary reasons, e.g. failure to follow the College's rules and guidelines for behavior.

**Audit** To audit a class is to participate in a class but not receive any grades or credits on your transcript. Please discuss this with your academic advisor before trying to audit a class. Audited classes do not count as classes toward full-time status, either for immigration purposes or your status as a student at Beloit.

**Citation** It is imperative that you use citations in your papers if you use someone else's work. Each discipline has a preferred way of making citations. If you do not cite other people's work, you are plagiarizing and could fail the assignment, course, or be dismissed from the College. Talk to your professors, advisor, staff, and the writing center if you need instructions on how to properly cite the sources you use.

**Commencement** is a ceremony at the end of the year for students who have successfully completed all work toward their degree, also known as graduation.

**Convocation** This is a ceremony that marks the beginning of the academic year.

**Dismissal** means being asked to leave the College before you have completed your degree or program of study because of poor academic performance or disciplinary problems. Dismissal automatically results in termination of your SEVIS record and the loss of your student immigration status. If dismissed, you will have to leave the country immediately.

**Faculty** In the U.S. this term refers to teaching staff at the College.

**FYI** First Year Initiative is part orientation and part introductory class. Every first-year degree student is assigned to a FYI course, which begins meeting during new student days. The FYI leader (instructor) serves as the class's advisor through the sophomore year or until the students declare a major.

**Full Course Load** A full course load is considered at least three, one-unit classes per semester. Note, however, if you only take three classes per semester, you will not complete your degree on time. This is also referred to as full-time student status.

**Grades and Grading** There are two different forms of grading that have similar meanings.

- Number Grades: Percentage grades based on a scale of 100.
  - Letter Grades: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and F. A is the best and F is fail.
- The grades that appear on your Beloit transcript will be letter grades. Grading at Beloit College may be different from the grades you received at home.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** Your grades will be averaged on a 4.0 scale(4.0=A, 0.0=F). This number is found on official transcripts and grade reports. Refer to the College Catalog under Academic Requirements for more information.

**Internship** An unpaid or paid job many students have, usually during the summer, to gain practical experience in their field of study. In some cases, you may receive academic credit for an internship.

**Prerequisite** Some classes require that you have completed particular classes or gained certain skills in order to enroll. An example is having sufficient language skills to take a literature course in another language.

**Quiz** Faculty will often schedule quizzes at various times of the term to make sure you understand the assignments. These are short tests that usually do not count as heavily as regular tests. They may be unscheduled (pop quizzes), so that you do not have time to do special preparation. If you stay on top of your homework and attend class regularly, you should not have difficulty with quizzes.

**Syllabus** A syllabus is an outline of what will happen over the course of the semester for a particular class. It provides a brief description of the class and lists homework assignments and due dates, as well as the dates of quizzes and tests (except pop quizzes). Expect to receive a syllabus for each of your classes and to follow it. Do not rely on others to remind you when an assignment is due.

**Term** Also known as a semester. There are 3 terms at Beloit College: Term I (fall courses), Term II (spring courses), and Term III (summer). The only summer courses offered at Beloit are through the Center for Language Studies. However, students sometimes take summer courses at other institutions.

**Transcript** A document kept by the registrar listing the classes you have taken, your grades, and the number of credits earned. An official transcript is sealed and has an official signature, and can be used to apply for graduate school or to apply for a job, for example. Unofficial transcripts are often used for advising purposes on campus.

**Transfer** Students sometimes begin college at one institution, and then transfer to another to continue their education. Every year, several international students are transfer students. In addition, some students leave Beloit after one or more years to transfer to another institution. If you intend to transfer, you need to work with the International Student Advisor to make sure the right steps are taken to maintain your student immigration status.

**Tutor** Many students work with student tutors from the Learning Enrichment and Disability Services, <http://www.beloit.edu/learning/>. These tutors may also be called peer advisors. Tutors are available only for courses taught at Beloit College. You do not need to be having trouble with your classes to seek help from a tutor. Even the best students use tutors for additional help. For tutoring service in writing, you can go to the Writing Center for help. Trained peer tutors will help you improve your writing

skills and make you become a better writer. For more information, please go to <http://www.beloit.edu/writingcenter/>. Both services are free and available to all Beloit students.

**Unit** Beloit College uses units to count classes and credits. One unit = 4 semester credits = 1 course. Most courses are 1 unit. However; it is possible to have a course worth .25 or .50 units. If you are taking two courses that are 1 unit and one course that is .50 units, this will give you 2.5 units. You will need at least one more ½ unit to be considered full-time and will normally take another 1 ½ units for a total of 4 units.

**Vacation Term** Often called ‘leave of absence’ at other colleges. Vacation terms may be taken voluntarily or the College may ask you to take one due to bad performance. Note that a vacation term will affect international students’ immigration status. If you anticipate taking a vacation term, see the International Student Advisor immediately.

**Withdrawal** To withdraw means to leave the College before receiving the degree. The immigration records of international students who withdraw are terminated in SEVIS and students must leave the country immediately.

## MONEY AND BANKING



### American Currency

The basic unit of American currency in the U.S. is the dollar (100 cents).

Paper money is common in the amounts of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50. Larger denominations are available, but they are rarely used. Since all American paper money is of the same size and color, you should be careful when you pay someone. It would be easy to make a mistake and give someone a \$10 bill rather than \$1.

You will also find six different coins – the penny (1 cent), the nickel (5 cents), the dime (10 cents), the quarter (25 cents), and the less common half dollar (50 cents) and dollar (\$1) coins. You should always have some coins (change) with you for bus fares, vending machines, laundry machines, etc.

Keep most of your money in a bank. Do not carry large amounts of money with you. There is always the risk of losing it or theft. Always carry identification.

### Guide to Financial Terminology

**Balance** Amount available in a depositor’s bank account, representing the amount you are entitled to withdraw. It is the amount of money you have left in the bank.

**Checking Account** Allows the holder to write checks against deposited funds. Generally you receive no interest. However, you can withdraw all or part of your money at any time and use your checks to pay bills. There are several kinds of checking accounts. A regular account requires the payment of small fees for each check used as well as a monthly maintenance fee. In a minimum balance account, checking services are available without charge for maintenance if you leave a certain amount of money in your account. If the balance should go below the required minimum, you will be charged a fee.

**Savings Account** Normally, banks pay approximately 2% annual interest on savings deposits. A regular savings account, which earns 2% to 2.25% per year, has no limit on the number of deposits or withdrawals you may make. There are, however, restrictions on accounts where the interest payments are higher. Usually the longer you leave the money in the bank, the higher the interest you will receive; however, early withdrawals may result in the loss of interest. In some cases, penalties on withdrawals may be avoided or reduced by giving 90-day written notification that you plan to withdraw your money. Since your stay in the United States will be limited and you will need access to your money as the year

progresses, you may wish to use the regular savings account. When you use a savings account, the bank provides a guarantee against loss or theft, and you earn interest on your money as well.

**Bank Statement** Monthly statement of your bank account. Shows all deposits made, checks written, ATM withdrawals, and other charges that occur during the period covered. The statement will show the current balance.

**Check** A draft drawn on a checking account which is payable on demand. Once you sign your name, a check can be exchanged for cash in the amount stated on the check.

**Credit Cards** are issued by banks, gasoline companies, stores and other companies and are used for purchases when you want to delay payment, that is, buy on credit. Purchases charged are payable within 30 days. You will receive a bill in the mail. If you do not pay within 30 days, you will be charged interest for the amount remaining. Interest rates are high on credit card balances. As a temporary student, you may find it difficult to obtain a credit card. You will find various brochures from credit cards on campus and can check them to see if you are eligible for a card, and if so what is involved.

**Debit Card / Bank Card / Charge Card / ATM Card** Gives you 24-hour access to your checking or savings account. Often banks will offer this service at no extra charge.

**Deposits** to your checking account may be made either in person or by mail. Soon after the opening of an account, you will receive a personalized checkbook, which contains the account number as well as your full name, address, and telephone number. You can withdraw your money, make purchases by writing personal checks. Such checks will normally include the date, name of the person or agency to whom they are written, exact amount in number and words, and your signature. They bank will provide you with simple instructions for making out checks and keeping your records.

It is important to keep a record of all payments and deposits you have made. You should always keep your checkbook balanced and in agreement with the monthly statement you receive. If the bank's records and yours disagree, inform the bank immediately and they will work with you to locate the error.

**Interest** The sum paid to you by the bank in exchange for the use of the money you keep in a savings account.

**Money Order** A draft sold by a bank or the post office for a small fee. It is like a bank check and is used to send money from one place to another when personal checks will not be accepted.

**Overdraft Writing** A check for more money than what you have in your account or exceeding the limit of your account with your charge card results in an overdraft. This is also called "writing a bad check." Many banks have overdraft privileges, meaning the money will be paid out but you will be charged an extra fee for the overdraft—usually \$35 each TIME you try and withdraw money or use your debit card.

**Safety Deposit Box** Many banks have locked boxes within their vaults that may be rented by the year. The contents of the safety deposit box are known only to the key holder since the bank does not have access to it except in case of death. A safety deposit box is a good place to keep valuables that cannot go into a bank account (e.g. jewelry, currency which you do not want to exchange, legal papers, etc).

**Sales Tax** The amount of money added to the purchase price of an item by the state. The tax is used to support state and local governments. Most items other than food bought at a grocery store (restaurant food is taxed) and medications are subject to taxation. In Wisconsin, you pay 5.5% sales tax. In Rockford, IL, sales tax is 7.25% and in Chicago it is 9%.

**Service Charge Fee** Charged to you for services including monthly service charges for a checking account, safety deposit box rentals, and excessive withdrawal from savings account, late loan payments, and checks drawn against uncollected or insufficient funds (overdrafts).

**Tipping** Tips are an accepted means for Americans to show their gratitude for a service which has been performed. In fact, restaurant waitresses, taxi drivers, baggage carriers, hotel helpers, hairdressers, generally receive low salaries because they are expected to supplement their income through tips. A standard tip is 15% of your total bill. (Example: a \$30 meal, drinks, dessert, etc. for you and a friend would be a \$4.50 tip, for a grand total of \$34.50.) For baggage carriers at the airport or a hotel, tip about \$1-2 per bag.

**Traveler's Checks** are a form of money which is particularly useful when traveling. Traveler's checks are sold by banks and are guaranteed by them. If they are lost or stolen, they will be replaced by the bank for free, as long as you have a record of their purchase. When you buy traveler's checks, you pay the bank approximately 12% above the total amount purchased to cover bank costs. Generally, the smallest traveler's check is worth \$10.00, and it will cost \$10.10 to purchase it.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Scholarships are given on the basis of merit and financial need. The amount of any scholarship is determined when the student is admitted to the College and does not change from year-to-year. International students are not eligible for U.S. federal and state student loans.

### Appeals to Receive More Funds

It is very rare for a financial aid award to be increased. Requesting an increase requires completion of the Declaration of Finances from the Financial Aid Office, documentation of your circumstances, and submitting an appeal. The written appeal must include the following:

- The reason you are requesting an adjustment accompanied by documentation.
- The quality of your academic performance at Beloit College.
- Your involvement in campus activities.
- The specific amount of additional aid being requested.



### International Student Emergency Fund

The Office of International Education has a small emergency fund that acts as a small loan for students who may need funds for an unexpected crisis. The loan is expected to be paid back to the fund within one semester. For more information, please contact the International Student Advisor.

## SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

All-legal residents of the United States who work have a Social Security Number, which is used by the government to keep track of earnings and withholdings. The Social Security withholdings are disbursed to people who have retired or are disabled. If you are employed in the U.S., you will need a Social Security Number even if your pay is exempt from Social Security withholding. In Wisconsin, you need a Social Security Number to obtain a driver's license.



**Driver's License** U.S. federal law requires that you carry a driver's license with you in order to drive an automobile. Always carry it with you. To get a license you must first have a Social Security Number. Then you will have to take driver's lessons at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) followed by a written and driving test. Please refer to [www.dmv.org](http://www.dmv.org) for more information. For more information on getting a driver's license in Wisconsin, please refer to <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/drivers/apply/> for more information.

## STAYING HEALTHY

### Health Center

The campus has its own Health Center located on the first floor of Porter Hall and offers the following services:

- Appointment with a physician
- Nursing assessment as well as treatment of health problems and minor injuries (Walk-ins welcome)
- Gynecology/birth control
- STD testing (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)
- Counseling for health and personal problems
- Influenza vaccine
- Strep throat screening
- TB skin testing (Tuberculosis)
- Condoms that can be purchased at \$0.10 a piece
- Medical equipment to loan, i.e., crutches, ice bags, heating pads
- Stress reduction techniques
- Referrals to specialists and community health services



You can find more information regarding hours and services by calling 363-2331 or at web page <http://www.beloit.edu/healthcenter/hours.php>.

### Counseling

Counseling for mental health and personal problems is available at the Health Center. In the U.S. counseling services are commonly used for problems in class, difficulties adjusting, a death in the family, or just someone to talk to as you sort out your thoughts. Adjusting to a new environment is difficult at times and the counselors are aware of that and willing to talk to you on a confidential basis.

### International Student Health Insurance

All international students (except ISEP students and Fulbright scholars) are required to purchase health insurance at Beloit College. The insurance cost is included in the annual school fees paid by degree students. Exchange students must pay for the insurance when they arrive on campus. Please note **that not all costs** will be covered by the health insurance and you may find that you will need to cover these expenses. Please review your policy to understand what is covered. For more information, please check with your insurance company.

### Beloit Memorial Hospital

The Beloit Memorial Hospital ([www.beloitmemorialhospital.org](http://www.beloitmemorialhospital.org)) is the biggest hospital in Beloit, located at 1969 W. Hart Road. The various hospital departments may be accessed directly at the following numbers:

- Emergency Services, Intermediate Care (608) 364-5151
- Lifeline Personal Response Program (608) 364-5480
- Neurology Services, Birthing Center (608) 364-5237
- Cardiology (608) 364-5127



## COMPUTER, TELEPHONE, FAX & MAIL SERVICES

### Computer Labs, Emails

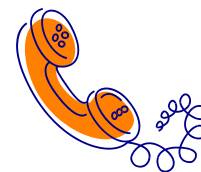
For information on computer lab facilities and Internet and Email service, please refer to Information Services and Resources (ISR) website: <http://www.beloit.edu/isr/index.php>.

### Telephone Services

Each room in the residence halls has a separate phone line. You must provide your own room phone.

- You can make **on-campus** calls simply by dialing 4-digit extension number.

- To make calls **off-campus**, you must dial 9 first, and you must either use phone cards or contract with Resicom (see below).
- Calls to on-campus and within the Beloit area are free of charge.
- Numbers that begin with 1-800 are toll-free numbers in the U.S.



Following are the suggested methods of long distance calls, national and international:

### Phone Cards

Phone cards are available in stores as well as online (<http://skype.com/>, <http://jajah.com/>) . Different phone cards offer various deals and calling plans. Cheap rates often correspond to high connection and maintenance fees. Suggested websites include: <http://phoneshark.com/>, <http://www.pincity.com/default.asp>, [www.onesuite.com/](http://www.onesuite.com/), and <http://www.phone-card-pin.com/>.

\*\*Ask other international students what they use to call overseas.

### What is “Resicom”?

Resicom is a tele-management firm that manages telephone services in the education market. This is the only telephone service provided to students on campus, and students can choose whether to use it or not. Upon arrival, students are automatically provided with an authorization code to access their Resicom accounts. The company has reasonable rates for calls within the U.S., and offers optional discount rates. Rates for international calls vary by country. Rates are higher for international wireless phones. Details regarding Resicom rates and plans can be accessed at their website:

<http://www.resicomcorp.com>. All phone contracts for long distance service are between the phone company and the student.

### Collect Calls

Making a “collect call” is a method of calling whereby the person you are calling pays the bill. It is useful in case of an emergency, but can be expensive.

*Collect call numbers: 1-800-COLLECT (1-800-265-5328) or 1-800-CALLATT (1-800-225-5288)*

### How to get a cell phone?

The mobile system used in the U.S. is very different from the rest of the world. Most countries use SIM cards to activate their cards. There are only 2 U.S. companies that use SIM card technology: T-Mobile and AT&T. SIM cards are between \$10-20 and can ONLY be used if your cell (mobile) is UNLOCKED. Most international students use either a prepaid phone plan or pay-as-you-go phone plan. There are monthly plans starting around \$40 a month and a social security number and credit check is necessary. Without a number and a credit history, your deposit will be expensive (ex. \$300-500). For more information, please check with specific cell phone service company. The following is a list of the most common cell phone service companies in the U.S.

T-Mobile <http://www.t-mobile.com/shop/plans/Cell-Phone-Plans-Overview.aspx>

Verizon Wireless

<http://www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/store/controller?item=planFirst&action=viewPlanOverview&lid=//global/plans>

Sprint <http://www.sprint.com/index.html>

U.S. Cellular <http://www.uscc.com/uscellular/SilverStream/Pages/uscellular.html>

AT&T <http://www.wireless.att.com/cell-phone-service/cell-phone-plans/index.jsp>

## **Beloit College Mail Center**

Beloit College's own Mail Center is located in the basement of Pearsons Hall. Upon arrival, you will get a personal mailbox that is identifiable by a specific number, and this mailbox will be yours until the time you graduate or leave the college. Your mailing address at Beloit College is:

[Your name]  
Beloit College, [Your Box #]  
700 College Street  
Beloit, WI 53511

All local, national, and international mail can be received from the Mail Center. The Mail Center also sells various stamps and provides FedEx and UPS express delivery services. If you receive mail that requires a recipient's signature, the Mail Center will sign for you and forward your mail to your personal mailbox. The Mail Center is not open on the weekends but you have access to your mailbox.

The Mail Center is not authorized to send packages that exceed one pound. If you need to send a package that weighs more than one pound, you will have to go to the Beloit **Post Office** downtown located at 300 Mill St, Beloit, WI, (608) 365-7755. It is about a 10 minute walk from the OIE office.

## **RESIDENTIAL LIFE**

**Resident Assistants (RAs)** are student peer advisors who live in the residence halls. Most residence halls on campus are divided by floors, each with its own RA. The RA monitors compliance with college regulations and provides assistance to residents as needed. The RA will hold meetings periodically to inform residents about college policies, student concerns, or community standards. RAs also organize activities for residents. RAs are very approachable, and you can go to your RA any time you need something.

**Alcohol** Refer to student handbook, <http://www.beloit.edu/studentaffairs/policieshandbooks/>.

Candles, kerosene lamps, or any other open flame devices are not permitted in any of the living areas under ANY circumstances for fire safety reasons.

**Condition of the Room** At the beginning of a student's occupancy of a room, an inventory of the condition of the room and its furnishings will be made by the student and the Resident Assistant. Students are expected to keep their rooms reasonably clean throughout the academic year. Any excessive cleaning required when the student vacates the room will be billed to the student.

**Food Services** Students may use their meal card (ID card) to obtain food on campus.

Commons (cafeteria) is located in Chapin Hall. Commons serves 3 meals a day (excluding Sunday dinner). A vegetarian option and an additional vegan entree are provided at each meal. If you will miss lunch or dinner, you may request a box lunch in advance.

D.K.'s Snack Bar provides an alternative to the main dining area. Located in Pearsons Hall, D.K.'s serves sandwiches and grill items and is open on weekdays only.

Java Joint in the Pearsons Hall basement offers beverages, sandwiches and soups.

**Laundry Service** Washers and dryers are provided in the lower level laundry area of each complex/hall (except the Foreign Language Houses). The equipment is coin operated and monitored weekly by the service company. You will need \$1.00 each washing and 25c for each 15 minutes of drying.

**Lock-Out Policy** Residents are expected to carry room and building keys with them at all times. Personal and property safety demand locked doors and attention to key safety. In the event a student is

locked out of his/her room, the RA will assist entrance to the room with the spare key. The student may use the spare key for a period of 24 hours, while looking for his/her keys. If keys are not found in 24 hours, the student must order new locks and turn in the spare key. Key replacement will usually happen on the same day the order is placed. All key replacements can be done in the Office of Residential Life. If the student loses their key-card, they will be charged \$25 to replace it.

**Overnight Guests** Residents may have overnight guests for up to three consecutive nights. As host, you need permission from your roommate and a guest pass from Security. You also need to notify your RA. All guests must comply with college regulations. There is a guest house on campus for non-student guests at an additional cost. Hosts are responsible for the conduct and behavior of their guests.

**Pets** Due to the many problems associated with animals living in a densely populated area, no pets other than fish in an aquarium are allowed in the residence halls. Residents with pets may be evicted and charged the full room rate for the remainder of the semester as a result of not meeting their live-in requirement. If you house an animal/pet, or an animal/pet visits your room, you will be charged \$60 per occurrence.

**Refrigerators, Microwaves, and Electrical Appliances** The college rents small refrigerators and microwaves to students at the beginning of each semester. For details, contact the Office of Residential Life. No other electrical appliances with heating elements or cooling coils may be used without the authorization of the Office of Residential Life.

**Room Lottery** Each spring, students select their rooms for the following semester(s) at the room lottery. Students draw a number from a pool of numbers assigned to their class. When that number is called, they select a room from the pool of open rooms. Seniors have first choice, juniors second, and sophomores third. First-year students are assigned rooms after the lottery.

After their first semester, students may apply to live in special interest or Greek housing. They must apply directly to the house or fraternity/sorority (Greek organization) they wish to live in. Students accepted to live in either a special interest or Greek house do not need to participate in the annual room lottery.

**Storage** The College has several rooms designated as student storage areas. These areas are opened by appointment and are available to all residence hall students, who wish to store boxes, trunks, clothes, etc. over the summer or during the school year. The college is not liable for items stored in hall storage areas.

**Safety** The College works toward keeping the campus safe. However, you are also responsible for helping keep the campus safe and are responsible for the safety of your belongings. It may seem that you do not need to worry about safety, as Beloit College students frequently seem to leave their belongings unattended; however, thefts do occur. Please take care to lock your dorm room, car, and bikes and to keep your other belongings safe.

**Security** Most residence halls can be opened with a keycard. All students have a keycard and can enter all buildings during the day. You can enter all residence halls with your keycards from 7:30am until midnight. After midnight, however, your keycard will only work for your own building. Some residence halls have traditional locks and only students living there have keys to the building. It is recommended that you keep your door locked when you are not there or when you are sleeping.

**On-Campus Security** The College security is on patrol 24 hours a day and is located in the basement of Pearsons Hall. The office can be reached from all campus phones by dialing 2355.

## Off-Campus Security

For any sort of serious **off campus** emergencies dial 911. DO NOT DIAL 911 unless it's a serious emergency (losing your passport is not a serious emergency!). It is better to contact On Campus Security first. Contact addresses for Beloit's Police Station and Fire Department are as follows:

Police Station:                      Beloit City non-emergency: 757 2244  
  Beloit Town non-emergency: 364 2984

Fire Department:                    Beloit City non-emergency- 364 2900  
  Beloit Town non-emergency- 364 2997

## TRANSPORTATION

Most students at Beloit College walk or ride bicycles to get around campus and to go downtown. Comfortable shoes are recommended for going to class and getting around the city of Beloit.

### Local Bus Services

Beloit Transit provides bus service in the city of Beloit. Route pamphlets that contain the bus routes, stops, and schedules are available in the Office of International Education as well as online at: [www.beloittransit.com](http://www.beloittransit.com). Buses travel to shopping areas as well as restaurants and specialty stores.

The Van Galder Bus Service provides transportation to Janesville, Madison, and Chicago. The bus stop closest to campus is at McDonald's near the South Beloit exit on interstate 90. For rates and schedules, see: <http://www.coachusa.com/vangalder/> .



### Bus Travel

Within the continental U.S., see Megabus (<http://www.megabus.com/us/index.php>) or the Greyhound Bus (<http://www.greyhound.com/>). Tickets by mail may be purchased through Ticket Center on their web site or by calling their Telephone Information Center at 1-800-231-2222.

The closest Greyhound terminal from Beloit College is:      PILOT TRAVEL CENTERS  
  3001 Milwaukee Rd.  
  Beloit, WI 53511

Tickets are not sold at this location in Beloit. You may get tickets by mail if you buy at least 10 mailing days in advance. For trips that don't meet the mailing deadline, you can still purchase tickets from any Greyhound-affiliated terminal. To find a nearby location, check at their web site or call Telephone Information Center.

### Train Travel

Amtrak is available as long distance train service in the continental United States. To purchase tickets or for route information call Amtrak at:1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245) or visit their web site at: <http://www.amtrak.com>

### Chicago Area Commuter Train

A commuter train runs from Harvard, IL to downtown Chicago and costs \$7 on weekends. Harvard is a 40-minute drive from Beloit. See the Metra (Chicago's commuter rail system) web site at <http://www.metrarail.com/>

# ADJUSTING TO A NEW PLACE AND CULTURE

Anytime a major change occurs in your life, (attending a new school, moving to a new town, experiencing a death, getting married) you go through a period of adjustment. When you move to another country to study, you will need to adjust to a new environment, academic system, and culture. This adjustment is often associated with culture shock.

## What is Culture?

Researchers disagree widely on a definition for “culture.” For the purposes of this discussion, it is defined as follows: involves large groups of people, is learned, is passed from generation to generation, is a set of shared interpretations, involves beliefs, values and norms, and, affects behavior.

## What is Culture Shock/ Dislocation?

Have you ever walked into a party and felt out of place? Where you knew few people, if any? The music wasn't what you would play if left to your own choice. People were standing or sitting, huddled in groups that felt impenetrable. No one introduced you and you had no idea how to “break the ice.” Everyone else was talking about things and people about which you knew nothing.

This is a bit like what one experiences while adapting to a new culture. You feel uncomfortable and like an outsider. You are not really sure what part of the experience is causing you the greatest discomfort, but you generally feel that something is wrong and you are unsure of how to change it.

## Symptoms of Culture Shock

Culture shock, or dislocation, manifests itself in various ways. Among the most common affects are the following:

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal, from people, activities, etc.
- Lethargy
- Excessive sleep
- Overeating
- Excessive consumption of alcohol
- Irritability
- Stereotyping of and hostility toward the host culture
- Inability to work effectively
- Unexplained crying
- Physical illness; so-called psychosomatic illnesses (physical disorders caused or aggravated by mental, emotional, or psychological factors)



Few people experience all of these symptoms at the same time; however, whatever symptoms you experience, it is important that you identify that they are relating to culture shock and realize experiencing culture shock is absolutely normal. You can minimize the affects of culture shock and decrease how long you experience it if you take a few simple steps.

## Factors Leading to Discomfort

Culture shock can be intensified with other factors leading to discomfort. Among these are:

- Differences in cuisines and food items (the rice or a dairy product you are served may taste very different from at home)
- Differences in communication styles (verbal, non-verbal)
- Differences in clothing styles and needs (someone from a warm climate may not be able to fully grasp exactly how cold it can get in Wisconsin nor how to prepare for it)
- Distance from family and friends
- Differences in the amount of sunlight or in weather
- Being tired from spending all day trying to understand new surroundings in a new language

- Not hearing news from home
- Less mobility (a lack of easy access to transportation – bus, subway, automobile, bicycle - can cause one to feel trapped)
- Social anxiety/stress from having to make friends in a new environment

### **The Effects of Culture Shock**

All, or some, of these factors conspire to make us uncomfortable to varying degrees when we live in a culture other than our own. Some people report that they have been relatively unaffected by culture shock, though this generally means that the effects were so minor that they did not attribute them to cultural differences. Other students experience serious discomfort related to the changes. Some students studying abroad describe their time abroad as a roller-coaster of emotions. There are several different coping mechanisms.

### **Coping with Culture Shock**

- Understand and accept that one feels discomfort upon entering a new culture and that culture shock is normal and even healthy.
- Start and maintain a journal of your thoughts, experiences, observations, and emotions to help you through tough times before they become problematic.
- Find people who like to do the same things you do.
- Try to identify and analyze what is going on.
- Try to learn how people in the new culture communicate as differences in the way we communicate can lead to discomfort (see the next section on cross-cultural communication).
- Maintain a sense of humor, about yourself, your mistakes and others.
- Set realistic goals.
- Expect and accept failure. You will not do everything perfectly.
- Find a local student with whom you are comfortable and ask him or her to explain situations that confuse you or cause you discomfort. Sometimes your discomfort will come from “mixed signals” or communication misunderstandings.
- Try not to blame the entire culture or country when it may be the actions of an individual that are causing you trouble.

### **Cross-Cultural Communication**

We communicate in our native cultures without thinking about how to do so. We just know how. Communicating with those around us is fundamental to functioning effectively and appropriately in any situation. Yet when we come to a new place, we may find that the local people communicate differently from us, or that our words and actions receive a different response from at home.

An example of miscommunication is an instance when we “know what to do” in our own world, for example, when we greet a friend on the street. We automatically know what to do. We shake hands or bow. We look the other directly in the eye or we look away as a sign of respect. We know what titles to use and what is proper to say. We use more formal or informal language depending on the situation. We learn these how to do this unconsciously by observing others and mimicking their actions.

When we live in a culture other than our own we come across interactions that we do not understand and behavior that feels familiar but is subtly different. For example, many international students notice that Americans will say “How are you?” as a greeting but do not stop to hear the answer. This may be strange for international students. Most Americans use “How are you?” to mean a casual “hi” or “hello”. The common answer is “Not bad.” or “Fine, thanks!”

### **Non-verbal Communication**

Misunderstanding a facial expression or other bit of non-verbal communication causes us to misunderstand what a person is trying to convey. For example, many people raised in U.S. culture routinely misunderstand the Indian gestures for agreement and disagreement. In the U.S., the gesture for agreement is a simple nod of the head. Disagreement is conveyed by shaking the head from side to

side. The Indian versions of these gestures are almost perfectly reversed. Interpreting the Indian sign for “no” as meaning “yes” can lead to real problems!

Simply put, we often misunderstand. We misunderstand instructions in class. We misread peoples’ emotions. We think that someone is starting a conversation when really s/he is just greeting us in passing. When you feel frustrated or unsure of a message you receive whether verbal or non-verbal, try asking someone to help you interpret the message and identify appropriate responses. This person giving advice could be the one giving you the message, but might also be an international student advisor, your academic advisor, a roommate, a classmate, a host parent, or a friend from your country who may have had a similar experience. **Whatever the misunderstanding, don’t be afraid to ask about it.** You’ll learn more about the culture you are living in and more about yourself and how each of us views the world a bit differently.

## **GETTING TO KNOW THE BELOIT COMMUNITY**

### **Host Family Program**

International students have the option to participate in the host family program. A host family is a local American family that is interested in befriending an international student and making them feel welcome and comfortable in this new culture. They assist you in adjusting to the customs and lifestyle of the U.S. Host families and their students get together often for dinners, birthday parties, movies, and cultural or religious holidays. The family may have parents and children, or the family may be a single person.

The Host Family Program offers international students and their American families an opportunity to build friendships that bridge the gap across cultures. Host parents are volunteers in this program, and their only reward is the satisfaction of learning about other cultures and viewpoints from international students. Similarly, you can absorb much about American culture and traditions by spending time with your host family.

Apart from personal visits arranged between you and your host parents, the Host Family Program organizes four major events each year for the students and their host parents – a welcome picnic in August, winter clothing drive in October, a Christmas party in December, a welcome dinner in January. In return, the International Club cooks a dinner for the host families in the spring.

Expectations: being a participant in the program is a two-way street. If you decline your host family invitations to do activities with them repeatedly, they may stop asking you to join them or even discontinue being a host family altogether. Your host family might appreciate it if you invite them to campus events and receiving e-mails or phone calls from you. Please communicate with each other regularly and if problems arise, please contact the International Student Advisor.

### **International Club**

The international club of Beloit College is a student organization aimed at promoting international strength and diversity and it is open to all members of the Beloit College community regardless of nationality, gender or ethnicity.

### **Community Outreach Program**

At local schools and clubs in Beloit, there are opportunities available for international students to share their experiences or introduce their countries and cultures. These are usually volunteer activities, and are great chances to get to know “real” people living in Beloit area. If you would like to help with cultural fairs at local school, teach a class for kids, or if you have some projects for your class that you would like to work with local people, speak to someone in the OIE.

## Getting Involved

Getting involved in campus activities will provide you with invaluable experiences and opportunities beyond your academic work. Once you get familiar with Beloit, you will realize that the majority of events taking place on campus are organized by students. The teamwork and leadership of the students are what make the Beloit Bubble an exciting place to live.

As a new student in college, it may seem hard to fit in and figure out how to join an existing club, establish a new club, or introduce a completely new event. Here are some general tips to help you get started or help you create your own strategy:

- Come to college with a fresh mind and a lot of enthusiasm. Be aware of what you want to gain out of your college experience, but at the same time, be receptive to new and unique opportunities that could completely change your perception of what college is all about!
- Be proactive in meeting new students, faculty, and staff. Don't get overwhelmed and expect to remember them all at once. Feel free to ask questions whenever you need to, because everybody in Beloit belongs to one network, and everyone will try their best to direct you in the right way.
- Feel free in expressing your ideas and thoughts. You have the complete freedom of expression and speech in this culture, and most Americans are honest and straightforward with their thoughts and opinions. However, be mindful of cultural sensitivity and take care to not say things that may offend the culture or people you've come to live with.
- Share your ideas with students, and find out which departments, clubs or organizations on campus are involved in similar activities and might show interest in your idea.
- Remember that anyone can join clubs free of cost. You are not bound to attend all meetings and the level of participation is entirely up to you.
- There are various social and educational events that take place all the time, such as music concerts, educational speakers, student rock bands, parties at dorms and fraternities, host family events, improvisational comedy shows, movies shown by Film Series, and off-campus trips sponsored by Student Activities. These events prove to be a lot of fun and provide an opportunity to interact with many students on campus.

This college has a system that allows you to do everything inventive and creative as long as you have the motivation. There are students and staff around to offer you support. College is the time for you to gain practical leadership and organizational skills before you move out to the real world. Be sure to make the most of this experience.

New international students, including exchange students, regularly are among the most active students on campus in initiating and participating in activities. There are also a variety of ways you can volunteer in the community and make visits to local schools to talk about your country.

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