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## Welcome to the Yaoundé Program!

Dear Yaoundé Program Participant:

Greetings from Carlisle! Congratulations to each of you on your selection to the group of students who will represent Dickinson College in Yaoundé. An academically challenging and personally rewarding experience awaits you. We wish you all the best!

This **Yaoundé Orientation Handbook** has been prepared to make your transition to Yaoundé and the Cameroonian educational system a little smoother. The handbook covers general topics affecting all students who study abroad: health matters, insurance, safe behavior, code of conduct and other policies, Dickinson course registration and room draw while abroad, and absentee voting. It also contains specific information about studying in Cameroon: packing tips, lifestyle abroad, an academic calendar, course information, and much more. Sections on cultural perspectives will help you put your observations and experiences into context. This program specific information will also help you to understand better and adapt more quickly to your new environment and culture. Everything in this handbook is very relevant, so please read it carefully. A copy of the handbook will be mailed to your parent(s)/guardian(s) at your home address.

If you have any questions, contact the Center for Global Study and Engagement at (717) 245-1341 or [global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu). The Center for Global Study and Engagement is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (EST).

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Important Reminders:**

If you plan to be at a different address during the break or if your insurance information has changed since you completed the Student Agreement form, please let the Center for Global Study and Engagement know right away.

You will need your passport and the yellow fever documentation to check in at departure and when you arrive in Cameroon. Do not pack it in your luggage!

If you want to change the date or itinerary of your return flight, do so early enough to secure the date you want. Airfare and any airline fees that occur due to changing the return date are the responsibility of the student.

As you read this handbook, if you feel anything has been left out that you wanted to know, or that some of this information is out-of-date, please let us know.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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### **Program Director:**

**Mr. Teku Tanyi Teku**

B.P. 14478

Yaoundé-Centre Province

Cameroon

Mobile: (011-237) 776-644-61

E-mail: [mr\\_teetec@yahoo.fr](mailto:mr_teetec@yahoo.fr)

### **Dickinson Center (Student's Apartment)**

Location: Shell Nsimeyong

Tel: (011-237) 220-065-22

Students can receive local and international calls on the apartment phone and can make international calls using prepaid calling cards.

### **On-Campus Coordinator:**

**Joyce Bylander, Special Assistant to the President**

Campus Academic Life

Old West

Dickinson College

P.O. Box 1733

Carlisle, PA 17013-2896

Tel: 717-245-1392 (office)

E-mail: [bylander@dickinson.edu](mailto:bylander@dickinson.edu)

### **Center for Global Study and Engagement:**

**Brian Brubaker, Director of Study Abroad**

Center for Global Study and Engagement

Dickinson College

P. O. Box 1773

Carlisle, PA 17013-2896

Tel: 717-245-1341

FAX: 717-245-1688

E-mail: [brubakeb@dickinson.edu](mailto:brubakeb@dickinson.edu)

### **Major Emergency Protocol:**

If you need to contact the Center for Global Study and Engagement after hours for emergency assistance in a very serious situation, call the Dickinson College Public Safety 24-Hour Hotline (**001-717-245-1111**), identify yourself and the program, describe the emergency briefly, and give a number for call back. The operator will locate the proper staff member, who will return the call.

**The Center for Global Study and Engagement's Travel Agency:**

Advantage Travel  
313 East Willow Street  
Syracuse, NY 13203  
TEL: 1-800-788-1980  
FAX: 315-471-6264  
Contact: Gabriella Bonney  
[gbonney@advantagecny.com](mailto:gbonney@advantagecny.com)

**Cameroonian Embassy in the U.S.:**

Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon  
2349 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Telephone: (202) 275 8790 to 8794  
Web site: <http://www.ambacam-usa.org/>

**U.S. Embassy in Cameroon**

U.S. Embassy to Cameroon  
Avenue Rosa Parks  
P.O. Box 817  
Yaoundé CAMEROON  
Tel/FAX: (011-237)220-15-00 ext. 4531  
DOS Consular Information Sheet at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1081.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1081.html)  
CDC website for Cameroon: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationCameroon.aspx>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### General College and Center for Global Study and Engagement Policies

#### **College Non-Discrimination Policy:**

Dickinson College is an academic community that values justice, free inquiry, diversity, and equal opportunity. It is a fundamental policy of Dickinson College to respect pluralism and to promote tolerance, civility, and mutual understanding within its community. On that basis, Dickinson College does not discriminate as to race, color, sex, political and religious beliefs, marital status, age, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origins, veteran's status, or disability.

#### **Student Agreement Form (see Appendix VI):**

The Student Agreement form, which applicants filled out as part of their application process, acknowledges awareness of inherent risks associated with foreign travel and that the student is participating in the program voluntarily. By signing the form, the participant agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Dickinson College from and against any claim that the participant, the participant's parents or guardian or any other person may have for any losses, damages, or injuries arising in connection with participation in the overseas program. Signing this form automatically enrolls the student at no cost in the Dickinson College's "Supplemental Emergency Travel Assistance and Medical Evacuation Insurance Program." (See **Appendix IV** for more information on this insurance.)

#### **Status of non-Dickinson Students:**

Students from other institutions who participate in a Dickinson College program are considered "guest students" of the College for the duration of the program; as such, they will enjoy all the rights and privileges granted by the program. (The only restriction is ineligibility for Dickinson grant money and endowed scholarships).

#### **Program Cancellation Policy:**

All decisions concerning the cancellation (or required modification) of a Dickinson College program will be made by the Center for Global Study and Engagement in consultation with responsible authorities on campus and overseas. These decisions will be based on, but not limited to, State Department warnings. In the unlikely event of an emergency program cancellation, every effort will be made to accommodate the academic needs of program participants by offering an alternative to enable students to complete their course work. For example, one possible alternative would be to offer suitable coursework on-campus during the summer.

Students whose program is cancelled prior to the start date will receive a full refund of the program fee, including the confirmation payment.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative for credit completion is offered, no refund will be given.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative credit completion is NOT offered, the student will receive a full refund including the confirmation payment.

## Conduct and Discipline Policies

### **What is this all about? (IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ!!)**

At Dickinson College, study abroad is not about travel to an exotic destination. It means becoming an active participant in the life and culture of a foreign locale in order to gain useful knowledge about a place and its people. By applying to a particular program, you have taken a significant step toward expanding your mind, engaging other cultures, and becoming a more active participant in our global society.

In a very real sense, you go abroad as an ambassador of Dickinson College. Your attitude, interactions, and presence abroad will speak volumes about you and about us. You are privileged to be there as a full-time learner, both academically and in all other aspects of daily life. Many study abroad participants are used to being the “majority,” and once they become a minority abroad they realize their actions are viewed as representative of their entire group. Resist playing the role of the “ugly American” stereotype. Resolve instead to develop understanding and show respect for the culture you are visiting.

### **Code of Conduct:**

All students studying abroad are expected to abide by the code of conduct as expressed in the Student Agreement that you have signed. This form is reprinted as Appendix VI of this handbook. Please read it again.

It is a fundamental expectation that students will respect the norms of the host culture with regard to behavior and dress and will obey host country laws as well as all policies and regulations of the host institution and/or Dickinson Center. It is further expected that students participating in Dickinson programs will:

- attend and participate in classes and complete assignments
- participate in planned group excursions
- observe the rules and respect the property of the host institution, housing accommodations, and any temporary program accommodation such as hotels or hostels
- for safety purposes, provide the Program Director with contact information and/or itinerary to the extent possible when they leave for private travel.

Students shall respect the rights of other students whether on the program or at the host institution, as well as those of homestay families, staff, and faculty. Dickinson College policies regarding student conduct as outlined in the Dickinson College Student Handbook, including academic infractions such as plagiarism, apply to students enrolled overseas as well. In Dickinson programs abroad, the On-Campus Coordinator will serve as the Judicial Hearing Officer for alleged violations.

### **Drinking and Drug Use:**

Most cultures have well-established customs with regard to acceptable social drinking. Mature behavior and respect for local customs is expected of all students. The misuse of alcohol will not be tolerated and can result in dismissal from the program. The use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs is prohibited. A student caught using, purchasing, or selling drugs will be sent home immediately without refund.

Legal penalties with regard to drugs and alcohol may be more severe in the host country than in the U.S. and may entail fines and/or jail time. A student charged with breaking local laws will be subject to the rulings of local courts. U.S. laws and constitutional guarantees do NOT apply. The ability of

program staff or U.S. Embassy personnel to assist is very limited. In most countries, release on bail while awaiting trial is not an option.

### **Removal from Program for Disciplinary Reasons:**

Students can be dismissed from programs for violating policies, rules or regulations, for engaging in disruptive behavior, for academic infractions or failure, and for conduct that could bring the program into disrepute. The Executive Director of the Center for Global Study and Engagement will make the judgment in consultation with the Program Director/On-Campus Coordinator.

## **Early Withdrawal: Process and Penalties**

### **Student Status and Changes of Status:**

All students approved to participate in an academic year/semester program off campus continue enrollment as Dickinson students with “off-campus” status and are expected to keep their commitment to participate in an academic year/semester program for the full term, and to return to campus following their semester or academic year away. To return early requires changing status, a process initiated by the Center for Global Study and Engagement.

#### **Early return or withdrawal:**

- A compelling medical or academic reason is required for leaving a program early. You should consult first with the Dickinson Program Director/on-site staff, and then with the Center of Global Study and Engagement.
- Whenever possible, students should complete the semester that has already begun. Students risk not receiving credit if they withdraw from a program mid-semester or before completing scheduled instruction and examinations.
- Financial consequences for early withdrawal are described in the following section, “Refund Policy and Financial Consequences for Early Withdrawal,” and in Appendix VII, “Refund Policy for Overseas Programs.”
- When you are certain of your decision, communicate your reasoning in writing to the Center for Global Study and Engagement at [global@dickinson.edu](mailto:global@dickinson.edu). Please also request that your Program Director e-mail the Center to confirm the last date you attended class.
- The Center for Global Study and Engagement will then officially notify the campus of your change in status. If you are asked to follow-up directly with certain offices, please do so.
- If your withdrawal occurs prior to the end of the first week of classes at Dickinson, you may be granted permission to return to campus. If so, you can contact Campus Life to arrange for housing on a last-in-line basis.
- Students returning early from study abroad will register during the add/drop period of the following semester.

### **Refund Policy and Financial Consequences for Early Withdrawal:**

Early withdrawal from a program will have financial consequences. Both the \$35 application fee and \$300 confirmation payment are non-refundable. Before making a final decision to withdraw, you should read the Refund Policy for Overseas Programs, which is reproduced as Appendix VII of this handbook. **These policies apply in all cases of early withdrawal from study abroad programs, regardless of the reason for withdrawal.**

Students receiving Title IV federal financial aid will have funds returned to federal aid programs

according to the policies outlined in the Dickinson College Bulletin. It is important to understand that, since the financial aid refund and the refund to the student's account are calculated using different methods, the refund to the student account may not fully cover the required refund to the financial aid programs, and the student may end up owing funds to the college after the refund to the financial aid programs has been made.

### **Non-traditional Off-Campus Study:**

Off-campus study in the senior year that precludes meeting the senior residency requirement requires special approval from the Academic Program and Standards Committee.

Special approval is also necessary for participation in more than two semesters of study off campus. Petitions should be addressed to Stephen DePaul, Associate Provost of the College and Executive Director, Center for Global Study and Engagement and should include the following:

- An essay describing how your specific study abroad plans fit in with your overall academic goals and plans
- Letters of support from your academic advisor(s), department chair(s), on-campus coordinator and/or Program Director, as applicable
- An audit showing in detail how off-campus courses will fit in with graduation requirements.

## **Program Fees/Financial Aid Information**

### **Payment of Fees/Financial Aid:**

The total cost of the program for 2013 spring semester is \$27,639.50. Students at Dickinson College will receive invoices from the Student Accounts Office that show credit for the \$300 confirmation fee and any applicable amounts from your financial aid package.

**The program fee includes the following:** tuition and fees, room and board, and scheduled group excursions. **Not included in the program fee are:** required health and accident insurance (purchased in the U.S.), transportation to/from Cameroon, immunizations, visa expenses, books, vacation travel, meals during independent travel, and other personal expenses.

Arrangements for any type of monthly payment plan options should be made as soon as possible through Tuition Management Systems (1-800-722-4867, x 775, or [www.afford.com](http://www.afford.com)). If the balance due on your account is not paid by the deadline noted on the billing, or if special arrangements have not been made with Student Accounts (Tel. 717-245-1953 or email: [stuacct@dickinson.edu](mailto:stuacct@dickinson.edu)), you will not be allowed to participate in the program.

### **Financial Aid Information:**

Dickinson grant money and endowed scholarships are available only to Dickinson College students on Dickinson programs. Students from other colleges and universities should check with their own financial aid office to determine eligibility.

## PROGRAM PREPARATIONS

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### Things to Take Care of at Dickinson

#### **Declaring a Major:**

Before you can study abroad you must officially declare a major. The applicable text from the Dickinson College Bulletin reads as follows:

“A student must be accepted for a major field of concentration by the time he or she earns junior standing. A student who does not have a declaration of a major on file in the Registrar’s Office by the end of the semester in which the 16th course (counting towards the degree) is completed may be required to withdraw from the college.”

To declare a major you must complete the necessary paperwork available from the Registrar’s office. The declaration of a major is only official when the completed paperwork has been turned in to the Registrar’s office. A conversation with someone in the major department about your intentions is NOT sufficient. To avoid being dismissed from your study abroad program, be sure to attend to this well before your departure.

Now is also an appropriate time to look over the requirements for your major(s)/minor/general education. Make sure to note courses that you need to take while abroad, especially if you are planning to double major.

#### **Student Accounts and Financial Aid Loans:**

Two very important things to check on prior to departure:

- If you are applying for financial aid, make certain you have completed all necessary applications and responded to all requests for information from the Financial Aid office.
- Call the Office of Student Accounts (717-245-1953) to make sure your student account is clear. If you have a hold on your account, you will not be able to study abroad until it is released.

#### **Career Center Resources:**

The Career Center offers a variety of resources to help assist you before you go abroad or while you are abroad. Please see the important information below about Career Center resources that you can utilize.

The Career Center is available to assist you in any way possible while you are abroad.

- **Resume/Cover Letter/Personal Statement Reviews:** If you would like to have a resume, cover letter, or personal statement reviewed, just email it to [career@dickinson.edu](mailto:career@dickinson.edu).
- **Phone or Skype Appointments:** If you would like to speak with a counselor – either email or call (717-245-1740) to schedule a phone or Skype appointment. Be sure to schedule the appointment for Eastern Standard Time and please provide a phone number or Skype address where you can be reached.
- **Skype IM:** You can IM the Career Center with quick internship questions that do not need an appointment. IM between 2-4 EST, W-F. Screen name: InternshipIM
- **Career Center Updates:** You will continue to receive emails from the Career Center about upcoming events, programs, deadlines, etc. Pay attention to these emails – there may be opportunities that you can take advantage of.

- **Career Center Website:** Periodically review our website, [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/), for resources, and Dickinson Connect (available through the Gateway portal) for job and internship postings, interviews and events, job fairs, on-campus employment, scholarship and fellowship information, and volunteer opportunities.

### ***Graduate & Professional School Advice***

Studying abroad during the junior year and beginning graduate school immediately after graduation from Dickinson can be accomplished - with careful planning. But, before you make the decision to apply, here are some things you should consider:

1. What are your career goals? Do you need an advanced degree to accomplish them? This is important, irrespective of studying abroad.
2. Will you have enough time to prepare for the entrance exams you need to take? Are you willing to spend time doing that while abroad?
3. Some students find that trying to prepare for graduate or professional school while abroad is a difficult challenge. For those students, delaying graduate school might be a good idea. Graduate school will always be available, but this might be your only chance to study abroad, so make the most of it.

The typical timeline for applying to graduate/professional school is available at [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Grad-School-Timeline/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Grad-School-Timeline/). Review the timeline to see what you can do before, during and after your abroad experience. If you are studying abroad for the fall semester only, you should be able to follow this timeline easily. In either case – one or two semesters abroad - you should plan to meet with the Graduate and Professional Studies advisor in the Career Center during the spring semester of your sophomore year to make sure you are on track.

If you are applying to medical, dental or veterinary school – or any of the allied health professions – be aware that your deadlines will likely be earlier, so plan to adjust your own timeline. For more information on applying to these professional degree programs, go to [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Pre-Health-Program/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Pre-Health-Program/). For individual questions related to health related applications during your year abroad, please consult the Career Center Pre-Health Advisor by emailing [swarnerd@dickinson.edu](mailto:swarnerd@dickinson.edu).

Taking entrance exams - the GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, PCAT, DAT, etc. – before you return to campus for your senior year is always a good idea. The GRE Subject Test is paper-based and only available in October, November and April. It is administered on the Dickinson campus. However, do not take any exam before you have thoroughly prepared for it. Schools will have access to all of your scores, not just your highest ones! For more information on the entrance exams, go to [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Graduate-and-Professional-School-Exams/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Graduate-and-Professional-School-Exams/).

For more information on applying to graduate or professional school, go to [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Students/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Students/).

### ***Internship Advice***

If you plan to undertake an internship upon your return, you can search and apply to opportunities while you are abroad. You can search online by going to Dickinson Connect through the Gateway portal. Login instructions are on the left hand side of the page. Additional resources and information about the internship program can be found on [www.dickinson.edu/student-](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-)

[life/resources/career-center/content/student/Students/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Students/). You will find registration options and deadlines on this page. If you have questions about the internship program, please email [career@dickinson.edu](mailto:career@dickinson.edu).

### ***IM about Internships***

Now you'll be able to IM the Career Center with quick questions about internships. IM via Skype between 2-4 pm Wednesdays – Fridays EST and Amity Fox, the internship coordinator, will get back to you. **Screen name:** InternshipIM You can also schedule Skype appointments if you'd like to have a face-to-face meeting. Just IM Amity or e-mail at [foxa@dickinson.edu](mailto:foxa@dickinson.edu) to schedule an appointment.

### ***Job Search Advice***

You can start your job search while you are abroad! The Career Center has many resources available online to assist you, and networking – the number one job search method – can be very effective electronically. One of the first steps in job searching is researching organizations to which you will want to apply, and learning their application processes. Some application deadlines will approach as early as the fall semester senior year; it is important to conduct research prior to returning to campus in the fall. A key resource to utilize in your research is Vault, available through the Student Resources tab in Gateway. Check out many other job search resources at [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Career-Research/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Career-Research/).

### ***Networking Advice***

Networking is one of the most effective methods of job searching! Take the opportunity to meet and talk with as many people as possible who are working in your desired industry. Additionally, individuals who work in industries that are not of interest to you can also be of assistance in putting you in touch with people who can help. The primary networking tool available through the Career Center is Dickinson Works. This is a database of alumni who have agreed to provide career-related information or assistance to other Dickinsonians. Please note – this is NOT a job searching database, although networking can sometimes turn into a job lead, the primary purpose is to assist you in connecting with alumni in your desired career field and learning from them. More information on how to use Dickinson Works can be found on the main page of the Gateway portal.

Time spent abroad could be viewed as a networking opportunity. If you plan to network during your time abroad, you might want to consider having business cards made before leaving the U.S.

### ***On-Campus Student Employment When You Return***

Departments and offices on-campus are continually seeking student employees and are often looking to fill positions a semester ahead of time. Make sure you check the on-campus student employment section of DickinsonConnect the semester before your return.

### ***Using DickinsonConnect***

**DickinsonConnect is the online recruiting system that will help you to:**


- Apply and sign up for on-campus interviews
- Apply to resume referrals
- Search for jobs (full-time, part-time or summer opportunities)
- Conduct an employer search
- Search for internships
- Search on-campus student employment
- Search for graduate scholarships and fellowships

- View and sign up for events/programs
- Upload resumes and cover letters easily from a Microsoft Word file for employers to review
- Manage and edit your job/internship preferences (job type, level or location).

DickinsonConnect is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students must complete a user profile in DickinsonConnect before being able to utilize the system.

Getting started with DickinsonConnect is quick and easy. To begin, follow these basic steps:

1. **To access your account, current students should do so through Gateway**
  - Log into your Gateway account.
  - Click on the "Student Resources" tab.
  - Click on the "DickinsonConnect" **link**
2. All students are pre-registered to use the DickinsonConnect system. But if you are having problems, please contact the Career Center office at [recruit@dickinson.edu](mailto:recruit@dickinson.edu).
3. After you have successfully logged in for the first time, your student profile will appear and must be completed before you will have full access to the system. **Note:** There are several tabs that required fields (indicated by \*) must be completed – make sure to fill in all required fields.
4. After your profile has been completed, you will see the Student Home Page. Here, you will be able to view Announcements, Upcoming Events and additional resource links.
5. The links on the left side and top of the page will allow you to navigate and to utilize the DickinsonConnect system.

For assistance on using the system, click on the  *Resource Library* link on the left side of page and click on the + sign beside the Using DickinsonConnect folder to view the folder contents. There are several files listed to help with most questions you may have. If you would have questions not covered in any of the files, please feel free to contact the Career Center at [recruit@dickinson.edu](mailto:recruit@dickinson.edu)

## Legal Matters

### Limited Power of Attorney:

In case your signature is needed for any reason during your absence, such as for a Stafford loan check, you should consider making arrangements for "limited power of attorney" to be held by an appropriate person stateside to act on your behalf. This is usually a parent or guardian, but can be another relative or close friend. It must be someone you trust to act responsibly on your behalf in legal and financial matters. You may use a standard "Limited Power of Attorney Form" (A240), available from the Office of Student Accounts or at the Center for Global Study and Engagement in the Stern Center. Examples of the kinds of things you might want to authorize the person(s) to do would be: acting on your behalf in federal loan matters or withdrawing or transferring money from a specific bank account. You should have the statement(s) notarized and request a couple of originals in case the bank or other entity requires an original.

### Income Tax Declaration:

If you have taxable income for the year ending 31 December, you will have to file a tax return for that year. Options are:

- to have the forms sent to you so that you can meet the 15 April deadline
- to file on-line

- to file for an extension of the deadline.

### **Absentee Voting:**

If you want to vote by Absentee Ballot, you need to register to vote before leaving. Check with the Board of Elections or the Secretary of State in your home state about the procedures for voting by Absentee Ballot. It is important to get this information before going overseas since there are usually several steps involved with specific due dates for the Absentee Ballot. Remember to make a note of your Party, Ward, District, and Voter Registration Number.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program offers extensive information about registering to vote by absentee ballot online at <http://www.fvap.gov/>.

## **Insurance Information**

### **Health Insurance:**

**You are required to purchase primary health insurance in the United States** that is valid overseas to protect against the costs of hospitalization and medical care in the event of sickness or an accident while abroad. **This cost is not included in the program fee.**

The following section includes a list of things to consider with regards to your current health insurance coverage:

- Selecting and paying for adequate primary health insurance coverage is your responsibility. You should read your insurance policy to determine what is and is not covered. Pre-existing conditions, sports injuries, and dental care, for example, may not be covered by basic medical insurance. It is your responsibility to determine whether your policy meets your particular needs.
- Before deciding to use your health insurance policy, you should contact the provider to determine whether the policy will cover you **overseas** for the **duration of your stay**.
- You may want to consider the **Dickinson Student Health Insurance policy, which covers students while overseas\***. While it satisfies the minimum requirement for primary health and accident insurance while overseas, you are advised to examine the policy to see if the coverage meets your particular needs. You can find more information about this insurance in Appendix III and at <http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/health-center/content/Insurance/>

Please contact the Office of Student Accounts for further information about the Dickinson health insurance plan. (\*This is for Dickinson students only).

- On the **Student Agreement form** that you signed when you applied, you provided the **insurance company name and policy number** for your medical coverage. **If that information should change, please notify the Center for Global Study and Engagement immediately.** Up-to-date, accurate insurance information is needed in case of emergency and is also mandatory if your program requires a letter issued by the Center for Global Study and Engagement in support of your student visa.
- Make note of your insurance company contact information and policy number in your own essential records, which you take with you overseas. Also leave the information with someone at home.

- ❑ If you have **special health needs**, discuss them with the Resident Director and/or the Center for Global Study and Engagement before departure. Thinking ahead about how you will cope with special health needs is essential. Do not assume that the same services or medications you use at home will be available in the host country.
- ❑ As a rule, an insurance card will not be accepted for payment of medical expenses overseas. Be prepared to **pay cash for treatment and keep receipts** to present to your insurance company for reimbursement. Before going overseas, contact your insurance company to know exactly what you will need to send them in order to be reimbursed. Verify if the documents provided by doctors and pharmacies from another country will have to be translated into English.

To evaluate personal sickness and accident insurance coverage, we offer the following questions:

- Does the plan include hospitalization for accidents and illnesses while abroad?
- What is the maximum amount of coverage provided?
- Are there deductibles? If so, what are they?
- Will the plan include emergency room expenses?
- What is explicitly not covered?
- Does the plan cover visits to the doctor or medication prescribed while abroad?
- What is the procedure for filing a claim, and how long does it take to be reimbursed?
- When does the plan begin and end?
- Does the plan have continuous coverage before, during, and after you go abroad?
- Is there a publication explaining the coverage in detail?
- Is there coverage for medical evacuation or for repatriation of remains?

### **Supplemental Travel Assistance and Medical Evacuation Insurance:**

Dickinson College provides "Supplemental Travel Accident and Medical Evacuation Insurance" for all students participating in a program overseas. **However, this is NOT a substitute for your primary health insurance coverage.** See Appendix IV for an overview of coverage and limitations.

### **Liability Insurance for Belongings:**

Students are not covered by the College for personal liability, including the loss or theft of personal property. It is the responsibility of each program participant to purchase liability insurance, if needed. Students who bring laptops are advised to purchase adequate coverage. Check first to see whether the homeowner's insurance of your parents/guardian will cover personal liability while overseas. Normally, a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft will be required by the insurer before any claim will be considered.

## **Health Matters**

### **Medical Check-ups:**

Before leaving the United States, you should visit your physician, gynecologist, eye care specialist, and dentist. Make sure you are in good health before going abroad so that you can avoid any potential problems.

### **Immunizations/Inoculations:**

Up-to-date information about vaccinations and other health precautions for Cameroon is available at the Centers for Disease Control web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinationCameroon.aspx>. It is recommended that you print out the CDC information and take it with you when you consult with your physician. Make sure that all of your routine inoculations are up-to-date. These include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) and diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT). It is strongly recommended that you ask about other types of inoculations, such as Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, or any medicines that are advisable. You should start your immunizations **immediately**, so you will have plenty of time to complete them all. Local places to obtain immunizations are:

- **Holy Spirit Hospital Travel Center Nurse**  
Address: 503 N. 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011  
Phone: 717-972-4222 to schedule an appointment
- **Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center Clinic**  
Address: 1711 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102  
Phone: 1-800-243-1455 to schedule an appointment

All agencies will provide the yellow WHO vaccination card.

**The cost of immunizations and medications are the responsibility of the participant.**

**Have all inoculations or immunizations recorded on an “International Certificate of Vaccinations” (yellow World Health Organization [WHO] card). Carry the card with you; it will be checked at the airport upon entering Cameroon!**

**Please review the following with your physician:**

- Yellow Fever:** the only immunization **required** for entry; you must get this immunization at least 10 days before departing for Cameroon. However, it is in your best interest to take of care of this well before this time.
- Gamma Globulin:** helps prevent infectious hepatitis (type A). Given shortly before departure (not good beyond 6 months). Vaccination is available for some other types of hepatitis. Check with your doctor about this.
- Typhoid:** oral or by injection. Takes about 3 weeks. Check with your doctor about this.
- Polio booster:** if you have not had one within the last 5 years.
- Diphtheria and tetanus:** good for 10 years. (If you are uncertain when you had the last one, it is recommended that you get the booster.)
- Meningitis:** likelier in the north during dry season. Check with your doctor.
- Cholera:** the cholera vaccine is largely ineffective; the State Department no longer requires it for overseas employees. Check with your doctor about this.
- Measles** is endemic; you should be protected by prior disease or by vaccination. Discuss with your physician when updating your MMR (measles, mumps, rubella).
- Smallpox** has been eradicated: no vaccination is necessary.

### **Disease Prophylaxis:**

**Malaria:** Good prevention and immediate attention to symptoms will help shield you from malaria. You should bring insect repellents containing DEET (20-30%) with you; bring enough that you can use it every day. There are many different prophylaxes currently available. Consult your physician.

Please note that some drugs available require a seven month supply, and you **MUST** bring enough to last the entire semester. Please note that some insurance plans will only cover a supply for a few months, and you are advised to not ship medication to Cameroon as there is not guarantee that you will actually receive it. Therefore, you may have to pay a surcharge to your insurance company in order to secure a sufficient supply.

If you or your physician has any questions, call the Center for Disease Control, Malarial Division (770-488-7788). If you experience side effects, you may contact one of the preferred program physicians (see page 42 for contact information).

**Diarrhea-producing infections:** What is often called traveler's diarrhea is fairly common, lasting for a few days, characterized by watery non-bloody bowel movements. It is recommended that you take Imodium or Lomotil with you. More serious diarrhea is due to giardiasis and amoebic dysentery (parasitic) and bacillary dysentery (bacterial). These infections are caused by contaminated food and water. In the event of prolonged diarrhea, accompanied by cramps and vomiting, contact one of the preferred program physicians (see page 42).

**To minimize the risk of coming into contact with contaminated food or water, observe the following:**

- Do not drink tap water, even as ice or in alcoholic drinks (alcohol does not kill organisms) unless it has been boiled for 20 minutes or treated with tincture of iodine. Drink bottled water (Tangui, Supermont) which is available everywhere for about \$1.00 a liter. The cost of bottled water is factored into your allowance. Bottles are sealed at the factory, so make sure you see them opened in front of you in the restaurant. Beer and soft drinks are safe, if unopened. You can eat commercially packaged and pasteurized yogurt with no ill effects, though milk is a good medium for bacterial growth. CAUTION: Ice cream as well as "rebottled" water purchased from street vendors should be avoided. Generally, ice cream from a bakery is fine (i.e. Select Plus)
- Eating raw vegetables, including salads, may be risky. You should wash raw vegetables and fruit in a solution containing disinfectants like iodine solution (2%= two drops per liter, or crystals). Do not eat street fruit, unless it has a rind or peel (e.g. a banana or an orange). Meat and fish, especially shellfish, should be well cooked.
- You can probably eat most of the cooked street food without any ill effects.
- You will dine with African friends, so use your common sense. Part of the pleasure of being in Cameroon will be lost if you become paranoid about food.

**Schistosomiasis (=bilharzia):** Do not swim in fresh water. Swimming in seawater or in properly chlorinated water is fine. Take showers in the hotels rather than baths (a bucket or sponge bath is better than a long soak in untreated water).

**Rabies:** Endemic in Cameroon. Avoid cats, dogs, and monkeys. If you are bitten by an animal, wash the area well and see a doctor immediately. If the animal can be captured and held for testing, by all means do so. NOTE: Rabies immunizations are available, but generally sought only by those who will be off the beaten path and alone for long periods of time.

**Sexually transmitted diseases (venereal diseases, hepatitis B and AIDS):** Epidemic in Central Africa.

**In general, be prudent and take precautions,** but do not be fearful. The worst sickness you will probably experience is diarrhea, but if a condition lingers or worsens, talk with the Program

Director.

### **Medications:**

Prescription/non-prescription medication(s) should be in the original container from the pharmacy and labeled with your physician's name, your name, and the medication name and dosage. **Do not transfer any medication into an unmarked container.** You should also carry a written letter or prescription from your physician verifying that this medication was prescribed by a licensed practitioner and is necessary for medical reasons. If you are on prescription medications or take particular over the counter medications, such as a particular brand of painkillers, you should take enough with you to last the duration of your stay. It is neither advisable nor legal in some circumstances to ship medications by mail. It is your responsibility to make sure that your medications are legal in your host country. You can find this out by consulting the consulate website of the country you will be visiting. **You may also want to take along some cold/flu medication, anti-diarrhea, and anti-fungal medicine.** Women prone to gynecological infections should take a supply of medication. Be aware of recent changes in airport security regulations limiting the type of liquids or gels that can be transported in carry-on luggage.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that students with diabetes or health situations that require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes sufficient to last their stay abroad. If you carry narcotics or syringes, you should also bring a copy of the prescription and a statement from the prescribing physician.

### **Mental Health, Stability, and Stress:**

For students under the care of a counselor or psychiatrist, please be sure that you see him/her before you depart from the US. Participating in a study abroad program in another country will not lessen any emotional issues that you may presently be experiencing. When you are abroad, you will probably experience various states of excitement and frustration as a result of the opportunities and differences presented by the new culture. These alternating emotions are usually related to the natural phenomenon of culture shock, which occurs when people adapt to a new culture and surroundings. As you become accustomed to your new surroundings and establish a routine, these feelings will begin to subside. If homesickness, depression, or eating disorders persist, consider seeking out professional assistance.

### **Special Accommodations:**

Accommodations available to students with disabilities in the United States may not be available to students studying abroad. Facilities for people with physical disabilities are virtually non-existent in Cameroon. It is unlikely that you will find the same medications, medical and/or psychological care, and support services at your study abroad site that you would at home. For you to fully assess whether you will be able to successfully complete a study abroad program, we encourage any student with special needs to review the program descriptions and to visit websites about the community in which you will be living and learning. If you would like assistance from Dickinson College in helping you to assess your ability to succeed in studying in a particular program or in identifying programs where more support may be available, you are encouraged to disclose your situation on the medical forms you completed during the application process or to come talk to the Center for Global Study and Engagement. Such disclosure is completely voluntary. If you travel to an abroad site, you will be expected to fully participate in the program. Therefore, you need to inform yourself about the demands of the program in order to plan ahead and to prepare to cope

with your health needs in a new environment.

### **Health and Safety in Flight:**

For safety and comfort, wear loose-fitting, natural-fiber clothing during your flight. Do not wear snug-fitting or heeled footwear! If possible, avoid wearing contact lenses. Low humidity in flight tends to remove the moisture from the eye's surface. It is helpful to do seat exercises or to walk in the aisles in order to maintain good circulation. One easy exercise you can do is to tap your toes while keeping your heels on the floor. This pushes blood up your legs and reduces swelling. Tap for several minutes every hour or so.

It is always advisable to sleep during long flights. You should avoid alcoholic beverages in flight because they cause dehydration. Recycled air also has a drying effect, so you should stay hydrated with non-alcoholic beverages. If you require a special diet, be sure to notify the airline at least 72 hours before departure.

The most common difficulty or problem that can result from flying is known as jet lag, which is the sudden sense of fatigue or wakefulness at the "wrong" time. Jet lag is more pronounced flying east than flying west. Veteran international flyers recommend going to bed and getting up at the customary local time from the beginning. This helps the body adjust quickly. Avoid naps until fully adjusted to the new time zone; the body confuses naps with night sleep.

### **Health Tips:**

By using common sense and taking everyday precautions, you can safeguard your health. Here are some tips:

- Inform yourself about the particular health risks of the country you will be visiting and be meticulous in observing recommended precautions.
- Students with existing medical conditions should consult their personal physicians regarding special precautions they may need to take. It is important to tell your physician the location(s) you will be visiting.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take along an extra pair, plus a copy of your lens prescription. Pack enough lens cleaning solution for the entire trip, as well as eye drops because it is very dusty in Cameroon.
- Always carry a wallet card or wear a necklace or bracelet stating any special conditions you have (such as diabetes, asthma, etc.). Be sure to list allergies to specific medications.
- If you are sexually active, use a condom. You may have trouble finding reliable brands of condoms abroad; consider taking a supply.
- Take care of yourself while traveling: try not to wear yourself down, avoid excessive exposure to the sun, drink plenty of liquids to stay hydrated, and try to get enough sleep.

## TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

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### Passport and Visa Information

The responsibility for ensuring that you have a valid passport and visa in time for your program is ultimately yours.

#### Passport Information:

A valid passport **that does not expire 6 months beyond the end date of the program** is required to enter any country. If your passport expires before the required validity, you will have to acquire a new passport before departure and/or before applying for a visa. **If you have not applied for your passport, you must do so immediately.** You can find more information and the passport application at the Center for Global Study and Engagement, or you can contact the Prothonotary's Office at the Cumberland County Courthouse at 717-240-6195.

If your program requires a visa, before sending your passport through the mail to apply for a visa, sign in the signature line provided with an ink pen, and also write in pencil your current address and daytime telephone number in the blank space provided opposite your photo page. This will help the U.S. Postal Service return it to you, if it should become separated from the envelope during processing. Be sure to use some traceable form of mail.

#### Visa Guidelines (APPENDIX I):

A visa is a stamped endorsement placed in your passport by the embassy or consulate of a foreign government that allows you to enter that country for a specific period of time. All students going to Cameroon will need to apply for a visa. The Center for Global Study and Engagement will assist students with the visa application.

Visa guidelines for each program can be found in the back of this handbook. Please refer to this when applying for your visa. However, please note the following:

The information in the visa guidelines is current to date and is to be used as a general guideline only. Each consulate has specific rules that must be followed and that you must comply with. Before submitting your visa application, you will need to check and recheck the consulate website to be sure that nothing has changed. Please note that the responsibility for submitting all documents required by you or your parents for your student visa ultimately rests in your hands. If necessary, the Center for Global Study and Engagement will supply the supporting documents required from the College or your host institution.

### Information for International Students

**If you are not a U.S. citizen**, it is your responsibility to research your status, and whether or not you need to obtain a visa, obtain any special entry papers, or other documentation that may be required for entry. Contact the host country embassy in your country of citizenship for assistance. Depending on the country's requirements, you may have to apply in person at that Embassy/Consulate.

#### SEVIS Information for International Students at Dickinson:

Since you will still be a Dickinson Student while abroad, you are required to pursue a course of study that is considered a full course load at your abroad institution in order to maintain your F-1 status. You will be registered in SEVIS each semester, just as you are while on-campus at Dickinson.

Also, please remember to have your I-20 endorsed for travel prior to your departure from campus this semester.

## Packing Tips and Travel Information

### Packing Tips:

When planning what to take with you, the first rule is to take the minimum amount of clothes possible. You will accumulate things while abroad, so when in doubt – leave it at home! Be practical and focus on the essentials of a wardrobe. Choose clothes that can be mixed and matched and layered to serve different seasons and temperatures. Dark, conservative colors can be worn longer without laundering, but do not be afraid to wear bright colors. Please note that cleaning establishments and laundry services are expensive, (about 1500-2000cfa= \$3-4USD), and you should be prepared to wash most of your clothes by hand.

TIPS FOR WOMEN: Cameroonian female students dress conservatively and well. The following, written by a former (female) Dickinson student in Cameroon, sums up the issue of dress:

“When packing, keep in mind that Cameroonians are always well dressed when leaving the house. Presentation means a lot, so clothes are always well ironed and shoes are cleaned. Dressing well means both self-respect and respect for those you encounter during your travels. Even the poorest Cameroonians take pride in looking nice.

Also, keep in mind that white skin will stand out in Africa! Nothing will prevent attention being drawn to you and with the attention comes many comments and opinions. At first this may be overwhelming, but after a while you come to accept that you are who you are and you’ll never fit in as a Cameroonian, so you’ve just got to be yourself. It is a personal decision as to how much you want to blend into the Cameroonian dress code.”

In general, it is better to dress modestly. In regards to the length of shorts and skirts, longer is preferable, but most teens in the area can be seen in shorter styles. Women should bring at least one skirt or dress to be worn when at École Normale. Otherwise, bring anything you would normally wear in the US. Here are some tips:

- flip-flops (known to Cameroonians as *sans confiance* because of their flimsiness and likelihood of breaking) are worn by many students who find them convenient and comfortable, though the sturdier they are, the better. They are readily available in Yaoundé for between 300 and 500 francs (about 1 US\$). Sturdier sandals (like Birkenstocks) are a comfortable and practical way to go.
- sneakers are commonly worn by Cameroonians and are useful when the rainy season starts and mud develops.
- a nice pair of shoes will be appropriate for any important family or school related events.
- jeans and casual slacks are very common and many Cameroonian women admire them. Dress pants are more frequently seen in the streets of Yaoundé than in the U.S. Bring 5-6 pairs, but keep in mind that heavier fabrics (like denim) will be much more difficult to wash.
- skirts, especially knee-length or longer, are customary for women (this applies more so in the northern Muslim-populated region). Women dress up for school, so keep this in mind. At École Normale Supérieure women must wear a skirt to be permitted to enter the campus. Sundresses are also a comfortable and an appropriate alternative. You will be invited to receptions and formal dinners and/or activities. Skirts or dress pants are the best way to go. Women should be aware that any style of dress, as modest as it might be, will draw a lot of attention.
- 8-10 shirts and blouses in coordinating colors

- having clothes tailor-made in Yaoundé is a great option. To negotiate a good price, it helps to be accompanied by a more skilled Cameroonian. Fabric can be bought at one of many markets in Yaoundé (for between 4000 and 7000 francs a piece, the equivalent of 8 and 14 dollars), then brought to the tailor. Prices vary depending on what you have made. A **kaba**, a kind of large, loose dress that many African women wear outside the home, costs about 3000 francs (\$6) or more depending on its complexity, but can also be purchased ready-made.
- 15-18 pairs each of underwear and socks
- a light jacket with a zip-in lining in case it gets cool & a raincoat
- a swim suit and beach towel
- 2 towels, 2 washcloths
- when packing, keep in mind that the streets of Yaoundé are extremely dusty, and that the dust is sometimes difficult to get out of clothing and shoes
- **an extra pair of contact lenses, eyeglasses and prescription (enough to last the duration of your stay)**
- a money belt or neck pouch to secure money and valuables
- (twin) bed sheets and (you will need these for your first weeks in the apartment)

*TIPS FOR MEN:* Bring a sports jacket and tie for occasional dinners, evening gatherings, and church. Past participants mostly wore jeans, khakis, cargo pants, and shorts. T-shirts or polo shirts are appropriate, as are nicer shirts. Bring a swimsuit. Bring light-weight (cotton) washable underwear and socks.

#### Other useful packing hints:

- space/Vacuum bags (can be found at WalMart or Target and can condense the amount of space your clothes uses in your luggage)
- 2 converter/adaptor plugs if you plan to use U.S. appliances
- USB memory device for transferring documents and photos between computers (especially useful at internet cafés)
- a small supply of toiletries, especially bath soap, toothpaste, dental floss, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, and feminine hygiene products. All of these are available in Yaoundé, but may be more expensive than in the U.S.; if you prefer a particular brand of any of the above, bring them with you.
- first aid supplies, perhaps including burn ointment (Neosporin), **Imodium, Pepto-Bismol** (tablets), Tylenol/aspirin for pain/fever, antihistamine for allergies/colds (Sudafed, cough syrup, etc), **sun screen**, antiseptic/calamine lotion for bites, band-aids, scissors, **hand sanitizer**, tweezers, thermometer, and the like
- 2-3 bottles of insect repellent (20-30% DEET)
- plenty of saline/cleaning solution for contact lenses (about 2 large bottles) and a small bottle to take on trips
- camera, film, and extra batteries for camera. Film, batteries, and memory cards for digital cameras can be expensive in Yaoundé.
- zip lock plastic storage bags and some garbage bags (various sizes)
- raincoat
- a travel alarm and extra battery
- a plastic hanger or two
- a small sewing kit and safety pins
- all medications (both non-prescription and prescription) need to be in their original, labeled containers. Take copies of all prescriptions with you.
- swiss army knife--with corkscrew, bottle opener, and scissors (packed in your checked luggage)
- playing cards
- flashlight
- bag for daily use that can be closed securely
- sunglasses

- shower sandals
- small backpack
- portable music device with extra batteries
- address book
- packaged drink mixes (e.g., Crystal light, Kool Aid, Hi-C, etc)
- spices (spices commonly found in American cuisine may be expensive, so bring a few spice combinations to liven up your home cooked meals)
- roll of duct tape
- board games
- French/English dictionary
- lots of pictures of you and your family. Cameroonians love photos and photo albums, and will likely show you their photo books when you come to their houses. They may even ask you to leave a picture of yourself so that they can remember you.
- small gifts: candy, gum, Bic pens (children values these as gifts in many areas in and outside Yaoundé), hats and T-shirts with Dickinson and sports team logos, cheap digital watches, colored pencils and markers, match box cars, etc.
- a day bag or book bag for traveling (i.e. duffle bag)
- luggage ID tags inside and outside of your luggage

### **Packing tips from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA):**

- Do not pack oversized electronics (laptops, full-size video game consoles, DVD players and video cameras that use cassettes) in your checked baggage when possible. However, please be advised that you will be required to remove these items from your carry-on bag and submit them separately for x-ray screening. Small electronics, such as iPods, can remain in your carry-on.
- Prepare your 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag of liquids before arriving at the airport, following the 3-1-1 guideline (place liquids into 3.4 ounce bottle or less (by volume); all bottles should be carried in one 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag)
- Pack all your coats and jackets in your checked baggage when possible. All coats and jackets must go through the X-ray machine for inspection.
- Do not wrap gifts. If a security officer needs to inspect a package, they may have to unwrap your gift. Please wait until you've reached your final destination to wrap gifts.
- Undeveloped film should go in your carry-on bag. You will be able to declare film that is faster than 800-speed to a transportation security officer for physical inspection to avoid being X-rayed.
- You are required to remove footwear for X-ray screening so wear shoes that are easy to take off and put back on.
- Double check the contents of your pockets, bags, and carry-on luggage to ensure no prohibited items were inadvertently packed.
- When in doubt, leave it out. If you're not sure about whether you can bring an item through the checkpoint, put it in your checked bag or leave it at home.
- For more information, visit [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov).

### **Carry-on and Checked Luggage:**

**BAGGAGE REGULATIONS:** You should call the airline directly or go online to inquire about baggage regulations. A backpack with a frame must be checked as one of these allowed pieces. (It should be noted that this type of “backpackers” backpack has been found useful by past participants due to the amount of traveling you will be doing). Attach a label on the outside of your luggage and place a name and address label inside.

In most cases, you are allowed one piece of carry-on luggage not to exceed 45 total inches, which must fit under the seat in front of you or in an overhead bin. Make sure that your luggage follows TSA regulations. Remember that bags should be small enough to go up narrow stairways, go down crowded train aisles, and fit on luggage racks. A coat and a handbag, briefcase, or laptop may be

carried on. Also, in case your luggage is delayed for a few days, be sure to pack a change of clothes and any medicine or toiletries you would need in your carry-on bag.

**LAPTOP:** If you bring a laptop, it will be considered one of your carry-on items. You should purchase insurance to cover it in case it is stolen or damaged. (Laptops are not necessary, but useful during exam times.)

**VALUABLES:** Carry extra cash in a money belt or neck pouch. Do not carry all your cash in one place. Never pack money, valuables, or important documents in your checked luggage!

**LOST LUGGAGE:** Make a list of everything you pack, then bring a copy of the list with you and leave a copy at home. This will be helpful if your luggage is lost and you need to identify the items and cost of your luggage. If your luggage is lost or mishandled, you must file a claim with airline personnel immediately. Do not leave the airport thinking it will be easier to do so at a later time. It won't be.

Airlines don't refund lost baggage unless there are original receipts, so keep the things you care about with you at all times during travel.

### **Shipping Luggage:**

Should you decide to mail anything to yourself, you should contact the Postal Service about their air mail rates or talk with other international services, such as UPS or Emery or DHL. Do not ship anything that cannot be replaced if lost or stolen, especially valuables or medication! **The Cameroon postal service is very unreliable, and packages may be opened, pilfered, or stolen altogether.** It is recommended that packages be sent via Airmail through the US Postal System, usually taking between a month and a month and a half to arrive.

### **Travel Documents:**

Before departure you should make copies of all of your important documents. Leave one set of copies with your family and take one with you to keep in a safe place separate from your original documents.

- The information page of your passport
- Any entrance visas (if applicable)
- Insurance policies and contact information
- Your airline ticket
- Front and back of credit cards and phone numbers for credit card replacement (you cannot dial an 800-number from overseas so you will need a direct number)
- Travelers check numbers
- Contents of your wallet
- Prescription medications
- Rail passes

### **Immediate Cash/Travel Funds:**

As of 1997, the banks in Cameroon have ceased to exchange traveller's checks in any currency. Unless this policy changes, **you will have to bring cash for your non-stipend needs.** It is suggested that you bring no more than \$500.00, which should be more than adequate. Keep in mind that your monthly allowance from the Program Director will exceed the annual income of the vast majority of Cameroonians. Some students report that they did not have to spend any of their own money. You may leave your US money with the Program Director, where they will be safe. For more information on money, see the "Financial Information" section on page 37.

## Flight and Arrival Information

### Travel Arrangements:

**Students are required to take the group flight to Yaoundé from Dulles Airport.** Students will receive an email from the College's travel agent at Advantage Travel regarding the details of this group flight. **Students are responsible for the payment of this flight and any connecting flights.**

In general, passengers on international flights need to be at the airport at least 3 hours before departure. Be sure to leave yourself plenty of time for potential delays due to increased security measures. You will need your passport to check in and when you land, so have it available.

**In case you miss your connection or your flight is delayed, make a note of the Program Director's contact information** and carry it in your wallet so that you can get in touch with him.

When you have booked your flight, please complete the flight itinerary questionnaire found on the online application system at <http://dickinson.studioabroad.com>.

### Clearing Immigration and Customs in Cameroon:

Your luggage will be checked through to the Yaoundé airport. When you go through customs and immigration in Yaoundé, you will have to show your **passport** and **yellow WHO card**.

After clearing immigration and customs and getting your baggage, the group will be met in at the airport by the program director. It is important that you wait until the entire group has collected their luggage and exit the airport with the program director.

### Arrival in Yaoundé:

After you arrive, you will be taken to the Dickinson apartment for a light meal and to settle in for the night. During the first several weeks of the program there will be an on-site orientation that includes intensive French instruction as well as excursions outside Yaoundé. Those with home stays will move into the family home after a few days.

### Registering with the Authorities:

You must register with the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé, on Avenue Rosa Parks (see contact information on page 6). This will enable you to receive e-mail updates on travel and security from the US Embassy.

Dickinson staff in Cameroon will facilitate registering with the embassy authorities.

## THE PROGRAM

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### **Cameroon:**

The Republic of Cameroon is located in West Central Africa, and is bordered on the southwest by the Gulf of Guinea, on the northwest by Nigeria, on the northeast by Chad, on the southeast by the Central African Republic, and on the south by Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. The country is shaped like an irregular triangle, covering 183,567 square miles, or roughly the size of California; it is divided into three primary geographical regions, ranging from the extremely arid sub-Saharan north to the thick rainforests of the south. Yaoundé is the capital and Douala is the largest city and main port. The population of Cameroon is comprised of more than 18 million people and between 130 and 200 different ethnic groups. 58% of the population lives in villages, while 42% are city dwellers. Three forms of religions are prevalent: Christian (65%), Islam (20%), and traditional worship (15%). Cameroon is unique in Africa in that two “official” European languages (English and French) are commonly spoken, although French is the more widely spoken of the two and is the dominant language in Yaoundé.

### **Yaoundé:**

Yaoundé, with an estimated population of 1.5 million, is the political capital of Cameroon as well as the country’s administrative, financial, and communication center. Items produced in Yaoundé include beer, cigarettes, dairy products, clay and glass goods, and lumber. Yaoundé is a regional trade center for coffee, cacao, copra, sugar cane, and rubber. The city is at a highway junction and is intersected by Cameroon's main railroad. Yaoundé is the home to the University of Yaoundé and many other educational and research institutes, including a school of administration and law and a school of journalism.

The city is set in green hills some 2,500 to 3,000 feet above sea level, resulting in a much cooler climate than one would expect in a city only 5 degrees north of the equator. Students can take advantage of the large international community in the city, including the U.S. Embassy and other U.S. agencies. The city has many modern buildings, including a new airport, and sports arena. The many *quartiers* of the city are colorful and lively with their open-air markets and food stalls.

The city sprawls over undulating hills and thus lacks any semblance of street patterns; most streets snake their way around and up and down. The center of the city is Place Ahmadou Ahidjo, and the major commercial hub is Ave Kennedy.

A good map is hard to find, so be prepared to do a lot of self-exploration if you want to get to know the city, and don’t be afraid to ask a lot of questions!

### **Climate:**

The climate of Cameroon is as varied as the topography. There are three primary geographical regions, ranging from the extremely arid, sub-Saharan north to the hilly, central grasslands, and the thick rain forests of the south. Average temperatures (maximum and minimum in Fahrenheit) in Yaoundé between January and May are 85 and 66. Temperatures and humidity fluctuate greatly outside of Yaoundé. It can get surprisingly cold in the jungles of the East. Temperatures often reach 50 in the evenings. As for the North, the dryness is often very uncomfortable at first but students adjust after a few days. Also, the North is extremely hot and students should be prepared for this. There are two main seasons in Cameroon: dry and rainy.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

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### The University of Yaoundé I and the Dickinson Center

The University of Yaoundé I is the oldest university in Cameroon and specializes in the arts and humanities. Most faculty members who contribute to the program also are contributing faculty at Yaoundé I. Due to difficulties obtaining space in courses already offered at the university, the Dickinson program hires faculty members to teach at the Dickinson center and invites qualified Cameroonian students to join these courses. Courses may meet at the Dickinson center or in a rented classroom not far from Dickinson's property. Program participants also have the opportunity to join clubs or sports teams on campus and to meet Yaoundé I students through their extracurricular involvement at the university.

### The Tentative 2013 Program Calendar (THESE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE):

DATE	ACTIVITY
20 Jan 2013	Group flight departs from Washington
21 Jan 2013	Evening: <b>Arrival in Yaounde</b>
22 Jan 2013	On-site orientation begins
23 Jan 2013	On-site orientation continues
24 Jan 2013	<b>Morning:</b> -French placement test/Continuation of orientation <b>Evening:</b> -Meeting with host families
25 Jan 2013	Trip to Kribi
26 Jan 2013	Kribi
27 Jan 2013	Return to Yaounde
29 Jan 2013	*Clean-up in preparation to move to host families *Meeting with Yaounde Faculty
29 Jan 2013	<b>Students move in with host families</b>
30 Jan 2013	Free day(Discovering host family neighborhoods)
31 Jan 2013	<b>Start of Intensive French</b>
4-8 Feb 2013	Orientation at UCAC (selection of courses at UCAC)
11 Feb 2013	<b>Start of classes at UCAC</b>
13 Feb 2013	<b>Start of Classes with Yaounde Faculty</b>
22-24 Feb 2013	Weekend academic trip to Limbe/Buea
4 March 2013	Start of internship
Easter Break	Week long academic trip to the Northern regions
25-28 April 2013	Weekend academic trip to the North West and West Regions
7 June 2013	End of classes UCAC and Yaounde Faculty
10-14 June 2013	<b>Exam period UCAC &amp; Yaounde Faculty</b>
22 June 2013	-Send-off Party <b>-Deadline for submission of grades by Yaounde Faculty</b>
24 June 2013	<b>END OF SEMESTER: Departure of Students</b>

### Use of the French Language:

A working knowledge of French, while not required, is highly recommended. Participants without previous study of French should make an effort to acquire a functional grasp of at least basic phrases and expressions before leaving the U.S. Students should work with language tapes, at the

very least. Outside the University campus, where English is spoken, very few people in Yaoundé speak English. To shop in the market, take a taxi, or ask directions, **you will need to speak some basic French.**

Students proficient in French may take courses in French at the Dickinson Center. All students will study French while in Yaoundé.

### **Academic Culture:**

Course work is by independent study/tutorials and lectures, much like at Dickinson. Each student will establish a list of courses in consultation with the Program Director who will then arrange tutorials with individual faculty members. Attempts will be made to arrange tutorials that fit students' academic needs, but students will have to be flexible. Due to the difference in schedules, classes will not be held with Cameroonian students at the University of Yaoundé, but students can arrange to visit classes at the university; a recommended experience!

### **Typical Courses:**

Students can generally choose from among the following courses. **Please note that course offerings are subject to change.**

- Colonization and Decolonization in Africa
- African International Relations
- Issues in Environmental Management
- African Oral Traditions in Literature
- African Thought and Philosophy
- Medical Anthropology
- African Theatre and Drama
- Le Roman africain francophone colonial et post-colonial: Le cas du Cameroun
- La Femme dans la société patriarcale de l'Afrique Australe à travers la littérature

### **Credit Transfer /Grades/Transcript:**

Participants enroll in one required core course and three other courses selected by the student.

**Students may earn a maximum of 4 Dickinson transfer credits for work successfully completed in Cameroon.** Courses taken are recorded on the transcript with course titles and letter grades earned. Course grades equivalent to a Dickinson "C" or better will receive credit, but will not count toward the GPA. No credit is earned for a grade of C- or below.

**For non-Dickinson students:** The Registrar's Office will automatically send an official transcript of work completed with grades and course titles to your home institution once grades have been posted. Transcripts are usually sent to your institution later in the fall semester following your return. Know your home institution's policy on transferring credits beforehand, as you may have to get pre-approval. Your institution's policy will govern whether the credit will be counted toward the GPA. You should focus on your interests and credit needs. If you plan to take courses in a department other than your major, check the requirements with the respective department at your home institution before departure. However, please note that you may not know what the course descriptions are before the school year begins, so you may have to take of this once you are abroad.

### ***What to Do BEFORE Going Abroad***

Dickinson College does not formally pre-approve courses for transfer. However, students should discuss their study abroad plans with their academic advisors prior to leaving Carlisle. Students should talk with their advisors about what may or may not fulfill Dickinson transfer credit requirements, specifically which courses taken abroad may fulfill major, minor, or distribution requirements. In some cases, conversations with appropriate department chairs may also be helpful.

Departments on campus may require extra work for some courses, especially for advanced-level credit. It is the student's responsibility to inquire about extra work required. The Center for Global Study and Engagement staff are available to answer general questions about transfer credit policies.

### ***What to Do WHILE Abroad***

Students should maintain e-mail contact with their academic advisors while abroad, especially during the first weeks of the semester when they are in the process of finalizing course schedules. To document coursework at cooperating institutions, students should keep a portfolio for each course, including a syllabus, reading list, completed projects, written work, examinations, journals, etc.

### ***What to Do AFTER RETURNING to Campus***

Upon return to the Carlisle campus, students must complete the *Enrollment in Another Institution Form*. Seniors are required to submit this form prior to the course request period for their last semester. If the form is not in the Registrar's Office at that time, the student will not be permitted to participate in course request. Please note that this form is required **only** when a student is seeking major, minor, or distribution credit for coursework completed at a cooperating university. The form is *not* required for Dickinson Center courses, or for courses at a cooperating university for which a student is seeking only general credit. After obtaining the required signatures, the student should bring the form to the Center for Global Study and Engagement for approval. The form will then be forwarded to the Registrar's Office.

### **Internships**

Students have the opportunity to engage in internships in Yaoundé or its environs. Placements are available in the areas of government, women's empowerment, entrepreneurial development, environmental management, protection of the mother and child, caring for the aged and homeless, peace and conflict prevention, and primary and secondary education. The following are some of the non-governmental organizations and associations and community groups with which students may intern:

- **Centre for Rehabilitation and Abolition of Trauma(CRAT)**-NGO working to provide treatment and rehabilitation services(Counseling, psychosocial support and mental health care interventions) to people who have been traumatized as a result of war, torture and other forms of organized violence in Cameroon.
- **African Action on AIDS(AAA)**
- **Fact Foundation Orphanage**
- **Akwi Montessori School:** Working with children between 2-8 years)
- **FRAZATI Bilingual school:** Working with children between 3-12 years)
- **National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms**
- **African Women Association(AWA):** Promotion of women's rights
- **PLAN CAMEROON:** International NGO working on health issues, human rights etc.
- **Environmental Protection Group**
- **Prison Fellowship International:** Help promote human rights in prison setting, especially the rights of children prisoners, and also giving them psychosocial and moral support
- **Stay Green Foundation:** Environmental protection and sustainability organization. Students are expected to do volunteering, such as planting trees, recycling of used plastic materials, sensitizing people on the need to help protect the environment by avoiding littering, bush burning, indiscriminate waste disposal etc.
- **Traditional African Ballet:** African dancing and drumming, learning to play various traditional musical instruments and knowing their origins).
- **United Methodist Church Medical Department**

**Note:** Over the years it has been difficult getting internships with UN agencies and the US Embassy. However depending on special needs of students we may look for other internship places.

Research organizations in Yaoundé for which you would be interested in volunteering. You should be prepared to work on an internship proposal to give to Program Director when you arrive. Otherwise, you may not get an internship until after you have been in Cameroon for a few months. In writing your proposal, think about what you would like to do and who you would like to work for.

**Accessing College Library Resources from Dickinson Global Library:**

If the libraries at your abroad site do not have the resources you need, or if you have trouble getting the assistance you need for your research projects, please remember that you can access all the resources and services from Dickinson College Library no matter where you are. All you need to do is to go to the Dickinson Global Library page

([http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/Global\\_Library/LibraryResourcePage.htm](http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/Global_Library/LibraryResourcePage.htm)).

You can access the page on the library website under “For Students,” “For Faculty,” or “Doing Research.”

From the Dickinson Global Library page, you will find detailed information on

- How to find journal articles through the online databases
- How to find books and have them sent to you
- Research resources available online such as subject guides and online reference works
- And most important of all, how to get in touch with a Dickinson College librarian via phone, email, and instant messaging and get the assistance you need.

The library liaison to all Center for Global Study and Engagement programs abroad is Yunshan Ye. He can be reached at 717-245-1838 or [yey@dickinson.edu](mailto:yey@dickinson.edu).

## **LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS**

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Students have the option of living with a French or English speaking host family or to live in a shared room at the Dickinson Centre in Yaoundé.

### **Life at the Dickinson Centre:**

Program students are housed in a furnished apartment in a house leased by Dickinson College. The Centre is furnished with beds, a table and chairs, one stove, refrigerators, pots and pans, and basic silverware. The apartment has 2 computers, a laptop, a phone, and a television set. Sheets and towels are not provided. Sheets are expensive in Yaoundé, but a piece of local cloth is a reasonable (and colorful) alternative. Students shop in the local markets (where French is spoken) and cook for themselves.

Students must not allow strangers to enter or roam about the Centre. Pilferage will certainly result. Be wary of persons who introduce themselves as friends of the Centre's previous residents. Centre keys should be secured and never left about the apartment (or elsewhere) where someone might pick them up. A reasonable attention to safety and security will protect you and your roommates' money, personal documents, and possessions. Students must be prepared to share responsibility and ensure that the gate of the Centre remains locked.

The Centre is NOT a college dorm. There are neighbors with small children who live close by. Be respectful of your neighbors and keep noise to a minimum.

### **Life with a Host Family:**

Students have the option to live with a host family. Living with a family will give you insight into Cameroonian life that can otherwise go unnoticed (including women's and men's responsibilities in the home, interactions between parents and children, etc.), permit you to sample local cuisine, have people to take you to the market, show you how to wash clothes by hand and do things the Cameroonian way. Since Cameroonian women typically spend a lot of time at home, American female students who spend a lot of time away from their home may encounter lots of questions regarding their whereabouts. It is always important to announce when you are leaving and greet the family according to custom when you return. You may not come and go as you please without regard for the family's concerns – most homestay students will not have keys to the home. Keep this in mind when considering weekend plans. You don't want to come back late because then someone will have to let you in. By establishing and understanding expectations through good communication, you should be able to join your friends' gatherings around the city, but be prepared to explain where you are going.

In summary, Cameroonians do not possess the sense of privacy and the need for one's own space that Americans are used to. This fact will be the most difficult part of adjusting to a homestay. The Program Director will discuss mutual expectations and make explicit the "rules" which will guide you and your host family with regards to privacy and other issues.

### **Getting Along with your Host Family:**

Living with a host family overseas can be an intensely rewarding experience, but students need to be prepared for a period of challenging inter-cultural adjustment. Your host family has a different way of life and a different set of rules from what you are used to at home or on campus. Naturally, it will take you a while to feel at home in this new environment. In the beginning, you may act like

and be treated like a boarder. Whether you remain that way or whether you eventually integrate yourself into the life of the household will depend upon your initiative, adaptability, and acceptance of traditional habits and attitudes toward life in general. As you interact, you will notice differences. Some of these will be easy to accept and adjust to, while others may at first feel uncomfortable. Flexibility and openness to learning the family's ways of doing things will increase your success in learning about your new culture.

When you feel uncomfortable about your role, or about family customs or behaviours and the like, you should talk with your host mother directly and honestly about the problem and work it out. This helps to develop mutual understanding. If you encounter a problem you cannot resolve on your own, you should not hesitate to contact the Program Director. He can serve as mediator between you and your host family, open lines of communication, and help find a solution.

Although each family is different, be aware that host families generally expect to have an adult relationship with the students they house. They will respect your independence while remaining open to exchanging ideas and conversation. Mutual trust and open communication is essential for a successful relationship. There is no infallible recipe for the success of your home stay, but the tips below may help you to adjust more smoothly and quickly.

#### **In the beginning...tips for daily life:**

1. Do not hesitate to ask your host family questions or to start conversations with them. Remember, your host family is there to help you. By starting conversations, you are initiating an immediate rapport. Hiding away in your room will communicate to the family that you do not wish to interact with them. Communication is the key to a successful relationship with your host family.
2. The first few weeks are very important in establishing a "base" with your host family. Therefore, try to avoid planning long trips the first few weekends. The key is to settle in before you start moving around.
3. Although you might feel awkward at first, it is very important to communicate openly with your host family. A problem that seems difficult for you to solve (you don't know how to wash your clothing by hand) may be very easy for your family to fix (they can show you where they keep supplies and demonstrate how to do the laundry). Your host family would surely prefer that you ask for their help rather than be unhappy in their home!
4. We suggest keeping your schedule as flexible as possible in order to take advantage of family activities. By joining your family when invited, you will get to know each other better while improving your language acquisition at the same time.
5. Be yourself with your family, and be polite. Remember, although you are living with them and would like to be a member of the family, you are still a guest in their home. Do not assume immediately that you are afforded certain privileges just because you live with them. When you take meals with your family, ask if you can help set the table, clean up, etc. Be sure to ask to watch TV and to use the family phone. If you do not want your host family to clean your room, tell them that you will clean it yourself and ask them for cleaning supplies. Be sure to leave the bathroom clean after each use.
6. The food will be different from what you are used to, but if you are open about your dietary needs and preferences, then the family can be considerate when trying to accommodate your needs.
7. Do your best not to betray your host family's trust. Respect their rules, and always ask their

permission before inviting anyone into their home. If you feel the rules of the host family are unreasonable, talk to your Program Director.

8. Be open-minded and flexible; there will be differences, so accept them. Adopt your family's patterns, such as keeping doors closed at all times and being careful not to waste hot water and electricity.

**FINAL REMARKS:** This section reviews only some aspects of life with a host family, so be aware that this new experience will require adjustment in many ways. One could say that adjustment is the primary vehicle of cross-cultural learning. The homestay experience will reward you richly if you remain flexible, keep an open mind, and maintain a sense of humor. Your family will be ready to help you, but both sides must share in making your stay a success, and both must realize that it takes time to establish a routine and achieve integration.

**IF YOU FEEL THE TERMS OF THE ARRANGEMENT ARE NOT BEING FULFILLED, PLEASE LET THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR KNOW.** If there are difficulties, the Program Director will serve as mediator between you and your host family.

Whether you live in the Centre or with a family, living in Cameroon will require major adjustments on your part. You will find it easier if you remain flexible, keep an open mind, and maintain a sense of humor. In the Centre, you are more independent; you shop and cook for yourself, you come and go according to your schedule and you work things out with your apartment mates. Students often cherish the apartment space as a sort of sanctuary.

## LIFESTYLE ABROAD

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### **Food:**

There is an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables at the many open markets; there are no fast-food chains. Both African and European foods are available. Being a vegetarian is a hard concept for locals to understand but is interesting to most Cameroonians. Be prepared to explain and be open when eating with Cameroonians.

### **Shopping/Bargaining:**

When you shop, be prepared to bargain. Often the social value of bargaining outweighs the commercial purpose. When you see something you want, greet the seller; hunker down if the seller is seated. Ask the seller's price, but have an idea of what the item is worth (or at least what you are willing to pay for it). Some items are not negotiable and just have a standard price; find out which items those are. Do not look as if you **must** have an item. Simply offer a lower price, commenting perhaps that the seller's first price is too high (**très cher**), that the price is what one might offer a stranger, but not a friend.

Above all, be patient and good humored; the haggling may take time. If you take the first price, you spoil the game. Do not get angry or upset; you will be respected if you bargain. You will probably pay more for the purchase than a Cameroonian would, but do not think of yourself as being cheated. The best advice is: when the bargaining seems to be about over, that is, when the seller's and your "best price" are not very far apart, think to yourself: "When I get home, will I be happy I bought this?" If you decide you will be, then go for it.

However, if you really think you can do better, say thank you and walk away; you may get that final offer. Alternatively, you can agree to the price, but suggest that the seller toss in something extra, such as an orange or an extra pepper. One rule you should not break is to offer a lower price than the last offer you made. In the end, the seller may act like he/she has been cheated. Do not worry, for if he/she cannot make a fair profit, she will not sell. If the price is not acceptable to you, you are under no obligation to buy. If the seller acts irritated that you have taken up her time, remember that it is part of the sales strategy. Say "maybe tomorrow," and leave.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Take small bills and coins to the market. For small traders (e.g., those selling fruit, vegetables, etc.), a 1000CFA (\$2) bill is considered quite large. Always pay and accept change with your right hand. Hire a porter to carry your purchases if you plan to do a lot of shopping. Your purchases will be safe, and you will be appreciated for supporting the local economy. The usual tip is 100-150 francs. In larger markets, men will try to show you around. If you accept their help, a small tip is appropriate.

**Watch your money and purchases carefully! Keep your market money separate from the rest of your money. Do not be seen flaunting a roll of bills!**

### **Social Life:**

Some student-run clubs and organizations at the University provide opportunities for social interaction and cultural enrichment. Ask the program director about these types of opportunities. The city has movie theaters with movies shown in French, as well as bars and night clubs for night life. Monthly cultural events are held at the French, German, American, and Cameroonian cultural centers. In addition, the top hotels have pools and tennis courts open to outsiders for a fee.

Yaoundé also has a tennis club, a golf club, and a sports center (Centre Sportif). If you are a jogger, there is an exercise course outside Yaoundé. Running is common enough among expatriates. You can run in the neighborhoods in the morning; there are usually a lot of people around and it is quite safe.

### **Suggested Readings:**

You should read as much as you can about Cameroonian and African history and culture before you leave. It is also important to know something about your own culture's relationship with Africa -- you will inevitably be asked questions about the U.S. A basic knowledge of the history of colonialism in Africa and the impact of globalization is important to know. Here is some suggested reading:

#### BOOKS:

1. Basil Davidson's *The Black Man's Burden*, *Africa and the Curse of the Nation State* (New York Times Books, 1992) and *The Search for Africa* (Times Books, 1994).
2. Roland Oliver, *The African Experience*
3. John Reader, *Africa* (Vintage Paper).
4. Mark W. DeLancey, *Cameroon, Dependence and Independence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989, 2000).
5. Michael G. Schatzberg & William I. Zartman, *The Political Economy of Cameroon* (New York: Praeger, 1986)
6. Joseph Takougang & Milton Krieger, *African State and Society in the 1990's; Cameroon's Political Crossroads* (Boulder: Westview, 1998).

Cameroonian novelists include Ferdinand Oyono (*Houseboy; The Old Man and the Medal*), Mongo Beti (*Mission to Kala; Perpetua and the Habit of Unhappiness, The Poor Christ of Bomba, Remember Reuben* and writing as Eza Boto, *Vie Cruelle*), Francis Bebey (*Agatha Moudio's Sons, Calixthe Beyala, Loukoum, The Sun Hath Looked Upon Me, Your Name Shall be Tanga*), and Werewere Liking (*It Shall be of Jasper and Coral, Love-across-a-Hundred-Lives*).

Some West African women writers are: Ama Ata Aidoo (*Our Sister Killjoy, No Sweetness Here, Changes: A Love Story*), Buchi Emecheta (*The Joys of Motherhood, The Double Yoke*), Flora Nwapa (*Efuru, One is Enough*), Mariama Bâ (*So Long a Letter, Scarlet Song*) Yvonne Vera, Zainab Alkali, Bessie Head, and Tsitsi Dangaremba.

The college owns several Cameroonian films, including *Afrique, Je Te Plumerai, Sango Malo, Quartier Mozart, Chocolat*, and *Le grand blanc de Lambarene*.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

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### **Monthly Stipend:**

You will receive a monthly allowance of either CFA 225, 000 (for host family students) or CFA 275, 000 (for Centre students), from which you will pay for groceries, bottled water, taxi fares, household expenses, and local excursions. This allowance will be paid on or about the first of the month. Stipends will be pro-rated to take into account group meals and any excursions around Cameroon.

### **Travelers Checks:**

As of 1997, the banks in Cameroon have ceased to exchange traveller's checks in any currency.

### **Spending Money:**

Students sometimes ask how much spending money they should plan to have during their time abroad. This amount depends, of course, on the lifestyle you adopt and how much you plan to travel. You will have to bring cash for your non-stipend needs as travellers' checks cannot be exchanged. It is suggested that you bring no more than \$500.00, which should be more than adequate. Keep in mind that your monthly allowance from the Program Director will exceed the annual income of the vast majority of Cameroonians. Some students report that they did not have to spend any of their own money. It is recommended to bring no more than \$500 USD, although many participants report spending less.

### **Transferring Money/Banking:**

Yaoundé and other major cities have Western Union offices. Transferring money through Western Union, although quick and highly reliable, is expensive (the surcharge is about 20%). You will **not** be using the banking system in Yaoundé except to exchange your currency. You may leave your US money with the Program Director, where they will be safe. You will be given more information about this upon arrival.

### **Credit Cards:**

Credit cards are accepted by airlines, large hotels, and a limited number of boutiques and restaurants in Yaoundé and Douala, but are generally useless elsewhere. **NOTE:** Credit cards cannot be used at banks for cash advances. Western Union maintains an office in Yaoundé. Funds can be transferred from the US if needed.

### **Check on Fees with Bank and Credit Card Companies:**

Before leaving the U.S., check with your local bank and credit card companies about fees for using your card overseas. Many banks and credit card issuers impose additional charges on foreign transactions; others such as Capitol One (at least at print time) do not. If the fees are hefty, consider withdrawing larger amounts of cash from the ATM and taking only what you need and keeping the rest in a safe place. Only use credit cards with high fees for big purchases or in emergencies.

You should notify your bank and credit card companies that you are going abroad for an extended period of time. Otherwise, when they see charges on your card from a foreign country, they may assume that your card has been stolen and suspend your account. Keep a separate record of your credit card numbers and phone numbers of the companies so you can report theft or loss of your

card quickly.

**Student Advice on Money:**

Alison Egic, 2003 program participant: “When people recognize you as an American, they automatically believe you have money, and will not hesitate to ask you for gifts and/or money. Furthermore, if you invite a group of Cameroonian friends out (to a night club, a bar, a movie, or dinner), it is assumed you will pay. Be cautious not to be flagrant with money initially and give your friends the idea that you will be able to sustain weekly, even daily excursions, with them.

“If you don’t want to pay for something or are low on money at the moment, the best way to explain this to people is by saying you are a student and you don’t have a job (this is also a good bargaining strategy in the market when a vendor is charging a price that is too high).

Don’t forget that your stipend will be used for different excursions you will plan outside of Yaoundé (transportation, lodging, and food) and for buying optional expensive items at the outset of your stay (such as a personal cell phone which costs about \$40 to purchase and about \$15 per month to use, and is useful to keep in contact with other students on the program and Cameroonian friends). It may seem like you have a lot of money, which you do by Cameroonian standards. However, still be aware of your spending habits because your money can go quickly if you are not careful.

## **COMMUNICATION INFORMATION**

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Students sometimes tell family/friends that they will phone home the minute they arrive. However, plans often go awry because of plane or train delays, unavailability of an international phone line, etc. To save parents and loved ones worry, we suggest an agreement to call at the earliest convenient time, rather than promising to call at once.

E-mail, cell phones, and Skype allow students to keep in closer touch with family and friends back home than ever before. There is a good side to this, but it is possible to overdo it so that you focus too much on home to the detriment of your abroad experience. Consider writing frequent letters, postcards or a blog instead. These can be reread and kept as a record of your time abroad.

### **Mail:**

Be sure that correspondence between you and family/friends is sent via air mail in both directions or it may take months to get to its destination. There will occasionally be stretches where mail will not get in or out. The system of mail distribution is very slow and sometimes unreliable. Packages will take either a long time (up to two months) or a short time (sometimes as fast as two weeks) to get through. Do NOT mail valuables, medication or any other necessary items – make sure to bring those in your carry-on luggage.

### **Telephones:**

You can make a direct long-distance phone call from either a cell phone, a telephone at the post office, from one of the many telephone boutiques around the city (you may also send faxes from there), or from international calling booths at around 5 cents a minute to the U.S. A regular phone is installed at the Centre. This land line can be used to make local calls only, though it can receive international calls. Most students buy their own cell phone in Cameroon in order to make local calls and to be easily contacted. Teleboutiques are a good option. It is usually around 50CFA a minute to call the U.S. and, most of the time, the connection is good.

Cell phones are a poor option for calling home because they are pay as you go and you can only get about 15 minutes with 10,000CFA. However, they are convenient for parents or friends to contact you.

One option you may want to consider is having your parents arrange for a low cost international calling service and arrange for a time for your parents to call you.

Remember that there is a **five-hour time difference** (during US daylight savings time) between the U.S. (east coast) and Yaoundé (it is five hours **later** in Yaoundé).

### **Cell Phones:**

Many students purchase cell phones while in Cameroon. This is an excellent way to communicate with other students on the program, to be accessible to family and friends at home, and to be reachable in the event of an emergency. It may, however, be very expensive to make international calls from your cell phone.

Cell phones in Cameroon are ubiquitous and relatively inexpensive. You can expect to pay \$30-40 USD for the phone, and then you can purchase phone minutes from small boutiques. See the FAQ section (page 73) for more information.

### **Skype:**

One of the most inexpensive ways to make international phone calls is through the Internet. Skype is one of the most common programs for this type of phone service. All that is required is access to a computer with an Internet connection and a headset or external microphone. Skype offers several options:

- 1) **Skype to Skype:** Have your family and friends download and register with Skype. Once you have both registered and have a headset or external microphone, you can talk for FREE!
- 2) **Skype Out:** A low cost way to make calls at a local rate to people that have traditional land lines or mobile phones. This is a good way for parents to call students' cell phones)
- 3) **Skype In:** For a small fee, you can receive a local U.S. phone number that your friends can call. When someone calls, you will receive the phone call on your computer where you can communicate with your friend using a headset or an external microphone. This option also has free voicemail.

For more information, visit the website at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). While your friends and family can use Skype as a low-cost way to call you while you are in Cameroon, because of privacy or access issues it may not always be possible for you to use Skype to call home. A fast Internet connection and a place where you can make a phone call without disturbing others are required. The best internet cafe for using Skype as of print time is Espresso House, located in Quartier Bastos, but can be expensive.

### **Computers and Internet Access:**

The program does not recommend that you take a laptop, but if you plan to take one, make sure it has an internal voltage converter that allows for 220 voltage. You will need a plug adaptor to change your U.S. plug end into one that works in Cameroon, which you can normally purchase at an electronics store. If you are unsure if your computer will adapt to the 220 voltage, please contact your computer dealer for further information. Also, be sure to install quality virus protection software. There are many cyber-café's in Yaoundé, although the connection speed may not be as fast as what you can find in the United States. In any case, you are encouraged to limit your Internet use to create a healthy balance between staying in touch with your friends and family in the U.S. and taking advantage of the time you spend.

The Centre has 2 computers. The best cyber cafes are in Bastos, but there is a bilingual school (CITEC) down the road with great computers, printers, and phones.

### **E-mail:**

Students should have no difficulty staying in touch with family and friends via e-mail, provided they are patient and purchase a long time period at a local cyber-café. Remember that official communications from Dickinson College (for example, instructions from the Registrar, Campus Life, or the Center for Global Study and Engagement) will be sent to your Dickinson e-mail account. If you ordinarily use another e-mail account, remember to check your Dickinson account regularly for messages or have your Dickinson account forwarded to your personal e-mail account. Also, be sure to clear your Dickinson Inbox regularly so that messages can reach you and do not bounce back and don't bounce back. Make sure you empty your Sent and Deleted messages box regularly.

## TRAVELING WHILE ABROAD

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### **Vacation Travel:**

You will have ample time to explore the wonders of Cameroon. Travel may be by bush taxi (a small mini-van type taxi for many people going to the same place), bus, airplane, or train. Trains are either first or second class; **second-class travel is not recommended**. Booking a couchette (sleeping cabin) requires a surcharge above the first class ticket. Traveling by bush taxi can be an adventure and is cheaper than by train. Flying is rather expensive, e.g. \$250 from Yaoundé to Maroua. Avoid motorbike taxis; they are dangerous, and their drivers may be disreputable. Be prepared for slight discomfort no matter how you travel. Personal space has a different meaning in Cameroon.

When you travel, especially by bush taxi or bus, be prepared to find many checkpoints staffed by armed men in uniform. Remain patient and courteous. If you are asked for papers, provide them. A special orientation session on personal safety will be offered by the Program Director. **Students are discouraged from traveling outside the cities/large towns at night.**

### **Travel Guides:**

The best travel guide is the volume on Central Africa in the Lonely Planet series; information specific to Cameroon is available at <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/africa/cameroon/>. Some guide books are available in the College bookstore, or you can look for used travel books online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.half.com](http://www.half.com). Other travel guides can be found in Cameroon at the American Cultural Center, the American School Library, The Peace Corps Library, and local bookstores. Good Cameroon websites can be found as well.

### **Safety while Traveling:**

Whenever you travel, take care of your belongings and safeguard your credit cards, mobile phone, and cash at all times. One of the safer places to carry your passport and money is in a breast pouch tied at your neck or in a money belt strapped at the waist, under your shirt. A word to the wise: keep a small amount of money easily accessible so you do not have to dig into your hidden money in public.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILE ABROAD

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### Health Care

The preferred physicians for students in Yaoundé are from the Hospital General Yaoundé. Please see their contact details below. Excellent dental care is available as well from Clinique Dentaire Adventiste (tel 22 11 10), operated by the Seventh-Day Adventists near the American Embassy and the Adventist Church.

Dr. Gloria Ashutantang Some  
Hospital General Yaoundé  
Tel: (011-237) 75-29-46-93  
(011-237) 99-95-22-08  
(011-237) 22-20-12-91

Dr. Esemé Ebai Ashu  
Yaoundé University Teaching Hospital  
Tel: (011-237) 74-60-54-91  
E-mail: [dresemecbai@yahoo.com](mailto:dresemecbai@yahoo.com)

If you have diabetes, are allergic to penicillin, or have any condition that might require emergency care, carry some personal identification – a tag or bracelet – on you at all times. **CAUTION: Do not buy any medications in Cameroon without checking with the program doctor, especially medications on the street.**

Participants are reminded of the presence of avian flu (H5N1 virus) and swine flu (H1N1 virus) in various countries. For the latest information on these as well as CDC health suggestions, go to:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/current.htm>.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

#### **AIDS and STDs Overseas:**

You are at the same risk for AIDS and STDs while abroad as you would be at home since your risk of infection depends on your behavior. Therefore, if you are sexually active, use good judgment and common sense. It is also highly recommended that you carry a personal supply of condoms and birth control, especially if traveling to underdeveloped regions of the world.

### Safety and Emergency Procedures

#### **Overview of Emergency Precautions:**

The Center for Global Study and Engagement has always taken seriously our students' safety while studying abroad. In the wake of the September 11 events, safety concerns are even more urgent. With the continuing threat of terrorism around the world, we are obviously concerned about the global security situation and continue to monitor it, and we encourage students and parents to do likewise. We depend on a variety of sources to assess situations overseas, including the news, our own Program Directors, and other on-site contacts abroad, as well as professional colleagues and publications. One of the most important sources is the U.S. State Department. Please review the Department of State web site (see next section), as well as any other information you may find useful.

All past decisions about canceling or closing programs have been informed by Department of State or World Health Organization recommendations.

We consider it essential that students take responsibility for their own safety, and we expect their cooperation. For example, students are asked to share flight itineraries with our office; our Program Directors ask students to inform them of any travel plans away from the site. We share DOS

warnings and announcements with students and remind them frequently to review common sense safety and security measures, such as those printed below in this section. Each student is given a key chain with emergency phone numbers and instructions and is asked to carry it at all times. In a serious emergency, administrative staff of the Center for Global Study and Engagement can be accessed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

Dickinson Centers and partner institutions are in regular contact with the Center for Global Study and Engagement in Carlisle, and contact information is updated routinely for students overseas, on-site staff, partner institutions, and local emergency officials at our program sites, as well as U.S. Consulates and Embassies. Our staff abroad remains in contact with local university and civic officials on an ongoing basis.

Dickinson College has developed emergency plans that can be implemented in the event of a crisis directly affecting any of our programs abroad. In the unlikely event that it became necessary to return students to the United States, every effort would be made to offer alternative means for students to complete their academic program. For important information about Program Cancellation, see page 7 and the Refund Policy in Appendix VII.

Dickinson College is concerned about the health and safety of its students traveling abroad. We review our approach frequently and make every effort to anticipate health and safety issues. This said, it remains true that many of the risks in traveling abroad cannot be reasonably anticipated or prevented.

#### **Department of State Announcements:**

Department of State travel information and publications are available on the Web at <http://travel.state.gov>. Every student going abroad is responsible for becoming familiar with the Department of State web site and the information available there.

- **Before leaving, read the Consular Information Sheet for your host country.**
- For your safety, read the Consular Information sheet for all countries you visit.
- Current Travel Warnings and Public Announcements are accessible through the State Department web site.
- The DOS home page links to their [Travel Safety Information for Students](#) page, which has good advice and many links, including the fact sheet Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad.

The Center for Global Study and Engagement occasionally sends students Department of State announcements that are relevant to their host country. These announcements are not to alarm students (unless warranted), but instead to inform them of current situations in their country or surrounding countries that they may possibly travel to.

(U.S. travelers may hear recorded information by calling the Department of State in Washington, DC at 202-647-5225 from a touchtone phone.)

#### **Key Chains for Emergencies:**

Lightweight key chains are distributed to all students participating in an off-campus program.

Students are asked to attach the key ring to the key(s) that they carry with them at all times. On one side of the tag is the Dickinson College 24-hour Hot Line number (001 717-245-1111; the digits 001 are the International Country Code for the United States.) On the reverse side is the phone number of the Center for Global Study and Engagement (001 717-245-1341). A Program Center number or other emergency number can be entered in the blank space. For obvious security reasons, the

overseas home address or phone number should NOT be entered. The emergency numbers on the key chain make the following easier:

- calling the Department of Public Safety at any time in a serious emergency
- contacting the Center for Global Study and Engagement during office hours with matters of concern
- identifying “who he/she belongs to” if injured seriously while not carrying identification

Obviously, the first step in an emergency is to react to the emergency itself, i.e., go to the hospital, call the police, contact the Program Director or other on-site contact, etc.

Any student abroad, whether a Dickinson student or a guest student in a Dickinson program, may call collect the 24-hour Dickinson College Public Safety number collect in a serious emergency and ask for assistance. The student should identify himself/herself and the program, and give a brief description of the emergency and a call-back number. The operator will locate the proper staff member who will then return the call.

### **Parents and the Public Safety number:**

Parents, too, may use the 24-hour Dickinson Public Safety number if they need assistance in contacting their son or daughter after hours in a serious emergency, or if their son or daughter has contacted them because of such an emergency. The procedure would be the same as above.

### **Requests for Contact Information and Itineraries:**

To have emergency contact information at our fingertips, we prepare emergency books for each program. Parents’ work and cell phone numbers and email addresses are extremely useful, should we need to contact parents quickly. We therefore ask you to cooperate with our requests for parental contact information as well as your host-country mailing address and phone numbers.

We also need to know student flight itineraries. Therefore, please share your itinerary with us by completing the flight itinerary questionnaire on the online application system at <http://dickinson.studioabroad.com>

## **Safe Behavior Abroad**

Travel abroad is always an adventure for students. A common sense approach to the risks involved goes a long way toward assuring safe travel and pleasant memories. We offer the following suggestions for your own safety:

- When you travel during vacations, give a copy of your itinerary to your Program Director. Even if your plans are vague, leave whatever information you can, such as the names of travelers, expected destinations, lodging, phone numbers, and if available, mode of travel and dates of departure and return.
- Check State Department advisories on the web for all countries you will be traveling through to be prepared for any special conditions or dangers, visa requirements, etc.
- Travel with at least one other person.
- Carry passport, money, and other important papers in a pouch around your neck or waist under your clothing.
- Avoid travel in large, predominantly American groups. It is easier to meet local people and

to organize trips and sightseeing in smaller gatherings. It is also safer.

- Always carry some local currency. Keep the equivalent of at least \$50 cash in reserve while traveling.
- DO NOT HITCHHIKE. Travel by bus, train, local transportation, or car.
- Do not leave money, tickets, your passport, or other valuables in a hotel room while you are out. Take them to the front desk and ask for them to be locked in a safe.
- Keep a low profile in demeanor and dress. It is wise to adapt to local dress codes; avoid clothes and behaviors that call attention to yourself as a foreigner who does not know the culture.
- Leave expensive jewelry at home. It's best to wear little or none.
- Every year backpacks are stolen from students who set them down at their feet or sling them over the back of the chair in a café. Be careful with your belongings because replacing your passport, credit cards, keys, etc., is quite a hassle.
- Be polite, low-key, and sensitive to local customs; always observe signs and regulations in public places.
- Speak the local language wherever possible.
- Student guidebooks such as Let's Go or Lonely Planet are generally a good source of information.

### In Troubled Times...

Avoid the following:

- controversial discussions/situations in public places such as pubs
- street gatherings, demonstrations, picketing, etc.
- dangerous areas, shortcuts, narrow alleys, or poorly lit streets
- walking around in a large group speaking English
- heated sports matches and public events characterized by crowd excitement.

In times of heightened political, religious, or ethnic tensions, be particularly careful in:

- identifiable American institutions such as Embassies, American Express, McDonald's, Hard Rock Cafés, discotheques, lobbies of American chain hotels, and other places such as bars and restaurants identified with Americans or where Americans usually gather
- military and diplomatic installations; war memorials
- highly visible and crowded churches, mosques and synagogues
- train stations and airports; do not hang around ticket offices or airline counters – go quickly to your train or the lounges beyond the passport controls.

Some advice concerning terrorism:

Be especially careful to help maintain security both at your program site and while traveling. Because terrorist actions are usually preceded by a surveillance period, the U.S. State Department asks all American citizens "to be alert to anyone who might appear to be following them, or anyone whom they notice in the same place repeatedly, or anything unusual near their vehicles, workplaces, or locations frequented by Americans. Any unusual activity of this sort should be reported to local police."

Remember that terrorist attacks are usually planned months in advance. They often involve innocent accomplices. Students in foreign countries are considered easy to recruit. Be cautious when you meet new people. Do not give your address, your telephone number, or contact info for your study site.

Further recommendations when traveling:

- Do not accept any package, parcel, or suitcase from anyone asking you to carry, look after or store items for them.
- Do not borrow suitcases; make sure that no one has put anything in your luggage. A few years ago, a bomb found at Heathrow Airport in England had been planted in the bag of a young woman by her boyfriend whom she had known for over a year.
- Never drive a car for someone else, especially across national borders. In general, it is recommended that you not drive in Cameroon.
- Remain alert in public places; look around; get away from any package or bag that appears abandoned, and notify the employees or local police.
- Do not leave your own bags unattended, not only because they may be stolen, but also because the police may consider them dangerous and confiscate or destroy them.

### **Health and Safety information resource online:**

Check out the Student Study Abroad Safety Handbook at <http://www.studentsabroad.com>.

This is a resource intended for students' and parents' direct use. It offers exhaustive checklists and resources covering all kinds of topics related to safety abroad.

### **Personal Safety in Cameroon:**

The social consequences of Cameroon's economic situation and occasional political tensions have sparked isolated incidents of violence in the several areas of the country, in most recent times this has been limited to the far northern region and to the North West Province (Bamenda). The Program Director will notify you if travel to these regions becomes risky.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR SAFETY:**

- Avoid large crowds, such as at political rallies and sporting events. While you are not likely to be the target of a politically motivated attack, large gatherings can be flashpoints (and are always frequented by pickpockets and purse-snatchers).
- Banditry and petty crime are increasing. Make photocopies of important documents, especially your passport and visa, immunization card, airline ticket, traveler's check records, Dickinson ID, and driver's license. Leave a copy with your parents and a copy with the Program Director.
- Due to the increase in crime, security forces have established checkpoints throughout the country and may ask to see ID when you are passing through. Do not volunteer a piece of paper; wait to be asked, and then produce it politely. Also, do not let them walk away with your ID and be prepared to explain the visa in French, since it is written in English and tends to confuse the guardsmen.
- Avoid travel at night outside the cities, or even within Yaoundé late at night. Be sure to have your passport or a certified copy with you in case you are stopped. Incidents of armed robbery and car-jacking take place occasionally, and serious road accidents are common due to alcohol and recklessness.
- Be careful when taking photographs. Police and military do not allow photography of government buildings and military installations (airports and bridges and even post offices are sometimes regarded as military sites). Seek prior permission.
- Strategies for coping with security checks will be discussed by the Program Director.

**Emergencies while Traveling:**

If you have an emergency while traveling, contact local authorities and the Program Director at once. In a medical emergency, be prepared to pay up front and submit receipts to your insurer for reimbursement later. In case of the loss or theft of your passport, contact the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate (see contact details for the U.S. Embassy on page 6.)

**Emergency Keychain:**

In a very serious emergency, use the contact numbers on your emergency key chain to reach the Center for Global Study and Engagement during work hours, or 24/7 through the Public Safety number. Before traveling, review the emergency protocol on page 5 of this handbook.

**Family Emergencies:**

Since you will be far away from home for an extended period of time, it is good to discuss with your family what to do in the case of a family emergency while you are overseas. This should include what you would do if a family member becomes ill or dies.

It is important to consider how your family will respond if you are involved in an accident or suffer from a severe illness while abroad. We advise one or both parents to obtain a current passport in case of an emergency. This should be done before you depart the U.S.

**Final Thoughts:**

Observing these mentioned precautions will be reassuring to you and to your parents, relatives, and friends at home. However, being overly concerned with safety should not interfere with the enjoyment of life and study in another country. Yaoundé is relatively safe. Do not feel scared just because you believe you should be. Women who can understand French can travel alone during the day and be fine. However, please keep in mind the following:

- No cabs for women after 9 pm.
- Do not take money out inside of a cab and count it.
- Do not speak English too loudly.
- Do not bring backpacks when you are downtown. Keep items you are carrying with you on your front.

## CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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### Being Informed about the Host Country and World Affairs

What do you know about your host country?

1. Can you name the capital city and the head of state?
2. Can you name the major political parties and what they stand for?
3. How is the government organized in your host country as compared to the U.S.?
4. Name five large cities, identify their location and a feature they are famous for.
5. What are the key historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century in your host country?
6. What are the major religions in your host country and what role do they play?
7. Who are the major literary and/or cultural figures of the last two centuries?
8. What is the state of the economy? What are its problems, successes, and how is it organized?
9. Can you identify on a map the major rivers, mountain ranges, and other significant geographical features?
10. Can you identify on a map the states, provinces, or other political subdivisions of the country?
11. How is the educational system organized and funded?
12. What is the predominant view in your host country regarding current U.S. foreign policy?

Without researching the answers, most of us would do poorly on this little quiz. However, most local people at your study abroad destinations could probably answer most of these questions about U.S. Think about it!

Before you leave, do some serious research to educate yourself about your host country. Travel guidebooks and encyclopedias offer a respectable starting point. Read books, magazine articles, and newspapers about host country history, literature, geography, cuisine, etc. Foreign films are also a good resource. Take the initiative and get acquainted with international students at Dickinson's campus before going abroad.

No matter where you go, you will be asked hard questions about U.S. foreign policy. It is crucial that you have an understanding of what is going on internationally. Read newspapers and magazines that cover international affairs in depth. Include foreign news sources to expose yourself to other perspectives and a different set of facts abroad. The point is: you do not want to arrive abroad poorly informed or be caught off-guard by an encounter with viewpoints sharply different from your own. You especially need to be knowledgeable about the situation in Iraq and the Middle East, and how your host country and the United States stand in relation to those areas. People will have strong opinions and want to engage you in dialogue. Prepare for these situations and recognize their value as learning opportunities.

#### **New York Times e-delivery:**

The New York Times runs an email service that provides daily delivery of the International section of the New York Times to your email box! You receive a brief overview of the article and a link that takes you to the full article.

To subscribe to the service, go to <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

Down the left side of the page, there is a MEMBER CENTER, where E-Mail Preferences are listed. You have to "sign-up" with the NYT, which is free. Once you sign up, you can click on a box that says "International" and you will receive an email with headlines from the NYT every day.

### **Local Customs (Cameroonian Etiquette):**

**GREETINGS:** Always greet people when you see them, even if you have already seen them earlier in the day. Greetings can be quite elaborate and show respect. Hand-shaking is usually involved; always use your right hand (if your right hand is wet or dirty, you may present your right wrist and the person will shake that). If your right hand is occupied (if you are carrying something), a Cameroonian will give you time to change hands. The left hand is considered unclean, and is used for toilet purposes. Saying *bonjour* or *bonsoir* is most often sufficient for less formal settings.

### **USE OF “tu” & “vous”:**

Adults use *tu* to children.

Children use *vous* to all adults.

Adults use *vous* to other adults whether in business or social contacts.

Give Cameroonian acquaintances, office employees, workers, etc. the dignity of a *vous* greeting.

It is important for women to use *vous* with Cameroonian men.

If a friendship develops, a Cameroonian will sense when to shift to *tu* and you can follow.

**HOSPITALITY:** To friends and respectable acquaintances who have arrived by invitation (but not the casual drop-in visitor, especially strange men), you should offer something to drink: water, a soft drink, even beer. Open the bottle in front of them and pour it into their glass. It is always wise to serve your guest. If you offer fruit or cookies, pass them around yourself. (If you give the plate to one person, he might think he is supposed to eat it all and that you eat a dozen cookies at a sitting.) The idea of “make yourself at home, help yourself” will be unfamiliar to Cameroonians who do not know American habits of hospitality. If you invite someone for dinner, be aware of food taboos (some cultures, for example, do not eat pork).

Neighborhood kids will take to hanging around day and night. They are curious and affectionate. They will be happy to run little errands for you in exchange for your hospitality. If a child is there and you are eating, offer him/her some. Children belong to the community. When you’ve had enough of them for the day, ask them to go. If you don’t have time to meet with them when they knock on your door, tell them to return another time. **DO NOT ALLOW** strangers to wander in and out of the Centre. Do not tell casual acquaintances where you live. Keep the gate closed and locked so that visitors must knock to enter. Cameroonians do not leave their doors open to passersby, and neither should you. The Program Director will discuss how to secure your possessions against theft.

**INVITATIONS:** When invited out for food, expect it to be a rather formal occasion. Cameroonians like an agenda, and may even give formal speeches of welcome. A person’s acceptance of you as a friend often involves sharing food. Try a polite bite. You will probably like it. Cameroonians won’t try to force anything exotic on you. You may be offered the gizzard of a chicken. This is a sign of honor and respect. Likewise, if you are offered a kola nut, take a bite; although bitter, the kola nut is a symbol of honor and respect. If you cannot deal with something, fill up on other stuff and plead that you are full. If you are a vegetarian, be flexible; rice and vegetables are common staples of a Cameroonian meal. If you invite someone to meet you somewhere to eat, you will be expected to pay for them as your guests.

**GENERAL CONVERSATION:** Cameroonians may avoid direct eye contact as a way of showing both respect and attention. When seated in conversation, they may cross their arms, but not their legs (especially women – while women may cross their legs in urban areas, they rarely do in

more rural areas). Pointing is considered rude. Cameroonian men often hold hands with other men, women with women. People of opposite sexes, married or not, do not hold hands in public. Public displays of affection are considered inappropriate. Social kissing, the kiss on each cheek *à la français*, is practiced by most Cameroonians. Having your hands in your pockets and whistling are often considered rude.

***APPROPRIATE TOPICS OF CONVERSATION:*** Generally avoid political discussions as casual conversation with Cameroonian acquaintances. Such discussions can be sensitive. Likewise, it is impolite to interrogate Cameroonians about their ethnic origins. Such subjects are fine among friends, but it is best to let Cameroonians bring them up. Do not be afraid to ask your host families about appropriate topics of conversation.

Avoid the use of the following expressions because they have derogatory connotations:

- (Un)civilized – *civilisé*
- savage/primitive/native – *sauvage, primitif, nègre*
- hut (say house)/*hutte* (say *case* or *maison*)
- bush (say countryside) – *brousse* (say *village, campagne*)
- race (meaning same ethnic group) – *race* (say *ethnie* or *groupe ethnique*)
- indigenous/*indigène*

You need not fill up the air with chatter. Relax and listen. Cameroonians who come to visit and talk may take some time in coming to the point. The principle virtue to be cultivated in Africa is patience. People don't pay as much attention to time and punctuality. They believe that people should not be enslaved to a clock.

### **Racial/Gender Issues:**

***RACIAL ISSUES:*** As an U.S. citizen, you will be seen as privileged, so you should expect to pay more for things. There are some 200 ethnic groups in Cameroon, each with its own language. Not all of these groups are treated equally, and you may witness signs of discrimination. Do not get involved in what you do not understand and are unable to change.

***GENDER ISSUES:*** (For women): **Men should not be allowed to hang out or become a nuisance.** Tell them politely and firmly that you are busy and they should please go away. If trouble persists, talk to the Program Director. Men will pester/verbally harass you, accost you in the street, and propose marriage; play it as a joke, which it mostly is. When they persist, or show up at your door, allow your irritation to show. Men are not allowed to grab your arm or pull at you. This is rude in Cameroonian culture, as they well know, but they will try it – especially in markets. Insist that you be treated with respect (a lecture on Feminism, however, will serve no practical purpose). A good phrase to know is “ne me touchez pas. Laissez-moi.” Do not invite a man alone to the Centre after dark, unless you know him well; expectations might arise. Use good sense, as you would in the U.S. You may become embarrassed at times, but you are not likely to be assaulted, or worse.

***SEXUALITY ISSUES:*** Homosexuality among both men and women in Cameroon is against the law! Avoid public displays of affection between men, except the customary walking arm-in-arm.

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

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### Stranger in a Strange Land...

Students head out into the global village, armed with sensible shoes, sharpened pencils, and bright hopes. They arrive at their destination, settle in, and head out again to discover local charms. They buy a Tube pass. Eat borscht or sushi. All goes well ... a few minor complications ... that begin to pile up ... until suddenly CULTURE SHOCK strikes! and the notion of “Home” gains an unprecedented, intense appeal.

Some form of this experience awaits almost everyone who goes abroad for the first time (and also for the second and every other time to follow). Culture shock is a natural phenomenon, the frustrating, but temporary first step toward the profound personal growth and broadening of horizons that is a central reason for studying abroad. A great deal depends on how you respond to it.

The two articles reprinted in this section are intended to help you navigate the experience of cultural adjustment you will soon face. If you are studying in a non-English speaking country, be sure to read the story of the woman who overcame her fear of using her clumsy beginners’ Russian.

## CULTURE SHOCK

### What is it?

Culture shock is the mental, physical and emotional adjustment to living in a new environment. It is the coming to terms with different ways of approaching everyday living—everything from fundamental philosophical assumptions (one's worldview) to daily chores.

Anyone living in a new environment long enough cannot ignore the differences. They become frustrating, and possibly infuriating, until recognizable patterns emerge and an understanding of why things are done differently develops.

Culture shock can be charted on a U-shaped curve that encompasses five separate phases: fun, fright, flight, fight and fun. When you first arrive in Britain, everything is wonderful. You're excited that you've arrived, finally seeing firsthand all those places that previously were just one-dimensional pictures. This is the 'fun' stage.

After a while, all those wonderful, cute customs become aggravating. There is no point to them. You think your own culture's way are much better, more efficient, more sensible. While British people seem friendly, at first, it's just superficial warmth, not a real interest in establishing a friendship. You begin to miss your family and friends. This is the 'fright' stage.

Then it gets worse. You're really homesick. You can't find anything good about the UK. Everything stinks. You're convinced that nothing beats your home country, and you remember how good you had it at home. You may even come to believe that all your problems will go away if you can just pack up and go home. This is the 'flight' stage. It's serious but usually temporary.

You give yourself a pep talk and decide to stick it out awhile longer. This experience deserves a fair chance. You become a bit more active in the clubs you joined earlier. You make more of an effort to get to know the people on your dorm floor. You decide to be less furious with those stupid policies (like post offices and stores that close early). Now you're into the 'fight' stage.

Know what? You begin to like the people on your residence hall floor. In fact, those acquaintances are more like friends. They tell you why those stupid policies are the way they are. In fact, those policies make sense and don't seem too stupid. You're no longer inconvenienced by them and have trouble understanding why they bothered you so much. You suddenly realize you like it there and want to stay forever. You've arrived at the fifth and final stage -- and have made it through the emotional roller coaster ride of culture shock.

### Possible Symptoms of Culture Shock

Sometimes people don't realize when they're suffering from culture shock. This confusion can be

the result of looking at several symptoms as isolated problems rather than as related components of a single affliction. Some signs which you may notice that could indicate culture shock are:

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal (spending too much time in your room, only seeing other U.S. students, avoiding your host family)
- Negative feelings and stereotyping of nationals
- Inability to concentrate
- Excessive sleep or insomnia
- Compulsive eating or drinking
- Lack of appetite
- Irritability
- Crying uncontrollably or outbursts of anger
- Physical ailments, such as frequent headaches or stomachaches

### Dealing with Culture Shock

There are ways to prepare for, and thereby lessen the extremes of, culture shock.

First, know that you will experience some degree of culture shock (even if you don't believe it now). Everyone does. Carefully read the process outlined so that you'll recognize the symptoms and feelings. Most importantly, understand that those frustrating feelings will pass.

Second, expect things to be different. Some differences will be quite

obvious, others less so. You're probably prepared for the major cultural differences -- religious and socio-economic differences. It's the apparently trivial differences that will become the most grating. Try not to allow yourself to blow them out of proportion.

Third, don't label differences as "good" or "bad." Because the American way is the predominant (if not the only) way you know, you will inevitably compare everything there with the ways and approaches you know in this country. Realize that you are not looking objectively at your new culture. Rather, you're seeing (and judging) it from the American perspective. Instead of judging what you see as better or worse than what you know in America, try to focus on the differences and ask why they exist.

Fourth, maintain the ability to laugh at your mistakes. It will take some time to adapt to the point you can maneuver without making cultural missteps. After all, it took quite a bit of training by your parents and effort on your part to be comfortable in your own culture! Finally, you don't have to "do as the Romans do" and accept all the differences. You'll like some of the British ways and incorporate them into your daily routine. Other ways won't fit your values or outlook, and you'll decide that they're not appropriate for you. You are free to make choices, and doing so is perfectly acceptable.

#### Taking the Sting Out

Culture shock occurs because, unconsciously, we expect everyone to be like us. Inevitably, something will occur in a new culture that will not fit your frame of reference

and therefore won't be fully comprehended. This sort of ambiguity is threatening and frequently causes fear, anger, repulsion or some strong emotion.

The key to coping is to become aware of these reactions as they arise. Instead of allowing extreme emotional reaction to control, try to determine the cause of your reaction. By focussing on the cause instead of the reaction, you can frequently cause the emotion to abate. Then you can experience the situation more objectively, without the American presumptions which caused the emotional reaction in the first place.

Careful observation, not clouded or skewed by your own cultural presumptions and expectations, will help you develop an understanding of the new culture and will facilitate your inclusion in that culture. This is a general overview of culture shock. *The Art of Crossing Cultures* by Craig Storti (Intercultural Press, 1989) discusses culture shock and coping strategies in more detail.

#### American Cultural Patterns

Culture shapes everything -- the ways in which you think and analyze, what you value, how you do things, what's considered proper behavior. It's difficult to assess all the effects of a culture while you are enmeshed in it. When you're abroad, you'll discover important aspects of the American culture that you were unaware of before you left. Since you'll be viewing your new culture from the American perspective, it is helpful to have a good grasp of the American perspective and how it shapes you.

Being aware of your own cultural biases and presumptions will enable you to understand your reactions to ambiguous events that occur while you are abroad. While you won't escape culture shock, you can be well-prepared to face it and dilute its effects. You may think this is obvious, but take a look anyway. Tacit knowledge can only be of help to you if you're cognizant of it. Time in America is linear. The clear division between past, present and future allows for a chronological frame of reference. Time is a tangible thing. It can be "used," "spent," "wasted," and "managed." It is a commodity to be carefully monitored. The faster something is done, the better.

#### Cultural Variations

Most western cultures share many of the same assumptions with Americans, but some variations do exist. Be prepared for "efficient and quick" to be a very different concept from what you're used to. While everyone likes an idea that works, some cultures value aesthetics over practicality or emphasize the process over the end result, and family ties and social obligations are often given priority over individual needs and wants.

#### You're Not Alone

Remember that everyone else on your program will experience similar feelings to yours. Don't hesitate to look to them for moral and emotional support. In addition, the staff of both your host institution's international student office and our offices abroad can help you if you're feeling particularly stressed or anxious. Please seek them out.

From the Beaver College Orientation Handbook

# A Bit of Nerve, and Plenty of Pleases

*A traveler to Russia finds that attempting the language, however haltingly, opens doors and prompts smiles*

By JOAN CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

**A**BOUT five weeks into my evening class in Russian, I came to a hard truth. I knew, abruptly and positively, that I was never going to speak this language.

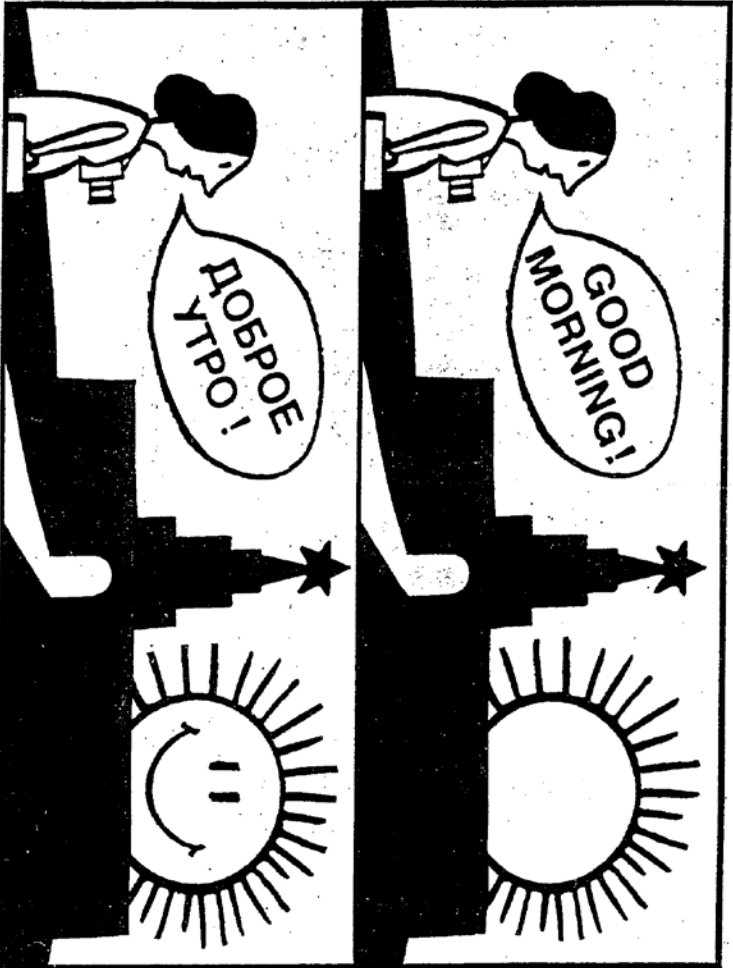
When I started my course, friends said with awe, "You mean, you're going to learn a whole new alphabet, the Cyrillic alphabet, for all its idiosyncrasies, like the capital letter T that becomes a small t in script, turned out to be completely new. My classmates and I got a kick out of sending at the blackboard writing words embellished with apostrophs and dots. But my middle-aged brain gave up when it came to the grammar, with its three genders and six cases for nouns and adjectives, its combining verbs of motion and its different verb forms for completed and uncompleted actions.

If I had been in school, talking Russian for credit, I would have panicked. Instead I was a one-evening, 9-week, not-for-credit student in a University of California Extension class in San Francisco. My classmates, ranging in age from 20 to 60, were taking the course for the sheer pleasure of learning new sounds or make a fortune in the Wild West of Russian commerce, although there were some hints of cross-cultural romance.

If there was little exterior pressure to excel, there was still the madder of self-respect. I am a language snob, who for years believed that the only acceptable way to speak a foreign language was perfectly. I feel a quite dispiriting frisson of pride when French people ask me if I teach French or if I'm from another French-speaking country. Clearly, no Russian was going to mistake my Slavic mutterings for the real thing. Nevertheless, I continued to study Russian. I just changed my goals. As my Russian-speaking daughter put it: "Mom, you are never going to learn this language perfectly. You just want to make Russia less opaque."

Less opaque. Those were the magic words that kept me listening to my tapes and filling in my workbook. The class moved from the university's extension campus to the teacher's home next to Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco's oldest Russian Orthodox church. We drank tea and admired the array of icons and painted Easter eggs in this informal setting, we no longer had written tests and our homework was

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Art: Kopylovsky

corrected but not graded. The real test for me came when I made my second trip to Russia. During my first trip, before I started the course, I had been content to struggle with the Cyrillic alphabet, walking slowly down St. Petersburg's Nevsky Prospekt trying to decipher signs. I stopped at one that seemed to announce, "Baccus Poshavnic." After at least one minute of decoding, I started to giggle. BASIN ROBINSON. My favorite word looked like bap, which turned out to be good place to get a shot of BODKA. Ten months later, as my plane bounced

into Moscow in a blizzard, I was frantically rereading my Russian textbook. On the way toward my Russian teacher, I had been unexpectedly interested in cell phones, snack foods, banks, computers and other New Russia status symbols. I understood almost everything, with the help of an extremely basic vocabulary and the helpful historical tendency of the Russians to borrow words from other languages. Even under the heavy disguise of the Cyrillic alphabet, the word for a hotel floor is pure French, étage. Nor does it take much linguistic brilliance to

figure out that fotoapparat is just a fancy way of saying camera. One cannot live by billboards alone, however. The more interesting challenge came when we decided to take a walk. I approached the elderly hotel security guard near the door, took a deep breath and asked "Where is the Story Albat?" in what I hoped was Russian. He looked at me with a not only gave me directions but messages that save Moscow pedestrians from certain death on the city's many-laned streets.

Walking along the Arbat, Moscow's favorite pedestrian mall, in a flurry of snowflakes, we were approached by a woman who wanted to tell us about the Earth services at her cultural center. As she rattled on, I realized that I was getting the drift of the conversation. Unfortunately we had not reached the future tense in class, so I was unable to tell her politely that we were leaving for St. Petersburg in a few days. Buoyed by the experience, I spent the next two weeks producing bits and pieces of Russian. I asked for directions. I bargained with taxi drivers. I mastered the Moscow metro, starting with the central station where four lines meet. I translated for my friends when the charming decent at the Romanov Boyars house explained the life of a noble family in 16th-century Moscow. I smiled a lot, and, almost without exception, everyone smiled back and tried to help with directions, information, advice. Russia was indeed less opaque.

I remembered other countries where a few words of the language had had dramatic effect. My best moment in Turkey came in a preeminent, dark restaurant in Istanbul. As we struggled to read the menus in the penumbra, our waiter ignored our requests in English for more light. Suddenly I remembered that my 40-word Turkish vocabulary included both *lutfen* (please) and *num* (thanks). When I said firmly, "Lutfen, num," his amazement was lovely to behold, and so were the candles that promptly graced our table.

**E**XPERIENCES like these have made me a firm believer that speaking languages badly of itself is better than not speaking at all. It takes some nerve, of course, although my own experience has been that people respond with a smile rather than a sneer, particularly if a simple stumbling about in relatively obscure language. Speaking badly required a dramatic change in personality. Gone was the perfectionist with her graceful suppletonnes and catchy idioms. Instead, I now smile a lot. I begin every conversation — if one can call these glibbed bursts conversations — with please, thank yous and excuse me. I givel, linguistically speaking.

It has been worth it. Even a handful of words, chosen almost at random, is empowering. Russia, that mysterious and intimidating country, became a friendlier place as it became less opaque. So have Turkey, Costa Rica, Italy, Denmark, Morocco and a dozen other countries where I opened my phrase book, tamped down my shyness and began, however haltingly, to speak.

## Cultural Adjustment: Responses to Living Abroad

In order to understand what culture shock is, you need to remember that your ability to function in the world depends on your being able to read hundreds of signs, to respond to subtle cues, and to behave according to countless explicit and implicit rules. At home, much of what you do in your daily life is automatic and requires little thought. Overseas, the reverse is true, and simple tasks can become difficult. Because you are not always able to understand the messages you receive and cannot always communicate what you mean, you may suffer anxieties. When you are confronted with new ways of thinking and acting, including oftentimes a different value system, you can become disoriented. Your “normal”, “common-sense,” or “logical” way of looking at things suddenly may not apply. Suffering culture shock can, at its worst, lead to severe stress and depression. Even a slight case of culture shock will manifest as frustration and irritation.

Culture shock usually manifests itself as a cycle of readjustment phases that may last quite a while before one adapts. Most people experience at least two lows during a stay overseas, but the length and severity of these vary greatly for each individual. Fortunately, culture shock is both predictable (it will happen) and manageable (you will survive it). If you are prepared for it, you can do a great deal to control it or at least understand its effect. The best advice may be to remain flexible and open-minded to new things, maintain a sense of humor about the mistakes you will certainly make, and try to integrate as quickly as possible into your new culture. Whatever happens, the Program Director is available to help you through rough periods. We encourage students to talk to on-site staff when they meet problems and not to wait until the problem gets bigger and more complicated.

### Responses to Living Abroad:

- 1) First weeks, riding high with enthusiasm. Commonly known as the "honeymoon stage."
- 2) Possible entrance of a slight anti-American streak such as thorough disgust with all American tourists... or "I am never going to go back to America again."
- 3) Feeling of being overwhelmed by all the possibilities presented in your host country, i.e. cultural events, restaurants, student clubs, traveling in your host country and elsewhere, etc.
- 4) Realization of aloneness, some independence, absence of family, problems of communicating by letter, struggle with the language, utilizing free time, heating and housing discomforts, etc.
- 5) This often coincides with mid-semester examinations adding academic pressure to all of the above, which results usually in a very low period or dark depression. Psychologist L. Oberg states that some of the symptoms of this period are: "Excessive washing of the hands; excessive concern over drinking water, food, dishes, and bedding; a feeling of helplessness, fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations; delay and outright refusal to learn the language of the host country; excessive fear of being cheated, robbed or injured; great concern over minor pains and eruptions of the skin; and finally, that terrible longing to be back home, talking to people who really make sense."
- 6) Hostility or aggressive phase. Complaints about the local people, their customs and attitudes. Complaints about the program, regulations, and attitudes. This phase can become extremely petty.
- 7) Identity crisis. Searching within oneself, "Why am I here?", "Am I in the right major?"

### Recovery:

- 1) Slowly finding a balance between academic work and other compelling interests. Better organization of one's time, and separation of the romantic preconceptions from the reality.
- 2) Oberg again says, "The recovery stage usually finds a growing sense of humor, with the visitor able to joke not only about the host country, but also about his own difficulties. In the final stage,

adjustment, the visitor learns to accept the foods, drinks, habits, and customs of the host country and even to enjoy them."

- 3) Important realizations include getting to know the local people as individuals and not as stereotypes, suddenly realizing the great personal freedom and appreciating it, making deep friendships with fellow students and the local people, finally leaving America and trying to learn something about the host country with an accompanying decision to appreciate the best of both countries.

### **Our Advice:**

Here are some additional thoughts concerning cultural adaptation:

Soon after arriving, you will undoubtedly confront the temptation to withdraw into the American group. Work hard to resist this crutch. Extreme dependence on the American group will limit ties and friendships outside your immediate circle. You should make a genuine and constant effort to penetrate and become part of the host culture. Opportunities are there from the moment you arrive, but you must take the first step and probably the second and third.

Look for clubs and activity groups, which provide opportunities for meeting people and for doing things that you enjoy. If you do join a group, realize that you are the one who will have to fit yourself in. People will not necessarily go out of their way to accommodate you. Even if you are not a "joiner," you should get involved in things that interest you.

Beware of cultural stereotypes! They can operate against you, as well as against the culture you are living in. Stereotypes are destructive because they can interfere with getting to know the local people and prevent you from getting to the rich reality behind the surface.

Avoid making negative comparisons with how you do things or what you have in the U.S. It can be a challenge to understand why things are done differently, but try to be patient and figure out what the difference is and why. Remember, you are not going abroad just to find the same things that exist here in the States. Beware of ethnocentrism, the attitude of superiority of one group over another. We tend to think our culture and society are the most important, worthy, and civilized in the world, and you may be surprised to find that others do not share our view.

Your experience abroad will not always be a bed of roses, and you may experience great loneliness at first. There will be a vacuum of comfortable social, cultural, and political structure. Activities and status symbols that make you who you are at home and on campus will be missing or meaningless: meetings, contacts, cars, sororities and fraternities, and extra-curricular recognition. There will be the void of a familiar routine in your life.

What can you do to survive with grace? Re-organize and learn to budget your time and avoid the temptation of too much travel. Keep a journal for future reference. Be patient; you will not learn the language perfectly or make friends in the first two weeks after arrival. Accept that you cannot become totally submerged in host culture. Be proud, although not intrusively so, of being an American. You will unavoidably carry your American cultural background with you. Accept that wherever you are is the center of the world for the people who live there. Behave as a guest, and show the inhabitants that you feel lucky to be there, in the center of their world.

And most importantly, remember that early disorientation is normal, healthy, and perfectly OK!

## **KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR TIME ABROAD**

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### **Keeping a Journal:**

You are about to embark on a journey where you will be a foreigner. As you interact with the people and customs of your new surroundings, your views of yourself and some of your most cherished values will be challenged and undergo subtle changes.

One of the best tools for gaining insight into these changes is to keep a journal. There you can reflect on the puzzling and wonderful things you have seen, experienced, and overheard that sticks in your mind. A custom that appears strange at first will often become understood as you continue to observe it in its own context. Writing down incidents, thoughts, questions, ideas, and reflections will help give depth and insight to your experience and can also be therapeutic. A journal can be especially helpful when traveling because it will be easier to remember the amazing places you visited – and a great reminder of your time abroad when friends and family ask about your semester.

It is always a challenge to put this experience into words, but make a start and stick with it. Go beyond the mere recording of incidents to recording your feelings and conjectures. Why did that comment sting? Why did people react so strangely to my shirt, or smile, or joke? You will see sights that strike you as barely imaginable back home. What does that say about the host culture? What does it say about your own? A month later you may see things differently and you should write that down too. Record stories or poems you are inspired to write, etc. The journal will capture your thoughts at a specific moment. Years later the journal will be a treasure. Keep a journal, you will not regret it!

### **Taking Pictures:**

Some people may not be particularly fond of writing or just can't find the time to keep a journal regularly. Keeping a camera close at hand is another great way to document all the memories you will make while abroad. Also, upon returning to campus, there will be a photo contest for returned studied abroad students during which your photos will be displayed and eligible for prizes. More details about the photo contest will be sent out upon your return from studying abroad.

### **Dickinson Study Abroad Blog:**

Dickinson College has a blog for students participating in study abroad programs. You may want to consider keeping a journal on the blog and to share your experiences and insights with your friends or other students interested in going on your program. It also serves as a good tool to keep you connected with Dickinson students studying at different locations and to exchange information. You can find the link at <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/abroad/>. If you are interested, send an email to Todd Bryant at [bryantt@dickinson.edu](mailto:bryantt@dickinson.edu). He will create your blog and send you the basic instructions to get started.

### **Dickinson Study Abroad Wiki Page:**

The blog is a great place for individual journals; however, if you and some of your fellow Dickinsonians would like to publish something together such as a newsletter or paper the wiki is a better bet. No technical knowledge is required. You can get an idea of how it works by looking at the example of the Toulouse program, available at [http://wiki.dickinson.edu/index.php?title=Toulouse Study Abroad Program](http://wiki.dickinson.edu/index.php?title=Toulouse_Study_Abroad_Program).

Check out the La Une newsletter. If you are interested, send an email to Todd Bryant. He will make sure you have the access you need and the very basic instructions.

## RETURNING BACK HOME

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### Things to Take Care of at Dickinson before Returning Home

#### Course Request Process when Returning to Campus:

Information regarding the course request period will be sent via e-mail to students' Dickinson e-mail addresses, announcing when the course request period will take place. Course requests will be made through the web, and the site will be accessible from off campus.

#### Room Selection at Dickinson:

The following information about room selection has been provided by the Office of Campus Life. Like other offices on campus, Campus Life relies on e-mail to convey information to students away from campus. You may contact the Office of Campus Life by phone (717-245-1556) or email ([campuslife@dickinson.edu](mailto:campuslife@dickinson.edu)). Communications will be sent to Dickinson students off-campus at their Dickinson e-mail address. **Remember to check your Dickinson account regularly for important messages from the College.**

- **If you are going abroad for *fall semester* and returning for *spring***, you will participate in the housing selection process on campus. Campus Life offers informational and educational materials that are available to all students so they can make informed decisions about room selection.
- **If you are going abroad for *the entire year* or for *spring semester* and returning for *next fall***, it is important that you make arrangements for a housing proxy for the next year **before you leave**. Make sure that you send Campus Life the name of your housing proxy well in advance of the dates of housing selection. All students studying abroad in the Spring semester will receive an email from Campus Life reminding them to designate a proxy. This can be done by emailing [campuslife@dickinson.edu](mailto:campuslife@dickinson.edu). Your proxy will pick your room assignment during room selection.

If you wish to live off campus, your proxy will fill out and hand in your off-campus housing application. Applications will become available in the spring semester. NOTE: Not all students who apply will be able to live off-campus. Only a limited number of off-campus permissions will be granted.

## COMMENTS FROM FORMER PROGRAM STUDENTS

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“A wonderful learning experience that I would recommend to anyone regardless of major or academic interest.”

“As long as students who attend this program are capable of taking care of themselves and do not expect a lot of ‘hand-holding’ in the adjustment process, they will do fine.”

“Always smile and never be afraid.”

“A lot can be kind of scary in Cameroon: the taxis, diseases that can be contracted, etc., but, if you dwell on these ‘bad’ aspects of the country, you will not enjoy your experience.”

“While a certain amount of common sense should be exercised, extreme caution will limit you and end up making you neurotic.”

“Cameroonians are in general very hospitable and friendly--anything lacking in creature comforts is more than made up for by the friendship and concern the people will share with you.”

“Some of the most important parts of my semester occurred outside of the classroom--traveling around the country, visiting villages, and talking with the people.”

“The program was the biggest learning experience in my career at Dickinson; in fact, off-campus study in Cameroon will have a big influence on me for the rest of my life.”

“Just keep an open mind, keep remembering why you chose this program, and keep learning throughout the entire semester. Cameroon has so much to offer.”

### A FINAL NOTE FROM DICKINSON

All of these security and health caveats may at first appear daunting. By Western standards Cameroon is materially poor, and lacks many of the physical amenities we are used to. But students quickly realize that its people are gracious in spirit, and the country is remarkably diverse and rich in many other ways. **Patience, good humor, respect for difference, and a willingness to listen to what others have to say will yield a remarkable experience.** Dickinson College tells its students that the essence of a liberal education lies in developing habits of intellectual tolerance for the ideas of others and the critical examination of one’s own beliefs and values. Cameroon will constantly offer you occasions for such reflections and reassessments.

-Joyce A. Bylander, Cameroon On-Campus Coordinator

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

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### **Work Study:**

You will not be allowed to work while you are in Cameroon. However, the director will attempt to set up internships with local school, U.S. government institutions, etc. At the moment credit cannot be assigned.

### **24-Hour Clock/Time Change:**

Telling time in Cameroon (and in the rest of the world) is based on a 24-hour clock. To convert, add 12 hours to any time after 12:59 p.m. – e.g., 1:15 becomes 13:15. There is a **five-hour time difference** between the U.S. (east coast, daylight savings time) and Yaoundé (it is five hours **later** in Yaoundé).

### **Currency:**

The Cameroonian Franc (CFA) was devalued early in 1994. Current exchange, which fluctuates, is approximately CFA 440 = \$1.00) as of 11/2009. Watch out for counterfeit CFA bills and expect sellers to inspect large bills (10,000 CFA) closely and refuse them if they find them suspect.

### **Metric Conversion Tables:**

See page. 61.

- APPENDIX I: VISA GUIDELINES**
- APPENDIX II: TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY**
- APPENDIX III: MEMO ON HEALTH INSURANCE**
- APPENDIX IV: SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY TRAVEL INSURANCE**
- APPENDIX V: HEALTH ISSUES WHILE ABROAD**
- APPENDIX VI: STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM**
- APPENDIX VII: REFUND POLICY: EARLY WITHDRAWAL/CANCELLATION**
- APPENDIX VIII: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

## METRIC CONVERSIONS

### Thermometer Readings

C	F
38	100.4
37	98.6 (body temp)
35	95
30	86
25	77
20	68 (room temp)
10	50
5	41
0	32 (freezing)
-5	23
-10	14
-15	5
-20	-4
-25	-13
-30	-22

[To convert centigrade to Fahrenheit: multiply by 9/5 and add 32]

### Kilometers - Miles

Kilometers	Miles
1	0.6
3	1.8
5	3
10	6
15	9
20	12
25	15
30	18
40	24
50	30
100	60
150	90
200	120
250	150
500	300

[To convert kilometers to miles: multiply by .6]

OR, observe the simple rhyme: “ 30's hot and 20's nice, 10 is cool and zero's ice.”

### Weights and Measures

Metric	U.S.
1 gram (gr)	0.035 ounces
500 grams (= ½ kilo)	1.1 pounds
454 grams	1 pound
1 kilogram (= 1000 grams)	2.2 pounds
5 kilograms	11.0 pounds
1 liter (l)	2.113 pints
1 liter	1.056 quarts
3.785 liters	1 gallon
1 deciliter	0.21 pint
1 meter	3.28 feet
1 meter	39.37 inches
1 centimeter	0.394 inches
2.54 centimeters	1 inch

### Kitchen Hints:

1 cup sugar = 200 gr. 1 tsp. = 5 gr.  
1 cup flour = 150 gr. 1 tbsp. = 12 gr.

[To weigh yourself: double the number of kilos and add 10%]

## APPENDIX I: VISA GUIDELINES

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### -IMPORTANT: DO NOT LOSE THIS CHECKLIST-

All Students **MUST** have a student visa to participate in this program.  
Students arriving without a visa will be sent home by immigration officials at your own expense.  
**YOU** are solely responsible for obtaining your visa **ON TIME** for your program.  
 Please take this process seriously.

### The following set of instructions applies for U.S. citizens ONLY

If you are **NOT** a U.S. Citizen, you will need to research the visa requirements for your nationality.

**\*YOU WILL APPLY FOR YOUR CAMEROONIAN VISA THROUGH THE WASHINGTON PASSPORT & VISA SERVICE.\***

#### What You Will Need TO DO:

- **READ** information on this **CHECKLIST** and **CONSULATE** <http://www.ambacam-usa.org/>
- **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** with your physician or a travel clinic for required immunizations
- **GATHER** all of the supporting documentation (and copies!) for your visa application
- **APPLY** through the Washington Passport & Visa Service for your visa
- **RECEIVE** your passport back from the Visa Service and ensure that your visa is correct

#### **Step 1: FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE VISA APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- Check out the Washington Passport and Visa Service webpage for Cameroonian visas ([www.wpvs.com](http://www.wpvs.com))
- **NOW!** Complete the Cameroonian visa application from the Washington Passport and Visa Services website ([www.wpvs.com](http://www.wpvs.com))-**remember to complete and sign both forms.**
  - You may follow the guidelines for the 'business visa' as you will receive a letter of invitation.
  - You will not need to submit proof of funds (bank statement) for the visa.

#### **Step 2: COMPLETE YOUR VISA APPLICATION AND GATHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:** make an appointment with your health care provider or a travel clinic to get a Yellow WHO card, required Yellow Fever vaccination, and other recommended vaccinations and preventative medications. **You need to take care of the Yellow Fever vaccination and WHO card before applying for your visa.**

#### **Step 3: SEND YOUR MATERIALS TO THE WASHINGTON VISA SERVICE**

- By **December 1, 2012:** Send your completed applications, WHO card, processing fee, and all other supporting documents (listed on the following page) by UPS, FedEx, or registered mail to:
  - Washington Passport & Visa Service
  - 2318 18<sup>th</sup> Street NW
  - Suite 200
  - Washington D.C. 20009
- \*money orders can be purchased at the Carlisle Post Office at 66 W. Louther St. or the Carlisle WalMart
- **YOU WILL NEED TO SURRENDER YOUR PASSPORT IN ORDER TO GET YOUR VISA!**

- Application and materials must be complete before sending them to the visa service. Any error in your paperwork could jeopardize your application or cause serious delays in processing.
- You should hear from the Washington Passport & Visa Service on the status of your application prior to December 31, 2012. You may wish to check on the status of your application on **December 21<sup>st</sup>** if you have not heard from them before that date.

## CHECKLIST FOR YOUR VISA APPLICATION

Items you will need for a complete visa application:

Required Items	Provided by:	Notes
Two (2) Complete and Signed Visa Application forms	WPVS completed by YOU	CGSE will provide a Sample Application for guidance
Signed passport	You	Must be valid through December 23, 2013.
One (1) International Certificate of Vaccination (WHO) card	You (via health care provider)	Must be <b>completed and signed</b> indicating that you have received a yellow fever immunization- <b>required</b> for the visa process and to enter Cameroon.
Two (2) photographs	You	Recent, passport-sized, white background with <b>BOTH</b> ears showing, computer generated photos <b>are not</b> acceptable
Copy of your flight itinerary	You	Watch for information on a Dickinson-arranged group flight and follow the reservation and purchase instructions
Proof of U.S. Residency ( <b>copy</b> of your US visa or green card)*	You	*for non-US citizens only; must have a copy of both front and back
Proof of State Residency	You	(e.g. driver's license, bank statements, etc.)
Processing Fees of \$375*  *fee can vary; check <a href="http://www.wpvs.com">www.wpvs.com</a>	You	Please calculate all fees carefully, including embassy fees, the WPVS processing fee, and the \$23 fee for returning your passport (with the visa!) to you.
Letter of Acceptance (from Dickinson)	CGSE	
Letter of Invitation (from the Dickinson in Yaoundé Centre)	CGSE	
Dickinson-in-Cameroon Cover Letter	CGSE	Will state purpose of travel, dates, expenses covered, etc.

- Money orders and pre-paid Express Mail envelopes can be purchased at the Carlisle Post Office at 66 W. Louther St.

Please contact the Center for Global Study and Engagement (CGSE) with any questions.

Contacts:
CGSE   Dickinson College   717.245.1341   <a href="mailto:global@dickinson.edu">global@dickinson.edu</a>
<b>Washington Passport &amp; Visa Service</b>   2318 18 <sup>th</sup> Street NW Suite 200 Washington D.C. 20009   800-272-7776   <a href="http://www.wpvs.com">www.wpvs.com</a>
<b>Embassy of Cameroon in Washington DC</b>   1700 Wisconsin Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20007   202.265.8790   <a href="http://www.ambacam-usa.org">www.ambacam-usa.org</a>

All information is subject to change; please consult with the Washington Passport & Visa Service for the most up-to-date regulations and requirements.

## APPENDIX II: Transfer Credit Policy

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### The Center for Global Study and Engagement Dickinson College

#### Credit Policies for Academic Year & Semester Programs

##### *General Policies for All Center Programs:*

- Dickinson students who have been granted permission to study off-campus must take a **normal full load of classes** as defined by their program or host institution.
- Only **liberal arts classes** will qualify for transfer credit.
- Generally speaking, courses must have an equivalent at Dickinson. Exceptions include classes that focus on the culture and/or history of the country in which a student is studying.
- Transfer credit will not be awarded for coursework that duplicates what a student has already completed at Dickinson.
- Transfer credit is awarded only for classes in which a student earns a grade of “C” or better. However, *all* courses for which a student has registered will appear on the transcript, along with the corresponding grades.
- Grades for courses taken at a cooperating institution (including all non-Dickinson programs) are recorded on the transcript, but are not included in the GPA (see exceptions for Dickinson and Dickinson Partner Programs below).

##### *Specific Policies for Dickinson and Dickinson Partner Programs:*

- Dickinson students enrolled in a Dickinson or Dickinson Partner Program abroad may receive up to a maximum of 4.5 course credits for one semester.
- Some programs require a separate pre-program orientation course that may yield an additional credit (please consult your program-specific handbook for more information).
- Please note that not all programs will provide half courses (.5 credit).
- To take more than 4.5 credits per semester, a student must petition Brian Brubaker, Director of Study Abroad. In the Director’s absence, students may also address their petitions to the Associate Provost and Executive Director of the Center for Global Study and Engagement. **If a student registers for more than the maximum credits allowed without permission of the Center for Global Study and Engagement, the course credit will not transfer.** Students will also be responsible for any additional fees for doing this.
- Grades for Dickinson courses taught at Dickinson Centers (i.e., courses approved by the Academic Program and Standards Committee and taught by faculty approved by the Faculty Personnel Committee) are included in the GPA, *regardless* of the grade earned.
- The following courses taken at cooperating institutions have been approved as “Dickinson courses” by the appropriate academic departments. Letter grades earned will be included in the GPA for:
  - University of East Anglia (Norwich) courses in English, American studies, economics, fine arts, theatre, music, history, philosophy, and religion. Courses in sociology except for core courses 240, 241, and 330/331, for which pre-approval is required.
  - University of East Anglia (Norwich) courses in biology, chemistry, environmental science, environmental studies, geology, mathematics, and computer science.
  - All courses taken through the School for Field Studies.
  - All courses taken at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies (ICCS) in Rome, Italy.

Upon return to Dickinson, students must complete an *Enrollment in Another Institution Form*. **Seniors are required to submit this form prior to the course request period for their last semester. If the form is not in the Registrar's Office by that time, the student will not be permitted to participate in the course request period.** Please note that this form is required **only** when a student is seeking major, minor, or distribution credit for coursework completed at a cooperating university or through the Dickinson in Yaoundé program. The form is *not* required for Dickinson Center courses, or for courses at a cooperating university for which a student is seeking only general credit. After obtaining the required signatures, the student should bring the form to the Center for Global Study and Engagement. The form will then be forwarded to the Registrar's Office.

***Specific Policies for Non-Dickinson Programs:***

- Dickinson students enrolled in a non-Dickinson program may receive up to a maximum of 4 course credits for one semester.
- To take more than 4 credits per semester, a student must petition Carla Maranto-Arnold, Study Abroad Coordinator. In the Study Abroad Coordinator's absence, students may also address their petitions to the Associate Provost and Executive Director of the Center for Global Study and Engagement. **If a student registers for more than the maximum credits allowed without the permission of the Center for Global Study and Engagement, the course credit will not transfer.**

Upon return to the Dickinson, students must complete an *Enrollment in Another Institution Form*. **Seniors are required to submit this form prior to the course request period for their last semester. If the form is not in the Registrar's Office by that time, the student will not be permitted to participate in the course request period.** Please note that this form is required whether a student is seeking major, minor, distribution, or general credit. After obtaining the required signatures, the student should bring the form to the Center for Global Study and Engagement for approval by the Study Abroad Coordinator. The form will then be forwarded to the Registrar's Office. Students should work directly with their host program to ensure that an official transcript is sent to the Registrar's Office as soon as possible after the program has ended.

***What to Do Before Studying Off-Campus:***

Dickinson College does not formally pre-approve courses for transfer. However, students should thoroughly discuss their off-campus plans with their academic advisor(s) prior to leaving Carlisle. Students should talk with their advisor(s) about what may or may not fulfill Dickinson transfer credit requirements, specifically which courses taken off-campus may fulfill major, minor, or distribution requirements. In some cases, conversations with appropriate department chairs may also be helpful. Some departments on campus may require extra work, especially for advanced-level credit. It is the student's responsibility to inquire about any extra work required. Staff are available to answer general questions about transfer credit policies.

***What to Do While Off-Campus:***

Students should maintain e-mail contact with their academic advisor(s) while abroad, especially during the first weeks of the semester when they are in the process of finalizing course schedules. **To document coursework at cooperating institutions, students should keep a portfolio for each course, including a syllabus, reading list, completed projects, written work, examinations, journals, etc.**

## APPENDIX III: Memo on Health Insurance

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### MEMORANDUM

From: The Center for Global Study and Engagement

Subject: Primary Health and Accident Insurance Information

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Students who are covered by the Dickinson Student Health Insurance are covered overseas by this policy. While it satisfies the minimum requirement for primary health and accident insurance for our students on overseas programs, you are advised to examine the policy to see if the coverage meets your specific needs.

For students participating on fall or academic year programs, you will initially be billed for the Dickinson student health insurance. Follow the directions for “waiving out” of the Dickinson student health insurance if you plan to rely on a family policy. Information on waiving out can be found at: <http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/health-center/content/Insurance/>

Students, who wish to “waive out” of this coverage and be covered instead by their family health insurance policy, will find helpful information about evaluating health insurance in the *Health Insurance* section of their handbook. Your policy must cover you **overseas** and **for the duration of your stay**.

For those going overseas during the spring semester, if you would like to sign up for the Dickinson Student Health Insurance, please contact United Healthcare at 1-800-505-4160.

Like Dickinson students, guest students attending Dickinson programs from other colleges and universities must also have primary health and accident insurance coverage. Non-Dickinson students **do not** have the option of purchasing Dickinson student health insurance.

## **APPENDIX IV: Supplemental Travel Insurance**

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**(This policy is subject to change)**

### **Emergency Travel Assistance Program and Supplemental Travel Accident and Medical Insurance**

Under the auspices of the ACE American Insurance Company (A Stock Company), Dickinson College provides world-wide travel assistance services and travel medical emergency insurance to persons acting officially for the College (e.g., program directors, trustees, faculty, administrators, academic professionals, staff, or students).

Afforded under the *world-wide travel services* are the following: Pre-departure Services such as information on immunization requirements, passport and visa requirements and Overseas Assistance such as telephone advice about lost baggage or passport, emergency cash service, assistance during a medical emergency, emergency legal advice-assistance, and emergency message service. For further information, consult the "Travel Assistance Program" brochure available from the Office of the Vice President for Campus Operations. For travel service assistance in the U.S. (or Canada), call 888-293-9229. If outside the U.S., call 001-610-293-9229

Also provided is *world-wide travel medical and emergency insurance* which includes: up to \$50,000 for accidental death & dismemberment, up to \$50,000 for all medical expense benefits, up to 100%\* of usual and customary charges for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. *Note:* This insurance coverage (ACE policy #GLM N0 48 49 06 1R) is effective ONLY AFTER the person has left the United States. For a complete schedule of benefits, deductibles, and policy limitations and/or exclusions, please consult with the Office of the Vice President for Campus Operations.

To process an insurance claim: a) written notice of the claim must be sent to the Company (ACE) within twenty (20) days after the occurrence or commencement of any loss covered by the policy; b) the Company, upon receipt of the claim, will furnish the appropriate forms to the claimant(s); c) written proof of the loss must accompany any claim; d) payment of the claim will be made to the claimant(s) or to a beneficiary.

Contact Address: Office of the Vice President for Campus Operations, Dickinson College, P. O. Box 1773, Carlisle Pa 17013-2896. Telephone 717-245-1943; FAX 717-245-1903;

\* These benefits apply only after all other valid and collectible insurance benefits are exhausted and are subject to policy limitations and/or exclusions.

September 2010

## APPENDIX V: HEALTH ISSUES WHILE TRAVELING

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### HEALTH ISSUES WHILE TRAVELING

Mary Arthur, C.R.N.P., M.P.A., Director, Student Health Services

#### Travel Clinics

*Holy Spirit Hospital, Camp Hill*  
Phone: 717-972-4222

*Hershey Medical Center Clinic*  
Phone: 1-800-243-1455

#### Internet Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm><http://www.travelhealth.com>

#### Prior to traveling

Check the CDC web site to get information on the country you are going to. Read about any epidemics or outbreak in progress. Read about water and food precautions. The CDC site will also give you the immunizations you need to be up to date along with any additional vaccinations needed for that specific country. Some vaccinations need to be given weeks before departure, so don't wait, make an appointment as soon as you know where you will be going, so that any needed vaccines may be given in the appropriate time frame.

#### Immunization

All the following immunizations should be up to date:

- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) - within the past 10 years or 5 years if you will be doing work outside around soil or potentially rusted material
- Hepatitis B (series of three shots)
- Polio

For persons who have received a complete series of polio vaccine, an additional single dose of vaccine should be received by persons 18 years of age and older traveling to the developing countries of Africa, Asia (East and Southeast), and Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent, and the majority of the new independent states of the former Soviet Union.

**Additional immunizations are recommended for those over 65 or anyone at high risk such as asthmatics, or immuno-compromised people (HIV, long-term steroid use due to organ transplant, chemotherapy treatments, etc.). They are:**

- Influenza (flu) vaccine (seasonal and H1N1)
- Pneumococcal vaccine

#### Malaria

Medication for Malaria must be taken before, during and after your trip to be effective. Expose as little skin as possible during your trip to areas where malaria is prevalent.

**\*\*THERE MAY BE ADDITIONAL VACCINES THAT ARE SITE SPECIFIC, SO CHECK THE CDC WEB SITE\*\***

#### Medications

If you are taking prescription medication you should keep the medication in its original container from the pharmacy which will have your name, the medication name, dose, and the name of the health care

practitioner who prescribed the medication. Do not transfer any medication into any unmarked container. You should also have a written letter or prescription from your physician also verifying this medication was prescribed by a license practitioner and is necessary for medical reasons. You should calculate the amount of medication you will need while you are away, and bring enough so you do not run out.

### Food and Water

The number one cause of illness in travelers is from food and waterborne diseases. Diseases from food and water can cause diarrhea, vomiting, fever and liver disease (hepatitis). Tips on how to stay healthy when abroad can be found on the CDC site.

Some suggestions include:

- Drink only bottled water, boiled water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself
- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors
- Don't drink beverages with ice
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized
- Don't handle animals especially monkeys, dogs, and cats
- Don't brush your teeth with tap water

### Items to take on your program

- Over the counter anti-diarrhea medicines such as Pepto-Bismol, or Imodium. Stronger prescription medications may make your condition worse.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat

### Common Sense

- Automobile accidents account for fifty percent of fatalities and medical evacuations
- Wear seat belts
- Don't drive OR SWIM drunk
- Do not walk on dark roadways at night
- Look both ways several times before crossing the street. Many countries drive on the opposite side of the road from the US, and students have been hit because they look one way only due to habit, and step into the path of an oncoming car.

### Other Points

- Make sure you will have health insurance while abroad. Call your insurance carrier to find out procedure for obtaining care while outside the U.S., and get it in writing.
- Diabetics need to know country's regulations on needles.
- **TB screening after returning is a good idea. This can be done at the Health Center.**
- Certain countries require HIV testing prior to entry.
- Some antibiotics may cause oral contraceptives to be less effective. Always use a backup method if you have to be on an antibiotic.
- Emergency contraception (ECP) and birth control pills may be illegal in some Islamic countries. If the country allows it and there is even a remote possibility you will be sexually active, women should take ECP's with them. Please call the Health Center to ask about this.
- In Tropical areas don't walk around barefoot. Spray yourself and cloths with DEET or similar anti-bug spray, and cover skin completely with clothes. Wear hat.

## APPENDIX VI: Student Agreement Form

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In consideration of my selection for participation in a Dickinson College Study Abroad and/or Domestic Off-Campus Program, I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to the following conditions of responsibility:

1. I acknowledge that the Dickinson College study abroad and domestic off-campus programs represent the broad values of liberal education and bonds between cultures. As a guest in a host country or with a host family, I will strive to understand and respect norms of conduct and patterns of the host culture. I agree to represent the College responsibly and to abide by dress and cultural codes suitable to the cultures visited.

2. I agree to abide by all policies and regulations of the host institution/Program and/or the regulations of the Dickinson Center I may be attending. I understand that as a participant in a study abroad or domestic off-campus program I remain enrolled at the College and will continue to abide by all College policies, rules or regulations outlined in the *Student Handbook*. I understand that the College has the right to, and will, withdraw me from the program at any time if, in the judgment of the Associate Provost of the Center for Global Study and Engagement, on the advice of the Program Director, I have violated such policies, rules or regulations or have engaged in disruptive behavior, academic infractions, or conduct which could bring the program into disrepute or disrupt the operation of the program. I agree, specifically, that I will have no involvement with illegal drugs, will not engage in illegal or abusive use of alcohol, and will participate in all classes and scheduled activities. I agree further that a decision to withdraw me from the program is final and that I am not entitled to any refund.

3. I further agree that the College may withdraw me from the program and send me home at any time during the program at my expense if the College determines that my continued participation in the program will adversely affect my health, safety or welfare, or the health, safety, welfare or enjoyment of the program by others. I agree further that a decision to withdraw me from the program is final and that I am not entitled to any refund.

4. I understand that the procedures outlined in this section for dealing with discipline and well-being are different than those outlined in the *Student Handbook*, and I agree that the procedures outlined in this agreement shall apply while I am a participant in a study abroad or domestic off-campus program. Further, I understand that a determination made by the Associate Provost of the Center for Global Study and Engagement may be the basis for further disciplinary action by the College, in addition to causing my withdrawal from the program.

5. I understand and agree that in order to be assessed and receive credit for academic work completed while studying off campus, I must participate fully in the program. I also recognize that I am expected to complete the entire program and may forfeit credit should I choose to arrive after the program begins or leave the program early without the prior consent of the Program Director, the host institution, and the Center for Global Study and Engagement.

6. I agree to indemnify and hold the College harmless from and against all claims and actions for property damage or personal injury sustained by me or any other person or entity, which arise out of my participation in the program, including but not limited to, violations of the policies and regulations of the host institution, violations of the policies, rules and regulations of Dickinson College, violations of law, and/or which are due to my sole or concurrent negligence with the College.

7. I, on behalf of myself, my heirs and personal representatives, hereby release Dickinson College and any cooperating institution and each of their officers, employees, successors and agents from any and all claims and causes of action for inconvenience, damage to or loss of property, medical or hospital care, personal illness or injury or death arising out of my participation in the study abroad program and/or travel or activity conducted by or under the control of Dickinson College or any cooperating institution.

8. I understand and acknowledge that there are risks and delays common to travel abroad and that there may be special health risks associated with living and studying in the country or area I have chosen. I

understand that I have a responsibility to exercise due caution in my behavior while in the program and agree further that I am personally responsible for obtaining adequate health insurance, health information, instruction, immunizations, and prophylactic medications appropriate to my study abroad program.

9. I have read and understand the refund policies of Dickinson College as outlined in the program orientation handbook published by the Center for Global Study and Engagement, and I understand that the application fee and confirmation payments are non-refundable.

10. I understand and agree that I will provide all completed materials, forms, and payments by the due dates specified and recognize that failure to do this may result in either added costs or in my being withdrawn from the program. Further, I have read or will read and understand all general information provided on this program by the Center for Global Study and Engagement, and will attend and participate in all orientation meetings and other pre-departure briefings.

11. This agreement shall be construed in accordance with the substantive laws of Pennsylvania without regard for its conflicts of laws provisions. The Courts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Cumberland County or the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any issue or dispute arising under or out of this agreement. Still further, each of the undersigned individuals hereby consents and submits to the personal jurisdiction of the courts set forth in this provision and waivers any challenge to the venue or jurisdiction of such courts over them.

12. I grant permission to the Center for Global Study and Engagement to request on my behalf an official or unofficial transcript from the Registrar’s Office at Dickinson College for the purpose of reviewing my GPA or to send the transcript directly to the institution to which I am applying. If I am from another school or have a transcript through another school, it is my responsibility to request a transcript with current information to be sent to the Center for Global Study and Engagement.

13. I grant permission to the Center for Global Study and Engagement to release my name and contact information to fellow program participants and to future students interested in applying to study off-campus.

14. I hold the following health insurance coverage which is valid overseas for the duration of my study abroad program. I understand that if this information should change I must notify the Program Director and the Center for Global Study and Engagement at once; further, that if this insurance should lapse because of unpaid premiums during my stay, I and my parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for health expenses incurred.

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read and agree to the above:**

**Participant signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note that your signature must be original. Faxed or photocopied signatures cannot be accepted.*

Please list the first person to contact in case of emergency for the time the participant is abroad.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

11/09

## APPENDIX VII: Refund Policy for Off-Campus Programs

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### Refund Policy for Early Withdrawal From Dickinson-Sponsored and Dickinson-Partner Programs (Semester/Academic Year) Administered by the Center for Global Study and Engagement

A student's date of withdrawal is determined by one of the following:

- 1) The date the student notifies the Center for Global Study and Engagement in writing of his/her decision to withdraw, or
- 2) The date the student is officially dismissed from the program by the Center for Global Study and Engagement, or
- 3) If a student leaves the program without notifying the Center for Global Study and Engagement, the date of withdrawal is determined by either: the mid-point of the semester or the student's last documented attendance at an academically-related activity, whichever is later.

A student who withdraws 61 days or more prior to the begin date of the Semester/Academic Year Program will receive a 100% refund, less the non-refundable confirmation payment.

A student who withdraws during the 61 days prior to the begin date of the Semester/Academic Year Program will receive a 95% refund of the Program Fee less the non-refundable confirmation payment.

A student who withdraws after the program starts will forfeit the non-refundable confirmation fee and 5% of the Semester Program Fee. Refund of the remaining Semester Program Fee will be determined on a daily pro-rata basis until 60% of the semester has been completed. No refunds will be calculated after 60% of the semester has elapsed. Weekends are included in counted days, except when part of a scheduled period of non-attendance of five days or more, such as spring break.

For example, if a semester includes 110 days from the start date through the end date and a student withdraws on the 50<sup>th</sup> day, the College will retain the \$300 confirmation payment, 5% of the semester fee and a pro-rate portion of the remaining fee.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (\$ 300) \\
 (5\% \times 26,705) \\
 (50/110 \times (26,705-300-1335.25)) \\
 \hline
 \text{Total retained by Dickinson} = \quad \$11,530.55
 \end{array}$$

In all cases, Dickinson also retains the right to deduct non-recoverable costs from any applicable refund. For students receiving Financial Aid, please see the "Financial Aid Refunds" section below.

#### Financial Aid Refunds

For students receiving Financial Aid, the financial aid refund rules apply as stated in the Dickinson College Bulletin under the Dickinson College Refund Policy. It is important to understand that, since the financial aid refund and the refund to the student's account are calculated using different methods, the refund to the student account may not fully cover the required refund to the financial aid programs, and the student may end up owing funds to the college after the refund to the financial aid programs has been made.

**Refund Policy for Emergency Cancellation  
Dickinson College Semester/Academic Year Programs  
Administered by the Center for Global Study and Engagement**

All decisions concerning the cancellation (or required modification) of a College program will be made by the Center for Global Study and Engagement in consultation with responsible authorities on campus and overseas. These decisions will be based on, but not limited to, State Department warnings. In the unlikely event of an emergency program cancellation, every effort will be made to accommodate the academic needs of program participants by offering an alternative to enable students to complete their course work. For example, one possible alternative for Semester/Academic Year programs would be to offer suitable coursework on-campus during the summer.

Students whose program is cancelled prior to the begin date will receive a full refund of the Program Fee, including the confirmation payment.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative for credit completion is offered, no refund will be given.

If a program is cancelled after it starts and an alternative credit completion is NOT offered, the student will receive a full refund including the confirmation payment.

## APPENDIX VIII: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### FAQ: YAOUNDÉ

#### ABOUT CAMEROON

##### **Where can I find some information about what is going on in Cameroon?**

CRTV ([www.crtv.cm](http://www.crtv.cm)), based in Yaoundé, is Cameroon's official state TV and radio company.

AllAfrica, accessible at [www.allafrica.com/cameroon](http://www.allafrica.com/cameroon), is a great site that provides daily updates in English from several countries major newspapers.

The local weather is available through the BBC website at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/5day.shtml?world=1605&links>.

##### **What is the currency in Cameroon?**

Cameroon uses the Communauté Financière Africaine franc, often noted as the FCFA or referred to simply as the “franc”. It is used in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. It is a product of the BEAC (Bank of the Central African States), and its official code is XAF. As of November 2008, \$1USD is equal to 502 FCFA. NOTE: There is also a West African CFA (code XOF), which is used in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. You don't want this!

#### PACKING

##### **Do you have any suggestions as to what we should bring if we're living with a host family as far as house warming gifts, etc?**

A gift for your host family is a good idea, though there is no need to spend more than \$20. Something unique to your town or area is always interesting, as is something from your school's bookstore. Your host families and friends would also enjoy t-shirts or hats from NYC, Washington D.C., or your school. In addition to a little present, you may want to bring some food or candy that is typically American.

It is highly recommended to bring a lot of photos. Your friends will want to see everything, including your house, your town, your family, your school, your friends, and your vacations. You will be asked about all of these things, and Cameroonians love looking at your pictures and showing you theirs. They will want to see your “exotic” pictures from home as much as your friends at school will want to see your “exotic” pictures from Cameroon.

##### **How much money should I bring?**

Past participants have brought between \$400 and \$500 in cash. Most people do not spend much of their own money, even when spending liberally, but it is recommended to have some extra; **you will need cash to cover non-stipend needs and personal travel**. Some people report spending only around \$100 of their own money, while others do not spend any at all. Any cash you bring can be stored in the Program Director's safe.

Also, bring whatever ID or credit/debit cards you normally have with you. Once you get to Cameroon, you can give them to the Program Director and he can store them in his safe for the

duration of your time there.

### **Is it safe to bring expensive electronics, like iPods, laptops, and digital cameras?**

Electronics, especially small or portable ones like iPods and cameras, are convenient to have and can improve the quality of your experience abroad. It is, of course, a matter of personal preference.

As with any electronics or valuables, you just have to be careful. Don't flash them around. Keep track of them when in large crowds, don't leave them sitting out in the open, and don't tell people where you store them. Your homestay room door will have a lock on it, and you may also lock up your things in the apartment. Remember, most of the people you will meet are honest, lovely people. Only a very small number of people will be, for various reasons, dishonest or unsavory characters.

### **Is it useful to bring a laptop?**

It depends. At the Centre, there are several desktop computers that are used for word processing and storing photos. The Centre, unlike most private residences, does have an internet connection. Most students use internet cafés, which are everywhere. So is a computer necessary? No. If you want to put pictures on it or keep files, it can be very useful. Just make sure you have a proper electricity converter and a really good virus protection program. If you are staying with a homestay family, you may want to keep your laptop at the Centre where it will be safer.

### **If I am living with a host family, should I bring sheets? If so, how many pairs?**

Everyone should bring at least one set of twin sheets. Your host family will probably provide them, but you will definitely want a set to cover the mattresses in the Dickinson apartment during the first few days before you move in with your host family. After you move in, you may keep your bedding at the Centre in case you spend the night there.

### **What kind of shoes should I bring?**

Flip-flops, sturdier sandals (like Birkenstocks or Teva sandals) and sneakers are the most appropriate shoes for every-day life in Yaoundé. If you like to hike and explore, bring good athletic sneakers or hiking boots, and make sure to bring at least one pair of dress shoes. Everything else depends on how much room you have left! Remember, Cameroonians take pride in dressing well; shoes should always be clean and in good repair.

### **What type of ID should we bring, if any, other than our passport and visa?**

In the first few days in Cameroon, you will have your passport and visa copied, and the Program Director will have it notarized. Your original will be stored in a safe (although you must have it with you if you travel outside of Yaoundé). You must keep this passport copy on you AT ALL TIMES.

You will be stopped regularly and will have to present it to the officers. The Program Director will tell you how to deal with these stops. Also, you may want a driver's license, which can be kept in the safe. You DO NOT need an international student ID card. It will not do you any good.

### **What over-the-counter medication should I bring with me?**

- Multi-vitamins: Unlike eating in the United States, you will miss out on a lot of important nutrients. Vitamin B is especially important. There is evidence that mosquitoes are attracted to people with vitamin B deficiencies.
- Insect repellent: Bring 2-3 bottles, or enough to last the entire semester.
- Pain killers: You will not find ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol), but there are generic pain killers and fever reducers available. Make sure to buy them from a reputable source, such as the pharmacies with green crosses.

- Saline solution for contacts: NO ONE has contacts in Yaoundé, so the cleaning solutions are very difficult to find.
- Imodium AD/Pepto-Bismol/Tums/Roloids: Helps with digestion and adjustment issues.
- Sleeping pills/nighttime medication: Medications Tylenol PM or melatonin will reset your biological clock; if you have a problem with jet lag, you may want these so you can be well rested from day one.
- Oragel: Bring if you are prone to cold sores.
- Cipro: This isn't technically over the counter, since you need a prescription, but make sure you have 20-30 pills, just in case of infections and stomach bugs.
- Tampons/pads: Tampons and pads are expensive. Many women prefer having their particular American brand and bring them. Another suggestion is The Keeper or The Diva Cup, both of which are sold online.
- Hydrocortisone cream: This reduces swelling and discomfort from insect bites; buy the strongest percentage available (usually 1%).
- Heartburn medication: *Piment* is a hot pepper commonly used in traditional cuisines, and past students have reported discomfort.
- Calamine Lotion
- Benadryl/Claritin

### **What kinds of toiletries should I bring?**

Bring enough shampoo, soap, conditioner, and toothpaste to last several days. Once you are settled in Yaoundé, you can go to a market and get more. Some toiletries, such as deodorant, hair styling products, shaving cream and razors, are sold in local stores but may be expensive. If you are particular about the brand you use, bring enough to last you all semester.

Bring sunscreen! Obviously, there is little/no market for sunscreen in Africa. Bring plenty, as it is very sunny almost every day. Even during the rainy season it is mostly sunny with a brief mid-afternoon downpour.

### **Do I need a raincoat?**

A raincoat may come in handy, but if you don't have the space, don't worry about it. The rainy season means that it will rain most days, but only for about an hour or two at a time. When the showers do arrive, almost everything shuts down and the streets empty. A lightweight jacket, a small travel poncho or a small umbrella will suffice.

### **Should I buy a mosquito net in Cameroon, or should I bring one with me?**

If you can find a mosquito net at a reasonable price that you can pack easily, you can bring that with you. Some host families will provide them, though not all. Mosquito nets are easily available at a reasonable price in Yaoundé. They are available at Score and Mahima, two grocery stores downtown, as well as Marché Centrale, the main market downtown (though it can be a little intimidating there – take a friend or host family member with you!). Having a fan blowing on you, and/or using permethrin will also keep the mosquitoes out. If you bring permethrin, one bottle should be plenty. It is possible to buy it there, but for the most part you won't need it. If you want to cover your mosquito net every so often, it will kill the mosquito on contact. You may also want to use it for travelling, though that is all personal preference.

### **What should I bring in my carry-on?**

Make sure you have all medications with you (especially for malaria), official documents (especially your passport and yellow WHO card), at least one extra change of clothes, and your toothbrush. If your bag gets lost, you will want everything valuable with you.

**Any other packing tips?**

Bring books. Everyone ends up reading A LOT, and between long bus rides, hot, dull afternoons, and rainy days, you will have plenty of time to do all that pleasure reading you've been missing. There are novels and nonfiction books that were left in the apartments from past years, but you'll still want your own.

Bring a lot of baby wipes. When you're hiking in the rainforest, riding the bus, or there is no water, you'll want to be able to get relatively clean. In daily life in Cameroon, you are likely to get dirty. Bring a money belt or secure bag that you can keep close to you. It is the best way to keep your money safe.

**Should I exchange money before I go to Cameroon?**

If you can even find a place to exchange money, which is rare, it isn't worth it. Not only will you probably get a bad exchange rate, but it is unnecessary. You will not need any money before you actually receive your stipend, and it is easy once in Yaoundé to exchange USD for francs.

**ACADEMICS****Can I get an internship?**

Yes. You will have a lot of free time in Yaoundé, so having an internship is a good way to fill that time. In the past, this has been something arranged by the Program Director and Academic Director upon arrival. An internship can be arranged once things settle a bit, but you will need to be proactive. Researching organizations based in or active in Yaoundé before you arrive. A meeting will be held with the on-site staff to find a placement site suitable to your academic and personal goals.

**What options do we have for courses besides those that are listed?**

Talk to the Program Director when you arrive. If a course can be arranged, he will do it for you, and during the first week of classes you can switch things around pretty easily. After that, your schedule is basically set. Each of your four classes, including a practicum during which you will learn about Yaoundé, is held once a week for two hours. Most classes have less than seven students.

**When will we pick classes?**

You should have indicated in your application which kind of classes you wanted to take. These preferences will give the Program Director a good idea of what classes to arrange. A list of courses should be emailed to you before your arrival in Cameroon; during your orientation you will meet the professors and decide which classes you will take.

**Do we have classes with local university students?**

No. Their school schedule is not compatible with ours. Your classes will consist of students from the Dickinson program and are taught by a Cameroonian professor. They will usually be held in a room at the Center or within walking distance of the apartment.

If you would like to visit the university or attend a class there, talk to a professor and/or the academic director. Professors really enjoy it when you want to sit in on a class. To get in contact with university students, talk to the Program Director. If all else fails, just go to the university and hang out for an afternoon--you are guaranteed to talk to many people. Don't be scared – it is really fun and interesting.

## **DAILY LIFE**

### **What activities are available in Yaoundé? How accessible are sports clubs?**

If you are interested in football (soccer), Cameroon will be heaven. There are two stadiums very close to the apartments, and many pick-up games go on all over the place. At the universities (Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II/Soa, and the Catholic University), there are even more activities and sports clubs, though you may have to do a little scouting around. If you like to run – do it! Running is fairly popular, though it's best to do it during the cooler hours in the morning.

Plenty of other activities are available through the university. Talk to your professors, and they can help you find groups that interest you. Previous students have participated in art, dance and theater groups.

If you are interested in art and cultural events, check out the Centre Culturel Francais (French Cultural Center), which is located downtown next to Score. They often have movies, performances, and art displays. Just by hanging around for a bit, you are bound to meet creative, original, and artistic people. Also, if you ask your Cameroonian friends to join you, they will be more than happy to show you where you can hear some great live music.

### **What we can expect to find when traveling in the markets?**

In local food markets, you will find commonly used ingredients – fruits, vegetables, spices, beans, peanuts, palm oil, rice, beef, and chicken – as well as second hand clothing, dishes, and other random goods. Go to the markets often. It's a great way to see Cameroonian culture; if you are friends with the vendors, they will often help you out with whatever you need. There are a few large markets in Yaoundé where you will have a diverse selection of clothing and almost anything else you can imagine! There are a few craft and artisan markets, where you can buy handmade gifts and souvenirs.

In every market, you will have to bargain. Bargaining is a learning process. Some people are amazing, while others have a hard time. It can be a fun game for me, and you will end up with some interesting things. Ask your Cameroonian friends or your host families how much you should be paying for things to make sure you are paying a fair price!

### **How should I carry money?**

The best idea is to invest in a money belt or secure bag that you can wear close to you, which is worn around your waist but under your clothes. It's similar to a fanny pack, but much thinner. Some students also choose to wear neck pouches. In the belt or pouch, you can keep your notarized passport copy, money, extra coins for a cab, and even an extra malaria pill. You don't want a wallet or purse with you all the time since they are too easy to take in markets or crowded area. Keep coins and small bills in your pockets for cabs for shopping in the market. Do not bring attention to your money if you do not have to.

### **How will I do laundry?**

You will probably be doing laundry by hand. Frequent water outages complicate the laundry process, so be patient and flexible. There is a particular brown square soap (called Maysoap) that everyone uses for laundry, as well as a powdered detergent called "Blu". If you don't know how to do laundry by hand, ask a professor or Cameroonian friend. They will probably be happy to show you.

At the Centre, there is a basin and clothesline to do your laundry. For students staying with host families, there will be a central location where everyone does laundry. It is probably best to ask your host mom or sisters about this. Some host families actually did laundry for the students, but don't count on this.

In the past, people have hired friends to do laundry for them in exchange for some “small money,” but that is your choice. It can take days for clothing to dry during the rainy season, so plan accordingly. After four months of hand washing, your clothing may be worn out and faded. Don’t expect to get things as clean there!

You should probably iron all your clothing. It’s been said that bugs can crawl in and lay eggs that will then get in your skin if you don’t iron them, although this may happen when Cameroonians lay clothing to dry over bushes and in the grass. In any event, ironing your clothing and maintaining a generally neat appearance is important to many Cameroonians, and you will be expected to do the same.

### **Can we have friends stay over in our apartment?**

Absolutely not. The only people who can stay overnight in the Centre are others in the program, or, with approval from the director, family members who are visiting. There is too much of a risk if others stay there.

### **How can I be safe with water?**

Don’t bother with a water purifier; it’s not worth the hassle. When cooking, make sure the water is thoroughly boiled, or you can treat it with iodine.

It is very easy and cheap to get bottled water to drink and for brushing your teeth. Never buy water on the side of the road that comes in bags, and when buying water from random vendors, make sure it is sealed from the factory and not just refilled.

Never go swimming in fresh water and avoid baths (showers, however, are fine). Oceans are fine, and if you would like to go to a pool, there are good facilities at the American School, Club France, and various upscale hotels.

### **Do I need to know French?**

The more you know, the better. Study up on basic pleasantries, food, and numbers. The more you make an effort to speak French, the more warmly you will be received.

## **ELECTRONIC GADGETS**

### **What kinds of camera should I bring?**

Pictures are a priceless souvenir from this experience, but people have brought many different types of cameras in the past.

- DISPOSABLES should be avoided. The heat, dirt, and humidity tend to be too much for them.
- 35 MM CAMERAS work well, but be careful to protect them from the elements. If you go to the game park in the north, a powerful zoom is a great investment so you can really see the animals in your photos. It is recommended to develop your film at home rather than in Cameroon.
- DIGITAL CAMERAS worked very well, as long as people were careful. The computers in the apartment will be convenient for storing your photos or for transferring them onto a USB or discs. Make sure your memory card has enough memory that you can take tons of photos on trips. Bring plenty of batteries or rechargeable batteries, since they can be hard to find (especially lithium batteries) and are very expensive.

Remember, Cameroonians love pictures, and many have not seen the places to which you will travel. They will want to see the other parts of their own country too! Putting together a slideshow for them is often a great idea.

Getting film developed in Cameroon is not recommended. It is hard to find a reliable developer and can be extremely expensive. If you do decide to develop a roll, maybe to give to friends (which is a great idea), it is best to go in the morning, while the chemicals are still fresh, for better results.

### **What is the deal with cell phones?**

- **IF YOU HAVE A CELL PHONE in the U.S.:** your American phone will not work in Cameroon. Most companies offer some sort of deal where, for a small fee, you can suspend your service contract without a penalty for up to 6 months.
- **GETTING A CELL PHONE IN CAMEROON:** It really is worth buying a cell phone when you are there. Nearly everyone has a phone or access to a cell phone, and it is the best way to communicate with your friends and host families. Your Cameroonian cell phone will be a pay-as-you-go system, and small boutiques selling minutes are on nearly every street corner. It does not cost you to receive domestic or international calls. The program can help you get and set up a cell phone.
- **IF YOUR FAMILY WANTS TO CALL YOU:** Skype or calling cards are probably the best way to go. Websites like [www.callingcards.com](http://www.callingcards.com) offer rates of about \$0.19 a minute. Whoever purchases the card should take into consideration whether they are calling you on a cell phone or a landline (*telephone fixe*), because the rates can be different. Usually your phone card will give you more minutes if you are calling from a landline, and less if you are calling from a cell phone. You will probably be able to call home in the first few days, though as with everything in Cameroon, that can't be guaranteed! Set up "dates" with your family and friends and try to stick to them. Again, call boxes run only about 5 cents a minute to call the United States.

## **LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **How did the experiences of students who live in the Centre compare with those who lived with a family?**

It is all about the attitude you bring to the situation. The more flexible you are and the better sense of humor you have, the more pleasurable your experience will be. Living arrangements don't have to be the defining factor in your time spent abroad. Each situation has its advantages and disadvantages (see page 32 for more information).

### **When will our housing arrangements be made?**

As you'll learn in Cameroon, sometimes you just have to go with the flow. Many host family arrangements are not made until the last minute, or changes are made. Don't worry, you will live with great people! Unfortunately, you will not know far in advance where you will be. Take it in stride, and you'll enjoy it.

### **Generally how wealthy are the families we stay with? Are these people in the top, middle, or lower economic classes?**

You will be with families in the middle to upper class. You will live in a place that is secure, and many of the families have host parents involved in teaching or business. Honestly, you will get to see a range of lifestyles, even if you live with a relatively wealthy family. If you'd like to visit a more rural area, that can be arranged.

Remember that there are a wide variety of lifestyles in Yaoundé and in Cameroon. You will learn tremendous amounts no matter where or with whom you live.

## **RANDOM QUESTIONS**

### **What kind of internet access do we have?**

There is internet access at the Dickinson center, however, if you need to use internet outside of the center you can find many internet cafes within walking distance of the apartment for about a dollar an hour. They are usually open from 10 am-10 pm. Internet access may be much slower than what you are used to in the U.S., but a little patience will go a long way.

You will not be able to download AIM, but you can use AIM express through [http://www.aim.com/get\\_aim/express/aim\\_expr.adp?aolp=](http://www.aim.com/get_aim/express/aim_expr.adp?aolp=).

You may find that the connection and privacy issues hinder your ability to use Skype, but there are a lot of telephone booths that offer inexpensive international phone rates and a bit of privacy.

You may also want to suggest to people that they contact you with Yahoo! Messenger. Most computers already have that installed, so it will be relatively easy to set up times to chat.

### **We are not to use the banking system, so how do we access money?**

NEVER use the banking system. You should be able to get most of what you need with the money from your stipend. You will have to bring cash with you, which you may store with the Program Director, for your non-stipend needs. If you give him a few days, he can exchange your USD for FCFA. There are a few ATMs available, but remember that the fees will most likely be exorbitant.

### **If I need medicine, where can I get it?**

DO NOT buy any medicines off the street. If you really need something, the pharmacies with green crosses are fairly reputable, such as the one in Biyem-Assi. In any event, talk to the doctor or Program Director, and one of them can help you find what you need.

### **Can I go on a safari?**

There will be a weeklong excursion to the northern provinces, including a trip to the Waza Game preserve. If you would like to plan additional travel around Cameroon, talk to the Program Director for travel suggestions, preparations and arrangements.

### **I know that the mail system is unreliable. Is there anything I can do to make sure things get to me?**

Basically, no. Almost everyone got most of their mail, but there is always a chance that things will be lost. The best tip is to tell people to write to you in red ink. Cameroonians associate it with death and bad news, and are often more likely to make sure the letter gets to the recipient. If you do receive a package, do not go to pick it up alone. Go with a Cameroonian. Having someone there who is knowledgeable about the inner workings is helpful. Another recommendation is to have things sent in padded envelopes instead of boxes (if possible) to shorten the time it will take to get to you.

### **How are women treated in Cameroon?**

This is a delicate subject. As a woman, especially if you are white, you will be subject to a lot of unwanted attention by men. Most likely, you will be harassed and touched as you walk down the street, especially in crowded market places. This type of behavior is not acceptable, but unfortunately it does happen. There is not really a way to prepare for this before leaving, and to be frank, there are times when it will seem unbearable. Talk to each other – you can really be supportive of one another, because it can be a difficult issue to deal with.

Until you are comfortable in your surroundings, wear a ring and try to go places in the company

of a male, because if all else fails you can say he is your husband. Tell people you have a boyfriend/fiancé/are married when they ask. A few helpful phrases:

- “J’ai un petit ami/fiancé/mari.” = I have a boyfriend/fiancé/husband.
- “Je suis fidèle.” = I am faithful (men will tell you it’s ok to be with them, even though you have a significant other)
- “Ne me touche(z) pas.” = Don’t touch me.
- “Laisse(z)-moi seule.” = Leave me alone

### **Will I be able to change Cameroonian society while I’m there?**

As silly as this question may sound, there are some people who think they will be able to save the world while they are there. Remember that you are there to learn. While in Cameroon, it is important to be respectful of laws and customs and not criticize them without understanding them. It will make your transition much smoother if you keep this in mind. This is not to say that you won’t do anything that will have a positive impact, but don’t be disappointed if, for example, the men in your host family still won’t help with chores around the house, even if you’ve tried to “enlighten” them.

### **Final comments...**

*“Erase all preconceptions of how Africa is. It isn’t anything you expect, believe me. Continue to be open minded throughout the whole time there. Everyday, you’ll experience/observe more random events than the day before. This program is one of those that gives you the ability to make of it as you like. Do as much as you can, travel as much as you can, and adapt into the culture as best you can. You will feel frustrated, tired, upset, and scared at times, but it will only make you a strong and better person at the end. Be careful with who you trust. Be smart with your actions. The semester will go faster than you think. We all wish we could stay longer.”*

*“I would tell the students to be prepared for anything, and to remain flexible even when outside of their comfort zone. I would tell them to rely on their peers for support, but to make the experience solely their own, and to experience Cameroon for themselves and no one else.”*