HOST FRIEND PROGRAM HANDBOOK

UW - Eau Claire
Center for International Education
Contact Information

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Introduction

UW- Eau Claire is fortunate to have such a large community of international students.

The Host Friend Program matches international students with members of the community for a weekend homestay. Host Friends introduce international students to daily American life outside of the University community.
Both our hosts and students come from a variety of religious, cultural, and political backgrounds. Sharing viewpoints, opinions, and experiences regarding these subject areas will likely be one of the most interesting and rewarding aspects of this program. However, students and hosts should never attempt to change another person's religious beliefs or political affiliations.

Host Friends and international students receive the information contained in this book.
Expectations

As a Host

- Hosts with pick up their student from the Chippewa Valley airport, shuttle station, or campus
- Provide a 2-3 day homestay
- Drop your student off for orientation/move-in day
- Give support during first days in Wisconsin
- Contact student at least once a month during their first semester
- Introduce students to American culture
- Learn about your student's culture
- Contact the Host Friend Program team if you can no longer get in touch with the student
Hosts are NOT responsible for:

- Financial, immigration, or academic support
- Healthcare (physical or emotional)
- Housing students other than the initial homestay
- Housing visitors or family of the students

If an issue arises that you are uncomfortable with, please reach out to the Host Friend Program team.

Trained professionals on campus can help with these issues. Contact information for a few of UW - Eau Claire's student support offices can be found on page 16.
Expectations
For Students

- Communicate their travel arrangements with you
- Respond to your invitations/emails/phone messages
- Notify you in advance if they must cancel an engagement
- Be kind and respectful towards you and your hospitality
- Contact the Host Friend Program team if they can no longer continue the host relationship
- Contact the Host Friend Program team if you can no longer get in touch with the student
Student Arrival

Typically, students will arrive to Eau Claire by airplane or shuttle service. All students are informed upon acceptance that they are expected to make travel arrangement to Eau Claire and share those arrangements with their hosts. You are NOT responsible for picking your student up from any airport outside of Eau Claire.

Chippewa Valley Regional Airport
3800 Starr Ave.
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(715) 839-4900
Track flights at:
chippewavalleyairport.com or flightaware.com/live/airport/KEAU

Chippewa Valley Shuttle Service
6204 Chuck Lane
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(715) 830-9400
Student Arrival Tips:

- Give your student a tour of your home and show them where they will be sleeping.
- Explain how the bathroom works: toilet (after each use), water faucets, and shower/shower curtain. Be very detailed!
- Briefly explain pertinent house rules, go into more detail after your student is rested. A written sheet of house rules may help with comprehension.
- Avoid big activities for your student's first night/day. Your student may want to rest. Simple activities such as a trip to the grocery store or Target could be an exciting cultural experience.
- Keep plenty of night lights around the house.
- Leave a drink & snack in your students room if they get hungry. Let me know where to find other food/drink items as well.
- Suggest that the student make contact with their family and decipher if they need to set up a cell phone (see pg 11)
Hospitality Hints

- Learn to pronounce your students given name and practice saying it with them.
- Speak distinctly but not loudly. It is more helpful to pause between sentences than to speak each word slowly. Try to avoid using slang or idioms. Ask your student to repeat anything you do not understand and encourage them to do the same.
- Treat them as part of the family. Share photographs, find mutual hobbies, explain new customs and manners to them.
- Becomes familiar with some basic facts about your students home country PRIOR to their arrival. Their traditional holidays can be lonesome for students, helping them celebrate their holidays can mean a lot!
Your student may have dietary restrictions because of religious or cultural practices. Try to find this out prior to their arrival and plan accordingly. Ask your student if they would even like to help shop for and prepare meals!

Be aware of direct/indirect communication. There are different styles of communication including: personal space, eye contact, use of silence, body language, etc. Don't be offended if your student does not look you in the eye.

Make plans for your next get together before dropping your student off at their residence hall.

Make sure when you plan an activity with your student that time, place, dress, transportation, and duration of the activity are clearly understood.

Keep in mind that some cultures do not stress punctuality. Let your student know that when you set a time for an outing, being late may cause a problem.
Homestay Activity Ideas

The possibilities are endless! Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Downtown Eau Claire Farmers Market
- Sledding
- Set up a U.S. cell phone (see page 11)
- See a movie
- Go to an orchard
- Cook an American meal together or go to an American style restaurant
- Cook a tradition meal from your students home country together
- Play American board/card games
- Tour upper and lower campus
- Help celebrate their holidays & invite them to yours
Cell Phones

U.S. phones and phone plans are very different than international carriers and we encourage students to do their research before purchasing a phone. We suggest going to Best Buy or AT&T to set this up.

Carriers that offer no-contract pre-paid plans:

- TracFone
- Straight Talk
- Simple Mobile
- T-Mobile Prepaid
The Host Friend team will email hosts their student's residence hall assignment as determined by the Housing Department. This email will also contain parking information and residence hall map. Please go with your student to check-in at their residence hall and help them figure out who their Residence Assistant (RA) is. There are student volunteers on site to help move students into the residence hall.

Each room will be furnished with linens however most students would like to purchase a new set upon their arrival.
Culture Shock

Cultural adjustment, also known as, "culture shock," is the feeling of disorientation a person may experience when in a new cultural environment.

Studying abroad can be one of the most exhilarating learning experiences of a student's life or it can be a series of bewildering incidents. Culture shock is a normal feeling and logical response to the differences a student will encounter in a foreign culture.

Although culture shock is not linear and different for everyone, there are typically 5 phases:

- Fascination with new experiences and culture
- Feeling like they do not belong
- Rejecting new culture and people
- Navigating foreign behavior and customs
- Accepting and enjoying new culture
Why Does it Happen?
Much of what happens in a new environment strikes the student as unpredictable and off as they are not comfortable with American culture yet. Often students obtain a higher degree of self-understanding and personal growth from this though. Most gain a greater education of what it means to be from their home country and how others in the world live and think.

When it Does Happen?
When students first arrive they may be excited and nervous about their upcoming adventure. You can help with their anxiety by listening, answering questions, and pointing them to resources. After their first few weeks, things may become more frustrating as classes increase in difficulty and mid-terms occur. Reach out to your student. Most students adapt to their new environment, but will still oscillate over time.
The Signs and Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Emotional reactions such as irritability, moodiness, or exaggerated elation

Some students will deny they are experiencing culture shock no matter how apparent or severe the symptoms are. Other students may breeze through their time without suffering from culture shock at all. Nevertheless, just because someone does show any signs does not mean they are not struggling.

Ways You Can Help

By providing a feeling of home for a student - for example cooking a meal from their home country together and offering a patient ear, is sometimes the best way to show your support. You may want to recommend campus resources if the behavior begins interfering with the student's daily life (see page 16).
Student Support

Offices

Housing & Residence Life
Towers Hall 112, (715) 836-3674, housing@uwec.edu

Advising, Retention & Career Center
Vicki Lord Larson Hall 2100, (715) 836-3487, arcc@uwec.edu

Student Health Services
Crest Wellness Center 150, (715) 836-5360, shs@uwec.edu

Counseling Services
Vicki Lord Larson Hall 2122, (715) 836-5521

Admissions Office
Schofield Hall 111, (715) 836-5415, intladm@uwec.edu

Academic Skills Center
Centennial Hall 2104, (715) 836-2200, asc@uwec.edu
Health Insurance

All students are required to purchase accident & sickness, medical evacuation, and repatriation insurance each semester throughout their studies. Insurance is a requirement of international student visas. Students are charged for insurance through their student bill and are automatically enrolled. There are no exceptions.

During orientation, students are educated about their insurance benefits and coverage, what to do, and where to go when health services are needed.
Emergency Situations

In case of an emergency, please dial 911

Students have insurance through UW - Eau Claire even if they do not have the insurance card.

Student Health Insurance Information:
Consolidated Health Plan
1 (800) 633-7867
www.consolidatedhealthplan.com
Provider: Cigna

Identify network providers prior to your students stay to quicken your response to an emergency situation. Students will need to complete and submit a claim form after services are provided.
Student Health Services (SHS) functions as an outpatient medical facility. Students are seen by appointment in room 150 of the Crest Wellness Center.

Services Provided:

- Treatment of general medical problems
- Minor surgical problems
- Women's & men's healthcare
- Lab services and immunizations
- Health education
- Tobacco cessation
- Contraception and sexually transmitted infection testing