

**Exchange Student
Handbook**
for CSU, Chico students
studying on international exchange programs

School of Graduate and International Programs
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0680
Phone: (530) 898-6880
Fax: (530) 898-6889

Table of Contents

CSU, Chico International Exchange Programs Overview.....1

Checklist.....2
 Things to do before you leave
 Things to do after your arrival and at the end of the program

Academic and Financial Matters.....4
 Approval of Credit, Grades and Transcripts
 Chico Pre-Registration While Abroad
 Withdrawing From Your Program
 Fees
 Financial Aid

Preparing To Go.....5
 Passport
 Visa
 International Student I.D. Card
 Health Insurance
 Medication and Inoculations
 Travel Arrangements
 Packing
 Customs Regulations
 Preparing Yourself for Study Abroad

Living Abroad.....8
 In Case of Emergency
 Security Abroad, Traveling and Living
 Accommodations Abroad
 Personal Matters Abroad
 Money
 International Calling Card
 Health Issues Abroad
 Psychological Counseling
 Legal Matters
 Security Abroad
 Culture Shock

Returning to Chico.....13

Appendix.....14

Handbook was written and edited by Darla Mazariegos, International Programs Coordinator, and updated in May, 2005 by Tasha Dev, Study Abroad Coordinator at CSU, Chico. Portions were adapted from Cornell University's Student Handbook for Students Studying Abroad.

CSU, Chico Direct International Exchange Programs Overview

The Direct International Exchange programs are the most independent and challenging programs offered by CSU, Chico. These programs are offered through bilateral exchange agreements between CSU, Chico and our partner universities overseas. Each program has a unique agreement upon which it was founded, and these agreements vary in terms of exchange duration, fees, requirements, application procedures and more. The Study Abroad Coordinator at CSU, Chico will provide each student with the information they need pertaining to their specific program, as per the agreement Chico State has with the host university.

Students who participate in these programs are expected to actively inform themselves about all aspects of the program by maintaining consistent contact with the Study Abroad Coordinator at CSU, Chico, and the Coordinator at the host university. This contact begins prior to departure, and continues until after the student returns to Chico. The Direct International Exchange programs were developed for the more independent and mature students, who are willing to take on the responsibility for virtually all aspects of planning and preparation associated with studying abroad.

The Direct International Exchange programs are ideal for students who want to challenge themselves by fully integrating into the day-to-day academic and personal life of the host country. Students who participate on a Direct International Exchange are generally those looking for a deep and meaningful cultural experience, and who are willing to work hard to ensure that this happens. While the Study Abroad Office at Chico, and the International Programs Office at the host university will do their best to assist you, students looking for a great deal of “hand holding” and personal assistance with planning and preparation should consider looking into some of the more “service-oriented” programs offered by CSU, Chico, such as IP or USAC.

This Exchange Student Handbook was prepared especially for participants on the Direct International Exchange, and should help to clarify and guide you as you begin this great international academic adventure. If you have any questions pertaining to this Handbook or any other aspect of the Direct International Exchange, please contact the Study Abroad Coordinator at CSU, Chico.

Checklist

Things to do before you leave:

- Submit the following to the Study Abroad Office to complete your file:**
 - 1. Health Insurance Questionnaire**
 - 2. Financial Statement**
 - 3. Student Code of Conduct**
 - 4. Assumption of Risk and Release Agreement (signed and notarized)**
 - 5. Recent photo (does NOT need to be a passport photo)**
 - 6. Course Equivalency Form(s)**
 - 7. A copy of your flight itinerary**
 - 8. A copy of your passport**
 - 9. Authorization to Release Information form**

- Apply for or renew your passport. You can obtain applications and information from the main post office on Vallambrosa Avenue in Chico and at www.state.gov.

- After receiving your acceptance letter from the host university, contact the host country's consulate to obtain a student visa (a stamp in your passport). A simple internet search will provide you with most information you will need to obtain a visa.

- Contact the student health center to find out if inoculations are required or recommended. Schedule a check-up, purchase a Medic-Alert bracelet (if needed), and order an ample supply of necessary medication.

- Purchase International Student I.D. Card. Applications are available at Tehama 209, by phone at (800)-2COUNCIL or on-line at www.counciltravel.com.

- Make your plane reservation. Make certain to purchase a ticket that will allow you to make changes. Student discounts are available through STA Travel at (800) 777-0112 and Adventure Travel at (800) 467-5032. You must have an International Student ID Card to receive this discount.

- Purchase health insurance, if necessary. Submit verification of insurance to the Study Abroad Office. You may purchase an international student health insurance plan through CSU Health Link. Enroll on-line at: www.csuhealthlink.com

- Make an appointment with your adviser in your major, minor or GE to receive written approval for courses to be taken abroad.

- Omit your local address at the Record's office on campus.

- Make sure you know how to access funds abroad should you need them.

- Gain background information on your country and program.

- Obtain small gifts for your host family, host institution and future friends.

Things to do after your arrival:

- Notify the Study Abroad Office, your family and friends of your new address in your host country as soon as you know it. If you change your e-mail address you should also send this to your contacts at home and the Study Abroad Office.
- Contact your Academic and Study Abroad advisers via e-mail if you need to make changes to your Course Equivalency form(s).
- Keep copies of all syllabi and work completed so that you can present these items to your academic advisers at CSU, Chico.

Things to do at the end of the program:

- Request two official transcripts from your host institution (the host institution may actually send this to us as a courtesy, but make sure to ask).
- Submit one transcript (in a sealed envelope) to the Study Abroad Coordinator upon your return to campus (this will be forwarded to the Student Records Office)
- Take the second transcript to your academic adviser if you need classes evaluated for credit; you should keep this copy for your records.
- Contact the Study Abroad Adviser if you are interested in volunteering at the Study Abroad Office.

Academic Matters and Financial Matters

Approval of Credit, Grades, and Transcripts

Before your departure, you should make an appointment with your faculty adviser(s) if you need to design your study abroad program to fit requirements for your major or minor. You should also contact a General Education evaluator if you want approval for GE courses. If you are taking a course that can be considered as an equivalent, your adviser should make this approval in writing.

For most programs, you will be block registered in a class called INST 401: Study Abroad for 12 units. This course will be graded Credit/No Credit. The classes you take at the host university will not appear on your CSU, Chico transcript; however, they will appear on your major/minor clearance forms and your “grad check.” At the end of the program, it is your responsibility to obtain a transcript and submit it to CSU, Chico so that you can receive credit. If you need to document the specific classes you have taken, you should request an additional transcript from your university and upon your return have these available when your adviser asks to see which classes you have taken.

Registering for Classes While Studying Abroad

You will be registered at CSU, Chico in a "study abroad" course for the semester(s) you are studying abroad. You will also need to register through the Host Institution for the actual courses you will be taking. Each host institution has its own method for registering you in courses.

Withdrawing From Your Program

When you are accepted to participate in a Direct International Exchange program, you have become both a student at the host university, as well as a representative of CSU, Chico. While the same CSU, Chico policies on withdrawing apply to you while you are overseas, withdrawing during the middle of the program has a great impact on your host institution. Because of this, we encourage you to strongly consider your commitment to the program before you leave. If you determine while abroad that you absolutely must leave the program, you should **IMMEDIATELY** notify the Study Abroad Coordinator at CSU, Chico AND the International Programs Coordinator at the Host Institution. You will not receive credit for the classes you fail to complete, and will be given a “W” for the units attempted (INST 401). Consult your CSU,Chico course catalog if you have any questions or concerns about withdrawing or any other university policy.

Fees

You will pay regular student fees at CSU, Chico. Make sure you have made arrangements for paying your fees before you leave the country.

Financial Aid

If you want to apply or if you are already receiving financial aid, contact Carolyn Stephen in the Financial Aid Office. You must arrange for Direct Deposit of your financial aid check prior to leaving the country.

Preparing To Go

Passport

If you already have a passport that will be valid for at least three months after your planned return to the United States, you can skip this section. If not, you should immediately apply for one or renew your old one. You can obtain passport application and information at the Main Post Office on Vallambrosa Avenue in Chico. Applications can also be found on the web at www.state.gov. For a new passport you will need:

1. A completed passport application
2. Proof of citizenship, which can be a certificate of naturalization, a previous passport, or a certified copy of your birth certificate
3. Required fee

Visa

A visa is a stamp in your passport which authorizes you to enter, study, and travel within a particular country. Student visa requirements vary by country, and you can determine what is required by the country in which you plan to study, by visiting the host country's consular website. You should apply as soon as possible, as it may take up to two months to obtain. Please note that visa requirements are subject to change. The best way to assure that you have the most up-to-date information on visa requirements for American Students studying in the host country is to visit the consulate website. You will definitely need to submit a copy of your letter of acceptance when you apply, and may need to furnish your birth certificate, proof of financial aid, a bank statement and/or a statement of good health from your physician.

International Student ID Card

It is required that you purchase an International Student ID Card. The major benefits include domestic and international travel discounts by air, rail, bus and ferry, as well as discounts on accommodations, museums, theaters, cinemas, and other places of interest. Holders of these cards receive basic sickness/medical insurance coverage and \$25,000 for emergency evacuation when traveling outside the U.S. They also have access to a 24-hour travel assistance hotline staffed by multilingual representatives ready to help travelers with medical, financial, or legal emergencies.

The travel assistance centers can assist you in:

1. Locating medical facilities.
2. Communicating with family members, personal physicians, and employers.
3. Arranging medical payments.
4. Finding an English-speaking attorney.
5. Replacing lost travelers checks or passport.
6. Arranging emergency travel home.

The International I.D. Card is valid for 16 months, from September 1 through December 31 of the following year. One passport-size photo, Chico State Student I.D. card, other valid form of identification (driver's license, etc.) and a fee (currently \$22) are required. To purchase the card before you go, contact the International Programs Office in Tehama Hall, Room 209 or call (530) 898-6880. You may also choose to apply on-line at www.counciltravel.com or call 1-800-2COUNCIL.

Medication and Inoculations

Make sure that your inoculations are current. You will want to begin your research on which inoculations are required for living in the host country by visiting the Center for Disease Control website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. You should then make an appointment with the Student Health Center or your family physician, at least eight weeks before you leave, to arrange to get the necessary inoculations. If you intend to travel to other countries, be sure to tell them in case you need shots for these areas as well.

It is wise to take care of any foreseeable medical, dental, gynecological, or optic needs before you go abroad. Prescription medicine for use over an extended period of time should be taken from home. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to ship medication overseas.

If you carry a large supply of medication, bring a letter from your doctor to show to custom officials. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair along, or at least a copy of your prescription. Contact lens wearers might bring along a supply of wetting and cleaning solutions. If you use an electrical disinfecting unit for soft contacts, you may want to switch to chemicals, since the unit may not function well overseas, even with a converter.

Travel Arrangements

Students are responsible for arranging and paying for their own transportation to and from the foreign location. It is important to plan ahead in order to arrive at the host university a few days early, allowing sufficient time to recover from jet lag and to adjust to the new surroundings. Several tips that you might consider in making air travel arrangements:

- Students who plan to travel in Europe or Asia for three months or more often choose to buy a one-way ticket out of the United States and assume that once they are overseas, they will be able to purchase an inexpensive ticket home. This is actually often more costly. Overseas fares are not regulated in the same way as those in the U.S., so do not assume that one-way fares will be the same coming home. Investigate fully before you purchase a ticket. When purchasing a round-trip ticket, you should always invest in a ticket that allows you to make changes and/or cancellations with limited penalties.
- Check into agencies dealing with charter flights, and youth/student fares. You can purchase cheap student airline tickets from Adventure Travel (1-800-467-5032) or STA Travel (1-800-777-0112).
- Most airlines have 800 telephone numbers and a webpage. A simple phone call or internet search will give you an idea of the approximate amount of money you should be budgeting for airfare before contacting a travel agent. Often a willingness to be flexible on the travel days can save a substantial amount of money. Travel during mid-week is often less expensive than on weekends. Travel during peak season is the most expensive.

Packing

Most airlines have luggage restrictions, usually two bags and a carry-on bag. There are also often size and weight restrictions. Check with your airline for current weight and size allowance and excess baggage charges. If you bring large items, such as bicycles, guitars, or skis, you must contact the airline in advance. Taking only a few light pieces will avoid possible excess baggage charges, juggling luggage in railway compartments, and storage problems when traveling. Do not pack more than you can carry by yourself!

Here are some other objects you may want to keep in mind to pack: electric converters, sleeping bag, travel alarm clock (that runs on batteries), Swiss army knife (but do NOT pack this in your

carry-on luggage), safety pouch to carry money and passport, lead X-ray proof bag to protect your film, and film. It is important to remember that you will return home with more than you took abroad; everything you take or ship to your location abroad will have to be transported or shipped back home, and shipping items from overseas is nearly always considerably more expensive than shipping from the States. Most things you need are available overseas, and if an item is NOT available, you will probably be able to live without it for a semester or a year, just as the locals inevitably do.

Customs Regulations

If you have a relatively new camera or other expensive items, be sure to register them with the U.S. Customs before you leave the U.S. and keep the receipt. If you do not, you may have to pay duty on it overseas or upon return. To register, take your passport and valuable items to any customs office (located at international airports). If you wait to do this at the airport on departure day, allow plenty of extra time, and keep in mind that their hours may be limited. As a rule, you can enter or leave any western European country with any item intended for personal use. Since Congress occasionally changes custom laws, you should consult an up-to-date U.S. Customs publication if you have specific questions concerning custom regulations related to bringing items back to the U.S., a helpful leaflet has been prepared by the Government Printing Office entitled "Customs Hints for Returning U.S. Travelers" and is available by writing U.S. Customs, P.O. Box 7118, Washington D.C. 20044. You may also wish to visit the U.S. Department of State website at: <http://travel.state.gov/links.html>.

Preparing Yourself for Studying Abroad

The more you know about your host country and university before you leave, the better off you are likely to be when you get there. Of course you cannot know everything beforehand. Read books, fiction and non-fiction, dealing with your host country, and visit various sites on the web, such as:

<http://cn.net.au/country.html>

General travel information with links to travel advisories in English

<http://travel.state.gov/links.html>

U.S. State Department website with links to web pages of American Embassies

<http://travel.state.gov/travelwarnings.html>

U.S. State Department travel advisories

Don't forget to talk to people!!! Most people love sharing their overseas experience, and they are perhaps your best resource. The following might be particularly useful:

- Talk to students, faculty, and staff who have visited, worked, or lived in your host country.
- Talk to students and friends who have gone on the program you are attending.
- Talk to students and scholars from your host country.
- Prepare yourself to speak, read, and write the target language.
- Read books and periodicals in the native language (if possible).
- Practice reading textbooks, particularly in your major, if you plan to take courses in the native language.
- Speak as often as possible to students and faculty versed in the language and culture.

Living Abroad

In Case of Emergency

When you travel, leave an itinerary with someone so they know where you will be in case they need to contact you because of an emergency. In an emergency, the Department of State will help find you if necessary. Your family can obtain the latest information on travel advisories around the world at <http://travel.state.gov/travelwarnings.html>.

Accommodations Abroad

Depending on the location, students may have the option of homestays, living in a university dormitory room, or in an apartment. You will be advised on the arrangements particular to your program before you leave.

- *University housing:* If you have not been notified of a housing assignment, address, or opening date before you leave the U.S., contact the International Adviser at the host university and/or the Study Abroad Adviser at CSU, Chico.
- *Homestays/Boarding Arrangements:* Some host universities can arrange homestays ahead of time. Homestays may have an expectation of your participation in the daily activities of your host family, while others make boarding arrangements that do not. You should be prepared to purchase a gift for your family; something from Chico is a good option, such as a T-shirt, books, or pictures. A little courtesy goes a long way.

No matter where you study abroad, it is important to remember that you cannot expect housing abroad to be the same as in the U.S. That is part of the adventure!

Money

Talk to people who have been to your host country to get an idea about what things cost. How much you will need depends, of course, on how you plan to travel (plane, train, or bus), where you plan to stay, what you like to do (shopping, concerts, or sightseeing), and your personal budget.

During your first few weeks abroad, you usually spend more than you will later on. In addition to picking up those things you forgot to bring, it will take a while to find the best inexpensive restaurants, bargain shops, discount tickets, etc. After this period of adjustments, you will find that you can enjoy more with less. Returned students say that it is wise to try to restrain yourself from over-buying during your first weeks in your host country. You will find that many things you initially thought were essential are really not.

Bringing money overseas: it is not a bad idea to have the equivalent of \$100 in foreign currency upon arrival in a foreign country. You can exchange this money in the International Airport from which you depart in the U.S., or at the airport when you arrive in country. Larger amounts of money may be taken abroad in traveler's checks, wire transfers, debit card withdrawals, or credit card cash advances. While no one way works best for everyone, most students have reported that the easiest and most inexpensive way to obtain funds abroad is to take out a large monthly cash withdrawal with your American debit card to pay for rent, food and monthly expenses, and to then make larger purchases on a credit card. Traveler's checks, while convenient, can be costly to cash, and exchanging U.S. currency abroad will likely incur some hefty exchange rates. Ultimately, how you organize your funding depends on the country, personal preference and your financial situation.

The fastest way to transfer money abroad is to obtain cash with a debit or credit card. With a debit card, you simply present the card to a foreign bank to withdraw money from your account in the States. Most American banks will charge a transaction fee to your account of around \$3.00-5.00, so you will want to budget wisely so that you only withdraw case once or twice per month.

If you shop around before you leave, you can find credit cards with low interest rates and no transaction fees for cash advances. In many countries, this is the most efficient and cheapest way to transfer money between home and abroad. The exchange rates are much better than normal bank rates for exchanging cash, and there are no bank transaction fees, unlike the debit cards. The only drawback is that you (or your parents) must pay off the credit card account each month in full to cover the cash advance before the cash advance is taken abroad--otherwise, interest (between 13 and 21 percent) will start being charged immediately. But with planning and coordination, this method can work quite well for many students. Find out before you leave how available this bank service is in the places where you will be traveling. Even in countries that offer this service, you may occasionally find yourself without money in a small town where no bank provides this service. It is a good idea to have traveler's checks available for those times.

International Calling Card

Consider getting an international calling card before you leave the U.S. If you live with a family in a country where the bills are not itemized, using a calling card may be the only way in which your host family or landlord/landlady will permit you to make outgoing calls (though some will not permit it even then). If you are in a country which has a service called USA Direct, your calls made from abroad using the card will be charged at American rates. You may also purchase international telephone debit cards while abroad in most countries. Ultimately, you may want to arrange for your family to call you regularly at an agreed time, to save money.

It is better not to promise your family that you will call home on the day of your arrival, since most students are too tired to figure out a new phone system. Assure them that you will contact them as soon as possible, but not to expect an immediate call.

Health Issues Abroad

Check with the International Student Office of your host university regarding medical care facilities. Another source of medical assistance can be the nearest U.S. embassy, consulate, or the CIEE International Student Card.

Sanitation, Water, and Disease: Changes in food, water, altitude, or weather may cause your body some distress, especially when combined with jet-lag and travel fatigue. Most students adjust quickly to local bugs and climate, although in rural areas, or places where sanitation systems are less developed, some caution is advisable. In some countries, you may need to avoid unpeeled fruit, raw vegetables, and unboiled water. Most major cities have adequate sanitation or purification systems, but use your judgment about eating and drinking at dubious places. If you have any specific health problems, or if you are going to countries outside western Europe, have a discussion with your doctor or with the Student Health Center staff before leaving the U.S.

Personal Health Conditions: If you have a medical condition which is not easily identified (diabetes, epilepsy, severe allergies to common drugs), it would be wise to wear a medic alert emblem bracelet abroad. It is also important to notify someone at your host university of your condition, so that they can be prepared in case of a medical emergency. If you have a persistent medical condition, particularly one which might be aggravated by local conditions, consider carefully what might be involved in dealing with the problem overseas and talk it over with your doctor before going abroad.

AIDS: Casual contact does not increase your risk of AIDS anywhere in the world. However, travelers in foreign countries should avoid injections or blood transfusions unless absolutely necessary. When an injection is required, make sure the needle and syringe comes straight from a needle package or has been sterilized with chemicals or by boiling for 20 minutes. When in doubt, ask to see how the equipment is sterilized. The Center for Disease Control recommends that:

"Diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad." Be aware, however, that carrying needles without a prescription may be illegal in some countries. Thus, when traveling you should take your own needles only if you have a prescription or a doctor's authorization. For information regarding contraception, gynecology and sexuality services, consult your doctor or the Student Health Center before you leave.

Psychological Counseling

Anyone using professional help to deal with emotional or mental health problems at home should talk over their plans for study abroad with a psychologist or psychiatrist before making a final decision to go. Living in another culture may exacerbate existing problems; it is certainly not likely to solve them.

Legal Matters

You are responsible for obeying all local laws abroad and are subject to all penalties, which are frequently much stricter than in the United States. Do not assume that as an American, you will be treated more gently; the opposite can be the case. Neither CSU, Chico or the host university will be able to intervene if you are arrested or prosecuted for violation of any laws abroad, including drug laws, currency exchange laws, etc. Contacting the American Embassy or Consulate in your host country is recommended if the need arises.

Security Abroad

The decision to study in a particular region of the world must be made by each student and his or her family, in light of their own interpretation of events and the student's willingness to live with a certain degree of ambiguity. It is sad but true that nowhere in the world, including many of our own cities, can one expect to find a completely safe environment. We cannot predict future events, nor give guarantees about a course of events or circumstances in any region of the world.

Nothing is as important as the security and well-being of our students. Students are advised to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate in their host country, either in person or through their host university contact, upon arrival. The CSU, Chico Study Abroad Office stays in regular contact with its representatives abroad and receives information regarding rapidly changing political situations through the State Department and its other contacts in the U.S. and abroad. As long as the State Department does not restrict travel to a particular place, CSU, Chico does not limit travel or plans for study abroad. CSU, Chico will try to notify its students immediately that they should defer their travel abroad, should such State Department restrictions be issued.

Students are advised to observe the following steps when traveling abroad:

When Traveling: Do not leave bags unattended. Keep a watchful eye on your luggage and do not agree to carry or look after any package, parcel, or suitcase for anyone. Don't drive someone else's car across national boundaries. Don't hang around airline counters unnecessarily. Leave your independent travel itineraries with someone who can be contacted in case of any emergency.

When Living Abroad: Do not stand out. Remain inconspicuous in dress, behavior, and group activities. Remain in regular contact with the host university contact. Avoid public places closely associated with the U.S., for example, military bases, corporate headquarters, embassy and consular buildings. Be discrete. Don't divulge too much information about yourself or your program to strangers. Be alert. Report suspicious behavior to your host university or the local authorities.

Money: Have sufficient funds on hand or a credit card, if necessary, to purchase a return ticket. Responsibility for a decision to withdraw from a program or to return home early rests with the student and his or her family. There can be no guarantee of credit for students who withdraw from programs before completion of scheduled instruction and examinations. However, if for whatever reason a program is officially closed, credit will be awarded for the portion of the courses completed. In these cases, documentation of the work done (syllabi, papers, examinations, recommendations, evaluations from instructor, etc.) will be required.

Culture Shock

The first few days/weeks you are abroad will probably be exciting and stimulating. Everything you see will be strange, new, and rich with tradition. Sounds, smells, gestures, and movement will crowd your senses, leaving you exhilarated and exhausted. This is the honeymoon period. Enjoy it!

At the same time, you may begin to experience the first symptoms of "culture shock," the unpleasant disorientation which can afflict visitors entering a strange world. Sometimes the more eager you are to enter into the host country and to really understand what its people are like, the more severe the shock you may have. If you are in a country whose language is foreign to you, culture shock will probably move in quickly. You may feel as though you have been "assaulted by culture" almost immediately.

Culture shock may also take place when your expectations don't match up with reality. You may be disappointed with what you see. You may be avoiding Americans who seem naive, rude, loud, affected, or provincial. You may even be disappointed in yourself and in your failure to be articulate and sophisticated. A common reaction to culture shock is to avoid contact with the local culture and the local people, learning little about the customs and traditions of the host society. It has been said that Americans who avoid contact with the local culture often go through several stages. First they complain to other Americans about the difficulties of living in the foreign culture. Then they glorify everything about the United States. Finally, they experience frustration, anxiety, and disorientation in relationship to the local culture and take refuge in the company of other Americans.

It is important to develop an understanding of the host culture when studying abroad. Here are some suggestions:

- Make an effort to meet local people. You may need to develop some new techniques to make friends while abroad. It usually requires more thought, effort, and creativity than in your own country. Students abroad often value this opportunity to develop new sides of themselves because of the new demands of the social situation. The important thing is to extend yourself and find a way of connecting with local people.
- Explore the territory. Find a map and strike out on your own, if you are comfortable with that. Get a transit pass, if available, and ride buses for a day, looking at odd corners of the city. Walk around different neighborhoods to sample the variety of the city. Discover old or important structures. If you get lost or have questions, ask someone. Most people like to help others, especially those who are pleasant and want to learn.
- Read and speak the local language. Read newspapers, popular magazines and novels, weather reports, menus, timetables, and T.V. guides, as well as university related materials. The local newspaper not only helps your language skills, but can also expose you to the local viewpoint about domestic and international issues. Possibly the greatest obstacle to learning a language is not vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation; it is self-consciousness. Plunge ahead, oblivious of

embarrassing mistakes. The rapid improvement in your speaking skills will help you integrate into the culture.

- Keep a journal. Keep a record or at least a weekly review of what you observe and how you respond to it. Record your interpretations. Later on, reread what you have written: you will be impressed with the progress you make in understanding your environment. And you will find that your notes become valuable, especially when you look back at them after you return to the U.S.

A few recommended titles on culture shock and cross-cultural issues:

Furnham, Adrian & Bochner

Culture Shock

Gordon, Arthur

How to Cope with Culture Shock

Hall, Edward T.

Beyond Culture & The Hidden Dimension

Hess, J. Daniel

From the Other's Point of View

Kohls, L. Robert

Survival Kit for Overseas Living on Being Foreign:

Cultural Shock in Short Fiction

Storti, Craig

The Art of Crossing Cultures

Returning to Chico

When you return to the United States, you may have to go through some readjusting to life and work. Give yourself a little time to do just that; you may need some time and some friends with whom you can share your experience. CSU, Chico will have a Welcome Home Reception designed to help you with your re-entry shock, and you are encouraged to attend.

Upon your return to CSU, Chico, be sure to stop by the Study Abroad Office and provide feedback to the Study Abroad Coordinator. Your feedback is important to the successful operation of the exchange and is used for future candidates in preparing them for their study abroad experience.

Perhaps during your stay you can also keep a small notebook and write a paragraph or two whenever you think of information which might be helpful to future students. Your comments could relate to a variety of topics, including academic and extracurricular activities, special opportunities for academic, social, or cultural enrichment, etc. You may even want to consider writing up your experiences for an article in the Orion, local newspapers or the International Programs newsletter.

THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS STAFF WISH YOU A SAFE, PRODUCTIVE, AND FULFILLING TIME ABROAD! DON'T FORGET US....SEND US A POSTCARD!