International Students
Hospitality and Tourism Management

Spring 2009
San Diego State University
Phonemany “Dao” Xayyavong
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..................................................................................................... 1  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ............................................................................................ 2  
MY EXPERIENCE .................................................................................................................. 3  
  Grossmont College............................................................................................................. 4  
AFTER BECOMING SDSU STUDENTS .............................................................................. 4  
  Freshman Students ............................................................................................................. 4  
  Transfer Students ............................................................................................................. 4  
  Open University or Extended Study .................................................................................... 5  
  Exchange Students ............................................................................................................. 6  
  Choosing Classes .............................................................................................................. 6  
  HTM Classes Atmosphere ................................................................................................... 6  
INVEREMENT IN HTM ORGANIZATION ........................................................................ 6  
SAVING MONEY ................................................................................................................... 7  
WOKING IN THE UNITED STATES AS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ......................... 7  
DRESS CODE ...................................................................................................................... 7-8  
COST OF LIVING ................................................................................................................ 9  
CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) ................................................................. 9  
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) ................................................................. 10  
INCOME TAX ..................................................................................................................... 10  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ................................................................................. 11  
CONTACT INFORMATION ................................................................................................. 12
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Diego State University strives to personalize each international students learning experience study aboard. The Hospitality and Tourism Management Program, in pursuing this mission, has decided to research the possibility of information for international students to study in SDSU.

This research provides to International students who plan to study in San Diego State University as freshman, transfer, or exchange students in major of Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM). This research consists of what and how students need to know before and after transfer to SDSU.

According to the International Students Center website at http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/ we conducted we have determined that I will place information and specific website link in this project. Therefore, international students can find the actual SDSU website in particular location. The research bases on international student center website and my experience. This project target provides convenience to International students who want to come to study in SDSU from foreign countries and transfer students. Cost could be huge concern to international students as cost of tuition fee, cost of living and personal stuff. According from my experience, I will provide how to save money to study aboard in SDSU.

This project is focused on International students from around the world in Hospitality and Tourism major.

The author believes this report will help international students in the HTM major to get the best they can, depending on each student’s situation. This report has the author’s experience as an international student, providing steps and details. It is my hope that international students will find this report to be a significant contribution to SDSU in the hospitality and tourism management major.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Every student from Europe, Asia and other countries has to apply at the San Diego State Website during the period the school offers.

San Diego State University categorizes students into 3 groups in the Major of Hospitality and Tourism Management.
   1. Freshman Students
   2. Transfer Students
   3. Exchange Students

I. FRESHMAN or FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS
There are a few steps that freshman students from other countries need to take before applying to SDSU. In addition, freshman students need to take a look at the following website which provides profound detail of how to apply:
http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/iwant_fresh.html

II. TRANSFER STUDENTS
The fall semester begins in late August. SDSU accepts transfer applications for the fall semester only begin on October 1 of the prior year.

This is a similar process as the students applying as freshman students. Transfer students need to take a look at the following website which provides profound detail of how to apply:
http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/iwant_transfer.html

III. EXCHANGE STUDENTS
Exchange students have a process slightly different from freshmen and transfer student’s process.
Please see the following information that exchange students need to do when they apply:

Applications for the Fall Semester may be submitted as early as February 15.
Applications for the Spring Semester may be submitted as early as August 15.
We encourage you to submit your applications as early as possible!

Deadlines for receipt of exchange student applications are:
Fall Semester: April 1
Spring Semester: October 1
Please check more information of exchange students in this below website:
http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/iwant_exchange0.html
MY EXPERIENCE

I am an international student from Laos which is a South East Asian country. It could be difficult for many international students to get their visa if they put on the application inappropriate or incorrect information. The application is called I-20. How do international students get I-20 from schools? The answer is that there are many ways to get an I-20 from schools.

One is if students plan to apply at SDSU as freshman with the HTM major, once they have been admitted, they can contact Mr. Carl Winston, who is the Program Director at this website http://htm.sdsu.edu/contact.html. Mr. Winston will help students with Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) major and guide them regarding how to get into the major. However, Mr. Winston will help mostly by picking courses in HTM.

Another website is the International Student Center (ISC) where international students should also contact the ISC office about the I-20 at http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/index.html because the ISC provides general information for all international students in all major degrees. Moreover, ISC officer generates most of the processes for international students on how to apply and obtain the I-20. I recommend that international students contact ISC first and be admitted before meeting with Mr. Winston due to the fact that the ISC is the only place that provides the I-20.

In addition, if international students plan to improve their English skills before getting into the university, they can apply to a Language school anywhere, but I recommend applying to the SDSU language school at http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/iwant_ali.html because the SDSU program allows International students to take a few classes in their Major and General Education classes while they are in the ALI (American Language Institute) program. Comparing with other language schools, international students cannot take classes at SDSU if they are in a community college. The ALI program helps students to save a lot of time and students can waive the TOEFL as well like transfer students from other community colleges.

From my experience, I came here directly to San Diego with very poor English. I spoke English a little bit, but no one would understand what I talked about. Therefore, I went to Language school first for 6 months. After that, I took the TOEFL test in order to get into a community college, not a university because a community college requires a lower TOEFL score than a university. I barely passed the minimum TOEFL score that a community college requires to accept international students.

Because of my experience on this point, I would recommend to other international students who plan to come straight to SDSU in order to get into the HTM major, he or she should have a minimum required TOEFL score of 550 paper, 213 computer, or 80 iBT 2 years prior to coming to SDSU. Otherwise, he or she has to take the test here like me. Fortunately, there are few ways that an international student can waive taking the TOEFL test as I have mentioned briefly above.

The first technique is, if the international student is a freshman, they can apply the TOEFL
waiver through the American Language Institute (ALI). ALI is one of the language schools in SDSU. Please contact ALI for more details at this website http://www.americanlanguage.org/

The second technique is to transfer from a community college to SDSU which will waive the TOEFL test automatically. Since a community college requires a lower TOEFL score than SDSU, it might be easier for many international students to study in a community college who do not have strong English grammar. This way is also a good way for international students to save a lot of money since a university tuition fee is more than a community college tuition fee. However, studying in a community college has disadvantages too since a university has a better quality system of teaching. However, it is not always true that a community college has low quality teachers. This depends on who teaches in a subject and their experiences.

Now, I am going to talk about the difference between the Tuition Fees of a community college, Grossmont College, and San Diego State University. I am a transfer student from Grossmont College, so I will use my experience to show the huge difference from the university tuition fees.

**GROSSMONT COLLEGE**
This tuition fee is based on the minimum units required in one semester for international students as 12 units excluding textbooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The tuition fee based on Year 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-State Tuition Fee</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Unit&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 units per semester&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health per semester&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total fee approximately</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Tuition fee could change without notice

Therefore, studying in a community college is three times cheaper than a university. On the negative side, you may not have as good opportunities and systems as there are at a university.

**AFTER BECOMING SDSU STUDENTS**

**Freshman Students**
International students who plan to start their 1<sup>st</sup> year at the university should contact Mr. Carl Winston directly because he will assist students in taking the right classes. Moreover, students can check on my map site that will guide them on what classes they should take in the first and second years. Please take a look at the website at [http://htm.sdsu.edu/documents/HTM_roadmap_1st2ndyr.pdf](http://htm.sdsu.edu/documents/HTM_roadmap_1st2ndyr.pdf). I recommending to freshman international students that they should study hard to get the best GPA (grade point average) as possible before getting into their third year at the university which will be more difficult than the sophomore year.
Transfer Students
International students can take as many classes as they want, but I would recommend to take not more than 6 classes as 18 units because from my experience taking many classes may save money and time, but those students who take even 18 units have to work hard in order to keep up their GPA in order to graduate with a minimum GPA required of 3.00. As an example from my experience, this semester is my second semester, and I am going to graduate this semester (Spring 2009) because I did Open University, or as it is also called extended study, for two semesters earning 23 units. International students and other students can earn credit through Open University for their undergraduate degree at SDSU for up to 24 units before transferring to the university. My first semester, fall 2008, I took 16 units with an internship. I planned it before taking my previous semester from Grossmont College. Therefore, I contacted Mr. Brian Blake, Internship & Placement Director, about the internship in the first semester, so I could start doing an internship. This was because an internship is hard to find especially in this economy.

Open University or Extended Study
Undergraduate international students and other resident students can take classes and the credit counts while they are in a community college as extended study program. They allow students from other community colleges to take classes up to 24 units. One unit costs $197 which is cheap for international students compared with what it costs after international students officially become students at SDSU. It costs $399 per unit; hence it has other registration fees too resulting in $1877 per semester, but this registration fee can be changed any semester as an increase or decrease to the fees. For instance from my experience again, I started to study at Grossmont College in Spring 2006 which was my freshman year, and then I started to do Open University in fall 2007 which allowed me to be able to almost maximize the units in extended study, 23 units out of 24 units. I could save a lot of money to help pay my future tuition fees. International students can save money by not paying the registration fee, and lowering the unit cost. I did Open University in fall 2007 and spring 2008 which allowed me to save:
23 units x $197 = $4,531 vs. 23 units x $399 = $9,177 plus Registration fee for two semesters
$1877 x 2 = 3,754 => I saved a total of $8,400.

This amount was a life-saver because if I did not have those savings, I might not be able to support my education. Therefore, I am writing to help other international students save money and I have told many other international students to do so. Please check the Open University website at [http://www.ces.sdsu.edu/open_info.html](http://www.ces.sdsu.edu/open_info.html). This website will guide you on how to take classes and file the form. Fortunately, I will explain the basics of how to do the Open University.

Before doing Open University, international students need to file the form from this website [http://www.ces.sdsu.edu/open_info.html](http://www.ces.sdsu.edu/open_info.html), or students can get the form at the registration office for extended study at SDSU Extended Studies/Gateway Centers, corner of Campanile Drive and Hardy Avenue. After students file the form and decide what classes they need to take, since classes are limited for Open University, students need to go to the class on the first day to crash the class. However, students need to get a professor to sign the form that students are supposed fill out. After that, students need to bring the form with a professor’s signature to the registration office at the address above in order to pay the fee and enroll in the class. The sooner students
pay the fee; the sooner students can get access to the blackboard for the class, because it takes 24 hours after students pay the fee.

**Exchange Students**
I recommend that they should take any class that is interesting to them, because they will spend a couple semesters or less in the SDSU program. Therefore, taking classes that they are interested in, and get the most enjoyment and benefits from, will bring the most memorable time.

**Choosing Classes**
How do we know how to pick the right classes? This answer will depend on whether the semester offers classes from their major that also match their schedule. It is all about time management, checking, and planning. Students have to plan and check the availability of classes offered in the fall and spring semesters. Fortunately, HTM students have an adviser, Mr. Carl Winston, who helps students to pick and choose the right class for them. Moreover, students can check my map at the SDSU website [https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/pubred/mymap.disp](https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/pubred/mymap.disp) emphasis in Hotel Management. It guides students on what classes to take as freshman and transfer students.

**HTM Class Atmosphere**
HTM classes are enormously important for learning in the hospitality industry. Students can get lots of information and ideas of real world situations from lectures, and presentations that are provided by students, guest speakers from the hotels who have experience in a particular field, and group projects throughout the semester. For example, a group project is several students in the same class gathering and meeting each other to do an assignment in order to present to a professor as a whole group. After that, if we have a small group, we have to do a presentation about the project; if we have a group of more than five students, we might have three or four students represent the group doing a presentation. Most of the HTM classes are requiring students to do presentations which are a great opportunity for students to get accustomed to public speaking in front of other students, in order to be a great speaker. Not only do you need to have group projects, and presentations, but you also need to ask questions during class lectures and presentations by professors, and students, as well as guest speakers.

I have learned a lot from the classes and improved my confidence at the same time because I needed to have presentations, and group meetings. My professor also encouraged me. But most importantly, I myself needed to be willing to change. I have been struggling with myself for a while because I did not spend enough time on my classes, but was focused on something else. However, I have gained knowledge and understanding from the hospitality industry; hence, I did an internship in a hotel, so it helped me to better understand HTM classes. I believe that doing an internship will help students to better understand the hospitality industry.

**IN Volvement IN HTM ORGAINIZATION**
International students should involve themselves in many organizations to create networking in the HTM major and also to build up friends and confidence. For many international students, they might have the same problem that I have, which is shyness and less confidence. I did get involved with few organizations in the HTM major as well as outside organizations that relate to the hospitality industry. However, I feel it is not enough to only be involved, while not really participating frequently as I did. When I realize about the past in my case, I was not enough
involved and it is a little too late because I will graduate this semester. So I write this to encourage other international students to get involved and participate with many organizations or even just a few of them as long as they engage with them. They will never regret if they do engage themselves in organizations. Those organizations will lead them to better communicate, networking with various students and professionals, and give them confidence as well as many other things that will award them in the future.

Here is a list of the organizations in the HTM major at SDSU:
- Meetings & Events Student Association (MESA) @ http://www.mesasdsu.com/
- Hospitality and Tourism Management Student Association (HTMSA) @ http://www.htmsa.org/
- National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) @ www.nsmh.org

There are also other nationwide associations at the website http://htm.sdsu.edu/documents/StudentMemb.pdf. Students can find most of the associations are very beneficial for the Hospitality Industry.

SAVING $$$

Another advantage in taking lots of units is to save money from paying out-of-state unit fees. International students, who take over 30 units in the fall and spring semester, do not have to pay out-of-state tuition fees for any units above 30 units. For example, Last semester, fall 2008, I took 16 units, and this semester I am taking 21 units. I knew this was a lot, and the toughest semester for me, since the total of both semesters is 37 units; therefore, I do not have to pay for 7 units. At $399 each unit, the equation is 7 x $399 = $2793 that I save for the two semesters.

A Scholarship is also one of the opportunities that international students have to get help from school. Students are encouraged to apply every semester in order to get a scholarship. I lost those wonderful opportunities because I did not concentrate on scholarships. Now, I feel regret that I did not even try to apply for a scholarship. Therefore, I sincerely recommend to every international student to apply, and they will never feel regret like me. Please check the scholarships for the HTM major at http://htm.sdsu.edu/scholarships.html.

WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES AS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students have limitations on working since they cannot work outside of the campus. Therefore, if they need a job, they should immediately look for a job everywhere on the campus as much as possible through many sources. One source is asking Mr. Brain Blake at bblake@projects.sdsu.edu for help and guidance on how to find a job on the campus. Another source is on the career service website at http://www.sdsu.edu/openpositions.html. The faster one applies, the more likely one can get, because these are for a limited time only.

DRESS CODE

Hospitality and Tourism Management Department has their own dress code of attire for lecturer visits. There are A Days and B Days dress code. On “A” Day students are required to wear suit
attire. On “B” Day students are required to wear polo style for men, and blouses for women. The following website will provide more details about the dress code. [http://htm.sdsu.edu/documents/FirstImpressions.pdf](http://htm.sdsu.edu/documents/FirstImpressions.pdf).

This does not mean that students have to wear “A” or “B” attire every day of school. Most of the time, students wear casual college style to classes. Wearing “A” or “B” attire is only required on certain days depending on the lecturers.

There is a sample of “A” and “B” attire dress code for the HTM major as in the pictures below. “A” day is on the left hand side and “B” day is on the right hand side.
COST OF LIVING

The expense of living is the greatest expense that international students have to deal with. Every international student has different expenses. Some have a car, and some do not. Therefore, I provide approximately what students have to spend for living each month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Having Car</th>
<th>Trolley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$116 per semester in fall =&gt; $29/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car insurance¹</td>
<td>$50 - $100</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal stuff</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent Room</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1150 - $1200</td>
<td>$1029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cost of a car is excluded.

This is a lot of expenses each month for international students; therefore, students have to know what they have to spend each month before coming to study in the United States.

Some advice about the public transportation in San Diego: It is not as good as other countries. This means public transportation is often not on time, tends either to be late a few minutes, or before the scheduled time. From my perspective, having a car is much better than using the bus or trolley because public transportation could take students from point A to point B around one hour to a maximum of two hours, whereas utilizing a car could take only ten minutes.

I recommend to international students that they buy a used car to take them around the city. It will be worth it to have a car.

- Saving time
- Having more time to oneself
- Do not have to worried about schedules of a bus or trolley
- Do not have to wake up hours earlier to prepare to go somewhere on-time
- Not much difference in expense
- Easy access to anywhere around San Diego and the cities nearby

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT is used for any type of work experience in a student’s field of major as working in the hotels, events, and meetings, or it can also be called an internship for the HTM major. Doing CPT should not exceed 12 months or full time CPT authorization because if students take CPT and exceed 12 months, they are ineligible for OPT in further graduation. Therefore, international students need to apply for OPT before doing an internship, and they have to get a new I-20 that mentions about work authorization. Moreover, before going to ISC to apply for a new I-20, students need to meet Mr. Brian Blake first at the HTM office, or contact him though email at

¹ Car insurance depends on the agent. I pay approximately $50 per month for my car’s liability insurance.
bblake@projectssdsu.edu in order to get the signed paper. Fortunately, I will provide a basic step for apply for OPT, or an internship:

- Receiving employment offer letter from the company where international students will do an intern.
- Meeting with Mr. Brian Blake in order to obtain recommendation letter from him.
- Enrolling in the internship course HTM 398 – Internship I, or HTM 498 – Internship II.
- Going or calling to International Student Center (ISC) to make an appointment with counselor in order to get a new I-20.
- After getting the new I-20, go to the company and giving a copy of the new I-20 and passport to a Human Resource officer.

The following website will provide more detail about CPT on page 2-3
http://aba.sdsu.edu/attachments/F1PracticalTraining.pdf.

**Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

OPT is for graduating students, vacation students, or time that students do not have school. Basically, international students mostly utilize OPT after their graduation. OPT can authorize international student to work in the United States for maximum of 12 months in working experience in the students’ field of study as Hospitality and Tourism Management. The following website will provide more indeed detail about OPT on page 4 – 5
http://aba.sdsu.edu/attachments/F1PracticalTraining.pdf.

**INCOME TAX**

International students need to file form income tax every year. Please take a look at these below to help students step by step of how to file the income tax forms:
http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/current/immigration_taxes.htm
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**How Do I Apply to SDSU as an International Student?**
Contact the ISC office or apply online at [http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/](http://www.isc.sdsu.edu/prospective/). This website provides step by step instructions on how to apply to SDSU.

**What International Students Need to Know Before Coming to the United States?**
Students need to know where they will stay, the cost of living, and they will need to fill out an I-20 in order to come here to study.

**Who Should I Discuss about My Major?**
Mr. Winston at carl.winston@sdsu.edu is the person students discuss their major and their classes with throughout a semester after students are admitted.

**How Can I Choose the Right Classes?**
There is no right or wrong class, but some upper division classes require prerequisite classes to be taken before taking.

**How Can I get an Internship?**
Asking Mr. Brian Blake at bblake@projects.sdsu.edu to help search for the job is one way to get an internship; otherwise, students will need to find by their own.
CONTACT INFORMATION
HTM OFFICE @ www.sdsu.edu/htm

San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-4514

HTM Main Department Office
Room #: PSFA 436B
619.597.4964

Carl Winston
Program Director
Carl.Winston@sdsu.edu
619.594.5254

Lori Sipe
Professor
lsipe@mail.sdsu.edu
858.722.8458

Brian Blake
Internship and Placement
Director
bblake@projects.sdsu.edu
619.594.4454

Mark Testa, Ph.D.
Association Professor
mtesta@mail.sdsu.edu
619.594.6642

Marian Lim
Administration
Coordinator
mlim@mail.sdsu.edu
619.594.4596

Jeff Campbell
Professor
jcampbell@san.rr.com
619.594.8498

More information of professors at sdsu.edu/htm