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cíee

program handbook

**CIEE Study Center at Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra – Santiago,
Dominican Republic**

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Part I: The CIEE Program in Santiago

WELCOME TO YOUR ADVENTURE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Santiago de los Caballeros, the second largest city in the Dominican Republic, is surrounded by mountains and located in the north-central part of the country. Santiago is just a 90-minute drive from the beaches along the Atlantic coast and the city of Puerto Plata. It enjoys a milder and less humid climate than the capital, Santo Domingo. Known as *la Ciudad Corazón*, Santiago is the commercial and cultural center of the fertile Cibao valley region, which produces much of the country's tobacco, rice, and a great variety of fruits and vegetables. Although a growing, modern city with a population exceeding 700,000, it still retains many features of a small town, particularly its friendly people.

Like most Dominican cities, Santiago boasts a diversity of lifestyles. Street vendors commonly walk through residential neighborhoods carrying fruit, vegetables, and other goods in large baskets or on their heads. Other merchants, called *marchantas*, ride burros loaded with baskets of goods and call out their wares in a nearly musical chant. Much of the daily grocery shopping takes place in small neighborhood stores called *colmados*, while major purchases are made in the downtown stores or supermarkets.

The people of Santiago, *Santiagueros*, and the people of the Cibao region, *Cibaenios*, maintain a high degree of regional pride for the culture of the north, which distinguishes them from the rest of the country. Founded by the caballeros, or noblemen of Columbus's early expeditions, the city has a rich historical tradition and has been the birthplace of many important Dominican political, intellectual, and business leaders. It is also the birthplace of the commercially popular *merengue* music.

Participants Say...

I wholeheartedly suggest without reserve this program to anyone who wants to learn what it's like to step out of his or her comfort zone for a while.

One of the main benefits of the program is my gained perspective on my country from the outside. I found myself to be more critical of America in some instances. At other times I felt very defensive and protective of my culture.

Participants Say...

Dress Dominican, eat Dominican food, dance the merengue, meet Dominican friends, and come prepared to have the time of your life.

YOUR HOST: PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA MADRE Y MAESTRA

PUCMM, the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, was founded in 1962 as an institution dedicated to serving the social and economic development of all Dominicans. Pope John Paul II added *Pontificia*, or papal, to its name in 1987.

PUCMM is a private, nonprofit institution of higher education dedicated to superior teaching. PUCMM has been ranked by the Inter-American Development Bank as the best academic institution of higher learning in the Dominican Republic. With a population of approximately 10,000 students, PUCMM offers the academic resources, support services, and physical facilities of a typical superior-level Latin American educational institution.

Located about 10 minutes from downtown Santiago, PUCMM's campus is laced with attractive, shady sidewalks connecting the various academic buildings. It's a private school with a student body similar to that of a small, private university in the United States. Most of the Dominican students major in business, engineering, medicine, and other professional fields.

ACADEMIC CULTURE

Most PUCMM students specialize in a profession such as law, medicine, engineering, education, or business. The only social science major is psychology. Like all universities in the Dominican Republic, PUCMM has limited resources compared to most U.S. colleges and universities.

The summer program courses have been designed by PUCMM specifically for CIEE program students only. All coursework is conducted in Spanish. Students should be prepared for a style of teaching that is more formal, technical in style, may rely solely on lectures, and may emphasize memorization. Readings are typically assigned in class.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

This seven-week program consists of six weeks of language and healthcare courses, and a

weeklong semi-rural clinical field rotation. Students also engage in an urban community service practicum in and around Santiago as part of the academic curriculum.

The program is designed for students who have taken two years of college-level Spanish and coursework in public health.

The focus of this program is to expose students to both theoretical public health issues and elementary practical medical skills. Classes are specially designed for CIEE participants only and are taught in Spanish.

Language Environment

As students gain proficiency in Spanish, resident staff encourage them to use their language skills in everyday settings. The more students participate, the more a community that contributes to Spanish language proficiency and understanding of Dominican society develops.

Coursework

All courses are taught by faculty from PUCMM. Students are required to take all three CIEE program courses:

Pre-Professional Health Care Issues/Sociología Médica

Community Health Practicum/Medicina Comunitaria

*Advanced Spanish Conversation and Grammar.

Please look at the Latin American catalog or online at www.ciee.org for more information about the courses.

Library

Students have access to the library at the PUCMM, which holds a large collection of Dominican materials. The collection may seem limited and outdated by U.S. standards, however. Nonetheless, students are encouraged to search for materials there as well as make use of the books available in the CIEE program library.

Bookstores

There is a bookstore located in the Student Center on campus as well as numerous bookstores in the area downtown near Calle del Sol.

Exams

Note that you are expected to take exams when they are scheduled. Do not expect to make special arrangements with professors for alternative dates.

Recommendation:

Make copies of all your work to facilitate transfer of credit after returning to the US.

Meeting Other Students

The PUCMM campus has a student center, which houses the cafeteria, bookstore, health center, and the International Students Office. The center is a popular hub of student activity and hosts numerous lectures and cultural events. There is an outdoor kiosk that sells food and drinks, which is another popular meeting place for students. The university also has a theater, auditorium, and outdoor amphitheater, which are often used for dance and musical productions. The campus is a favorite spot for amateur athletes, with tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, and basketball and volleyball courts available. Many Dominicans also take advantage of the vast campus to exercise by running or walking laps. Past CIEE students have enjoyed participating in sports and in music groups as a way to meet Dominican students.

As there are no dormitories on campus, students from Santiago and nearby towns normally live with their own families. Students from other parts of the country or abroad live with relatives or with a family in Santiago. Much of student life, therefore, occurs off-campus: in student homes, at *discotecas*, and at open-air gathering places where students meet over *refrescos* and *cervezas*.

Student ID

You will receive a photo ID from Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra. Benefits of a student ID can range from access to the library to reductions in museum fees, concerts, etc.

Cultural Activities and Field Trips

This program includes guided visits to sites of historic and cultural importance in Santiago. There is a weekend trip scheduled to the Dominican Republic's capital city, Santo Domingo.

Participants say...

Great insight to public health and the realities of a developing world.

Participants say...

I learned most from the unplanned events: conversations with concho drivers, a walk through a popular barrio, talking with my professors outside of class.

Find out about local events-plays, exhibitions, festivals-and go to them.

Try to go on all excursions through CIEE and classes. I learned the most through going to some of the smallest places-Cigar factory, waterfalls, etc.

THE CIEE PROGRAM

Departure and Arrival

How do I get there?

The cost of transportation to and from the program is not included in the CIEE program fee. Students should make their flight reservation to arrive on the date and time indicated on the **Program Dates, Details & Arrival Information** reading on your account. Those students whose arrival coincides with the indicated times will be greeted by the CIEE Resident Staff.

* Please be aware: Internet Airfare tickets are very restrictive. Past participants have gone through student travel agencies to get student travel discounts and more flexible tickets with smaller change date fees.

* Tip: Round Trip Ticket

In order to enter the country, you must show you have a ticket to depart the Dominican Republic. Although this rule is not always enforced, you should purchase a round-trip ticket, even if it has an open departure date.

What happens when I arrive?

If you arrive on the indicated program start date, you will be met by CIEE staff at the Santiago International Airport and taken to the host family reception site, where you will meet your host families. If you plan to arrive before the orientation begins, contact CIEE staff for assistance in arranging hotel and transportation accommodations. These will be at the expense of the student.

The airport's baggage claim area is particularly hectic, so be prepared to handle your own luggage. We suggest you bring no more than two bags that you can handle alone. After you get your luggage, you will have to pass through a second customs checkpoint. There are a

number of workers who will try to carry your bags for you and rush you through customs. These individuals expect a reasonable tip for their service if you choose to use them. After you pass through customs, exit the building. A number of people will be waiting anxiously to meet their arriving friends and family. Proceed ahead until you see the CIEE Resident Staff holding a sign that reads "CIEE." Please try to stay with the group.

NOTE: All students must arrive to the orientation hotel on the designated date of arrival that is listed on the Program Dates, Details and Updates section of your *My CIEE* online checklist. If it is possible, students should try to arrive to Santiago during the daytime hours. If students arrive on one of the early morning red-eye flights, they may need to stay in a hotel until their host family is prepared to receive them.

* Tip: Phone home when you arrive

Upon your arrival, it is a good idea to call your parents. A brief phone call telling them that you have arrived and are fine will relieve them of any worries. At this time you can also pass along exact information on how they may reach you.

Orientation

All students must attend the orientation: If you are delayed en route to Santiago, you must leave a message with Latin American Program Staff at CIEE's home office as soon as you realize you will be late.

During orientation week, the resident staff and some local students provide a structured introduction to the country, the culture, and the academic program. They also give you lots of practical information about living in Santiago, including:

- * Detailed information on health, well-being, and safety issues
- * Academic information relating to the program and the universities
- * Local excursions and guided visits in order to help with adjustment
- * Introduction to host family.

You will also participate in workshops on certain aspects of Dominican culture, such as race and ethnicity and gender roles in Dominican society.

CIEE Program Staff

The resident staff members—all of whom you'll get to know during orientation—are available to advise and help students with academic, administrative, and personal matters during regular office hours and in cases of emergency. We encourage you to respect the many demands on their time. Bring problems to their attention as soon as they arise and, whenever possible, during the hours they have set aside for this purpose.

HOUSING AND MEALS

You will be housed individually in a private, middle-class home. Living in private homes is considered the best housing arrangement in Santiago because of its practicality due to lack of housing on campus, not to mention the role host families play in meeting program objectives. Most families have hosted students in the past and come highly recommended.

You will also live in a semi-rural clinic for one week, where you are paired with local medical staff. Prior to your stay at the clinic, CIEE staff will take you to shop for food for the week.

What type of housing will I have?

The resident staff will try to match you with a family according to the preferences you indicated on the housing survey. The Director of the Oficina de Estudiantes Internacionales at the PUCMM assists CIEE in placing students with host families.

Your host family may have multiple members, or it may be a woman and her niece, for example. Divorce is not uncommon in Dominican society, so you may live with a family in which a divorced or widowed mother is the head of the household.

When will I find out who my host family will be?

You will meet your host family upon arrival to Santiago. There are sometimes last minute changes where a family may be unavailable to host a student (due to changing family circumstances on-site) and/or new families are added to the roster who need to be screened and complete training for hosting students, therefore it is not possible to be informed of your host family prior to arrival.

What will my housing be like?

The houses are typically clean, neat, and middle class by Dominican standards. Some are one-level, single-family homes, others are

apartments. They are comfortable, but expect differences from what you are used to. Some homes may be smaller or more crowded. Some have little or no hot water, while others have showers with small electrical devices for warming the water. Even without hot water, however, the climate is such that taking cold showers is tolerable. Depending on where you live, you may experience problems with the water pressure. *Apagones*, or blackouts of electricity, occur both at home and at the university, usually several times a week. Though your host families have power inverters to supply power during blackouts, you should still limit your power consumption during these blackouts.

In the Dominican Republic, most middle class homes have maids. This is an integral cultural part of Dominican society. Note that while maids generally clean your room, you are responsible for the day-to-day picking up of personal items.

Your host family will do your laundry for you, although women will be responsible for washing their own underwear.

How can I best get along with my host?

During the orientation, you will receive a homestay contract which provides you with the housing guidelines. The host family will be given the same guidelines before you move in with them. This is done to facilitate discussion on cross-cultural expectations that you and your host family may share. It is very important that you respect these guidelines.

Of course you want to be well received by your host family. It is important to remember that although you will most likely be treated as another member of the family, you will also be treated to some extent as a guest in their home. Be considerate of your host family and respect their concerns, which may include the following:

- Phone ahead or leave a note if you will be late coming home for a meal or if you will be coming home late at night. Please be respectful of their concerns. For example, families expect you to be home before midnight on weeknights and by two o'clock on the weekends, when night life usually ends in Santiago. It may make your host parents uncomfortable to have you coming and going at all hours of the night.

- Respect your host family's belongings. Remember to ask permission to use stereos and other equipment or to go into the rooms of members of your host families.
- Be aware that it is not appropriate to enter the rooms of members of the opposite sex, even if they are brothers or sisters in your host family.
- Don't leave things in the bathroom unless advised to do so. Your host family will show you where to leave them.
- If you smoke, ask where it's permissible.
- To feel secure in your new home, put your valuables (money, travelers' checks, passport, etc.) in a safe place. Your host family cannot be held responsible for theft and neither can CIEE. You can lock valuables in your suitcase or your closet, or lock the door to your room when you go out.
- Do not develop the habit of lending money to or borrowing money from your host family.

Moving in will involve some adjustments that may be hard at first. Imagine yourself moving back with your own family to live, particularly after having had independence to do things without your family's immediate influence. You must be prepared to live by your host's rules. Try to handle difficulties that come up on your own. Your hosts may not intuitively understand your needs (for example, you may have trouble finding space to store all you bring with you), so communicate your concerns and work things out with them. Only after attempting to resolve any problems by yourself, should you ask help of the resident staff.

One discussion that is difficult to have, but which students have said helps a lot, is to talk about the host's expectations in having you stay with them, and yours in wanting to stay there. Watch out for a tendency to immediately criticize what is different from your own standards. You may find some things you have trouble accepting, but at least try to understand and interpret in terms of societal and cultural differences.

Can I have guests?

Ask your host family upon arrival about bringing friends over, until what time they can stay, and if

they permit friends of the opposite sex coming over. (This does not mean sleeping over, which is never permitted.) Don't abuse their home by having a constant parade of friends come through. Always ask your host's permission before bringing a friend over to eat dinner.

If you are planning to have guests during your stay in the Dominican Republic encourage them to visit during a holiday break or after the semester has concluded. It is a CIEE policy and in most cases it is more comfortable for everybody that friends and family stay in a hotel. The host families are not normally prepared to accommodate extra people in their homes. The resident staff is available to assist you in finding accommodations for family and friends.

What about meals?

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided by the host family and included in the program fee. As in the United States, the time that meals are served and what is served varies from household to household. Generally, however, count on three meals: breakfast, lunch (the big meal of the day served at about 1 p.m.), and a light supper.

Typical Dominican foods include rice and beans, yucca, plantain, and meat--pork, beef, chicken, or goat. Be prepared to adapt to these staples. For vegetarians, it is comforting to know that a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables is available year round, though these are not always a staple in every Dominican household.

If you do not like a certain dish, say so. Families can be flexible and adapt meals to a certain extent to things you like. You cannot, however, expect them to rearrange their cooking for you nor can you expect them to purchase special items for you such as brown rice or soy products. Most Dominican families prepare and drink a lot of coffee. Do not expect your families to supply you with soft drinks or alcoholic beverages. You should receive healthy meals and portions. If this is not the case in your home, discuss it with the resident staff.

Contributing something occasionally towards a meal, such as fresh fruit or bread, is also something most host families greatly appreciate.

What if I follow a special diet?

Since the diet includes a fair amount of fruits and vegetables, and meat is normally cooked separately, vegetarians should have few problems, though vegetarian meals are often

quite basic. However, if you do not eat eggs or dairy products, you may have problems. Please consult with a dietician in the US about alternate sources of food. CIEE cannot guarantee that a home will provide a vegetarian, vegan, macrobiotic, or other special diet. If you have a medically certified diet, please notify CIEE immediately. The resident staff will make every effort to find a suitable situation.

What if I'm not happy with my housing?

If you are uncomfortable with your housing arrangements, please discuss the situation with the resident staff immediately. Each house has been rated by the students who lived there before you. However, because a prior student has recommended a house does not necessarily mean it is the best place for you. If you have a serious problem, ask to move, but keep in mind this is a last resort option. Working to resolve issues with host families is formative as well as convenient. We are here to help.

Living with Dominicans is one of the most important parts of your learning experience in the Dominican Republic. You have to adapt on a day-to-day basis to another culture, another mentality, another way of facing problems and making decisions. You will be exposed to other points of view and be closely involved with people from a different culture. We believe that if you are happy in your living situation, your studies will progress faster and your adjustment to living in Santiago will be easier. It will also add to your understanding of the Dominican Republic and greatly enhance your overall experience.

Participants say...

My host family was a blessing. They really made me feel welcome and treated me like a daughter. They've come to be a very significant part of my life.

The best part of the program is living with a family and having Dominican guides. Both are great for learning Spanish and getting to know the country, neighborhood, etc.

Part II: Before You Leave Home

A LOT TO LEARN

Preparing for study abroad entails a lot more than just packing a suitcase. In fact, the thought

and effort you put into preparing yourself will largely determine the success of the program you are embarking upon. At CIEE, we will do everything we can to provide you with the information you require prior to departure. Keep in mind that there is only so much we can do, and it is important for you to recognize your own responsibilities, which include:

Thoroughly discussing your study and travel plans with your financial aid office, study abroad office, and academic advisor.

Making any necessary arrangements for the following academic year, including housing, registration, and graduate school application. If you are a senior, be sure to make necessary arrangements for graduation.

Reading all of the materials that are posted on your account is a good way to prepare for your study abroad adventure. Many of the questions that students ask are answered on this website.

Doing additional reading about the region/country you will be visiting and the customs of the host culture is also advisable. While you couldn't possibly be prepared for every new experience that awaits you, reading about the host country will give you a base of knowledge that will serve you well in the early weeks of the program. (Refer to the Reading List at the back of this handout for required and recommended reading.)

Arrive at the program site with an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a positive attitude toward what lies ahead.

In addition to these required steps, there is a lot more we recommend you do to inform yourself before you go.

Get a Good Guidebook

Past participants recommend that you purchase a good guidebook and read a lot of it before you go! The Lonely Planet series is useful. Other guide books include the Let's Go, and Real/Rough Guide series. Insight guides provide good background and cultural information. Pay particular attention to sections on obtaining maps and other information from tourist offices, customs of the host country, currency exchange, calling home, safety, transportation, and general travel advice.

Tap Other Resources

Other good ways to learn about your new home:

- Check your college or university study abroad office for useful services and information.
- Seek out Dominicans through cultural organizations, international student organizations, and Spanish or Caribbean area studies departments or centers at your college or university.
- Surf the Web. Many web sites, such as www.lonelyplanet.com, offer travel information, slide shows, and tips from other travelers.
- Check libraries for detailed information and keep yourself informed of current events through the news media.
- Consult the list of past program participants in your acceptance packet. They have agreed to be contacted about their experience. Some of their comments are interspersed throughout this book

Brush Up Your Spanish

It is a good idea to sharpen your Spanish skills before departing. Listening to Spanish recordings, watching films, reading newspapers, and talking to native speakers or fellow students are excellent ways to do this.

Frequently, students who have studied Spanish for several years are surprised to find that they have difficulty understanding the language as spoken by native speakers. This is quite normal. In your foreign language class at home, you have grown accustomed to your instructor's accent and other personal speech characteristics. However, this may take more time when you go abroad and are surrounded by native speakers. Don't worry, it gets easier.

Check Travel Advisories

The U.S. government issues travel advisories and consular information sheets for most countries. We have included in this packet any advisories for the Dominican Republic. To receive updated information or advisories for other countries you may be traveling to, call (202) 647-5225. You can also get this info at any of the 13 regional passport agencies, by writing and sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Citizens Emergency Center, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Room 4811, N.S., U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., 20520, or via the web at www.stolaf.edu/network/travel-advisories.html.

Alternate points of view can be found on British, Canadian, and Australian travel advisory web sites (Website addresses located at the back of this handbook).

Be Informed about Home

It is important that you be well informed about your own country, region, and home town. New friends and acquaintances in your host country will be just as curious about you as you are about them. Be prepared to discuss your home political system, culture, traditions, history, holidays, geography, and social structures.

Participants say...

I came with an extremely open mind, trying to absorb the culture and be non-judgmental, which I felt totally added to my experience. Be a sponge. Talk to everyone. You are here to learn, not to change a society.

The most valuable thing for me was hanging out with Dominicans, especially those who spoke no English.

Before you come, learn a great deal about the country; your experience will be a great deal better. Also, if you are feeling a bit homesick or depressed in the beginning, don't be afraid to reach out to the other students in the program; they are probably feeling the same way and can make you feel better.

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

When preparing to travel and live abroad, it is essential that you obtain all the proper documents prior to your departure. CIEE cannot accept responsibility, financial or otherwise, for a student who travels without the proper documents.

Passports

You are responsible for obtaining a passport prior to the start of your program. You must have a signed passport, valid for a minimum of three months after the date you enter the Dominican Republic or for the duration of your program plus any travel, whichever is longer. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately as the process can take several weeks or even months. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is valid for the required period.

U.S. citizens applying for their first passports must apply in person at a passport agency or at one of the federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications.

Applicants must present the following materials:

- 1) a completed Passport Application Form (DS-11);
- 2) proof of U.S. citizenship (certified birth certificate, expired passport, certificate of naturalization, or consular report of birth);
- 3) personal identification bearing your photograph and signature, e.g., a valid driver's license;
- 4) two recent passport-sized photographs; and
- 5) a check or money order for the indicated passport fee (check with the agency where you will obtain your passport for current costs).

*** *Trap: Passport Pitfalls***

Under no circumstances should your passport be altered. Guard it carefully against loss or theft. Do not forget to sign your passport. Never pack your passport in luggage while traveling; it should be easily accessible at all times.

*** *Tip: Take a lost passport kit***

It happens. So save yourself a major headache. Take with you two U.S.-produced passport photos, a certified copy of your birth certificate (which you can shrink to wallet size), and the face page of your passport. Keep this "lost passport kit" separate from your actual passport. Also leave one copy of the passport face page with your parents or guardian and give another copy to CIEE staff at the host site.

Visas/Tourist Cards

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government allowing you to enter and stay in that country for a specified period of time. A student visa is not necessary for entry to the Dominican Republic. US citizens can enter the Dominican Republic on a tourist card, which costs approximately US\$10. You will also have to pay a fee of approximately US\$30 upon leaving the country since tourist cards incur an exit fee for stays lasting longer than 15 days.

For more information, please refer to the Entrance Guidelines document on your online checklist.

Documents for non-U.S. Citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen, check with your consulate for regulations regarding your stay in the Dominican Republic and reentry into the United States. As visa procedures may vary, you should also check with the Dominican consulate that has jurisdiction over your place of residence immediately for their specific visa procedures. Failure to do this may result in your being refused permission to enter the country, or not even being allowed to board the aircraft at the point of departure. Also, you should call the nearest district office of the INS, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, for information on the documents necessary for you to leave and re-enter the United States.

Before departure from the United States, non-U.S. citizens must also obtain a Certificate of Compliance-often referred to as a Tax Clearance or a Sailing Permit-from the local IRS (Internal Revenue Service) office. This will certify that you do not owe taxes to the U.S. government. Contact your local IRS office for information on documents required to procure this permit.

What documents do I need for the Dominican Republic as a permanent US resident?

Permanent residents need to apply for a Re-entry Permit, which serves as a passport while overseas. Being out of the United States for more than one year may jeopardize your permanent resident status. Check with the nearest INS office for information regarding documentation and procedures for return to the United States.

What documents do I need as a stateless person?

If you do not have a country of citizenship, contact the nearest INS office and the appropriate consulate or embassy to determine the procedures you must follow to obtain the proper travel documents and visas. In addition, be sure to check with the consulate of any country where you may be spending a night or more in transit to the country of your study program. Failure to do this may result in refusal of permission to enter that country or even to board the aircraft at the point of departure.

Immunization Records

The Dominican Republic does not require vaccinations unless you are a citizen of, or arriving from, one of a number of less-developed countries or sites of disease outbreak. But, if you

enter countries where immunizations are required, you must present a record of vaccinations. The most widely recognized document for this purpose is the yellow World Health Organization booklet, International Certificates of Vaccination, which is available from most doctors and health centers. Carry this document with your passport.

HEALTH

What health-related steps should I take before I leave?

You are required to complete a medical report in order to participate in the program; please be sure it indicates any allergies you have, in particular to medications. This information is confidential and has no bearing on your participation in the program. If you have a chronic illness that needs medical attention, have your doctor write a clinical report that can be given to a specialist in the Dominican Republic if necessary. In addition, we strongly urge you to have a complete physical and dental checkup before departing. Any required dental work should be done at home. Women should also have a checkup by a gynecologist.

What medical supplies should I bring with me?

Bring a sufficient supply of prescription medicine with you for your time abroad, and be sure to bring these in their original packages and with the original prescription. If it is not possible to bring a large supply, be sure to get a typewritten diagnosis/prescription so a doctor in the Dominican Republic may use it to write a valid prescription there. If you use contraceptives, please bring an adequate supply with you.

Students who wear glasses or contact lenses should be sure to bring an extra pair as well as a copy of their prescription.

Be prepared for the common cold and for stomach and intestinal disorders often caused by changes in diet and drinking water. Bring medications in case these problems arise; your doctor may suggest which drugs to consider. Remember, however, to be careful about treating yourself, and be sure to seek professional help when necessary. Most common over-the-counter medications are available in the Dominican Republic.

Pack medication for diarrhea, constipation, upset stomach, surface scratches and cuts, sore throat, coughs or colds. Be sure to bring

medicine for any recent or chronic ailment which might recur in the Dominican Republic. Some over-the-counter medications are available, but it is highly advisable that you bring extra supplies of any medications or prescriptions that you use regularly. Most people seriously underestimate the amount of medicine they will need.

***NOTE:** Past Participants have commented at the end of their rural clinic practicum that they wished they had brought over-the-counter medications and supplies to the clinics with them as donations. Many students were surprised at the lack of resources in the clinics and wished they had brought supplies for them. While this is not expected of any student or organization, it is always welcomed.

What other precautions should I take?

Inform the resident staff of any existing health problems, including mental health, or any potential problems you anticipate arising throughout the course of the program. This includes allergies to any medications. CIEE staff will use this information to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. Always inform the resident staff if you become ill during the program.

If you suffer from asthma, allergies, or any other medical conditions, you will be expected to take responsibility for your own condition and to keep the Resident Director informed. It is very important to seek medical advice when advised by the Resident Director and to follow doctor's orders.

Tap Water

Do not drink tap water, though most people can use it for brushing their teeth. Your host family will have bottled, filtered, or boiled drinking water. Bottled water is readily available for purchase throughout the city and other places where you may choose to travel. You may also want to pack a water bottle. Past participants have filled their water bottles and put them in the freezer overnight so they would have cold filtered water during the day when they are in classes.

Endemic Diseases

You are living in a tropical environment where everything flourishes, including bacteria and viruses. Hepatitis A, B, and recently, C are endemic, as well as typhoid, tuberculosis, and dengue fever.

Because you live in a perfect climate for growing things, you must be particularly careful to practice good hygiene. Drink only bottled, filtered, or boiled water. Avoid food cooked in areas where proper hygiene is not possible. Always wash your hands before eating. Use your mosquito nets (that will be provided by your host family) and insect repellent regularly to avoid disease and prevent insect bite allergies. Avoid exposure to the sun, and drink lots of water to avoid dehydration.

AIDS

The HIV virus is now pandemic, meaning it is present everywhere. Take the appropriate precautions. Many U.S. doctors are concerned about needle re-use in some countries. Should you need an injection while in the Dominican Republic, make sure the needle comes sealed in a special package and is torn open in front of you. This is normally done in the clinics you would go to in Santiago.

Dengue Fever

In recent years, dengue fever outbreaks have occurred with increasing frequency in the Dominican Republic and most countries of the Tropics.

Dengue is a mosquito-transmitted viral disease occurring chiefly in tropical and subtropical areas of the world. Generally, there is a low risk of acquiring dengue during travel to tropical areas except during periods of epidemic transmission (during or shortly after the rainy season). Dengue viruses are transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes, which are most active during the day. Mosquitoes that transmit dengue usually are found near human dwellings and often present indoors. They reproduce in clean water sources, including reservoired rain water. Dengue is predominant in urban centers, but may be found in rural areas.

There is no vaccine for dengue fever. Therefore, the traveler should avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellents on skin and clothing and remaining in well screened or air-conditioned areas. Travelers are advised to use aerosol insecticides indoors and use mosquito nets if sleeping quarters are not screened or air-conditioned.

Dengue fever is characterized by sudden onset, high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, and nausea, vomiting and rash. The rash appears 3 to 4 days after the onset of fever. Infection is diagnosed by a special laboratory

test of blood that detects the presence of the virus or antibodies. The illness may last up to 10 days, but complete recovery can take 2 to 4 weeks. Dengue is commonly confused with other infectious illnesses such as influenza, measles, malaria, typhoid, and scarlet fever. The symptoms of dengue can be treated with bed rest, fluids, and medications such as acetaminophen; aspirin should be avoided.

More severe forms of the disease, "dengue hemorrhagic fever" or "dengue shock syndrome" is very rare among travelers. Initially, symptoms are indistinguishable from dengue fever, but the illness progresses to faintness, shock, and generalized bleeding. Simple dengue does not produce long-term complications.

You must notify CIEE resident staff if you have symptoms of Dengue fever.

Smoking

Note that smoking is much more common in the Dominican Republic and in the Caribbean in general than in the United States. The anti-smoking regulations that are common in the United States are not common in the Caribbean and are not enforced in the Dominican Republic. Therefore, if you are allergic to or easily bothered by smoke, be aware that it will be more difficult to avoid in the Dominican Republic than it is in the United States.

Cholera

You have undoubtedly heard of the cholera outbreak that has affected Haiti since the summer of 2010. As Haiti's neighbor, the Dominican Republic has experienced some cases of cholera. Most of these have been among individuals who travel between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, though some have been affected without having visited Haiti. Cholera is a bacterium that is transmitted through improperly prepared food or untreated water, usually in areas where sanitation and hygiene are inadequate. The main symptom is severe diarrhea and vomiting, which can lead to dehydration. If treated immediately, it is quite easy to control.

The international health community has evaluated very positively the measures that Dominican authorities have taken to limit the spread of the bacterium in the Dominican Republic, and the possibility of contracting cholera while in the DR is extremely low. As an extra precaution, all host families have attended

a workshop ensuring that food and water preparation and home sanitation are conducted properly, and CIEE has taken measures to ensure that students are not at risk of contracting the bacterium during CIEE activities.

Vaccinations

Typhoid fever and Hepatitis A are present in smaller cities, villages, and rural areas. They are transmitted through contaminated food or water; symptoms include nausea, vomiting, skin rash, and fever. The CDC and the Resident Director strongly recommend vaccination against typhoid fever and Hepatitis A and B. In addition, the CDC recommends that all travelers have updated vaccinations for tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella. Check your vaccination records for typhoid, measles, mumps, and chicken pox.

CDC Recommendations

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has put in place a webpage for students studying abroad. It pulls together a number of documents that participants can find on the CDC site as well as a few links to other resources. The document is available at

http://www.cdc.gov/travel/study_abroad.htm.

INSURANCE

If you are covered by a personal or parental insurance plan, CIEE recommends that you continue this coverage while abroad. Prior to departure, you should contact your current insurance carrier concerning coverage for accidents, illnesses, and liability cases that occur outside the United States. Check your policy's limitations before making any assumptions about coverage. Most U.S. based insurance companies will not cover property lost or stolen overseas.

All program participants are covered by a CIEE insurance policy. Coverage provided by the policy is meant to supplement your private insurance and to provide coverage for activities related to traveling abroad.

Accident and Sickness Insurance

Each participant is covered by the iNext Platinum Plan with security designed to help cover the cost of unforeseen illnesses or accidents that occur while abroad. Additionally, the policy offers Emergency Medical Evacuation coverage, together with 24-hour Emergency

Assistance Services. The policy also offers coverage for travel document replacement and limited travel delay and lost/stolen personal effects coverage. Coverage begins two weeks before the program start date and continues for 364 days.

A complete description of the iNext Platinum Plan is in the online checklist accessed via MY CIEE. It is important that you read the plan carefully and note exactly what coverage it provides, and note items that are excluded from coverage.

The Sickness Insurance is designed as an additional or top-up policy only, and does not cover liability. It also does not include routine physical, dental examinations, preventive medicine or psychological treatments. Students are not covered for injuries resulting from acts of war or other political unrest such as riots and demonstrations.

Please note that CIEE does not cover medical expenses on-site. Students pay for any medical costs incurred and then file a claim directly with the insurance company for reimbursement. CIEE does not act as an intermediary between participants and the insurance company.

Primary Insurance Plan Brokers

If you do not have a primary insurance plan, you may wish to enroll in one. The following brokers have individual insurance plans available:

HTH Worldwide
www.hthworldwide.com
Tel: 877-424-4325

Wallach & Company, Inc.
www.Wallach.com
Tel: 800-237-6615

PERSONAL FINANCES

Cost of Living

The exchange rate between U.S. dollars and Dominican pesos is not constant. The *New York Times* and similar publications publish exchange rates daily. You may also reference www.x-rates.com or www.oanda.com for up-to-the-minute exchange rates. You should keep abreast of how the rate fluctuates leading up to departure.

What costs are covered by my CIEE fee?

CIEE Study Center fees include pre-departure information and services, on-site support services, tuition, orientation, cultural activities,

local excursions, field trips and sickness insurance. The cost of housing and meals is also included in the Santiago program. CIEE does not cover local transportation to and from your classes at the university, nor does it cover the cost of any textbooks.

Note: Transportation from Santiago to the airport at the end of the program is not covered by the program fee.

What expenses should I budget for?

You will need money for entertainment, toiletries, cosmetics, gifts, local transportation, school supplies, and independent travel. And don't forget to set aside \$50.00 for your departure. At the end of the program, you will be responsible for your own transportation from Santiago to your point of departure.

Besides inflation and currency exchange, another variable that will affect your spending abroad is your individual taste requirements. When creating a budget, it may be helpful to consider how much you normally spend in a semester and inflate it a bit. Although the cost of living for a student in the Dominican Republic is comparable to that of a student in the United States, the added cost of independent travel along with the impulse to splurge makes careful budgeting imperative. Former students have saved considerably through limiting meals to those provided by the program and limiting vacation travel to the general area around Santiago. We suggest you bring extra money, if possible, for unforeseeable expenses. Students are advised to maintain US \$100 in reserve for medical emergencies.

Please refer to the cost breakdown on the ciece website (www.ciece.org/study) to assist in your budget planning. It is based on the amounts spent by students in the program last year.

Financial Arrangements

You will need to make arrangements regarding traveler's checks, personal checks, credit cards, and bank cards before leaving home. If you plan to have money or checks sent to you, do not have them sent by mail. Some students have waited an entire semester for funds to arrive. Use Western Union. See the section [Money and Banking](#) in [Part III](#) for details.

*** Tip: Forget "Hey Mom, send money"**

It is important that you make arrangements to receive enough money to cover your personal

expenses for the time you are in Santiago prior to your departure from the United States.

Participants say...

Bring more money than you think you'll need.

It is possible to live very cheaply here, if you want. Most things that are necessary like transportation and photocopies are very cheap. It's possible to live a very nice lifestyle for not too much money. Most of what I spent was on luxury things that I could have done without if I really wanted to budget.

PACKING AND BAGGAGE

Try to organize and pack a day or two prior to departure so that you can judge if you'll be able to carry your bags (you must be able to do this). Some students have even practiced by carrying their bags around the block! Also, by packing early you'll have time to rest before the long trip.

What are the baggage limits?

Limits vary. Read the weight limitation and baggage allowance information provided by your international airline carrier. Generally flights overseas permit two pieces of checked baggage and one carry-on piece. Each checked bag must weigh less than 50 pounds. Total dimensions (length + width + height) of the first piece must be less than 62 inches, and the second piece less than 52 inches. Total dimensions of the carry-on must not exceed 45 inches and must be able to fit below the seat in front of you or in the overhead compartment. If your baggage exceeds any of these standards you may be charged for excess baggage. Check with your airline regarding any items that are oversized.

What should I pack?

For a complete list of what to bring, please see the [Suggested Packing Checklist](#) at the end of this handbook. Experienced travelers agree: bring as little as possible.

CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

Year-round daytime temperatures in Santiago average 73-82 degrees Fahrenheit, and 85-95 degrees in summer, so pack for a tropical climate. Lightweight cotton or cotton-blend shirts and blouses are better breathers than synthetics. At higher elevations in the country, nights can get a bit cool, so occasionally you'll need a long-sleeved shirt or sweatshirt.

Most Dominicans, like other Latin Americans, place more emphasis on looking their best in public than U.S. students. In fact, Dominicans generally dress as well as they can afford. In

addition to dressing well, there is a lot of emphasis placed on hair and grooming, especially for women. Women spend a lot of time in salons and most of them get their hair blow dried straight.

Dominican students make an effort to dress well to go to class--no torn or ripped jeans. Men will wear lightweight jeans or khakis with a T-shirt, polo shirt, or short-sleeved dress shirt. Women make an effort to wear attractive, trendy clothing, usually close-fitting jeans and shirts, tank tops, or blouses in the latest styles. Dominicans rarely wear tennis shoes to class and never to work, and never wear casual sandals (flip-flops or Birkenstock- or rubber sandals) for anything more formal than a trip to the corner store or to the beach. Your footwear is very important, especially since you will spend a lot of time away from home. A pair of good-looking but comfortable shoes is essential (past participants have suggested "cute sandals"), as well as dressier shoes for going out.

Even though it gets hot, Dominicans only wear shorts around the house, for a run to the *colmado* in their immediate neighborhood, or to the beach, but very rarely to class, to work, or for going about the city. For women, flowy skirts of breathable material work well for the heat, but lightweight jeans will be your best clothing option. Note that Dominican women nearly always wear belts with their pants and generally follow European fashions, which call for more tightly fitting clothing than U.S. norms.

For evening events and going out, Dominicans dress up to their glamorous best. Most *discotecas* refuse entry to men if they are wearing T-shirts, tennis shoes, jeans, or earrings. Cathedrals and national shrines usually do not allow visitors wearing shorts or tank tops.

Some homestay hosts do laundry on a near-daily basis, others once a week. Because of the intense Caribbean heat, you will sometimes want to change shirts several times a day. Pack accordingly, but remember that U.S. students have often said they took too much clothing. Nothing ruins traveling abroad more than having too much luggage, especially when you have to carry it yourself. You can save packing space by coordinating your clothing so that shirts and sweaters can be worn with different skirts and pants. Be sure to bring an umbrella!

If you still don't know what you need to bring or if you run short of clothing, you will be able to find a variety of imports in Santiago; the cost, however, may be higher than in the United States, as anything imported is subject to shipping and duty charges. Locally made shoes and clothing, including custom-made items, are much more reasonable.

Participants say...

Bring office-type supplies.

Bring lots of mosquito repellent.

Pack an open mind. Be prepared to jump into the culture and the society ready to experience and learn.

Toilet Articles

Stores carry a variety of soap, toothpaste, sanitary supplies, and cosmetics in Santiago.

We recommend that you bring some soap, a small plastic soap case, and a towel, for when you first arrive. You should bring your own water bottle as you'll want to carry water with you most of the time. Again, if you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair and enough contact lens solution. You may find items, such as saline solution, to be extremely expensive.

Sunscreen

Bring a high SPF sunscreen. It is much cheaper to purchase in the U.S. The sun will be stronger than you are used to.

Birth Control

If you anticipate needing some form of birth control while you are abroad, bring it with you. If you are taking birth control pills, bring a supply to last you the entire program, along with a copy of the prescription. Condoms are available in pharmacies, but they may be of poorer quality than in the United States.

Film/Cameras

It is a good idea to bring your digital camera with you from the US. Although they are sold in the DR as well, they are much more expensive. Photos can be downloaded and printed at a number of shops throughout Santiago. Although film is available, it is very costly, so purchase all the film you think you will need before you arrive if you use a film camera.

School supplies

There is a great variety of relatively inexpensive notebooks, pens, and other school supplies for sale in Dominican stores. Past participants have suggested bringing some school supplies with

you if you prefer special brands or types of supplies.

Linens

You won't need to pack bedding, but towels are not always supplied, so bring one or two and a wash cloth (if you use one). Definitely bring a beach towel. A light-weight sleeping bag is handy for overnight trips, although it is not required.

Electrical Appliances

The current is 110 volts, 60 cycles, the same as in the United States. There should be no problem with bringing your electrical appliances, but remember the frequent power outages, when you cannot use curling irons, blow dryers, or the like. Make sure you bring a *battery-powered* alarm clock.

Mementos from home

Bring things from home that you can share with your Dominican family and friends. This includes pictures of yourself and your family in the United States, recipes you like to cook, typical items from your community, college, or region of the United States. There will be both formal and informal opportunities for you to share talents in music, drama, dance, athletics, etc. Consider bringing music and instruments or other equipment.

Gifts

While not expected, it is nice to bring gifts for your host family. You will not know your family before arriving and thus not know exactly how many family members there are, but you should bring various small generic gifts such as picture books of the United States, T-shirts, foods and crafts from your hometown, and memorabilia from your university.

***Tip: Passport and credit card numbers**

Remember, leave a copy of your passport and a list of credit card numbers at home.

What if I want to have things mailed to me abroad?

If you are considering having some items mailed to you after your arrival, see the section on [Post Office and Mailing Procedures](#) in this handbook.

PREPARING FOR CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Although cultural adaptation is highly individual, research indicates that most people go through

similar stages in adapting to a new environment. Any travel you've done abroad, and perhaps even within your own country, has exposed you to culture shock. But if you've never had to overcome culture shock, you might want to read about it before you depart. You'll find books relating to cultural adaptation and culture shock on the recommended reading list at the back of this handbook.

During your on-site orientation, the resident staff will discuss details about culture shock and give strategies for adapting to your new surroundings. Near the end of the program, they will also provide information on reverse culture shock and suggest ways of coping with returning home.

The Glimpse Foundation

CIEE is an institutional member of The Glimpse Foundation. As a CIEE student, you get access to a full range of services that will help you prepare for your time abroad and/or enable you to share your insights during and after your overseas experience.

These services include:

- Access to Glimpse's content archive, which currently contains over 400 student-written articles from 88 countries.
- Access to the Glimpse 'Ask the Expert' database so you can connect with current and returned study abroad students in your country/region.

To get started you will need to register on [GlimpseAbroad.org](http://www.glimpseabroad.org) at: <http://www.glimpseabroad.org/register.php>

While registering be sure to select "CIEE" from the drop-down menu under "Abroad Program Provider".

Once you've registered, simply login with your personal username and password and enjoy access to the services outlined above. Enjoy!

Participants say...

Remember to learn from all the people around you: your family, the people on the street, and the "Estudiantes de Apoyo" are all great resources and can help you improve your Spanish. Also, the Americans in the program offer an opportunity to learn all about the United States. Take advantage of it all!

Part III: Living in Santiago

Sometimes living in a university environment abroad makes it easy to forget you're not home. Remember, you are in another country with its own laws and customs, and they are different from the ones you're used to. Be aware of this and conduct yourself accordingly.

The orientation described in Part I will also cover practical aspects of living in a new place, Dominican laws, proper social conduct, and cultural differences, including race, gender, and class. For example, some past participants have found that many Dominican nationals had what they considered to be a distorted and stereotyped image of U.S. women, often acquired through advertising, television, and movies. The resident staff will provide insights into the local culture's view of women and suggest ways to reduce anxiety and to ensure personal safety.

MEETING DOMINICANS

Just as it is impossible to define a typical "American," it is equally impossible to define a typical "Dominican." You will meet many types of people in the Dominican Republic who have different opinions, attitudes, and habits. The more you interact with Dominican people, the better chance you'll have of forming relationships and understanding the culture. During these interactions use common sense, intelligence, and a sense of objectivity. Be prepared to discuss your views freely and openly, and try to listen with an open mind.

You may arrive in the Dominican Republic with some preconceptions about Dominicans and may encounter some Dominicans with preconceptions about people from the United States. Try to put aside stereotypes and make judgments based on real experiences. If you are confronted with what you feel is untrue about the United States, be frank and truthful, yet tactful in your response. Avoid refuting arguments with odious comparisons to the Dominican Republic. This type of response will only create bad feelings. A positive and serious response from you will help dispel myths about the United States.

Participants say...

The sooner you disconnect yourself from the circle of North Americans from the CIEE program and decide you're here to learn and speak Spanish, the sooner

you'll learn about and integrate yourself into Dominican culture.

Cultural Note: Women and gender issues

Some students may find that the role of women in the Dominican Republic is quite different than what they are used to in the United States.

These roles and relationships are defined culturally and socially. Based on processes of socialization, men and women learn the cultural significance of "being" men and women in the society. This is manifested in terms of machismo (where boys/men are taught that they are intellectually and physically superior to girls/women) and Marianismo (where girls/women are taught to emulate the Virgin Mary and to have high moral and spiritual standards). The interplay of machismo and Marianismo is expressed in daily social relationships. You may find, however, some women challenging existing ideas about women in the Dominican Republic as there are feminist groups throughout the country working to address issues of equality, women's participation, non-sexist language, and domestic violence. Nonetheless, both male and female students may experience challenges surrounding some of the prevalent gender roles and expectations in Dominican society.

For example, the *piropo* is a common Dominican custom of men calling out to women on the street, which most foreign women find disturbing, although Dominicans define it as "giving compliments."

Be particularly careful to follow Dominican cultural "rules" for women: not walking alone after dark or not staying out too late in public social settings, such as dance clubs. Stay in groups unless you feel comfortable about your date. If you feel someone is behaving inappropriately, such as intimate touching, forcing drinks on you, or dancing too close, be direct and firm with the person. In time, you will become more comfortable with local values and practices and will begin to have friendships with Dominicans.

You will be presented with more information regarding these issues during orientation and throughout the semester.

Avoid excessive drinking in public.

Participants say...

If you are a woman, the DR is definitely a test of your self-esteem. Prepare yourself to be sometimes caught off guard by the piropos on the street.

If you're a woman, especially a white woman, you're going to have quite an experience—you'll have to get used to men hitting on you and making comments about you in the street, at discos, in taxis, and all over the place. There's also a lot of racism against people with especially dark skin which is more overt than in the United States. It's still a great program and a great country!

Cultural Note: Minority Issues

Students that are members of ethnic minorities or from ethnic backgrounds, students with disabilities, gay and lesbian students, or overweight students may face particular difficulties in the study abroad setting. Many students may encounter nicknames and expressions often based on ideas about color and ancestry, weight, gender, and sexual orientation - sometimes, this is based on stereotypes. At the same time, some of the words have a slightly different social meaning and implication within a cultural context. However, literally, some students may be offended by the direct translation (i.e. "gordita").

Some dark-skinned African American students have, in the past, been thought of as Haitian or Haitian American. This is due in part to the ways in which Dominicans define themselves in relation to Haitians, where Dominicans consider themselves to be "mixed" (not Black or White) and Haitians are considered to be Black. Also, there are long-standing tensions between the Dominican Republic and Haiti stretching back to 1822 when the island was unified under Haitian rule. Independence Day (February 27) is celebrated in relation to the formation of the Dominican Republic and separation from Haiti in 1844. Thus, ideas about peoplehood, race, color, and culture are relational, historical, and socio-cultural. So, while darker-skinned students may be defined as Haitian or Haitian American, lighter-skinned students are often defined as Dominican or Dominican American.

Students who come to the Dominican Republic with Black and/or African American identities are often surprised to learn that many Dominicans don't define themselves as Black or Afro-Dominican. Instead, Dominicans often use the color category "indio" to refer to skin color variation when referring to the "majority" of Dominicans. While "indio" literally means "Indian," it is an intermediate category, between

Black and White, and refers to color. Again, this has a socio-historical context. The usage of "indio" is being challenged, however, by some individuals and groups within the Dominican Republic who are seeking to define themselves in different ways (e.g. mulatto, Afro-Dominican, and/or Black). At the same time, "indio," and "mestizo" continue to be the dominant categories and ways of defining Dominicans along the lines of race and color. By the end of the program, students have a new perspective on the racial system in the Dominican Republic and in the United States.

As previously mentioned, while many students may never encounter a problem, it's important to mention that, in the past, some darker-skinned students have encountered anti-Haitian and "racist" remarks based on color and assumptions about race, ancestry, and culture. For example, some female students have been told to straighten their hair (because of the emphasis on "relaxed" hair in the Dominican Republic), been stopped by watchmen while walking home, and both males and females have been denied entrance to clubs. Some of the men have been approached by prostitutes and pick pocketed in the process—though this could happen to any man, no matter his ethnic background. We want you to know that these types of things have happened, but that they are not everyday occurrences.

Students will be presented with more information regarding these issues during orientation and throughout the program. Note that the resident staff is always available to discuss any cultural challenges you may experience in the Dominican Republic. They have been trained for and are accustomed to dealing with these issues.

Participants say...

Darker-skinned African-American women must come to the DR already having a strong sense of self.

For Black students, you may go through a bit of an identity crisis when you first arrive because the campus is full of white, or better said, mixed Dominicans who identify with being white and of Black Dominicans who glorify whites and deny their African ancestry.

So bear with their denial, try to expand their minds when you see fit and never, ever forget you represent a strong, proud and beautiful people of African ancestry in North America whose values and beliefs should never be undermined.

Being Asian in this country is something else! Almost everyone wants to know if you're from China.

Cultural Note: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Students

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students will find that Santiago has a "closeted" community for sexual minorities. Misconceptions about sexual orientation in the Dominican Republic continue to present challenges to many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students. Many Dominicans make deprecating comments about homosexuals, and a "politically correct attitude" toward the gay and bisexual community is non-existent in mainstream Dominican society. There are very few safe public places for meeting other gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. The resident staff is available to discuss individual situations in a discreet manner and to help you find resources and open and safe environments.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Student Issues in the General Latin American Context

Many gay institutions in Latin America are underdeveloped, with few resources and limited finances to promote and sustain GLBT organizations or NGOs. However, there are numerous individuals and small groups who voice their opinion to promote changes in the laws, offer social services, establish coming out groups, and advocate for hospice/medical care and/or housing for GLBT individuals expelled from their home, etc. As is the case in many underdeveloped countries, such GLBT issues have not been solidified institutionally and there is typically a lack of funding to establish NGOs that focus on these issues. Instead, GLBT issues are often addressed publicly under the guise of HIV awareness campaigns or other projects related to human rights.

Regardless of their sexual orientation (or class), most men and women who are not married continue to live primarily at their family's home indefinitely. The social and economic function of the family is an important one, especially when gay institutions are not well developed. In many countries, there is no welfare state and the family unit becomes a *de facto* security blanket for GLBT individuals. In addition, some researchers have noted that residing with families scattered throughout a city precludes the development of gay neighborhoods (with a

possible exception of a small cluster of gay entertainment venues, if permitted by law).

This explains some of the differences with regard to GLBT issues in Latin America in comparison to the U.S., where in many large cities you will not find such considerable obstacles to the formation of a gay consciousness and sense of open community regarding sexuality.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

CIEE's approach to safety is threefold. First, we conduct a careful safety evaluation of every program we run. Next, when the students arrive on site, we conduct a thorough orientation which includes tips on reducing risk and handling difficult situations should they arise. Finally, program staff continuously monitors local conditions in order to provide guidance to participants throughout their stay.

Experience has shown that the single most important factor in assuring a safe study abroad experience is the sensible and cautious behavior of the participants themselves. When traveling abroad, you should exercise additional caution until you become familiar with your new surroundings. Always remain alert to what is going on around you, especially in crowded tourist areas and on public transportation.

You should feel free to lock your valuables in the closet in your homestay. If you are the victim of a pickpocket, or if something is stolen, inform the Resident Director who will help you make a report.

Infrastructure Hazards

Because the Dominican Republic is a small developing country, you will find that conditions in general do not compare with those at home. An inadequate infrastructure means that electrical power is irregular at best, and the "luz" will often disappear for hours at a time. We recommend that you always carry a small flashlight.

Many people tap into the electrical wires without permission or training in electrical safety, so exposed live wires are common. Streets are sometimes in disrepair. When they are under construction, there are often no provisions or warnings for the safety of passing traffic. You must always be on the lookout for holes, unmarked ditches, and, especially, heavy machinery.

Although the municipal water in Santiago is treated at a modern plant, if water and sewage pipes are in disrepair, the water is contaminated in the process. We recommend that you drink only bottled water or, even safer, water that has been filtered and boiled. All host families are instructed to provide this for our students, as well as to use proper hygiene in the preparation of food.

Natural Disasters

Hurricane season is from August to November. The threat of hurricanes exists during this period, but the probability is not large. Because Santiago is in an interior valley of the island, most of the force of tropical storms and hurricanes arriving from the east or the west is diminished by the time it arrives. CIEE staff monitors the weather, and will post warnings against weekend travel if necessary. Host family housing is sturdy, and the families are well-practiced in preparing for hurricanes with adequate water and food supplies on hand.

The greatest potential danger to you from hurricanes is after the storm. Electrical lines may be down, water and communications may be cut off, and services are rarely restored promptly. Local rivers and streams may be flooded, and sanitation conditions may decline. The danger of injury from debris makes clean-up difficult. You should stay at home until contacted by local CIEE staff. We will contact you about what to do concerning classes and communicating with your families. We will make every attempt to stay in touch with the CIEE home office about local conditions, and your parents can contact them as well.

Earthquakes are another possibility, although much less possible to predict. PUCMM buildings and your host families' homes are probably the safest buildings available, but in general do not count on earthquake-proof buildings. In the case of tremors or earthquakes, stand under a door frame. Do not run outside. Again, local CIEE staff will be in communication with you and with the CIEE home office in the case of emergency.

Political Conditions

The political climate in the Dominican Republic has remained remarkably stable in the past few years despite two contested elections, U.S. intervention in neighboring Haiti, and a change of government. From time to time, transportation drivers have called for national strikes, which usually last a day, and any possible

disturbances usually take place in the marginal neighborhoods surrounding the city. PUCMM does not permit protests to take place on university property. CIEE staff will inform you if the PUCMM campus is closed; otherwise it is safe to walk to classes.

****Trap: Letting your guard down***

When visiting a foreign country, you may well be enchanted by your surroundings and engage in behavior that is not typical of you. This may cause you to let your guard down and be susceptible to crime. Practice common sense and exercise good judgment. Remember that you are more likely to be a victim of crime if you have been drinking alcohol.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MAIL

Telephone

The phone at your host family home is to be used as a means of relaying messages and to make plans, not for long conversations. Long distance phone calls are limited to 20 minutes from your host family's telephone (and then, only when using a calling card purchased in the DR). Local calls are limited to 5 minutes. Never direct dial an international, national long distance, or cell phone number on your host family's home. (Cell phone calls are charged as national long distance.) You can make local calls over 5 minutes and longer long-distance calls from local phone company offices located in each neighborhood throughout the city, or use your own card-activated cell phone—all incoming calls on cell phones here are free and you "charge" the phone to call out by buying cards in quantities from RD\$20 to RD\$1,000.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to use a calling card purchased in the United States to make long distance calls from your host family's phone. These calling cards are not accepted by Dominican operators for international calls, as there has been much calling card fraud. Instead, you may purchase calling cards here in the Dominican Republic that you can use to call the United States.

CIEE will not be able to release your grade report if you have left any outstanding telephone charges with your host family.

Calls from the United States: Your family can dial you direct by using the 809 area code (without having to use the prefix dial code 011 for international calls due to a special arrangement between the Dominican and U.S. telephone companies) and then your local host family's number, which you will receive in

orientation. Or they can call you on your own cell phone, if you have one here.

Time Zone here: Remind friends and family that the Dominican Republic is in the Eastern Standard Time, during the spring and summer months from mid-April through mid-October.

***Tip: Short phone calls**

Phone service in the Dominican Republic is expensive so the telephone is used only for brief messages or for emergencies. Please be considerate, and limit your time on the phone.

Computers & Email

PUCMM has reserved a lab with a dozen computers for International Students, where the services are free. CIEE students may also use the computers in the PUCMM Library, and there is wireless Internet available for private laptops throughout campus. There are a few internet cafes near the PUCMM campus.

Laptops

Should you choose to bring a laptop with you to the site, please bring with it some form of proof of purchase and proof of personal use for Customs. Do not pack the laptop in the luggage you check onto the plane. Be advised that you may have to start up your laptop for security staff at all airports through which you pass.

Fax

You may receive faxes at the CIEE Santiago office (limited to 5 pages). The resident staff can advise you of nearby service providers if the fax you anticipate is over 5 pages. Any fax sent to you should have your name and a phone number where you can be contacted when the fax arrives.

POST OFFICE AND MAILING PROCEDURES

You can buy postage stamps at the *correo*, the post office. Packages must be wrapped in heavy brown paper. Airmail packages take about 2 weeks to get to the United States. Send regular mail packages of more than 1 kilo (2.2 pounds) as air freight or via a shipping agent. The rates are cheaper as the weight and bulk increase.

Mail: Tell anyone who will write to you to use the full name of the city, Santiago de los Caballeros. Also warn your parents and friends that airmail to and from the Dominican Republic often takes 2-3 weeks. Although mail is usually reliable, occasionally items are lost in international mail.

Federal Express usually takes 3 days. Surface mail, airmail, or registered mail is not reliable for important documents or packages. Have important documents and packages sent to you by a private mail service, like UPS, DHL, or Federal Express. Packages sent via normal mail often do not arrive until after students have left the country.

Your Mailing Address while in the DR

Have your mail addressed this way:

(Your Name)
c/o Dr. David Simmons
Director Residente, Programa CIEE
PUCMM--Campus de Santiago
Santiago de los Caballeros
República Dominicana

Packages

Discourage people at home from sending you packages because of the possibility of loss in transit or high import duties. When you enter the country you may bring in duty free with you such personal effects as books, cameras, and transistor radios, provided they accompany you or are declared at the time of entry. If they are sent later, it can be a lengthy process to take possession, and you will probably have to pay some duty tax. If it is necessary that a package be sent, use a private mail service like UPS, Federal Express, DHL, etc. Surface packages can take 2 months or more. Even packages sent by regular airmail sit in customs for months before the appropriate person is notified.

*** Trap: Don't mail cigarettes or alcohol**

It is illegal to send cigarettes or alcohol through the mail.

MONEY AND BANKING

Arrive in the Dominican Republic with several ways to obtain money, so that in the event one method fails or is inconvenient, a back-up option is available. Once in a while there are waves of thefts of US-based credit card numbers. If you plan on using a credit or ATM card, you should check your account status every few days to ensure your number has not been stolen and also have a backup option for retrieving money.

Money

The national currency is the Dominican peso. As previously mentioned, the exchange rate between the Dominican peso and the U.S. dollar fluctuates. The *New York Times* and similar

publications publish daily exchange rates. You may also reference www.x-rates.com or www.oanda.com for up-to-the-minute rates.

Arrive in the Dominican Republic with several ways to obtain money, so that in the event one method fails or is inconvenient, a back-up option is available. The best options are ATM bank cards, traveler's checks, and credit cards. You can, of course, exchange dollars for Dominican pesos; the exchange rate is slightly better, but the risk is higher. We do *not* recommend that you open a bank account while here.

Credit Cards

Bring a credit card, preferably Visa or MasterCard, for cash advances or in case of emergencies. We recommend, however, that you not use a credit card for regular purchases because the exchange rate is below that of traveler's checks and cash; also there is normally a 5% handling fee, and the interest charged for this service is usually high. Most hotels, major restaurants, and some stores accept major credit cards. Make sure your credit card will not expire during your stay. Cards that are honored in the Dominican Republic include Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. American Express is not widely accepted in Santiago, however, and there are no American Express offices in Santiago or Santo Domingo, although students with an American Express card have been able to cash personal checks at no charge at Banco del Progreso in Santiago. If it is not convenient for someone at home to handle your finances and pay your bills, arrange to have statements sent to you via airmail or email, otherwise the payment grace period is likely to expire before you receive your statements.

ATM/Bank Cards

ATM machines are widely available in the DR – you may bring your ATM card as this is the most convenient way to have access to money.

Be sure and check with your bank on the following before leaving the U.S.

- ✓ Verify that your bankcard is valid for an international banking system. You may call Cirrus in the US at 1-800-424-7787.
- ✓ Verify if you can access a savings account with your bankcard abroad. Many past participants have not been able to access their savings account while abroad, regardless if it is within the

CIRRUS, PLUS or ACCEL ATM network. Depending on the answer you should consider transferring your saving funds into a checking account.

- ✓ Make sure your PIN is in numbers, **not** letters. (Some ATM/MAC machines in the DR only have letters on their keypads.)
- ✓ From your bank, obtain a list of international banking-system ATM machines in Santiago and other locations where you plan to travel. You may call Cirrus in the US (1-800-424-7787) to request international ATM locations. The following websites also have international ATM locations: www.visa.com, www.mastercard.com/atm.
- ✓ Check with your bank **regarding international transaction** and access charges associated with using ATM machines.

While some banks do not impose additional charges for using a bankcard abroad, others can charge up to \$6.00 per transaction. If your bank charges a high fee, you should consider switching to a bank that charges less, or you can plan to make less frequent ATM transactions in larger amounts.

Recently, most Dominican banks have begun to charge a transaction fee of approximately US\$3 per withdrawal for foreign cards.

If this is the way that you choose to access money while in the Dominican Republic, you should also bring an “emergency stash” of traveler’s checks.

And remember, There are occasional waves of thefts of US-based credit card numbers. If you plan on using a credit or ATM card, you should check your online account status every few days to ensure your number has not been stolen and also have a backup option for retrieving money.

***Trap: PIN numbers**

For both credit cards and bank cards, inquire with the issuer to verify that the card is valid for an international banking system. And memorize your PIN

in numbers not letters; Foreign phone pads are often configured differently.

Banking

Although hours may vary slightly, most regular banks in the Dominican Republic are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Some are open on Saturday morning. We recommend that you not open a bank account during your stay.

Participants say...

Bring more money than you think you'll need.

Participants say...

Bring your ATM card. Leave some money in your account for emergencies and for when you return to the States. Traveler's checks are the best thing to take and they are very easy to change.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Health and safety is a prime area of concern in the Dominican Republic. For minor or nonserious ailments, the resident staff works very closely with several bilingual doctors in Santiago. You may also visit the PUCMM doctor on campus, one of four recommended private clinics, Centro Medico Cibao, Unión Médica, Hospital Metropolitana de Santiago, and Clínica Corominas, or a private doctor from our recommended list. CIEE has good relationships with many doctors in the Dominican Republic and always uses private clinics.

For more intensive care, students are taken to a private clinic which provides excellent health care. Note that for serious emergencies, your ISIC covers limited evacuation costs to Miami.

Note that health care in the Dominican Republic is not comparable to that in the United States. Private clinics and hospitals maintain higher medical standards than their public counterparts, and we only recommend doctors who have received a high level of training or carried out their residencies abroad, usually in the United States or Spain.

Obtaining medical care and medication

Hospital support services can be expected to be different than the United States even at private clinics. Health professionals in nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and respiration therapy are usually overworked, underpaid, or not recognized as partners in health care

delivery. Hospital rooms are usually shared, air conditioning is not always available, and patients are expected to provide personal supplies. Patients or their families are expected to purchase their own supplies from the pharmacy, and will be asked to pay for them. This includes syringes for routine shots. Blood supplies are of course always checked for HIV and other communicable diseases, and new needles are always used, but blood supplies can be uncertain because of storage problems resulting from frequent power outages.

In the case of serious emergencies, use a private ambulance service or any other means. We will have the names of local doctors in each excursion city we visit. If you are on your own, go to a private clinic. Keep \$100 on hand for medical emergencies. Although your insurance will reimburse you, you must pay all medical expenses up front.

GETTING AROUND

Local Transportation

You will live within walking distance or a short ride from the university. For all CIEE-sponsored activities and excursions, we provide transportation with insured, trained drivers and well-maintained vehicles. In the case of local class activities, we send you by taxi or concho, a car that picks up passengers along certain routes.

Even so, you must be aware that public transportation is inherently risky: Dominican cars do not always have properly working lights or brakes, and drivers frequently disregard traffic rules. Public transportation is very cheap, often crowded, and sometimes confusing. Motorcyclists often dart in and out of traffic, sometimes against the traffic. Mudslides on mountain roads and floods can damage major highways, and warnings of these obstacles are sparse. Laws against drinking and driving are seldom enforced, and stands selling rum and beer along the highway are common. Exercise caution in choosing transportation, and avoid traveling at night.

Walking

Pedestrians should pay careful attention to traffic when they walk. Do not walk alone either, especially after dark. If you do have to walk alone, do so with an awareness of your surroundings, and avoid isolated routes. This is particularly important for women, who must always take a door-to-door taxi or be driven

home by someone known after dark. Never walk over, under, or on the Autopista or the interchange. Cross the Autopista only at the traffic light near Supermercado Monumental, or travel by Concho M along Estrella Sadhalá to cross from one side of the Autopista to the other.

Conchos: Routes are described in the handbook provided by the Departamento de Estudiantes Internacionales, which you will receive when you arrive. You should ride only in conchos that have a clearly posted city seal and that look like they are in decent condition. Women especially should not ride in an empty concho.

Taxis

They look like individual cars, but reputable companies have both radios and a sign on the roof. Always call the taxi company and ask for the number and color of the unit. Never take a taxi unless you are absolutely sure it is from a known taxi company. The CIEE staff and host families know of individual taxi drivers whom they always request. Trust their advice.

Motorcycles

Avoid them and moto-conchos under all circumstances. Thus you won't have to buy helmets, which are seldom used here. The local emergency rooms in the public hospital are nicknamed Yamaha, Suzuki, and Harley.

Independent Travel

You will no doubt want to explore this city, particularly on weekends. You can also plan longer vacations exploring other regions over university holidays and after final exams. Be sure to bring additional funds if planning longer trips outside the Dominican Republic. It is best to plan trips outside the country for after the program has ended. Before leaving the United States, gather as much information as possible about places you may want to visit. Of course, this may require additional funds.

You may not leave the Dominican Republic without explicit written permission from the Resident Director. To avoid unnecessary inconveniences, petition this request in a timely manner.

Consult with the Resident Coordinator or the Office of International Students for references on hotels and travel. We can warn you away from notorious tourist traps and suggest safe and economical hotels.

There are many guidebooks available for the Dominican Republic, with the most current versions of Lonely Planet and Rough Guides being two of the most respected. Although geared more to tourist, rather than student travel, these guidebooks are nevertheless reasonably comprehensive. Another good source is the section in the current edition of the Caribbean Islands Handbook, and most other general tourist guidebooks on the Caribbean will provide some information on the Dominican Republic.

Once in the Dominican Republic, you can get more information in Santiago at tourist information centers, at hotels, and in the arrival area of the airport.

You will be briefed-and must sign a release on the risks involved with travel to Cuba and to Haiti. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of communication with the Resident Director in respect to travel to Haiti. Conditions change daily, and even though travel is relatively simple for Dominicans and Haitians, other rules apply to U.S. citizens. Tourist travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens is prohibited by U.S. law.

***Tip: Wherever you go...**

You must inform your host family and the Resident Director of any travel involving an overnight stay outside Santiago. You must also sign the Travel Log in the office. Failure to do this may result in your dismissal from the program.

MODES OF TRAVEL FOR LONG DISTANCE

Bus

Guaguas come in many shapes and conditions. For long-distance travel, use one of three reputable companies: Metro Bus, Terra Bus, or Caribe Tours. Públicos, privately owned buses that stop along the highway, are more risky.

Participants say...

The most desirable aspect of the program was my freedom within it. While I had classes, excursions, and an excellent support group, I also had the ability to travel freely and benefit from my own experiences.

Be prepared to question your values, and expect it to be painful sometimes.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

If you are interested in attending church or involving yourself in a religious organization

during your stay in the Dominican Republic, please contact the Resident Staff. They can put you into contact with local religious groups.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

The use of illegal drugs, as well as the abuse of alcohol, is viewed very negatively by Dominicans. Penalties for drug violations in the Dominican Republic are often harsher than in the United States. If you use illegal drugs, you may be expelled from the study program, and the local police could take you to jail and may prosecute you as a criminal. Remember that you are subject to Dominican laws. You are not protected by your own country's laws. The United States and other governments can only seek to ensure that their citizens are not discriminated against; that is, that they receive the same treatment as do citizens of the country in which they are arrested who are charged with the same offense.

Dismissal from the Program

You must comply with any regulations established by your home university as well as those of Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra. The resident staff may establish additional requirements which they consider essential either to achieving your educational goals or to continuing good relations with the university or community. Resident Staff may dismiss any student from the program who does not comply with the regulations and requirements as outlined in the Release, which all students must sign before being allowed to participate in the program.

If your Resident Director warns you that you are not complying with program regulations, you must take responsibility for changing your behavior as requested, or risk early dismissal and consequent loss of time, money, and academic credit. CIEE does not refund program fees to students who are dismissed from their programs.

VOTING WHILE ABROAD

U.S. citizens who expect to be away from home on election day may request absentee ballots in person or by mail from their local election offices. Procedures vary by state but are usually quite simple if you have already registered to vote.

If you have not arranged this before leaving home, you may use the provisions of the Overseas Voting Rights Act of 1975 which

requires states to establish a means for citizens residing overseas to apply for voter registration. Some states permit you to use an FPCA (Federal Post Card Application) to register. Others use an SF76 which serves as both an application for registration and as an absentee ballot. You can get a list of states' voting requirements from a U.S. Embassy or consular office.

***Tip: Notarize your ballot**

FPCA forms used to register or obtain a ballot must be notarized. If you believe you have been wrongfully denied the right to vote, you may write to the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Washington, D.C. 20530.

If you are a citizen of another country, consult the authorities governing elections in your own country for similar instructions before you leave.

INCOME TAX

Most U.S. citizens and residents must file U.S. income tax returns even if their earned income is exempt from taxes. State requirements vary; call or write to the appropriate state office.

Internal Revenue Service income tax information and forms are available at U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Since tax laws change from year to year, direct any questions to the U.S. Consulate. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the appropriate authorities in their own countries for taxation information.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, parents or family can reach you by calling CIEE. CIEE's home office is in daily contact with our Santiago office.

* During office hours (Monday-Friday, 9 am to 5pm EST), call 1-800-40-STUDY.

* Outside of regular office hours, call (207)553-4000. This number will connect you to a message service which will page a staff member who can help you 24 hours a day.

Part IV: Policies and Procedures

Please click on the following link to view CIEE's Policies and Procedures:
<http://ciee.org/study/terms.aspx>.

This website includes:

General Policies
Admissions

Late Arrival and Early Departure
Exceptions
Drug and Alcohol Violations
Alcohol Policy
Dismissal from the Program

Academic Policies

Student Academic Orientation
Course Loads, Credits, Equivalencies
and Grades
Academic Records
Attendance
Pass/Fail and Audit
Drop/Add Period
Incompletes
Withdrawal from a Course
Academic Honesty
Appeals

Program Fees and Payment Policies

Confirmation of Participation
Payment of CIEE Program Fees
Due Dates, Late Fees and Interest
Exclusion from Participation
Late Fees and Interest
Withdrawal and Deferral Policy
Program Cancellation

Please make sure to review this website. Your signature on the "Program Participant Contract" indicates that you have read and agree to comply with all of the policies provided to you on that website.

A NOTE FROM CIEE

Credits and Grades

Most students who choose to go abroad for a term or a year report that the experience is one of the most powerful and enjoyable parts of their undergraduate education. We hope that when you return home, you will have had an equally memorable experience.

Many students report that study abroad is also challenging, and that coming to terms with the challenges is one of the things that make it so powerful and memorable. Some students, however, report that the challenges of dealing with another country's academic culture are sometimes more frustrating than enjoyable.

The academic programs that CIEE provides are to varying degrees integrated into another culture's academic framework, and are often governed by rules that are unfamiliar to U.S. students. At CIEE we want you to experience the challenges of adapting to a new culture, of accepting different teaching styles, and

embracing forms of learning that may be different from what you are used to.

As noted above, all summer students are enrolled in the same three classes, the only variation being the Spanish language class, which is determined by the student's current level. If you realize, that special circumstances will prevent you from completing a course successfully, it may be possible to "Withdraw" from the course. If you do withdraw from a course, it will remain on your CIEE Academic Record with a "W" grade. Permission to withdraw from a course is not automatically granted just because a student is not doing well; it is only granted when there are circumstances that the Resident Director believes *prevented* a student from doing well, and *only before the program's withdrawal deadline*. There is also required paperwork to complete if you are withdrawing from a course.

After the withdrawal deadline, all courses that remain on your Course Registration Record will be posted on your CIEE Academic Record with a letter grade. If you stop going to a course, fail to take the final examination, or fail to turn in required coursework, you will receive an F.

Getting Good Grades.

The time to think about your grades is at the beginning of each course, not at the end.

Make sure you understand the basis on which the professor will be assessing your work. Practices vary from country to country. Often a single final paper or examination will be the most important (perhaps the only) opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned and/or achieved in the course. In some courses, the basis for grades may have been explained during orientation or during the registration process. An explanation may appear on the course syllabus, and/or the professor may announce grading policies. In some cases, you may not be sure how the professor will be calculating the grade. In this case as well, **it your responsibility to be sure you understand the basis for grading in each course.** If you're not sure, ask the professor or the Resident Director.

How am I doing?

Although grading differs from country to country, there are general guidelines that we can offer.

In the U.S., a student usually forms an idea of how he/she is doing as the semester progresses

based on a self-appraisal of participation in class and a general sense of what the professor cares about. In most overseas situations, it is much more difficult, and often not possible at all, for a student to determine this. Although we ask our teachers to give students ongoing feedback, their own academic cultures are often very different in this regard, and many teachers do not always offer feedback in a way that enables a student to form a reliable opinion of his/her progress. We strongly recommend that you ask your professor how you are doing, perhaps two weeks after the semester has started and again two or three times during the session. Don't wait until mid-term time to do this.

“Demanding” doesn’t mean the same thing in most overseas academic cultures.

U.S. students are accustomed to forming an idea of how demanding a teacher is based on the pressure that is applied on a day-to-day basis. In the U.S., if a professor repeatedly challenges students to show they have read and understood the assignments, and then chastises those who can't answer, students will conclude that this is a demanding teacher. This doesn't always happen overseas. “*Demanding*” in an overseas context may mean simply that the grades awarded at the end of the course are lower than those awarded by other professors.

Because of these differences, you need to take stock of your situation early and often. If the regular clues are not present, you should ask, “How am I doing?” If there isn't yet any basis for the professor to answer that question, you should ask, “What is important in this class? What should I be doing in order to succeed?” Make it your responsibility to actively seek confirmation of how well you are doing in each course.

All the CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your program site, want you to have an enjoyable and

successful session overseas. We are committed to offering top-quality assistance to help you understand the host culture and its constraints. Please do not hesitate to contact any staff member if we can advise you on how best to manage your overseas experience.

Have a great summer, learn all that you can about your temporary home, and try to bring back an excellent and accurate academic record.

CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE IS UP TO YOU

Your stay abroad may be one of the most vital and rewarding times of your life. Don't worry about what you are going to miss at school by going overseas. You will learn so much abroad! The people you meet and the situations you experience may be invaluable in the years to come.

We hope you will arrive prepared to adjust to a way of living that is different from your own; to a way of thinking that may be, in some cases, more traditional, more conventional, and more conservative than your own. You will also most likely encounter new and different views about the U.S. and its people. Take the opportunity to learn from these and to clarify misconceptions about the U.S. when you can.

Remember that each person you meet will see you as a representative of the United States. If you can accept differences cheerfully and with an open mind rather than attempting to alter the environment around you, you can contribute to a positive relationship between the country and the United States.

CIEE wishes you every success during the coming months.

Part V: Additional Resources

RECOMMENDED READING

We urge you to read several of these publications to expand your knowledge of the Dominican Republic and ease your adjustment to Dominican culture. Many of these books will be difficult to find so you should be sure to check your university and local libraries as well as local bookstores. You may have to obtain the books through inter-library loans.

Books and articles on the Dominican Republic and Public Health

We especially recommend that you read James Ferguson's insightful book before the start of the program, as it provides a general background of contemporary Dominican society, culture, and history.

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- Black, Jan Knippers. *The Dominican Republic. Politics and Development in an Unsovereign State*. Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1986.
- Calder, Bruce. *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.
- Cambeira, Alan. *Quisqueya la Bella : The Dominican Republic in Historical and Cultural Perspective*. New York: Sharpe, 1997.
- Crassweller, Robert D. *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator*. New York: Macmillan, 1966.
- Gregory, Steven. *The Devil Behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. California: University of California Press, 2006.
- Ferguson, James. *Dominican Republic: Beyond the Lighthouse*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1992.
- Moya Pons, Frank. *The Dominican Republic: A National History*. Princeton: Markus Weiner, 1998.
- Roorda, Eric Paul. *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Simmons, David. "Structural Violence as Social Practice: Anti-Haitianism, Haitian Agricultural Workers, and Health in the Dominican Republic," in *Human Organization* 69(1): 10-18. 2010.
- Whiteford, Linda. "A Question of Adequacy: Primary Health Care in the Dominican Republic," in *Social Science and Medicine*, 30(2):221-226. 1990.
- Whiteford, Linda. "Caribbean Colonial History and Its Contemporary Health Care Consequences: The Case of the Dominican Republic, in *Social Science and Medicine*, 35(10):1215-1225. 1992.

- Wucker, Michele. Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola. Hill and Wang, 2000.

Also, the books by Julia Alvarez are highly recommended: *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent*, *In the Time of the Butterflies*, and *Yo*.

Films

El Poder de Jefe. Three volumes on the dictatorship of Trujillo.

Nueba Yol and *Nueba Yol III*.

Books On Cultural Adaptation

Adaptation to a new culture can be difficult. The following reading list contains publications that deal specifically with issues of culture shock and the difficulties associated with living overseas. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

- Bedggood, Ginnie, and Ilana Benady. Dominican Republic- Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture. Kuperard: 2010.
- Kepets, Dawn. Back in the USA: Reflecting on Your Study Abroad Experience. NAFSA: Association for International Educators, 1995.
- Kohls, L. Robert. Survival Kit For Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1996.
- Lewis, Tom J. and Jungman, Robert E., eds. On Being Foreign: Culture Shock in Short Fiction. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1986. Paul Bowles' "You Have Left Your Lotus Pods on the Bus" and G.S. Sharat Chandras' "Saree of the Gods" are particularly recommended.
- Storti, Craig. Cross-Cultural Dialogues. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1994.
- Storti, Craig. The Art of Crossing Cultures. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1990.
- Weaver, Gary R. "Understanding and Coping with Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress," in Paige, R. Michael, ed. Cross-Cultural Orientation. Lanham, MD: Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra Press of America, 1986. This book contains several other very useful articles applicable to coping with both culture and reentry shock.

WEBSITES

For those students with access to the Internet, we also encourage you to look at the many sites on student travel as well as on the Dominican Republic and Santiago including the following:

www.ciee.org - CIEE's web site. If you haven't already, take a look and find out about other CIEE activities around the world.

www.CIEEtravel.com - For a direct link to CIEE Travel information on student tickets, travel gear, and other interesting information for the student traveler.

www.travel.state.gov/dominican_republic.html - The U.S. State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs home page providing Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, U.S. Passport Information and Application Procedures, U.S. Consulate and Embassy Addresses Abroad, and U.S. Customs Information.

www.oanda.com/converter/classic - Current exchange rates.

www.quote.yahoo.com/m3?u - Current exchange rates.

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/americas.htm - News from around the world

www.hispaniola.com - Information on the Dominican Republic

www.dominican-rep.com/ - A cultural site

www.cdc.gov - U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Provides updated information on required immunization and regional health advisories for travelers.

www.lonelyplanet.com - On-line travel guide to the Dominican Republic from the very respected Lonely Planet series of travel guides.

www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/travelreport/menu_e.htm - Canadian Consular Services Travel Information and Advisory Reports

www.dfat.gov.au/consular/advice/consadvice_main.html - Australian Consular Travel Advice

www.fco.gov.uk/travel/default.asp - Foreign Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom

www.netcafes.com - Look up the location of cyber cafes in the Dominican Republic.

Additionally, the Overseas Studies Office at the University of Southern California (USC) maintains an extensive web site with a number of relevant links under topics including cross cultural information, currency conversion/money abroad, financial aid, government sites, health and safety issues, insurance, passports and visas, phone codes and time zones, weather, and transportation. This site can be found at: www.usc.edu/dept/overseas/links.html

SUGGESTED PACKING CHECKLIST

You'll want to pack what best reflects your own life style and taste, but CIEE recommends the following for the Dominican Republic:

Important Documents

- Airline ticket (save the return ticket if it's a round-trip ticket)
- CIEE Student Handbook and pre-departure materials
- Credit card/ATM/bank card
- Home Advisor's address, fax, email
- International Student Identity Card
- Passport/Photocopy of passport (keep separate from passport)
- Traveler's checks/List of traveler's check numbers (keep separate)

Clothing (Cultural Note: Dominicans tend to dress more formally for classes than Americans. See "What should I pack?" in this handbook for more information.)

- Belt (1-2)
- Bras (4)
- Dress shoes (1-2 pairs)
- Flip flops or sandals (1 pair)
- Pajamas/nightgown (2)
- Pants (4-5 pair including some lightweight)
- Raincoat or parka
- Robe--optional
- Shirts (including dress), blouses, T-shirts (10)
- Shorts, formal and informal (5-6)
- Shower sandals (1 pair)
- Skirts or dresses, (2) one should be dressy
- Slip
- Sneakers (1 pair) particularly if you like jogging or plan to participate in sports
- Socks (6-7)
- Sportscoat/lightweight blazer (optional)
- Sweaters/sweatshirts (2-3)
- Swimsuit (2)
- Tie (1-2)
- Underwear (10)
- Walking shoes, sturdy & comfortable (1 pair)

General Items-Optional

- Address book, including email
- Adhesive tape
- Backpack/Overnight bag for traveling
- Batteries
- Birth control/contraceptives
- Camera, film, Blank CD's

- Contact lens solution
- Pictures of your family and friends
- Flashlight
- Spanish grammar book
- Gifts
- Glasses or contact lenses, extra pair, prescription
- Guidebook
- Gynecological supplies
- Hair dryer-Voltage in the Dominican Republic is 110V (same as the US)
- Hosteller's sack/light sleeping bag
- Journal
- Medication you are taking and a copy of the prescriptions
- Medicine kit, small: antacid/anti-diarrhea medicine/aspirin/band-aids/cold medicine
- Money belt or pouch
- Mosquito repellent
- Nail scissors
- Plastic bags
- Pocket Spanish-English dictionary
- Pocket knife-(optional)
- Reading material: books, magazines
- Sewing kit
- Soap and soap dish
- Sunglasses, good pair
- Sunscreen, good quality
- Toiletries: brush, comb, deodorants, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.
- Towels (1 beach, 1-3 bath)
- Travel alarm clock
- Umbrella
- Water Bottle