PRE-ARRIVAL HANDBOOK

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— PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION —

The purpose of this document is to assist you, as much as possible, in preparing to leave your homeland and to arrive in a new area. This is probably one of the most exciting (and possibly nervous) times in your life thus far. We want to make the transition as easy as possible. This information will assist you in arranging your travel to the United States and in planning your educational career at Union University. Please read it carefully and please let us know if you have any further questions!

Emily Harper
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TRAVEL DOCUMENTS
Unless you are a Canadian citizen, you must obtain a passport and a visa (a permit to enter the United States).

Student Visa (F-1): Unless you have previously verified alternative visa status, you will receive the Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20) necessary for acquiring a student (F-1) visa from Union University. Present the Form I-20 with your passport to a United States consular officer at a United States consulate or embassy to obtain a visa application.

Canadian students must present Form I-20 to US Immigration officials at the United States-Canadian border.

DO NOT enter the United States on another school’s I-20. To do so and then enroll at Union University would be a violation of US Immigration Service regulations.

DO NOT attempt to enter the United States on a visitor/tourist visa (B-2) unless it is designated “Prospective Student” by a consular officer. The US Immigration Service rarely authorizes a change of status from B-2 to F-1.

Exchange Visitor Visa (J-1): Students whose expenses are paid by an international organization or a US government agency, or who participate in a University exchange program may receive a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (Form IAP-66). Present this form to the consular officer when applying for a J-1 visa and present it again at the port of entry.
HEALTH REQUIREMENTS
You will be informed of any health and immigration requirements when you apply for your visa. A physical examination may be required. The University further requires, as a condition of enrollment, that all students have a Medical History and Health Evaluation Form completed by a physician and submitted to the University Health Services. You must comply with certain immunization requirements. If you do not do this before leaving home, you must be examined by a physician at your own expense after you arrive.

THINGS TO BRING
Tennessee has a varying climate with four distinct seasons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>June- September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>September- December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>December- March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>March- June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Temperatures vary considerably from year to year. During spring, summer and fall moderate periods of rainfall occur; snow falls occasionally during the winter months. Three basic types of clothing are essential in winter; heavy jackets or overcoats; warm hats; scarves and gloves are needed. During chilly autumn and spring days, jackets are worn outdoors, sweaters indoors. A lightweight jacket is sometimes necessary for cool nights during spring, summer, and fall.

Personal Items: Most students like to bring typical examples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, music, maps or other items descriptive of their country and culture, both to show interested Americans and to provide a touch of home decoration in their new homes. You may want to bring items you use regularly that may not be readily available, or may be more expensive in the United States – for example, eyeglasses, cameras, watches, portable radios. You may also have the opportunity to visit a duty-free port where such items may be purchased at a reduced cost.

If you live on campus, basic furniture is provided in campus residence complexes, but bed linens, blankets, pillows, and towels are not provided. You may purchase these items once you get to the United States if desired. If possible, bring a bed sheet, a light blanket, and a towel with you from home or purchase them before moving into the residence complexes.

THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME
You can obtain a booklet on customs regulations at the consulate or embassy where you acquire your visa. Prohibited items include some foodstuffs, narcotics, and items for resale.
Since students are expected to buy required textbooks for all courses, and supplemental reading materials for review and research are available in libraries, you need not bring any books used in previous study.

It is best to purchase electrical appliances after you arrive: appliances manufactured outside the US may not be compatible with the power supply or may not be allowed in residence halls.

**ARRANGING FOR MAIL**

Until you have a mailing address in Jackson you may have your letters (not parcels) mailed to you at the following address:

**UU Box # 1858**
**c/o International Student Office**
**1050 Union University Drive**
**Jackson, TN 38305**

“Hold for arrival” should be marked on the envelope. The University cannot be responsible for the security of any mail forwarded.
TRAVELING TO THE UNITED STATES

TRANSPORTATION
If you plan to come directly to Jackson, TN from your US port of entry, you will save money if you purchase your domestic travel ticket with your overseas flight. Otherwise, you will need extra money in US dollars to purchase an airline or bus ticket to Jackson. Exchange rates and US taxes generally make it more expensive to buy tickets after you arrive.

Before buying an airline ticket, you should shop for the most economic fare. Some national air carriers offer student rates, and organizations often contract with travel agents for group rates. Bookings for discount fares usually must be made months prior to departure. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) arranges Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific passage for groups and individuals. You may contact CIEE at one of the following addresses:

28A Poland St,
London WI
(Oxford Circus) England

18 Graf Adolf Str.
4000 Dusseldorf I
Germany

49 rue Pierre Charron
Paris 75008
France

Sanno Grand Building Room 102
0-14-2 Nagata-cho 2-chome
Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo 100
Japan

205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
USA

CIEE also sells an International Student Identification Card, which provides for reduced-rate air, bus, and train tickets; accommodation discounts in major cities; discounts for certain services and shopping; and traveler’s health and accident insurance for the duration of your trip. (You
really won’t need the insurance since you will be covered from the time you leave your home until you arrive back at your home by your Union University International Student Insurance Group policy.)

**LUGGAGE AND BAGGAGE**
You may send baggage in advance of your arrival; the University has storage facilities for luggage, trunks, or packages. Send to the International Student Office at the address mentioned above.

Regardless of the cost for excess weight, it is usually better to bring all personal baggage with you on the plane (check with your travel agent and airline for size and weight limitation) rather than to ship it separately. Even if you spend $100 for excess weight, you will save money, since a shipment of large parcels often cost at least that much. You also may require the services of an agent to arrange for customs clearance and forwarding of unaccompanied parcels. Such services are expensive and result in considerable delays.

**MONEY**
It is a good idea to exchange currency for US dollars before your departure, but you should not travel with large amounts of cash since there is too much danger of loss or theft. If you anticipate bringing large sums of money to the United States, ask a bank about the safest and most convenient means of carrying or transferring funds. If you make arrangements for funds to be transferred in US dollars to a US bank before you leave home, that money will be available to you when you arrive on campus. Foreign currency is not available in most US cities, and the University and all local businesses accept only US dollars.

When you arrive in the US, you should have sufficient funds to cover your expenses until you arrive at the campus. The amount depends, of course, on your travel plans. Once you have decided your itinerary and estimated your expenses, you should purchase traveler’s checks in US dollars for the amount of money you need. Traveler’s checks, obtained at banks or travel offices, can be cashed by banks and by most businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and airports.

It is also advisable to carry a small amount of cash – at least fifty dollars in paper currency and two or three dollars in coins or “change” for telephones, baggage lockers, bus fares, and tips. The lower denominations of US paper money are $1, $5, $10, $20 bills; coins are 1 cent (penny, $0.01), 5 cents (nickel, $0.05), 10 cents (dime $0.10), 25 cents (quarter, $0.25), and 50 cents (half-dollar, $0.50).
ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES

INSPECTION
When you arrive in the United States, a US customs inspector examines your luggage to determine compliance with customs regulations concerning personal items. At the time of your US Immigration Inspection, you must show your passport and surrender your I-20 or IAP-66. Page 3 - 4 of the I-20 or the pink copy of the IAP-66 is returned to you for future use. The immigration officer issues the entry permit.

If you have a problem with customs or immigration, contact the International Student Office at Union University immediately (731-661-5031).

PORT-OF-ENTRY SERVICES
Arrival in a strange city in a foreign culture can be a confusing experience. If you desire, a Union University representative will meet you on your initial entry to the US if you contact your International Student Advisor at least three (3) weeks in advance. They will meet you at the Memphis, Nashville, or Jackson, Tennessee Airport and bring you directly to the campus.

STAYING IN THE PORT CITY
If time permits, you may enjoy staying in the port city or any city for several days as a way to begin your educational trip. Any stay, however, is likely to be very expensive unless carefully planned in advance. Specific information on expenses, places to stay and eat, sightseeing, and transportation is available from travel agents and travel books (Let’s Go: USA, published by St. Martin’s Press and distributed by Fleetbooks, and Where to Stay USA, published by CIEE, are two good references generally available in bookstores).

In US cities, bus or train service is considerably less expensive than taxis unless you share the ride with other people. If you need a taxi, ask the driver to tell you the approximate rate and then pay the exact fare shown on the meter. It is customary to tip the driver 15 percent of the total fare.
ARRIVAL AT THE UNIVERSITY

You are expected to arrive at the University no later than the arrival date specified on your I-20 or IAP-66. The University’s orientation program begins on this date. It is very important that you attend the orientation program to become familiar with the University and its resources, meet with advisors regarding academic planning, and become familiar with the community. You will also need to move into housing, get settled, and learn about University procedures and regulations, register for courses, recover from travel fatigue, and begin the transition to life in a new environment and cultural setting.

Orientation materials, sent to you separately, include instructions on where to go when you arrive on campus. If you arrive before the designated date, report directly to the International Student Office, located in the Penick Academic Complex inside the International Student Lounge.

HOUSING AND MEAL PLAN
All students under the age of 22 are required to live in university housing. We are primarily a residential college. Students who have already reached the age of 21 are permitted to live off-campus if they apply. Students living on campus must purchase a meal plan for use in the cafeteria. Meal plans include 20 meals, 12 meals, and 7 meals per week plans. Students may choose to purchase meals using the "block plan" which allows a student to use 100 or 150 meals during the semester. Students who have kitchen apartments must purchase at least a 7-meal/week plan or the 100-meal/semester plan; others with non-kitchen apartments must purchase at least a 12-meal/week plan or the 150-meal/semester plan. All students may purchase more meals per week than the minimum required.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FOCUS ORIENTATION
All new international students are required to participate in International Student Orientation. This three day orientation focuses on preparing international students for a successful transition to studying at Union University. Topics include learning about U.S. and Jackson, TN culture, the American university system, immigration policies, and opportunities for involvement in the international community at Union. By arriving early to the university, you also get a chance to settle in before you join the greater student body for FOCUS week. New international students are required to attend both the International Student Orientation and FOCUS weekend.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cost estimates for a single student on a minimum budget are listed on your form I-20 or IAP-66. Some government agencies or banks in your country may require a statement of projected costs: you may present a copy of that statement to any authority needing this information.

Because enrollment in summer school is voluntary, these cost estimates do not include costs for taking courses in June, July, and August. Depending on the number of courses and the level of study, summer enrollment would cost an additional $1500-$4000.

Full payment of tuition fees, and other charges is due at registration (when you enroll for classes).

If you wish to deposit funds in your University account before arrival, you may send a check to Student Accounts, Union University, 1050 Union University Drive Jackson, TN 38305. Write on your check the student identification number assigned to you by the University and make the check payable to Union University. You may withdraw funds from Union University, as you need them as long as your bill is paid.

No financial aid is available from the University for international students beyond academic scholarships.

Do not proceed to the University with the expectation that you may be awarded an assistantship at a later date; plan on meeting your own educational expenses for the duration of your studies. No long-term loan funds are available through the University. All students must therefore bring enough money to cover their expenses.

Married students who wish to have their families’ join them should realize their financial burdens. A married couple who can live inexpensively will require at least $1500 more per year than a single student. An additional $1000 is necessary for each accompanying child for a minimum standard of living. Visas are not issued to the family of students unless they have sufficient funds for dependents in addition to the amount required for the single student. Many students find it is best to delay bringing their families until they have found housing and settled in the community.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance is very important. Because of the high cost of medical care in the United States, Union University sponsors a health insurance program that is mandatory for all international students. The cost is included on your student account. Optional coverage is available for your spouse and/or child (ren) if they will be joining you. The insurance covers doctor’s visits, hospitalization, medication, laboratory tests, medical evacuation, repatriation,
and other related costs. There are some exceptions. More specific information will be provided when you arrive. Direct this information to Emily Harper, International Student Advisor, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, TN 38305.

NOTE: If you have private family health insurance and wish to use it in lieu of the required health insurance, the policy must be approved before you arrive by the Designated School Official at Union University.