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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE (TALLAHASSEE)

A5500 University Center
282 Champions Way
P.O. 3062420
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2420

Phones: (850) 644-3272 or 1-800-374-8581
Fax: (850) 644-8817
Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., EST, Mon. – Fri.
Email: ip-info@fsu.edu
Website: international.fsu.edu

Louisa Blenman
Associate Director
Email: lblenman@fsu.edu

Carolyn Barringer
Assistant Director of Program Management
Email: ctbarringer@fsu.edu

Program Management
Email: ip-faculty@fsu.edu

FSU PANAMA CAMPUS

Calle Jacinto Palacios, Building 227
Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge)
Clayton
Panama, Republic of Panama

Dr. Carlos Langoni,
Resident Director
Email: clangoni@fsu.edu
Phone: (011) 507-317-0367, ext 228
Cell: (011) 507-6674-2545

Mrs. Alexandra Anyfanti
Vice Rector
Email: aanyfanti@fsu.edu
Phone: (011) 507-317-0367, ext 238
Cell: (011) 507-6676-4071

Dr. Raymond George
Director of Student Affairs
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Phone: (011) 507-317-0367, ext 223
Cell: (011) 507-6648-8071

Maria Elena Puerta
Inter. Programs/Housing Coordinator
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Cell: (011) 507-6676-4296

Hector Miranda
Program Assistant
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Cell: (011) 507 6678-4969

Adelaida Gomez
Program Assistant
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Phone: (011) 507-317-0367, ext 224
Cell: (011) 507 6672-1075
PANAMA EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Making international calls from the U.S. to Panama: First dial “011” (for international call), followed by “507” (the country code), then the specified location number.

In emergency situations, the Panama staff may be called at the numbers provided. **Please reserve the use of these numbers for emergencies only.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergencies (Fire, Ambulance, Police)</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>(011) 507-236-5050, Code: 13417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>(011) 507-317-9290/104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Department of Balboa</td>
<td>(011) 507-228-2837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Department of Clayton</td>
<td>(011) 507-512-6152 (Central Dispatcher 103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross Emergency</td>
<td>*455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. EMBASSY AND CONSULATE - PANAMA</td>
<td>507-317-5303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building 783</td>
<td>507-317-5000 (After hours/emergencies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calle Basilio Lakas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton, Panama</td>
<td>WEBSITE <a href="https://pa.usembassy.gov/">https://pa.usembassy.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Panama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time differences: Panama time is the **same** as Miami and Tallahassee **except** when the States are on Daylight Saving Time.
BEFORE DEPARTURE & ARRIVAL IN PANAMA

BEFORE DEPARTURE
FSU International Programs is now a Passport Acceptance Facility, so you can apply for your passport in our office. Call 850.645.9714 or visit international.fsu.edu/Passports.aspx for details. You may also purchase your passport photos in our office. Please call our Passport Acceptance Facility office for details.

ARRIVING IN PANAMA
Please make sure that you are arriving in Panama on or before your Approved Arrival Date, which is typically one day before the start of the program. This date can be found in both your appointment letter and Okay to Buy Airline Ticket email.

In order to receive reimbursement, the faculty member must save receipts and expense receipt(s) must be uploaded to the Concur online travel system. See the attached directions for uploading your receipt(s) to the Concur online travel system. If you have issues with the Concur system, please contact FSU Travel or your FSU home department travel rep if you have questions about your receipts, contact ip-submittravel@fsu.edu. Travel receipts for reimbursement will not be accepted via email or in person.

AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION
Tocumen Airport
FSU Panama can arrange for an airport pickup, provided your travel itinerary is available at least two days prior to your arrival. The cost, if you are going from the airport to the Clayton area where the City of Knowledge is located, may vary between $40 and $45.

If you choose to use an airport cab service, as you exit the Customs area, walk towards a small kiosk located inside the terminal called “Autoridad de Turismo de Panama”. Tell the agent (in English or Spanish) that you need to take a cab. They will ask you a few questions to better serve you and direct you to a waiting taxi outside. The fare to go to the City of Knowledge, Clayton, should be approximately $40 for one passenger. Although there are plenty of taxis outside to take passengers, there’s better control over the taxis that the Autoridad de Turismo recommends.

In order to receive reimbursement, the faculty member must save receipt(s) and expense receipt(s) must be uploaded to the Concur online travel system. See the attached directions for uploading your receipt(s) to the Concur online travel system. If you have issues with the Concur system, please contact FSU Travel or your FSU home department travel rep if you have questions about your receipts, contact ip-submittravel@fsu.edu. Travel receipts for reimbursement will not be accepted via email or in person.

TRANSPORTATION IN PANAMA CITY
The safest and ultimately easiest way to travel in Panama City is by cabs, which are readily available. The fare from FSU-Panama to the heart of downtown Panama City should be no more than $7-$10 (one-way). A tip is not necessary. ALWAYS VERIFY THE TOTAL COST OF THE FARE WITH THE DRIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE TAXI!

Following is a list of recommended cab companies:

- America Libre 800-8294/224-0122
- Taxi Nacional 224-1132
- Taxi Concordia 236-7848
- Clayton Taxi 317-0386
- Metro Taxi 264-8569
- Radio Taxi Panama 224-4390

Uber services are also available in Panama, it may cost slightly more than a regular taxi service but it’s very effective. Other companies, like Cabify, offer similar services.

Travel outside Panama City requires plane, bus, or car. Most in-country flights depart from Albrook Airport, located only two miles from the FSU-Panama campus. Express buses leave from downtown Panama City to all parts of Panama frequently every day. The Bus Terminal is only a 10-minute car ride away from the FSU Panama Campus.

Riding the local buses is also a great cultural experience and a very economical way of going places. The bus system (Metrobus) requires the use of a card which can be purchased at most supermarkets. One of the Metrobus lines goes through Morse Street, only a block away from the dormitory complex, and takes you to the bus terminal at Albrook where you can connect to other areas of Panama either by bus or by the subway (Metro). A bus ride currently costs 25¢. Routes that connect to the suburban areas of Panama City cost $1.25. We suggest you start riding the city buses only when you are familiar with the different places and have a better sense of the distances. Avoid riding the bus at night unless you know exactly where you are going and you are certain about the bus routes.
PANAMA CAMPUS
The FSU Panama campus is located in the City of Knowledge across the street from the Miraflores locks of the Panama Canal. The administrative offices and classrooms are located in Building 227, the main building. The FSU Panama Library is located in the ground floor of Building 225, just a short walk from the main building. The main building houses 14 audio-visual equipped classrooms, administrative offices and laboratories, including a computer classroom with 30 computers, and laboratories. Also, in the top floor there’s a study area with computers and a leisure area which includes a little cafeteria.

The City of Knowledge Plaza, a ten-minute walk from the main building, is a shopping area which includes convenience stores, a pharmacy, a bookstore, and a wide selection of little restaurants and eateries. Other restaurant options inside the City of Knowledge are the Hotel Holiday Inn, Taberna del Canal, and Paddy Mick’s (all can be easily found in Google maps, please check the link: City of Knowledge)

Other restaurant options are also available in the Clayton area, only a few minutes away from the City of Knowledge.

A free shuttle service is available within the perimeter of the City of Knowledge, allowing easy access to all areas, including a bus terminal with bus service to the Albrook Mall, the main Panama City bus terminal and the Albrook subway station. FSU Panama also offers a shuttle service which runs approximately 6 times a day between the main building and the dormitories.
PROGRAM SPECIFICS

FACULTY ON-SITE ORIENTATION
Due to immigration requirements, all faculty members are required to attend an on-site faculty orientation at the Study Center. The Study Center will coordinate the orientation date/time with the faculty member before their arrival.

COMPANIONS & CHILDREN
Faculty members must provide the names and, if under 18, ages of any people who will be accompanying them on the program to Program Management on the Companion Form. The FSU Panama Program tries to promote a family-oriented environment as much as possible for all visiting faculty, but our highest priority remains the students. Faculty members are asked not to bring their children to the Study Centre while they are lecturing. Furthermore, the children of faculty members are not allowed to be in the classroom during lecture periods and should not be allowed to attend any field trip that is connected to the students’ experience of the course.

Appropriate daycare and/or babysitting arrangements must be made by each faculty member prior to their departure. Students attending the Panama program or staff members should not be asked to babysit.

If children will be attending a study center arranged excursion, they must be at least 12 years of age to ride the coach.

HOUSING
For easier access to the FSU Panama facilities, we highly recommend making every effort to secure housing in the Clayton area as traffic coming in and going out of the City of Knowledge may present a challenge during rush ours. For those staying in Panama for a period of less than 4 weeks, one of the options may be the City of Knowledge housing complex. They offer different types of rooms which include night tables, safe, intelligent AC, hot water, balcony, telephone, television and wireless internet. Occupants have access to a kitchenette with microwave, coffee maker and a refrigerator. The complex has a living-dining area a fully equipped kitchen, coin-operated laundry, and vending machines.

For longer stays, several options of houses and apartments for rent are available in the Clayton area.

FACULTY COMPENSATION
Your teaching stipend will be split between the pay periods during your approved program dates. Your payments will be deposited automatically to your checking account, as currently arranged with FSU. Be sure to keep your original receipts for expenses incurred for shipping or airline baggage charges.

For more information regarding your compensation, including your approved teaching stipend and shipping allowance, please refer to your International Programs appointment letter.

SHIPPING ALLOWANCE
As part of the compensation package all Panama faculty from Tallahassee are reimbursed shipping costs for books and other items up to $100. Receipts for shipping costs should be uploaded to the Concur online travel system. See the attached directions for uploading your receipt(s) to the Concur online travel system. If you have issues with the Concur system, please contact FSU Travel or your FSU home department travel rep. If you have questions about your receipts, contact ip-submittravel@fsu.edu. Travel receipts for reimbursement will not be accepted via email or in person.
ACADEMIC INFORMATION

International Programs is a strong proponent of the concept that “The World is Your Campus.” Class sessions need not meet solely in the classroom; we encourage you to use the host city as the classroom. Courses taught internationally should be enhanced by their location, and we recommend that you take full advantage of all the resources available to you. The finest museums, theatres, and historical sites are at your disposal, so you will be expected to get your students out into the streets to explore all your host country has to offer.

CONTACT HOURS
Course-related field trips incorporating academic lectures are classified as classroom contact time for the duration of the lecture or instruction. Course-related field trips without formal accompanying instruction count as half class time for the period allotted by the instructor. For example, if your field trip without formal instruction lasts four hours, only two hours will count as teaching contact hours. Contact time required per credit hour is 750 minutes. A three credit hour class will need a total of 37.5 hours of teaching contact time. You are able to utilize travel time to and from the location for instruction.

ACADEMIC RIGOR
Distractions from academic work are part of a student’s life while studying abroad, due to the fact that they are in a new and alluring environment; they invariably want to travel and explore. Personal travel and exposure to the culture are important to the educational experience, but this must not be at the expense of academic standards. Therefore, you, as a faculty member or Program Leader, must exercise all of your teaching skills to make your courses so engaging that the students will want to attend every session! This is not an easy task, but involved faculty members and Program Leaders will find a way.

It must be stressed that student access to library facilities, computers, and reliable internet access will be much more limited than on the home campus. You must take this into account when assigning research papers and other assignments that rely on these resources. Focusing outside class assignments on direct contact with the culture is a wise alternative. It would be a mistake to give assignments requiring the kind of library research expected on Florida State’s main campus. Whenever possible, assignments should be creative mixtures of traditional materials and the international environment.

When you applied to teach abroad, you were asked to submit course descriptions for all study abroad courses. As per the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008), Section 112, information regarding course materials for courses taught at our study abroad locations must be posted on the FSU Textbook Compliance Portal in Student Central before registration opens for the students. This ensures that the students know about any required texts and course materials that they will need to purchase prior to their departure. Before registration opens for students, you will be asked by an International Programs staff member to submit your textbook information for your courses. International Programs will enter this textbook information into Student Central on your behalf. If you have any questions regarding Textbook Compliance, please contact IP-Faculty@fsu.edu.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
Course descriptions will be displayed on the International Programs website for all courses taught abroad.

DIRECTED INDIVIDUAL STUDY (DIS)
You may be asked to accept Directed Individual Study (DIS) requests from students going abroad. There will be no additional compensation given for DIS courses that you accept. In addition, you may be asked to be a Professor of Record by a student participating in an IP International Internship.

SYLLABI
An electronic copy of your final syllabus must be provided to International Programs during the first week of classes. Each syllabus must be as comprehensive as possible, clearly setting forth fully the requirements for the course. It is important that you make the standards for the course absolutely clear in this syllabus at the outset. Objections inevitably arise when new requirements are added mid-course. Grade appeals are often determined by the clarity of syllabi.

University and Faculty Senate policy requires that a course syllabus be distributed at the beginning of the semester. Please visit the following link for further explanations: http://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum-Resources/Syllabus-Language

The syllabus is required to include:
- University Attendance Policy
- Academic Honor Policy
- Americans with Disabilities Act
ACADEMIC INFORMATION

It is recommended that the syllabus also includes:

- Information about Free Tutoring from FSU
- Syllabus Change Policy
- Written course objectives
- An evaluation/grading statement that indicates what procedures will be used to evaluate students. It should also be possible to discern the approximate weight of each grade component.
- A statement of the faculty member’s policies and/or expectations regarding classroom conduct and missed work.

Additional helpful information to use when creating your syllabi can be found at the following link: http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/preparing-syllabus-university-approvals

Please keep in mind that faculty members and Program Leaders may be required to provide Non-FSU students with a syllabus of their course(s) so that these students can receive pre-approval from their home institution before going abroad.

There may be other required syllabi entries based on your course’s designation. For example, if your course is a Liberal Studies course, there might be additional requirements for the syllabus. Please check with your home department as to any requirements for your specific course(s).

GRADES

All instructors are required to submit their grades online. Grades are submitted through Student Central. For complete instructions on how to submit your grades please visit the following link: http://www.sc.my.fsu.edu/Faculty/How-To/Use-Grade-Rosters-in-Faculty-Center. For “Incompletes,” “No Grades,” or any necessary changes to grades even after the term’s grades have posted, please go to: http://sc.my.fsu.edu/Faculty/How-To/Request-a-Grade-Change.

ATTENDANCE

Rosters are available through Student Central. It is each instructor’s responsibility to ensure that the class roster is correct after the drop/add period is complete.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL EVENTS

International Programs provides social and cultural events for all program participants as part of the program fee. These events may include concerts, lectures, special visits, or day-trips to surrounding locations. Program Leaders must attend all program related social/cultural events, and faculty members are encouraged to also participate in program-planned social/cultural events. Companions of faculty members are invited to participate in such trips on a space-available basis, but they must fund these trips themselves. Past faculty members would agree that participating in such trips was one of the most rewarding aspects of their program because it allowed them to get to know students on a personal basis and share a common learning experience with them.

ACADEMIC FACILITIES

For information on available academic facilities, such as AV equipment, library space, or laboratory space, please see the “Panama Campus” section or contact Panama campus staff.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Each student will be asked to complete evaluations of the program. Program evaluations will be provided to the students by an International Programs staff member through an online survey. These evaluations will help us prepare a report on the program and hear the opinions of the students in regards to their overall experience. Faculty and Program Leaders will receive a survey regarding their experience abroad.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students will be asked to evaluate the courses that they completed abroad, just as they evaluate courses on main campus. Course evaluations will automatically be ordered and provided to the students electronically by the FSU’s Office of Distance Learning.
ONLINE BANKING
We recommend you set up on-line banking for your bank accounts prior to departure from the U.S. This is the easiest way to track your accounts while overseas and will save you having to make calls home to check account balances and transfers. Please, notify banks of your travel before departure.

Bring or have access to at least one credit card in the event of an emergency. If you need to visit a doctor or hospital, you will likely have to pay prior to the service, and then submit an insurance claim afterward. Credit cards are also useful for everyday purchases and offer excellent exchange rates. **MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards overseas.** A credit card with “chip and pin” technology is required, as this is the standard abroad.

Before using an ATM or debit card overseas, we recommend the following:

- Contact your financial institution(s) before you leave the U.S. to make sure your ATM or debit card is activated for international use. You will also need to inform them of your dates/location abroad. If you fail to contact your financial institution(s), it is not unusual for credit card companies to “freeze” an account if suspicious or fraudulent activity is suspected.
- **Make sure your debit/ATM card is linked to a checking account, rather than to a savings account, so you will have access to your funds.**
- If you have a pin longer than 4 digits or based on letters, you may have trouble using it abroad. You will need to change your pin before departure.
- You may also want to take a Visa or MasterCard with you, in case of an emergency.

You can limit the fees associated with ATM withdrawals if your U.S. bank has a ‘sister’ bank in Panama and/or if you limit your withdrawals.

CURRENCY
Panama’s medium of exchange is the U.S. dollar. Bills larger than $20 are rarely accepted (carry lots of singles and fives).

Visit the following web site for the current exchange rate: [http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/)
HEALTH

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION
You will find it easiest if you bring sufficient quantities of your prescription medications with you to last for the duration of your stay. Keep these in their original containers with copies of the prescriptions and place them in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to bring a copy of a legible prescription from your doctor. Be aware that not all U.S. drugs are available here. Research/Discuss alternative options if you were unable to get permission for advanced prescriptions from your doctor.

INSURANCE INFORMATION
International Programs will provide full medical/evacuation coverage for all approved faculty from the United States through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). Students participating in all of our study abroad programs are also covered by this same insurance policy. For more information regarding your coverage, please see CISI's insurance policy posted on IP's website at:

CISI Insurance

You may also request insurance coverage for your companions at a very reasonable price. You will receive a companion form with your acceptance package where you may request this insurance coverage. You will be billed at a later date for the coverage charges. Details regarding the billing and prices of coverage are provided on the companion form.
CELL PHONES & COMMUNICATION

CELL PHONES
The country code for Panama is 507. To call Panama from the U.S.A., dial 011 507 followed by the local number. To call the US from Panama, dial 001 followed by the US area code followed by the number. If you have a land line phone in your apartment, you may use International and local calling cards from there. International calling cards are available through the local carriers and they can be bought from any grocery or convenience store. If you are planning on using your US phone in Panama make sure your phone is not blocked by your local carrier. You can then buy a prepaid plan from a local carrier. You can also buy cell phones in Panama at very low prices.

OTHER COMMUNICATION OPTIONS
Other popular options to keep in touch with family/friends back home include Skype, FaceTime, and WhatsApp. If you have a smartphone, download these apps before you travel abroad so you will be able to activate the account. You will be able to communicate internationally for free through connecting via WiFi.

MAIL
Please share the following information with those in the U.S. who are interested in sending you mail while you are abroad.

The Panamanian mail system is sometimes unpredictable. Airmail will take from 7-14 days, but local holidays or other contingencies may stretch this time. Use international airmail stamps; regular mail will cause your letter to go by boat, taking about six weeks to deliver. When sending packages, neither overestimate nor underestimate the value of the materials in the package. You will pay up to 30% customs duty on the amount shown as the insured price. There should be no commercial value on the package. When mailing items from Panama you need to buy local stamps available at the nearest post office. Please be advised that the boxes and packages you receive are opened in order to clear customs and you will have to pay a percentage of the registered value of the items in the package. The Panamanian Customs Office will not tax personal packages whose reported insured price is under $50.00. Anything more than $50.00 will be taxed between 5 - 20% depending on the item. Also note, there is no door to door delivery of packages in Panama unless you pay a courier company which is very expensive, and it is not a good idea to send goods and items through Panama Postal office to our P.O. Box because they can get lost. Therefore, think twice before having items mailed to you. You may be able to purchase those items in Panama at a much lower price than the cost of shipping and taxes.

COMPUTERS
You are free to bring a laptop computer with you. The main building and the Library have wireless internet connection. It is not uncommon for laptop computers to be stolen or broken while abroad, so please note that if you take a laptop with you, it is at your own risk. If you do choose to bring a laptop, check your homeowners insurance to make sure that it is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If it is not covered by this insurance, you may want to check into laptop insurance through www.safeware.com, a worldwide insurance provider for all electronic devices (e.g. laptop, digital camera, iPod, etc.). They also have a provision for non-electronic personal property.

Desktop computers are available for students and faculty at the FSU Panama Library and also in the Study area on the top floor of the main building.
SAFETY & SECURITY
Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials and keep students, faculty, and staff apprised of any new information. For more information on IP’s security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Chris Carroll at 850.644.7823 or ccarroll@fsu.edu.

CAMPUS RESOURCES
Even though you are not on the main campus, you have access to many resources should you encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support program participants in a variety of ways, including connecting you with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.

- Victim Advocate Program - The University takes very seriously all types of victimization, including sexual violence, relationship violence, and domestic violence. Advocates are available and on-call 24 hours a day to provide confidential support services, even for students who are abroad. For more information on the Victim Advocate Program, visit http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu.
- University Counseling Center - The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Visit https://counseling.fsu.edu/ for more information.
- Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness - The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages healthy lifestyle decisions that facilitate academic success and lead to lifelong health and wellness. For more information, visit http://chaw.fsu.edu/

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
All faculty members and Program Leaders at study centers are responsible for pastoral care of their students in class and during academic excursions.

Safety plans, emergency procedures, and emergency telephone numbers will be provided at the on-site faculty orientation by the study center staff. Notices of any and all crimes and emergencies are to be given to your study center staff (if the program is in a study center location), the International Programs office in Tallahassee, and to the local authorities as soon as possible.

For study center faculty members and Program Leaders, in case of a personal emergency, contact your study center director for assistance. In case of a program-related emergency, follow your study center contingency plan and contact your study center director.

SAFETY & SECURITY MEASURES
- The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: https://step.state.gov/step/.
- Waivers. All IP participants will be given a Waiver of Liability via email. It must be signed and submitted to IP.
- Be aware that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling.
- Always carry a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport with you. Keep another copy in your room separate from your passport. Leave one copy at home in the U.S. with your family or a relative.
- Encourage students to use the buddy system—Bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.
- Valuables. If a safe is available in program housing, it is encouraged that you use it to store your valuable personal items and important documents. If a safe is not available, be sure to keep these items in a secure place. Plan regular visits to the cash machine rather than leaving large amounts of cash in your room. International Programs is not responsible for items lost or stolen during your time abroad. Be sure to also secure your money, passport, and other valuables if you are traveling on public transportation, especially overnight trains.
- Pickpocketing. In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to
always be aware of your surroundings. While traveling in some areas beware of beggars who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or excessive body movements. Coats and purses are often stolen in crowded areas. Keep them close to you and lock your pack zippers with a combo lock. Secure your valuables if you are traveling on an overnight (“sleeper”) train.

- Weapons. You are strictly prohibited from keeping or using firearms, knives, weapons (including pellet, air guns, paintball guns or other dangerous articles or substances). Furthermore, mace and/or pepper spray may be illegal in the countries that you visit. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.
The more information you find out about the country beforehand, the better off you will be once you get there. Here is a list of a few web sites that may be helpful as you begin your information search:

(Note: The Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

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[Link](state.gov/travel/)  
U.S. State Department’s information for Americans travelling abroad

[Link](http://www.panamainfo.com)  
(Panama Travel Guide)

[Link](http://www.worldpress.org/newspapers/AMERICAS/Panama.cfm)  
Panama newspapers and magazines

[Link](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panama)  
General information about Panama

[Link](http://www.panamainfo.com)  
Panama Travel Guide

[Link](http://panama.fsu.edu/)  
FSU-Panama's own web site

[Link](donquijote.org/spanishlanguage/)  
Brush up on your Spanish!