About the Asian Studies Outreach Program at the University of Vermont

For more than a decade, the Asian Studies Outreach Program (ASOP) at the University of Vermont has promoted teaching and learning about Asia in the state of Vermont. The goals and accomplishments of ASOP over the years have been made possible through the continuous funding from the Freeman Foundation and support from the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont.

About the Visiting Scholar Program

To assist Vermont schools in teaching about Asia, ASOP directly invites Visiting Scholars from China, Japan and Thailand to Vermont. The Visiting Scholars are highly trained teachers from Chinese, Japanese and Thai schools who share various aspects of their culture in Vermont schools, libraries and community centers.

The Visiting Scholars program, as it exists today, began in the year 2000 and since then, Vermont schools have hosted over 182 Visiting Scholars.

Communicating with the Asian Studies Outreach Program

Contact us if you have questions about the Visiting Scholar program.

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Role of the Hosts
A whole community has a role to play in hosting a Visiting Scholar, but different groups have different responsibilities.

Receiving Schools Responsibilities
- Recommending a host family,
- Assigning mentor teachers,
- Providing opportunities for the Visiting Scholar to share his or her culture and do observations and research,
- Assisting with local transportation,
- And providing a free school lunch.

Hosting Families responsibilities
- Providing the Visiting Scholar with their own room,
- Providing meals,
- Working with the school to provide transportation to and from school,
- Working with the school to find some inexpensive or free winter clothes for the Visiting Scholar,
- And helping to provide as many “traditional” American experiences as possible.

Health and Medical Needs of the Visiting Scholars

Living Abroad
For those who have traveled or lived abroad, maintaining good health is critical to enjoy your time abroad. Proper rest, a healthy diet, and some exercise are great ways of staying in good health.

Host families are encouraged to ask the Visiting Scholars how they are feeling, whether they are getting enough sleep, and whether they have a healthy diet to ensure good health.

Successful Communication
In our section on “successful communication”, you will note that North Americans and Asians have different communication styles. A Visiting Scholar may be too shy to tell the host family that they are not feeling well, or they need additional help. Watching for paralinguistic cues such as facial expressions or pauses can share insight on the needs of the Visiting Scholar.

Illness or Medical Emergency
The Asian Studies Outreach Program provides all Visiting Scholars with health insurance coverage for the duration of their stay in Vermont. The coverage does not include preventative care or emergency room visits.

If a Visiting Scholar becomes ill, contact ASOP at (802) 656-7985 right away. We will work with the Visiting Scholar and you to make sure that all health needs are met.
In today’s globalized world, an understanding and knowledge of ways of effective communication across diverse cultural backgrounds is essential to the existence of harmonious global communities as it promotes appropriate and satisfying intercultural interactions.

In the United States, North Americans tend to value direct communication, assertiveness, that everyone should be treated equally, and being an individual. This style is different from the style of communication other cultures. In China, Chinese tend to value implicit communication, listening, insider-outsider differentiation, and face-saving strategies.

In the book, Communicating Effectively with the Chinese, authors Ge Gao and Dr. Stella Ting-Toomey created a list of guidelines to help North Americans to better communicate with the Chinese. Consider some of the following guidelines:

1. Focus on how something is said – relational and mutual-face meanings often outweigh literal, content meanings.

2. Learn to read paralinguistic cues, such as facial expressions, body movements, gestures and pauses.

3. Develop a belief that words can be inadequate and insufficient.

4. Understand that Chinese selves are often embedded in plural pronouns, and learn to differentiate personal opinions from those of the group.

5. Be aware that impersonal language can be used with outsiders and that insiders and outsiders are treated differently.

6. Accept that Chinese value indirect talk and that requests are often implied.

7. Recognize that definite responses are rarely given in Chinese culture and that the word yes may have multiple meanings.

8. Understand that modesty is a Chinese virtue and that understanding and discrediting oneself is expected.

9. Be aware that personal questions considered as private in the United States are asked frequently and is a sign of care and interest.

10. Accept that Chinese tend to keep opinions to themselves and are uncomfortable in engaging in social talk with strangers.

While these trends of communication may not be true for all Visiting Scholars, understanding that communication styles are embedded in one’s own culture is great food for thought, or a great ice breaker.

Communicating Effectively with the Chinese is written by Ge Gao and Dr. Stella Ting-Toomey and published by Sage Publications, Inc.
Information about Living and travel in the United States

Around Town
The school and the host family will be the primary source of transportation for the Visiting Scholar. The school should work with the host family to arrange transportation to and from school. The host family will help the Visiting Scholar with local transportation to grocery stores, shopping centers and local events and activities. The ASOP staff will also help to provide transportation for certain events such as the Vermont International Festival.

Traveling within Vermont
Many of the Visiting Scholars are from large urban areas where taking local transportation is common. For those Visiting Scholars living in Chittenden County, Brattleboro, Middlebury or other towns that have a local bus system, taking the bus is a convenient and easy way to travel within your local community. To find out about public transportation in your town, visit the website for the Vermont Agency of Transportation to learn about local bus information:

www.aot.state.vt.us/PublicTransit.htm

511: Traveler Information Telephone Number
511 is America's Traveler Information Telephone Number. This number can be used for information on travel conditions regardless of their location in the United States.

Traveling Outside Vermont
Visiting Scholars often use school holidays as an opportunity to visit other parts of the United States. Consider some of the following travel options:

Greyhound Bus
This is a bus service that departs from Burlington, and can bring you to Boston, New York, or Montreal (and other cities). Tickets are cheaper if you plan ahead.

http://www.greyhound.com/home/

MegaBus
This is a bus service that departs from Burlington, and can bring you to Boston, MA or New York, NY for very little. Tickets are cheaper if you plan ahead.

http://www.megabus.com/

Amtrak Train
The train is a great way to travel to and from major cities.

http://www.amtrak.com/

Burlington Airport
With many of domestic flights leaving each day, choosing a flight from BTV airport might be the most time efficient way to travel.

www.burlingtonintlairport.com/

JetBlue Flights
JetBlue airlines offers reasonable prices tickets from Burlington, VT to NYC, and other major cities in the United States.

http://www.jetblue.com/

Traveling to Canada
VISA REQUIREMENTS
Chinese and Thai Visiting Scholars will need a Canadian visa to enter Canada. Contact Bill Williams 6 weeks before the Visiting Scholar plans on entering Canada for help with the visa application process.

Vermont Activities
Vermont is a beautiful state with a culture and a uniqueness that host families should be proud to share with their Visiting Scholars. Consider some of the following items or activities that are uniquely Vermont:

Vermont’s fall foliage
Vermont Maple Syrup
Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream
Halloween around Vermont
Fairs and Festivals
Shelburne Museum

www.shelburnemuseum.org

Vermont’s State Parks

www.vtstateparks.com

Skiing in Vermont

www.skivermont.com

Remember that Visiting Scholars need to speak with the principal at their host school before making travel plans to leave the school for an extended holiday.

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