Dear Student,

Congratulations on your admission to the College of Staten Island/CUNY! The staff of the Center for International Service is here to help you. We hope to provide you with all the information that you will need to make the transition from your home to our university an easy one.

Your participation is a key to making a successful transition. Your understanding and assistance in the process is critical. We invite you now to join us on Facebook, where we are creating a special group for incoming new international students. We can be found at: www.facebook.com/centerintl. If we have not requested you to be a “friend” to the Center yet, please request our friendship with a message that you are a new student for the Spring 2017 semester and we will add you.

In addition, carefully review the immigration, financial and arrival information in this letter. If you should have any questions about the process or about the information that we are sending you, please contact us. You may write us an email on Facebook, post a question in the Facebook group or contact us individually. The contact information is listed in this letter. The admission and orientation process at each American university can vary. Please do not rely on friends who may have studied in the U.S. for assistance as the procedures may be different here. We would love to hear from you.

IMMIGRATION AND FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION

If you are already a student in F-1 or J-1 status present in the United States, we will need more information from you before issuing your SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019. (See For Students in F-1 or J-1 Status At Another Institution below.)

For Students Outside of the United States
If you are presently outside the United States, you must first pay the SEVIS fee ($200 for F and $180 for J) before you apply for your student visa. Please see the What You Need To Know About the New Federal SEVIS Fee for more information on how to do this.

After the SEVIS fee is paid, you must take the I-20 or DS-2019 to the nearest United States embassy or consulate and apply for your student visa. Present originals of all financial papers that you sent to the College of Staten Island. Please check with the website of the nearest U.S. consular office or embassy for specific instructions on how to make an appointment for the visa.

The date entered in item number five of the I-20 or number three on the DS-2019 is January 17, 2017. If after that date you are outside the United States, you will not be given a visa or permitted to enter the United States. If this is your situation, please contact us about the possibility of beginning your studies here for the Fall 2017 semester.
For Students In F-1 Status At Another U.S. Institution: If you already have F-1 student status at another institution and you are in the United States and not planning on travelling abroad before coming to Staten Island, you must contact your Foreign Student Adviser to indicate your intention to transfer to the College of Staten Island. We will need your current school to complete an F-1 Student Transfer Form from our school before your transfer is complete. The form is available on our website: http://www.csi.cuny.edu/international/forms/F1_Transfer_Form.pdf
Your transfer will be completed as required by law by our office after you have completed the orientation and registration process at CSI.

For Students Already in The United States in a Visa Status Other Than F-1 or J-1: If you are already in the United States under a different visa status other than F-1 or J-1, please contact Nina Morgenlander or Inga Mezale by email as soon as possible with your information as there may be limitations about changing your status within the United States.

ADVICE TO PERSONS APPLYING FOR STUDENT VISAS

Many students who have been admitted to The College of Staten Island find that their plans are ruined when the United States Embassy or Consulate refuses to grant them a visa. Though this happens in some countries more than in others, it is a possible problem for all students planning to come to a United States college from other countries. The following advice is intended to prepare you to provide the Embassy or Consulate with the proper documents and to give the answers most likely to result in approval of your visa application.

You must understand that a student visa (F-1 and J-1) is issued only to persons who intend to return to their own countries after completing their American education. In fact, United States law requires the Embassy or Consulate to assume that you intend to come to the United States permanently and it is your obligation to prove that you are intending to return to your country.

It will help your case very much to do the following:

Show convincing reasons for U.S. officials to believe that you intend to return home. Demonstrate ties to your own country, such as employment, ownership of a business or property, or potential future employment, family obligations, and clear explanations, of how you plan to use your education to help your own country or pursue a career there. You should be truthful but do not emphasize too strongly any ties you may have with family or friends in the United States. You must not plan to work permanently in the United States after you complete your education.
Be definite and clear about your education plans. Be prepared to explain precisely what you wish to study and why you chose the College of Staten Island for your education. Be especially prepared to explain good educational reasons for studying here rather than in your own country. If you do not understand our programs and degrees, write to us with specific questions and we will supply the answers. Do not show lack of decision about which college you will attend. Your visa records will state the name of the college at which you are to study.

Be prepared to prove financial ability. All documents must be original for your visa interview appointment. Since students may not plan to work to support themselves except in rare cases when fellowships have been granted in advance, you must show the United States officials that you have available the amount indicated on our Form I-20 or DS-2019. You must have evidence in the form of bank statements, scholarship award letters, etc. In many countries, it is far better if you can show that at least a major portion of your funds comes from sources within your country. If all or part of your support is to come from other people, you must have them complete the Statement of Financial Support, along with a statement from their bank showing that the funds exist. In addition, your country may require government permission to send funds to the United States. If so, you must show documents to the United States officials that your government has granted permission for money to be sent to the United States for you.

Before applying to United States officials, be certain that you have met all requirements of your own government, including passport arrangements.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION FOR MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA and MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS IMMUNIZATIONS

New York State law mandates that every student have an inoculation against Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR). In addition, inoculations against Meningococcal Meningitis are recommended. It is therefore necessary to get and provide proof in English that you have had the inoculations. If you have had these inoculations, please have a physician complete the form entitled “Medical Certification for Measles, Mumps, and Rubella. You can also find the form here: www.csi.cuny.edu/registrar/forms/medicalcertification2.pdf Also, please complete and sign the Meningococcal Meningitis Immunizations" and bring it with you on the day of check-in on January 18. If you have not had the required immunizations, you will have to get the immunizations in the U.S. and pay for it. The Student Health Clinic offers free inoculations for students who don’t have this vaccine in their home countries. However, it is highly recommended that you get your immunizations prior to coming to the U.S.
CHECK-IN AT THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Remember that you must complete your visa arrangements in enough time to allow you to arrive in the United States by January 17, 2017.

You must report to The Center for International Service on:

**Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

Please report at the time indicated below, using the first initial of your family name as a guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Names</th>
<th>Time to Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-L</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-Z</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you report, please bring your passport, all immigration documents, and a completed Immunization form, translated into English. You will have lunch on your own and be prepared to spend the entire day at the College, maybe as late as 5:00 p.m.

The New Foreign Student Orientation Program at CSI is MANDATORY. **You will not be allowed to register if you do not participate.** Therefore, please read carefully the “Tentative New Foreign Student Orientation Schedule” so that you can make your plans accordingly and you will be present for all the activities. Please note that there may be minor changes made to this schedule between now and the beginning of the semester.

**HOUSING**

All international students may reside in the CSI Student Housing (called Dolphin Cove). Please visit [csistudenthousing.com](http://csistudenthousing.com) for more information about applying for it. Please be aware that if you reside in our on-campus housing you will be required to purchase a meal plan. Dolphin Cove staff will provide you with more information.
If you plan to look for housing on your own in New York, please be advised that we highly recommend that you enter the United States prior to January 17 in order to allow sufficient time for you to seek housing before classes begin. By law, F-1 and J-1 visa holders may enter the United States up to 30 days prior to the start date on their Form I-20 or DS-2019 (January 17). Please be aware that you will be extremely busy with the mandatory Orientation activities from January 17 – 27. Please refer to the “Tentative New Foreign Student Orientation” schedule for a tentative listing of the scheduled events. Therefore, you should not plan to look for housing in the daytime hours during the week once the Orientation activities begin. You will, however, have time on the weekends and during the mid-week evenings to look for housing. Therefore, we recommend that if you need housing, to allow at least a week to concentrate on finding this.

MONEY FOR THE FIRST FOUR WEEKS

We advise all students to bring enough money in the form of TRAVELER’S CHECKS to cover expenses for at least the first four weeks (or) have availability of funds from an ATM card. We do not recommend that you carry a lot of cash. Checks of any other kind, including bank checks, can take three weeks to clear for a newly arrived student. Information about banking options will be given to you as part of our New Foreign Student Orientation program. You will be able to open a bank account on the day of your check-in at the Center on January 18. A small amount of money is needed to open an account that day.

HEALTH INSURANCE

As you may know, students in J status must have health insurance. Per U.S. law, the health insurance must meet certain specifications. There are many changes being made in the U.S. health insurance laws, so we are now requiring that all people in J status purchase only one of the plans below. If you have another health insurance, you will still be required to purchase one of these plans for the J exchange visitor program.

As you may know, medical costs in the United States are very expensive. As a CSI student in F-1 status, the health insurance is not required but EXTREMELY recommended. Even the most “routine” check-ups with a doctor can cost hundreds of dollars in the U.S. The average costs for insurance are included in your estimated costs to attend the College of Staten Island, so you should already have budgeted for these costs.

We highly recommend that you purchase health insurance that begins on the date of your travel to the U.S. Below is a list of insurance companies which specialize in insurance for participants involved in international educational exchange. You should bring a money order (or) a credit card in order to pay for the insurance if you haven’t purchased it before leaving your country. The rates for the coverage depend upon your age and the coverage you select. For an updated list of prices and to compare plans and benefits, go to the following company websites listed below.
TRAVELING TO CAMPUS

Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR, Newark, NJ) in New Jersey is the closest airport to the College. The distance is about ten miles to the College. The other two airports in New York City are: John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and La Guardia Airport (LGA). For more air travel information, go to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's website: www.panynj.gov/airports or call 1-800-247-7433.

Car service is available between campus and all three major airports. The cost for Newark Liberty airport is about $31 and $65-$79 for JFK and La Guardia each way. The cost does not include tips, tolls and luggage fees. CSI is located at the Willowbrook section of Staten Island. If you want to take a taxi cab from the airport, don't take a ride from someone you meet inside the airport. Be sure to go outside and get in the taxi line. For more information go to: www.panynj.gov/airports or www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/html/passenger/taxicab_rate.shtml.

The Loop Bus service starts at the Victory Boulevard main entrance and runs 6 other locations within the campus. It is free to members of the college community. Call Loop bus Service at 1-718-982-3224 for more information or the Campus Transportation Hotline 1-718-982-3100

For more directions go to our website: www.csi.cuny.edu/international/about/directions.html.

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you have any questions or if you have difficulty, email, call, fax, write or connect with us on Facebook and provide as much information as possible about the nature of your situation. We will try to help in any way we can. Below are the various ways to reach us:

Email: General questions: intstudy@csi.cuny.edu
   Director of International Student and Scholar Services: barbara.clark@csi.cuny.edu
   SEVIS Coordinator: inga.mezale@csi.cuny.edu
   Foreign Student Adviser: nina.morgenlander@csi.cuny.edu

   College Assistants: danielle.castro@csi.cuny.edu
                       linda.lewis@csi.cuny.edu
On Facebook: www.facebook.com/center.intl

Mail: Center for International Service  
     College of Staten Island/CUNY  
     2800 Victory Blvd. 2A-206  
     Staten Island, New York 10314  

Phone: 1-718-982-2100  
Fax: 1-718-982-2108

WEB INFORMATION  
Information about CSI: www.csi.cuny.edu  
Information about the Center for International Service: www.csi.cuny.edu/international

We look forward to meeting you here at CSI and wish you a safe trip!

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Clark  
Director of International Student and Scholar Services

Nina Morgenlander  
International Student Adviser

Inga Mezale  
SEVIS Coordinator