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Studying Abroad at San Francisco State University

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Student Perspective From:
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How difficult/easy was it to obtain a US visa?

Basically, it is not too hard to obtain a US visa—the problem was all the papers that I have to complete. You have to go on the US government website, and then fill out a long form that takes like one hour just to answer the questions. The US visa is also very expensive; you have to pay for everything: SEVIS, the appointment at the US embassy etc. However, when you have all the paperwork complete and the appointment at US consulate, things run faster. I received my US visa two days after my visit.

Where and how did you find permanent housing? How much rent do you pay? Are you happy with where you live? Describe your experience.

I found my house before coming here. Four of my friend and I wanted a house for all of us. So one month before leaving, we started to looking for one on the internet: craigslist.org / rent.com etc. We found lot of houses, but prices were very high and most of them were not furnished. After many searches, we found a house with five rooms south of Mission Street. One of our buddies suggested visiting the house for us, and sends us pictures after her visit. The rent is 800\$ per person.

My house is the same now, I am very happy, it is near school (15 minutes by bus) and 30 minutes to go downtown. The neighborhood is very nice, and there is lot of things close to the house (Safeway, post office, Walgreens).

How difficult/easy is it to get around? What mode of transport do you use primarily (public transport, bicycle, car, walk)?

Since coming here, I take public transports (MUNI, bus or BART) everywhere. I bought a Clipper Card, so I pay 60\$ per month for public transport. I think the public transport system here is very complicated, because when I took the MUNI for the first time I was very surprised there is no map with all the stops. Moreover, in the MUNI you have to ask for your stop, but the things is, if you don't know where you have to stop exactly it's a problem. After two months here, I know all the stops, bus

numbers etc. but public transport is definitely not easy in SF if you don't know the city, compared to Paris.

How do you access your money? Did you open an American bank account? If so, was it worthwhile?

I still have my French account; I got an international account with my French Bank, so I have no problem with my money. I can pay or withdrawal easily with my French credit card.

Did you obtain a California driver's license? If so, was it worthwhile?

No, I already have my French driver's license.

Did you find San Franciscans to be helpful if you were in need?

San Franciscans are very helpful, friendly and they care about you. During the first week, when I visited the city, I was walking with my map and 3 or 4 people asked me if I need help.

Where did you obtain furniture for your room?

My room was already furnished when I arrive.

Primarily, do you buy groceries or do you eat out? Where and why?

During the first week, I ate out, but now with my roommates we go to Safeway once a week.

How difficult/easy was it to make friends? Describe your experience.

Personally I found it quite difficult to make friends at the start because everyone here at SFSU comes and goes, and SFSU doesn't really have a big college atmosphere. During the classes, I speak with peoples, etc., but at the end there is no relationship; it is more like, "Hi how are you? Fine, see you next week." I met lot of people during the IEEC events, and my friends here are from international programs.

What IEEC commitment did you choose (flyering, tabling, language exchange, country ambassador, IEEC officer, special contribution)? Describe your experience.

I choose to be a Country Ambassador, and so far I have done 4 hours in the OIP office. Moreover, I am in the IEEC Special Events Committee, and I organized the Tahoe Trip.

All these commitments are very interesting: I can improve my English, speak with people from different countries, and see how do organize some events here in the US.

Were you able to enroll in the classes you wanted?

I enrolled in my classes before I came, and I got all the classes that I want.

How do your classes at SFSU compare to your classes at home?

In France, I don't choose my classes, and I see the same people in each class. Here it is very different because you can choose every class you want. I think it is better because, if you choose these classes, it means that you like it, so you are more involve. However, as you are with different people in each class, it is more difficult to create relationships. For that part, I prefer the French system.