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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?

In my case, obtaining a US visa was easy. If you just prepare required documentaries well, there will be no problem to get it.

Where and how did you find temporary housing when you first arrived? How much did it cost? Describe your experience.

When I arrived in San Francisco, my uncle's friend who is a professor at SFSU was in San Francisco, so he helped me. Before I arrived in San Francisco, I already had found my place to live thanks to my uncle's friend so I didn't have to find a temporary housing. Thus, I have no idea about temporary housing.

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

After reading the housing guide given by OIP and searching the information about apartments which are close to SFSU, I contacted apartment companies via email. If you want to lease an apartment with an apartment company, you need financial documentation, which certifies that you can afford to pay for rent and a financial guarantor if you do not have a social security number and credit in the U.S. In my case, my uncle's friend became my financial guarantor so I could lease my house.

I lived in a studio apartment in 'Westlake Apartments' located in Daly City alone, and paid \$1095 per a month, not including utilities. This apartment was a little bit far away from school compared to Parkmerced. However, I think this apartment was fine to live in because you can use the SFSU shuttle bus at Daly City Bart Station for free, and the rent is cheaper than Parkmerced. Also, there is a big shopping center near Westlake Apartments.

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

I think that San Francisco is one of the few places with well-organized transportation in the U.S. so even if you don't have a car, it won't be difficult getting around. I usually use public transport such as Muni, Bart, and SamTrans.

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

I opened a bank account at Bank of America and also got a debit card. Getting a debit card is convenient because you don't have to bring a lot of cash with you.

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

I obtained a California driver license a month after I arrived in SF. If you do not get a car, getting a driver license is still worth it because it is also a legitimate form of ID less precious than your passport and you can also use a Zipcar whenever you want instead of buying a car. (For reference, Zipcar is a kind of community car and the rental fee for Zipcar is calculated hourly and is reasonable. If you don't have the U.S. driver license, you cannot rent a Zipcar.)

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

Yes I did! IEEC assigned me good buddy who is local person and always tried to help me adjust to America and unfamiliar aspects of American school life.

Where did you obtain furniture for your room?

I bought furniture for my room at IKEA and Amazon.com. I think IKEA sells relatively good stuff at a reasonable price. However, if you buy furniture at IKEA, you will have to assemble it because IKEA only sells do-it-yourself goods. I believe that Amazon.com is also a good website to buy your

furniture from. Amazon.com provides students with some benefits such as free shipping.

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

I usually buy groceries and cook by myself. Sometimes, I ate out with my friends in order to try new dishes that I haven't eaten before such as Thai food, Mexican food and so on. San Francisco has a variety of delicious restaurants, so it's a good place to experience new dishes!

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

I think that most people in the U.S. have open minds. Thus, if you truly want to become friends with someone, and your English isn't great, it will not bar you from making friends. Just go up to people and say hello! In my case, I could make good friends in my classes by studying and doing homework together. There are good people all around you!

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

Describe your experience.

I chose **country ambassador** as my IEEC commitment. Every semester, the IEEC holds the Study Abroad Fair. As a country ambassador, I had to organize the Korean table, tried to help SF state students understand Korea better, and convince them to study abroad in Korea, as well as encouraged Korean exchange students to participate in the Study Abroad Fair. Though there were some difficulties, I could overcome them thanks to another Korean exchange students' help. In addition, I could meet a lot of SF State students who were interested in Korea and had a great time talking with them. Through this experience, I could practice how to lead other people and gained more pride in my country and my home school. It is one of the unforgettable moments of my exchange student life.

Were you able to enroll in the classes you wanted?

Yes, I was able to because OIP tried to give exchange students the priority of enrolling in the classes.

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

Classes at SFSU are more discussion and require more interaction between professor and students than classes at my home school. Also, SFSU professor gives students a lot of homework to make us study hard. I think these are good points of classes at SFSU.