



Illinois Eastern Community Colleges

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International Student Program

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Frontier Community College (FCC)**

**Lincoln Trail College (LTC)**

**Olney Central College (OCC)**

**Wabash Valley College (WVC)**

## **CONTENTS:**

- 3     **Introduction to the International Student Program (ISP)**
  - 3     Introduction to ISP
  - 4-5   F-1/J-1 Regulations
  - 6     Immigration Term Glossary
  - 7     ISP Assistance Chart
  - 8     Required Reporting & Travel
  
- 9     **Academics**
  - 9-11   About IECC, FCC, LTC, OCC, & WVC
  - 11-12   Academic Advisement
  - 12     Grading System
  - 12-14   Academic Differences
  - 14     Academic Resources on Campus
  
- 16    **On-Campus Resources**
  - 16     Student Services
  - 17-19   Student Life
  
- 20    **International Student Employment**
  - 21     On-Campus Employment
  - 21-22   Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
  - 22     Optional Practical Training (OPT)
  - 22     Academic Training (AT) for J-1 Students
  - 23     Social Security
  - 23-24   Taxes
  
- 24    **United States Culture**
  - 25     American Cultural Values
  - 26-27   Practical Matters
  - 27-28   U.S. Laws
  - 28-29   Safety & Crime Prevention Tips
  - 29     Title IX & Sexual Misconduct
  - 30     Academic Calendar
  - 30     Important Phone Numbers
  - 30     Important Contact Information

## INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM (ISP)

**Welcome to Illinois Eastern Community Colleges!** The International Student Program (ISP) advocates for and advises the international student population at WVC on U.S. immigration and visa-related issues. In addition to federally required immigration services, the ISP provides information, resources, immigration guidance, tips, and advice that can help our international students succeed. The ISP promotes and celebrates individuals in an intercultural environment.

The ISP is a center where international students can seek advice on the intersection of academic and U.S. immigration regulations, as well as social and acculturation issues. In addition, the ISP provides orientations and workshops on topics of interest, such as immigration requirements, employment, and cross-cultural communication.

Finally, the ISP exposes the Colleges' communities to the international population through sponsored programs and events on campus. Our overall vision is to foster global awareness throughout the campus community.

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## F-1/J-1 VISA REGULATIONS

To maintain legal status in the U.S., international students must follow these federal regulations, state regulations, and campus policies. You are responsible to know and follow these rules and regulations.

International Student Program (ISP) staff is here to assist and advise students, but **your visa status during your program is your responsibility.**

Maintaining legal status is extremely important. Falling out of status will make your student visa invalid, legally stop you from continuing your study, and make you ineligible for other F-1 or J-1 benefits, such as CPT or OPT.

### **As an F-1/ J-1 international student, you must:**

1. Attend the institution listed on your I-20/ DS-2019.
2. Check in with the International Student Program upon arrival at your campus to register your SEVIS record. This alerts the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that you are an active student. You must report to the ISP within 15 days of the start of each semester. Failure to check-in with the ISP could result in delays with class registration, possible loss of legal status, and possible termination of SEVIS record.
3. Maintain full-time enrollment in a course of study in each academic term. The minimum per semester is: 12 credit hours (fall and spring – summer is optional)
4. If you cannot complete a full course of study due to extenuating medical or academic circumstances, you must be approved for a Reduced Course Load with the approval from your academic advisor and authorization in SEVIS from the ISP before you drop below full-time or take a leave of absence.
5. Make satisfactory progress toward completion of your program and always keep the I-20/DS-2019 valid during your study.
6. If you plan to graduate early or cannot complete your program by the program end date listed on the I-20/DS-2019, you must see the International Student Program to find out if you are eligible to have your program date shortened or extended on your I-20. This must be completed at least two weeks before the I-20/DS-2019 program end date
7. Report any changes to your name, address, or contact information to the International Student Program within 10 days of the change by submitting the Address Update form to the ISP. The ISP will use your IECC email for all

immigration updates. ***It is your responsibility to check your IECC email frequently.***

8. Report any changes to your major, program level, funding source to ISP within 10 days of the change.
9. Keep your passport valid 6 months into the future. Contact your embassy to renew your passport well BEFORE the expiration date. For students returning to their home country to renew their visa, you will need: an official sealed transcript from IECC; a copy of your course schedule for the returning semester; and all old I-20s as well as your new I-20.
10. Never accept employment off campus without authorization from the International Student Program and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), even if it is unpaid or an internship. Contact the ISP to determine if you are eligible for off-campus employment authorization in your field of study. Students cannot work off-campus in their first semester.
11. Never work in an on-campus position for more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. Full-time (more than 20 hours per week) on-campus work is permitted during official community college breaks and vacations.
12. Notify the ISP if you intend to transfer to another U.S. school. We assist with the process of transferring your visa to your new school.
13. Submit your I-20/DS-2019 for a travel authorization to the ISP at least 2 weeks before you leave the U.S. for vacation if you have the intent of returning to continue your studies. Your I-20 must be signed for you to return.
14. Comply with all other U.S. federal and state laws, such as never driving while intoxicated and never carrying a weapon.
15. Comply with all other Illinois Eastern Community Colleges academic and conduct policies.
16. Enroll in the IECC provided international insurance plan. Certain students may be eligible to waive out of the IECC provided international insurance plan. See ISP staff for more information.

## IMMIGRATION TERM GLOSSARY

There are many technical terms and abbreviations international students should be familiar with related to their immigration status. Below is a glossary of many of the common terms.

D/S Duration of Status	As an F-1/J-1 student you do not have an expiration date for how long you may stay; instead you may stay in the country as long as you maintain legal status as a student and until you complete your studies. You must not let your I-20/DS-2019 or passport expire.
DSO (Designated School Official)	An international advisor who has been approved by the U.S. government to grant certification of status for international students and to verify status on government forms.
EAD (Employment Authorization Document)	A laminated government card bearing your photo you receive after successfully applying for permission to work on OPT. It lists start and end dates of your authorized employment.
F-1 Visa	The class of visa that is issued to non-immigrants who are granted permission to enter the U.S to study at an approved school, also known as a Student Visa.
Form DS-2019	Three-page immigration document for J-1 students. It shows your field of study, start and end dates of study, and financial information. It is used to obtain your J-1 visa and for entry and re-entry into the U.S.
Form I-20	Three-page document for F-1 students. It shows your field of study, start and end dates of study, and financial information. It is used to obtain your F-1 visa and for entry and reentry into the U.S.
I-9	A form to prove employment eligibility by anyone being hired.
I-94	Form I-94 is issued to students upon their arrival in the U.S. by an Immigration officer. The I-94 is an electronic record updated by the Immigration officer at the port of entry each time a student enters the U.S. It is recommended that students obtain their I-94 from this website <a href="https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov">https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov</a> each time they enter the country.
J-1 Visa	The class of visa that is issued to non-immigrants who are granted permission to enter the U.S to study, do an internship, or be a visiting scholar at an approved school.
SEVIS	Student Exchange Visitor Information System. The government's database system that is used to track student records, employment status, and to issue student documents.
SSN (Social Security Number)	The Social Security Number is a permanent ID number issued by the U.S. government. A Social Security Number is required to receive compensation for work in the U.S. (F-1 on campus employment, paid internship, OPT).
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services is the government agency responsible for enforcing the regulations relevant to your entry into the U.S. and ability to remain in and return to the U.S.

## ISP ASSISTANCE

The ISP provides a variety of services for F-1 and J-1 students and scholars. When you come to the ISP, depending on your inquiry, you will receive instructions on what to do or you will be asked to make an appointment with an ISP staff member. Some inquiries may be complex processes, so you will be given instructions about which documents to bring to a personal appointment in the future. We can also provide several services by email. In all cases, please know we are happy to help you navigate the visa regulations and processes.

Please review the common ISP assistance below and anticipated timelines:

<b>Procedure</b>	<b>When to Ask for Assistance</b>	<b>Expected Process/Timeline</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
Travel Signature	2 weeks prior to travel	Drop off I-20, ready for pickup in 1-2 business days	Must have most current I-20/DS-2019.
Invitation or Full-Time Status Letter	Anytime	3-5 business days	N/A
SSN Letter	Anytime	3-5 business days	N/A
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)	At least 2 weeks prior to start date (if enrolled in internship course)	3-5 business days once all documentation Received	Need employer offer letter, Internship form, and CPT form.
Less than full-time enrollment	Before you drop any course, you need permission from ISP to determine if eligible.	Complete request for less than full-time enrollment and attach evidence (ex. medical diagnosis), 5-7 business days	You must prove you are eligible for a reduced course load to be enrolled less than full-time.
Shorten or extend I-20/DS-2019	30 days before your current end date.	Complete form and provide supporting documents, 5-7 business days	New financial documents required for extension.
Leave of absence	Immediately	Appointment required, 5-7 business days	Must complete Registrar's process first.
Transfer to another school	Within 60 days after end of final term/or prior to add/drop deadline of term	Drop off new school's acceptance letter and transfer form' 3-5 business days	Must complete Registrar's withdrawal process first.

## REQUIRED REPORTING & TRAVEL

Federal regulations require that F-1/J-1 students must report any changes of their personal information to the International Student Program within 10 days of the change. F-1/J-1 students must inform the ISP of any changes to the following information by submitting the **Personal Information Update Form**:

- Change of physical address
- Change of phone number
- Change of personal email
- Emergency contact information

Students must also update any change of name, funding source, or program end date to the ISP by email at johnsonl6@iecc.edu.

### **Passport:**

F-1/ J-1 students must always keep their passport valid for 6 months into the future. Students requiring a renewal must apply well in advance of the expiration date of their passport.

### **Visa:**

F-1/J-1 students are admitted to the U.S. for D/S (Duration of Status). As long as a student's I-20/DS-2019 is valid, they may remain in the U.S. with an expired F-1/J-1 visa. However, if the student has plans to travel internationally, they must apply for a renewal of their F-1/J-1 visa from a U.S. Consulate or Embassy.

### **Travel Signature on I-20/DS-2019**

F-1/J-1 students are required to present an unexpired I-20/DS-2019 with a valid travel signature at the port of entry when returning to the U.S. from a trip outside of the country. Travel signatures refer to the list of signatures on the second page of the I-20/DS-2019. The travel signature must be provided by a DSO in the International Student Program.

Travel signatures are valid for one year while the student maintains enrollment in IECC.

### **ISP Provided Travel:**

All international students are assessed a minimum transportation fee per semester. This fee includes transfers to/from the Evansville, Indiana airport at the beginning and end of each semester, as well as other transportation during the semester. Further information about ISP provided travel is contained in the ISP Transportation Guidelines.



## ACADEMICS

### ABOUT IECC

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges District #529 (IECC) is located in a 3,000-square-mile (7,800 km<sup>2</sup>) area of Southeastern Illinois near the Illinois-Indiana border. The multi-college District includes **Frontier Community College (FCC)** at Fairfield, **Lincoln Trail College (LTC)** at Robinson, **Olney Central College (OCC)** at Olney, and **Wabash Valley College (WVC)** at Mt. Carmel.

Bordered on the east by the Wabash River, the District is located in a scenic section of the state, with wooded areas, golf courses, and recreational lakes scattered throughout the region. The District includes all or parts of 12 counties and has a total population of 111,000.

Each of the colleges is located in a small-town setting, with convenient access to larger cities in Illinois and Indiana. The colleges serve as centers for educational and cultural excellence, attracting not only recent high school graduates but also many adult students who are upgrading their skills, earning the first two years of a four-year degree, or participating in plays, concerts, and seminars.

The college District also includes a highly successful Workforce Education program which provides short-term training for some 10,000 employees each year at plant sites throughout the State of Illinois and in other states and countries as well.

### ABOUT FCC

Founded in 1976, Frontier Community College (FCC) is a two-year, public community college offering certificates and degrees across transfer and Career & Technical Education programs. FCC also offers the programs of community education, adult and continuing education, and emergency preparedness.

As an FCC Bobcat, you will have exceptional opportunities to not only pursue a career through your academics but also develop skills for success in life. FCC will provide you with a great way to prepare for a career, make friends and achieve the goals you have set for your college education.

Students have many clubs and organizations to participate in, which enhances the student life on our campus. As a competitive member of NJCAA Division I and the Great Rivers Athletic Conference, FCC offers men's baseball and women's softball and volleyball.

## ABOUT LTC

Lincoln Trail College is a two-year, coeducational, comprehensive, public community college offering a full spectrum of transfer, occupational, continuing education, and community service programs.

Founded in 1969, LTC is a two-year community college that offers a wide variety of transfer, occupational, continuing education, ESL, and community service programs. Situated in Robinson, Illinois, the scenic main campus brings together contemporary buildings and picturesque settings like Miller Lake.

At LTC, you will have exceptional opportunities to not only pursue a career through your academics but also develop skills for success in life. LTC will provide you with a great way to prepare for a career, make friends and achieve the goals you have set for your college education.

Students have many clubs and organizations to participate in, which enhances the student life on our campus. As a competitive member of NJCAA Division I, LTC offers men's and women's basketball, baseball, softball, cheerleading, volleyball, and men's soccer. Additionally, LTC is proud to offer opportunities for you to get involved and build your resume. This is your chance to experience things you never thought possible. Imagine yourself on stage performing with our award-winning Statesmen Singers or aspire to join our nationally recognized Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

## ABOUT OCC

Olney Central College is a two-year public community college located on Ill. 130 across from the city park in Olney, Illinois.

Since our founding in 1963, OCC has been dedicated to providing students with a quality education at an affordable cost. We offer a variety of educational opportunities with transfer degrees and technical programs that prepare our students for careers in today's competitive job market.

Our small class sizes ensure students receive one-on-one instruction from faculty members dedicated to their success. OCC continues to receive recognition for its completion and graduation rates, earning it rankings as the No. 1 Community College in Illinois and one of the Top 150 Community Colleges in the nation.

We also offer community education classes ranging from painting and furniture refinishing to woodworking and dancing. If you've decided to go back to school, we offer free GED Test Preparation classes, including online courses.

In addition to out-standing academics, OCC offers an active campus life. Students can participate in numerous clubs and organizations such as Student Senate and Phi Theta Kappa. Several CTE Programs have their own clubs. Our Music Department includes both instrumental and vocal ensembles, which are open to all OCC students, regardless of major. Area residents are invited to participate in our community band and choir, which meet in the spring and fall, respectively.

OCC supports four sports at the National Junior College Athletic Association Division I level. Our men's and women's basketball, baseball and softball teams are extremely competitive in the Great Rivers Athletic Conference and region.

### ABOUT WVC

Founded in 1960, WVC is a two-year community college that offers a wide variety of transfer, occupational, continuing education, ESL, and community service programs. Situated on 120 acres in Mount Carmel, Illinois, the college consists of modern facilities surrounding a scenic lake and wooded pathways.

As a WVC Warrior, you will have exceptional opportunities to not only pursue a career through your academics but also develop skills for success in life. WVC will provide you with a great way to prepare for a career, make friends and achieve the goals you have set for your college education.

Students have many clubs and organizations to participate in, which enhances the student life on our campus. As a competitive member of NJCAA Division I and the Great Rivers Athletic Conference, WVC offers men's and women's basketball, baseball, softball, cheerleading, volleyball, and women's soccer. Additionally, WVC is proud to offer club sports such as bowling, archery, and bass fishing.

### ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Students at each campus are assigned an academic advisor, who will assist you in selecting classes, arranging your course schedule, and identifying resources to solve problems or meet specific academic needs.

You will meet your academic advisor after you have taken the Accuplacer ESL test and after you have reviewed and signed the *Information Sheet for Advisement of International Students* with ISP staff.

Your academic advisor can provide advice on course selection and help plan your program of studies.

If you wish to withdraw from a course, **you must get approval from the ISP before requesting any schedule change** from your academic advisor.

If you wish to participate in curricular practical training (CPT) **you must get approval from the ISP** before you seek approval from your academic advisor.

## GRADING SYSTEM

Grades are awarded to reflect the quality of student performance. Grade values are assigned on a 4.0 scale from A to F.

More specific information about grades and the grading system at IECC can be found in the IECC Academic Catalog. The IECC Academic Catalog is updated annually and is located on the IECC website at:

<https://www.iecc.edu/catalog>

## ACADEMIC DIFFERENCES

As an international student, studying in an American classroom can be a life-changing experience. You will be able to express yourself freely, make friends, build your confidence, and challenge your friends and professors on topics in class. Many international students find very noticeable differences between classroom culture in the U.S. and in their home countries.

### *1. CLASSROOM PROCEDURES*

During the first week of classes, the instructor will hand out a **syllabus**, or make the syllabus available online. The syllabus will outline the course objectives, required textbooks, chapters to be covered, due dates for assignments, attendance policy, and the grading policy. The syllabus will include the instructor's office location and contact information. One major difference noted by international students is that grades are based on weekly assignments, papers, and projects rather than solely on examinations.

### *2. EXAMINATIONS & ASSIGNMENTS*

The number and types of examinations and assignments throughout the semester differ from one course to another. The instructor will tell you how many examinations and assignments to expect in the course and the material that each will cover. If you are unfamiliar with any of the types of exams or assignments requested by the course you are taking, please contact your professor for clarification. Some classes do not have a final exam but require instead the completion of a project or lengthy writing assignment. Make sure

you review the class syllabus carefully to understand the instructor's exact requirements for the course, how assignments are graded, and when assignments are due.

### 3. *DIVERSE TEACHING STYLES*

Instructors may use lecture, class discussion, or both. Most classes meet on a regular schedule once, twice, or three times a week. The teaching style of the professor can determine the amount of student participation in each class. Some instructors prefer a more formal style of lecture with a possible question and answer period at the end. Others prefer a more conversational style and encourage interaction throughout the class.

### 4. *ATTENDANCE*

Your course instructor will inform you of the attendance policy at the beginning of the semester. Regular attendance is expected of all students. It is likely that attendance will affect your grade. Missing more than two classes or being excessively tardy could result in a lowering of your final course grade. If you must miss a class, email your professor before the class meets to let them know of your absence and arrange to make up any missed assignments.

### 5. *CLASS PARTICIPATION*

Many instructors encourage class participation and often expect it. In some courses, it is a part of the overall grade. If you feel hindered to participate because of your English proficiency, we strongly advise you to discuss this issue with the instructor, your academic advisor, or the staff in the ISP.

### 6. *OFFICE HOURS*

If a student is confused about something in a class, it is expected that they will talk to the instructor before or after class. If the issue requires a longer conversation, the student may make an appointment to see the instructor during office hours. Each instructor has different office hours, and these will typically be posted in the course syllabus and/or in Canvas – the IECC Learning Management System. Students can make an appointment to meet with an instructor during their specific office hours.

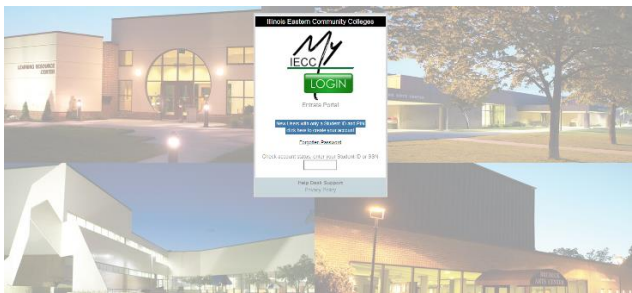
In U.S. academic culture, there is no shame associated with not understanding something in the course, even if it has been presented in a class lecture. Instructors respect students who work hard towards fully understanding the material, so don't wait until just before the exam to seek clarification. Ask as soon as you realize that you don't completely understand the material.

## 7. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is one of the most important concepts to understand in U.S. academic culture. Even innocent violations can have very serious effects on your academic career. The consequences for cheating, plagiarism or other academic misconduct can range from being given a failing grade on a paper, exam, or for the entire course, to being suspended from IECC, or worse yet, you could be asked to leave permanently. Keep in mind that failure to maintain your full-time student status impacts your immigration status, too. More information about academic integrity and policies can be found in the IECC Academic Catalog.

<https://www.iecc.edu/catalog>

### ACADEMIC RESOURCES ON CAMPUS



MyIECC is the point of entry to online resources at IECC, including: Entrata, Canvas, Microsoft Office 365, and your IECC email. Canvas is the IECC Learning Management System.

For more information: <https://my.iecc.edu/e4/>

To gain access to MyIECC, student accounts are generated during the application acceptance process and credentials are sent to the student by encrypted email to setup their MyIECC account. In some instances, student services personnel may directly issue credentials to create an account using a Generated ID and pin. For either process, the student must complete the account setup and set a new password.

### *ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER*

The Academic Success Center is where non-native English-speaking students will take the Accuplacer ESL test upon arrival to campus. This is also the location for other placement testing required of students before course registration.

The Academic Success Center also provides free tutoring assistance in a variety of subject matters.

## LEARNING COMMONS/MEDIA CENTERS

### *THE CLEMENCE ELIZABETH COX CENTER (FCC)*

This building serves as the home for FCC's Center for Nursing, Learning Resource Center, and Academic Success Center. The Learning Resource Center offers students a wide variety of services and is located at the center of campus. The most used service is access to library resources. The library has an open computer lab.

FCC is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI). Students may borrow books from other libraries by placing holds on them via the online catalog.

The entrance to FCC's CEC Center is located in the middle of campus just NE of West Hall.

### *EAGLETON LIBRARY/LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (LTC)*

The Learning Resource Center offers students a wide variety of services. The most used service is access to library resources. The library has an open computer lab.

LTC is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI). Students may borrow books from other libraries by placing holds on them via the online catalog.

The entrance to LTC's Eagleton Library is located in the north hallway of the Student Union Building.

### *WATTLEWORTH HALL LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (OCC)*

The Learning Resource Center offers students a wide variety of services. The most used service is access to library resources. The library has an open computer lab.

OCC is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI). Students may borrow books from other libraries by placing holds on them via the online catalog.

The entrance to OCC's Learning Resource Center is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Wattleworth Hall.

### *BAUER MEDIA CENTER (WVC)*

The Bauer Media Center offers students a wide variety of services. The most used service is access to library resources. The library has an open computer lab.

WVC is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI). Students may borrow books from other libraries by placing holds on them via the online catalog.

The entrance to WVC's Bauer Media Center is located next to the Brubeck Arts Center gallery.

## **ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES**

### STUDENT SERVICES

Located **at the front of campus next to Adult Education (FCC)**, in Williams Hall (LTC), in **Wattleworth Hall (OCC)**, and **in Main Hall (WVC)**, Student Services is your one stop location dedicated to assisting you with your student billing, financial aid, and registration questions.

### *TUITION PAYMENTS*

- Tuition and fees are determined for each academic semester. Tuition and fees may be subject to increase each academic year.
- Tuition bills will be available after registering for courses. Online billing statements are available on **Entrata**.
- Payment options are available through **Nelnet**. Unless payment arrangements are made through Nelnet, all student bills are due by midterm of the semester. After midterm, a late fee is assessed to unpaid student accounts (except those using Nelnet payment options).

For more information: <https://www.iecc.edu/payments>



## MEAL PLANS

Students have the option to purchase meal plans at LTC, OCC, and WVC. Meal plans must be paid in full at the time of purchase.

- Meal plans may be purchased in Student Services.
- Meal plans are only redeemable at the campus where they are purchased.
- Report lost or stolen meal plan cards to Student Services IMMEDIATELY.
- Any unused value on the meal plan at the end of the academic year does NOT carry forward to the following academic school year.

For more information: <https://www.iecc.edu/mealplans>

The Statesmen Grill (LTC) is open for breakfast and lunch from 7:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, the Knight Kafe (OCC) is open for breakfast and lunch from 8:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and the Warrior Grill (WVC) is open for lunch from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Additionally, West Hall (FCC) and Warrior Grill (WVC) have micro market where food can be purchased anytime campus is open.

## STUDENT LIFE

Get involved on campus to find friends and make the most of your college experience. These clubs and organizations offer you numerous opportunities to become acquainted with other students, develop leadership skills, and work with those who share similar interests. Clubs range from academic/honorary to career-focused to multicultural to special-interest groups. You can join an existing organization, re-establish an inactive club, or even form a new club.

Opportunities include:

Frontier Community College (FCC):  
Alpha Delta Nu Nursing Honor Society  
Automotive Club  
EDS Club  
E-Sports Club  
One Love Christian Club  
Phi Theta Kappa  
Student Activities Committee  
Student Nurses Association  
Student Senate  
Trio Support Services

*Athletics:* Baseball, Softball, and Volleyball.

We are about 1½ miles from the Fairfield public golf course which is a 10-hole golf course, city park, and outdoor basketball courts. Campus also has The Bobcat Den, which houses the bookstore, fitness center, and Frontier Perks coffeehouse.

**Lincoln Trail College (LTC):**

At Lincoln Trail College, we believe that there is more to education than just the classroom. Our students have the chance to develop skills like leadership and teamwork through our clubs and organizations. Student Senate serves as the College's student government association and Phi Theta Kappa is our honor society. Many of our career and technical programs have their own organizations designed to help students in those areas succeed.

*Athletics:* Baseball, Softball, Men's Golf, Basketball (Men's and Women's), Cheerleading, Men's Soccer, and Volleyball.

We have the Statesmen Park where the soccer and baseball fields are, the Sport Center where you'll find volleyball and basketball games and the Crawford County Recreation Center, LTC's indoor pool and gym facility. We also have the Robinson City Park where the softball team currently plays. Additionally, LTC has the Athletic Performance Center, also known as "The Barn," which is an indoor facility. The center includes a weight room and cardio equipment as well as an indoor facility that can be used by the baseball, softball, soccer, and golf teams for indoor training. Miller Lake is on campus and offers a picturesque setting to take a walk.

**Olney Central College (OCC):**

Accounting Club  
Active Minds  
Alpha Delta Nu Nursing Honor Society  
Art Club  
Automotive Club  
Cosmetology Club  
Student Nurses Association  
Massage Therapy Club  
Phi Theta Kappa  
Radiography Club  
Science Club  
Student Senate  
Welding Club

*Athletics:* Baseball, Softball, Basketball (Men's and Women's)

We are housed right across from the city park where, if you're lucky, you may see the locally famous white squirrels, and 1.4 miles from The Drey Pickleball Complex and approximately 2 miles from East Fork Trails, which is a great place for hikers and mountain bikers.

**Wabash Valley College (WVC):**

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Advanced Manufacturing Technology Club | Diesel Equipment Club |
| Alpha Delta Nu Nursing Honor Society   | Agri-Technology Club  |
| Collegiate Farm Bureau Club            | Gunsmithing Club      |
| Health Professionals Club              | International Club    |
| Marketing Business Management Club     | Phi Theta Kappa       |
| The National Technical Honor Society   | Player's Guild Club   |
| Radio-TV Broadcasting Club             | Red Pin Club          |
| Red Rage                               | Science Club          |
| Seekers Club                           | Social Services Club  |
| Student Nurses Association             | Student Senate        |
| Teaching Our Youth (T.O.Y.) Club       | TRIO SSS Club         |

*Athletics:* Baseball, Softball, Basketball (Men's and Women's), Cheerleading, Women's Soccer, Volleyball, Archery, Bowling, and Bass Fishing.

We have tennis courts on campus and are ½ mile from the West Berwick 18-hole golf course, pickle ball courts, city park and outdoor basketball courts.

ARTS CENTERS

*Zwermann Arts Center (LTC)*

*Greetings from The Arts at Lincoln Trail College! Our mission is to provide quality instruction in the arts and offer world-class programming to our community. Whether you are a graduating high school student looking for a college home or someone wishing to perform or participate in one of our ensembles or productions, we welcome you.*

*At LTC, our dedicated instructors offer individualized and group study, including private lessons, Community Choir, Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble, Brass Ensemble, and Orchestra, to all levels of participants. Would you like to perform in or work behind the scenes for a theater production? Do you want to learn a new instrument or continue performing with fellow musicians? We have a place for you!*

*Children's Summer Theater was a huge success this year, with productions of Disney's "Winnie the Pooh Kids" and "Lion King Jr". We produce other plays and*

*musicals throughout the academic year, which involve pre-college and college students, as well as other members of the community. From our spring 2022 production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Cinderella" to the fall 2022 production of "The One-Act Play that Goes Wrong," there is something for everyone in The Arts at LTC!*

### *Dr. John D. Stull Performing Arts Center (OCC)*

*Olney Central College is home to vibrant and thriving Fine Arts Programs, where creativity knows no bounds! At OCC, we take immense pride in nurturing the artistic talents of our students and fostering a dynamic environment where their passion for the arts can truly flourish. OCC provides many avenues for you to step into the spotlight and showcase your creative outlets whether you're looking to pursue a career in the visual or performing arts or simply want to enrich your life with creative expression.*

*What sets the Fine Arts Programs apart at Olney Central College is our unwavering commitment to a student-focused approach. We believe that every student is unique and deserves the chance to explore and refine their artistic abilities. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to providing personalized attention, mentorship, and support to help you achieve your goals in the arts.*

### *Brubeck Arts Center (WVC)*

Dedicated in April 1976 in honor of longtime WVC supporters and patrons of the arts, William and Anne Brubeck, the Brubeck Arts Center is comprised of two elements: the Brubeck Arts Center Theatre and the Brubeck Arts Center Gallery. Since its opening, nearly half a million people have attended events at the Brubeck Arts Center.

The WVC Arts Council has generously donated tickets so that international students can attend performances at the Brubeck Arts Center at no cost. Please see the ISP staff for tickets.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

Employment is defined as any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food, or any other compensation. Students must not assume that they are automatically eligible to work in the United States. Work authorization of one type or another is needed for an international student to work in the U.S.

USCIS considers unauthorized employment to be the most serious violation of F-1/J-1 status. It is important that you understand the type of employment F-1/J-1

students are eligible for and how to apply, because unauthorized employment (even for one day) will violate your legal F-1/J-1 status in the U.S. and jeopardize your eligibility for change of status to a professional working visa like an H-1B in the future. You must consult the ISP and be authorized before accepting an offer and beginning to work.

### ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

While on-campus employment opportunities are limited, all F-1 students are permitted to work on-campus part-time while school is in session and full-time during the summer and official school breaks. On-campus employment is not guaranteed.

If you obtain paid on-campus employment, you must apply for a Social Security number prior to beginning work. You must also complete the necessary hiring paperwork with your campus's Administrative Office prior to beginning work.

Most departments will require you to submit an application online, including your resume and cover letter. Some positions may also include an interview. To view the available positions:

<https://dev-iecc-2020.pantheonsite.io/employment>

### CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a type of employment authorization for experiential learning integral to your degree program, such as an internship. The F-1 visa was issued to you to be a full-time student; hence U.S. Immigration (USCIS) is very strict about employment on the F-1 visa. Unauthorized or inappropriate employment, even for one day, is considered a serious violation of visa status and thus cause for deportation. It is the students' responsibility to understand the regulations regarding employment and to obtain the necessary employment authorization before you begin work.

**For any and all kinds of curricular practical training, paid or unpaid, you must have CPT authorization added to your I-20 prior to beginning work. Your employer will need this document before you can begin working.**

#### *ELIGIBILITY:*

- To be eligible to apply for CPT, an undergraduate student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis, while physically present in the

U.S., for one academic year (2 semesters) unless your academic program requires immediate participation for all students.

- Students must not be on probation.
- Students must be enrolled in a full course load (including the internship course) (12 credits = undergraduate students). The only exception for less than full-time enrollment is if you are in your final semester and have fewer credits remaining to complete your degree.
- You must be registered in Banner for the appropriate internship course (3 credits) before your I-20 will be created.

#### *RESTRICTIONS:*

- CPT must be part-time (20 hours or less per week) during the fall and spring terms. CPT can be full-time (more than 20 hours per week) during the summer session. However, please note that full-time CPT will be scrutinized by USCIS and may affect OPT, STEM OPT, and any future H1-B application.
- CPT is only allowed within the dates of the term that a student is enrolled in the internship course.
- CPT employment is employer and location-specific. If the student decides to change their employer, the student must obtain a new job offer letter and a new authorization in SEVIS. CPT is not transferable from one job to the next.
- CPT is also required for internships that involve on-campus positions or research.

#### OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) is 12-months of temporary employment authorization for a student to engage in employment directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study. Students may apply up to 90 days prior to their program end date and up to 60 days past their program end date. Due to USCIS processing times, it is highly recommended that students apply early.

#### ACADEMIC TRAINING (AT) FOR J-1 STUDENTS

Academic training is the name the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program uses for employment training or practical experience related to your field of study. Academic training is available as part of your academic program, either while you are enrolled in school or after you complete your academic program, as long as you maintain valid J-1 status, visit the ISO if you have questions regarding AT.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

All U.S. employers require employees to have a Social Security Number (SSN) for the purpose of reporting individual employee earnings for tax purposes. A Social Security Number (SSN) is required to receive compensation for work in the US (F-1 on-campus employment, fellowships, paid internship while authorized for Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT)). The Social Security Number is a permanent ID number issued by the U.S. government. Keep this card and number safe, and be careful with whom you share this information, as it can be used for identity theft purposes.

### **Why do I need a Social Security Number?**

You must have an SSN if you will receive a salary or stipend from **FCC**, **LTC**, **OCC**, **WVC** or from your off-campus OPT or CPT employer.

If you were employed, you will need an SSN to file a U.S. income tax return for each calendar year in which you spent any period in the U.S.

SSNs are often used for a variety of unofficial purposes, such as opening phone, utility, or bank/credit card accounts. While having a SSN is convenient for these reasons, it is not required.

### **When can I apply for a Social Security Number?**

You may apply for a SSN only if you have received a job offer.

You must have entered the U.S. at least 10 days prior to submitting your application.

You may not apply more than 30 days before the start of your job.

### **How can I apply for a Social Security Number?**

The ISP staff can assist you with preparing and submitted the required documentation to apply for a SSN.

## TAXES

Everyone living in the United States, including F-1 and J-1 students, is expected to file federal and state income tax forms whether they earn money in the United States or not. You may be required to file Federal Form 8843, to exclude days living in the United States from income tax presence tests. You may also need to file taxes using Form 1040NR, or the shorter Form 1040NREZ, if you meet its requirements.

The filing deadline for federal and most state taxes is April 15<sup>th</sup> each year for money earned in the prior year. If you believe your earnings from employment in the United States will complicate your tax situation in your home country, you should consider contacting an accountant. ISP staff cannot answer questions regarding your individual tax filing requirements. ISP staff can provide you with a list of local tax accountants who can assist you with filing the necessary documents.

*International Student Athletes* - Any scholarship from IECC received by an international student may have tax implications. This is determined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Non-qualified scholarship benefits (such as housing and meal plans) may be subject to a 14% withholding. The amount of any withholding depends on your tax status and whether your home country has a tax treaty with the U.S.

If a tax withholding is required, this amount will be deducted from your scholarship award. IECC is required to remit this tax withholding to the IRS on your behalf. A Form 1042-S will be issued to you by January 31 for any year in which you had withholdings remitted to the IRS on your behalf (2022 withholdings will be reported to you by January 31, 2023). The Form 1042-S will include the amount of your nonqualified scholarship benefits and the amount of any tax withholding paid on your behalf from those benefits. You can file a Form 1040NR-EZ or 1040NR with the IRS, which may result in a refund for part, or all of the amounts withheld from your non-qualified scholarship benefits.

ISP staff cannot answer questions regarding your individual tax filing requirements. ISP staff can provide you with a list of local tax accountants who can assist you with filing the necessary documents.

### UNITED STATES CULTURE

Many international students arrive in the U.S. already knowing a great deal about the U.S. and about Americans. However, living and studying in the U.S. can be very different from reading about the U.S. or visiting it with family members. In this section, a few of the most common U.S. cultural values are described so that students can begin to prepare themselves for how some of the cultural values may differ from or be the same as their own cultural values.

Everyone experiences some form of “culture shock” when confronted with new and unfamiliar people and situations. It’s important to keep in mind that this is a common experience among new international students and that it is also temporary. While there may be unhappy moments, adjusting to a new culture will bring many long-lasting rewards.



## AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES

### *INDEPENDENCE*

Americans strongly believe in the concept of individualism. They consider themselves to be separate individuals who are in control of their own lives, rather than members of a close-knit, interdependent family, religious group, tribe, nation, or other group.

### *DIRECTNESS*

Americans tend to value frankness and openness in their dealings with other people. They believe that conflicts and disagreements are best solved by means of forthright discussion among the people involved.

### *EQUALITY*

The American Declaration of Independence states that “all [people] are created equal,” and this belief is deeply embedded in their cultural values. Americans believe that all people are of equal standing and are therefore uncomfortable with overt displays of respect such as being bowed to.

### *INFORMALITY*

Don't be surprised if store clerks and waiters introduce themselves by their first names. Many people visiting the U.S. are surprised by the informality of American speech, dress, and posture. Don't mistake this for rudeness or irreverence. It's just a part of the culture!

### *IMPORTANCE OF TIME*

“Time is money,” is a common expression in the U.S. One of the more difficult things for many students to adjust to in the U.S. is the notion that time must be used carefully and productively. Being “on time” (arriving at the stated time) for class or meetings with advisors, professors, and even with friends is very important. It is considered rude to show up late for a scheduled meeting or appointment.

### *FOLLOWING RULES*

In the U.S., many rules really are followed, and procedures are often not negotiable. Arguing or demanding to see someone “in charge” will not lead to success. It is more effective to explain exactly what you need and what kind of

problem you have been having, and ask, "What do I do now?" or "Is there someone who could help me?"

## PRACTICAL MATTERS

### *CALENDAR DATES*

In the U.S., dates are written as month/day/year. This is the opposite of the British method, in which dates are written day/month/year.

### *DINING*

Most Americans eat three meals a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast is in the morning between 7:00-9:00 a.m., lunch usually is between 12:00-2:00 p.m., and dinner is typically between 6:00-8:00 p.m. Breakfast and lunch tend to be light meals, and dinner is the main meal.

If a friend, classmate, or host family invite you to eat a meal, this does not mean that they will pay for your meal. You should always plan to pay for and offer to pay for your meal when you eat at a restaurant, cafeteria, or fast food establishment.

### *SALUTATIONS*

American names are written and spoken with the given name first and the family name last. So, John Smith's family name is Smith, not John.

- In a formal setting, address men as "Mister" (abbreviated as "Mr."), married women as "Misses" (abbreviated as "Mrs."), and unmarried women as "Miss". Many women prefer to be addressed using the abbreviations "Ms." (pronounced "miz"). If the person has an M.D. or Ph.D., they will often be addressed as "Doctor" (abbreviated as "Dr."). Faculty are addressed as "Professor" (abbreviated as "Prof.") or "Instructor" (abbreviated as "Instr.>").
- In an informal situation, Americans will introduce each other by first name, without titles, and occasionally by just the last name. If you are introduced to somebody by first name, you can address him or her by first name the next time you meet. The only exception would be for someone who holds an important position, such as the IECC Chancellor or the President or Dean of Instruction of your college. Unless they tell you otherwise, faculty should be addressed using their title and last name (e.g., "Professor Smith").

## TIPPING

Restaurants in the U.S. do not include a service charge in the bill, so it is customary to tip the server approximately 20% of the total bill. If service was slow or particularly bad, some Americans will tip only 10-15%. Likewise, if service was particularly good, it is appropriate to tip more than 20%.

- If you are in doubt, ask whether it is appropriate to tip or whether a gratuity is included in the bill.
- Tipping is only appropriate in restaurants which offer table service. Tips are not expected when ordering from a fast-food restaurant or cafe with counter service.
- Taxi drivers, food delivery drivers, bartenders and hair stylists all expect to get a tip equal to about 15% of the total fare.

## U.S. LAWS

While on campus, students are expected to follow laws and policies that govern a variety of daily life and academic activities. There are different levels of laws in the U.S including federal, state, and local community laws which will differ depending on the particular jurisdiction. Violating a U.S. law can have different consequences for an international student than for their American friends and can negatively impact their U.S. immigration status. It is the student's responsibility to know what is legal or not.

The following is a description of some of the laws that may affect international students. It is meant to introduce F-1/J-1 students to some of the laws that exist in the U.S. that may be different from other countries.

### ALCOHOL

Alcohol use in the U.S. is regulated by law. In every state in the U.S. including Illinois, alcohol may not be legally purchased or consumed by anyone under the age of 21, and may not be consumed while in public or in an automobile. It is illegal to have any open bottle, can, or container with an alcoholic beverage in public, even if the consumer is of legal drinking age. Driving while intoxicated is considered a serious crime, punishable by large fines, jail sentences, and the loss of driving privileges. It is also a serious crime to offer or provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21.

## TOBACCO

All IECC campuses are tobacco-free and smoke-free. Smoking and the use of tobacco products is prohibited on all IECC campuses, both indoors and outdoors. The prohibition includes e-cigarettes and vaping devices. Smoking in public buildings, public transportation, and restaurants is prohibited by Illinois law. Smoking is generally allowed outdoors and in one's home. When in someone else's home, it is considered polite to step outside to smoke. Cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping products and other tobacco products may not be purchased or used by people under the age of 18.

## DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

The possession or use of marijuana is prohibited by federal law. Although the recreational use of marijuana is permitted in some states, it remains a federal crime to possess or consume marijuana and can have immigration consequences. Furthermore, at all IECC campuses, any illegal use, sale or distribution of drugs, and/or possession or supply of drugs, drug paraphernalia, narcotics and marijuana (including marijuana plants) will result in disciplinary action by the college and/or criminal prosecution. Street drugs, such as cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates, and other mood-altering substances that are not prescribed by a medical doctor, may not be possessed, or sold legally in Illinois. Strict laws and severe criminal penalties, including incarceration, apply.

## SAFETY & CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

### AVOID SCAMS

- **NEVER** pay money or give personal information to someone who threatens to deport you. Neither USCIS nor the Department of Homeland Security will call you to ask for money to avoid deportation. The International Student Program (ISP) at IECC is the only office to inform you about your immigration status and we will never threaten you with deportation. If you receive such a call, please HANG UP immediately and inform the ISP about the phone call.
- Never give out your credit card number, bank account number, or social security number unless to a reputable official/establishment such as IECC or your specific campus.

## *PERSONAL SAFETY*

- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid dark, secluded areas. Don't walk alone at night.
- Emergency Blue Boxes are located around campus and can be used to get help in the event of an emergency.
- Keep your door locked when you are in or out of your room. Always ask who is at your door before you open it.
- Don't allow strangers into your room.
- Trust your instincts.

## *PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY*

- Keep wallets, purses, checkbooks, jewelry out of sight and locked away, if possible.
- Do not keep large sums of cash. Use credit/debit cards or local ATM machines.
- Keep track of debit and credit cards and report their loss immediately. It's a good idea to take a copy of all cards and ID documents (including your passport, visa, and I-20) in case they are lost or stolen.

## TITLE IX & SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states: "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance".

IECC is committed to providing an environment that promotes excellence, responsibility, respect, understanding, integrity, and service. IECC adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any form of harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or intimate partner violence.

For more information, and to view the IECC policy and procedure, visit:  
<https://www.iecc.edu/titleix>

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The IECC academic calendar provides information about the first day of classes, date of midterm, dates of final exams, and last day of classes for each academic semester. In addition, the calendar provides the dates that the college campus is closed, and no classes are in session, for federal and state holidays as well as professional development days for faculty and staff.

In addition to the academic calendar, the ISP maintains a calendar of cultural trips and cultural activities that our international students are invited to participate in. Please see the ISP office for our calendar of events.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency Number from any phone is 9-1-1 (used for fire, police, and ambulance)
- **Frontier Community College** switchboard is 1-618-842-3711
- Lincoln Trail College switchboard is 618-544-8657
- **Olney Central College** switchboard is 1-618-395-7777
- **Wabash Valley College** switchboard is 1-618-262-8641.

## **WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!**

The International Student Program at IECC is a great resource for you throughout your time here. Please contact us with any questions, concerns, or ideas.

Once again, welcome *to Frontier Community College, Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College, and Wabash Valley College - Illinois Eastern Community Colleges!*