

Preface: **A Word for the Student**

This is a second edition of the book under the same title that was published a few years ago. Thanks to many great comments, encouragements, and suggestions from our readers, we have made some improvements and additions to this new edition. Most changes concern updates related to statistical materials. Although basic rules of admissions to U.S. universities and colleges remain the same as in 2001, there are other changes in the book: We give new examples and appeal to new facts. We use recent opinion polls and surveys. We have also included the results of our own research and interviews conducted over the past five years. Also, this edition has a fresh new look, which we hope the reader will appreciate.



In a way, we are all strangers. Very few of us stay in one place. We all came from somewhere. We move looking for knowledge, better lives, better opportunities, and new challenges. We search for peace, love, happiness, and freedom. We want to travel and explore. We try to find professions and occupations suited to our needs, skills, and talents. No matter what motivates you to study in the United States—a long-planned and awaited journey or a sudden opportunity—you are taking a decisive step in your life.

To be successful in college is not easy. It is especially tough if you are new to this country. The language, the customs, the rules, the weather—everything could become a new hurdle for you. There are many questions that can confuse any student: What is the correct visa? How do I choose the right college? What is the right program for me? How do I take notes in class? How do I get help? What shall I watch on television? How can I remain optimistic? This book addresses these and many other questions and problems that almost every international student will face on a college campus.

Our book will help you overcome the initial myths and fears related to visas and will help you understand higher education in the United States. It also advises how to plan your day and how to get the most from the printed and virtual sources around you. It discusses how to organize your semester, make appointments, and plan ahead. It gives tips on how and where to talk to your professor. It trains you in productive note-taking and essay writing. The book provides you with basic tools of critical thinking. It shows how to use

American television, newspapers, and the Internet more effectively for your education. It helps you understand customs in the United States. This book will teach you more about American conversations and greetings, celebrations and holidays, eating habits and shopping.

Once you make the decision to study in the United States, you will find that many advisors who have your best interest at heart will emerge. Listen to their advice, but make sure that you base your decisions on solid evidence. Let your decisions be informed by your own careful research. Once you have made a commitment to an institution, you should follow the process that the school presents to you and be timely in meeting your deadlines. Once you arrive in the United States, take advantage of the many resources available at your college or university.

We hope this book will steer you in the right directions. Remember that this will be a unique opportunity, so take responsibility for making it a productive and positive one. Good luck in your journey!

A Note for Students and Advisors

Obtaining visas related to education is a complicated process. People who are not qualified to give advice in this area often give students conflicting or confusing information. The Foreign Student Advisor at your school should be fully trained, and you should follow his or her advice.

The National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) provides information, training, and resources for Foreign Student Advisors. Much of what is presented in this book related to visas was either directly or indirectly influenced by the NAFSA Manual and the U.S. Department of State Code of Federal Regulations. Information about NAFSA can be found at www.nafsa.org.

Remember, however, that it is ultimately the U.S. Department of State that issues visas and the Department of Homeland Security that grants status and permits entry into the United States. It is their rules and regulations to which everyone must adhere.