All of the information in this packet is accurate at the time of publication. As we have referenced in several other documents, forms and websites, the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is such that all elements of our programs are subject to change. We will do our best to update this packet and notify you as changes occur.

Reference the most recent COVID-19 FAQs and Information for details about COVID-19 safety measures.

Updated 4/22/22
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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE (TALLAHASSEE)

A5500 University Center
282 Champions Way
P.O. 3062420
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2420

Phones: (850) 644-3272 or 1-800-374-8581
Fax: (850) 644-8817
Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., EST, Mon. – Fri.
Email: ip-info@fsu.edu
Website: international.fsu.edu

Louisa Blenman
Associate Director
Email: lblenman@fsu.edu

Carolyn Barringer
Assistant Director, Program Management
Email: ctbarringer@fsu.edu

Program Management
Email: IP-Faculty@fsu.edu

FSU PANAMA CAMPUS

FSU Panama Campus
Calle Jacinto Palacios,
Building 227
Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge)
Clayton
Panama, Republic of Panama

Phone: (011) 507 317 0367
Fax: (011) 507 317 0366

Dr. Carlos Langoni,
Resident Director
Email: clangoni@fsu.edu
Phone: (011) 507-317-0367, ext 228
Cell: (011) 507-6674-2545

Dr. Alexandra Anyfanti
Vice Rector
Email: aanyfanti@fsu.edu
Phone: (011) 507-317-0367, ext 238
Cell: (011) 507-6676-4071

PANAMA EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Making international calls from the US to Panama: First dial “011” (for international call), followed by “507” (the country code), then the specified location number.

In emergency situations, the Panama staff may be called at the numbers provided. Please reserve the use of these numbers for emergencies only.

Emergencies (Fire, Ambulance, Police) Phone: 911
Ambulance Phone: 103
Police Phone: 104
U.S. Embassy
Building 783
Calle Basilio Lakas
Clayton, Panama
Republic of Panama
Phone: +507 317 5000
Website: https://pa.usembassy.gov/

Time differences: Panama time is the same as Miami and Tallahassee except when the States are on Daylight Saving Time.
BEFORE DEPARTURE & ARRIVAL IN PANAMA

COVID-19 UPDATES AND POLICIES
You should expect to adhere to any entry requirements that may be in place at the time of your program, including submitting proof of a negative COVID-19 test result prior to departure/upon arrival or proof of COVID-19 vaccination. Updates about testing prior to departure will be provided through the Faculty Portal.

At the time of this publication, Panama requires all incoming travelers to either a) provide proof of complete vaccination or b) test negative with a PCR or antigen test 72 before arrival or at the airport upon entry for a fee of $50. Additionally, all travelers must fill out an affidavit form prior to departure for Panama. This will be posted in your IP Faculty Portal closer to your departure date.

If you are unvaccinated and test positive for COVID-19 in Panama, you will be required to quarantine for 7 days. For more up to date information about COVID-19 restrictions in Panama click HERE.

VISA & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR US CITIZENS
All faculty must check their current passport to ensure they have at least 6 months validity after the departure date from the Study Centre location.

ARRIVING IN PANAMA
Please make sure that you are arriving in Panama on or before your Approved Arrival Date. This date can be found in both your appointment letter and Okay to Buy Airline Ticket notification within the Faculty Portal.

ARRIVAL TRANSPORTATION
Tocumen Airport
FSU Panama can arrange for an airport pickup with and you must provide your travel itinerary at least two days prior to your arrival to the FSU Panama staff.

If you choose to use an airport cab service, as you exit the Customs area, walk towards a small kiosk located inside the terminal called “Autoridad de Turismo de Panama”. Tell the agent (in English or Spanish) that you need to take a cab. They will ask you a few questions to better serve you and direct you to a waiting taxi outside. The fare to go to the City of Knowledge, Clayton, should be approximately $40 for one passenger. Although there are plenty of taxis outside to take passengers, there’s better control over the taxis that the Autoridad de Turismo recommends.

In order to receive reimbursement, the faculty member must save receipt(s) and expense receipt(s) must be uploaded to the Concur online travel system. See the attached directions for uploading your receipt(s) to the Concur online travel system. If you have issues with the Concur system, please contact FSU Travel or your FSU home department travel rep. If you have questions about your receipts, contact ip-
Submittravel@fsu.edu. Travel receipts for reimbursement will not be accepted via email or in person.

TRANSPORTATION IN PANAMA CITY

The safest and ultimately easiest way to travel in Panama City is by cabs, which are readily available. The fare from FSU-Panama to the heart of downtown Panama City should be no more than $7-$10 (one-way). A tip is not necessary. ALWAYS VERIFY THE TOTAL COST OF THE FARE WITH THE DRIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE TAXI!

Following is a list of recommended cab companies:

America Libre 221-3491/221-1932
Taxi Concordia 236-7848/236-7820

Uber services are also available in Panama, it may cost slightly more than a regular taxi service but it’s very effective. Other companies, like Cabify, offer similar services.

Travel outside Panama City requires plane, bus, or car. Most in-country flights depart from Albrook Airport, located only two miles from the FSU-Panama campus. Express buses leave from downtown Panama City to all parts of Panama frequently every day. The Bus Terminal is only a 10-minute car ride away from the FSU Panama Campus.

Riding the local buses is also a great cultural experience and a very economical way of going places. The bus system (Metrobus) requires the use of a card which can be purchased at most supermarkets. One of the Metrobus lines goes through Morse Street, only a block away from the dormitory complex, and takes you to the bus terminal at Albrook where you can connect to other areas of Panama either by bus or by the subway (Metro). A bus ride currently costs 25¢. Routes that connect to the suburban areas of Panama City cost $1.25. We suggest you start riding the city buses only when you are familiar with the different places and have a better sense of the distances. Avoid riding the bus at night unless you know exactly where you are going and you are certain about the bus routes.

PANAMA CAMPUS

The FSU Panama campus is located in the City of Knowledge across the street from the Miraflores locks of the Panama Canal. The administrative offices and classrooms are located in Building 227, the main building. The FSU Panama Library is located in the ground floor of Building 225, just a short walk from the main building. The main building houses 14 audio-visual equipped classrooms, administrative offices and laboratories, including a computer classroom with 30 computers, and laboratories. Also, in the top floor there’s a study area with computers and a leisure area which includes a little cafeteria.

The City of Knowledge Plaza, a ten-minute walk from the main building, is a shopping area which includes convenience stores, a pharmacy, a bookstore, and a wide selection of little restaurants and eateries. Other restaurant options inside the City of Knowledge are the Hotel Holiday Inn, Taberna del Canal, and Paddy Mick’s (all can be easily found in Google maps, please check the link: City of Knowledge

Other restaurant options are also available in the Clayton area, only a few minutes away from the City of Knowledge.

FSU Panama offers a free shuttle service for students running approximately 6 times times a day between the FSU Panama main building and the dormitories.

HOUSING

For easier access to the FSU Panama facilities, we highly recommend making every effort to secure housing in the Clayton area as traffic coming in and going out of the City of Knowledge may present a challenge during rush hours. For those staying in Panama for a period of less than 4 weeks, one of the options may be the City of Knowledge housing complex. They offer different types of rooms which include night tables, safe, intelligent AC, hot water, balcony, telephone, television and wireless internet. Occupants have access to a kitchenette with microwave, coffee maker and a refrigerator. The complex has a living-dining area and a fully equipped kitchen, coin-operated laundry, and vending machines.

For longer stays, several options of houses and apartments for rent are available in the Clayton area.
PROGRAM SPECIFICS

FACULTY COMPENSATION
Teaching stipends will be split between the pay periods during the approved program dates. Payments will be deposited automatically to the faculty member’s checking account, as currently arranged with FSU.

Be sure to keep your original receipts for expenses incurred for airport transportation in country, shipping, or airline baggage charges.

Please refer to your International Programs appointment letter for more information.

FACULTY ON-SITE ORIENTATION
Due to immigration requirements, all faculty members are required to attend an on-site faculty orientation at FSU Panama. Local staff will coordinate the orientation date/time with faculty members before their arrival.

GUESTS & CHILDREN
The FSU Panama Program tries to promote a family-oriented environment as much as possible for all visiting faculty. As you will surely understand, however, our highest priority remains the experience of the students. Faculty members must provide the names and ages (if under 18) of any people who will be accompanying them at any point during the program in the Guest Insurance Form. Faculty members are asked not to bring unaccompanied children to FSU Panama while they are lecturing. International Programs strongly recommends not bringing guests to class lectures or academic events.

Appropriate daycare and/or babysitting arrangements must be made by each faculty member bringing minor guests before they depart from the US. Neither Panama students nor staff should be asked to babysit.

Faculty are invited to attend social/cultural events as guests of FSU Panama. We welcome the opportunity such engagements provide for the enhancement of the student experience. Where space allows, faculty guests are invited to attend social/cultural events at their own expense. Children must be at least 8 years of age to participate in excursions requiring coach transportation or theatre performances. If in any doubt, we encourage you to consult IP/Panama staff regarding the participation of minors in social/cultural events.

HOUSING
Faculty housing is located within walking distance of FSU Panama. International Programs provides an apartment for each faculty member for their approved dates.

SHIPPING/BAGGAGE REIMBURSEMENT
All FSU IP faculty from Tallahassee are reimbursed shipping/baggage costs for books, extra luggage, or other items up to $100. Receipts for shipping/baggage costs should be uploaded to the Concur online travel system. Refer to the directions received for uploading receipt(s) to the Concur online travel system.

Contact FSU Travel or your FSU home department travel representative with issues with the Concur system. Additionally, contact ip-submittravel@fsu.edu with any questions about receipts.

Travel receipts for reimbursement will not be accepted via email or in person.
International Programs is a strong proponent of the concept that “The World is Your Campus.” Class sessions need not meet solely in the classroom; we encourage you to use the host city as a living and interactive classroom. Courses taught internationally should be enhanced by their location, and we recommend that you take full advantage of all the resources available to you. The finest museums, theatres, and historical sites are at your disposal, so you will be expected to get your students out into the streets to explore all Panama has to offer.

CONTACT HOURS

Course-related field trips incorporating academic lectures are classified as classroom contact time for the duration of the lecture or instruction. Faculty must accompany students with formal instruction on all course excursions during class time. Course-related field trips without formal accompanying instruction count as half class time for the period allotted by the instructor.

Helpful Information

The contact time required per credit hour is 750 minutes or 37.5 hours. You are able to utilize travel time to and from the location for instruction.

ACADEMIC RIGOR

Distractions from academic work are part of a student’s life while studying abroad, due to the fact they are in a new and alluring environment. They invariably want to travel and explore. Personal travel and exposure to the culture are important to the educational experience, but this must not be at the expense of academic standards. The syllabus should make clear the final grade penalties that will be imposed for any unexcused absence during the session, such as personal travel.

Focusing outside class assignments on direct contact with the culture is a wise alternative. It would be a mistake to give assignments requiring the kind of library research expected on Florida State’s main campus. Whenever possible, assignments should be creative mixtures of traditional materials and the international environment. Do bear in mind that some of your students take two courses, so you will need to keep that in mind when planning assignments and due dates.

When faculty applied to teach abroad, they were asked to submit course descriptions for all study abroad courses. As per the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008), Section 112, information regarding materials for courses taught at our study abroad locations must be posted on the FSU Textbook Compliance Portal in Student Central before registration opens for the students. This ensures that students know about any required texts and course materials they will need to purchase before their departure. Before registration opens for students, in the spring semester, IP Program Management will request this textbook information from instructors to submit textbook or course materials information for their courses. International Programs will then enter this textbook information into Student Central. Faculty members are encouraged to use electronic resources including e-books, online readings, OERs, and/or scanned handouts/readsings on Canvas to avoid students bringing textbooks overseas. Also, you can reach out to the FSU Panama Librarian or FSU Distance Learning to confirm if specific textbooks are already available for students to use at the study center library. If there are any questions regarding Textbook Compliance, please contact IP-Faculty@fsu.edu.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course descriptions are displayed on the International Programs website for all courses taught abroad. These descriptions are from the official course catalog. For special topics or Liberal Studies courses, a member of IP Program Management will contact the faculty member to confirm the correct description for the IP website.

DIRECTED INDIVIDUAL STUDY (DIS)

Instructors may be asked to accept Directed Individual Study (DIS) requests from students going abroad. There is no additional compensation for accepted DIS courses.

SYLLABI

An electronic copy of the Faculty’s finalized syllabi must be provided to International Programs via the Faculty Portal at the conclusion of the first week of classes. Each syllabus should be as comprehensive as possible, clearly setting forth fully the requirements for the course. Course standards should be absolutely clear in each syllabus at the outset. Objections arise when new requirements are added mid-course. Grade appeals are often determined by the clarity of syllabi.
University and Faculty Senate policy require that a course syllabus be distributed at the beginning of the semester. Please visit the following link for further explanations:
http://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum-Resources/Syllabus-Language

The syllabus is required to include:
- FSU Panama Attendance Policy
- University Attendance Policy
- Academic Honor Policy
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement (updated 9/16/20)
- Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus should also include:
- Information about Free Tutoring from FSU
- Written course objectives
- An evaluation/grading statement that indicates what procedures will be used to evaluate students. It should also be possible to discern the approximate weight of each grade component.
- A statement of the faculty member’s policies and/or expectations regarding classroom conduct and missed work.
- Information on your available office hours to meet with students

Additional helpful information to use when creating syllabi can be found at the following link:
https://fda.fsu.edu/leadership-toolkit/syllabus_preparation

There may be other required syllabi entries based on a course’s designation. For example, if a course is a Liberal Studies course, there may be additional requirements for the syllabus. Please check with your department as to any requirements specific course(s) may have.

EMERGENCY ASSIGNMENT
In addition to sending Panama staff a copy of your syllabus, we ask that you also send an assignment that could be administered should you have to be absent from the classroom owing to an emergency. Examples of such assignments include a visit to a museum or gallery with accompanying questions, a movie screening with guided reflection, or a piece of reading and short-answer questions.
GRADES
All instructors are required to submit their grades online. Grades are submitted through Student Central. For complete instructions on how to submit grades please visit the following link: www.sc.my.fsu.edu/Faculty/How-To/Use-Grade-Rosters-in-Faculty-Center. For “Incompletes,” “No Grades,” or any necessary changes to grades even after the term’s grades have been posted, please go to: sc.my.fsu.edu/Faculty/How-To/Request-a-Grade-Change.

ATTENDANCE
Rosters will be provided by the FSU Panama staff for each class session. Rosters should be completed to mark attendance for every class and returned to the FSU Admin office. Any student absence must be reported and will be followed up with by the FSU Panama Student Affairs team.

ACADEMIC FACILITIES
All classrooms are fully equipped for presentations. If your course will make extensive use of high-grade multimedia screenings, please contact FSU Panama about your needs: IP-IT-Panama@fsu.edu

EVALUATIONS

Program Evaluations
Each student is asked to complete evaluations of the program. Program evaluations are provided to students by an International Programs staff member through an online survey. These evaluations help us prepare a report on the program and hear student opinions in regard to their overall experience. Please remind students of the importance of these surveys in the final days of your class.

Course Evaluations
Students are asked to evaluate the courses they complete abroad, just as they evaluate courses on the main campus. Course evaluations are automatically ordered and provided to students electronically by FSU’s Office of Distance Learning.

Faculty Experience Survey
Faculty and Program Leaders will also receive a survey regarding their experience abroad. These evaluations help us assess our current processes and procedures and incorporate faculty feedback into future programs.
BANKING & CURRENCY

BANKING OPTIONS
Before you travel, consider how you plan to access your funds while abroad. PLUS, STAR and CIRRUS cards are the most widely accepted overseas. American Express is also accepted, but with less frequency. Discover Card is rarely accepted.

You will find many places in Panama (and across the world) no longer accept cash; it is advisable to ensure you have access to ways to pay with a card or electronically. The easiest way to make purchases is with a debit/credit card or using Apple Pay/Google Pay on your smartphone. Paying with a contactless card is very common.

CURRENCY
Panama's medium of exchange is the U.S. dollar. Bills larger than $20 are rarely accepted (carry lots of singles and fives).

Visit the following website for the current exchange rate:
http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/

PANAMA PRICES
The cost of living in Panama is about 20% cheaper than in the United States!
HEALTH & WELLNESS

INSURANCE INFORMATION
We encourage all faculty with underlying health issues that may increase the severity of infection should they contract COVID-19 to discuss their teaching abroad plans with their doctor/specialist.

International Programs will provide full medical/evacuation coverage for all faculty from the US through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) effective during your approved program dates. Students participating in all of our study abroad programs are also covered by this same insurance policy. It includes coverage for treatment of ill faculty members, including those with COVID-19, as well as COVID testing for those who are symptomatic, or those who have had a known exposure to a person who tested positive. This policy is NOT intended to replace your domestic coverage. For more information regarding your coverage, please see CISI’s insurance policy posted on IP’s website at:

CISI Insurance Plan

For IP faculty members, IP provides coverage for one guest during your approved program dates. Faculty members will receive a Guest Insurance Form within the acceptance package where this insurance coverage can be requested for additional guests. Faculty must complete the required form to notify IP of any guests accompanying them at any time during the approved travel dates and notify IP if they would like IP to enroll their guests in the CISI insurance plan by the posted deadline prior to departure. Insurance coverage for other guests can also be acquired at a very reasonable price. Faculty will be billed at a later date for the coverage. Details regarding the billing and prices of coverage are provided on the Guest Insurance Form.

HEALTH
Panama has an excellent health care system. Emergency care will likely be dealt with at Hospital Nacional, a local health care provider FSU Panama has been working with for years. If you need to be admitted to the hospital, the CISI insurance will be notified to cover the costs. Less urgent situations should be dealt with at one of the many nearby general physician (GP) or walk-in clinics. GP visits will incur a fee that must be paid up-front; this can be reimbursed by submitting a receipt to the CISI insurance.

VISIT A TRAVEL CLINIC
Travel clinic professionals will consider your health history, current medications, drug allergies, and travel plans when recommending shots and other medications. It is highly recommended to make an appointment as soon as possible so that you can get a scheduled appointment in time to complete any recommended immunization series. Many travel clinics often book far in advance (especially around the holidays), and some immunizations need to be started months in advance of your departure.

MEDICATION
Be sure to bring sufficient quantities of your prescription medication with you to last for the duration of your stay. Keep these in their original containers with copies of the prescriptions and place them in your carry-on luggage. Bring a copy of a legible prescription from your doctor.

Please be aware that not all U.S. drugs are available elsewhere. Don’t postpone discussing your prescription needs with your doctor. You will likely need to work with your insurance company to cover your vacation prescription.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION
It is best to bring sufficient quantities of prescription medications to last for the duration of your stay. When you travel, make sure they are in the original containers with legible copies of the prescription in case you are asked any questions by Customs & Immigration. If you cannot obtain sufficient supplies in advance, be aware that Panama doctors will not fill a US prescription. A Panama doctor will prescribe based on their diagnosis. Be aware that not all U.S. medications are available in Panama. Research/discuss alternative options if you are unable to get permission for advanced prescriptions from your doctor.

MAPPING YOUR IDENTITIES GUIDEBOOK
Our Mapping your Identities Guide was developed for students to explore their identities and evaluate their overall wellness to aid in their preparation for a successful and enriching study abroad experience. It will also help you understand the students in your program and be better allies for them.
CELL PHONES & COMMUNICATION

CELL PHONES
Please be aware that a faculty member is required to carry a mobile phone during any class excursion with students for emergency purposes.

The simplest and most cost-effective way to use your cell phone in Panama is to buy a local SIM card. Contact your cell phone provider before leaving the US to ensure your phone is unlocked. SIM cards are widely accessible and are low-cost (around $20 for one month of data, calls, texts).

If you will be using your US SIM card and do not have an international plan, make sure you turn off cellular data and cellular roaming before you land in Panama to avoid additional charges. You can then use the phone on Wi-Fi anywhere in Panama. Wi-Fi is generally available in cafes, pubs, and restaurants around Panama. There is also great high-speed Wi-Fi at FSU Panama.

Options for international communication include WhatsApp, Skype, FaceTime, Viber, Rebtel, and many others. If you have a smartphone, download any or all of these apps before you travel abroad in order to activate the account.

If you want an alternative to a smartphone, you may prefer to have a Pay as You Go Top Up mobile phone. Panama staff will be happy to advise you on the various options.

As a part of the on-site orientation, Panama staff will offer advice for faculty to purchase a local SIM card or Pay As You Go Top Up mobile phone.

As a part of FSU Panama’s Emergency Preparedness, U.S. faculty are asked to download the app WhatsApp to their smartphones prior to departing the U.S. Once in the Panama, FSU Panama will create a Faculty/Admin WhatsApp group as a means of being able to contact faculty in the event of an emergency.
**Polices & Safety**

**Safety & Security**
Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff, and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials, and to keep students, faculty, and staff apprised of any new information. For more information on IP's security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Chris Carroll at (850) 644-7823 or ccarroll@fsu.edu.

**Resources**
Even though you are not on the main campus, you have access to many resources should you encounter issues while abroad. Panama staff are available to support program participants in a variety of ways, including connecting you with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.

- **Terra Dotta Alert Traveler App:** Florida State University has recently adopted the use of a new international travel software program called Terra Dotta. As part of this program, all participants on International Programs will have their program information registered in the system. One of the benefits of this program are automatic crisis alert messages from Alert Traveler emailed to participants traveling in an affected area. The Alert Traveler emails will contain emergency information collected from the Department of State and other risk management resources. Please note, you will continue to receive important emergency information directly from us as necessary. Alert Traveler information is general and not program-specific. For more information and FAQs on this program, click here.

- **Faculty & Staff Emergency Guide:** DSST-Emergency_Folder-2021-02[1].pdf (fsu.edu)

- **Employee Assistance Program** provides help in dealing with personal and/or workplace difficulties. For more information, visit https://eap.fsu.edu/

- **The U.S. State Department** maintains a web site of information for Americans traveling abroad, including current travel advisory warnings, at: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/UnitedKingdom.html

- **The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: https://step.state.gov/step/

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** provides country-specific health recommendations, health notices, and vaccine and medication information: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/

- **COVID-19 Resources:**
  - U.S. Department of State: COVID-19 Page
  - Center for Disease Control and Prevention: COVID-19 Page
  - **CISI Insurance:** If a participant is sick or exposed to someone who has COVID-19, CISI will cover COVID testing and medical bills. If needed, CISI will medically evacuate someone back to the U.S. if deemed necessary by health professionals. However, please note that security evacuation is not covered under the CISI policy which is a standard in the insurance field.

**Emergency Procedures**
All faculty members and Program Leaders teaching abroad are responsible for the pastoral care of their students in class and during academic excursions.

Safety plans, emergency procedures, and emergency telephone numbers will be provided at the on-site faculty orientation by the Panama staff. Any and all crimes and emergencies must be reported immediately to the Panama staff, the International Programs office in Tallahassee, and to the local authorities.

In case of a personal emergency, contact the Panama Rector, Carlos Langoni, for assistance. In case of a program-related emergency, follow the FSU Panama contingency plan and contact the Director.
SAFETY & SECURITY MEASURES

• Faculty members and their guests are subject to the laws of the country in which they travel.
• Encourage students to use the buddy system; bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.
• FSU Panama will take a copy of your passport upon your arrival and will keep it on file during your time abroad. It is still advisable to keep a copy on your own separate from your passport in your accommodation and another with a family member in the US.
• Encourage students to use the buddy system; bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.
• Valuables. If a safe is available in your housing, use it to store your valuable personal items and important documents. If a safe is not available, be sure to keep these items in a secure place. International Programs is not responsible for items lost or stolen during your time abroad. Be sure to also secure your money, passport, and other valuables if you are traveling on public transportation, especially overnight trains.
• Pickpocketing. In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to always be aware of your surroundings. Beware of strangers who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or strange gestures. Smartphones and purses are often stolen in crowded areas, cafes, restaurants, and pubs. Keep them close to you and within your sight, but out of the reach of strangers. Secure your valuables when you use public transportation, especially if you are traveling on an overnight train/coach.
• Weapons. Different types of weapons are illegal in Panama. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.
Whether it’s your first- or tenth-time visiting Panama, reading up on the city before your trip will help you connect and understand the culture even more. Here are a few resources the Panama staff frequently uses and recommends.

(Note: Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

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state.gov/travel
U.S. State Department’s information for Americans traveling abroad