

**BASICS Video** - *This video explains some of the cultural norms specific to the United States and Humboldt County. This information can be very useful to your success at Humboldt State University, regardless of which country you're from. You will also learn about the Center for International Programs and how to use it as a resource during your stay.*

- 1) Welcome to Humboldt State University!
- 2) The United States is **DIVERSE, SAFE, and FUN!** This presentation video will provide you with useful information on how to adapt to American culture.
- 3) **BASICS | Culture, Diversity:** The United States is often referred to as a Melting Pot. A “Melting pot” is where many cultures and ethnicities living together in the same space. There is *Lots of diversity* in the United States, with regards to ethnicities, religions, family structures, gender roles, sexual orientations, and more. The USA promotes equality for **ALL** people, so we encourage you to **Respect** these differences.
- 4) **BASICS | Culture Shock:** Culture Shock is the shock of a new environment. For some, meeting lots of new people and learning the ways of a different country and it's culture can be overwhelming. You may have difficulty being separated from the important people in your life (such as family, friends, colleagues, and teachers), who you would normally talk to at times of uncertainty or those who give you support and guidance. You might experience several things, including feelings of surprise, uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety. You may have difficulty concentrating or find it harder to focus. You might even experience health effects such as headaches or stomach aches. These experiences are normal, and remember, *you are not alone!*

**(HSU Culture Shock Video)**

- 5) **BASICS | Culture, Food, Music, and Community:** There are plenty of fun things to do in Arcata and the surrounding area. Get involved in the community! Eat some delicious and unique food- both local and organic. Try new things. Go see some live music (be aware that venues with alcohol are ALWAYS limited to people who are 21 and older.) You can join a club on campus to meet people: there are clubs for sports, arts, history- everything!!
- 6) **BASICS | Culture, Calendar Dates:** As opposed to European and Japanese ways of writing the date, Calendar Dates in the United States written as **month/day/year**. This can be very confusing for students who are new to this country. It is best to write out dates using the name of the month in order to avoid confusion. 01/15/2013 = January 15, 2013
- 7) **BASICS | Culture, American Holidays:** On most holidays, business and non-essential government offices will be closed, and school will be cancelled. Traveling can take a lot longer than usual on these days because many people are traveling to visit their families. Plan ahead! Order any plane tickets far in advance, and expect delays due to heavy traffic.

- 8) **BASICS | Culture, Hand Gestures:** It's a good idea to be careful expressing things with your hands! A hand gesture might mean something in your country, but it could mean the opposite in another country. If you're not sure, you can ask someone.
- 9) **BASICS | Environment, Recycling:** Our beaches and forests are very clean. People in Humboldt County are proud to live in such a beautiful place, and we take very good care of it. Reduce waste! Use reusable items. Humboldt State University is one of the top "green campuses" in America. "*Green*" means that it is good for the environment. Reduce, reuse, recycle is a common motto for sustainable living.
- 10) **BASICS | Environment, Weather:** Humboldt County is not like Hollywood.... The weather here is very different. It is foggy and rains often in the fall, winter, and spring seasons. But the weather in summer can be very nice. Humboldt weather changes often and can be **unpredictable!** Please stay **healthy**. It is very easy to catch a cold during the rainy season. Always be prepared for **rain!** Wear **layers** and have an umbrella handy.
- 11) **BASICS | Environment, Temperature:** In the United States, temperatures are most often reported in Fahrenheit, and occasionally also in Celsius. To convert Fahrenheit to Celsius, subtract 32 and multiply the result by 5/9. The following table lists a few common temperature conversions:
- 12) **BASICS | Environment, Weights and Measures:** We use the English system in the United States. These charts convert between the English and metric systems for the most commonly used measures.
- 13) **BASICS | Environment, Homelessness:** Homeless people **do** exist in the USA, and are common in Humboldt County. In Arcata, most homeless people are harmless. They may ask you for money or leftovers. *If you feel the need to give, it's better to give food.*
- 14) **BASICS | Transportation:** You will receive free Public Transportation w/ your **HSU Jack Pass!** The three public bus systems in Humboldt County are: Arcata & Mad River Transit System (for local Arcata transit), Eureka Transit Service (for transportation around Eureka), Redwood Transit System (which provides transportation throughout Humboldt County).
- 15) **BASICS | Currency:** The currency used in the United States is called the **Dollar**. The symbol for the United States Dollar is **an "s" with two lines going through it vertically**. If you are paying a large amount for something ( like rent), or if you don't want to carry around lots of cash, you can use a *check*. To get checks, you must set up a *bank account*. Come to the Center for International Programs if you would like information or help opening a bank account.
- 16) **BASICS | Culture, Restaurant Dining** – There may be some differences for you when you dine in the United States... For example, "TIPPING" or "GRATUITY" is: Extra money you give for good service; it is not included on the bill. Tipping is only expected in restaurants which offer table service. Tipping is normal and polite behavior. It is generally 10-20% of the final bill. 20% is for extremely good service, when the waiter or waitress was polite, attentive, and accommodating).

- 17) **BASICS | Culture, Dining** - Most Americans eat 3 meals every day- breakfast, lunch, and dinner: Breakfast: usually occurs between 7:00 and 8:00 am on the weekdays. It is usually a light meal with only 1 course. Typical breakfast foods include cereal with milk, juice and/ or coffee, fruit, yogurt, toasted bread or a muffin with jam, butter, or margarine, or a version of eggs with potatoes and breakfast meat. Lunch: generally occurs between 11:00 am and noon. It is also a light meal with only 1 course. Typical lunch foods: soup and salad, pizza, or a sandwich. Dinner: is usually between 6:00 and 8:00 pm. This is the main meal of the day for Americans. Typical dinner foods are usually heavier and may include pasta, salad, a main course (like a meat dish), potatoes or rice, or ethnic cuisine (such as Mexican). Dinner is usually followed with a sweet dessert like cake or ice cream.
- 18) **BASICS | Communication, Body Language** - Body language and communication are different in every culture. In the U.S., people stand about 2 feet (or 0.6 meters) away from each other when talking. This gives your conversation partner personal space to feel comfortable. Let people move towards you- don't try to force closeness. Avoid physical contact for casual acquaintances; an arm on the shoulder may be off putting when you've just met someone.
- 19) **BASICS | Communication**: When meeting someone new, it is customary to exchange names and shake hands, like so: Your handshake should be firm, but not overpowering or painful.
- 20) **BASICS | Campus Resources**: Here are some Campus Resources if you are interested in sports or other physical activity: The Student Recreation Center (SRC) includes the gymnasiums and sports fields, The Recreation and Wellness Center (RWC) offers alternative classes like Archery or ropes, and Center Activities provides off-campus adventures and leisure activities year-round!
- 21) **BASICS | Campus Resources**: The HSU Library is a great place to study and do research.
- 22) **BASICS | Campus Resources**: The HSU Student Health Center is where you can receive medical treatment at low or no cost to you. These qualified staff are ready to help!
- 23) **BASICS | Campus Resources, Volunteer Resources**: If you are interested in volunteering or are required to volunteer by your program or sponsor, there are several resources on campus that can help you. The Youth Educational Services or "YES House" and the Campus Center for Appropriate Technology (CCAT) are two excellent resources for volunteer experience.
- 24) **BASICS | CIP Front Desk**: The following video is important information for how to communicate with the Front Desk in the Center for International Programs. In order for us to assist you as best we can, there are procedures that we must follow. Take a look: