

Keep Your Experience Alive

&

Integrate Your International Experience Into Your Life Back Home

There are many positive ways of coping with the challenges of re-entry. Here are some ideas of things you can do to help yourself process your experience:

Volunteer! Volunteering is a good way to extend your abroad experience, share your new knowledge and give something back:

- Be a resource to other students planning their own study abroad experience. The Office of Off-Campus Study is always looking for student volunteers:
 - Share your experience at the sophomore info session in September
 - Join us to help at the OCS Fair in early October
 - Participate in a department or program info session in October
 - Join the Homecoming Weekend student panel
 - Organize your own event in coordination with OCS
- Be a contact for prospective study abroad students
- Represent Your Program at the Off-Campus Study Fair or volunteer to help OCS at the fair
- Participate in or organize an informal regional pre-departure sharing. Talk with students who are going to the same country/program. You can give a student's perspective on everything from courses to what the food is like. It's nice to have somebody to ask who's been there and done that.

OCS Volunteers get an OCS T-shirt as a thank you!

Share your experience with the Colby Community:

- Share your photographs for the Photo Contest in September
- Join the International Club
- Go to an international coffee hour
- Participate in the International Food Festival and/or International Extravaganza
- Continue to meet with other returnees, keep it informal or create a club. Talk with people who understand what you are feeling.
- Write a story for The Echo
- Publish an article in one of these online magazines:
 - <http://abroadviewmagazine.net>
 - <http://www.transitionsabroad.com>
 - <http://glimpse.org/>
 - GoAbroad's Next Great Travel Writers Contest! <http://www.goabroad.com/writer-contest>
- Contribute your experiences on RealAbroad.com <http://www.beta.realabroad.com/#/>
- Surround yourself with understanding and encouraging people

Integrate and build upon your experiences abroad by incorporating your new interests, knowledge and skills into your current and future academic studies:

- Find ways to use the knowledge you have brought back and the new perspectives you have acquired.
- Select courses that deal with issues you became interested in while abroad. Use your experiences abroad as references for class assignments and research papers.
- Enroll in courses with an international focus: be sure to let your professors know that you were recently abroad—your input and first hand experience will add to class discussions.
- Talk to your academic advisor and other faculty members you are close with. Tell them about your experience and ask for their advice about how to build on that experience. They might have helpful suggestions for courses, internships or careers related to your interests.
 - Consider an independent study, senior thesis, or special project to continue exploring an area which is not covered by existing courses.
 - Talk to Faculty about finding fellowships and funding for special projects.
 - Attend lectures and events related to the areas from which you have just returned.



Speak the language:

- Continue taking language courses
- Participate in the Language Tables: take advantage of this opportunity to not only speak in your language of study, but to also share your stories from abroad.
- If Colby doesn't teach the language formally, contact the Language Resource Center.
- Start a new language! It is never too late to start something new!
- Continue to push your comfort zone as you did when you were abroad. Keep trying to find new ways to interact with those who are different from you.
- Stay in touch with friends you made abroad.
- Continue to correspond with your friends and home stay family in your host country.

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Keep Your Experience Alive & Integrate Your International Experience Into Your Life Back Home (Cont)

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Connect with the international community beyond campus:

- Visit the Colby Volunteer Center
- Volunteer: share your experience with local school children or read to them in your language of study
- Volunteer to give a presentation about your experience at local schools or churches
- Help organizations that support community service and development. Groups working with immigrants, refugees, or the elderly can often use your skills of listening, patience, and empathy.
- Continue being a multi-cultural person. Seek out situations in which international experiences and perspectives are appreciated. Use your international perspective and skills to work on issues in the United States.
- Take a class that involves community interaction

Plan for the future:

- Think about your career plans. Visit the Career Center.
- Participate in the *How to Market Your International Experience: Unpacking and Translating Your Skills For the Job Search* workshop offered each semester by the office of Off Campus Study and the Career Center. This workshop will help you identify, unpack, translate, and market the skills and abilities you gained from your time abroad in a way that is meaningful for future employment or graduate school. Get some tips on incorporating your study abroad experience into your resume and interviews, regardless of whether or not you are seeking an international job.
- Research other ways to get overseas again including graduate studies or employment abroad, the U.S. Peace Corps, or visiting host families and friends.

Go abroad again !

- For Jan Plan, summer, or after graduation
- Research scholarships through Academic Departments, Career Center, Off-Campus Study office
- Do an International Internship (see Career Center)
- Work or Volunteer abroad
- Visit the Career Center for resume help and to use the resources there such as Going Global <http://web.colby.edu/careercenter/>
- Check out the OCS web page for examples of organizations which sponsor work, volunteer, and teaching opportunities abroad
- Consider graduate school abroad
- Travel!



*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
--T.S. Eliot*