

Name: Mohammed Aqib Adamu

ID: 900080840

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Instructor: Dr Kim Fox

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AUC survival guide

Lead In:

Not all International students studying in the AUC are privy to the services that are offered to them by the university. Also, rarely do we get to hear from the international students themselves regarding their outlook on the experience.

(Music fade-in)

Voxpub of international students:

My name is Madi Hegdem and I am from Norway and am an exchange student at AUC for one semester

My name is Sherise, I was raised in new york

My name is InwanSho I am from Korea

My name is Kandy and am from the United States

My name is YanichMaximiilianShnider fromGermany from the city of berlin

Time 27 (second)

The American University in Cairo A-U-C receives hundreds of international students year but most of the time it is a difficult transition to make; studying abroad. International students are sure to face several hurdles when they take the plunge that thrusts them into a new learning environment. Especially when the language, culture, religion and the societal norms are different from what one is use to. With that in mind I set out to discover what international students could do to quickly become accustomed with Egypt and the A-U-C.

We will begin by taking a look at the offices that have been set up by the A-U-C to cater to needs of international students. We will also be receiving input from international students themselves with regard to accommodations, transportation food and their words of wisdom for future international students.

The Office of Student Support, O-S-S for short, the OSS is a student-centered department established in the spirit of educational enhancement The OSS offer services such as counseling, student mentoring, when I got there I realized that there is a general misconception by international students on the duties of the O-S-S.

(MUSIC FADE OUT IN 20 SECOND)

Marwa Hussein -OSS OFFICE:

The international students I have dealt with..i think there case is quite ..Complicated maybe complicated isn't the right word but its the only word that comes to me now. Because some of these students or the majority of these students are coming as non degree and maybe sometime later they decide to be a degree student...so I think that they need to know everything that the university as in general is very complicated there are loads of policies and rules, there is the international office that is very supportive and very helpful, so they just need to visit and also I think that the advising of international students happens through that office.so they need to speak to their adviser,they need to go and meet with them , speak with them, they are very helpful . They can provide this information and if they need specific information about academics they have us as the mentoring unit or the registrar. But I think they come first as disoriented especially with their own issues. Being international students, as a non-degree they don't know what to take, they have special courses. There are a lot of students that started out as non degree but then I want to be an undergrad or declared student and they are not having that title of non declared student and they come and ask me why and of course I am not equipped to the answers so I refer them to the council... sorry to the international office .so my advice is please get as much information as you can, don't hesitate to go where you need to go to find it.

TIME 1:20 SECOND

MUSIC FADE IN

Next on my list was the international students affairs office, but before I made my way over there, I spoke to a few international student and I asked them what they thought of the living arrangement made available to them here in the A-U-C.

Vox pub

Kandy: living in new campus away from everything ws kind of umm...living in the isolation wasn't a great experience for me, then I moved to maadi much much better. yeah don't live on campus.

Madi:

What I heard and alsowhat i know is that the dorms are just as expensive ore more expensive than renting an apartment. Also there lots of rules related to living tin the dorms and my impression is that international students they are older than the Egyptian students when they start here because we are on exchange so we have already gone through some university years at home and that is my impression of people living the dorms that they are younger than me, so I felt like I am too old to have those kinds of restrictions on my life.

Before I came here..the people I know who came here, gettysburg sends a lot of students here...I was told "don't live on new campus there is nothing out here"

There's not like, there is not like... there is not likeany real kinda food there is getting access to the rest of Cairo, it's a 60 pound cab ride minimum and that's if you can afford it one, andtwo. ...Its just ...its very inconvenient like they just got saoudi market out here like this semesterright? And I went to he saodi market that everyone was so excited over and it'sliterally a hole in the wall. Likethere's maybe 3 fresh food and everything else is chips and grenolar bars. I was like I am really glad, really really glad I live in zamalek it's a lot better than living out here. Most of the students I met who live here ...they are either sad and moving next semester or they are only here for a semester but really didn't like.

Schnider:

Actually in the beginning I considered staying on campus, then I though I live alone since I am 16 so I am kinda use to being really independent and use to doing my own stuff. I just don't really like anyone of somebody caring wheniget home or somebody like observing if I get home or whatever and that's was like the major point why I didn't choose to live in the dorms here or zamalek, And shortly afterward I spoke with a couple of people living in the dorms and they were not happy, that I would consider it right now.so am really happy with the decision to ...

(TIME2MIN 40SEC)

I did eventually make it to the International students affairs office and found out that they have quite a lot to offer international student here in the A-U-C

(MUSIC FADE OUT)

Ibrahim: The ISA, or the office of international student affairs, here at the AUC offers international students all kinds of assistance except for academics. We have our colleagues in the international programs office who deals with the academic part of the experience. so what we mainly do is that we assist the student if they need ..Like off campus housing, if they decide to reside off campus we are responsible for that.

We also organize many trips for international students that have cultural components where they get exposed to the Egyptian culture. We organize the main orientation when they arrive here in Cairo. Introduce them to the culture of Egypt. We give them sessions about safety, street in Cairo, what they should do and what they shouldn't be doing while they are staying in Cairo. The mission of the orientation is to prepare them for the beginning of the semester. We give them also our emergency contacts that's 24/7, our emergency line We also work with our colleagues at the New York office, like for example every once in a while they send us loan cheque for the students. We start the process of having the cheque signed and then send it to the student's account where they process the payment for the students. We also have another service here in Egypt... at the ISA I mean, we offer mini loans and it ranges between 250 to 500 pounds and its interest free. if students run into any kind of financial problems or something they can come to our office and ask for this mini loan and they can settle it after a while. if they need more than 500 we also do have.. Like the other service of giving them big amounts of money, but they need to demonstrate their need for the loan and they need to settle it before the end of the semester here in Egypt .We also have our big hit of the year which is international day where we host student from all over the world...so that's what we mainly do .

Time:2MIN 50 SECS

(FADE IN MUSIC)

The last office on my list was the international programs office, but before I went there I wanted to check in with my international students again, especially those living off campus to find out what they did for food an transportation.

Vox pub

Sho: I always go to el Oumda because it is the cheapest food I can get so, and also we don't have a kitchen at the dorms so we have to eat out all the time, so I really don't want to use more than 50 pounds a day so I try to ..You know um get the cheapest food as possible...buT um... I like the Egyptian food. um a lot of international student, study abroad don't really like Egyptian food...or cant eat kusheri and all..but I can deal with tamaya and kusheri so am good.

Schnider: That's like my main critic about Egypt, I just don't get along with the food um its not like I get problems with my stomach all the time. But I just don't like the food in general; I miss my food from back home.

Madi:

I like the Egyptian food a lot but, I um..the main problem is that I think that its um..difficult to find healthy food in your like ..Daily diet. I really have to make an effort especially here on campus to find healthy food. I don't mind eating unhealthy

once in a while yeah, but in my daily diet I would like to have some healthy choices. Like in the beginning I couldn't even find a piece of fruit on campus, I think its.... very different from the things I usually eat when am home.well I like to go to el Oumda to the Egyptian food there...I think that's probably one of the most healthy options you have.Really surprising the `McDonalds on campus interesting yes? (TIME 3MINS)

Sho:

Its very difficult because there is a bus .so that's good but its just that traffic is really really annoying, I mean am not use to travelling to school like for an hour.so which is pretty you know hard.....um yes.

Madi:

The amount of time I use on the bus. Thatsomething that has been hard to accept that you have to...I send 3hours on the bus every day so...

TIME:3 MINS

Right above the American food court is the international programs office, where I met with the director of study abroad.

(FADE OUT MUSIC)

FADE IN MUSIC IN 2 MIN 40 SECONDS

Mohammed AbouSeoud

Well the kind of service we render to our students is mainly academic and the international students here can be divided in to two group.The in house degree seeking student like your self, requesting a degree from A-U-C, and the other branch of international students who are the ones coming in for short periods of time to study abroad at the A-U-C for either study abroad or a year, and for the particular services.and for the international student just like yourself, we offer them or they would fall into the part who would want to study abroad on exchanges and study abroad out going.so our in-house students are eligible to study abroad for a semester or year or even for a short program either with the study abroad area or with short special academic programs with my colleague Sherrif.They are considered as part of the other students, they are treated the same, they have to fulfill the criteria for

specific programs to apply for and qualify, get selected and placed and then spend their semester abroad. And we have actually sent many international student from different nationalities to destinations to either home destinations to either the home country, we have students from Malaysia, we have had students from the states who wanna go to japan, we have students in Europe, US and Canada or even Asia as well. So that's one particular part. For the other particular part, which I will leave to my college Soha who is working with RandaAifal in the international academic advising part. She will be talking to you about the kinds of services incoming students coming into A-U-C.

Soha Ali

Okay my name Soha Ali, I mainly register international students who come to study at the A-U-C non-degreecategory, which come here for a semester or a year. International students mainly from Europe and America, they are on a different time, according to the academic calendar, so they cannot abide by the undergraduate registration days at A-U-C. That's why we help them, that we deal with all of them regardless of their majors they all come to this office we have to ensure their schedules, and whatever they request of courses and we deal with them one by one, doing their schedules, advising them according to the transcript, the course the have taken back home and actually registering them on the system in A-U-C Some of them would actually like to take Arabic classes, and they have to go through tests o test their level regardless of what they have taken back home because the categorization of courses differs.

TIME: 3MINS

And that brings us to the end of this documentary. We hope you have found this session both informative and entertaining. Thank YOU for listening