The Global Perspective

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Featured Events
There are many English Language Resources in Pittsburgh for anyone looking to improve their English skills. Here are some great options:

- Asian Studies Center offers language partners, to apply go to the following link, click “Application” and fill out the information:  
  http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/asc/academics/language-partners

- Carnegie Library offers “Let’s Speak English” classes at both the Carnegie and Squirrel Hill Branches, check out the following website for upcoming times: https://www.carnegielibrary.org/?s=let%27s+speaker+english&search-location=Website

- Allegheny Intermediate Unit offers free Adult ESL classes, for more information, email this address: info@aiu3.net

- Pittsburgh Language Exchange is a website that offers opportunities to meet up for one-on-one conversations. You will need to specify that you want to learn English and also exercise caution because anyone can participate in the program so we do not know how the participants are vetted: http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/city/Pittsburgh__United_States.asp

- The English Language Institute at Pitt offers part time courses for a fee if you are in need of some structured, more formal training. Learn more here: https://www.eli.pitt.edu/english-second-language-esl-programs-study
Meet the OIS Graduate Interns!

Susanna is in the last year of their MEd in Higher Education Management, specializing in student services at the University of Pittsburgh. They are particularly interested in access and equity issues within higher education and hopes to continue working broadly in student support at colleges and universities.

With varied international work and travel experiences across Europe as well as in Mexico, India, China, and Japan, they are thrilled to be working at OIS as a graduate intern assisting with various assessment and benchmarking projects.

In their free time, Susanna is an avid cook and eater—loves to host dinner parties and brunches—and enjoys spending time reading and hanging out with their partner and almost 3-year-old dog, Frankie.

Maria is a second-year student in the Higher Education Management MEd program at Pitt. She is from Pittsburgh and attended Pitt as an undergraduate, during which time she studied English Writing and Literature. She also spent a semester studying abroad in London and traveling to the Netherlands, Germany, and France, along with various parts of the UK.

Her interest in international education was sparked by her experiences abroad, along with spending time with her Dutch roommate at Pitt!

At OIS, she works on programming and outreach initiatives. At home, Maria loves spending time outdoors, playing with her cats, and reading.
IWAP is a secular association of women representing more than 35 nationalities, including temporary and permanent residents.

**IWAP’s Mission:**

To develop understanding among women from different nations and cultures. To create an opportunity for international women to learn about their new home, and enjoy their stay in Pittsburgh and the USA.

**Programs:**

- **Social meetings:** 1st, 3rd, and 5th Thursdays of the month for a morning of social/cultural exchange.
- **English class:** Weekly meetings to learn or improve your English.
- **Cooking class:** Once a month cook an international meal with IWAP members
- **Field trip:** Monthly field trips to discover Pittsburgh and its surrounding communities
- **Volunteering:** Monthly opportunity to serve the community together.
- **Book group:** Monthly meetings

Come to a Thursday meeting and get to know women from your country and all around the world!

**When:** from 9:30 AM—11:30 AM (1st, 3rd, 5th Thursdays of the month)

**Where:** First United Methodist Church

- Although IWAP is not a religious organization, they meet in a church building.

**To find out more about IWAP, please visit their website:** [IWAP Website](#)

or email them at iwap.pittsburgh@gmail.com
Pittsburgh’s [Peoples Gas Holiday Market](#)™ mixes international flair with local charm. Enjoy a one-of-a-kind shopping village as you stroll through an illuminated Market Square, weaving through wooden chalets brimming with high-quality gifts and holiday experiences.

Open daily November 22 - December 23

Find more Downtown Pittsburgh Holiday events and information [here](#)!
Understanding Credit in the United States

What is a credit score?
A credit score is a numerical analysis of a person’s credit history, which determines his or her “creditworthiness” (can he or she be trusted to repay loans). The number is based on five criteria: 1) payment history 2) credit utilization 3) length of credit history 4) credit mix 5) new credit.

How do I build my credit score?
First, you will need to get a social security number (SSN). This will be needed for any banking, credit cards or loans. Next, if you already have loans or a credit card, build good credit using the five criteria above. Be sure to pay on time!

If I have no credit already, how do I start?
Obtain a secure credit card. These cards are available through your bank, and only allow you to charge up to the limit placed on the card. Often, you will make a deposit to the bank in order to open the card.
Winter Break Information

Travel Tips from the Student Team

- Make sure you have all required documents: most recent I-20s or DS-2019s signed for travel, valid passports, valid visas and EAD cards if you are on OPT.
- We recommend also traveling with the proof of financial support and proof of enrollment (transcript and enrollment verification letter from the Registrar.)
- You may need a visa to enter the country to which you are traveling. Please be sure to check with that country’s Embassy or Consulate in the US.

Office Closures

The University is closed from December 23, 2019 through January 1, 2020. No offices will be open during this time.

In addition, OIS will also close at noon on December 12th, 19th, and 20th. The office will reopen on Thursday, January 2nd at 9 AM.
Culture Corner:
Christmas in the United States

Christmas is an annual festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, celebrated on the 25th of Christmas. On this day, Christian families exchange gifts, attend mass, and eat a large meal. In some families, these activities occur on Christmas Eve, December 24th.

Families usually place a pine tree in their homes and decorate it with ornaments—metal balls, beads, tinsel, and lights. Sometimes similar decorations are placed around the home. Often, stockings (large socks) are placed over and type of fireplace or mantel. Also, families often place lights on the outside of their homes.

The weeks before Christmas are the busiest shopping days of the year. This time often has high sales and discounts to motivate shoppers. Due to crowded shopping areas and the pressure to buy gifts, many Americans find this time of the year stressful.
8
Nationality Rooms Holiday Open House
12-4 PM, Cathedral of Learning
Visit 31 Nationality Rooms decorated in holiday fare. Tours from Quo Vadis guides speaking about each country’s holiday traditions. International foods, dances, and songs! Free admission.

10
Mannheim Steamroller Christmas
8 PM, Benedum Center
Experience the magic as the spirit of the season comes alive with this signature holiday music.

17
A Benedum Christmas—
Home for the Holidays
7:30 PM, Benedum Center
Local artists and bands perform unique renditions of holiday classics along with their own original hit songs.

26
The Illusionists—
The Magic of the Holidays
Dec. 26-29, Heinz Hall
Celebrate the holidays with the entire family with a mind-blowing showcase featuring jaw-dropping talents of the most incredible illusionists on earth.

31
Hallmark First Night Pittsburgh
6 PM, 120 Fifth Avenue Place
Make plans to ring in 2020 with Pittsburgh’s favorite New Year’s Eve celebration! Tis arts-focused event takes place in the city’s vibrant Cultural District and features live music, art performances, ice sculptures, and a wide array of family-friendly activities.
Enjoy your Winter Break!

We love meeting new scholars at weekly Scholar Orientations!

Thank you to Yuji Yano for the picture!