



2011 S@S Frosh Guide

S@S Committee 2011

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1 First Things First - Getting There

If you have your I-20, your visa, and an excited attitude, you're ready to get onto that plane to the happiest place on earth. Not Disneyland, but Stanford. Knowing the average college student, we pack at the very last minute. Not to worry, here's a list of things you should have when you come to school. Granted, we're all unique, so it's clearly incomplete for some of us. So, bring what you feel is necessary to enjoy yourself for four years (or three, for you A*STAR scholars) in California.

- § **Passport and I-20.** Your I-20 is perhaps the most important thing you will need traveling in and out of the U.S. Keep it close. **You I-20 should also be signed by someone from Bechtel.** Please make sure you check this early (and hopefully it's not too late by the time you read this...) Upon entry into the US Immigration will issue you an I-94. It's a white tear-away section of the form you have to fill out in the plane. Fill in your admission number on the I-20 from the I-94 if immigration doesn't do it for you. Keep the I-94 near your passport, if they don't staple it to your passport for you. To reiterate, keep your **passport**, your **I-20** and your **I-94** safely with you while in the U.S.
- § **Your plane ticket.** Enough said.
- § **About US\$1000-2000 in cash or traveler's checks, preferably the former.** You'll need the cash to pay for things (like deposits, books and things for your room), and money takes time to get into your bank account, whether it's a wire transfer or a cheque. If you're getting a cell-phone plan from AT&T, that's already going to take up \$500 for the deposit alone, so bring enough to make sure you don't go broke before your account is up and running with money. Also, try to bring some small change. If not, you can make change in the airport. Do so before trying to pay the shuttle driver who will be bringing you to Stanford. On that note, it's always cheaper if you travel in groups on a shuttle. For example, SuperShuttle charges \$26 one-way from SFO to Stanford for the first person, and an additional \$8 for every extra person in the group. Bring the rest of your money in a bank draft. Bank drafts drawn on Singaporean banks (e.g. DBS) may take longer to be processed, usually a week or longer. Therefore, traveler's cheques (or in America, traveler's checks) are useful but not essential. We'd honestly rather stick with the cash, for simplicity's sake. Remember, most of the money should be placed in your bank account on the first day. This will depend on your pre-Stanford plans as well.
- § **Clothing – less is more!** The weather doesn't get very cold in California. Honestly. You can bring your clothes from home and not have to worry at all. T-shirts, jeans, shorts, track pants, maybe a sweater or two and definitely a windbreaker would be sufficient. It's hard to predict when it rains in the winter, but expect it to rain for 2-3 weeks. This is also usually the coldest period of the year. Remember, if doing laundry is not your forte, lots of underwear is highly recommended. Do your laundry often anyway.
- § You will be attending semi-formal events while at Stanford. This implies a suit for guys. A blazer and khakis work equally well. The most cost-effective way is to get one tailor made at home. For girls, your summer dresses or a nice blouse and skirt are perfect.
- § We said it doesn't get too cold at Stanford, but say you want to go **snowboarding at Lake Tahoe** with your dorm, you'd be well advised to buy some **winter clothing / ski jackets** either at home or at school. You will have a much better selection of designs when you get to California, so I'd advise the latter.
- § **Singapore Driver's License, if you have one.** We know what you're thinking: Please bear in mind that a Singapore license **cannot** be converted into a Californian one. The moral of this story is that all residents, meaning you, have to sit for the in-state DMV driving test. If you are thinking of bringing along an International Driving Permit, please note that if the

'fuzz' stops you on your way to Jack-in-the-Box, they will ask to see your original Singapore Driving License – the IDP by itself is not recognized.

- S Textbooks.** Clementi Bookstore (Blk 450 Clementi Ave 3, #01-297 S(120450) Tel: 67762146) and the NUS Co-Op are your best bets. Check out the truly exorbitant www.stanfordbookstore.com for latest textbook information, or search the web for the class webpages, which usually tell you what books they need. Stanford "custom edition" texts and course readers cannot be found in Singapore, obviously. Buy your textbooks in Singapore if at all possible. They can be up to 4 times as cheap. Sometimes though, the textbooks are not available over here. Then, try www.campusi.com, www.campusbooks.com, or other second hand sources (e.g. your seniors, or the newsgroup su.market.textbooks) for cheaper books. When you finally get a P.O. Box (we're looking ahead already), Amazon Marketplace is also comparatively more affordable, and you can ship your books to school at the start of every term.
- S Luggage, of course.** But watch your luggage allowance! On Singapore Airlines, you're allowed 2 pieces of luggage (excluding 1 carry-on bag) weighing a maximum of **strictly 23kg each**. If you have more than that, you'll have to pay a huge fee. This surcharge is a huge fee for bags weighing up to 23kg, and then it's insanely expensive, so do take note. While talking about airlines, you'd be well advised to join your frequent flyer club, like Krisflyer. You'll most likely be flying back and forth from school often, so those miles can go towards some very pleasant upgrades.
- S Stationery** is more expensive over in the States, and there is not much variety to choose from, so buy all your stuff at home. If you use correction tape, get it in Singapore. It only comes in the liquid form in the States, and last I heard, it's out of style. Letter-sized paper, triple-hole punches and triple-hole-punched paper are used here. To save yourself the hassle of bringing over your two-ring binders, buy a three-hole punch and triple-holed binders at school. It's really not all that bad, and they're sturdier too! One thing you can bring over is your Singapore-bought stapler and Singapore-bought staples. They're light and easy to carry, and many Stanford students are impressed at the efficiency at which they not only fit into your pencil case but can also "staple on-the-go" especially when they need to staple loose pieces of paper 2 minutes before their problem sets are due – by far, one of the most innovative ways to make friends. The staples in the U.S. are of a different size, so make your own judgment.
- S Other random stuff.** Mousepads. Digital cameras. Pictures from home. USB cables. CDs. DVDs. One of our committee members highly recommends you bring a backup hard drive or plan to purchase one at school. Caps. Raincoats. Your favorite stuffed toys. Posters. You'll probably be at Stanford for three to four years, so you'll want your stay to be absolutely comfortable.

2 Getting to the US - Immigration hassles

September 11th, 2001 changed U.S. immigration forever. It is natural and expected that Singaporeans studying in the US are also affected. Fortunately though, despite the fact that the hijackers were also on F-1 visas, Singapore is not on a list of 20 countries released by the US government which immigration officials will pay special attention to. However, applications to federal and state governments will continue to be delayed due to background checks. Every student entering the US should have the new SEVIS I-20. Remember to sign your I-20 and try not to lose your I-94. We apologize for the repetitive warnings, but we can't reiterate it enough. Look respectable and follow all instructions airport security issues when you arrive at the airport, and getting in and out of the country will be a walk in the park.

3 Now What? - Things to Do while Jetlagged

- § **Get to Stanford.** If you're arriving by yourself and told the IUC (International Undergrad Community) when you're arriving, there should be people at the airport to welcome you. You'll most likely take a shuttle (pick-up from the roadway centre island on the Departures level, no reservations required), rent a car if your parents are around, or something. If necessary, call the committee members, most of whom will be in Stanford before you. Refer to the section on early birds.
- § **Get hold of a map and carry it with you for the first few days** (you can either get one at Stanford, or at <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/visitorinfo/plan/maps.html>). It's best to see if you can find the official one used by Parking and Transportation Services. It's extremely detailed and helpful. While you're there, you can also pick up a bike map, which outlines the bike routes used in and around Stanford. We've got a huge university campus, allegedly the second largest in the world in terms of land area. It takes about an hour or more to get from one end to the other on foot or 15 minutes on bike. You have been warned. Again, get a map!
- § **Pick up your Stanford University ID (SUID, pronounced ess-you-eye-dee), P.O. Box key and room key.** Remember those photos Stanford had you send in? Here's the first time school uses it. Anyway, all these items should be given to you on the first day when you register for International Orientation. Do not lose your card – you need it to eat at the dining halls, to get into Green and the other 20 odd libraries on campus, and to get into many events and parties. It also doesn't bend as well as your Singapore IC, so don't try, it may break. You take care of your IC, don't you? Accord the same care to your SUID. A replacement costs US\$15. It's not much, but don't try and lose it.
- § **Go for International Student Orientation (ISO).** You will have fun, and you'll meet lots of new people and make friends. We promise.
- § **Then go for the "real" orientation.** Have more fun, but the introduction to the academic portion of Stanford begins now (yes, you're at school, although it doesn't seem like it). Fit as many events as you can into your schedule. Go dance, eat with your new friends, buy school sweatshirts, talk to professors. Meet upperclassmen and ask for course recommendations. Find the S@S committee members. We're here to help.
- § SLE people can begin reading for their classes, and have no more fun. Don't worry, we'll still come find you SLEers on the weekends and see if and when you want to play.
- § But most importantly... **Be Kiasu.** (It can be surprising how un-Kiasu Singaporeans are relative to other Stanford students – moral: do not take "kiasu-ness" for granted.) Take the first few days to do all your administrative stuff, since very few of the American frosh will be on campus this early. Do all the stuff below in between International Orientation stuff, and you'll save yourself a lot of grief fighting with everyone and their moms. Stuff at ISO that is really important will be compulsory, so go for the fun stuff, and you can figure out the rest. If you get to campus a few days before orientation starts, you can get a lot of admin stuff

done without having to wait in line for too long. However, be warned that you cannot do some university related administrivia (e.g. claiming credits for 'A' levels) before orientation starts due to holds on your account. Also, it may be inconvenient to apply for stuff when you don't have an address, but it is still possible.

- § **Activate your in-room network connection.** Access the website rescomp.stanford.edu. You'll need a computer and a network connection. It's helpful to have an Ethernet cable on hand just in case the wireless connection doesn't work the first time. If you arrive early (being international, of course you will), find your Resident Computer Consultant (RCC) immediately and he or she'll be glad to help you out (there's no one else in the dorm yet anyway!). If you can't find your RCC, wander over to the LalR at Tressider Union, and see if your RCC or a techie CS major is hanging out there.
- § **Set up an e-mail account.** The website is sunetid.stanford.edu. You can get this done in Singapore. Now get a Facebook account if you haven't done so already. Don't just get an account, use it and add people. Sift through the stack of information packets that you have received. But in case you haven't done it yet, let that be one of the first things you do upon hitting campus.
- § Also, **activate your Stanford Card Plan on Axess.** It comes in handy for stuff like printing from the cluster and libraries. It works like a credit card, but you have a limit of \$1000 per quarter, and the charges go to your university bill. It's not necessary; I personally don't have one, but it definitely comes in handy when you need to print something and your personal printer decides to call in sick.
- § The Stanford Card Plan is not the same thing as the **Meal Plan**. All freshmen are required to be enrolled in a dormitory, and at the same time, a meal plan. There are 19, 14 and 10 meals/week meal plans. With the 14 and 10 meals/week meal plan, you also get Meal Plan dollars which you can use at certain dining outlets on campus (not all though!). These Meal Plan dollars come in handy when you want to grab lunch at Tressider, or if you want to hang out at Late Nite (Lagunita Dining and Stern Dining are two of the campus' late night eateries. There are no 24 hour kopitiam here. ☺)
- § Another detail: **Meal Plan dollars are not the same as Cardinal Dollars.** You can choose to buy Cardinal dollars in addition to your meal plan, which work somewhat like the Meal Plan, but can be used for more dining outlets on campus.
- § **Open a savings and a checking account.** Apply for a credit card. An ATM and check/debit card keeps your expenses account separate from your savings account. Wells Fargo or the Stanford Federal Credit Union would be good bets. They both have branches at Tressider Union, and will have booths for newcomers during orientation. A savings account accrues interest, a checking account allows you to, duh, write checks - not cheques. Read the section on banks.
- § **Get a cell-phone (if you need it).** All rooms have a fixed line telephone installed and local calls within a 12 mile radius are free, so you may not need a cell-phone on campus. If you do wish to obtain one, go with AT&T because it is the only one which gives you decent reception on campus, and also because Stanford students get a 15% discount. They'll have a booth during orientation in White Plaza or outside the bookstore that would probably be set up halfway through ISO. If you're a really early bird and can't wait to get a phone, the nearest store is at the junction of Page Mill and El Camino. Read the section on phone services. Get a family plan to enjoy cheaper rates. You can also use Skype or Pfingo calls for very affordable rates to Singapore. T-Mobile and other services have very poor network coverage in Stanford.
- § **Settle your AP credit and your mother tongue (where applicable).** If you didn't get exemption from the language requirement, go and ask them how to deal with the problem. To settle your AP credit, go to the student's services center/registrar's office with your A level (or equivalent) certificate. Yes, remember to bring your original A' level (or equivalent) certificates with you to Stanford.

- § **Complete your immunization and TB test requirement at Vaden Health Center.** They may bar you from enrolling in classes if you do not complete the Mantoux Test by the deadline! Oh, and get the rest of the immunization shots you are missing while you're at it, especially Meningitis. Be wary that there are many types of Meningitis shots available, so pay attention to the handouts from Vaden. You need to schedule appointments with Vaden in advance. Visit <http://vaden.stanford.edu/> for more information.
- § **Go shopping.** Bike, roller blades, skateboard, lamp, bed sheets, comforter, pillow, clothes, food, bike lock, books, posters, microwave, water boiler, whatever floats your boat.
- § **Explore Stanford!** It's a beautiful (and huge) campus. Try not to get too lost. But you have your map, right? Plus you can't really miss Hoover Tower...if you can't see it, you've got to be pretty far off.
- § **Pay your bills (eventually).** Stanford has gone green and stopped issuing paper bills, so all payments are now done electronically. Bear in mind that you will be issued the bill for the next term on the 20th of the month before the current term ends. There are fines for late payments.
- § **Sign up for classes.** Yes, spend hours trying to arrange your schedule and trying to find the perfect combination that allows you to wake up at 10 and be done with classes by 3. Even better, have no classes on Friday. The websites that you will become very familiar with are: axess, introsems, pwr, ihum. Add .stanford.edu to each of these. The cool thing is, when you're logged on to the Stanford network and want to access any of these website, all you have to do is type the name of the website into the web address box. For example, 'axess' is all that is necessary.
- § **Go for classes (eventually).** Not entirely compulsory, but recommended. You are paying a ton of money for the Stanford education for a reason.
- § **Look for your (or anyone else's) Big Sibs** if you still have queries, problems, doubts, or too much cash. They're here to help. Find us!
- § Note that due to a change in rules, **you are no longer eligible for a SSN unless you have a job.** Some banks require you to have a SSN in order to apply for a credit card, and you definitely need one if you want to get your driver's license. Putting in an hour a week filing books at the library is not really that bad, and Stanford pays relatively well! Visit the Bechtel International Center for information on the paperwork needed to obtain the SSN.

4 Early Birds

It sure sucks to be in a strange land with 2 pieces of luggage, and no idea how to get to Stanford without looking like Mr. Bean lugging your luggage around and trying to juggle a map. No fear! Below is an incomplete list of people who will be around just before or during ISO. If you really need help getting around or need some advice on where to go to find something, you can give us a call. You'll probably be having too much fun once NSO starts to be running about buying stuff though.

Name	Date	Contact No.	Email	Comments
Ching Hua <u>Lee</u>	Summer	650-919-4877	clee2@stanford.edu	Away at conference at the beginning of Fall
Desmond <u>Lim</u>	September 23 rd onwards	650-521-7617	dhl@stanford.edu	
Kee Wui <u>Huang</u>	September 9 th onwards		hkiwi88@stanford.edu	Staff Retreat
<u>Koh De Wei</u>	September 22 nd onwards	650-804-2932	dewei@stanford.edu	
Russ <u>Li</u>	Summer	267-307-7881	jingxian@stanford.edu	
Neo Kai-Yuan	September 5 th onwards	650-391-6969	kneo@stanford.edu	Sophomore College
Sherlene <u>Chatterji</u>	September 5 th onwards	650-391-6953	sherlene@stanford.edu	Sophomore College
Toh Weisong	September 9 th onwards	(+65)97904365	weisong@stanford.edu	
Yang Zi <u>Dong</u>	September 5 th onwards	650-391-6958	dongyangzi1@gmail.com	Sophomore College
Yii Wen <u>Chuah</u>	Summer	650-644-7576	yiiwen@stanford.edu	All summer through fall
Ying Zhen <u>Ang</u>		650-804-2766	yingzhen@stanford.edu	
Yesheng <u>Yee</u>	Summer	(650) 733-6975	yesheng@stanford.edu	

5 Life at Stanford

5.1 Shopping!

You will eventually learn to stop converting from US to SGD as it saves a lot of pain and agony. You either need a car for getting around and ferrying your cargo, or shop with the International Orientation group which usually organizes a shopping trip. Here is a rough guide for places to try:

1. Appliances/Electronics:

(a) Newegg/other online retailers – Cheap and convenient, especially if you don't have a car. Beware of mail in rebates though, sometimes you might not get them, or they take ages to process.

(b) Fry's Electronics – the one located near Stanford gives allegedly horrible service; the one in Sunnyvale, about 20 minutes drive away, is further but larger and has better service.

(c) Walmart and Target – Located at San Antonio Shopping Center, where there are many other supermarkets and eateries, you can find various cheap appliances (e.g. radio clock, lamp, printers, refrigerators). You can get here with the Stanford Marguerite. See <http://transportation.stanford.edu/marguerite/> for maps and schedules of the Marguerite Shuttle Bus.

It might be a good idea to wait for your roommates to come to discuss with them if you'd like to share items like refrigerators, printers, fans and what nots.

2. Linen/Household Goods:

(a) Stanford Shopping Center hosts a wide range of department stores such as Macy's, Nordstrom's and specialty household shops such as Stroud's, Home Depot, and Bed Bath and Beyond.

(b) IKEA – conveniently located in East Palo Alto, a 15 minute drive away. NB. For sheets, you need twin long, not just twin. Twin longs tend to be harder to find, and often are sold out by the time you get there. This can't be helped as you can't find them in Singapore, except in IKEA. Their (super) single fitted sheets do fit the beds over there but IKEA doesn't have many designs. Order them from the IUC; you get a cheaper price compared to ordering from the university. For comforters, choose between a down comforter (very soft and season adaptable, although somewhat warm in Spring and more costly), and polyester ones.

3. Groceries/Personal Care:

(a) Walmart/Target/Longs Drugs/Safeway: Find out about "Secret Safeway", south of campus by Sharon Heights which is within bike-able distance and also accessible by the SLAC line of the Marguerite Shuttle Service. A useful alternative to the dining halls in the future. Safeway offers fresh fruits, vegetables and food, whereas the others focus on household equipment. At Safeway, apply easily for the Safeway card for special discounts. There's another Safeway/Walmart/Target down by San Antonio Shopping Center, which is accessible via the Shopping Express line of the shuttle service. There is also a Trader Joe's that is a 10-20 minute bike ride off campus (depending on how fast you ride your bike).

(b) Walgreens/Longs Drugs: A short bike ride away in Palo Alto, if you're not shopping for too much or if you're not being picky. In addition, the intense competition in the US also tends to mean that if you search hard enough, you'll be able to find discount coupons for just about anything, or cheap rock-bottom deals on airline tickets and the like, just so long as you're not fussy. Some good places to look at are in the Unofficial Guide to Stanford; you'll be given a copy sometime during September. The downside though, is that there tend to be gimmicks for many of the so-called free services. Caveat Emptor they say.

5.2 So Near Yet So Far (How to get between Stanford and SFO, SJC)

The regional rail service, CalTrain (check out the schedules at www.caltrain.com), runs from San Jose all the way to San Francisco. It's the cheapest way to get to the city or to the airports. Take the Marguerite Shuttle to the Palo Alto Station, and board a train from there. You can cycle there too (don't be lazy, it's not far). Going to SFO requires a change to the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) at Millbrae station though. It takes about one and a half hours to get to the city from the station.

5.3 What is the Housing Draw?

Stanford guarantees housing for all four years of your undergraduate life. What they do not on the other hand guarantee that you will like where you have to live every year. To try to keep things as equitable as possible, since the 1970s, Stanford has been running a giant lottery called the draw. Simply put, where you stay depends on pure luck, and is not based on a points system as in our local universities. The Housing Draw is an experience similar to buying 4D, but more exciting. You'll find out when the time comes.

5.4 Electric Appliances/ Computers

- § **Electrical appliances run on 110V AC in the US**, as opposed to 240V in Singapore (i.e. many things won't work there). Get a transformer (the step-up kind, not the more-than-meets-the-eye kind) if you're bringing appliances over, e.g. Discman battery charger, but that might be compatible with 110V - check the big black box on the cable for the range of input voltages. Your laptop power supply should take a range from 110-240V, so you won't need one for that. Alternatively, check out the nearest Radio Shack to get a clumsy black transformer that will suffice. Generally, for most things, unless you're bringing half the appliances in your house and the kitchen sink, you won't need to get a transformer.
- § **Also, the plugs are different in the US.** Get an international adaptor of sorts so you can plug in your devices from home. However, note that the adaptor is not a transformer – it merely allows you to plug your device into the power socket. The devices you are using in must still support 110V AC operation or they will not work (or even self-destruct) when switched on.
- § **Rice cookers are unnecessary.** Rice is commonly served in dorm dining halls (and if you find them unsuitable, let your Dining Ambassador know – they usually do their best to make sure the food's good and that you feel comfortable!). Hot pots however are a different kettle of fish. They are immensely useful for cooking instant noodles, bah kut teh and having steamboat, as well as for taking down and shorting the entire mains power supply to Narnia. You can get hot pots in the states. It's a little more expensive, but it's much more convenient. Also you might want to buy
- § Buy your desktop **computers** in the US, even though they're more expensive than in Singapore – it's obviously more convenient. Laptops used to be cheaper in Singapore, but for many brands, they seem to be cheaper in the US. For example, I bought my laptop in Singapore for over \$2500 and found that it was only USD\$1100 at Stanford and that that wasn't even the newest model anymore; the newest model was going for USD\$1300 (still a FAR CRY from SGD2500). That being said, do your own research and make a decision that's comfortable for you – whatever happens, try to get a laptop with an international warranty though. Ask your friends in NUS/NTU if they will help you buy a laptop at a fabulous discount. Stanford has deals with IBM, Dell and Apple to offer laptops at discounted prices that approach that of the NUS/NTU deals.
- § Laptops or Desktops? Laptops are undeniably more convenient, especially if you don't plan to study in your room. Dell, Toshiba, Fujitsu and IBM are all pretty reliable. Desktops are for computer-power hungry maniacs, like most of the guys I would assume. Especially if you want to play network games. But watch out for those bandwidth levels, because IT might assume you're downloading something illegal (Stanford is informally considered to have one of the worst records when it comes to illegal downloading) and issue you with a strike. Three strikes, and something very bad happens. We'd prefer you not to have to find out. But take CS 1C (taught by your RCCs). You have been warned.
- § **Macintosh vs. PC.** This might be a dilemma for some of you. Many computers in the dormitory computer clusters are Macs, but they run both OS X and Windows XP. The argument for or against either type of computer would be incessant and partisan.

- § You can consider getting a **10 meter long LAN cable** to connect your computer to the wall jack because wireless is not yet available everywhere, and sometimes the jack may be a distance away from your table.
- § Make sure **you get a laptop lock** because these things do get stolen. If it floats your boat, get a desktop monitor when you get here as well, it really is easier on the eyes compared to that small 13inch screen on your Macbook.
- § For further debate on computers, check out rescomp.stanford.edu.
- § You'll probably want to **get a table lamp** or some form of extra lighting other than the light in your room, which is insufficient for proper studying (if you want to get some studying done in your room, of course). Halogen lamps are not advised because they are illegal under Stanford law. When Housing inspects your room over winter break, you don't want to get a fine for having a halogen lamp on your desk. A hairdryer and an iron, in addition to an ironing board would be extremely handy (although some dorms already have them in the laundry room – you might want to wait till you get to check out the services in your dorm before you buy all these stuff). For those of you messy eaters, buy a Stain Stick, which gets those soy sauce stains out really fast! Liquid detergent is recommended. Costco sells detergent in large quantities (some of us think a little too much), enough to last you one to two years, depending on how often you do your laundry, which we hope is at least two times a month. Or you better have a lot of clothes.
- § Lots and lots of non-original software. Hard to find, but useful. However, this is not strictly necessary because the University has taken out lots of licenses on all the software you might need, including Photoshop and software compilers. Stanford has even taken out a corporate copy of Norton Antivirus, so your virus-worries are over. The website you need to access at some point is Essential Stanford Software, which you can reach at ess.stanford.edu. At least some of our tuition fees go to good use.

5.5 Banks

The main banks that you will no doubt be interested in opening an account with are Stanford Federal Credit Union, Wells Fargo Bank and Bank of America. Regardless of what conclusion you arrive at after reading this, you should definitely check out their booths after moving in, as they would have the most updated information. We highly recommend that you also check out their websites, where you can find detailed information on the kinds of accounts and cards that they have and save yourself some time during orientation to do the more fun stuff.

- § **Stanford Federal Credit Union (<https://www.sfcu.org/>)**. Decent bank with pretty good rates in the Money Management Accounts. They have the most ATMs on campus and at the hospital, however expect to pay ATM usage fees if you have to draw money off campus. (Hint: Places like Walgreens have cash-back service, so you can make use of that when you're not on campus.) Most popular pick among Stanford students, especially international students, since they do not charge a fee on incoming telegraphic transfers (but beware that transfer chargers are still levied by intermediary banks). They also allow you to apply for a credit card without an SSN. Recommended only if you don't expect to be travelling all over the US for long stretches at a time. Then again you're a student. What would you be doing gallivanting around..?
- § **Wells Fargo Bank (<https://www.wellsfargo.com/>)**. One of America's oldest and most established banks. Wells Fargo has a large network of ATMs in California. You can apply for a credit card with Wells Fargo without an SSN, but it will be a secured credit card that has a limit of \$1000, but can be upgraded to a normal card after a year or so. Unfortunately their only on-campus ATMs are all at Tresidder Union. Then again, you won't

really be carry much cash around on you in the US, because you can pay with your check/credit card at most places and have cash-back at most stores like Walmart, Target, and Safeway.

- § **Bank of America (<https://www.bankofamerica.com/index.jsp>).** Another popular American bank, Bank of America loses out in appeal because their service center is a 15 minutes bike ride away at the Stanford Shopping Centre. In addition, they only have one ATM on campus, at Tressider Union.
- § In a nutshell, with banks, some general points you'll want to note are that you will probably want to open both a checking (expenditure) and savings (money management) account. If you anticipate large inflows of money at a time such as when you are on scholarship, the interest you accrue from putting the bulk of your money in the savings account can be pretty significant.

Also, you'll want to note that banks may offer different interest rates, and that you should always ask to compare the annual percentage yield or APY rather than just the number they give you as those can be very misleading, especially when they are given on a monthly basis. Another important service feature that makes a difference is the cost of accepting Telegraphic Transfer or Wire Transfers. All this information can be found online at the bank's website.

5.6 Phone Services

- § **Internet calling** is fun and free. Skype (www.skype.com) or MSN Chat works just fine. This should be the option of choice if you have a broadband connection at home. If you bought a Mac, our resident Macgeniuses insist that iChat is the most stable of them all.
- § If not, calling cards in the US are very cheap. You pay online with your credit or check card, they give you a PIN (there is no physical card) and that's it. No phone bill hassles. Skype-out is another possibility, with rates at about US 3 cents per minute. See if you can call collect if you really must call Mom and Dad. Also, wait till the weekend or nighttime, when calls are bound to be cheaper.
- § **For cell-phone service, AT&T is one of the best bets.** It's the only network with decent coverage around Stanford. Not to mention the student discount of 15%. Also, if you wish to save even more, you might want to sign up for a family plan with other friends – you'll share a pool of minutes (which is a lot) and each of you will end up paying less. An alternative is pre-paid service, if you don't foresee yourself using a cell phone much. One thing to note is that you'll have to pay a deposit of US\$500, if you don't have a SSN (which you almost certainly don't). The above holds if you are on a family plan. Do bring more cash for the upfront deposit.
- § Remember to pay external phone bills on time – they are separate from your University phone bills. Some phone service providers have surcharges for late payments. AT&T, for example, charges you \$36 to reconnect your line if you decide to leave that bill underneath the bed and they have to suspend your line to punish you. Use the autopay feature. It saves a lot of hassle.

5.7 Getting Around

Nearly all Stanford students either bike, blade or skateboard on campus. But, if you choose to walk, it is definitely possible, especially if your classes are clustered around an area, class. Whatever you do, do not buy from Stanford Student Enterprises. Their bikes are overpriced and prone to theft as a result

The International Student Orientation committee usually organizes a big shopping trip to the San Antonio Shopping Center in Mountain View (check your ISO schedules, or drop an email/Facebook message to your friendly ISO coordinators). Bikes there are cheap (US\$59-\$99), so it is recommended that you join in. Walmart has cheap bikes too. However, note that cheap bikes offer a rough ride and tend to fall to pieces quickly. Also, note that bikes at Walmart and Target run out very fast once school starts. So get your bikes ASAP.

Mike's Bikes and The Bike Connection, found along El Camino Real, sell more expensive bikes. These may last longer, be of higher quality, and may be more cost-effective in the long run as repairs are expensive, but they also tend to be stolen more quickly. A good, new bike can cost you around US\$250, and a good, second hand bike about US\$150.

Buying a helmet is recommended, especially for the day when you pulled an all-nighter the night before writing an IHUM paper, took a Stats midterm and then rush to class after lunch, only to get into a bike accident because you were too sleepy. Accidents can get pretty bad here at Stanford. Being a student at Stanford means your brain is probably worth the US\$15 you spent on the helmet to protect it. If you're going to bike off campus, you really should get one. Bumping into a car is quite different from bumping into another bike. Most undergrads don't put on a helmet on campus though...we'll tell you about that later.

The main bike shop you will frequent (especially after your glorious bike crashes) is the Campus BikeShop, located right on campus, next to the CoHo at Tressider Union, a place to get bike repairs and checks, and to buy bike accessories like locks and lamps. The campus shop may be cheap relative to shops off-campus, but expect to be ripped off all the same. Learn how to fix bikes yourselves. Do maintenance (e.g. oiling and air-pumping) every week. The bike shop has also set up several stations around campus where you can use the tools to fix your bike or pump the tires on your own for free. There's one near Meyer library between the library and Stern.

Get a good U-Lock, even though it may be more expensive. They are more difficult to break into than chain locks. Make sure to lock the wheel AND the frame of the bike to the bike rack or anything immovable. Locking your nice new bike only to itself and not to the rack is a very bad idea, especially overnight. It most likely will not be there in the morning.

5.8 Academics

Finally we get down to the main reason why you're at Stanford. Here's a list of some of the majors at Stanford and some people you can approach if you have any questions:

Biology	Kee Wui (he can also tell you about the "wonders" of being Pre-Med)	hkiwi88@stanford.edu
CS	Pang Wei, Zheng Hao, De Wei, Jonah, Yifan, Frank	pangwei@stanford.edu , zhenghao@stanford.edu , dewei@stanford.edu , tangjonah@gmail.com , maiifan@stanford.edu , frankchn@stanford.edu
CSE	Daniel Chia	danstryder@gmail.com
Economics	Yitao, Sherlene	yitaoz@stanford.edu , sherlene@stanford.edu
International Relations	Desmond	dhlum@stanford.edu
Literature	Deanna	dsjtan@stanford.edu
Math	Pang Wei, Lay Kuan	pangwei@stanford.edu ,

MCS	Pamela	lkloh@stanford.edu
Mechanical Engineering	Michelle	ylpchua@stanford.edu
Philosophy	Deanna	michteo@stanford.edu
Physics	Weichao	dsjtan@stanford.edu
Psychology	Chuan Yu, Ying Zhen	weichao@stanford.edu cyfoo@stanford.edu , yingzhen@stanford.edu
Public Policy	Michelle, Sherlene	michteo@stanford.edu , sherlene@stanford.edu
Science, Technology and Society	Yang Zi	yzdong@stanford.edu

For a listing on first courses to consider, we have also prepared a brief list for you. You should still ask around for other ideas.

- § Any Engineering: MATH 51 (and possibly 52 and 53). Physics 43/45. Unfortunately due to a change in policy and our 'A' level syllabus, we only place out of the Physics 20 series and 41. It may be sufficient for some majors (e.g. Computer Science), but not for the majority of Engineering majors. Having to take the other Physics classes also means those corresponding 13 'A' level credits will not be counted. Also consider the introductory courses in your respective field, like E40 for EE, CS106X for CS.
- § Economics: ECON 1A, 1B, MATH 51 (this is a pre-requisite for the ECON 50 series. You cannot claim credits from A Levels towards the economics major.)
- § Biology: With chemistry at 'A' levels you should be able to place out of the first few chemistry classes up to CHEM 33, so you can start with CHEM 35 or 135/171 in the fall. You can also clear the math requirement and not take any math other than stats, but some math is always useful (start with MATH 51). You can take the biology core in your freshman year, but it'll tend to clash with a lot of other things like IHUM and PWR. The biology department does not accept transfer credits for placing out of the biology core. If you didn't take physics, you'll have to take it eventually, but it is not a pre-requisite for most classes.
- § Others: Consider taking Introsems, especially those freshman seminars. Some of them are good for getting rid of ECs and GERs, and even for those that don't, they're a great way to get to know a professor really well early on. There are also nice courses that just about everyone takes like CS105, CS106A, PSYCH 1, Social Dance and the list goes on. Ask upperclassmen, your RAs and Academic Directors for advice - they're really friendly and willing to help.

Happy exploring!

5.9 Storage

Ahh the wonders (or some may say, horrors) of storing. Unlike many other universities that can't wait to kick their students out of their dorms, Stanford allow students to leave their things in during all the breaks, except the summer break. When spring quarter ends, you have roughly 2-3 days to move all your things out of your room. There are several options available:

- § **Storage space:** By far, this is the cheapest option if you share with others. However, this also requires that you be able to transport your things to the storage space yourself, and later bring it back onto campus when you return after the summer break.
- § **Trucks that come and take your stuff:** These cost a little more, but the convenience is probably worth it – the truck pulls up in front of your dorm and all you have to do is bring your boxes down for them to pick it up. Nearer the end of the quarter, there'll be flyers abound to notify you of the different companies who are doing this, so don't worry about not being able to find one. There are several companies that also do it such that the mover actually comes to your room to collect the boxes (so you needn't lug whatever you've amassed over the year to the front of your dorm) but that comes at a slightly higher price. There are also services such as those which send your items to your new dorm at the start of the year. We recommend that you look at the options and talk with your roommate/future roommate/friends later on to discuss storage options.
- § **Your roommate/friend is feeling very generous and lives near campus:** Ahh the added advantage of having a Californian roommate/friend. I know of some friends who have their Californian roommates bring home potted plants for them so they do not die over the summer in storage. But I doubt your only possessions are potted plants, so you might want to consider the above options, or lug everything back home to Singapore.

5.10 Holidays

If you spend your school year in jittery anticipation of the next school holiday, you'll be pleased to note that US school holidays tend to be right next to weekends, which also translates into really long holidays for people interested in making weekend trips to see the sights or go snowboarding and the like.

Thanksgiving Break: 1 week at the end of November

Winter Break: 3 weeks from mid-December

Spring Break: 1 week in late March

5.11 The Internet

Surfing the web will be fast and fun over at Stanford, and you'll be using it for many things, course-related or otherwise.

Here are some pages you might want to bookmark.

- § Axxess (sign up for classes, get your grades): axess.stanford.edu
- § Academic Calendar:
<http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/academic-calendar-1011>
- § Explore Courses (look for classes): explorecourses.stanford.edu
- § Courserank (course reviews and statistics): courserank.stanford.edu
- § Facebook: www.facebook.com
- § Hume Writing Center (when you have to write those IHUM/PWR papers): hwc.stanford.edu
- § Introduction to the Humanities (IHUM): ihum.stanford.edu
- § Introsems: introsems.stanford.edu
- § Marguerite Maps and Timings:
<http://transportation.stanford.edu/marguerite/MargueriteSched.shtml>
- § Mailing List Tools (for Stanford mailing lists):
<https://itservices.stanford.edu/service/maillinglists/tools>
- § Program in Writing and Rhetoric (PWR): pwr.stanford.edu
- § Searchworks (For finding stuff in the library. PWR 1 will teach you):
searchworks.stanford.edu

- § Stanford Homepage: www.stanford.edu
- § StanfordWho (find people online): stanfordwho.stanford.edu
- § Stanford Online (watch classes online – but note that not all classes are online): online.stanford.edu
- § Stanford Bookstore: www.stanfordbookstore.com
- § UAL (information on undergraduate matters specific for each class): ual.stanford.edu

Mailing lists

You may use your Stanford email account to subscribe to sas@lists.stanford.edu, an all-purpose somewhat-moderated announcement list (list policy will be reiterated, beginning of school) and saskopitiam@lists.stanford.edu, a less stuffy chat list for S@S members to talk about anything they want to.

We strongly encourage you to subscribe to these mailing lists. They're a great way of keeping in touch with our activities, and from time to time people send interesting or important mails that you would never have read otherwise. We usually add you when we get your emails (we sent this to you at that address anyway), but if you aren't on the list, email us as a reminder.

5.12 What to do in your spare time

- § Learn to play pool properly - but your dorm might not have a pool table. In which case you can consider other activities like...
- § Movies – Hitch a ride or steal a car and go to AMC 20 or Century 16. Go and see a theatre that makes Yishun 10 look positively puny. For US\$7.50 (with SUID) it's a cheap way to waste your time. The Aquarius on University Avenue is nearby and shows less mainstream movies and foreign films, but does not offer a student discount. The Stanford Theatre shows excellent classic films you won't ever see screened in Singapore cinemas, and is an experience not to be missed.
- § Go party – but ask yourself this question, if you ever go to a frat party: Why is American beer like making love in a canoe? Because it's f***ing close to water! If you're in an all-frosh dorm, usually the party comes to you...just walk out of your room.
- § Cook/bake (or learn to if you haven't). It's fun, and a great way to make friends! Anybody can cook, it's just whether they do it well or not.
- § When you get sick of dorm food, try out some restaurants with your friends in Palo Alto. Try reasonably priced Thai food at Siam Royal, heavenly Italian gelato ice cream from Gelato Classico, wholesome and fresh food at Whole Foods Supermarket (where you can read the nutritional information of huge scones and cookies) or get reasonably priced good Chinese food at Castro Street down by Mountain View. Other recommended restaurants include Raffles Cafe at Fremont, and Gim Tah at San Jose Ranch. Ask any upperclassmen for rides and recommendations.
- § Dorm trips/activities. You aren't living on campus to hide in your room and study all day...go meet all the interesting people living together with you!
- § Make holiday plans – You will have breaks during Thanksgiving (a week), winter (3 weeks), spring (a week) and whenever you feel like skipping classes for a week. Think of what you want to do, where you want to go, etc. Keep in mind you'll get chased out of the dorm

during winter break but not for spring break or Thanksgiving.

- § Secret Snowflake, Screw Your Roommate, Full Moon on the Quad etc. should not, and will not, be explained to you right now. Some things are best found out for yourself.

5.13 Last things to do before you leave

It would certainly be prudent for you to sign your I-20 prior to leaving the US. Read the chapter on immigration to be scared into doing just that.

6 Random Trivia

6.1 Why Cal Sucks

We don't have time or space to tell you all the Stanford traditions, so we'll just mention one of our most time-honoured precepts: Beat Cal. This caption has been seen hanging from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, during space shuttle missions and even painted in Cal's very own Memorial Stadium. And we beat them at Big Game for seven years in a row, we lost one year, and we won it back again in 2010.

6.2 10 Reasons why Stanford Kicks Ass (as if you needed telling)

1. LSJUMB – The (One and Only Truly Incomparable) Leland Stanford Junior (pause) University Marching Band, which specialises in playing while drunk and high. Banned from playing in various universities, and also from several airlines. Genuine reason to be proud of being in Stanford.
2. The most beautiful campus in the world. There's a three-yearlong waiting list to get married in Mem Chu. (a. k. a. Memorial Church—an example of Stanford's tendency to shorten everything for efficiency. Here's an exercise: figure out GovCo, FroYo, FloMo, TresEx. When you're done, you can start boasting). Nap, read, chill on the green green grass at the Oval, and feel good to be part of all this beauty around you. Feel good that you may at any minute be part of a picture taken by some avid Mainland Chinese tourist.
3. Excellent weather. The last time it snowed in Stanford was when America's late Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist was a student in Stanford. If you've seen him lately, you'll know that that was a very, very long time ago. You're in sunny California, man. Laugh at all your friends freezing their butts off while trying to study elsewhere in the world. Go back and show off your tan.
4. Sports sports sports. We're good at virtually every sport (except football -that hurt, but it's gotta be said. We are improving though). Tiger Woods, John Elway, John McEnroe, Janet Evans, and others to come.
5. Structured Liberal Education (SLE). While you may think that IHUMs are bad, you can always laugh at the SLE people. SLE is one of the best freshmen program that's run at Stanford and is a truly one of a kind experience. If you didn't sign up for SLE, ask your SLE friends what you're missing, including the famous Mark Mancall and Thursday SLE movies.
6. Flicks. Rambunctious paper fights and the apparently patternless hissing (until you figure it out) make Flicks an event for all but the most jaded movie-goer.
7. The Tree, our school mascot. A candidate for this spot once streaked through most freshman lectures wearing nothing but peanut butter. 'Nuff said.
8. Our outstanding faculty and student body makes learning a delight. Your intellectual growth will be accompanied by a total awakening of your psyche, like the simultaneous blossoming of a hundred flowers under the springtime sunshine.

9. Dorm life. Admit it - you are really looking forward to getting out of your parents' hair (or vice versa, mutatis mutandis). Hey, you're only a frosh once.
10. Amazing Ethernet connection (sure, you can get that anywhere, but still) – very good for downloading MP3s. Though that's illegal and the RIAA would get royally annoyed at us if we encouraged it, so disregard what we just said.

THE END
WELCOME TO THE FARM!