

# Living in the U.S.

[http://illinois.edu/here\\_now/index.html#25832](http://illinois.edu/here_now/index.html#25832)

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## Here & Now: Images of Illinois

### Jumping for Joy!



Loc Bui, PhD, on the left, and Quang Nguyen, MS, both graduated with degrees in electrical and computer engineering on May 17, 2009. This image was taken by La Thu Dang on the lawn outside the Grainger Engineering Library.

## Here & Now: Images of Illinois

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### CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS:



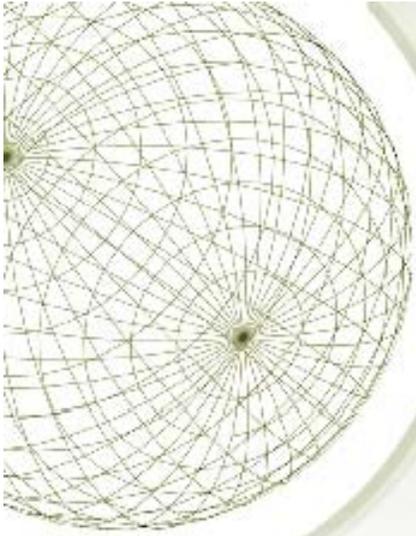
Inside the Swine Flu Virus with Klaus

Schulten



Journalism students are 'Revealing Romania!'

### MORE NEWS & EVENTS:

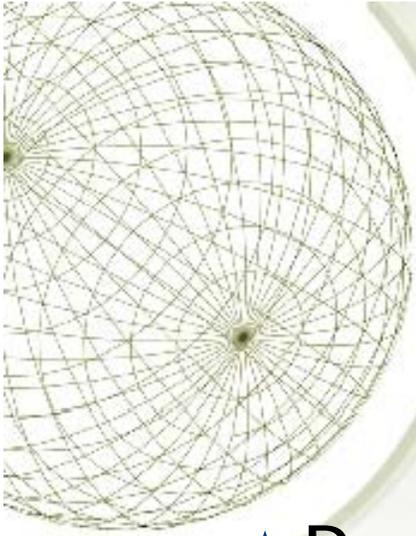


# *Living in the U.S.*

*Campus Life, Housing, Health and Wellness, Social Life,  
Travel, Bank Account, SSN...*

Tam Pham - VEF Fellow 2004

Dr. Hien Luong Nguyen - 2007 Visiting Scholar

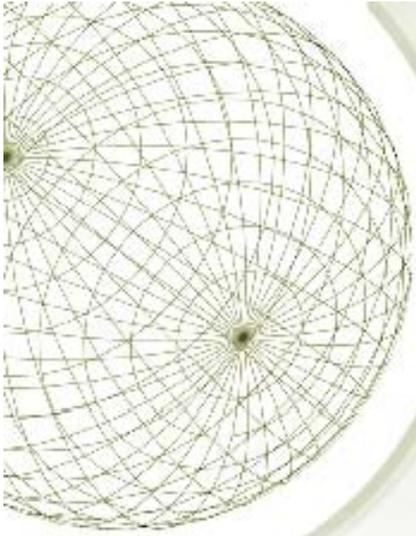


# *Outline*

- ◆ Preparation for the trip
- ◆ Arrival and settling in
- ◆ Getting used to new environment
- ◆ Maintaining healthy life
- ◆ Tips for visiting scholars
- ◆ Questions

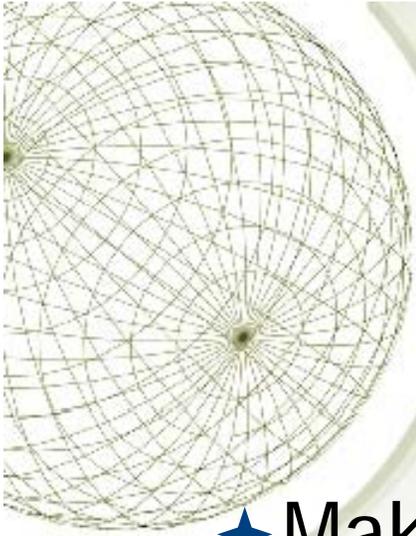
# *Preparation for the trip*





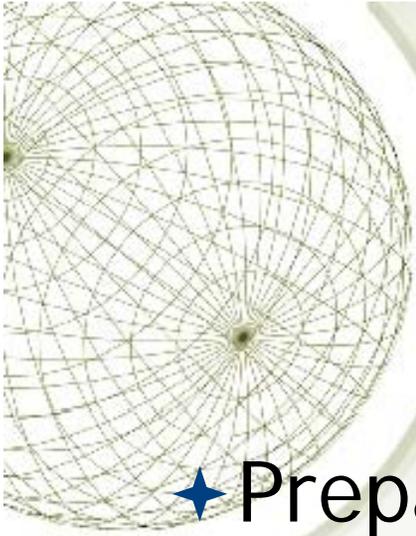
## *Preparation for the trip*

- ★ Contact your school/fellows at your school for housing preparation
- ★ School housing websites/forum



## *Preparation for the trip*

- ◆ Make **checklists** for important documents and personal items
  - ◆ Check-in luggage: be careful with the weight of your luggage and food
  - ◆ Cabin luggage:
    - ◆ 1 Backpack: Documents, laptop ...
    - ◆ Small wheeled luggage: clothes...

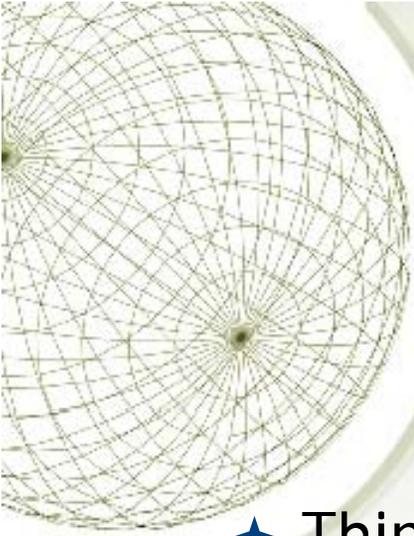


## *Preparation for the trip*

- ★ Prepare money for the first month expense (house rent/deposit, food, etc)
- ★ Be prepared for a long flight (about 24 hours), flight delay
  - ★ Contact details of friends / pick-up person
  - ★ Coins for phone call

A large commercial airplane is shown in flight, viewed from a low angle, flying over an airport runway. The aircraft is white with a yellow tail. The background features a city skyline under a hazy, yellowish sky. The text "Arrival and settling in" is overlaid in the center of the image.

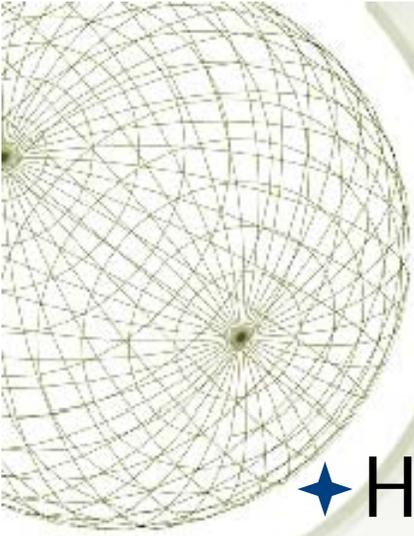
*Arrival and  
settling in*

A decorative wireframe globe is positioned in the upper-left corner of the slide. The globe is composed of a grid of thin, light-colored lines forming a spherical shape. It is partially obscured by a white circular graphic element that frames the top-left corner of the slide's content area.

# *Arrival and settling in*

## ◆ Things to do first

- ◆ Present at the International Office
- ◆ Open a bank account
- ◆ Attend orientation course/week
- ◆ Apply for Social Security Number (SSN)
- ◆ Apply for State ID/driver license (optional)
- ◆ Update information on OMS
- ◆ Explore the campus and the surrounding areas
- ◆ Go shopping (be generous to yourself :D)

A decorative wireframe globe is positioned in the top-left corner of the slide. It consists of a grid of intersecting lines forming a sphere, with a central point from which the lines radiate outwards.

# *Arrival and settling in*

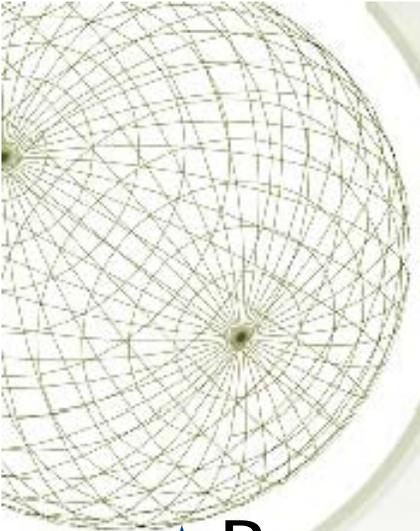
## ◆ Housing

### ◆ On-campus VS off-campus:

- ◆ Dormitory, University housing

- ◆ Shared houses, shared apartments, home-stay, furnished and unfurnished apartments

- ◆ Depends on your pocket



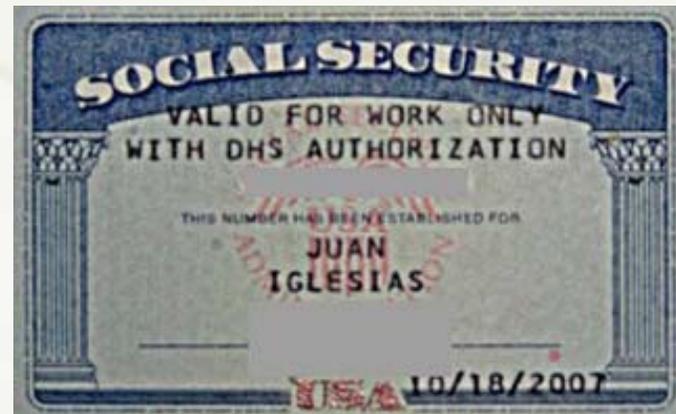
# *Arrival and settling in*

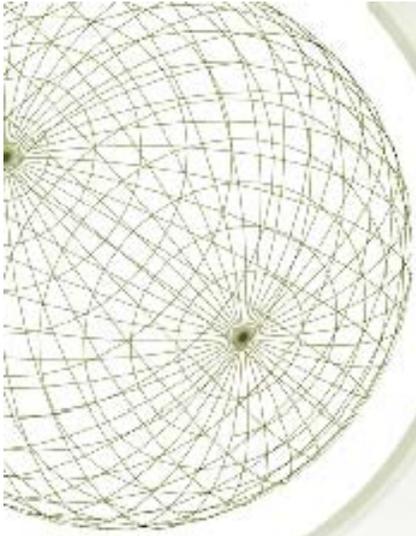
- ◆ Be prepared for culture shock
- ◆ Be open-minded
- ◆ Be friendly but careful



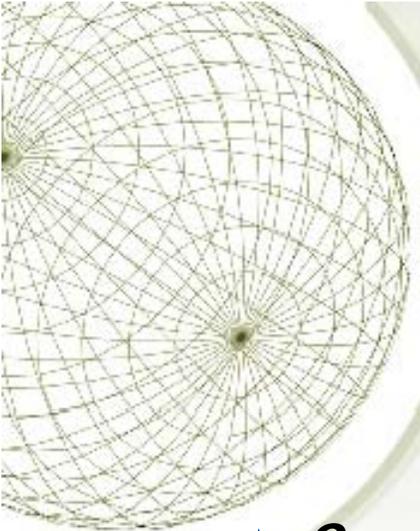
# *Arrival and settling in*

- ★ Be careful with your personal info (SSN, ID and ect) and credit card info



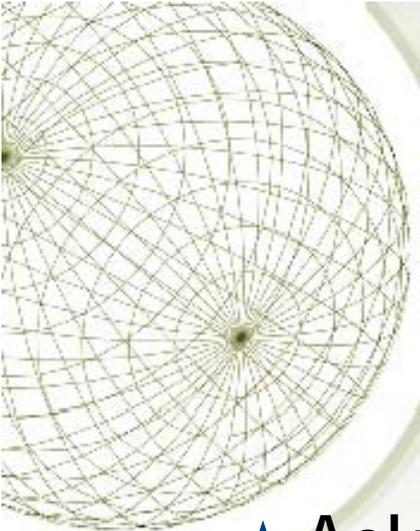


*Getting used to new  
environment*



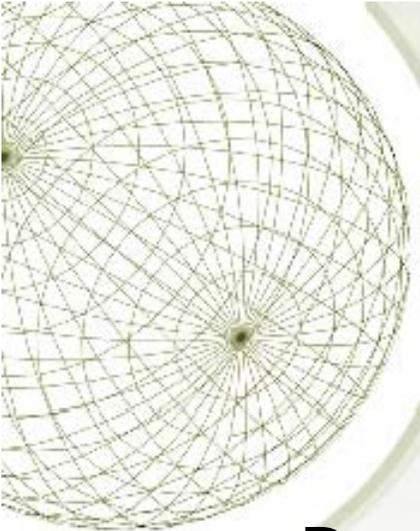
# *Getting used to new environment*

- ★ *Survive first, thrive later*
- ★ Try to improve your English. Most of Vietnamese students have difficulty speaking and listening
- ★ Do not take too many courses unless required, 2 or 3 courses are fine for the first semester



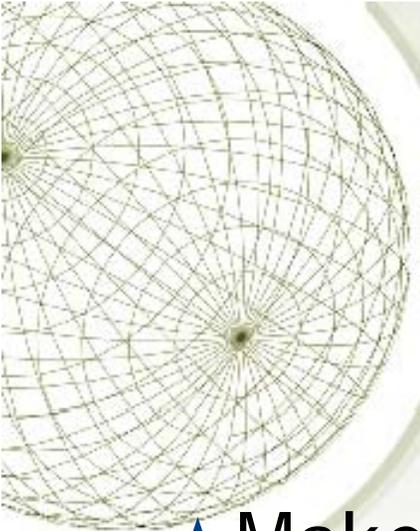
## *Getting used to new environment*

- ★ Ask seniors for experience
- ★ Go to professors' group meetings /lab meetings
- ★ Concentrate on studying for GPA in the first semester but try to do impressive class projects
- ★ Attend distinguished lectures/seminars around campus



## *Getting used to new environment*

- ★ Do not take too fundamental courses since it does not help you find a professor
- ★ Do not wander too much when seeing many interesting courses, you have time to study all the courses



## *Getting used to new environment*

- ★ Make friends to form a study group
- ★ Some research theme we find interesting while in Vietnam but is no longer an active topic in US

*Maintaining healthy life and  
success*





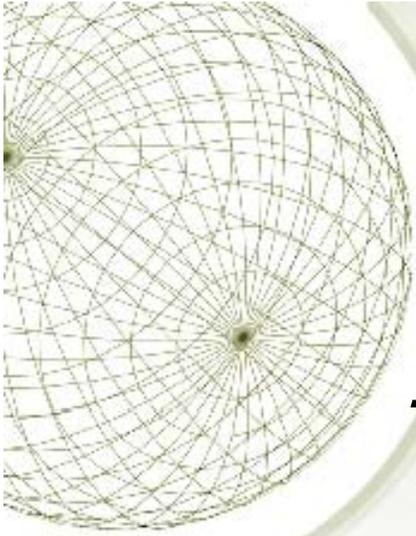
# *Maintaining healthy life and SUCCESS*

- ◆ Balance your life
  - ◆ Sports (very good facility at school)
  - ◆ Clubs (various types)
  - ◆ Try to sleep enough (although it is not easy to do so >:) )
  - ◆ Travel and have fun



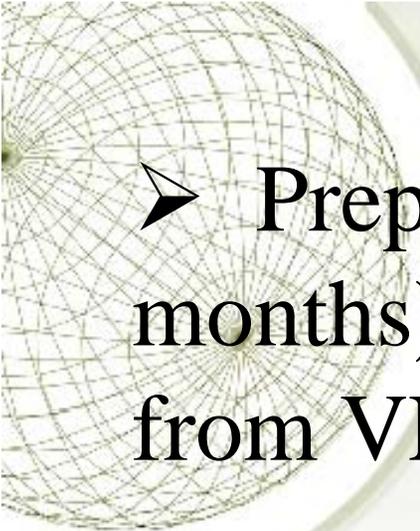
# *Maintaining healthy life and SUCCESS*

- ◆ Local grad student community
- ◆ VEF community
  - ◆ VEF Fellows in your school
  - ◆ VEF Fellow cohort 2009
  - ◆ VEF Fellow Association (VEFFA)



# *Tips for visiting scholar*





➤ Prepare money to pay lodging (2-3 months) before receiving grant/stipend from VEF

➤ Ask your friends (if applicable) to find a shared room/room mate in on-campus houses in advance



For those who bring dependents along →  
check the I-94 form before leaving the  
custom, be sure no mixing up between  
yours and your spouse's

Departure Number OMB No. 1651-0111

402297051 16

I-94  
Departure Record

~~AUG 1 2007  
J2  
DIS~~

14. Family Name	
VIU	
15. First (Given) Name	16. Birth Date (Day/Mo/Yr)
NGOCUT	070909
17. Country of Citizenship	
VIETNAM	

CBP Form I-94 (10/04)  
**STAPLE HERE**

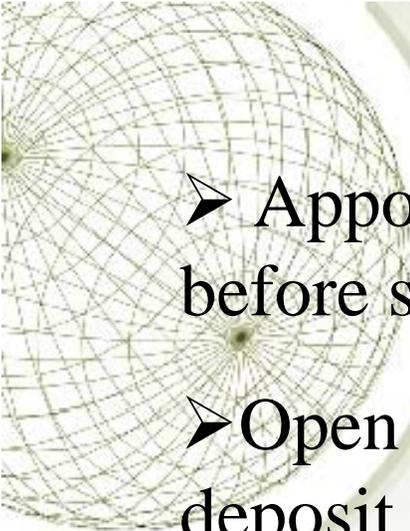
See Other Side

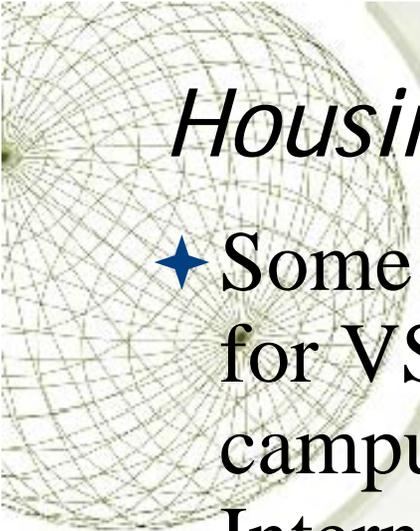


# Arrival and settling in

**Be prepared for often  
postpone/delay at the airport**

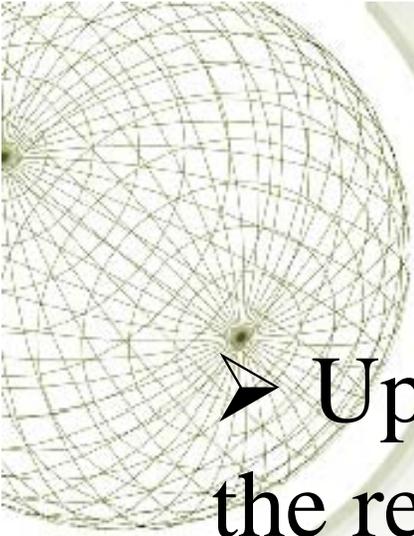
- ✓ Prepare mentally to stay overnight at the “airport”
- ✓ Prepare some changes for making phone calls

- 
- Appointment letter from School (Read it carefully before signing)
  - Open bank account (checking and saving) and deposit the money in the bank near to your university (*Bank of America*)
  - Get visiting scholar ID
  - Start registering SSN (*Social Security Number*): scholars need the SSN as soon as possible for money transfer if conference and professional training grants approved
  - State ID



## *Housing*

- ★ Some universities do not provide apartment for VS but they can give you info (off-campus housing list in Housing / International Affairs Offices )
- ★ Find a place near to the university, food stores, bus/subway stops, pharmacy,...
- ★ Shared houses (apartments), studio
- ★ Furnished or unfurnished apartment
- ★ Be careful when signing a lease with the owner (try to negotiate to pay deposit at least as possible)

- 
- A decorative wireframe globe is positioned in the upper-left corner of the slide. The globe is composed of a grid of thin, light-colored lines that form a spherical shape, with a central point from which the lines radiate outwards. The background of the slide is a light, neutral color with subtle geometric patterns and a soft gradient.
- Update personal info on OMS within the requested time frame
  - Contact VEF officers to get needed forms for monthly stipend and grants
  - Fill and fax form “Start Date” to NA as soon as possible after receiving the form to get stipend transferred



✓ Start searching for relevant conference and training course as soon as you can

✓ Discuss with mentors the plan for conference and training attendance to get support → it takes time to get approval from VEF

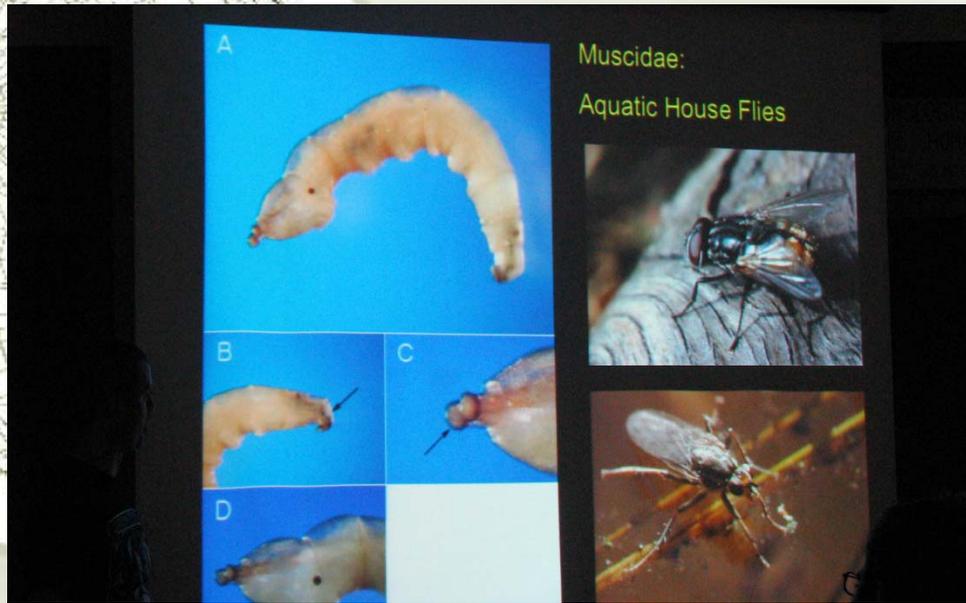
✓ Prepare for submitting a technical paper, if possible.



# Study and work

Be proactive to make appointment and discussion with your mentors about your work plan

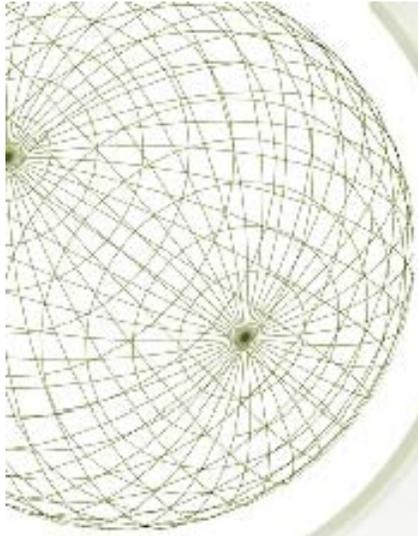




Join interested  
classes/courses

to learn different  
experiences in  
teaching and  
learning methods  
beside additional  
knowledge

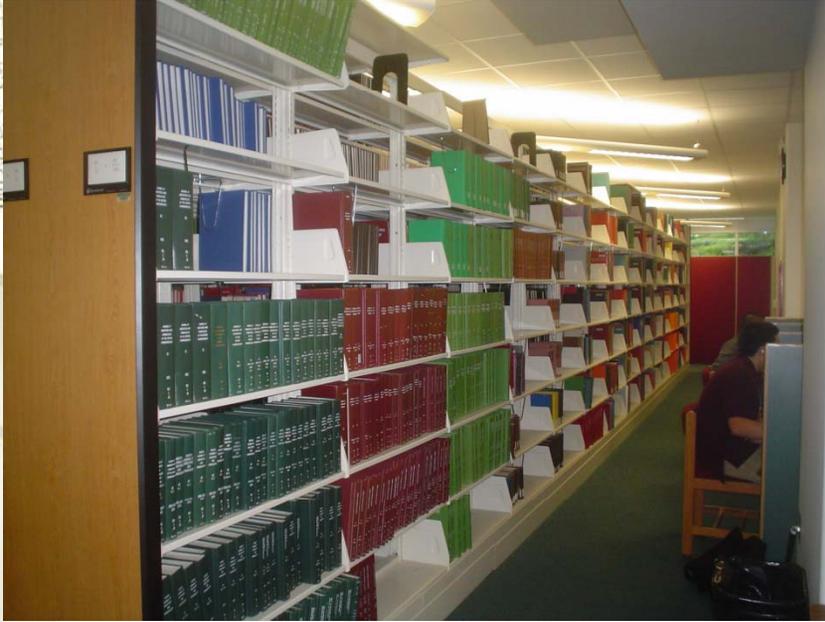




Actively participate  
in field, lab work to  
get experiences



Take advantage of libraries: excellent books and online facilities/computers



Perfect Study environment

Sports and other activities (travel, dances,...)

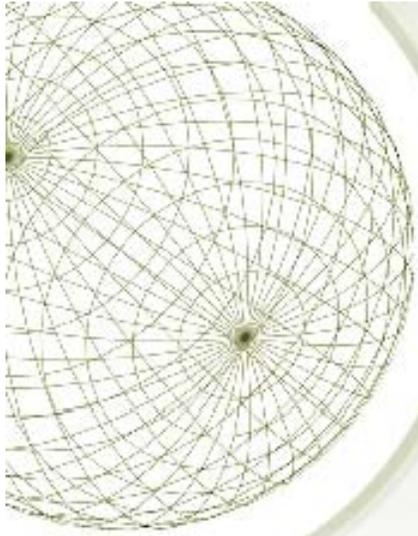
Improving English (ESOL courses)

Enjoy events at weekend (football, marches,...)

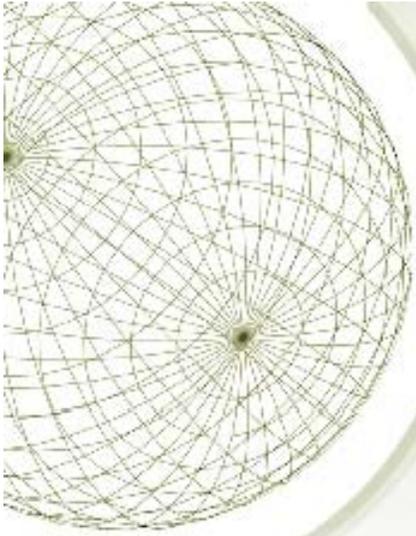


# Make sure to attend the Big Event: Annual VEF Conference





*Thank you!*



*Questions?*