UNO ROME STUDENT HANDBOOK

THIS HANDBOOK GIVES OUR PARTICIPANTS AN OVERALL PREPARATION FOR THEIR SUMMER ABROAD EXPERIENCE. APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH BEFORE DEPARTURE, A LIST OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS, ADDRESSES, AND CONTACTS IN ROME WILL BE SENT TO YOU. THESE ARE NUMBERS TO LEAVE WITH A RESPONSIBLE PARTY AT HOME SO YOU CAN BE REACHED AT ANY TIME IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

ANXIETY:

It is very normal to feel anxious about your trip. Everyone is excited and nervous about the whole experience, so don't feel like you are the only one. Calm down, rest, and be open to the wonderful experiences you will have in Italy.

BOOKS:

Books for your classes can be ordered on line. We will send you information about the books assigned for your class and how to order them.

CLOTHES:

I cannot say this enough: **Pack light!** This, of course, does not have the same meaning for
everyone. You will be tempted to acquire a new wardrobe for this exciting trip. Please don't. People in Italy dress according to the weather, which is usually very warm. Classes are held on the field and you need to wear **COMFORTABLE SHOES** and clothes. You may wear slacks or t-shirts but women should always bring a jacket or large scarf and avoid shorts. You never know when your class runs into a church that can be visited (in Italy there are strict rules about covered shoulders, long pants or skirts). Most of the clothes you need are casual. One or two dressy outfits will be enough for restaurants or special parties. **If you can't carry your suitcase on your own, you have over packed.** It is important to have some empty space in your bags for souvenirs and purchases made while on your trip. A backpack (small) is a good idea for those who go on weekend trips. You will also find it helpful for grocery shopping, carrying your water bottles and for laundry day. The best tip is to always carry a hat, a water bottle and an umbrella (for protection from the sun!!).

**Note: Because of new regulations, mostairlines are charging extra for luggage. Please check with the airline you are using for suitcase regulations.**

**CULTURE SHOCK:**

Even for those who have traveled abroad, it is something of a shock to find oneself in a totally new environment. The first few days this can translate into the dreaded disease called HOMESICKNESS!!! Some students can suffer from homesickness so acutely that they develop stomach problems or flu like symptoms! However, in a few days, things get back to normal and a few weeks in Rome go by too quickly.

**ELECTRIC APPLIANCES:**

Do not expect your American appliances to work in Europe without proper conversion equipment, since the voltage differs from America. In order to use hair dryers, razors, etc. you MUST purchase both a **converter** (for the voltage) and an **adapter** (for the plug to fit the wall socket). Some of the newer appliances have built-in converter (simply a switch for 220v), but these still require the wall-socket adapter. Please purchase the proper equipment before you arrive. Most electrical stores (such as Radio Shack) will carry such equipment. Also, if you are planning to bring a video camera, bring all the necessary extra tapes with you, as the European system is not compatible with our system.

**E-MAIL:**

You will have internet access in your apartment. While in town, you will find internet cafes all over Rome. We encourage you to use the Internet to keep in touch with those at home, but remember not to spend all of your time at the computer. Make some live friends instead!
EMERGENCIES AND/OR EVACUATION PLANS:

We do not anticipate any problems or emergencies, but as a safety measure you need to know where to go, whom to call and how to report. When you arrive in Rome, you will be given a walking tour of the area and shown the different places that are assigned as official emergency meeting places. In case of an emergency, you will be able to use this plan in order to have a quick and safe group assembly. You’ll also be given local emergency phone numbers, the local American Embassy numbers, as well as a plan to leave the country if necessary. It is important that you take these measures seriously and adhere to the instructions given by the group leader. All the possible emergency scenarios will be discussed and handouts distributed. Our office number in New Orleans is (504) 280-7455 and will be the official number for your family to call and get any pertinent information.

FLEXIBILITY

You will hear this word many times during your stay. You are in Italy to learn about another country, its customs, or its language. Forget how you are "used to doing things". The food, people and the sights are all different. If you are not open to new ideas your stay will not be as pleasant. Forget macaroni and cheese and try the local homemade pasta. Try all the wonderful flavors of “gelato” ice cream. You’d be surprised how happy a simple meal of bread, cheese and fruit can make you!!

EURO. The Euro is the currency used in more than 15 European countries including France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. The exchange rate varies, but is currently 1 euro is equal to $1.41 US (approximate). It is very helpful to have some dollars changed into Euros before your trip. Any major bank in your home city can do this. About $50 worth of Euros should be helpful for the first few days. The easiest, most convenient way to get money once in Italy is from an ATM. They take MasterCard or Visa debit cards and use the same pin number as you would at home. The biggest advantage is you get the best exchange rate possible. If you bring travelers checks, remember it is better to convert a larger sum, since you pay commission (as much as 4 Euros) on each transaction. Remember that when you make a purchase in Italy, tax is included in the price. Whatever price is marked is what you pay. We will go over money during the orientation held on the first day of the program.

HOURS OF OPERATION FOR BUSINESSES:

Basic hours of business are 8 or 9 am until 12 or 1 pm. Most businesses are closed for 2 to 3 hours for lunch, reopening at 2 or 3 pm. Closing time is usually 6:30 or 7 pm. Many restaurants, shops, etc are closed on Sunday and/or Mondays, so consider this when making plans to shop for food, eat out, etc.

HYDRATION

Remember that the weather is very hot and dry. You will tend to dehydrate easily, so it is imperative that you remember to drink lots of water!
INSURANCE:

All students will be covered by a comprehensive study abroad medical insurance plan that is included in the cost of the program. This policy provides for accident, medical expenses, emergency medical and evacuation, repatriation of remains, and family assistance coverage. **Extended coverage at additional cost is also available.** A brochure fully detailing the insurance plan will be provided to each student well in advance of departure. This policy does not cover trip cancellation or baggage insurance. **Students will be covered for the duration of the program only.**

JET LAG:

If you have not traveled overseas, jet lag might be a problem. It is best to be well rested and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and rich foods during the flight to Rome. Do not nap too long upon arrival, no matter how tired you are. This throws your body clock off and could prolong your adjustment for several days. Instead, get out into the sunlight and take a walk. This gets your circulation going and helps your body adjust to the new time.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

Rome is are surrounded by some of the most prestigious hospitals and medical centers in Europe. However, if for any reason you don't feel well, you must contact your UNO representative first. Unless it's a life-threatening situation, do not go to an emergency room. We will have the name of a doctor on duty to treat you. If you have a minor ailment, the pharmacists can give you medicines over the counter. **DO NOT FORGET TO LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE ILL, NO MATTER HOW MINOR THE AILMENT.**

It is a good idea to bring a few items that can make your trip more comfortable such as aspirin or Tylenol, Imodium AD tablets, Dramamine, band-aids, and any prescription you are taking. Take all medicine in your carry-on, not packed in your suitcase. Bring a copy of the prescription, since refilling it in Italy may be difficult without the actual pharmaceutical name. Make sure that all medicine is properly labeled and bring enough to last you for the entire trip. If you use contacts or eyeglasses, it is a good idea to take an extra pair with you. Losing such items can be bothersome and hard to replace. Lastly, don't forget to bring sunscreen!!

MEDICAL RESPONSIBILITY:

As a student you should be aware that there are certain risks inherent in international travel and that the University of New Orleans, as a State of Louisiana educational institution, cannot assume responsibility for all or certain aspects of your activities while traveling. You should also be aware of your personal medical needs and consult with a medical doctor before your departure regarding any personal needs while abroad. **Also, be sure that you have completed the “Report of Medical History” form.**
MONEY:

Students often ask, "How much money should I bring?" This is a highly individualized question. The program does not include meals. You are responsible for: dinner and meals on the weekends, laundry, personal expenditures such as telephone calls, souvenir purchases, snacks, etc. It is our suggestion to budget at least $150 per week for your spending money. Some students might be able to do fine with $500 spending money total and others, with the same amount, are already broke at the end of the first week. It is useful to bring a credit card, but try to budget yourself wisely. A cup of coffee in a cute sidewalk café can cost as much as 4.00 euro!

It's not wise to bring a lot of cash for your spending money. The best way to use your money is to use an ATM machine. If you don't have a credit card, bring travelers checks in DOLLARS and exchange them at the bank as you need them. Traveler’s checks may be cashed at banks during normal banking hours: 9:00 - 4:00, Tuesday through Friday. You may not have an opportunity to go to a bank upon arrival, so it is a good idea to have some Euros with you before you leave (about $50 worth should be enough). If you bring a credit card, VISA is generally accepted throughout Italy, and often in preference to AMERICAN EXPRESS. If you plan to use your credit card for cash advances, be sure to know your PIN number before you leave the states. Banks will change currency from traveler checks, cash, or from bank cards (Visa, MC, etc) and they will most often charge you a "commission fee" for each transaction. It is best to shop around for the best exchange rates and service charges, which are posted daily.

PASSPORTS

You need a current passport to enter Italy. Check with your local passport agency (listed in the front of your city's phone book) to find out the proper procedures to obtain one. Some post offices also issue passports. This procedure sometimes takes weeks, so apply early. Always remember to keep your passport in a safe place. This is the most important document you have! You also can check http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html for the nearest agency to you.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU MAKE COPIES OF YOUR PASSPORT (INSIDE COVER, PHOTO PAGE, NUMBER) BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE STATES AND LEAVE ONE COPY WITH A RELATIVE OR FRIEND AT HOME AND SEND THE OTHER ONE TO OUR OFFICE. This way, if you lose this document, copies can be faxed to the embassy.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

DON'T BRING ANYTHING WITH YOU THAT YOU DO NOT WANT TO LOSE. This is no time to flaunt your great grandmother's jewelry or that irreplaceable family object. When packing your suitcase, be sure your name is on the outside tag as well as inside your bag. If for any reason your luggage gets lost, your identification will be available inside.

Leave a copy of your itinerary, phone number, and address of the places where you will be staying with a family member or trusted friend. Also, leave copies at home of your passport, credit cards, and any important documents.
PHOTOS:
You will definitely want to bring your cameras to bring all of your memories home. Most museums do not allow flash photos to be taken at all, so be sure to have them turned off while viewing artwork.

READING LIST:
It would be a good idea to look up Montpellier in one of the many travel guides in your library such as _LET'S GO ITALY_ OR _FODOR'S ITALY_. There is also The Rough Guide series that publishes a book on Rome and the region. Some of our favorite websites are:

http://www.gotoroma.com/pages/cityguide/touristinfo.htm
http://www.asteromansdo.com/tourist_info.htm
http://www.initaly.com/travel/info/tranlink.htm
http://goeurope.about.com/cs/rome/
http://www.raileurope.com/us

RETURNING HOME:
At customs, you are allowed a total of **$800.00** worth of purchases including 200 cigarettes and one liter of alcohol (if you are over 21 years of age), duty free. After that you will have to pay duty. Remember that certain things are not allowed to come into the U.S.: Fresh fruits and vegetables, meat byproducts, medicine or narcotics, plants or pets are not allowed to enter the States.

SAFETY:
Rome is a city where you have to be aware of your valuables. Petty theft is the major concern so precautions should always be taken when traveling or staying in a new city. Most dangers lie in crowds, where pickpockets can easily work. Don't leave your purse or bag(s) unattended (especially in the outdoor cafés where street performers depend on your change for a living) or your wallets in plain sight. Guard your money well and acquaint yourself with the currency before your trip. Most students carry their money in a "fanny pack" or "neck wallet".

DON'T EVER WALK ALONE AT NIGHT. ALWAYS STAY WITH A GROUP, NO MATTER HOW SAFE YOU FEEL IN THIS CITY. Use your common sense, think before you act and you should avoid problems that can spoil a good trip. If for any reason you encounter a problem CONTACT A UNO REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY!
SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET:

When traveling overseas, there are a number of precautions that you should follow in order to travel safely:

1) Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time.
2) Do not let anyone give you something to carry when traveling.
3) Never keep all your documents and money in one place and make duplicate copies of your documents (especially your passport).
4) Always be alert to your surroundings and be cautious when traveling.
5) Do not get involved in drugs and beware of becoming intoxicated.
6) Let people know where you are going and when you expect to return.
7) Have sufficient funds and/or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as transportation tickets.
8) Be cautious when you meet new people and never bring them into the dormitory.
9) Report any unusual activity or suspicious persons to the program coordinator.
10) Be aware of the political situation wherever you are. Stay away from places that are experiencing political unrest.
11) Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the United States or its allies.
12) Be conservative in your dress and never wear expensive jewelry when traveling.
13) Don’t flash your money and be discreet when showing your passport.
14) Keep away from political demonstrations.
15) Avoid the media and don’t feel like you have to comment or give an interview.

These are just a few general rules you should of which to be aware. Most often, common sense will tell you what to do. That is why it is imperative that you avoid a situation in which common sense does not prevail--being intoxicated and using drugs.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR WHAT PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILIES SHOULD DO IN ORDER TO INSURE A SAFE TRIP FOR THE STUDENT PARTICIPANT:

Parents/guardians/families should:

1) Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
2) Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in the study abroad program.
3) Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
4) Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
5) Keep in touch with the participant while he/she is overseas.
6) Be aware that some information may most appropriately be proved by the participant rather than the program.
SHOPPING

There are so many shops and stores to choose from in Italy. Since the majority of students are on a budget, most look for stores that offer convenience, reasonable prices, and a variety of items. Don't forget that most stores (except major chains) close everyday for lunch. Check posted times of opening.

YOU WILL HAVE A WALKING ORIENTATION UPON ARRIVAL THAT WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND SHOW YOU WHERE THE SHOPS, BAKERIES, AND MISCELLANEOUS STORES ARE LOCATED.

STUDENT REGULATIONS:

As a participant in the program, you are expected to comply with program regulations. These rules of conduct govern a set of citizenship standards: living together in harmony in the dormitory, respecting your dorm neighbors and the citizens of Montpellier, avoidance of drunkenness, disorderly conduct, drugs, dishonesty, criminal acts, academic cheating, damaging property, etc. You are also governed by the University of New Orleans policy and procedures regarding students.

Students must conduct themselves in appropriate manner and abide by all policies outlines in the UNO Judicial Code:

http://www.uno.edu/%7Estlf/Policy%20Manual/judicial_code_pt2.htm

Cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct will not be tolerated.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

It is the policy of the University of New Orleans, on a flexible and individualized basis, to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are strongly urged to inform us of their disability and specific needs, and accommodations. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact their instructors to discuss their individual needs within the academic context of the class requirements.

TRAVEL ADVISORY:

You should realize that anytime you travel abroad there is potential for danger due to crime, political unrest, unforeseen “Acts of God,” strikes that will delay your travel plans, etc. We simply cannot list every possible scenario in this handbook. We therefore recommend that if you have concerns about traveling you contact the U.S. Government Travel Advisory. This can be found on the Internet at:

www.state.gov/
TIPPING

Most restaurants include a 15 percent service charge and tax in their prices. If a meal or service has been particularly good, leaving some extra change is customary, as is leaving the waiter the small change from your bill if you have paid in cash. If service is not included in the price (a 15% tip is customary). Most, if not all, restaurants in Italy will post their menu and price list outside so you can select the type of food you like and the price range you need. A fixed price menu is usually the best bet since for one price you get about three courses (appetizer, entree, and dessert) but be careful of extras such as coffee and wine, sometimes they add up more than the meal itself!

VALUE ADDED TAX

If you are lucky enough to have a lot of spending money available, don't forget this important little item that will save you even more: VAT or TVA. Visitors carrying their passports can get a refund of the value added tax on purchases of around $400 or more at any single store.

WEATHER:

The summer weather in Rome is usually hot but very pleasant. Be prepared for some cool nights where you will need a light jacket or sweater. In previous years we have also experienced extreme heat. You will need to prepare for this change of weather. Some students purchase fans for their rooms when they arrive (there is no air conditioning). Students from the New Orleans area will appreciate this kind of weather and will find it very pleasant!

THE FOLLOWING PAGES WILL GIVE YOU INFORMATION ON DAILY ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICAL ISSUES.
WHAT TO DO ON TRAVEL DAY

When preparing to leave for the trip, be well rested and have all your travel documents easily accessible. Arrive to the airport at least TWO hours before your departure time.

1) Verify that all the information on your ticket is correct and know your flight times and connections. Everyone should have ample time to make connections.

2) WHEN BOARDING YOUR FLIGHT IN YOUR HOME CITY, MAKE SURE YOUR LUGGAGE IS CHECKED ALL THE WAY TO YOUR FINAL FLIGHT DESTINATION: ROME.

3) If for some unfortunate, unforeseen reason, you miss your connection in your home city, notify the airline counter immediately so that they can arrange a later flight. Call home, let them know your change of plans, and have them contact us with your new arrival plans.

BE SURE TO SEND US A COPY OF YOUR ITINERARY AND THE TIME TO EXPECT YOU IN ROME. WE WILL SEND YOU DIRECTIONS TO YOUR APARTMENT AND THE DIFFERENT TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO GET THERE.

BRING THIS BULLETIN WITH YOU SO YOU CAN REFER TO IT, IF NEED BE. MAKE A COPY OF THE CONTACT NUMBERS FOR YOUR FAMILY AND LEAVE IT AT HOME. Closer to your departure time, we will send everyone a list of contact numbers in Rome.

IMPORTANT!!! There are three (3) things that you absolutely must have in order to make it from your home city to Rome and back again. You can get there without your camera, even without your clothes, but you cannot go from here to there without your PASSPORT, and to a lesser extent, your money (credit cards or travelers checks). Those items should be figuratively, if not literally, attached to your person.
WHAT TO PACK FOR YOUR TRIP:

1 light jacket, windbreaker, or rain jacket (NOT a heavy coat)
1-2 nice outfits for going out at night
2-3 pairs of jeans/slacks
2-3 pairs of shorts
3-4 casual shirts and tee shirts
1 pair of dress shoes
1 pair of sturdy, but comfortable shoes for walking like tennis shoes
1 pair of sandals
1 swimsuit
a cover up for women visiting churches (Women must cover their shoulders of bare arms, no one is admitted with short pants into Italian churches. This is enforced at all times, a large scarf or jacket is good)
plenty of underwear and socks
pajamas and/or a robe
towel and soap
an umbrella and a hat

NOTE: A good rule of thumb is to remember that you will be wearing casual clothes 98% of the time. Since your clothes will be laundered, pack for a week and wash. YOU DO NOT PACK AN ITEM FOR EACH DAY OF THE FOUR WEEKS.

Also, the less things in your suitcase on your way in, the more you can fit on the way out. We have had too many mad dashes to the luggage department in order to get a bigger suitcase for the return trip! You might want to consider bringing an EMPTY duffel bag for souvenirs.
A QUICK CHECKLIST FOR THINGS TO BRING:

__AIRLINE ITINERARY (and confirmation number for e tickets)
__PASSPORT (leave a copy of the inside pages at home with your family)
__ATM CARD (with pin number) OR TRAVELER'S CHECKS
__HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION
__GOOD WALKING SHOES
__LIGHT SUMMER CLOTHES (and a cover up for church visits)
__SMALL ITALIAN/ENGLISH DICTIONARY
__TOWELS (BEACH TOWEL TOO!) AND SOAP
__TRAVEL ALARM CLOCK (battery operated, not electric!)
__BATHING SUIT/HAT/UMBRELLA
__JACKET (IT CAN GET COOL AT NIGHT)
__THIS HANDBOOK
__BACK PACK FOR DAY TRIPS
__SUNBLOCK
__FLEXIBILITY AND AN OPEN MIND

Have a great trip!