Keystone Study: A way

The Conservatorium
# Table of Contents

## KSAC Program Overview
- Program Overview 4
- Academic Director 5
- KSAC Staff 5-6

## Overview of The Gambia
- History 7
- Geography 8
- People and Languages 11

## Pre-Departure
- Personal Responsibilities 14
- Family and Friends 15
- Visa Information 15
- Financial Concerns 16
- Passport Preparation 16
- Health Preparations 18
- Immunizations 19
- Packing Tips 19
- Useful Online and Book Resources 20

## Academics
- KSAC and the University of The Gambia 22
- Registering for Classes 23
- Academic Culture and Class Expectations 25
- Grades and Transcripts 26
- Textbooks and Photocopies 27
- Extracurricular Activities 28
- Director of the International Office 29
# Table of Contents (continued)

**Service Learning**
- Volunteer Experiences 30
- What to Expect 31
- Identifying Organizations 32
- Descriptions of Organizations and Opportunities 33

**Housing, Food and Living**
- Student Housing 38
- Food and Eating Out 39
- Safety 41
- Medical Care and Insurance 43
- Transportation 44
- Mobile Phones 47
- Computer Specifications 47

**Money and Shopping**
- Currency and Exchange 48
- Your Personal Budget 49
- Access to Money/ATM/Debit 49
- Shopping in The Gambia 51
- Accessibility of Goods 52
- Craft Markets and Bargaining 53

**Things to Do**
- KSAC Lectures and Site Visits 55
- Field Trips and Excursions 56
- Cultural Events and Recreations 58
- Sports and Exercise 59
Program Overview

The Gambia Program is the foundational program of the Keystone Study Away Consortium (KSAC); the pilot year of the program was spring 2009. KSAC is a cooperation among Juniata College, Huntingdon; Chatham University, Pittsburgh; Moravian College, Bethlehem; Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove; and Washington and Jefferson College, Washington in Pennsylvania and Drew University, Madison in New Jersey. KSAC was founded to develop and sustain study away programs through collaboration among like institutions. It is a program offered only in the spring, whereby KSAC students directly enroll in the University of The Gambia, and may select any courses available that term. KSAC students must enroll in at least one course designated by the Academic Director that will be common to all KSAC students.

Academic Director

In accordance with KSAC guidelines, The Gambia program includes an Academic Director each year who is employed full-time at one of the member institutions; the position rotates among member institutions. The Academic Director will conduct a pre-orientation for KSAC students both in the US and on-site, as well as coordinate excursions throughout the semester. The Academic Director will remain on-site for the entire semester, and teach at UTG. The standard teaching load is two classes.

KSAC Gambia Staff

KSAC Gambia employs two staff members: a Resident Director and a Program Assistant; one consortium member employs a faculty member as Academic Director. The Resident Director is responsible for meeting logistical concerns such as housing, ground
transportation, and food and acts as an in-country liaison for the program with such entities as the University, the government, and local establishments. The Program Assistant assists the Resident Director and the Academic Director and is responsible for student services and support and planning group activities.
An Overview of The Gambia

- History
- Geography
- People and Languages
A Brief History of The Gambia

The first written accounts of The Gambia and the surrounding region come from Arab traders from the 9th and 10th centuries (World Fact Book). During this time, The Gambia was a part of the Mali Empire and subsequently dominated by the Arabian establishment of the trans-Saharan trade route for gold, slaves and ivory (ibid). As the reign of the Mali Empire began to end, the Songhai Empire, named after the Soninke people who assumed control, came to rule over the region by the 16th century (The Gambia). In the later part of the century, the area now known as The Gambia and Senegal suffered from Moroccan and Portuguese invasion and looting (Kane 26). At the end of the 16th century, with the raids continuing, the empire collapsed, was conquered and claimed by Portugal (World Fact Book).

In 1588, the claimant to the Portuguese throne, Antonio, Prior of Crato, sold exclusive trade rights to The Gambia River to English merchants (The Gambia). In 1618, King James I granted a charter to a British company for trade with The Gambia and the Gold Coast (currently Ghana). During the late 17th century and throughout most of the 18th, England and France argued constantly for political and commercial control of the Senegal and Gambia River regions (The Gambia). The 1783 Treaty of Versailles gave Great Britain possession of The Gambia. France was given the area now known as Senegal (World Fact Book). It is estimated that around three million slaves were taken from the region surrounding The Gambia during the height of the transatlantic slave trade; however, the amount of slaves taken by the Arabs before and during this time is unknown (World Fact Book). Most slaves were sold to the Europeans by other Africans and were previously prisoners of intertribal war, in debt or were kidnapped (The Gambia). The majority of slaves sold were taken to Europe to work as household servants until the market for labor exploded in the West Indies and North America during the 18th century (The Gambia). However in 1807, the slave trade was abolished throughout the British Empire (World Fact Book). The British Government tried unsuccessfully to stop the slave trade in The Gambia and to attempt to have better control over the area, the military outpost of Bathurst (now Banjul) was built in 1816 (Kane 28). An 1889 agreement with France established
the present day boundaries (World Fact Book). The Gambia became a British Crown Colony, divided for administrative reasons into the colony, Banjul and the surrounding area, and the protectorate, the remainder of the territory. The Gambia received its own executive and legislative councils in 1901 and gradually progressed toward self-government (Kane 28). In 1906, an ordinance was passed that formally abolished slavery in The Gambia (World Fact Book).

Gambians fought alongside the allies in Burma during World War II while Banjul was used both as an air stop for the US army and as a port for Allied naval convoys (The Gambia). After the war, the push for constitutional reform and self-government gained momentum (The Gambia). After a general election in 1962, full self-governance was granted to The Gambia in 1963 (Kane 30). The Gambia officially gained independence on February 18th, 1965 and became a constitutional monarchy within the British Commonwealth (Ibid). On April 14, 1970 The Gambia transformed from a constitutional monarchy to a republic following a referendum (World Fact Book).

Until a coup in 1994, The Gambia was led by President Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. The relative stability of The Gambia under Jawara was first broken by a violent but unsuccessful coup attempt in 1981 led by Kukoi Samba Sanyang (The Gambia). After a week of violence, which resulted in the death of several hundred people, President Jawara (who was in London at the time), appealed to Senegal for help (World Fact Book). Senegalese troops defeated the rebel force. In the aftermath of the attempted coup, The
Gambia and Senegal signed the 1982 Treaty of Confederation (Ibid). The resulting Senegambia Confederation aimed to eventually combine the armed forces of the two nations and to unite economies and currencies (Ibid). The Gambia withdrew from the confederation in 1989 (Ibid).

In July of 1994, the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) led by Lieutenant Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh succeeded in overthrowing Jawara in a military coup and Jammeh became the head of the state. From 2001-2002, The Gambia completed a full cycle of presidential, legislative, and local elections that were deemed free, fair, and transparent but with some shortcomings by outside observers (World Fact Book). President Yahya Jammeh was re-elected and took the oath of office again on December 21, 2001. The AFPRC maintained a very strong majority in the National Assembly; especially after the main opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) boycotted the legislative elections. Jammeh was re-elected for a third term on September 22, 2006, winning 67% of the vote while the UDP received 27% of the vote. Instead of boycotting future elections, the UDP agreed to take part in the 2007 National Assembly elections (World Fact Book). In the January 2007 parliamentary election, the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), the new name for Jammé’s party, won 42 of the available 48 elected seats (Kane 34).
Geography

The Gambia is very small western African country whose borders mirror the flow of the meandering Gambia River. It is less than 30 miles wide at its widest point and has a total area of 11,295 sq km (World Fact Book). In fact, The Gambia is the smallest country in Africa and is only slightly larger than twice the size of Delaware (Ibid). It is completely bordered by Senegal to the north, east and south and by the Atlantic Ocean to the west.
The country itself is split into five divisions and a city: 1) Upper River (Basse Santa Su); 2) Central River (Janjanbureh, formerly known as Georgetown); 3) North Bank (Kerewan); 4) Lower River (Mansa Konko); 5) Western (Brikama); and 6) Banjul.

Traveling through The Gambia is very easy, even for long distances. Bush taxi rides (comparable to taxi or bus rides in the US) tend to be very cheap compared to travel in western countries. There are two main roads that follow the Gambia River and cross the entire country lengthwise: one on the north bank and one on the south bank. The road on south bank is only paved in certain areas and is a long and dusty road to travel for long distances. The road on the north bank is completely paved and is very easy to travel on. If one needs to get to somewhere on the south bank, it is sometimes easier to cross the ferry from Banjul to Barra, take a bush taxi on the north bank and cross over one of the ferries near Farafenni or Janjanbury to get back on the south bank. Make sure to bring your passport or a copy of it when traveling upriver in bush taxis. Police checkpoints are frequent and routine. While friendly, the police officers and military personnel will want to see your identification before letting you move along upriver.

Gambian terrain is a flat flood plain of the Gambian river, interspersed with some low hills in the Central and Upper River Divisions. The highest point in the Gambia is a mere 53 meters high above sea level at an unnamed location (World Fact Book). The climate in the Gambia is subtropical with distinct dry and rainy seasons. From mid November to early June, coastal areas are usually dry, while the rainy season lasts from late June to October (World Weather). Inland the cool season is shorter and daytime temperatures are very high between March and June (World Weather). Sunny periods occur on most days even during the rainy season.
In a July 2009 census, the population of The Gambia was 1,778,081 (The Gambia). Almost half of the population of The Gambia is below the age of 14, while the other half is between 15 and 65 (Ibid). The median age of the population is 17.9 years and the birthrate far outpaces the death rate (37.8 births/1000 people compared to 12.2 deaths/1000 people). These three facts suggest that in the upcoming years, The Gambia, like many developing countries, will have a huge population boom. Of this growing population, 57% of the population lives in urban areas (Ibid). This urban population has been increasing with a 4.2% annual rate of change that is expected to stay the same or increase as the country becomes more populated (Ibid).

In The Gambia, 99% of people are considered African. In this population, there are numerous tribes that people belong too. By far, the majority of Africans in The Gambia are Mandinka (42%) followed by Fula (18%), Wolof (16%), Jola (10%), Serahuli (9%) with other smaller groups making up the remaining 4%. The 1% of the population that is non-African consists of assorted expatriates and immigrants from around the world. The Gambia is 90% Muslim, 8% Christian and 2% indigenous religions. Despite the multitude of different religions and ethnic groups, The Gambia sustains a relative peace with no discernable tension or conflict between the different groups (World Factbook).

Each ethnic group has its own language, but most Gambians can speak the other tribal languages besides their own with relative ease if not fluency. Most Gambians also speak fluent or conversational English. Being a Muslim majority, it is customary to greet people in the Arabic fashion by saying “As-Salam Alaykum” (peace be upon you) and responding to this greeting with “Amaleekum Salam” (peace be upon you also). After this greeting, Gambians normally switch to a local dialect. Wolof, Mandinka and Fula are the most widely used languages in the Gambia.
Pre-Departure

- Your Personal Responsibilities
- Your Family and Friends
- Visa
- Financial Concerns
- Passport Preparations
- Health Preparations and Immunizations
- Packing Tips
- Useful Online Resources
Your Personal Responsibilities

Your decision to study abroad has set you apart from your peers and reflects a higher level of maturity and personal responsibility. Your home institution will expect you to carry this same level of maturity and responsibility with you in The Gambia. You are representing yourself, your college, and the United States of America while abroad. It is ultimately up to you to ensure that all the details are taken care of as you prepare to leave. It is also your responsibility to be conscious of your academic situation at all times (i.e. selecting and getting approval for your courses at the University of The Gambia, understanding all assignments and grading policies, seeking proper help from your instructors if a problem arises, etc.)

Your Family and Friends

With all the excitement and anticipation for your semester in The Gambia, you may not realize what those closest to you are feeling. We suggest you take time to discuss with them how your semester abroad is going to affect them. Here are some tips on making the semester easier for all of you. It is important that everyone understands why you have decided to study in The Gambia. Share all of your pre-departure and orientation materials with your family. Discuss the possibility of a member of your family visiting you abroad. Before you depart, discuss with your family and friends how you will stay in contact with them during your trip. We recommend Skype, Facebook or email as they are the easiest (and most affordable) form of communication while in The Gambia. Also, consider setting up an online photo album or a blog. Be aware that after your first week or so away, communication with your friends may decrease! It does not mean that your friends have forgotten about you and are no longer interested in your experience. They are simply busy with classes, activities, and work—just like you will be.
Visa Information

The Academic Director and the Program Assistant will work with the study abroad institutions at the KSAC consortium schools who are sending students to The Gambia in a specific semester to organize the visa application process. Information on the visa process can be found here: http://gambiaembassy.us/ However, due to required group travel the visa application process must be coordinated by the Academic Director and the Program Assistant on behalf of KSAC. The cost of the visa is $100.

Financial Concerns

Knowing your financial limitations and budgeting prior to departure is one of the most important aspects for a smooth semester abroad. Your biggest expense for the KSAC study abroad program will be airfare. Airfare is typically coordinated by the KSAC program to obtain a group rate. The KSAC program recommends you budget a minimum of $2,000 USD for the semester (including paying for the meal plan on-site and a contingency for medical emergencies of about $500.00 USD). Please refer to the section on Money & Shopping for more detailed information about planning a budget.

You must decide for yourself the safest and easiest way to bring and access your money while abroad. In The Gambia credit cards are not accepted for most financial transactions.
MoneyGram and Western Union are a very easy way to have money sent to you for a minimum fee (usually about $10 for each transaction in the US). Most supermarkets in the US have a Western Union office at the service desk. Almost all Wal-Mart shopping centers offer MoneyGram services. The exchange rate is optimal and there are many offices throughout The Gambia for both Western Union and MoneyGram and access is easy and efficient. Also, if you bring US dollars with you to The Gambia, there is no fee to exchange them for dalasis at either Western Union or MoneyGram.

Traveler’s checks are a secure option for bringing money. However, it can take a long time to cash checks at a bank, you will be charged a fee, the exchange rate may not be optimal and you are required to bring the original receipt of purchase.

ATM/Bank cards (VISA ONLY) are prevalent in large towns in The Gambia. When using the ATM make sure to withdraw from either Universal or Current. Also pay attention to additional fees that can be incurred with use abroad. You can only withdraw 4,000 GMD per day. Be sure that you contact your bank and inform them you will access your account abroad so they do not assume there are fraudulent transactions and freeze your account.

It is highly recommended that you authorize a parent to discuss any financial situations with your bank if a problem would arise while abroad. This will save you from calling your bank personally while abroad. Establish a joint checking account with a trusted relative so they can easily transfer money to you if needed. Also remember to have someone handle bill paying and taxes on your behalf.
Passport Preparation

You must have a valid passport to participate in KSAC program in The Gambia. If you are a US citizen and currently do not have a passport, get started on the application process right away! It takes about 6 weeks to process and costs $97 for a non-expedited passport or $157 for an expedited one. Applications can be found at any US post office but can only be submitted once. For more information on the application process please go to [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

If your current passport expires while you will be abroad or within six months of your return from The Gambia, make sure to renew your passport. Information for the renewal process can also be found at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/renew/renew_833.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/renew/renew_833.html).

Be extremely careful with your passport! In The Gambia, you can ask the Resident Director to lock it in a security safe. You do not need to carry your passport with you on most days you are going about daily business (a copy should be fine for daily use) but you should take it on any trips outside of the area.

If your passport is lost or stolen immediately report it to the KSAC Resident Director and Assistant. They can help you to contact Passport Services at the US Department of State in Washington (24-hour phone: 220-955-0430) and the US Embassy on Kairaba Avenue. More detailed information on what to do can be found at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/lost/lost_849.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/lost/lost_849.html).

The KSAC Program Assistant will require you to provide a photocopy of the photo and signature page of your passport, and you should retain a copy for yourself to bring to The Gambia and a copy to be left in the US.
Useful Packing Tips

Arrange for a physical examination prior to departure in order to ensure that you are in good health and discuss with your doctor any prescription medication you may want to take with you for the semester. Obtain a signed letter from your doctor describing your current health condition(s) and the types of medications you are taking (including all generic names).

If you are concerned about a pre-existing health condition, please talk with your doctor about specific care needs and coordinate with KSAC program staff to fully investigate whether adequate care can be provided in The Gambia. Also, have a dental check-up prior to departure.

Do not wait until the last minute to get your immunizations as some must be given as a series over several months. You will also need to receive a prescription for Malaria medication which can be taken daily or weekly depending on your preference. Please contact your regular physician or see the Center for Disease Control’s homepage (www.cdc.gov/travel/) for further information.

Please see the section on Housing, Food & Living for more information about medical care and insurance.

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Required Vaccines for The Gambia:

- Routine
- Yellow Fever
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Typhoid
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Rabies
- Polio
Useful Online and Book Resources

- Check the airline baggage allowance.
- Be aware of how you dress. The Gambia is a predominantly Muslim country which requires you to dress modestly. If you do not want to advertise that you are from the US, no plunging neck lines or anything that comes above the knee.
- Personal care items (shampoo, soap, etc.) are readily available in The Gambia.
- Pack essentials (i.e. medicine, valuables, passport etc.) in your carry on luggage.
- Mark your checked luggage clearly with your name and address.
- Pack a spare change of clothes, an extra toothbrush, toothpaste, and travel soap in your carry-on luggage in case your bags get lost.
- Pack some photos from home. Your new friends will appreciate seeing where you live and your friends back home. It is a good idea to bring a tiny gift (usually something authentic from where you live—a postcard, mug, t-shirt, etc) for the Resident Director and any other good friends you may get to know.

Here is a list of some items you do not want to forget. This is by no means a fully comprehensive packing list:

**Toiletries:** towel set, beach towel, swim suit, shower toiletries, deodorant, lotion, shaving needs, feminine needs, toothbrush, etc.

**Medications:** anti-malarial, anti-diarrheal, anti-pain, maintenance medication, Dramamine, anti-itch cream, insect repellent, chewable Pepto Bismol, sunscreen, hand sanitizer, etc.

**Clothes:** a swimsuit, comfortable summer wear and footwear, and few dress clothes for nights out.

**Misc:** 220 volt adaptor, stationary, camera, laptop, flashlight, batteries, pictures, hand wipes, facial tissues, snacks, gifts, etc.

US State Department... http://www.state.gov
Travel Warnings & Consular Info... http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html
US Passport Services... http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
Embassy Locator... http://www.tripresource.com/embassy.htm
Embassy Registration Site... http://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Travel Info... http://www.cdc.gov/travel
The World Clock (Local Times Worldwide)... http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock
US Customs & Boarder Protection... http://www.customs.ustreas.gov
A Safe Trip Abroad (State Department Travel Info)... http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html
Know before You Go (US Customs Info)... http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg
International Newspapers Online... http://www.onlinenewspapers.com
The Universal Currency Converter... http://www.xe.com/ucc

For a detailed history of The Gambia and the surrounding region and a good overview of the developments in the 20th century please see:

- Lonely Planet: The Gambia & Senegal (Multicountry Guide) by Katharina Kane
- The Rough Guide to Gambia 2 by Emma Gregg, Richard Trillo, and Rough Guides
- The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Niumi by Donald R. Wright
• KSAC and the University of The Gambia
• Registering for Classes
• Academic Culture and Class Expectations
• Grades and Transcripts
• Textbooks and Photocopying
• Extracurricular Activities
• Director of the International Office
 KSAC and the University of The Gambia

The University of The Gambia (UTG) was established in 1999 by an act passed by the National Assembly as an effort to expand post-secondary education in The Gambia (University of The Gambia). UTG contains seven different academic departments including the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Science; Arts and Sciences; Businesses and Public Administration; Education; Engineering and Architecture; Law; Medicine and Allied Health Sciences; and a school of Graduate Studies and Research. The school of Medicine and Allied Health Science is also a component of the University and is affiliated with the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (RVTH) in Banjul (University of The Gambia).

Although the University was originally scattered throughout various office buildings in the Kanifing and Banjul areas, in the spring of 2010 several of the academic departments including Agriculture, Language & Humanities, Education, Science & Technology, and Social Science moved to The Gambia College campus in Brikama where both institutions share the facilities.

In the spring semester of 2007, after negotiations between UTG and Juniata College, the first Juniata students arrived in The Gambia. The program at that time was very structured in that classes were pre-determined and taught exclusively to the Juniata students. The students on the program did not have much opportunity to interact with other students at the UTG. This structure was devised in part because the UTG academic calendar did not correspond with the American academic calendar. However in the spring of 2006, as a result in part of conversations with Juniata and UTG administrators, the calendar was moved so that it coincided with a more international academic schedule (Eller).

The change in academic calendar has meant that students participating on the KSAC program have been able to register for a broader range of courses and participate in classes with UTG students. This means that you can select your courses of choice (in
consultation with your home university and academic advisors) and be accountable for your schedule and work throughout the course of the semester since there is no direct supervision in each course in which you may be enrolled.

However, The KSAC Resident Director and Academic Director are on-site to assist you and the group with all aspects of your academic experience on the KSAC study abroad program and should be consulted at all times concerning class schedules, registration, academic questions, etc.

The only course that KSAC students are required to participate in is the three-credit Culture Course: The Gambia which will consist of various speakers and excursions that are meant to expose you to Gambian culture. Throughout the semester, the group will be required to take part in cultural activities, site visits, excursions, (including trips which are several days in length), and listen to guest lecturers on relevant topics.

The purpose of the course is to give you a fundamental understanding of the history, society and culture of The Gambia and to provide opportunities to experience aspects of Gambian culture and society. An important part of the KSAC Culture Course is Wolof language instruction. The activities are provided as part of the study abroad program and in most cases there are no additional charges to you.
on-site for these activities. The course syllabus and specific assignments may vary each semester depending upon the interests of the Academic Director who will be the instructor for the course and the group.

The following may help you navigate the confusing, and sometimes frustrating process of registration and give an overview of what to expect in your classes and other hints that will help you in your various academic endeavors at UTG.

The registration process is done on paper because computers are not widely used at the university. A class timetable will be posted on a central bulletin board on campus. You will fill out the registration form indicating which classes you wish to take. Both the timetable and registration forms will be given to you by the KSAC Resident Director. After the registration forms have been submitted, if you wish to make any changes to your schedule, you must go to the Social Sciences department to make changes to your forms. Although there is a designated drop/add period, you can make changes to your schedule throughout the course of the semester. However, you should try to finalize your schedule within the first three weeks of classes and with guidance from the Resident Director and Academic Director.

You should understand that your schedule will most likely adjust throughout the course of registration because the timetables will change. Class times will change, and classes will be cancelled. Some of these changes will be official. Other changes will be unofficial, and you will have to investigate on your own by asking other students, professors, the respective head of department, the Director of International Affairs, or the KSAC Resident Director. You can also check the bulletin board located in the middle of the campus for more information. This is where professors post updates about their classes in order to inform students of any changes. (There are also other announcements posted here concerning extracurricular activities, etc.) Schedule the classes in which you are the most interested and meet with the requirements of your home university for your study abroad semester. However, you must also be flexible about which classes will comprise of your final schedule.
You will find that classes at UTG are not as structured as classes taken in the U.S. Many professors will not provide a syllabus. If professors do provide a syllabus, they may deviate from the outlined schedule. This means that exam and assignment due dates may frequently change. Because you may leave before the scheduled final exam dates, you need to make sure that you complete your coursework before they leave The Gambia. The Resident Director and Academic Director will consult with UTG administration and faculty to discuss a final exam/project schedule for students on the KSAC program.

You can also approach your instructors one-on-one to discuss final assignments. Setting these dates in advance will ensure that you will be able to finish your coursework in a timely manner and receive grades in all of your classes.

As a new university with limited funding, teaching is often a part-time position for some of the instructors at the UTG. If he or she has an outside job, those obligations may take precedence over their teaching responsibilities. Classes may be cancelled without much advance or no warning at all. You should obtain the telephone numbers of your professors and other students in your class to facilitate communication.

Although it is difficult to make widespread generalizations about class conduct, the Gambian classroom is very different from what American students may be accustomed. Classes may seem less formal. For instance, students and professors alike will answer their
mobile telephones during class. Unless there is an explicit attendance policy, students may not come to class on a regular basis. However, there is a general sense of hierarchy in the Gambian educational culture, and the professor is at the head. As with classes in the US, the general rule of thumb is to be courteous and conscientious and to use common sense when in the classroom or meeting one-on-one with your professors.

Compared to the coursework that students receive in the US, the coursework at UTG can be less rigorous because there is not ongoing assessment (paper assignments, quizzes, etc.) throughout the semester. Lack of access to books and photocopying usually mean readings are usually not as long as in the US. Like the European educational system, a typical class will involve one or two take-home tests, a possible paper, and a final exam. This leaves a great deal of responsibility to you in order to learn the course material over the course of the semester on your own.

The following list is comprised of professors with whom KSAC students have had positive experiences in the past: Iris Walton, Theater and Psychology; Dr. Taal, Politics; Dr. Gomez, Social Sciences; Ms. PK Junisa, Environment Science and Development and Mr. Joe, Mathematics.

**Grades and Transcripts**

You will receive an official transcript from UTG which will be sent to your home university and should be reflected on your home university transcript. At the end of the semester, grades are verified by professors and are submitted to the registrar’s office. This process may take several months to complete, and your home institution will not receive your grades until well into the semester following your semester at UTG.
Textbooks and Photocopying

Books in The Gambia are expensive and most students cannot afford to buy them, so professors simply do not require students to purchase any textbooks. Instead, professors give handouts or readings that students will take to the copying center located near the campus canteen. It costs 1 Dalasi per page, and although some of the readings may be long, you are still spending a significantly smaller amount of money on textbooks in The Gambia than you would in the US.

Extracurricular Activities

Because UTG is not a residential campus and it is still a relatively new university, there are not many extracurricular activities. There is a Christian club that meets every Friday while the Muslim students are at prayers. There is also a Science Club and a Women’s Computer Club which advertise their activities on the board in the middle of campus. The largest club on campus is the Student Union which plans various social events for the students. The president of the Student Union is elected by the students and is a highly coveted position. Along with planning events and speakers, the Student Union also works and communicates with school and government officials, including President Jammeh. If you wish to participate in any of the clubs, contact information can be found on the flyers that are hung around campus, or you can contact the Director of the International Office or ask your classmates.
The Director of International Affairs is a position that was designed to help diversify and attract international students to UTG. It is this person’s job to answer any questions that you might have and to help you navigate the system. Before the start of the semester, he will meet with all of the international students during an international orientation. This is your opportunity to get to know the Director of the International Office because this person can be extremely helpful during registration which can be a very confusing process.

Although the system is different and everything may seem to be disorganized, you will have a positive academic experience. It is important to be flexible and keep an open mind during registration and to be respectful toward your professors. Your study abroad experience is in part to participate in a different academic culture. Keep in mind that being able to function and learn in a new academic culture is enhancing the development of your interpersonal skills and intercultural competency.

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Tel: (220) 4372213 / 4395062 / 4395065
Fax: (220) 4395064
E-mail: info@utg.gm

http://www.unigambia.gm/UTG/
Service Learning

- Volunteer Experiences
- What to Expect
- Identifying Organizations
- Descriptions of Organizations and Opportunities
Volunteer Experiences

During the KSAC study abroad program in The Gambia, you will have the opportunity to volunteer (and possibly intern) with local organizations. Engaging in a volunteer or intern position provides you with a deeper understanding of the community in which you are living, the opportunity to meet new people and to develop professional experiences in an intercultural setting. Through volunteer and internship positions you will be exposed to many opportunities for immersion in the culture such as traveling to villages to conduct data studies or working closely with groups of students to teach conversational English or computer skills.

Credit internships require you to fulfill a certain amount of hours per week with supervision. You and your supervisor must report the hours worked and sometimes what tasks the you fulfilled. Class schedules, transportation logistics, and availability of projects/work on-site can make fulfilling hour requirements difficult. A lack of resources and the overall pace of work in The Gambia can result in projects moving slowly or even stopping before completion. If you want to pursue a credit-based internship, you must try to contact organizations prior to your arrival in The Gambia. Discuss possible work responsibilities and projects with your academic advisor(s) at your home institution. Confer with the career services and/or study abroad office at your home institution for requirements and procedures. Credit internship experiences must also be approved by the KSAC Program and Academic Directors on-site prior to final arrangements with an organization in The Gambia.

At some institutions you will be able to obtain a transcript notation for a volunteer experience. Volunteering with an organization creates more flexibility for students studying in The Gambia. As a volunteer, you are free to work as many or as few hours as your schedule can accommodate and are able to be somewhat flexible with determining a weekly schedule. Choosing to obtain a transcript notation for volunteer work allows you to include this as part of your academic record of your study abroad experience. You should check with the career services and/or study abroad office at your home institution to discuss the requirements and process for obtaining a transcript notation for a volunteer experience.
What to Expect

Volunteer and internship experiences vary by person, organization, and year. You should have realistic expectations when starting your volunteer work. Development work in The Gambia is usually supported by outside resources and leadership. You may be given more responsibility and autonomy than you would expect; or there may be little work or projects to offer your other than basic administrative tasks. What you DO during the course of the volunteer / internship experience may not be the most important aspect. What you LEARN and LEARNING TO WORK IN AN INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT can be the most valuable part of the overall experience and can significantly enhance the study abroad experience.

Identifying Organizations

The best place to begin is to research the organizations at which other students in The Gambia have worked. There is a list below. You can also identify and search for organizations on the web. If you are interested in an international NGO, investigate if the organization does work in The Gambia. www.Charity-charities.org/gambia has a list of organizations that are available to receive volunteers and is a good place to start your search. If you are planning to do an internship in The Gambia, you must contact the organization ahead of time. There are some organizations in The Gambia that may not have websites nor cannot be identified through an internet search. When you arrive on site, talk with the KSAC Resident Director, Academic Director and the Program Assistant. They are your first source of information and referral. The Resident Director and the Program Assistant can assist you in making the initial contact with organizations because many organizations already have a connection with the KSAC staff and program. You are also encouraged to explore organizations on your own as you take public transportation and walk around the first weeks in country and as you network with professors and students at the University of The Gambia.
The American Corner / American Embassy Banjul

Location: Comium Building on Kairaba
Contact: Mohamadou M. Njie (Papa) - Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs Assistant
Tel: 2856-2166 or 7666047 or 6738878
Email: njiemm@state.gov
Website: http://banjul.usembassy.gov/index.html
Mission: The American Corner was first established as part of the US Department of State for Public Diplomacy outreach. The combined goal of the US Embassy and Comium is to provide education access to the public.
Volunteer tasks: Students volunteering at The American Corner can assume many roles including: computer training, teaching conversational English, and advising Gambian students interested in studying in the US.

GAMCOTRAP: The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children

Location: 49 Garba Jahumpa Road, New Town, Bakau
Contact: Omar Dibba
Tel: 765-3108
Email: info@gamcotrap.gm
Website: www.gamcotrap.gm
Mission: “To create awareness about traditional practices in The Gambia, We aim for the preservation of beneficial practices as well as the elimination of all forms of harmful traditional practices. GAMCOTRAP is committed to the promotion and protection of women and girl children’s political, social, sexual, reproductive health and educational rights.” Mission statement received from www.gamcotrap.gm.
Volunteer tasks: Student activity within GAMCOTRAP can change depending on the activity of the organization at the time. Student tasks can range from traveling up river on outreach trips to office managerial work.
The Gambia YMCA
Location: Kanifing South, MDI Road
Contact: Sam Bruce Thorpe National General Secretary
Tel: 439-2647 or 439-0625
Email: ymca@ymca.ga
Website: http://www.ymca.gm/index.htm
Mission: “To develop the full potential of young people by creating opportunities for their positive participation in national development. To advocate for total development of the body mind and spirit in order to be positive agents of change irrespective of faith, age, sex, race and social condition.” Mission statement retrieved from www.ymca.gm.
Student tasks: Students who have volunteered at The Gambia YMCA in the past have helped program development and administrative tasks.

SOS Children’s Villages International
Location: Kanifing District, Kairaba Avenue near Safari Garden Hotel
Contact: Rachel Bennett- Project Coordinator for UK umbrella organization
Email: Rachel@soschildren.org or info@soschildrensvillages.org.uk
Website: http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/sos-childrens-charity/projects/gambia
Mission: “We enable children to live according to their own culture and religion, and to be active members of the community. We help children to recognize and express their individual abilities, interests, and talents. We ensure that children receive the education and skills training they need to be successful and contributing members of society.”- Mission received from http://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/Publications/Documents/_26J1-a-fJ_10A93C.pdf.
Volunteer tasks: In the past student have worked with the SOS Mothers and Adult Training Center on educational programs and literacy. Other tasks may include skills training and managerial or administrative roles.

“My volunteer work has allowed me to gain experience in my major that I would not have been able to have at home. It also gives you a new cultural perspective.”
-Danielle Fulmer, 2010 KSAC participant
Unique FM
Location: Bakau New Town Road, second level shopping plaza between Timbookto and Yok Art Café.
Tel: 7555777
Website: http://www.uniquefm.gm/
Volunteer tasks: Student volunteers at Unique FM can DJ a weekly music program.

United Nations World Food Program, The Gambia
Location: The Banjul office is in Fajara across from the Fajara War Cemetery
Contact: Babagana Ahmodu
Tel: 946-0199
Website: http://www.wfp.org/countries/gambia
Mission: “WFP will play its part as an active member of the United Nations system to bring the issue of hunger to the centre of the international agenda. In its dialogue with recipient governments and the aid community, WFP will advocate policies, strategies and operations that directly benefit the poor and hungry.” Mission statement received from http://www.wfp.org/about/mission-statement.
Volunteer tasks: Current projects The Gambia WFP is working on include The Food For Education Project and an emergency project to aid Senegalese refugees. Students will have the opportunity to volunteer within these projects.

Alliance for Democracy in Africa
Location: ADA office is located in Serekunda off the Banjul Highway at Kow Junction. ADA has project sites in many villages near Banjul as well as upriver. ADA also has projects that are run through local schools.
Contact: Dr. Madi Touray
Tel: 994-8191 or 930-3176
Email: maditouray2001@yahoo.com
Website: www.adeafrica.org
Mission: “Alliance for Democracy in Africa (ADA) is a tax exempt nonprofit organization working to encourage Africans, particularly children and youth, to study, internalize and practice the values of democracy in their societies. The organization is not an affiliate of any political party, nor will it affiliate with any political party in Africa, or any other country.” Mission statement received from http://www.adeafrica.org/html/aboutus.
Volunteer tasks: Volunteers can work on specific ADA projects such as women's group initiatives and skills training or youth education and skills training. Spring 2010 Juniata students and faculty started the Soccer for Democracy program at Sheika Mass Kah Senior Secondary School located on Stadium Highway. Students also participated on a computer training program teach basic computer skills.

CIAM Public Health Research & Development Centre
Location: Plot 17, Kanifing Institutional Layout, Kanifing
Contact: Dr. Palmer
Tel: (220) 439-4592 or (220) 439-4624
Website: www.ciam.gm
Mission: “CIAM - Public Health Research & Development Centre bridges the gap between the health needs of people in West Africa, national health policies and relevant research. We focus on priority diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, work with researchers, policy makers, health service providers and the general public.”- Mission statement received from www.ciam.gm
Volunteer tasks: In the past students volunteering with CIAM have been able to participate in studies and surveys, often times going into villages to map malaria. Other tasks commonly performed by volunteers at CIAM are data entry and clerical work.

Concern Universal - Gambia is Good Farm
Location: Gambia is Good Farm is located near the Banjul Airport and can be reached from the Banjul Highway as well as the AU Highway.
Contact: Kelly Taboure-Smeets- Farm Production Manager for Gambia is Good
Tel: 449-4473, 449-5716 or 773-9673
Email: ksmeets2001@yahoo.com or Kelly.tab@concern-universal.org
Website: www.concern-universal.org
Mission: “Concern Universal works in partnership to challenge poverty and inequality. We're determined to do all we can to play our part in the global movement challenging poverty and inequality.”- Mission statement retrieved from http://www.concernuniversal.org/index.php?/home.
Volunteer tasks: Students volunteering at Gambia is Good Farm will participate in hands-on sustainable agriculture, farming, and nursery work.

Each One Teach One
Location: Each One Teach One is located off of Kairaba Avenue across from the Elton station.
**Contact:** Shelley Sousa  
**Tel:** 711-2303  
**Email:** eotogambia@hotmail.com or sousashelley@hotmail.com  
**Mission:** Each One Teach One is an adult literacy tutoring program that teaches conversational English.  
**Volunteer tasks:** Volunteers meet with adult students for English literacy tutoring. Volunteers may also teach conversational English classes.

**SBEC Shiloh Bilingual Education Center**  
**Location:** SBEC is located on the AU Coastal Highway near Coca Beach Resort.  
**Contact:** Iris Walton- SBEC Teacher  
**Tel:** 777-9845  
**Email:** iriswalton@hotmail.com  
**Website:** [http://www.sbec.gm/index.ph](http://www.sbec.gm/index.ph)  
**Mission:** SBEC is an international bilingual private school.  
**Volunteer tasks:** Volunteers at SBEC perform a variety of roles that include teacher development in conflict resolution, overseeing the mediation department, and teaching a variety of subjects at a primary through secondary level.

“Having an internship in The Gambia is a great way to gain real experience. There are not many people vying for those volunteer positions so you are able to do things you’re not able to do in the US or Europe. It’s a great way to meet professionals in your field and with Gambians with whom you can form friendships.”

- Blair Saul, 2010 KSAC participant
Housing, Food and Living

- Student Housing
- Food and Eating Out
- Safety
- Medical Care and Insurance
- Transportation
- Mobile Phones
- Computer Specifications
While studying in The Gambia, you will stay in a compound in a section of ‘suburbs’ of Banjul: Old Jeshwang. Old Jeshwang is about a 15-minute car ride from Banjul, a 45-minute ride to the university in Brikama, and is within a 20-minute walking distance to Kairaba Avenue, where you will find many restaurants, shops, and markets.

The Resident Director, Mohammed Obukwe Ambrose, lives on-site with the students. He is in charge of all aspects of your living situation while you study in The Gambia. Mohammed employs two Gambian women around the students’ ages to assist him in daily chores like cooking, cleaning and laundry. The three staff live on site, and you should remember to conduct yourself appropriately in this shared living arrangement.

The house has four bedrooms and three bathrooms. Two of the bedrooms have a bathroom in the rooms. The other two bedrooms share a bathroom. There is also one bedroom and bathroom in a small building in the compound not connected with the main house. Each room has two beds, an assortment of shelving and storage, and mosquito netting. The house is cleaned daily, but you are still expected to tidy up after yourself, just as you would at school or home. There is also a “common room”, a living room area with a desk and sitting area for the group to share. Students tend to relax here after class and dinner. There is also a coffee table perfect for setting up your laptop for a group movie night. The dining room includes a large table where you will eat all meals. There is also
L’Oreal, Nivea, and Clean and Clear. You can also buy dental hygiene products, beauty products, and feminine supplies in these stores. You will be expected to provide your own toilet paper and hand soap for the bathrooms. Previous groups advise students to buy toilet paper as a group and share the supply. There are wholesale stores on Kairaba that sell toilet paper, and other items, in bulk for a great price.

You can have your clothes laundered, dried, and folded once weekly for about $6.00 US dollars per week. You will be given laundry bags into which dirty clothes are put weekly and placed in the common area the night before the laundresses come to the house. The laundry service will wash, dry and fold the clothes in about two-three days, depending on the amount of clothes they are given.
You are required to purchase a weekly meal plan which provides five dinners per week, about $3.00 US dollars for each meal, and breakfast seven days per week. The dinners are a mix of Gambian fare, like Chicken Yassa and Domoda, and American-style food, like spaghetti, baked potatoes, and various soups. The breakfasts will mostly be continental (bread, jam, coffee, tea, juice, and occasionally fruit) and one cooked breakfast per week. The Resident Director will plan the menu weekly, does most of the cooking, and is always open to requests. Specific dietary restrictions or food allergies should be reported to the Resident Director. Eating every meal out or having to provide all your own meals would be very expensive and time-consuming. You will be happy to come home and know that a good dinner will be provided for you. The evening meal is served at a specific time each evening and you should plan on sitting down together at the arranged time. You can make arrangements beforehand with the Resident Director to save a plate if you are going to return home after the arranged dinner time. However, this is done by an occasional arrangement beforehand. You should expect to have dinner at the arranged time each evening and should not expect your individual schedule to be accommodated.
Many days, the group members will be following their own class schedules, leaving home in the morning and coming back at very different times. Stores offer all the familiar foods. You will be able to find coffee, teas, juices, cereals, and bread and jam. Products from countries other than the US are usually fine quality and are less expensive. On some days, you may wish to pack a lunch for the university or visit the very cheaply-priced canteen at school. Although the food is decent, it is not a restaurant nor is it like a college dining hall. One of the first activities the group will do together is visit local shops, markets, and restaurants. You will quickly learn to how to shop for food and find your favorite restaurants. You will quickly learn how to budget. For example, how much is too much for a carton of milk and what restaurants are fairly and accurately priced according to the quality of their fare?

Since dinner will only be served five nights a week, you will be responsible for your dinner two nights a week, most likely on the weekends. Banjul, Senegambia, Bakau, Cape Point, and Kairaba Avenue will all be areas you can expect to find restaurants serving every type of cuisine for every budget. Also, grocery stores offer plenty of ingredients and prepared foods, even things like EasyMac and “TV dinners.”
The Gambia is one of the most peaceful countries in Africa and has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. However, just like in our hometowns in the United States, you should always be aware of your surroundings. Walking alone during the daylight hours is safe, but you should not go anywhere alone after dark.

It is also inadvisable to flash large amounts of money or very expensive electronics (cameras, iPods, and phones) or jewelry while shopping or walking. Very valuable possessions are best left at home (in the US). You should only carry around the amount of money you need for the day or the specific errand to which you are attending. The Resident Director has a safe in which you can store your passports, money and other valuables.

Female students should be extra cautious when interacting with Gambian men. Gambian men are, at times, overly friendly, and will approach you and wish to talk to you. It is quite possible they will tell you they recognize you from before, you have already met, or a friend of yours told them about you. They may also tell you they love you, they want to marry you or want to find a wife. Most of the time, these men simply want to have a conversation.

If you have never met the person before and do not wish to talk to them, firmly tell them you definitely do not know them and keep walking. Also, another technique to avoid unwanted interactions is to not break stride. People may yell greetings at you or hiss (another way of getting your attention). Again, if you do not want to have a conversation, simply keep walking. If they try to catch up to you, speed up and tell them you are very late for a meeting. The Gambians will often ask you for your name. If you are not comfortable telling them your real name, say nothing or tell them a fake name.

Also, if there is ever anyone you are uncomfortable giving an email or phone number to, simply say you do not have a phone or email address. Be aware of ploys to get money from you by telling you their child needs money for medical procedures, school fees,
etc. You should never tell anyone your home address in Old Jeshwang. The student residence is a shared, private living space, and you should not invite visitors, even friends, to the house. Failure to comply with this rule can lead to expulsion from the KSAC program.

All students should be aware of bumsters. Bumsters are Gambian men who are unemployed and hang around tourist spots, like the beaches, the Senegambia area and hotels. They will be very aggressive in trying to “get to know you”. They may say they already know you from the hotel by saying, “I’m the security guard there” or they are in love with you or want to create a “deep relationship.” Don’t be fooled. All they want is a little conversation and a lot of your money. There is no harm in being polite and greeting them. If you have no desire to talk to them, do not break stride and do not say you may see them later, because they will remember. All these tips are also common sense tips to use back in the States. And the best advice: follow your intuition.

Medical Care and Insurance

The Gambia is a developing country where medical standards and access to medical care is different than in the United States. Some diagnostic tests and medications may simply not be available. There are a few public and private clinics all within a short drive from the house that can treat all minor to moderate injuries.

You will most likely experience diarrhea, nausea and symptoms of dehydration at some point during the semester. You should drink enough water each day, be cautious of food and drink consumption, and plan to limit alcohol consumption.
You are required to inform the Resident Director and the Program Assistant of all medical concerns and emergencies. Students will be accompanied by the Resident Director and/or Program Assistant to a clinic in an emergency. For treatment of serious illnesses and/or injuries, it may be necessary to be evacuated by airplane to a private clinic in Dakar, Senegal.

You should budget a minimum of $300 US dollars for medical care while in The Gambia. Although the required medical insurance (see below) will reimburse you for medical costs incurred, you must pay clinics at the time of care for consultation and medications.

You should bring all over the counter medications you think you will need while studying abroad in The Gambia. This may include, but is not limited to: painkillers like Ibuprofen or Naproxen Sodium, Pepto-Bismol, Imodium, allergy relief, Neosporin, band aids, alcohol wipes, SPF lotions, sunburn relief, itch relief creams or sprays to treat mosquito bites, and OTC drugs like Nyquil and Dayquil to treat colds. However, most grocery and drug stores do carry OTC medicines and the Resident Director has a supply of some medications / first aid care. You should also consult their regular and travel doctors for advice on what medicines to bring along.

You will have medical insurance while abroad that is provided by Cultural Insurance Services International and is designed specifically for study abroad students. For complete information on policy terms, benefits, coverage, and conditions, please see www.culturalinsurance.com or contact your study abroad office.

You are advised to discuss any medical conditions with your travel doctor, regular doctor and your study abroad office prior to participation on the program, because there is risk involved with living in The Gambia and limited access to advanced medical care.
Transportation

You will either walk or take taxis to get to destinations. Walking is the primary mode of transportation in The Gambia. The beach, National Stadium, stores, shops, markets, and restaurants are all within walking distance. If students choose to use taxis, use the yellow taxis and ask for a “town trip.” Be prepared to give the taxi exact directions if you want the taxi to take you to a specific destination. You will haggle for the price and if the price they are offering is too high, simply walk away. They will most likely understand that you know what the fair price is and will accept your offer. If you do not want a “town trip”, use a shared taxi for about 5 dalasis, compared to the 25-75 dalasis town trip. You hop in and out of the shared taxis as they travel a regular route. Green taxis are for tourists, and while they will be perfectly happy to drive you around, the ride will be more expensive than a yellow taxi. To get to school, students will take bush taxis, which are vans or buses that hold about 12 to 15 people. They follow a specific route (Brikama, Serekunda, Banjul) and you must tell the driver to stop where you want on the route. Students should plan in their budgets for transportation costs including daily trips to and from the UTG campus in Brikama.

KSAC students are not permitted to use bicycles or motorbikes. Even though hitchhiking appears to be culturally acceptable and a free mode of transportation for Gambians, KSAC prohibits students from doing this. Failure to comply with transportation restrictions can be reason for expulsion from the program.
Mobile Phones

All students will purchase a cell phone that can be used to make calls in country and to make and receive calls from home. Students will need a way to keep in contact with their housemates, professors, KSAC program staff, and friends and students they will meet. There are many different service providers and students are encouraged to buy phones from the same provider to minimize the cost of calls. The Program Assistant will help with this in the first few days in country. A cell phone with SMS (texting) capabilities, games, alarm clock, reminders, and other useful tools like a flashlight, plus the cost of the SIM card and start-up minutes costs about 40 US dollars.

To recharge your phone’s minutes, you can purchase scratch cards from people selling them on the street or in most shops / stores. Cards are usually sold in increments of 25, 45, 95, and 240 dalasis. It costs very little to call in country and about 12 dalasis a minute to call to the US (about 50 US cents).

Computer Specifications

Students are encouraged to bring a laptop in order to complete school assignments, keep in contact with loved ones, and access the news and other entertainment. Since voltages and plugs are different in The Gambia than at home, please bring a converter and plug adapter to charge your laptop. Also, it may be beneficial to buy insurance for your computer in case it is damaged while studying abroad. There is the possibility to have a computer repaired in The Gambia. The house has wireless internet access, which is sometimes very strong and other times very weak. You should expect to not have the ease and regularity of internet access as you would in the US. If there is a power outage, there will be no internet in the house. In that event, students can go to internet cafes or take their laptops to a restaurant / café that offers free wireless service.
Money and Shopping

- Currency and Exchange
- Your Personal Budget
- Access to Money/ATM/Debit
- Shopping in The Gambia
- Accessibility of Goods
- Craft Markets and Bargaining
The Gambia uses the Gambian Dalasi (GMD). Familiarize yourself with the currency exchange rates at www.xe.com. There are small offices, banks and many Western Union and MoneyGram locations that exchange currency. You may get a better exchange rate if you take money out of an ATM, but you may incur financial transaction fees at your bank at home and transaction fees with each withdrawal at ATM machines.

This is something that you should take very seriously. Your biggest expense for the KSAC study abroad program will be airfare which is typically coordinated by the KSAC program as a group rate. Vaccinations and medications can also be a significant pre-departure expense. The KSAC program recommends you budget a minimum of $2,000 - $2,500 USD for the semester (including paying for the meal plan on-site and a contingency for medical emergencies of about $300.00 USD).

Some students plan a budget for their money on-site by setting a weekly expenses allowance. You will want to be realistic about spending money, and you do not want to miss out on good opportunities by not allowing for some flexibility with your allowance. For many of you the semester in The Gambia may be your first time abroad, or your first time in Africa and you are going to want to purchase things for yourself and others. You are also going to want to participate in activities, enjoy special foods, and perhaps travel a bit. Be realistic when you are planning your personal budget.
A detailed expense plan is below. Some major expenses you can expect on-site are: $1600.00 USD for the meal plan (5 dinners per week and $80 meal stipend per week); about $200.00 USD for transportation; and laundry; $500.00 USD for eating out, other activities, and gifts and souvenirs; and $200.00 USD for other personal expenses (telephone, postage).

Below is a list of some sample prices. Prices may vary depending on the store, stand or restaurant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price in Dalasis</th>
<th>Price in Dollars (at an exchange rate of 26D : $1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sodas</td>
<td>10 D</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapalapa Sandwiches (with Egg)</td>
<td>10 D</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapalapa half (six inches)</td>
<td>2.5 D</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunch of bananas</td>
<td>25 D</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnuts</td>
<td>5 D</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>25 D</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonjo Juice</td>
<td>5 D</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch at UTG canteen</td>
<td>25 D</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag of water</td>
<td>2 D</td>
<td>$0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush taxi to UTG</td>
<td>12 D</td>
<td>$0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Trip Taxi (varies based on distance)</td>
<td>25-100 D</td>
<td>$1-$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Cream from La Parisienne</td>
<td>50 D</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You must decide for yourself the safest and easiest way to bring and access your money while abroad.

In The Gambia, credit cards are not accepted for most financial transactions.

MoneyGram and Western Union are a very easy way to have money sent to you for a minimum fee (usually about $10 for each transaction in the US). Most supermarkets in the US have a Western Union office at the service desk. Almost all Wal-Mart shopping centers offer MoneyGram services. The exchange rate may not be optimal but there are many offices throughout The Gambia for both Western Union and MoneyGram, and access is easy and efficient.

Traveler’s checks are a secure option for bringing money. However, it can take a long time to cash checks at a bank, you will be charged a fee, the exchange rate may not be optimal and you are required to bring the original receipt of purchase.

ATM/Bank cards (VISA ONLY) are prevalent in larger towns in The Gambia. When using the ATM, make sure to withdraw from either Universal or Current. Also pay attention to additional fees that can be incurred with use abroad and there can be some concern with illegal access to your bank account. You can withdraw 4,000 GMD per day. Be sure that you have your four digit PIN number memorized and contact your bank and inform them you will access your account abroad.

It is highly recommended that you authorize a family member to discuss any financial situations with your bank if a problem would arise while abroad. This will save you from calling your bank personally while abroad. Establish a joint checking account with a family member so they can easily transfer money to you if needed. Also remember to have someone handle bill paying and taxes on your behalf.
There are grocery stores that are similar to stores in the US. There are many products that are similar to what you may eat in the US (peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, pasta, spaghetti sauce, cereal) but are imported from the U.K., Europe and the Middle East. Safeway Market and Kairaba Shopping Center on Kairaba Avenue are the two best grocery stores, with the freshest products. Everything is a set price so if you can go in and purchase foods just like in a supermarket at home, without needing to bargain.

If you want to buy fruit and vegetables, try the fruit and vegetable stands near the traffic light on Kairaba Avenue. The produce at stands is fresher, less expensive, and tastier than in the stores. It can be a great cultural experience to bargain and make friends with one stand owner so he or she will always give you fair deals. The Gambia and the Casamance Region in Senegal offer some excellent locally grown produce, especially fruits, which would be much more expensive in the US.

There are a lot of Gambian ‘fast food’ stands and restaurants. Although you should give your body time to adjust to food in The Gambia, food purchased at roadside stands and in restaurants is for the most part safe to eat (but use your judgment). ‘Sandwiches’ of all varieties (potatoes, spicy beans, meat, eggs) on tapalapa or senfu (baguette-type loaf of bread) can be purchased for about 12 GMD. Fish balls, meat, vegetable and fish pies can be purchased for less than 10 GMD. Gambian/African plates (rice with a traditional vegetable and/or meat or fish sauce like domoda, chicken yassa, benachin, etc.) are offered at many restaurants daily for less than 30 GMD.

Buying and eating local is more sustainable and can offer you a more authentic cultural experience and opportunity to interact with Gambians in a meaningful way. It will also most definitely be much less expensive for your personal budget.
Accessibility of Goods

You will need to walk some distance to purchase most things you will want to buy. There are a few produce stands and some convenience-like mini stands near the student house, but a walk to Kairaba Avenue will be necessary for a grocery store run or a full stand of assorted fruits and veggies. This is about a 45 minute walk or a short taxi ride. The taxi route from the area in which the student house is located is not a regular route and the cost can be more than the average 5 GMD for a shared taxi, so expect to pay about 25 GMD.

Although most health, beauty and personal care products are available in The Gambia, they are imported and can be more expensive than what you might pay in the US. For health, beauty and personal care items, you must decide for yourself what items will provide you the most level of comfort while here (special face wash, lotion, contact lens care, etc.) and bring it with you. You may not be able to find the same product here, and this can provide you a small bit of comfort from home.

Craft Markets and Bargaining

The craft market vendors, where most of the items are handmade in country, represent a significant source of personal income in The Gambia. Visiting the craft markets and bargaining is a fun part of your cultural experience while studying in The Gambia. You are going visit a lot of craft markets, deal vendors and other shoppers who want to be your friend, want you to buy their items, give you a good price or the “Gambian price,” etc. Stand your ground. If you really want something, get it, but never EVER go with their original price. Drop it by half immediately. The vendor may act like your new price is offensive or much too low; just wait for the seller to come down closer to you. After this initial slash in half consider what you would want to pay for it and equate it to US
dollars. Nothing costs as much as they will tell you. Also, once people start establishing the costs of things with you when you visit
different markets, you can comparison shop with vendors. This may irritate some vendors initially, but it will demonstrate you are
not a tourist and know what you are doing. If something seems to cost too much, walk away. Say, “Okay it’s too much...No thanks!”
they may ask you to come back and accept your price. If they do not accept your price, they are either 1) right, you did offer too little
or 2) stubborn and in an area where some other foreigner will pay what they want. Your persistence can result in good bargains in
the end and the opportunity to have a lot of fun haggling with the craft market vendors.

There are plenty of markets from among which you can choose. You should not go to the ‘tourist’ markets like the Senegambia Craft
Market and the Fajara Craft Market near Leybato. The Albert market in Banjul
is overwhelming when you first visit, but you will be more comfortable when
you visit next. This market has the most variety: crafts, carvings, clothes,
tailoring, fabric, shoes, jewelry, foods, etc. The Bakau market great drums and
wooden products, but mostly fabric, bracelets, bags, and a good leather
store. The Brikama market, which is out by UTG is good because many of the
sellers are willing to negotiate, inexpensive items such as wooden products,
drums, bowls, etc.

The Serrakunda market is an amazing market experience where most local
Gambians shop. The market vendors offer fabric at good prices, crafts, and
everyday goods and sundries. They sell things like belts, shoes, and a lot of other items you might find yourself needing. It can
provide you with many sights, sounds, and smells of a traditional Gambian market and the opportunity to interact with many
Gambians without being treated as a tourist.
Things to do

- KSAC Lectures and Site Visits
- Fieldtrips and Excursions
- Cultural Events and Recreations
- Sports and Exercise
KSAC Lectures and Site Visits

Students studying abroad on the KSAC Gambia program are required to register for a three-credit course, entitled Culture Course: The Gambia. Throughout the semester, students will be required to take part in cultural activities, site visits, excursions, (including trips which are several days), and listen to guest lecturers on relevant topics. The purpose of the course is to give students a fundamental understanding of the history, society and culture of The Gambia and to provide opportunities to experience aspects of Gambian culture and society. An important part of the KSAC Culture Course is Wolof language instruction. Wolof is one of the main languages spoken in the Senegambia region. The course syllabus and specific assignments may vary each semester depending upon the interests of the Academic Director and the students on the program.

The activities are provided as part of the study abroad program and in most cases there are no additional charges to students on-site for these activities. Here are some examples of the Culture Course lectures, site visits, and field trips from previous semesters.

**Wolof Lessons**

Wolof is one of the tribal languages in The Gambia, and, as the language of commerce, is commonly used in the Banjul area. Students will find basic Wolof useful in communicating with Gambians in daily interactions, whether in the form of greetings, or communicating with shopkeepers or taxi drivers.
Lectures:

- “Colonialism in The Gambia” Hassoum Ceesay
- “Family Structure and Ethnicity in The Gambia” Papa Njie
- “Overview of Gambian Politics—Presidential Power” Emil Nagengast
- “Community Mobilization and Solidarity” Mohammed Ambrose
- “Development of a Peer Health Education Program” Ansumana Dibba
- “Pursuing an International Career” Emily Eller

Site Visits:

- **Gamcotrap Site Visit and Talk “FGM and the Work of Gamcotrap in The Gambia” with Omar Dibba:** Gamcotrap is a non-profit organization in the Gambia that focuses on the rights of women and children, and that specifically works to put an end to the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia.


- **US Embassy:** Students visit the US Embassy to achieve an understanding of how the Embassy works with the Gambian government, its interactions with the local population, and about careers in the US Foreign Service.

- **Gambia is Good:** Gambia is Good is an organization that strives to educate farmers on sustainable agricultural practices as well as teach methods for improving crop yields. Gambia is Good grows much of the produce used at local restaurants.

- **Royal Victorian Teaching Hospital:** Students tour this facility, located in Banjul, to achieve a better understanding of the health care available to Gambians and how the health care system operates here.
Field Trips/Excursions

The KSAC program includes field trips throughout the semester. The activities are provided as part of the study abroad program and in most cases there are no additional charges to students on-site for these activities. Students can also arrange short trips in consultation with the KSAC Resident Director and Program Assistant. Some examples include:

- **Yabo Family Compound** - Lamin Yabo coordinates transportation for some of the KSAC Program activities. An afternoon at his compound is an enjoyable opportunity to interact with Gambians, including women and children, and to gain insight into family life in The Gambia.

- **Tendaba Nature Camp** - Tendaba is a village and nature camp located upriver on the South Bank. The three-day trip includes a boat ride on the River Gambia and through mangrove swamps, a nature hike, traditional dance and music, swimming pool and riverside dock.

- **Janjanbureh/Georgetown** - Janjanbureh is upriver on the North Bank. In the past, the three-day trip included the Wassu Stone Circles, Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Project, and visit to Juffereh and the slavery museum.

- **James Island/Jufureh/Albreda** - Jufureh is the village where the author of the famous book *Roots*, which has been made into a movie, traces his own roots. Albreda Fort and James Island are two other nearby attractions where students can learn about the history of the slave trade in The Gambia. These are all located on the North Bank and are most conveniently reached by boat as part of a day trip (“Africa on a Shoestring,” 336).

- **National Museum** - The museum includes exhibits on ethnology, ecology and history of The Gambia. The exhibits include a lot of detailed information on the Gambia. (“Africa on a Shoestring,” 330).
- **Mama Africa Women’s Art Museum and Cultural Center and Paradise Beach** - Mama Africa is an art gallery and restaurant owned and operated by a Gambian woman. Its goal is to empower Gambian women to explore art. Paradise Beach is located off of the village of Sanyang and is the location for the village’s main industry of fishing.

- **Lunch at Safari Garden and Djembe Drumming Lessons** - Safari Garden is a local hotel located just off Kairaba Avenue, offering African and European dishes. Students can use the pool and lounge chairs if they purchase lunch or a drink. Following lunch at Safari Garden, students experience a two-hour Djembe lesson. Djembe is a type of traditional West African drum, which many students see in performances during their time in The Gambia or may choose to purchase as a souvenir or gift for someone back home.

- **Botanic Garden Tour** - The Botanical Gardens, located in Bakau, have numerous beautiful plant and bird species, as well as a nature trail (“World Guide to The Gambia”).

- **Sand Painting Lesson** - Sand painting is a common art form in The Gambia, and students can find lessons at various locations. A stand in the Bakau market offers sand art lessons at a rate of 200 GMD for two hours, including supplies.

- **Water Sports and Day at Sun Beach** - Sunbeach Hotel & Resort, located at Cape Point past Bakau, offers wind surfing, sailing, kayaking, jet skis, beach volleyball, ping-pong
and billiards, plus a pool and food and drink service. Prices are approximately 200 GMD for lunch or drinks and use of the pool; 400 GMD per hour for most water sports; and 500 GMD per hour for lessons. It is customary to tip about 25 GMD when using the beach lounge chairs.

- **Abuko Forest and Lamin Lodge Lunch** - Abuko Nature Reserve is home to over 200 bird species and is located between Banjul and Brikama.

- **Basse** - Basse is the eastern-most town in The Gambia, and has a market, waterfront, and friendly locals ("Africa on a Shoestring," 335).

- **The Monkey Park** - The Bijilo Monkey Park, located in Senegambia, offers hikes of varying lengths and affords students the opportunity to view monkeys and various birds in their natural habitats.

- **Katchikali** - Katchikali is a crocodile park located in Bakau. There are plenty of crocodiles to watch, and students can even touch a crocodile under the direction of their tour guide!
The best way to attend cultural events is to make friends with Gambians through meeting other students at UTG or through meeting colleagues at volunteer sites. The Gambians are very friendly and love inviting students to learn more about Gambian culture. Here are other routes to find cultural events.

**Daily Gambian Newspapers** - Daily newspapers include *The Point, The Daily News, Today, The Daily Observer* and *Forroya*. These cost 10 GMD each and provide information on upcoming events, as well as local news.

**Markets** – Markets are excellent daily excursions to experience a part of daily Gambian life. Also, many events are advertised in the markets because of the amount of daily traffic.

**Nightclubs** - Students often enjoy experiencing Gambian nightclubs, most of which are located in the Senegambia tourist area. Female students may not go alone to clubs and are advised to bring male students and trusted Gambian friends, especially male friends, to these clubs. Wednesday night is considered “clubbing” night in The Gambia. The most popular nightclubs include Wow!, Duplex and Aquarius. There are other clubs, as well as some bars with karaoke or jazz music, to choose from.

**Wrestling Matches** - Wrestling matches are very popular in The
Gambia. By watching for fliers in public places and asking others, students may be able to locate one of these matches. The main arena is located in Serrekunda, and admission is about 25 GMD (“Africa on a Shoestring,” 334).

Alliance Franco-Gambienne- The French Alliance is located on the right side of Kairaba Avenue if you are headed towards Westfield. It offers weekly films in French at no charge, frequent West African music concerts for about 100 GMD, art exhibitions, a library, and eight-week French language courses at various levels for approximately 1,350 GMD per course.

The American Corner- This is a newly opened educational center operated by the US Embassy in conjunction with Comium, and is located in the Comium Building on Kairaba Avenue. The Center provides public access to educational materials, including computers and books. It is open Monday through Saturday. Movies are shown on Monday evenings at 6:30 PM and guest lecturers present on a variety of topics on Thursday evenings (Marenah).

The Beach- Old Jeshwang is located within walking distance of the beach, about three miles. Students can go to the beach for free, or there are restaurants and hotels lining the beach, where students can rent a sun bed for about 25 GMD or sit at tables with the purchase of food or drink. The advantage of such establishments is that the businesses restrict access to “bumsters,” so students are less likely to be harassed during their time on the beach.
National Stadium. If you are a devoted exerciser, The Gambia is an excellent place to work out. The student house is a 10-minute walk (5 minute brisk jog) to the National Stadium, where students will find a track, a much-loved gym, and an aerobics room. The track is often used for school events, so you may need to work around school schedules or only use part of the track if a school group is present. The gym has all the basic lifting equipment, but is a little outdated, so proceed with caution and a spotter. It is open from 3 PM until 8 PM on weekdays. Aerobics classes are excellent. They are 100 GMD per month and taught by Mr. Freeman, a very buff Gambian man who is knowledgeable and trustworthy. Aerobics classes are offered five evenings a week, including step aerobics, skip aerobics and low impact aerobics. The classes are offered from 4:15 - 5:15 PM and 5:30- 6:30 PM on Mondays through Thursdays, and from 4:30 – 6:00 PM on Fridays.

Roots Health and Fitness Centre is off of Kairaba Avenue on the right prior to the junction with the Post Office. The owner, Jon, can be reached by email at jon_gomez@hotmail.com or by telephone at 4396585. He is willing to discuss discounts, but a basic membership is 900 GMD per month, including all exercises classes, which are usually held in the mornings.
**Water Sports at the Sun Beach Hotel and Resort on Sun Beach on Cape Point** - The basic price for most windsurfing and kayaking rentals are around 400 GMD per hour, while sailing and jet skis are more expensive. Lessons are available for 500 GMD an hour.

**Football** - For students who enjoy soccer, it is easy to find a football game to join in on, either on the beach or even in Jeshwang. Male students may more easily find games to join in as mainly young men play football informally.

**Running** - Runners are encouraged to keep running while in The Gambia. Just like at home, do not run during the hottest part of the day. Also, run off the side of the road and take your phone with you. KSAC students are not permitted to run around dusk or after dark. Failure to comply can lead to expulsion from the program. Female runners: it is perfectly acceptable for ladies to train (workout) in athletic shorts, but do not wear spandex or very short or tight clothing. It will attract unwanted attention.

**Pool Passes** - Most hotels offer daily pool passes. At the Kairaba hotel, for example, a daily pass is 200 GMD. Some hotels, such as Sun Beach Hotel and Resort, Cocoa Hotel, and Safari Garden, allow students to use their pool, towels and lounge chairs with purchase of food or drinks. It is customary to tip the hotel staff about 50 to 100 GMD in these instances.

**Walking** - Students will probably find that they do a lot more walking here than at home (usually at least one hour per day), which provides a surprising amount of exercise.