

# Cultural Adjustment





A background image of a busy city street. In the foreground, a man in a blue t-shirt and sunglasses holds a sign that says "GO!". Other pedestrians are walking in the same direction. In the background, there are buildings, a red car, and various street signs, including a "P" parking sign and a "3" sign. The overall scene is vibrant and captures the energy of an urban environment.

# This will be an exciting and challenging time

*“Honeymoon Phase” – initial excitement & newness*

- Exploring a new learning environment – US & Berkeley culture
- Increased sense of independence
- Feeling of accomplishment
- General feelings of enthusiasm and positivity



HEARST MEMORIAL MINING BUILDING

# This will be an exciting and challenging time

## *Initial Culture Shock*

- Newness and excitement fades as everyday reality sets in
- Psychological stressors/ emotional challenges
- Dealing with remote learning environment: Zoom fatigue, isolation, time zone differences
- Likely to coincide with busier academic period
- When you communicate, your student may be upset, negative and/ or vulnerable



# Psychological Stressors: Common Concerns of International Students

- Isolation
- Adjusting to differences in the educational system
- Not being understood when they express themselves in their usual ways
- Difficulty making friends or engaging in campus community
- Dealing with misperceptions about their culture or country

# Psychological Stressors: Imposter Syndrome

- I'm an imposter – a fake.
- I'm not as smart or talented as others think.
- I don't deserve to be here; I just got lucky.
- I need to prove myself to others.
- Everyone will realize I'm weak if I ask for help.





# THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

## SURFACE CULTURE

Food  
Flags Festivals  
Fashion Holidays Music  
Performances Dances Games  
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

## DEEP CULTURE

### Communications Styles and Rules:

Facial Expressions Gestures Eye Contact  
Personal Space Touching Body Language  
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations  
Handling and Displaying of Emotion  
Tone of Voice

### Notions of:

Courtesy and Manners  
Friendship Leadership  
Cleanliness Modesty  
Beauty

### Concepts of:

Self Time Past and Future  
Fairness and Justice  
Roles related to Age, Sex,  
Class, Family, etc.

### Attitudes toward:

Elders Adolescents Dependents  
Rule Expectations Work Authority  
Cooperation vs. Competition  
Relationships with Animals Age  
Sin Death

### Approaches to:

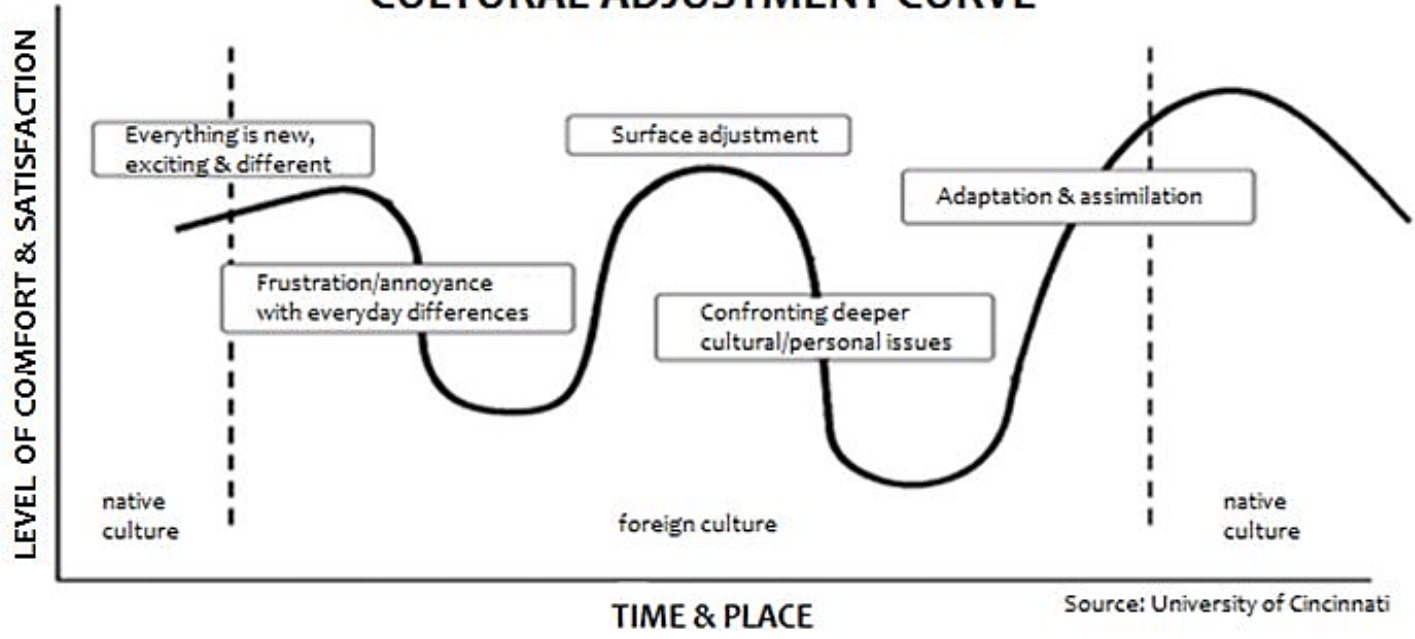
Religion Courtship Marriage  
Raising Children Decision-Making  
Problem Solving



# Berkeley Culture



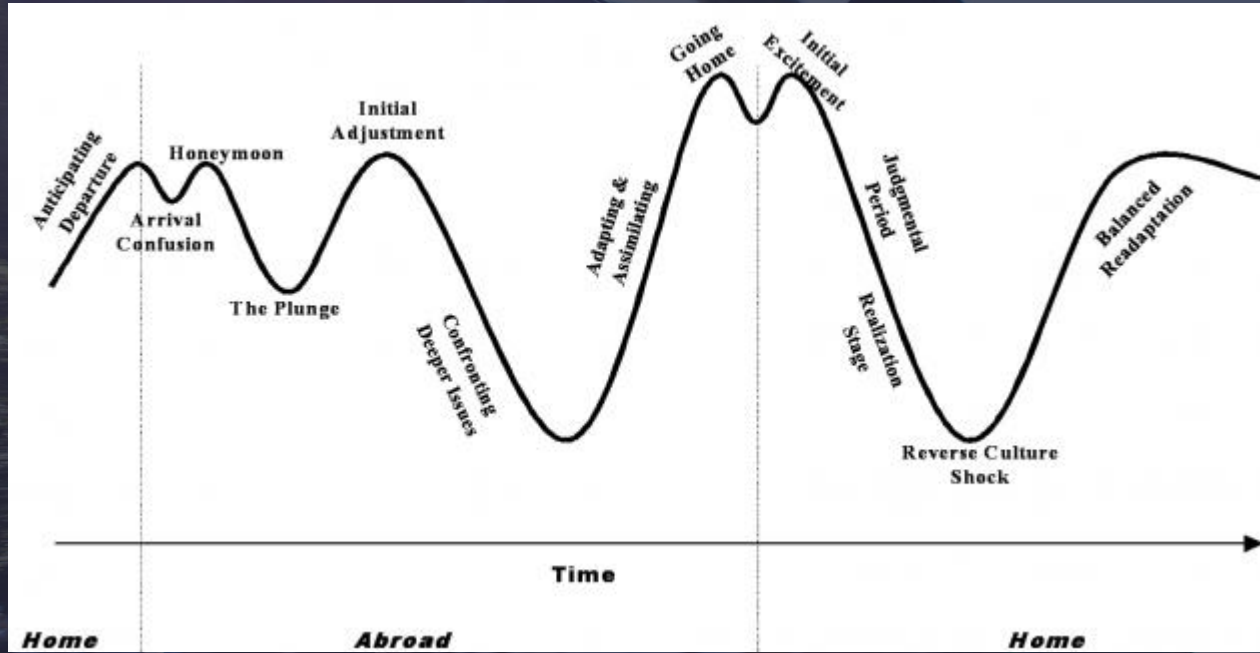
# CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT CURVE



- I love learning about new cultures.
- My studies are challenging, but they are never boring.
- What was the most interesting thing you learned in Berkeley?
- I am starting to understand the differences and have some things in common.
- My family is still in my home country, but my career interests are different.
- I've finally adjusted and understand who I am and how I fit into this environment. I feel balanced and happy.



# Re-entry Cultural Transition



# Student Coping Strategies

Things I can do on my own	Things I can do with others	Things I can remind myself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Keep a journal</i></li><li>• <i>Exercise</i></li><li>• <i>Talk with friends/family about your stress</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Join a club</i></li><li>• <i>Participate in virtual campus events/programs to engage with the community</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>”This is normal”</i></li><li>• <i>“You can do this”</i></li><li>• <i>“This is only temporary”</i></li></ul>



# How Can You Support your Student's Remote Learning?

A young woman with long blonde hair is sitting on the floor, leaning against a laptop. She has her hand to her chin and is looking thoughtfully at the screen. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

- Listen and communicate
- Make space for online learning – create a calm and quiet environment
- Keep a routine
- Make yourself available
- Help find time for fun and active breaks



# International Parent & Family Calendar

Important dates and advice



# International Parents & Families

2020-2021 Calendar



Photo by Koggeshuur

## Berkeley International Office

Congratulations to you and your student for reaching this important milestone! Now that you are part of the UC Berkeley family, Berkeley International Office (BIO) would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and offer a basic overview of your student's first year experience.

This calendar includes suggestions on how to offer support while your adult student learns even more about independence, responsibility, challenges, and successes. We understand that every family and student relationship is different. However, we hope that you will find these tips useful, and that you will refer to the calendar for important dates.



Photo by Elena Zhukova



Photo by Elena Zhukova



Photo by Brittany Hoopes

### A Special Note for Fall 2020

While much of this calendar includes information and advice for students who will be arriving on the UC Berkeley campus in fall, we realize that your student may not be arriving until a future semester and may be starting their studies remotely from your home country. The information on the following pages should assist you in understanding the adjustment period your student will go through when they eventually arrive on campus in the future as well as how you can best support them at that time. Additionally, even students who will not be in the U.S. will be experiencing some cultural and academic adjustment as they get used to taking UC Berkeley classes and interacting with their instructors and their classmates from the U.S. and all over the world. We hope the following pages will help you understand what to expect as they go through this adjustment process.

## Letting Go

College is a time of change and transition for both you and your student. Your student may deal with these changes through mood swings and ambivalence. Being prepared for these changes can sometimes ease the process; the sudden shift from being involved in your student's plans to not being a part of their everyday lives may be jarring and cause a feeling of loss or helplessness. It can be both a liberating and unwelcome change.

**Tips to help you cope with the loss of control as your student leaves for college:**

- You will always have a parent-child relationship, but try to build an adult one as well. Keep in touch through phone calls, emails, video calls, letters, and care packages (most students are excited to receive mail). Let the student have some control in these interactions to allow them a sense of independence.
- Congratulate yourself in helping them get so far. Recognize that the foundation you have set for your student over the years will accompany and support them through their college life and later years.
- Reassure your student that you believe in their abilities, and that they will be fine on their own in college. Allow your student to make their own mistakes. Take pride in their confidence and successes. Help them view so-called "failures" as opportunities to learn and to increase resilience.
- Don't draw out goodbyes; remember that you will see them again before long!
- Focus on the things you enjoyed doing before your student began college. Some parents fill their schedule with new commitments solely to occupy themselves. It's probably best to do things you wanted to but may not have had time for earlier. Focus on yourself or other family for a while.
- Try not to feel guilty if you adjust to your student being in college before or after other parents do. Everyone is different and takes their own time, and this in no way reflects on the quality of love you have for your student. Finding your own healthy life balance will help you from being overly emotional. If you are miserable every time you talk to your student, he or she may feel guilty or sad and, in some cases, may avoid talking to you.

Photo by Kenzie House

## Letting Go (cont.)

**More tips to help you cope with the loss of control as your student leaves for college:**

- Limit any other major changes in your life for a while until you can feel stable and adjusted.
- If you have other children at home, try to avoid using the college student to set an example because this may make them feel devalued.
- Students sometimes seem to be different after some time in college. Try not to judge the quality of these changes—however permanent or impermanent. Let your student enjoy the widening of their world view and altering of thoughts since that is an essential part of the college experience.
- Talk to other parents to validate your feelings and get emotional support.

**Ideas for getting the most out of your conversations and communications:**

- Make a list of items you want to discuss when your student calls. You can cover any important topics and then move on to light-hearted topics without feeling worried that you forgot something.
- Begin your calls with positive news. Share news about yourself and life at home, but don't drag on; give your student a chance to tell you about their life as well.
- Let your student determine the length of your talk. He or she may need to study or go to class. Alternatively, schedule a time to speak in advance.
- Don't ask a question you don't feel ready to hear the answer to. If you respond in a judgmental fashion when your student confides in you, it could limit the information they share in the future.

Photo by Kenzie House



### Nervousness about making new friends

Encourage your student to get involved in an activity or organization that interests them. Berkeley International Office's orientation and social events are a great way to make connections!

### Anxiety about major/career path

The College of Letters and Science advises that the first year may be used for exploring majors and fulfilling university requirements. It is not unusual for students to be uncertain of their major at this point. Students may also contact academic advisers and the Career Center for additional guidance.

### Roommate conflicts

Propose that your student discusses responsibilities and house rules with roommate(s). Students living in dorms may reach out to their Resident Advisers (RA) for advice.

### Adapting to U.S. culture

Encourage your student to be open to trying new things. Berkeley International Office can be a great resource.

## August 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 BIO Undergrad & Parent/Family Orientations	19 BIO Graduate Orientation Early Move-In Day	20	21 Golden Bear Orientation (GBO) Full 2020 semester has date	22 GBO
23 GBO	24 GBO	25 GBO	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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## Financial Stress

Encourage your student to look for on-campus jobs. This is a great time to discuss budgeting and to reflect on expenditure thus far to encourage responsible money habits. A great on-campus budgeting resource is Bears for Financial Success.

## Academic Stress

Remind your student gently about studying proactively, but note that if they do poorly in one class this won't have a huge impact on their average GPA. Encourage visits to office hours and formation of study groups. Again, the Student Learning Center is a great resource!

## Winter Break planning

Encourage your student to start planning their trip early or to plan events during the vacation if they are staying in Berkeley. They can also check out events/activities planned by Berkeley International Office.

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## November 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Daylight Saving Time ends	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Academic & Administrative Holiday	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Send a care package	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Non-Instructional Day	26 Academic & Administrative Holiday	27 Academic & Administrative Holiday	28
29	30 Due to COVID-19, instruction and final exams move online after Thanksgiving	The U.S. holiday season begins in November. Consider talking to your student about plans during the breaks and Academic & Administrative holidays that are coming up over the next three months in order to avoid feelings of restlessness and stress by structuring time.				



### Uncertainty about major, fall course load, or career path

Most students decide on (a) tentative major(s) by sophomore year. The [Berkeley Academic Guide](#) is a useful tool. Suggest that your student consider shadowing someone in their ideal job. Encourage seeking out advice from advisers, counselors, or upperclassmen.

### Summer plans

Discuss options and what is best for your student and family: take classes, study abroad, do an internship, or take a break?

### Taxes

Remind students to visit the [Berkeley International Office tax webpages](#) for general guidelines about filing taxes, regardless of income.

### Visa/work authorization

If your student plans to work off-campus during the summer, remind them to visit BIO for advising. Remind your student to consult the [BIO website](#) to plan ahead for international travel.

## April 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Finalize summer plans	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Send a care package	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Formal classes end	

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Cal Parents: [calparents.berkeley.edu/](https://calparents.berkeley.edu/)

BIO Parents & Families webpage:  
[internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/parents-of-students](https://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/parents-of-students)



# Q&A Session

- First year experience
- Safety, Health & Wellness
- Academics
- Internships & on -campus jobs
- Housing
- Extra-curricular activities & free time
- Your questions!

Sreeja  
Apparaju

Sarah  
(Nguyen)  
Bui

Tatiana Djordjevic  
BIO Adviser

Sudarshan  
Gopalakrishnan

Vedant  
Kajaria

# Helpful Resources

## Visiting Berkeley:

- Clean and safe lodging: <https://calodging.com/clean-safe-certified-members>
- Visit Berkeley Guide: <https://www.visitberkeley.com/plan-your-trip/visitor-guide-request/>

## Campus Resources:

- Cal Parents: <https://calparents.berkeley.edu/>
- Resource Guide: <https://calparents.berkeley.edu/about-us/resource-guide-for-cal-parents/>
- Move-in information: <https://housing.berkeley.edu/move-in>
- Inviting family to the US: <https://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/families/inviting-family-us>



# Upcoming Event for New Students and Parents: Navigating Your Finances in the U.S.



BIO and the Bank of the West present an interactive discussion to help you navigate your finances throughout college. Whether you will be in the U.S. or abroad for your Fall 2020 semester, our experts will provide guidance on managing your money during this next chapter of life.

Register at: <https://bit.ly/BIONavigatingFinances>

The background of the image is a photograph of the University of California gate, featuring a large wrought-iron fence with the words "UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA" inscribed on it. The gate is flanked by stone pillars topped with spherical ornaments. Behind the gate are tall, dense evergreen trees. The entire image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay. The text is centered and written in a white, serif font.

Thank you for attending the  
International Parent & Family Orientation!

Please stay for a virtual tour of the campus!