



Guide to Graduate Life in State College

Welcome

Welcome to State College! This area guide was created by BRIDGE, to assist members of underrepresented and diverse populations in transitioning to life in Central Pennsylvania. BRIDGE is a diversity action alliance consisting of faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Psychology who are interested in promoting and addressing diversity-related issues within our program community. For more information on BRIDGE or information that may be of interest to underrepresented or diverse populations, please visit BRIDGE's website (<http://psych.la.psu.edu/diversity/bridge-diversity-alliance>).

General Diversity Issues

Q. How tolerant is the State College community of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds? My graduate training will involve various types of contact with community members either through research or through clinical work. Are there situations I should be aware of where I should be concerned about my personal safety?

A. As with any town, there is great variability in how accepting and open individual people are to racial differences. Overt instances of race related problems, especially problems related to physical safety, are extremely, extremely, rare. Students and faculty have encountered inappropriate jokes/comments (e.g. "Wow, how can she be Latina? She has blond hair and blue eyes!"), as well as situations where they feel people are staring at them/watching them extra carefully due to their race. Feel free to talk to BRIDGE members about their experiences.

Q. How do I get personal support about my diversity-related concerns?

A. Bridge offers a mentorship group that helps diverse students become more comfortable in the community. Also, feel free to contact anyone in BRIDGE individually. We'd be happy to talk one-on-one with you. Furthermore, you are always encouraged to talk to faculty members – including faculty outside your advisor or your area of training. There are differences in faculty member's comfort level, openness, and commitment to discussions surrounding diversity issues. If you would like to speak with a faculty member, but are unsure of who you want to talk to, we can suggest faculty who have been particularly helpful to students in the past. The university also has student groups and advocates. The Multicultural Resource Center (located in Grange Building) would be a good place to go to find out about these resources. For a list of other available resources for specific groups, see also: <http://www.equity.psu.edu/mrc/links.asp>.

Food

Q. Where can I get international groceries?

A. There are several options! Here is a list highlighting some:

International Grocery Stores

1. Far Corners Oriental Market (1012 W. College Ave.)
- This is the largest and most popular Asian market in town.
2. East Asian Market (215 Blue Course Dr.)
3. That Oriental Store (451 Railroad Ave.)
4. International Market (328 S. Allen St.)
- This market has a wide range of groceries. The store owner is very friendly and if they don't have something that you want, they will usually order it for you.
5. Krishan Indian Grocery (230 W. College Ave #A)
6. Eastern European Market (2110 N. Atherton St.)

American Markets with International Options

1. Wegmans (345 Colonnade Blvd.)
- Wegmans is a great option for Latin foods.
2. Trader Joe's (243 Patriot Ln.)
3. Nature's Pantry (2331 Commercial Blvd.)
- This is a local organic market.
4. The Granary (2766 W. College Ave.)
- This is a local organic market.
5. Giant (255 Northland Ctr, on North Atherton; 222 E. College Ave.)
6. Weis (560 Westerly Pkwy.; 110 Rolling Ridge Rd.; 1471 Martin St.)
- The Weis on Westerly Pkwy maintains a large international section, including international produce, because many international students live nearby that market.
7. Wal-Mart (1665 N. Atherton St.; 373 Benner Pk.)
- Although Wal-Mart does not have many international groceries, they do have a great selection of cooking gadgets used for international cuisine, including Latin cooking.

Q. Where can I find Kosher Food?

A. Wegmans has a selection of kosher meats including Empire chicken, steak, and occasionally turkey. Trader Joe's, Weis, and Giant also have kosher items. Kosher meals can also be found through the Penn State Hillel, and Chabbad, which offer Shabbat dinners and holiday meals. The Pollock Dining Commons also offers Kosher options.

Q. Where can I find Halal Food?

A. The Islamic Society of Central Pennsylvania maintains a Mosque Meat Store, and some Halal food can be purchased from Wegmans and the International Market. Halal lunch and dinner options are available on campus in the North Food District. Many restaurants in town also cater to Halal diners, including India Pavilion, Kaarma, Pita Cabana Grill, and Penn Kebab.

Q. Are there vegetarian and vegan restaurants?

A. You can find vegetarian options in most State College restaurants. There are also many vegan options. You can also refer to this State College dining guide created by the Penn State Vegetarian Club (<http://pennstatevegclub.weebly.com/state-college-dining-guide.html>).

Spirituality

Q. How can I find a place of worship?

A. The Pasquerilla Spiritual Center is a good resource, as there are many religious groups on campus. BRIDGE members are always happy to help you find individuals in the department who might be able to direct you to a place of worship that fits your interests and needs.

Q. I'm Muslim and looking for a mosque. Are there any in State College?

A. Although there are no mosques in State College, the Islamic Society of Central Pennsylvania (<http://iscponline.net>) offers a place for Friday prayers, regular Islamic classes/ halaqas, outreach programs to non-Muslim community, weekend Islamic school, chaplaincy services to Muslim inmates and many other special programs.

Q. I'm Jewish and looking for a synagogue at which to worship, are there many in State College? Are they reform, conservative, or orthodox?

A. There are a few different options. Penn State maintains an active Hillel and Chabad, and State College is home to one synagogue. Although the Hillel primarily serves undergraduate students, it is also home to a growing number of graduate students (join the Facebook group Penn State Jewish Graduate Students for more information about graduate student events). In addition to the Shabbat dinner and service provided by Hillel, Chabad also offers dinner and services for Penn State students. If you would prefer a local congregation, Congregation Brit-Shalom (<http://britshalompa.org/>) is a great option. The congregation is a Reform synagogue, and also offers a monthly potluck dinner.

Q. I'm Mormon and looking for an LDS church. Are there any in State College?

A. There is a Church of Jesus Christ of LDS located at 842 West Whitehall Road, State College, PA 16801-4375. The telephone number is (814) 238-4560.

Q. I'm Christian and fairly left-leaning politically. Are there any churches in town that have tolerant/accepting beliefs towards issues like gay rights, etc.?

A. St. Andrews Episcopal Church (www.standrewsc.org) is a wonderful, warm, accepting and left-leaning congregation. The United Church of Christ (<http://www.faihucc.info/>) is also a historically liberal denomination. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Centre County (<http://uufcc.com/>)– while not specifically a Christian organization– is a welcoming and liberal religious community for people of all faiths and sexual orientations.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender

Q. Is there an LGBT-QIA community in State College?

A. Yes. It is just not as visible as in other, larger cities. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Ally Student Resource Center (Located in 101 Boucke Building on campus) is a great resource. The LGBTQA Student Resource Center also has a film/lecture series, weekly gatherings for students, and an extensive library on LGBT issues (<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/lgbtqa/mission.shtml>). In 2016, Penn State was ranked one of the top 10 schools LGBTQ students by bestschools.com for its LGBTQA Student Resource Center, course offerings, and related funding support.

Q. Are there any LGBT bars/clubs in State College?

A. Yes, Chumley's is located downtown at 108 W. College Ave. Additionally, there is a Rainbow Night at Indigo (112 W. College Ave.) every Sunday night.

Entertainment and Community

Q. Where do you go in State College to dance? Are there any clubs that have a Latin night?

A. There are several dance clubs in downtown State College. Ask current students where they like to go! Additionally, the Ballroom Dance Club has weekly Latin dancing sessions, as well as other types of specialty dance sessions. They also host regular parties that are internationally themed. More information on their events is available at: www.clubs.psu.edu/up/ballroomdance. Other dance activities include student-run organizations (e.g., modern, swing, Latin parties, Persian dance events, and Indian dance clubs) that are open to both undergraduates and graduates. Dance competitions and exhibitions are also hosted at least once or twice a year. Some bars and coffee shops (e.g., Indigo Club and Webster's Café) also host occasional Latin nights.

Q. Are there places in town where you can watch/rent movies in languages other than English?

A. The State Theatre shows artsy movies, often movies that are in other languages a few nights a week. You can also rent Hindi movies at Krishna's Indian grocery store on College Ave. The public library also rents videos and DVDs. And you can always order videos that you want through the PSU library, which is free.

Q. Where can I go for events and activities unique to my culture or to meet people similar to me? Can any connect me with diverse people to live with if I were to move here?

A. There are currently approximately 70 different student organizations on campus for various cultural groups, some of which are unique to only graduate students and have regular events. For a full listing, see <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/hub/studentorgs/orgdirectory/search.aspx> and enter search criteria that match your interests. Additionally, most of the graduate student organizations (see link in last question) can often help incoming students find housing for people of similar backgrounds using their social networks.

Additionally, there are two non-PSU affiliated community living houses that particularly promote diversity through housing and hosting specials events. For the past decade, Houseasaurus, aka the Central Pennsylvania Community Housing, has served as a hub in the community for promoting environmental sustainability, socially responsibility, queer positivity, and egalitarianism. They host weekly cafes that discuss a diverse range of issues, host community dinners Sundays through Thursdays at 7 pm, and host monthly parties or larger events celebrating a range of identities and causes. Houseasaurus is located at 833 W. College Ave (website:

<https://www.facebook.com/Houseasaurus-Co-op-134462925505/?fref=ts>). Another newer hub in the community is the co.space. They focus on creating a global network of residents with diverse interest. See their website at www.thecospace.com. They are located at 244 E. Nittany ave. People can either take part in these groups' events without being a resident or apply to live at either location if they are looking for housing options with people of different backgrounds and interests. Various other non-PSU affiliated, community organizations dedicated diversity issues are also spread throughout town.

Self-Care

Q. Where can an African-American go for a haircut, weaves, perms, or for natural hair services?

A. There are several options:

1. Visions Multicultural Hair (375 E Calder Way)
2. Thee Lasting Look (800 Pike St., Lemont)
3. S'Hair-eng Styling Salon (139 Kelly Alley)
4. Nothing But Hair Unisex Hair Salon (232 W College Ave)

There are also stylists at other salons such as Cherry Lane Salon who have experience styling African American hair, but you would want to call and ask specifically when making an appointment.

Q. Are there any hair salons that specialize in cutting and styling Asian hair?

1. SZ Styling (Unisex) (311 W Beaver Ave)
2. Hair Time (234 E College Ave)

Q. *Are there health service providers in town who are tolerant and flexible to cultural differences? Are there places with translators for people where English may not be the primary language?*

A. Yes. Students primarily use University Health Services (UHS). The physicians there are used to working with a diverse group of students from varied backgrounds and are generally sensitive to differences among students. In addition, there are physicians from minority groups on staff as well as physicians with particular interests in working with diverse groups of students. If there are language concerns for yourself or family members, you can request a translator to accompany you on the visit (there are translators available for over 50 different languages). See <http://www.sa.psu.edu/uhs/> for more info.

Research

Q. Is there university funding support for doing research with diverse populations? Are there diverse communities to do research on?

A. Yes. Many students have won grants to do their own research with diverse populations from those in central Pennsylvania to those in other countries, such as South Africa. Special PSU centers dedicated to diversity in graduate school include the American Indian Leadership Program African Research Center, the Commission on LGBT Equity, Commission for Women, and the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity. For more on these resources and other diversity resources: <http://equity.psu.edu/diversity-resources> or <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/diversity/>.