

## Morrisville State College

### INTRODUCTION

**Welcome to the Morrisville State College learning community and family.**

**The following document is designed to cover what you need to know before and after arriving in Morrisville;** planning for your arrival, applying for your student visa, health requirements and health report, things to bring, things to leave at home, procedures related to your arrival in the US, cellular phones, laptops computer issues, driving an automobile in New York and last but not least a summary of the items covered in this document.

Enclosed with this text is your Form I-20 or Certificate of Eligibility. **Check to make certain that all of the information on your I-20 is correct, e.g., your name is spelled correctly, your date of birth is correct, etc.** Please note, before you can apply for your visa you must pay a \$200 USD SEVIS fee. The SEVIS fee receipt, your I-20 and other pertinent information, e.g. proof of your financial ability to pay for your study must be brought to the embassy or consulate that conducts your interview for your F-1 Student Visa.

**Canadian students please note that the SEVIS fee applies to citizens of Canada.** However, Canadians are not subject to the visa requirements.

#### **SEVIS Fee**

All students that are applying for an F-1 visa after 1 September 2004 must pay a \$200 USD SEVIS fee prior to applying for their visa. Information concerning the SEVIS fee procedures may be found at: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/index.htm>.

### PLANNING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

The Office for International Education is part of the Academic Enrichment Center. This will enable international students to participate in the extended orientation program offered by the Academic Enrichment Center.

In addition, you will be able to move into your dorm room if you arrive up to 4 days prior to the official start date. If you decide to arrive sooner then here is a list of local motels may be found at the College's website in the admissions section. Visit: [http://www.morrisville.edu/admissions/local\\_lodging.aspx](http://www.morrisville.edu/admissions/local_lodging.aspx) for a list of motels.

Please look at item 5 which is located on page 1 of your I-20. This section indicates your major and the latest date by which you should report to Morrisville State College. **You may arrive in the US 30 days prior to this date.** This date is the first day of classes. You will not be admitted to Morrisville State College if you arrive after that date without prior notice. Please note that you will need a new I-20 with a new arrival date. However, please note that the latest date for which you will receive an I-20 is **1 week after the start date.**

However, if you are over the age of 21 you may choose to live in off-campus housing. Morrisville is a small community and decent off-campus housing is difficult to find. I highly recommend you arrive before your reporting date in order to locate suitable accommodations before Orientation and registration activities begin. You may arrive 30 days prior to the reporting date located in item 5 or your I-20.

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### **Transportation to Morrisville**

#### *Airport*

The closest major airport to Morrisville, NY is Hancock International Airport [SYR] in Syracuse, NY.

#### *Bus/Train stations*

The closest bus/train stations are located in Syracuse and Utica.

For your safety and convenience, I or another college representative will pick you up in Syracuse if you arrive before 2000 hrs. The pick-up service for the Syracuse airport, train/bus station and the Utica bus/train station is provided free of charge to all international students.

You will need to make overnight motel accommodations if you arrive after 2000 hrs. Again, a list of local motels may be found at the College's website in the admissions section.

Visit: [http://www.morrisville.edu/admissions/local\\_lodging.aspx](http://www.morrisville.edu/admissions/local_lodging.aspx) for a list of motels.

There are a number of local livery and taxi services that provide transportation to and from the Syracuse airport and train/bus station and the Utica train/bus station.

### **Orientation**

You will need to participate in the Orientation Program if you did not attend one of the programs during the summer. The orientation program is held on the start date.

### **Welcome Weekend**

The activities connected to Welcome Weekend begin on 22 August 2009. You will be able to participate in scheduled shopping trips to a local department store organized by the Orientation staff. Please note that participation in the extended orientation will enable you to do your necessary shopping. These trips will be scheduled in a manner that will allow you to do your laptop training or go to your school meeting.

### **Travel Documents**

In order for you to enter the United States as a F-1 student you will need the following documents:

- A F-1 visa issued by a consular official from a non-US embassy or consulate [unless you are a Canadian citizen];
- An endorsed Certificate of Eligibility or I-20;
- A passport that will be valid at least 6 months beyond your proposed entry date in the US;
- An original or copy of your SEVIS fee receipt, and
- Documents that prove your ability to pay for your schooling. Please note that you may be asked to produce the financial statements when you enter the United States.

**Canadians are not subject to the F-1 visa requirement.**

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**Important Note:** If your plans change, and you decide not to attend Morrisville State College, return your I-20 to the Office for International Education and notify the Admissions Office of your decision. If you wish to defer your admission to a subsequent semester, you will need to put the request in writing when you contact these offices. Please note that if you do not return your I-20 you will be listed as a “no show” and if you entered the US on another school’s I-20 your life will be perhaps unnecessarily complicated. You may be required to explain to the Department of Homeland Security your reason for not informing Morrisville State College about your change in plans and why you did not return your Morrisville State College I-20. You could be charged with entering the United States in a fraudulent manner; so please return your Morrisville State College I-20 if you decide to not attend our school.

Remember that you must hold a passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the United States.

### APPLYING FOR YOUR STUDENT VISA

#### **When to Apply**

If you are currently abroad, and do not yet have a valid U.S. student visa, you generally apply for one at the U.S. embassy or consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it is generally more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

You should apply for your student visa well in advance of the date you would like to depart for Morrisville. The months of June, July and August are very busy times at the US embassies and consulates world-wide, and it is important for you to have your visa in time to arrive and begin orientation and registration activities on August 21. Appointments are now mandatory for all student visas, and some U.S. embassies and consulates require that appointments be made at least four to eight weeks in advance. All U.S. embassies and consulates have a website where you can read the latest information on visa procedures. Visit: <http://usembassy.state.gov/> to locate embassy or consulate near you.

#### **What To Bring With You to the Visa Interview**

Be sure to bring the following with your to the visa appointment:

- Passport
- Required photo(s)
- Visa fee or proof of visa fee payment
- U.S. non-immigrant visa application forms (unless you will be completing it at the consulate or embassy)
- Morrisville admissions letter
- Morrisville SEVIS I-20
- Test scores and academic records
- Proof of English proficiency
- Proof of financial support
- Evidence of ties to your home country
- Any other documents required by the embassy or consulate

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Remember that if you plan to attend Morrisville, you must present the visa officer with an I-20 issued by Morrisville State College. You cannot apply for a U.S. visa using another school's I-20 and the attempt to attend Morrisville. An entry into the US will be considered a fraudulent entry by the U.S. immigration authorities. In addition, you will not be allowed to enroll as an F-1 student at Morrisville State College.

### Strategies for the Visa Appointment

You are well advised to consider the following matters prior to your visa appointment since you may be asked about each item.

1. **Academics:** Be definite and clear about your educational plans. You should be able to explain precisely what you wish to study and why you chose Morrisville for your education. Be especially prepared to explain reasons for studying in the United States rather than your country.
2. **English:** Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English. Do not bring parents or family members with you to the visa interview. The consular official will want to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.
3. **Ties to your Home Country:** You will need to demonstrate convincing reasons for consular officials to believe that you intend to return home after studies in the United States. You should emphasize your home country ties such as future employment, family obligations, property or investments that you own or will inherit, and clear explanations of how you plan to use your education to help your country or pursue a career when you return home.
4. **Financial documentation:** Be prepared to prove financial ability to pay for your education and living expenses. While some students will be able to work part time during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their education. You must show the consular officer that you have the annual amount in United States dollars listed on your I-20. Your financial evidence should be in the form of bank statements, affidavits, of support, etc.
5. **Be Concise:** Because of the volume of visa applications, all consular officials are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impression they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers short and to the point.
6. **Not all countries are the same:** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from these countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities in the United States.
7. **Dependents remaining at home:** If you have a spouse and/or children remaining behind in your home country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular official gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support them, your student visa will almost surely be denied.

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### Visa Denial or Visa Delay

The vast majority of Morrisville students will be successful in obtaining their student visas. Despite this, a small number of students may have their visa application denied.

The most common reasons for visa denial are:

- Failure to prove sufficient ties to your home country, or
  - Failure to provide sufficient evidence of financial support
- The visa officer must verbally inform you of the reasons for the visa denial. If your visa is denied, please send an e-mail message to [danae@morrisville.edu](mailto:danae@morrisville.edu) and provide the date and location of your visa interview, and details regarding the reasons given by the visa officer for the denial.

Much more common than a visa denial is a visa delay. This is why it is so important to apply for your visa EARLY! Here are some of the most common reasons for visa delays:

- Visa delays can occur when there are closings or reduced hours at U.S. visa issuing posts abroad due to political instability in the host country
  - Student or scholar's record does not appear in the SEVIS system at the U.S. embassy or consulate, even though the student or scholar presents a SEVIS I-20.
- If you are told that your record does not appear in the visa officer's SEVIS system, immediately contact Elizabeth Dana, International Student Advisor at [danae@morrisville.edu](mailto:danae@morrisville.edu) giving the date and location of your visa interview. Mr. Huerta will in turn contact the appropriate authority to have your SEVIS record resubmitted directly to the location where you have applied for your visa.
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant is determined to be pursuing a "sensitive area of study" as indicated on the State Department's Technology Alert List at <http://travel.state.gov/state147566.html>. Please note that Morrisville DOES NOT offer a major or area of concentration in any of these sciences or engineering-related fields since our curriculum in this area is largely at the associate degree level.
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant is male, between the age of 16-46 and a citizen of or born in one of the designated countries requiring security clearances (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).
- The need for a security clearance for any non-immigrant visa applicant male or female, age 16 or older who is a national of or permanently residing in Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan or Syria. Such individuals will not be issued visas unless the applicant can show evidence that he or she is not a threat to U.S. national security.
- The U.S. Department of State requires that all applicants for non-immigrant visas be interviewed. This policy has created delays at visa issuing posts around the world.

Similar to a visa denial, the visa officer must verbally inform you of the reasons for the visa delay. If your visa is delayed, please send an e-mail message to [danae@morrisville.edu](mailto:danae@morrisville.edu) and provide the date and location of your visa interview, along with details regarding the reason given by the visa officer for the delay.

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The U.S. State Department has prepared a very useful website that deals with student visas. The URL is: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>.

Please look at the following section on student visas:  
[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1268.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html)

### **Special Note for Citizens of Canada**

Citizens of Canada are not required to obtain a U.S. visa to enter the United States as an F-1 student. However, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will inspect your papers, either at a pre-inspection site in Canada or upon entry to the United States. You must have with you:

- A Canadian passport that will be valid for at least 6 months
- Your admission letter to Morrisville
- Your Morrisville I-20 Proof of financial support that corresponds to the information on your I-20

It is essential that you enter the United States in the appropriate status, so be sure to have complete documentation with you.

### IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN THE UNITED STATES

F-1 Students:

If you already have valid F-1 student status by being enrolled at another school, college or university in the United States, by now you have already completed the required Enrollment Verification Form and requested that the international student advisor at your current school releases your SEVIS record to Morrisville. Your new Morrisville I-20, which is endorsed for pending transfer, will be mailed to you as soon as the release date for your SEVIS record (as determined by your previous school) is reached. Your transfer will be completed once your enrollment at Morrisville is confirmed. A new I-20 will be issued to you that states in section three "Continued attendance at this school." Again, this will only be done once you have reported to the international Student Advisor, are fully registered and attended the SEVIS workshop.

### HEALTH REQUIREMENTS AND HEALTH REPORT

You will be informed of any health and immigration requirements when you apply for your visa. The College requires, as a condition of enrollment that all students have a Medical History and Health Evaluation Form completed by a physician and submitted to the Matthias Student Health Center no later than the fifth Friday after classes begin. You must comply with certain New York State immunization requirements in order to attend the College. For example, you must have TWO (2) MMR injections (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) in order to attend classes. Please note that you will be responsible for paying for immunization injections. They are not covered by the international SUNY health insurance plan. The College highly recommends that you decide to have your physical examination done in the United States; it will be at your own expense and is NOT covered by the SUNY international health insurance plan.

Please bring your eyeglass or contact lens prescription in case you need to replace them due to loss or theft.

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Please note that if you have a positive tuberculin skin test you will need to submit a chest x-ray. All x-ray readings must be translated into English if necessary. The Mathias Student Health Center is prepared to provide skin test at no cost to you. Further information about health requirements and services, including the health form, can be found at: [http://www.morrisville.edu/health\\_center/Default.aspx](http://www.morrisville.edu/health_center/Default.aspx).

Temperatures vary considerably from year to year. During spring, summer, and fall, moderate period of rainfall occurs; snow falls periodically during the winter months. Three basic types of clothing are essential. In winter, heavy jackets or overcoats, hats, scarves, gloves, and boots are needed. During chilly autumn and spring days, raincoats or medium- weight wool coats or jackets are worn outdoors, sweaters indoors. A light-weight jacket is can be necessary for cool nights during the spring, summer and fall. Climate and clothing: New York State has a varying climate with four distinct seasons:

Summer	June - September	50 to 90 degrees	10 to 32 degrees
Fall	September - November	20 to 80 degrees	7 to 26 degrees
Winter	December – March	-20 to 45 degrees	-29 to 7 degrees
Spring	April- June	40 to 72 degrees	4 to 22 degrees

### THINGS TO BRING

Personal items: Most students like to bring examples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, tapes, or CDs, map, or other items descriptive of their country and culture, both to show interested Americans and to provide a touch of home decoration in their new homes. You may want to bring items you use regularly that may not be readily available, or may be more expensive, in the United State—For examples, eyeglasses, cameras, watches, or portable radios. You may also have the opportunity to visit a duty- free port where such items may be purchased at a reduced cost.

Basic furniture is provided in campus residence halls, but bed linens, blankets, pillows, and towels must be purchased. You might consider bringing a bed sheet, a light blanket, and a towel with you from home before moving into a residence hall. In any event, you will be taken to a local department store to purchase linens and other necessities. The service is provided free of charge at all international students.

THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME You can obtain a booklet on customs regulations at the consulate or embassy where you acquire your visa. Prohibited items include some foodstuffs, narcotics, and items for resale. For more information, visit the website of the US Customs Service at: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel>.

Since Students are expected to buy required textbooks for all courses, and supplemental reading materials

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for review and research are available in libraries, you need not bring used in pervious study.

Please be aware that you will need to use a college supplied laptop if you are enrolled in a laptop program. Laptop programs are listed in: <http://helpdesk.morrisville.edu/Curriculum.htm>. A discussion of the various laptop configurations may be found at:

<http://www.morrisville.edu/thinkpad/laptopcentral.htm>.

### Arranging for mail

Until you have a mailing address in Morrisville feel free to have your letters or parcels sent to you in care of the Office for International Education, 319 Crawford Hall, Morrisville State College, Morrisville, NY 13408, U.S.A. However, please be aware that Morrisville State College and/or the Office for International Education cannot be held responsible for the security of any parcels or mail forwarded to this address.

## ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES

### Port of Entry Procedures

You will be able to finalize your travel plans once you have obtained your F-1 U.S. student visa. Be sure to have your I-20 form (For F-1 visas) along with your passport when you go through your immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry. Remember that if you plan to attend Morrisville State College, you will be required to present a certificate of eligibility endorsed for study at the college.

**DO NOT** under any circumstances enter the United States using another school's certificate of eligibility. Your entry into the United States will be considered to be a fraudulent entry by the U.S. Immigration authorities and that may subject you to a variety of legal sanctions including deportation from the U.S.

**DO NOT** attempt to enter the United States on a visitor/tourist visa (B-2) unless it is designated "Prospective Student" by a consular officer. The U.S. Immigration Service rarely authorizes a change of status from a B-2 to F-1. You will be prevented from Enrolling in the College until your change of status application is approved. Please note that the change of status process may take several months including a denial of your request to obtain F-1 status.

**DO NOT** enter the United States under the visa waiver program which is available to citizens from nearly 30 countries throughout world. The waiver program is designed for tourists only, and attending school under the waiver program is a clear violation of U.S. immigration law.

Expect to go through both immigration and customs inspection at the U.S. port of entry. You may also be required to go through a pre-inspection procedure at certain airports abroad. At the immigration booth, present your passport, your I-20 and your completed I-94 arrival/departure card (which was distributed on the airplane). Expect to have your index fingers scanned for fingerprint purposes and a digital photograph taken, as required by the new U.S. federal regulations.

In the vast majority of cases, there will be no difficulty. In certain cases, if there is some problem with your documents, you may be issued a 30-day entry on your I-94 card and issued a form I-515, usually with

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instructions to see your international student advisor. Examine your I-94 card carefully as you leave the immigration booth. F-1 students should have their I-94s marked “D/S” which means Duration of Status, along with a stamp indicating the date you entered the United States. If an expiration date is written on the I-94 instead of “D/S,” and you are in F-1 status, see the International Student Advisor as soon as possible.

Anyone who is denied admissions at a U.S. port of entry should be very cautious about arguing with the immigration official. You may risk being issued “expedited removal”, which now entails a five-year bar on any admission to the United States. Please try to contact the International Student Advisor for assistance if you are denied admissions. However, you should make it known to the immigration official that you are willing to withdraw your application for admissions to the country rather than be subject to expedited removal.

### Money

You should consider exchanging your home currency for U.S. dollars before your departure. However, you SHOULD NOT travel with a large amount of cash on your person or in your luggage. There is a good chance that you will lose your money due to theft or loss, i.e., you lose your bag. If you anticipate bringing large sums of money to the United States, ask a bank about the safest and most convenient means of carrying or transferring funds. If you make arrangements for funds to be transferred in U.S. dollars to a U.S. bank before you leave home, that money will be available to you when you arrive on campus. Foreign currency is not available in most U.S. cities, and the University and all local businesses accept only U.S. dollars.

When you arrive in the United States, you should have sufficient funds to cover your expenses when you reach Morrisville. The amount depends, of course, on your travel plans. Once you have decided on your itinerary and estimated expenses, you may wish to purchase traveler’s checks in U.S. dollars for the amount of money you need. Traveler’s checks, obtained at banks or travel offices, can be cashed by banks and most businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and airports.

It is also advisable to carry a small amount of U.S. cash—at least fifty dollars in paper currency and two or three dollars in coins or “change” for telephones, baggage lockers, bus fares, and tips. The lower denominations of U.S. paper money are: \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills; coins are 1 cent, (penny, \$.01), 5 cents (nickel, \$.05), 10 cents (dime, \$.10), 25 cents (quarter, \$.25), 50 cents (half-dollar, \$.50) and 1 dollar (\$1). Payment of tuition, fees, and other charges is at registration (when you enroll for classes). Payment may be made by cash, check or credit card (American Express, Discover, Visa or MasterCard only). Please contact with Ms. Marion Gaslin during registration to arrange for a deferment of your charges if you are unable to make full payment at that time. You will be charged a late fee if you fail to make special arrangements with Ms. Gaslin during the registration period. Please be aware that little if any financial aid is available for international students at the College. Do not plan on attending Morrisville State College under the assumption or expectation that you may be awarded a scholarship or can work on a part-time basis in order to offset your own educational expenses for the duration of your studies. In general, international students are prohibited from working off-campus and there are a limited number of on-campus work situations. No long-term loan funds are available through the College or the Morrisville College Foundation. Therefore, all students must bring enough money to cover their expenses.

Married students who wish to have their families join them should realize their financial burdens. A married couple who can live inexpensively will require at least \$5000 more per year than a single student will.

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Additional funds are necessary for each accompanying child for a minimum standard of living. Visas are not issued to the family of students unless they have sufficient funds for dependents in addition to the amount required for the single student. Many students find it best to delay bringing their families until they have found housing and settled in the community.

### CELLULAR PHONES

Each student living in a residence hall or the Honors House will receive a cell phone. The College no longer has hard wired telephones located in residence halls or the Honors House. For information regarding cellular phones see:

[http://mac.morrisville.edu/tech/cellphone.aspx?info=1.](http://mac.morrisville.edu/tech/cellphone.aspx?info=1)

### DRIVING IN NEW YORK STATE

Holders of international driver's license do not need to obtain a New York State driver's license. For information about driving an automobile in New York see:

[http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/license.htm#driversfromothernations.](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/license.htm#driversfromothernations) For information about registering a vehicle in New York see:

[http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/register.htm#register.](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/register.htm#register)

### SUMMARY AND REVIEW OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We hope this information is helpful to you as you arrange for your new educational experience. You are encouraged to re-read it and carefully note the items that pertain to your situation. Please pay careful attention to your requirements and obligations. To summarize:

1. Make sure your travel documents are in order. Do not finalize your arrangements until you have your passport, I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility) and visa stamp. You may enter the United States only if your Certificate of Eligibility is endorsed for the College in which you initially intend to enroll.
2. Take care of your financial obligations and arrange for proper monetary transfer from your home country to the United States. Carefully review the requirements for obtaining foreign exchange. Make sure you and your family have prepared adequate funds to cover your stay at MSC.
3. Plan to arrive on campus on the date designated in section 5 of your I-20. Students should promptly submit their deposit along with their commitment form. Please take time to carefully fill out your rooming preferences if you are planning on living in a residence hall.
4. You will need to enroll for at least 12 hours to maintain your F-1 student status. Please contact the international student advisor before registering for less than 12 hours even if this is suggested by your academic advisor.
5. Be prepared to discuss your academic plans and interests with your academic advisor. PLEASE do not rely on others to plan your program for you. You will be able to drop and add classes during the first week if you wish to adjust your academic schedule. Remember to closely consult with your academic advisor during the orientation program to ensure that you will be able to graduate in a timely manner from Morrisville.

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6. If you do not plan to enroll at Morrisville in the semester for which you have been admitted, return the I-20 (certificate of Eligibility) to Ms. Elizabeth Dana, Office for International Education, Academic Enrichment Center, Morrisville State College, Morrisville, NY 13408 and notify Mr. Ryan Clarke, International Admissions Officer, Admissions Office, Morrisville, NY 13408 of your decision to defer your admissions or to withdraw your application for admissions to the College.

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Morrisville State College let me extend to you a warm welcome to our educational community.

Elizabeth Dana  
International Student Advisor  
Morrisville State College  
Morrisville, NY 13408  
315-684-6406 [work]  
315-684-6503 [fax]  
[Danae@morrisville.edu](mailto:Danae@morrisville.edu) [e-mail]