

FAQs for Virtual International Partners (VIP) Program Participants

What is the VIP program?

The Virtual International Partners (VIP) program connects international students with students attending San José State University for a semester-long virtual exchange. Participants are assigned partners and virtually meet to have discussions on a variety of topics (ex: food, holidays, family, school, etc.), learn about each other and develop friendships.

What is expected of me?

You will be required to virtually meet with your partner(s) for a number of sessions throughout the semester to discuss designated topics. We ask that you commit to the entire semester timeline and be available to engage with your partner on a regular basis. This means being responsive to your partner(s) and responding to any communications from them or the Study Abroad and Away office in a timely manner. There will also be some opportunities to participate in discussions to reflect on what you're learning, in addition to a live session at the end of the program that will bring all participants together for final reflection and celebration; we highly encourage you to attend and participate in these events.

How long should meetings last? How often should we meet?

You will be provided with a program schedule, which will outline which weeks you are expected to meet with your partner and what topic to discuss during that meeting. The sessions will take place approximately every other week. During an assigned week, you should be meeting with your partner for a minimum of one hour.

How do we figure out the time for meeting? What about different time zones?

This will be up to you and your partner(s) to decide what time works best for you. We understand that there may be a significant time difference, but there are some blocks of time that should be reasonable for both you and your partner. We will provide a resource and some tips on how to identify a time that will work for both of you when connecting you with your partner.

What are the meetings/topics about?:

Each meeting will have a different topic to focus on (ex: food, holidays, family, school, etc.). We'll provide you with some potential questions that you can ask each other to get the conversation started. We'll send you the list of questions for that topic the week before you should be meeting for that session.

How many partners will I have?

You may be assigned between 1-2 partners who attend San José State University. If you have more than one partner, we ask that you try to schedule your sessions so that you can communicate and meet together as a group, as much as possible.

How will I be matched with a partner?

As part of the application process, you will complete a brief form that contains some questions about yourself. Your answers will help provide the Study Abroad and Away office with information needed to match you with a partner. We try the best we can to match you up based on similar interests or preferences, but there could be some differences too. This is part of the experience, to learn something new! We ask you to be open-minded, respectful and willing to communicate with the partner(s) assigned to you.

Why should I participate?

There are many reasons to participate in the VIP program! Some of the benefits from participating include:

- Learning about U.S. culture and university life
- Reflecting and sharing about your own culture
- Making a new friend and expanding your global network
- Improving your communication skills

Plus, it's completely free and flexible to your schedule!

How do I sign up?

If you are interested in participating, please contact us at spartansabroad@sjsu.edu and we can send you a link to a form you will need to fill out.