

— CHI ALPHA INTERNATIONALS —

NAVIGATING YOUR JOURNEY

*A Post-Graduation Guide for
International Students*





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Visit the [XAI Re-Entry website](#) for additional resources!



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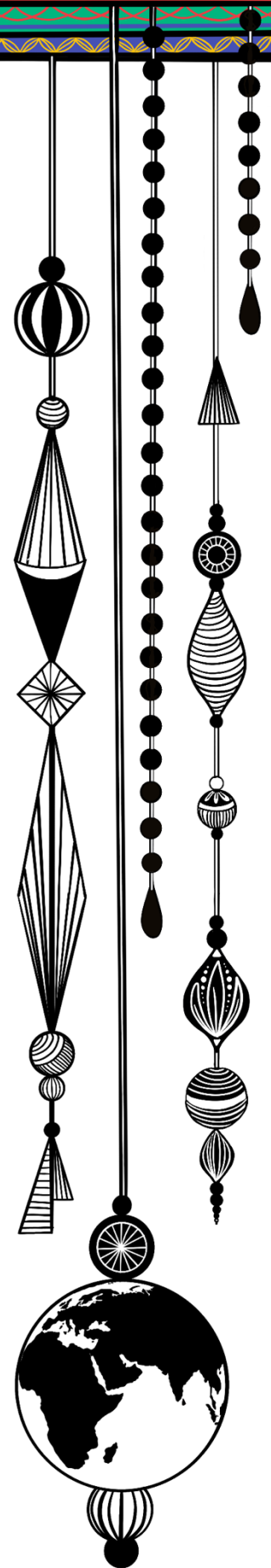
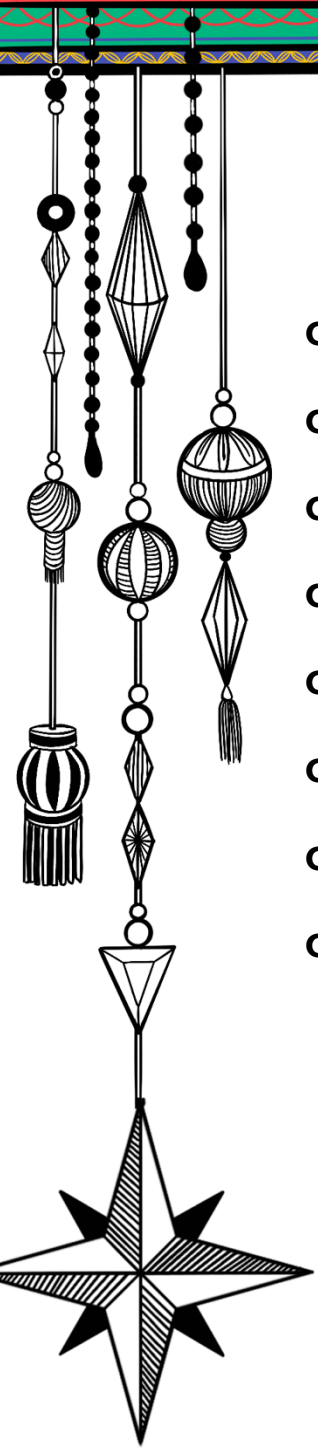
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Your Post Academic Transition

As you have studied here in the U.S., you may be looking toward what life will be like after your university study. From the moment Jesus created you to this moment, (Ephesians 1:4) and even before you stepped onto the plane to study in the United States, Jesus has invited you into His love and purpose. He continues to invite you into a life with Him, even after your time at university. Jesus wants to walk this life with you, to provide peace and joy during all the ups and downs transition to a new phase in life will bring.

Your Post Academic Transition is your time after your university study, whether you go back home, go to another country, or stay here in America. Whether you continue with more study or go work in the marketplace, Jesus is inviting you to walk with Him on this journey as you navigate your Post Academic Transition. He wants to be your guide!

Why Prepare?

Experiences shape us. As you have lived here in the United States, studying, and making memories you have become a different person. New hobbies, meal preferences, new friendships, exposure to a new culture, etc. have shaped you. It is important to process your Post Academic Transition through the lens of who you are now. (Think Home).



"I needed someone who would process with me the experiences which shaped me from who I used to be and where I was at, to who I am and where I am at now."

- Former International Student from Saudi Arabia



Moving into a new chapter of life can bring change and unexpected twists and turns. The great news is, we want to walk with you! Jesus wants to walk with you on this journey toward your next chapter, through it all. He never changes no matter where you are.

Transition comes with its own set of challenges and experiences. It is vital to process, set realistic expectations and plan for what is to come and how you will respond and approach the new context.

How to Use this Guide

Once a compass points true north, only then can you know the direction of east, west and south. From there, you can make decisions about which direction to go. Use this guide as a compass as you navigate through your Post Academic Transition. Jesus wants to be your true north - to establish your east, west and south as you process through all you're your experiences here in the U.S. and how they will impact you as you move onto a new chapter in life.

Each chapter is written specifically with you in mind, with the purpose of equipping you and giving you tools to use now and in the future. From preparing to face challenges ahead to setting yourself up for success, we want you to be prepared, cared for and strong and able to apply what you have learned during your time studying overseas. **Spend time processing and pondering through each topic, question, and challenge. Sit with a close friend and talk through these topics. Share what you are feeling and thinking. There are common themes to everyone's journey that are important to walk through.**



Processing Transition

Where Are You Going?

As you begin your Post Academic Transition journey, it is important to look ahead to the potential direction you are trying to go. Will you be staying in the U.S. for more academic studies or a career? Are you moving to a different country? Will you be returning home? (Think Home).

What are your motivations for your move? Think through the examples below:

Sense of Belonging

Career Aspiration

Family Needs

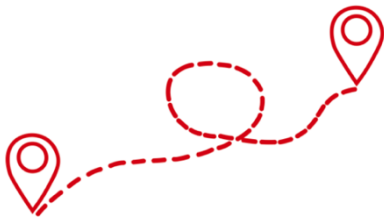
Other: _____

It is ok if you do not know the answer right now! Begin to think through what the possibilities are. This season has been one full of memories, experiences, and new ideas. It is exciting to look ahead to a new season full of even more new memories, experiences, and ideas!

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”**

Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

1. If you know what your next step is after graduation, write it here.
2. If you do not know what your next step is after graduation, write down what you are considering and thinking about pursuing.
3. What are next steps you need to take to move forward in your plans for post-graduation?

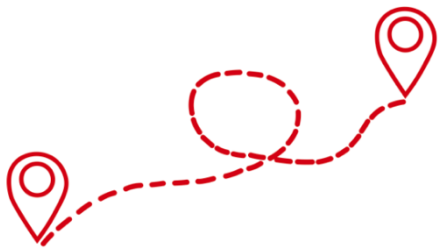


Challenge: Journal and process about your experience here in the U.S. What were aspects of your journey that made it enjoyable? What people influenced your life while being here? What are things you learned that you would like to take onto the next chapter with you?

Your Spiritual Journey

As you have come to the United States and began studying at your university, you have been connected to great friendships with those in Chi Alpha. It is important to look inside and take an inventory of your spiritual journey. Take some time to reflect on your beliefs and your spiritual walk. (Returnee Handbook).

1. What are your beliefs?
2. How have your beliefs influenced you while making decisions here in the U.S.?
3. How did you get involved with Chi Alpha?
4. Who introduced you to Jesus for the first time? How did you meet this person? What influence have they had on your life?
5. What are your current thoughts about Jesus and Christianity?
6. Reflect on a time when you were struggling and how you overcame it.
7. How has your spiritual walk changed since studying at university?



Challenge: It is important to understand how to share our experiences and how it will be most effective in different cultures. Write down your experiences here in the U.S. and how you would share it with a friend from your home context.

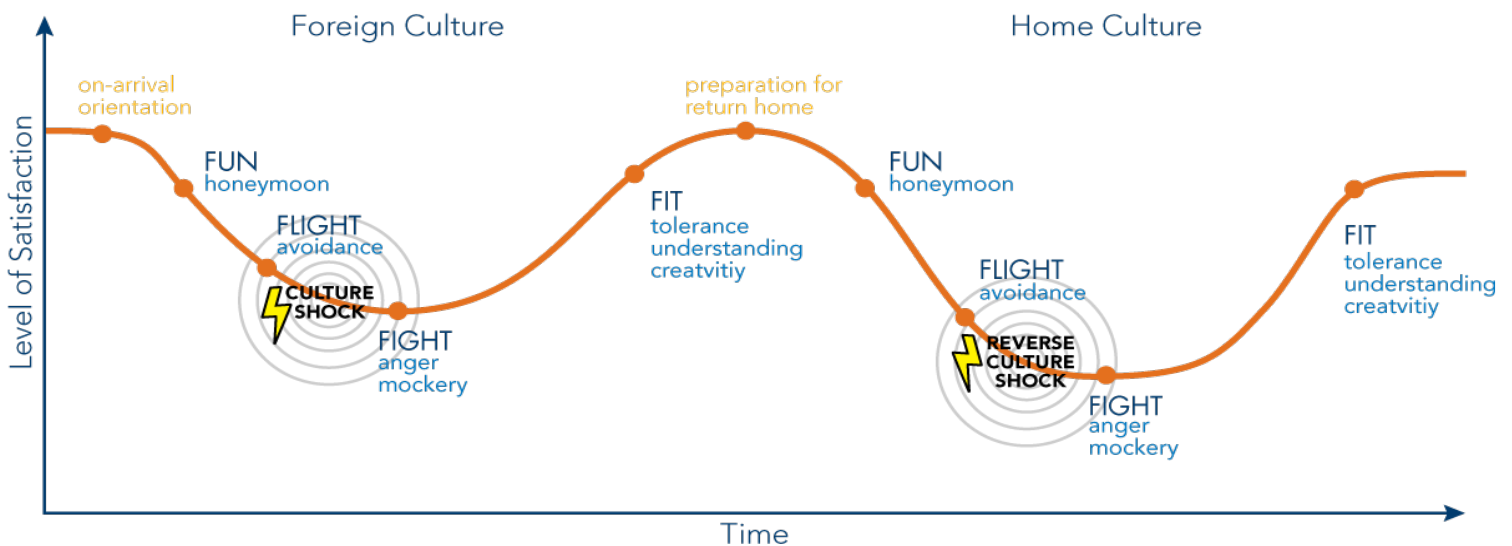


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The U Curve

Just as you needed to adapt to your new environment when you arrived in the U.S., you will need to adapt to your new environment in the next place you will be going. Lysgaard (sociology professor from the University of Oslo, Norway) developed a tool to help describe the transition phenomenon, called the U-Curve. It describes different feelings that people experience when entering a new environment. **This curve will vary person to person based on their experiences.** (Think Home).

STAGES OF TRANSITION



One may actually experience several high and low points in each transition. Also, multiple and simultaneous "U" curves may be experienced, with academic adjustment happening at a different rate than social or emotional transition, for example.

This diagram is available as a bookmark through the InterVarsity Store at tiny.cc/bkmmk

Lisa Espineli Chinn & David Pollock © 2011 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA

1. What blessings will you be leaving behind? How can you express thankfulness for these things? How will you deal with the loss of these things?
2. Do you expect to feel the same level of discomfort adapting to your home culture when you go back, or to a new environment as you felt when you arrived in the US and had to adapt to a new culture? Why?
3. What stages have you experienced? How did you deal with each stage? How will you approach each stage in your upcoming transition?
(Think Home).

See article from InterVarsity about the U-Curve and the stages of transition:
<https://ism.intervarsity.org/resource/your-cross-cultural-journey> (Think Home).

Processing Change

A vital step of processing change is understanding your current thoughts and expectations of what will happen after you finish your studies. As mentioned, through your incredible experiences, you have changed as a person and will continue to change as you develop more experiences in life. These changes can alter your perceptions. Understanding your current perceptions and how view different areas of life will prepare you to enter the next part of your life with more awareness and will help you set realistic expectations. Therefore, it is important to begin to prepare for Post Academic Transition by looking inward and evaluating how you have changed. (Home Again).

Experiencing and processing change is a unique opportunity to trust Jesus and allow Him to move in your life. You are not forgotten during all these changes. You will face events in your new context that will be different from what you expected.

Look at the below categories and the examples to begin to process changes. Think of more as they apply to you. (Think Home).

Physical Changes:

- Clothing choices
- Food preferences
- Do you have differences in your physical appearance?

Social Changes:

- New friendships and social circles
- Social skills (being outgoing, navigating conversations, etc.)
- Manners and attitudes
- Living alone vs. living with others

Emotional Changes:

- How do you express your feelings to others?
- How have your emotional responses changed?
- Do you find yourself more consistently joyful? Sad?

Financial Changes:

- What is your attitude toward material goods and money?
- Spending habits
- Have you become generous toward others?

Spiritual Changes:

- What new spiritual habits/disciplines are you practicing?
- How much have your theological views changed?



Processing Your Purpose and Future

Gifts and Talents

God made each of us for an incredible purpose and He made each person unique. The country and culture you come from and the family you were born into were not accidents. **They have shaped you into who you are now! In addition, you were created with certain gifts and talents that you can use to make a difference in your community and nation.** Maybe you are very good at coding or design or another professional skill. Each of us also has a set of interpersonal skills that can help us to interact with people and build strong relationships. Some of our talents and abilities bring joy to our lives and the lives of others such as when someone can play beautiful music or cook delicious meals to share.

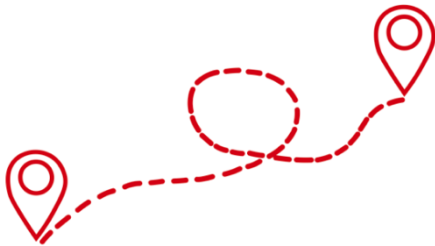
List your skills and abilities that God has given you:

Professional Skills

Relationship Skills

Other Talents/Abilities

How are you planning to use these skills after you graduate?



Challenge: Think of three ways that you can use your unique gifts to positively influence the people around you at work and in your community, in your new context.



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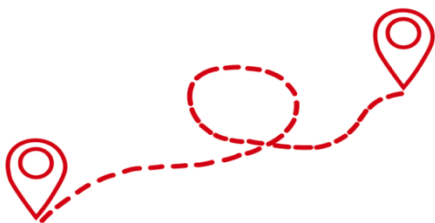
Goals and Dreams

What do you see yourself doing in the future? Where would you like to be in next year or 5 years? Maybe when you came to the United States your big dream was to come to study and finish a degree. Now, that dream has become a reality or will soon become a reality. It is now time to dream new dreams! However, many people have found that in the transition from being a student into working life, if your dream is only focused on yourself and the success of your career, it soon feels lonely, hollow, and empty. **Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full." Jesus can fill the emptiness and connect you with your purpose so that you can dream God-sized dreams.**

1. What were your dreams when you first came to the United States to study?
2. Have these changed over the time you have been here?
3. What are other dreams in your life that have become a reality?
4. What is something that you would like to do or become in the future?

It is often said that "A dream without a goal is just a wish." People who wish do not take any actions towards what they hope will happen. To complete your degree, you had to take exams and do work or research to be able to make this dream become reality. You took small steps with each assignment submitted and each report of your research progress towards your goal. You can continue to keep growing and moving towards your goals even when you are not in school. However, it may not be structured for you, and you will need to take initiative to set goals and take steps towards them. A good goal will be a specific action that you can do within a specific amount of time.

1. Do you have a habit of setting goals to act towards what you would like to do or become?
2. How can you start a practice of setting goals and working to complete them?

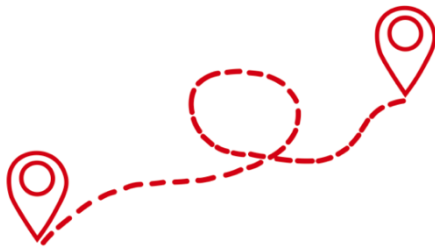


Challenge: Write out 3 goals that will help you reach your dream in this next chapter of your life. Also, write out a plan that will help you reach those goals. As well, write out the impact accomplishing these goals will have in your life.

Serving Your Community

One of the best parts of having gifts and talents is serving others with them! You have a lot to offer to your community. Whether you volunteer outside of your job, or serve others through your vocation, you can use the education and skills you have to contribute positively to society. You can start by seeing if there are ways you can serve your family, and then look for ways to meet needs or address injustices around you. Compared to others who have not had your education or experience, you will have more access to resources and influence. You can leverage them to serve and make a difference in the lives of others.

1. What are some needs or injustices you have seen in the community where you are going?
2. What is something that you have received that you would like to 'give back' by helping provide the opportunity for others to receive or experience it?
3. What kind of volunteer opportunities are available in the place where you are going?
4. How do you hope to serve others through your future job?
5. How do you feel when you serve others around you?



Challenge: Develop a plan to use your giftings and talents to serve the community you will be going to post graduation.



Facing Challenges

Expect Challenges

As an international student, you had the privilege to leave home and study in the U.S. The experiences you've gained, the relationships you've built, and the ways you have been stretched and challenged have all added to your rich experience. Sometimes, looking back, you can see that the times you grew the most were the most difficult seasons. As you prepare to transition, it is important to prepare your heart and mind for the challenges you will face where you are going next. Jesus doesn't promise life will always be easy. **In John 16:33, He says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." As you process difficulties that might be ahead, you do not have to face them alone. Jesus wants to walk with you, and you can continue to talk with your friends and family as you prepare for new challenges.**

Look at the below categories and the examples to begin to process challenges. Think of more as they apply to you! (Think Home).

Cultural & Social Challenges:

- Changes in identity - who are you now?
- Unmet expectations of what the next place may be like
- Different pace of life
- Cultural pressure to conform to systems and norms
- Loneliness
- Family focused vs. individual focused cultures
- Friends and family expectations of you (provide financially, marriage, etc.)
- New dynamics between relationships due to being away for an extended period
- Adjustment to languages and cultures different from the U.S.

Communication Challenges:

- Speech, mannerisms from the U.S. that may not be interpreted properly
- Different communication styles (roundabout, indirect, direct, etc.)

Workplace Challenges:

- Long work hours
- Expectation to participate in unethical behavior
- No job openings
- Relationship with authority

1. What challenges do you foresee happening upon your Post Academic Transition?
2. How do you think you will react in these challenges?
3. What can you do to stay positive and find solutions to these challenges?

Tough Questions

As you think about the challenges you may face in your next season of life, it will help if you take time to work through potential questions and problems before you face them. This does not mean that you will avoid these difficulties, but you can mentally prepare for some of the changes you will experience and be aware of the reasons why you may have conflicting emotions. This will help you to be more understanding and patient with yourself and others as you adjust to your new situation. Give yourself grace during this season! You are strong and capable to make this new season a great one! (Think Home).

Take some time to read through these questions in the context of your life and the culture where you will be going. Some of these will be very relevant if you are returning to your home culture after living for several years in the U.S. culture. However, some of these may address different expectations that your family or community will have on you once you have a job and are not a student even if you do not return home immediately. (Think Home).

1. What expectations are being placed on you related to getting a job and sending money back to your family?
2. Are you seriously dating someone now? What expectations do they or your family have for this relationship after you graduate?
3. Is arranged marriage common in your culture? Will you be encouraged to find a match once you are no longer a student?
4. What kind of work culture are you going to be working in? Are long hours and working on the weekends expected?
5. What are some ethical issues that you might encounter at your future workplace? What are you willing to do or not do to be considered for promotions or to keep your job?
6. Will you possibly experience discrimination in your future job because of your ethnicity? If you are a woman, is it possible that you will experience gender discrimination? What will your reaction be?
7. How involved will you be politically? If you return home to your country, how does the political situation affect you?
8. Are you moving somewhere completely new? Will it be difficult to adjust to the weather or other factors in the new environment?
9. What job offers do you have? What is affecting your decision for or against job offers?
10. Is there a large community of people from your home country in the new place? Will you connect with them?
11. What other difficult situations do you think you might face in your new season of life? (Think Home).



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People and Relationships

We are social beings because God created us to be in relationship with others. He has blessed you with relationships here in the U.S.! Your relationships will be critical to your success as you transition out of a student environment. However, you have changed and grown during your time in the United States, and relationships may look different from before. Relatives and friends may also have changed during this time or may make assumptions based on your experience abroad. These relationships will be amazing to go back to and reconnect with! However, they may take some navigation. (Think Home).

1. What is your community like in the new place you will be going to?
2. How do you plan to find support and friendship where you are going?
3. What is your community like back home?
4. If you are going back home, who are you excited to see and why?
5. What will you do if you find yourself rejected by or having difficulty relating to the people you love most?

These can be difficult questions to work through, but always remember that God wants to be with you and give you the grace and wisdom you need for any and every situation. Seek to know Him more and ask Him to bring the right people into your path. Give yourself time and grace to build new relationships and stay in touch with the people in your life now who support and encourage you, even as you make new friends where you are going.

“

“I think my life has re-prioritized since I came to the U.S. I will be ‘different’ in some ways, and it will be difficult to explain to others, or they might not totally understand.

- a former International Student who returned to their home country

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Discovering God

The first time Cynthia Dobbs really felt like God spoke to her through another person, she was around 14 years of age. A woman said to her in her native language, "Jesus loves you!" Suddenly, it was as though her heart could hear God's voice. That experience started a journey of vibrant faith, following the God who spoke through words that her heart could understand.

The Bible claims that God is the God of the nations. He created all people, and He initiated the speaking of different languages (Genesis 11:1-9) He knows and can speak to us in the language that we most resonate with. There is power in being addressed in our mother tongues. We understand, connect, and respond to words that have been with us since birth. Reading God's word in your native language is an indispensable asset to your journey of discovering Jesus.

"May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere. May the nations praise you, O God. Yes, may all the nations praise you."
Psalms 67:2-3 NLT

Do you own a Bible in your native language? It is important to find and begin reading God's Word in the language of your heart so that you can get to know Him better.

1. What spiritual habits have you developed here in the U.S.?
2. If you are reading the Bible right now, what are you learning?
3. What have you learned about the Bible that has interested you?

Continuing to Understand the Bible and the Christian Faith

Did you know, the Bible was not originally written in English? Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were the original languages of the Bible. For the longest time monks, priests, clergy, and a select few people who understood these languages remained the only people that could read and interact with Scripture. As Christianity spread to the west, people began desiring to know the God of the Bible for themselves. Dedicated men and women took it upon themselves to share the goodness of God's word with the world by translating it into many languages, including English.

Today the Bible has been translated into over 700 languages, with many more language translations currently in progress. **Since faith is dependent on obeying God, and obedience is predicated on knowing what God says, making the Word of God available to people in their native tongues has been a huge influence in growing faith among the nations.** Studies have shown that reading the Bible more than four times a week improves the quality of life for most people. Those who practice reading the Bible 4 or more times a week have healthier habits, keep away from immoral behavior, have better relationships and lead a more satisfied life. Reading the Bible can open these same possibilities to you too. (Power of 4 [https://bttbfiles.com/web/docs/cbe/Scientific Evidence for the Power of 4.pdf](https://bttbfiles.com/web/docs/cbe/Scientific_Evidence_for_the_Power_of_4.pdf))

Connecting with Local Believers

Why is community so important? First, when we are trying to learn how to follow Jesus in a new environment, it is helpful to have disciplers who can show us the way and encourage us. You will face different questions and challenges at home or in a completely new place. It is important to have friends who can offer prayer, wisdom, and encouragement. Second, being in community provides the opportunity to serve. God knows we work better together as a team. When you bring your gifts and passions to your Christian community, you will be able to do things for God's kingdom that you could never do alone. God wants community for you, and He will provide it as you seek Him. As you have found community in Chi Alpha, we want to connect you to find that community in the new place you are going! ! (Think Home).

**"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."
Hebrews 10:24 NIV**

1. In what ways do you think you will need community when you return home?
2. What sacrifices might you need to make to prioritize community?
3. What connections can you begin to make now to prepare to join a community when you return home?





Setting Yourself Up for Success

When you graduate and leave the environment that has become 'home' over an extended period, things will be different in your new context. You are probably not the same person that you were when you first came to the United States to study. You have changed and grown and developed in your skills and experience. However, you will need to be able to draw on these skills and experiences and apply them in a new place towards the accomplishment of new goals. You will have great influence in your new context! What will 'success' look like? How will you respond to new expectations and situations that you will encounter? How will you deal with difficulties and challenges?

Leading with Influence

You may see a difference in how people from your home community perceive you as you graduate from a university in the United States. You may have a better job, more money, and more influence than you have had before. It may be easy to have an attitude of superiority toward your community because of your experience abroad. However, Jesus taught that kingdom leadership comes from a position of serving others and not from superior knowledge or position. (Mark 9:35, Mark 10:45) The key is to continue to grow into who you are becoming and the responsibilities and new roles that this gives you, while at the same time using these not to serve yourself but to benefit and develop others. Your heart of service will need to be communicated in different ways depending on the culture you are entering. What a joy it is to serve with the gifts and abilities we have!

"He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

Mark 9:35 NLT

1. What job or social position will you have after you graduate?
2. How will this job or position be perceived by people from your home culture?
3. How will you demonstrate humility and service in your new role?

Relationships at Home

Whether you return home to visit or to live after you graduate, you will need to navigate how to have a good relationship with your family. You may have a very close relationship with everyone in your family, or you may have difficulty relating to certain family members and their cultural values. It may be difficult to explain to your family the impact that your time studying overseas has had on your life, and they may not like some of the ways you have changed. As you navigate loving and honoring your family, it is important that honor be an attitude of the heart that expresses itself in words and actions. Serving in small things that your parents would appreciate such as remembering to call, doing dishes, or picking up something for them at the store can communicate that you love and honor them. It is also important to show gratitude for everything they do for you.

When your values conflict with your family's expectations, you can explain with humility why you cannot do what your parents are asking or set limits on how you will participate while communicating that you still value the relationship and quality time with them. Do not be afraid if you experience opposition or anger. Even if your family does not understand or is angry at first, if you persist in love and service to them, often, over time, you can have a good relationship, respecting one another's values.

1. What response do you think your family will have if you tell them that you have been learning about Christianity during your time in the United States?
2. What do you think your biggest challenge will be when you return to your home environment?
3. What is one specific way that you can show honor and respect to your parents? (Think Home).

"Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3 NLT



Challenge: Think of a way to serve your family when you either return home or visit.



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Work and Money

Once graduated with your degree, you will be at a place where you worked so diligently to get to! You will likely spend many hours weekly pursuing your career and growing in leadership and influence. The Bible has a lot to say about work and money, and it is worth the time and effort to research and understand God's heart for those topics. You may find some values that are commonly accepted in your work culture are very different from what Christian's value. Here are some Scriptures to start your study.

Colossians 3:23
2 Timothy 2:15-16
Matthew 25:14-30
Chronicles 29:10-17
Luke 16:10
Luke 6:38

Read the Scriptures above. List some of the Christian values related to work and money that these Scriptures teach.

Work

Money

1. Which of these values are new to you?
2. Which ones do you think would be difficult to follow in your life?
3. Which of these values do you think would benefit society?



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Pursuing Health

Transition can be very stressful, even when it is for good reasons and is a natural result of growth and change in life. As you enter a period of change and adjustment to a new environment and community, take some time to set some habits that will promote your long-term health. **These health areas can include emotional health, physical health, spiritual health, and mental health.**

1. Look at the above areas of health. Are there any areas that you need to consider and give attention to?
2. How do you deal with stress?
3. What are some good habits that will help you to be healthy through your post academic transition?

Rest

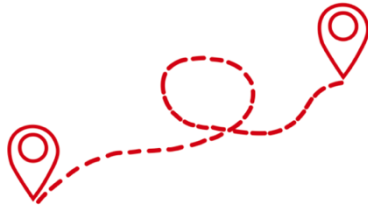
Before jumping into a new set of responsibilities, it would be wise to take some time to rest and reflect on the season of life that you just finished. If you can take a short vacation or get away for a couple of days, this can help rest your mind and body. When you begin your new schedule, do your best to build in a weekly time to rest as well as setting good boundaries on each day so that you can get the sleep that you need to be able to do your best at work. During your rest time, make sure that you have a good balance of meaningful activities, relationship time and time just to relax. You do not want to find yourself so busy and social that you do not rest during your time off. However, spending all your time off just relaxing in front of a screen will not help you build new relationships or set you up for long-term health.

1. How do you spend your free time in ways that help you rest?
2. What are the times you have set aside each day and each week to rest?

Good Habits

Habits are things that you build into your life and that eventually become part of your daily or weekly routine. Good habits can help you stay healthy and keep growing physically, mentally, and spiritually. Think through some of the list below and brainstorm how you will develop these habits in the next stage of your life.

Eating well
Exercising regularly
Being part of a community
Spending time with friends and family
Continuing to learn new ideas and skills
Continuing to learn about the Bible and Christianity



Challenge: Studies show it can take 30 days to break or start a habit. Choose a habit to break or start that will help you in your post academic transition for 30 days.



Creating a Plan of Action

Post Academic Connection Form

Are you moving to a new place or back to your home country? As you move from your Chi Alpha community to a different context, we want you to stay connected to a Christian community that can encourage and support you. **We have relationships with people who love Jesus and are wanting to welcome you and be a contact for you as you transition to the new place.** Work with your Chi Alpha leader and ask them to submit a connection form.

It is important to plan for your Post Academic Transition. However, as you think ahead, it is also important to hold your plans loosely, knowing that you will need to be flexible. Prepare with a heart posture of being open and willing to experience new things and places, even if they were not in the original plan.

Plan to Finish Your Current Season Well

As you move towards the next season of your life, one of the best things you can do to set yourself up for success is to finish well in the place where you have been. Are you serving in a leadership role? Then finish your commitment faithfully and communicate clearly to your current team about where you are going next and when you will be stepping down. Continue learning more about Jesus through the transition and find time even when you are busy for the people who have been there for you during your university years. Take some time to rest and reflect before you jump into new roles and experiences. (Think Home).

Your community should be the ones sending you to the new place and season of life, if possible, talk with your leadership about a good time for a sendoff with a commissioning prayer. Have them pray for you as you transition and for the new relationships that you will have in the next season. Identify key relationships who will continue to support you through the next few months as you get settled in the new place.

Plan to Continue Growing Spiritually in Your New Place

During times of transition, your rhythm of life will change, or will possibly be very irregular for a while until you start a job or settle into a new routine. During these times, it can be hard to find a consistent time to continue learning about God. As best as you can, think through what the next couple of months will look like and plan to continue to grow spiritually. You will keep learning and growing when you read the Bible and begin learning how to talk to God in prayer. (Think Home).

Growing Spiritually Plan

1. What time of day? _____
(early morning, or on a bus ride to work, or lunch break...)
2. How much time? _____
3. How will you remind yourself to be consistent? _____
(alarm on your phone, no Bible=no breakfast, etc...)
4. What will you do during your devotions? _____
(Read the Bible, sing a song, pray, etc.)

How do I pray?

Thinking about each letter of the word PRAY can help you as you learn to communicate with God.

- P:** Praise - Start your time with the Lord in thanksgiving and praise.
- R:** Repent - Confess any sins or attitudes that need to change and ask for forgiveness.
- A:** Ask - Bring any concerns or requests for yourself or others.
- Y:** Yield - Surrender to the Lord and listen to anything He wants to speak to You.

How do I read the Bible?

The Bible is a library of 66 individual books that were written over a long period of history. The part of the Bible called the Old Testament is about creation of the world and the history of God's people before Jesus. The New Testament starts with four different books that each tell the life of Jesus, and then continues with how the church started and with instructions for how Christians should live. **If you have not read the Bible before, one of the books of the Bible that shares the story of the life of Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John is a good place to start.**

As you read the Bible, SOAP is a method that can help you in your reading of Scripture

S: Section- Read an entire section of the book you have chosen to read.

(This could be a chapter or part of a chapter- Example Mark 1 or one of the sections in Mark 1 from your Bible)

O: Observe what this chapter says about God? About Jesus? About people? About life?

A: Ask if there are any changes you should make in your life based on what you read.

P: Pray - Ask God to help you live out what you read in the Scripture.

Plan your Connection to Local Believers in the New Place

A new church or Christian group will not be the same as the one you experienced during your time as a student. Approach your new church or fellowship with the expectation that things may be different and probably difficult at first. However, connecting with local believers is vital for you to continue to grow spiritually.

“So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5 NLT

1. What are some ways you can network with people now to know about options for churches or look online to find connections?
 2. Who will you connect with when you arrive in the new place?
 3. When and how will you connect with them?
- (Think Home).



Commissioning

As you have read and reflected through these chapters, you have had time to process where you are going next, and what some of the challenges and changes will be. As you transition from where you have been to where you are going, it is natural to be both excited for what will come next, while at the same time, feeling sad about what you are leaving behind. Hopefully this has been encouraging and helpful for you as you prepare for the next part of your journey.

We are praying for you and believe in you. As you focus on what is ahead, Jesus wants to be your true North wherever He guides you. Jesus invites you to join Him on the journey ahead of you, promising to guide you, walk with you and never leave. Jesus wants to be in full relationship with you. The only way to Heaven is through Jesus Christ. He died for you so that you can spend eternity in Heaven with you.

“Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” John 14:6 NLT

He invites you to pray this prayer, to commit to Him and the journey He has in store for you:

**“Lord, I admit I am a sinner. I need and want Your forgiveness. I accept Your death as the penalty for my sin and recognize that Your mercy and grace is a gift You offer to me because of Your great love, not based on anything I have done. Cleanse me and make me Your child. By faith I receive You into my heart as the Son of God and as Savior and Lord of my life. From now on, help me live for You, with You in control.
In the name of Jesus, Amen**

If you are still navigating your journey toward Christ, pray and ask Him to reveal Himself to you. Pray that He would make Himself known and help you during your Post Academic Transition.



Commissioning Prayer

As you go, recall that you are not alone. We pray you would be encouraged because you are surrounded by many more who have re - entered the marketplace, and your nations. And because you are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, strip off every weight that slows you down, especially the sin that so easily trips you up. And run with endurance the race God has set before you. This is done by keeping your eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects your faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne Hebrews 12:1-2

We pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. That your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God (Ephesians 3:17 - 20).

And we are certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns (Philippians 1:6). Now all glory to God, who can keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! (Jude 1:24-25).

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AMEN

Note: This document is unpublished and used for Re-Entry Pilot Partners



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