

UNIVERSITY OF  
**MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS**

**MORE**  
IS WHAT MOVES US

**Global Triton Welcome: Visa Interview Preparation**

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Narrator: This is a better response to the question. You should provide your motivation for studying in the program you are applying for. This will show the consular officer that you are serious about being a student at UMSL.



# Introduction

- Keep microphones muted
- Save your questions until the end of the presentation
- Refrain from using the chat box until the end of the presentation
- Take good notes and screenshots!

# Jessica Lynn Hylton, EdD

- Director, Internationalization Strategies and International Student and Scholar Services
- Primary Designated School Official
- 19 years in higher education
- 12 years working with international students
- Been with UMSL Global for 3 years



# Marisa Roth, M.Econ.

- Data Analyst & International Promoter
- Designated School Official
- Been with UMSL Global for 1.5 years
- UMSL Alumna



**Where are you  
from?**

**How are you  
feeling about  
your F-1/J-1  
Visa Interview?**



# Immigration Documents

- ❖ Passport
- ❖ I-20/DS-2019
- ❖ F-1/J-1 Visa



# Passport

- Must be more than 6 months from expiration prior to stepping on the airplane
- Make an electronic copy to keep “in the cloud” for back up.
- Make 2 good copies of your passport
  - to leave with a trusted person in your home country prior to departure
  - to put in your checked baggage
- Always carry your original passport with you when travelling to the USA.
  - Do not put your original passport in your checked baggage





# I-20 / DS-2019

1-20 for F-1 Students and DS-2019 for J-1 Students

- **This document is VERY important!**
- The I-20 or DS -2019 is what allows you to setup an appointment at the embassy/consulate to interview for your F-1 or J-1 Visa
- Once you enter the United States, your I-20 or DS-2019 is the document that keeps you legal and in-status.
- Make sure that all information is correct on your I-20.
  - Make sure to read PAGE 3 of the I-20 ad PAGE 2 on your DS-2019
  - students ignore page 2 & 3 but there is a lot of important information that the government expects you to know.
- Print your I-20 or DS-2019 and sign and date in **BLUE** ink!

# F-1 / J-1 Visa

- The Visa is the document that allows you to step on to the airplane and to land at a US Port of Entry (POE)
- It then allows you to ask Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for permission to enter the United States
- Once you enter the United States, the visa allows you to exit and re-enter if the visa is valid and you keep your I-20 / DS-2019 in status and legal!
- The most crucial step to obtaining the F-1 or J-1 Visa is the...

**...INTERVIEW!**





# Preparing For The Visa Interview

- Practice
- Dress Appropriately
- Be Truthful
- Demonstrate Strong Ties To Your Home Country
- Know Your Finances
- Practice Your English

# Practice

Practice, practice, practice!

With a trusted friend, family member, or teacher

You will be given ideas of what you need to practice during this session

# Dress Appropriately

You do not have to dress up for a formal occasion, but a business casual is appropriate.

Do not show up in sneakers and a tee-shirt with holes in it

Do not wear uncomfortable shoes or new clothes that you are not comfortable in.

# Be Truthful

Always tell the truth.

Do not lie to the consular officer about anything.

# Demonstrate Strong Ties to Your Home Country

Prepare to Demonstrate Strong Ties to Your Home Country

You must be able to demonstrate that you have reasons for returning to your home country after you complete your program of study that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States.



# Know Your Finances

Be prepared to discuss how you will finance your studies.

Having the documents is not enough. You need to know:

- Who is going to be financing you
- How will you pay after the first year

Answers should not include “working on campus”, CPT, or  
OPT.

# Practice Your English

## Plan To Answer Questions in English

If you are given the option to answer in your own language, always choose English.

Having a grasp on the English language demonstrates to the consular officer that you are a good student.



# How to Conduct Yourself in your Visa Interview

- Prepare For A Short Meeting
- Be Brief And Concise
- Speak For Yourself
- Maintain A Positive And Respectful Attitude
- Do Not Argue

# Prepare for a Short Meeting

The interview will only be a few minutes.

You have very little time to make a positive impression.

You will be called to a window with lots of people around and will only have a few minutes to answer the quickly asked questions.

# Be Brief and Concise in Your Answers

Keep your answers to the Consular Officer's questions short and to the point without being dismissive.

Do **not** just answer yes or no.

# Speak for Yourself

Do NOT bring parents, spouses, or family members with you to the interview.

The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family.

Only dependents who are applying for F-2/J-2 visas should accompany you.

# Maintain a Positive and Respectful Attitude

Be Brave

Be Polite

Be Respectful

Be Kind

And...

**Do Not Engage the Consular  
Officer in an Argument!**



# What to know for your visa interview

- UMSL and St. Louis
- Career Plans and Intentions
- Program of Study and Major





# UMSL and St. Louis

Learn everything you can about UMSL and Saint Louis.

Be prepared to answer questions about UMSL, Saint Louis, and why you wish to study here.

Focus on things that you have learned about UMSL and Saint Louis, not just generic answers about the weather, sports teams, and classroom ratios

# Career Plans and Intentions

You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program and what you plan to do with the knowledge you obtained when you return to your home country.

If you plan to engage in OPT or STEM OPT, be honest about it. Share what knowledge you hope to gain from those experiences to bring back to your home country.

# Program of Study and Major

If you are not able to explain the reasons why you want to study in a particular program and major at UMSL, you will not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are planning to study





# Other Resources

# Argo Visa

While UMSL Global currently does not offer individual Visa Interview Preparation Sessions, if this is a service you are looking for we can direct you to the company Argo Visa.

UMSL Global does not formally endorse this company, but it is a resource you can utilize if you are looking for such a service.

There are costs associated with this service.

If you have had several failed interviews, Argo can help you figure out what you are doing wrong in the interview.



# Practice Session!

# Questions You Might Encounter

1. How many universities did you apply to in the United States?
2. Why do you want to attend the University of Missouri – Saint Louis?
3. Do you have family or friends in the United States?
4. How will you finance your education? Is this sustainable after the first year?
5. What do you plan to study at the University of Missouri – Saint Louis?
6. What are your plans after graduation?
7. Do you plan on working while you are studying in the US?



**Mark Your  
Calendars!**

# Global Triton Welcome: Pre-Departure Orientation

You can find this online:

<https://www.umsl.edu/global/admissions/admitted/index.html>

Date	Start Time CDT	End Time CDT
Wednesday , June 12 <sup>th</sup>	12:00AM	2:00AM
Saturday, June 15 <sup>th</sup>	9:00AM	11:00AM
Tuesday, June 25 <sup>th</sup>	12:00AM	2:00AM
Thursday, June 27 <sup>th</sup>	9:00AM	12:00AM
Tuesday, July 9 <sup>th</sup>	12:00AM	2:00AM
Thursday, July 11 <sup>th</sup>	9:00AM	11:00AM

# Global Triton Welcome: Airport Pickup

Airport pickup from Saint Louis Lambert International Airport (STL) will be offered on the following dates to Global Tritons who have **signed a contract and will be living on the UMSL campus** in Oak Hall or University Meadows

Date
Friday, August 9 <sup>th</sup>
Saturday, August 10 <sup>th</sup>
Sunday, August 11 <sup>th</sup>

# Global Triton Welcome: Orientation and New Student Programs

This is a mandatory/compulsory event for all new Global Tritons. You will learn everything you need to know about UMSL to start your educational journey successfully. You will also take applicable placement tests, register for classes, meet fellow classmates, and have some fun as you acclimate to life in the United States, Saint Louis, and UMSL!

**Global Triton Welcome Orientation**

**Monday August 12<sup>th</sup>-Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**You must arrive in St. Louis by Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup> or you will need to defer your admissions to Spring 2025.**

**First day of classes for the Fall 2024 semester is Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Read Your Email!**

**How are you  
feeling about  
your F-1/J-1 Visa  
Interview Now?**

**Turn Your Cameras  
on and Let's Take a  
Picture!**

# Questions?



# Thank You!

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