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For Syracuse University Students, a Chance to Study in California

By Rebecca R. Ruiz

J. Emilio Flores for The New York Times

Palms trees in Echo Park, near downtown Los Angeles.

For those Northeast college students who dream of sunny skies and palm trees on dreary gray days, Syracuse University has announced plans for a Los Angeles campus. It will begin with the establishment this fall of an L.A. Semester program.

Initially, opportunities to enroll will be limited. The program was born of a collaboration between the university’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and its College of Visual and Performing Arts, and as of now it is open only to students in two subdivisions of those colleges: Newhouse’s Television, Radio, and Film Program and V.P.A.’s Bandier Program for Music and the Entertainment Industries.

But Ruth Kaplan, vice president of external affairs at Syracuse, said in a telephone interview that the university plans to broaden its Los Angeles offerings, saying, “Eventually, there will be more disciplines.”

Initially, the L.A. semester program will balance a 20-hour work week at an entertainment industry internship with classes tailored to students’ majors. Students will also be able to telecommute for certain Arts and Sciences courses conducted at the university’s main campus.

The program stipulates that participating students have a car. Those unable to bring one who are under 25 – the age at which rental is universally possible – can make “special arrangements with Enterprise Rent-a-Car at the Toluca Hills location.”


Syracuse’s program echoes Trinity College’s Trinity-in-San Francisco program, offering students a window into West Coast culture and real-world employment, while providing a respite from blizzards.

The University of Texas at Austin has its own “Semester in L.A.” program, recently opened to non-University of Texas students.

The Syracuse University “L.A. Semester,” which was first announced to undergraduates in the fall of 2008, has enrolled 28 students – all of whom are upperclassmen – for its inaugural term.