

The RICE WORLD

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Spring 2004

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FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN AN AMERICAN AND AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Do you have a host family or friend?

Many students complete host family applications during the orientation program, and are assigned to a volunteer in the "Friends of the International Program", thanks to the work of Peggy Tennyson at the Institute for International Education, who teams up the volunteers with the international students. The following is an article from our former student, Di Di, who wrote to let us know how much she enjoyed her friendship with Lisa, her American friend. If you, too, have great stories with your American friends or family, please drop us a few lines to let us know.

Didi:

When Lisa called me the first time and told me she was 24 years old, just out of college, and going to host me, I thought to myself: "Did OISS make a mistake? I am a MBA student and they sent a 24-year-old young kid to HOST me?" Before I came to the United States, I heard that the hosting program involved nothing more than a host family with kids, dinners with the family at holidays, some tips from the family about living and having fun in Houston. That's why at that moment I was quite surprised as well as disappointed to know I have a YOUNG host instead of a host family.



From the beginning, Lisa did a great "basic" hosting job by showing me around the city, introducing me some churches, museums in the Houston area, and so on. But unexpectedly, we ended up being friends. Thanks to the flexibility of individual hosting, I felt so lucky that I was able to explore Houston and even the whole Texas much better than most international students. As we hung out more frequently, we started to develop a friendship that is more than just host and host student. I think it might be partly because Lisa has been to China before and has a great understanding of Chinese culture. Interesting enough, Lisa made up her mind this year to go to China to learn Chinese, a decision that she did not even dream of before hosting me.

Upon my graduation, I really wanted to share this experience of

international friendship with all international students, which is the most unexpected but also one of my best experiences at Rice.

Lisa:

Didi was the first student that I have hosted so I took the job very seriously. I wanted her to experience and see Houston through my eyes and hoped that she would take the "spirit of Texas" back to China. When we met, she told me that she wasn't expecting someone so young. Later, after we became friends, she told me that she questioned my ability to host. I did not know at the time what she had heard about hosting, and that the norm for hosting was families that took students on outings and family dinners.

Initially I predicted that we would maintain a rather formal relationship and she would go back to China and we would loosely keep in touch. I had no idea we would become such good friends and I would plan to go back to China!! Going back to China has always been something that I wanted to do but never really knew how it would fit in with my other career goals. I dreamed one day in the distant future I would go back, but thanks to Didi, I will go back in the fall!! I'm so glad that I hosted Didi. In the end I think we both shared the spirit of each other's cultures.

A Letter From the Director:

Dear International Students and Scholars,

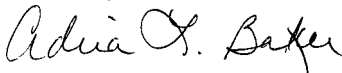
I take this opportunity to welcome you back for another semester. We hope it will be a successful one for you, and that you will come to our office for any assistance that you might need.

We are offering several workshops and opportunities that are geared specifically for foreign nationals' needs. Please take advantage of all that our office provides as well as other opportunities on campus, so you will get the full benefit of studying at Rice, in the U.S.A., as well as learning about our culture.

I hope you know what a privilege it is for me, and all of the OISS staff, to be able to work with Rice internationals. Please let me know how we are doing in our role, and what I can do to do an even better job.

Best wishes this Spring Semester!

Sincerely,



Adria L. Baker, *Director*
Office of International Students & Scholars

SPECIAL

APPRECIATION TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AT OISS

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

As I look back at 2003 and the accomplishments of OISS, I am amazed at the amount of work we have achieved. The goal of OISS, to serve the Rice international community, can be done only when we play as a team. An important component is all the volunteers who helped out in our office. They are behind the scenes making our projects a great success and enlightening our office with their smiles.

Thank you, thank you, and thank you to each one of you. You know who you are!

We could not have done it without you!

Marta Kapusta

RICE WORLD

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SEVIS AND VISA UPDATE

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced the launch of its U.S. Visitor and Immigration Status Indication Technology (US-VISIT) system (a "check-in/check-out" mechanism), when fully implemented, records the entry and exit of all foreign visitors to the U.S. It scans each visitor's fingerprints and photographs against national security and law enforcement databases, as well as maintaining each visitor's U.S. travel history. The system involves information sharing among Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the

Transportation Security Administration, the General Services Administration, and the Departments of State and Transportation. It was launched in early 2004.

MULTIPLE MAJORS NOT POSSIBLE IN SEVIS.

Due to SEVIS database limitations, students must choose one specific area of study to be considered as their SEVIS primary major that will be displayed on their I-20/DS-2019 form. This will be the area in which the student may pursue his/her practical training.

Even though Rice University allows a student to have multiple majors, every international student with multiple majors must inform OISS which major

they wish to consider as their main area of study (for SEVIS purposes only). This does not affect what classes you may take or the degree you are pursuing.

This is of particular interest for undergraduate students, who often declare multiple majors.

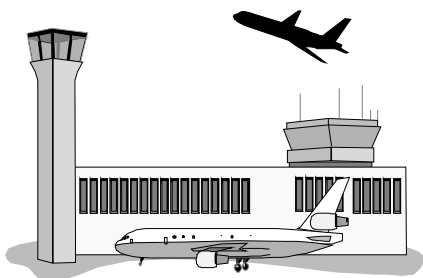
Thank you for your compliance. If you have questions or like to discuss more, please, contact our office.

Sandra Bloem,
*SEVIS and Departmental
Administrator, OISS*

TRAVEL WARNING!

All international students and scholars need an OISS advisor's signature on their immigration documents (I-20/DS-2019) before they can travel and return to the US with valid visas.

In order to maintain your status, you must enter and exit the US on that visa type. Do not return with your tourist (B1/B2) visa. Entering the U.S. with tourist visa will cancel your student or scholar status in the U.S.



Along the same line, if you have changed your status to H-1B or another status, please do not come back on your previous visa status. For example: An F-1 student on OPT, who has changed to an H-

1B status should not travel with I-20 anymore. By doing so, his/her H-1B status will be cancelled. This student needs to apply for an H-1B visa in order to re-enter the U.S.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

We want to show our special appreciation to the Rice alumni Mr. & Mrs. Paul Morris and Dr. Jong Choo Lim, for their financial contribution to our office general fund. For the year of 2003, our office has received over \$100,000 in contributions in financial donations, goods, and services. Contributions account for 90% of the OISS operating funds for this year. All those memorable activities outside of the regular office responsibilities are attributed to outside contributions. These contributions are instrumental in building so many fond memories of our international students for their experiences at Rice.

Many extra projects that were required of the OISS could not have been accomplished without the record number of hours (471 hours) of non-student volunteer time that was given to our office. Many of you, Rice Internationals have so graciously contributed volunteer time to the OISS, as well! Your help has been so great, we cannot actually state the number of hours as there are just too many.

Rice students and alumni who are interested in supporting or or contributing to our office, please contact us at X6095 or email one of our staff at OISS.

SOLUTION TO THE CREDIT CARD PROBLEM:

Rice students have the option of applying for a MasterCard Credit Card with MBNA. Applications are available in front of the Alumni Office in the Ley Student Center.

Somarine Diep, an OISS advisor, called the company and spoke with a customer representative who was very courteous. They may be reached at 1 800 523 7666. The priority Code for Rice is JTW5. Every purchase the cardholder make helps Rice University programs.

WHAT TO DO IN CRISIS AND EMERGENCY

In time of crisis and emergency, please contact our office right away. You may contact the campus police during weekends and in the evenings, as the police have ways to contact us directly. In a crisis situation, you may request that the OISS be informed so that our staff will be able to come to your assistance. The staff team of OISS is here to help our international students and scholars, even beyond immigration and SEVIS matters.

Please keep the following numbers handy in case of emergency you will be able to find help right away.

OISS 713-348-6095

Campus Police 713-348-6000

Campus Emergency Medical Service 713-348-6000

Rice Counseling Center
713-348-4867

Campus Environment Safety
713-348-4444

For off-campus crisis and emergency situations you may call 911.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MOVE?

The rule for new address reporting has been changed. All students who are on F and J status, do not need to send in the AR-11 form anymore. After you have moved you must report your address to Registrar's Office on campus and confirm with them that your new address has been entered into the student data base. J-1 scholars need to report address changes to the Human Resource Office. Our office will be able to transport this new information from the above database for SEVIS reporting.



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK 2003



Rice's International Education Week (IEW) increased awareness of the importance of international education at Rice, as well as in the Houston community. Collaborative efforts of the OISS, Office of International Programs, and the Institute of International Education (IIE) resulted in a luncheon hosting international education leaders in Houston, with guest speaker Ms. Harriet Fulbright on November 17, 2003. OISS staff and volunteers put together a fantastic display of exhibition of posters of cultures from the international student organizations on campus, as well as distinctive achievements of our international students and alumni. IEW was concluded with a reunion party for the first year international students and student volunteers who helped in the fall orientation program.

This bi-annual publication is designed specifically for the needs of Rice international students and scholars. Please take time to read it.

FALL ORIENTATION

Contact Lily Lam at OISS if you are interested in being a volunteer for the Fall Orientation in August

Contact Information: x8755 or llam@rice.edu

Calendar of Spring OISS Events

IMPORTANT

Tax Seminar for Rice Internationals

Wednesday, February 18, 2004
A CPA expert on international taxation issues will present the session.

4:00 PM-5:30 PM

Location: Room 301, Sewall Hall

Immigration Workshop

Thursday, February 26, 2004
Adan Vega, Rice Alumn and immigration lawyer.

4:00 PM-5:30 PM

Location: Room 301, Sewall Hall

Cultural Fair

Friday, March 26, 2004

12:00 AM-4:00 PM

SIR Meetings

Starting from March every first Wednesday of the month international ladies (scholars and students) get together to have lunch and fun time.

Please, stay tuned to our OISS announcements.

12:00-1:00 PM

OISS Lounge

