

The RICE WORLD

Office of International Students & Scholars, Rice University—MS 365, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251-1892
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Thanks to the selfless efforts and dedication of Ms. Marta Kapusta, the International Educational Week was a major success. Marta has motivated many departments on campus and international students to come together to celebrate this special week. The high lights of these events were the Round Table, Fiesta Luncheon, and the Mini World Soccer Club, which encouraged more than 60 students to participate. OISS also sponsored training sessions of REAP—*International*. (Rice Experiences Advertised to Prospects) and a luncheon for Presidents of International Student Clubs. Each department celebrated IEW in their own way: the Welcome Center with an Exhibition of international flags, the Fondren Library with an International Education Display, Rice Media Center with an outstanding International film, and KTRU, the Rice radio station with a World Music Show. The Center for the Study of Languages (CSL), also celebrating the Year of the Study of Foreign Languages, organized through out the week, presentations of 11 different languages and cultures. International Programs prepared an International Photo Exhibition and the Walk a Mile in My Shoes table at the RMC. The Asian Studies Program had their Asian Studies Annual Fall Gathering, and the Shepherd School the Chamber Music Festival: Spotlight on France. Last but not the least Sammy's celebrating IEW prepared for the delight of the Rice community an International Lunch Menu with typical food from a different country or region every day of the week. Marta's hard work paid off since the awareness of the International Educational Week has definitely been increased and the scope of involvement has tripled many folds.



7th Annual International Programs Photo Contest

The contest is open to all currently enrolled Rice students who have participated in any study or work abroad program sponsored, administered or approved by Rice University. We are looking for pictures that truly capture the 'international experience.'

Photo submission deadline is Tuesday, January 31, 2006 by 5:00 pm

Visit <http://abroad.rice.edu> to download additional details & entry forms and to see last year's winning photos!

Opening Reception for the exhibit of winning photos will be held March 7th from 4-6 pm in Farnsworth Pavilion. For questions on the Photo Contest, please contact: Shelly Royer, Study Abroad Advisor, e-mail: shelly.royer@rice.edu, phone: 713/348-2939

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letter from the Director	2
Gentle Reminders!	2
Scholarship Information	2
Car Shopping and Repair	3
What if Natural Disaster Strikes Again?	3
Tax Requirements	4
OISS Spring 2006 Events	4

A Letter from the Director:

Dear International Students & Scholars,

This is an exciting time at Rice University! The beginning of 2006 brought us "A Vision for Rice University" from President Leebron, which includes 10 steps necessary to further the mission of our great school. One of the priorities calls us to "become an international university", and seeks enhancement of research at Rice, and growth of the undergraduate international student population and exchange programs. We are enthusiastic about this, as well as other goals set forth that will positively affect our international visitors during your stay here.

I also want to invite degree-seeking international students to consider participating in our pilot program called "R.E.A.P.-*International*" (**R**ice's **E**xperiences **A**dvertised to **P**rospects). Since we started promoting it in late 2005, we have had 15 Rice international students visit high schools, universities, or overseas advising centers (<http://educationusa.state.gov/centers.htm>) upon returning to their home country for a visit. Hundreds of people all over the world are hearing about the great experiences, both educational and personal, students have while studying at Rice. I encourage all international degree-seeking students at Rice to consider participating in this fun project, if you plan to visit your home country this year. Not only do you make great contacts in your home country, but you enhance the value of your degree by allowing more people to know about our excellent university. For more information on REAP-*International*, visit: <http://rgs.rice.edu/oiss>

Finally, I must mention that we recognize that there are times during your stay at Rice that you will feel stressed, given the workload you carry, the distance you have with your family and friends in your home country, personal problems, and other strains. Please take time to talk to someone to ease the burden of working through them. You are always encouraged to talk to an OISS advisor, who is willing to listen to you and offer you proper resources that can help. The Rice Counseling Center (RCC) has counselors who are trained in helping students work through unique issues they face. For benefits-eligible faculty and researchers, the Human Resources department has a confidential program where you can call trained professionals to help walk you through the stressful times. Please let me know, personally, what I can do to help you.

As you know, international students and scholars bring a unique and special dimension to Rice University. Thank you for being an important part of our community, and do not hesitate to let us know your needs. Best wishes for a great 2006!

Sincerely,

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



By *Somarine Sam Diep, International Student Advisor*

Employment in Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Students must apply for OPT **before** "completing their course of study." Come to an upcoming CPT/OPT workshop to find out more. You may also schedule an appointment to speak to an international student advisor to discuss your options and your completion date.

- ⊘ Employment under OPT must be directly related to a student's major.
- ⊘ Employment must commensurate with the education level.
- ⊘ A student may only begin work after receiving approval from the USCIS.
- ⊘ A student may only work during the validity of the employment authorization document (EAD).

A student may not continue to be employed either as a "student" or "employee," on-campus or off, after completion date of study and/or without a valid EAD.

Did you or your spouse obtain a new visa status?

If your visa status has changed, bring proof of your new one to the OISS. We need a copy of the "Notice of Approval" from the Department of Homeland Security or, if you applied outside of the US, the new visa stamp from the US Embassy.

Gentle Reminders!

Scholarship Information

Extension of deadline for submission

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FEMALE STUDENTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Applications now close February 11, 2006

Car Shopping and Repair

Article by Sara Bauer,
volunteer English teacher

One of the first things you notice when you're new to Houston is that if you really want to get around, it sure is nice to have a car! So, if you plan on getting a car, you will need auto insurance—it's Texas law. Auto insurance laws vary by state, but as long as you meet Texas requirements, you're good to drive anywhere in the US.

Many companies will be happy to sell you auto insurance—and there are lots to choose from, and all claim to have the lowest price! How to pick? Ask friends, research on the internet, talk to different companies. Remember—if you don't like the company you choose, you can always switch—just read your policy to understand if you can cancel early or not. Be sure you like your agent and that you can communicate well with him, as he will be your contact should you get in an accident.

Texas law only requires you to have liability insurance. Liability insurance pays to cover an accident when it's your fault. There are two parts to liability insurance—bodily injury and property. Bodily injury liability covers medical bills and lost wages for injuries the policyholder causes to someone else. Property damage liability pays for the damage the policyholder causes to someone's property.

Texas law states you must have a minimum of \$20,000 coverage for bodily injury for one person in an accident and a minimum of \$40,000 bodily injury liability for all people injured in an accident. The law also states you must carry at least \$15,000 property damage liability for one accident. You can elect to buy more coverage.

After liability, there are many other options you can add on. Uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage protects you if you are hit by a driver either without insurance or not enough insurance. Medical payments will cover medical expenses from accidents regardless of fault. Comprehensive and collision covers damage to your car. Collision will cover damage to your car if it's your fault. Comprehensive covers damage to your car if it's not the same as replacement is usually the most expensive part of car insurance. You can lower it by choosing a higher deductible (\$500 up). The deductible is the cash part you pay out first to fix your car before the auto insurance is applied. Comprehensive pays in the event of fire, theft, and vandalism. Lastly towing and rental reimbursements cover these services should you require them, and special equipment covers any extras added to your car like stereos, rims, and other custom accessories.



How to decide what you want past liability insurance? Generally, what you add on is determined by the year and model of your car and how much you drive along with how much you want to spend. Talk to your agent to decide what is right for you. And remember—you can always change your mind!

One more important piece of information! Once you purchase your insurance, you will receive from your agent a 'Proof of Insurance'. By law you must have this paper with you when driving! A good idea is to keep one copy in your wallet and another in your car. If you are involved in an accident, you will need to show this proof to the policeman. And if you are ever pulled over for a traffic violation, you will also be required to show this. Also, when you get your car annually inspected and when you get your license plates annually renewed, you will have to show proof of insurance.

So get insured and get driving!



What if Natural Calamity Strikes Again?

Fall 2005 was a semester with an unprecedented beginning, Ms. Katrina's visitation to New Orleans and Ms. Rita's threat to Houston brought our city to emergency status.

Twice. First as a helper, and secondly as an evacuee looking for a helping hand. These sudden natural disasters prompted our office to re-think how to prepare our international students in case of crisis and emergency. The following are survival tips our office has drawn to better prepare the international students in case another unexpected emergency hits home.

The Top Ten List for in case of Emergency:

Take important documents with you!

- Proof of ID
- Passport
- I-94 (hopefully attached to passport)
- I-20 or DS-2019
- Texas Driver License or Texas ID
- Social Security Card
- Rental information
- Contact numbers



Although plans change as the crisis changes, have a safety plan updated and thought ahead of time... now.

Try to have some cash and water with you.

Don't panic. Watch enough news to be informed, but take a break from it also.

Let the international office know what you and your friends need.

Find a group of friends to stay with and to support one another.

Communicate regularly with your family and loved ones what your plans are.

Take medications and try to get a month's supply, if appropriate.

Maintain you legal immigration status.

Non-immigrants (such as F, J and H visa holders) not eligible for public assistance, only private fund. Keep SEVIS email address and telephone number with you for guidance, if you can't contact DSD. The SEVIS website is:

<http://www.ice.gov/Graphies/sevis/emergency/evacuation.htm>

Register full time or leave to home country.

Stay connected to Rice's emergency updates

Phone numbers for emergency:

Rice Police 713-348-6000

Phone number of your home country embassy

You may want to make a copy of this article and put it with your passport so that it may become handy when the situation arises.

Taxes Requirements for International Students & Scholars

By Sandra Bloem, Manager, Sevis and edpartment administration

All international students and scholars who were in the U.S. during 2005 are required to file U.S. tax forms, whether or not you received income during the 2005 calendar year.

To assist you in filing your taxes, we will have a tax workshop. Also, once again we have purchased CINTAX, a free web-based software program designed to assist internationals with tax form preparation. CINTAX is available for those who qualify.

Please note that if you were paid by Rice University at any time during 2005, you will receive tax documents necessary to complete your tax forms that must be filed with the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). You will receive these tax documents by mail from the Payroll office. Please look for your W-2 in early February or your 1042-S in March, depending on what kind of income you received from Rice. If you do not receive your documents, believe the information is incorrect, or if you need clarification on the tax documents, please contact the Payroll office (2nd floor, Allen Center). Please also make sure that your Permanent Address information in ESTHER has your updated local address where you would like these important documents to be mailed.

Tax assistance options available:

Attend the Tax Workshop (<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~ois/announcements.html>)

For international students & scholars who have been in the U.S. for less than 5 years and are considered non-residents for tax purposes, we have CINTAX.

You will need to apply for a password to login to use this free service available to you, to do so, please visit: (<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~ois/tax.html>)

For international students & scholars who have been in the U.S. for more than 5 years and need tax assistance, we recommend you attend the tax workshop or visit the University of Texas's international tax website: <http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/>.

Additional information can be found at www.irs.gov, or by calling 1-800-829-1040

Additional tips:

Students on fellowships should be taxed at the most 14% of their income. This does not include any additional tax benefits. If you have reason to believe you are being taxed more, please visit the Payroll office.

If you received no income in 2005, you will most likely only need to file Form 8843.

Foreign nationals who have tax treaties should pay close attention to the terms of their treaties (<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p901/ar01.html>). If you have questions concerning benefits you think might apply to you, please inquire at the Payroll office.

REMEMBER: Tax forms must be filed with the IRS by April 15, 2006 to avoid penalties. Please mail it to:



Stay tuned for OISS Spring 2006 events!

* **Immigration Workshop**

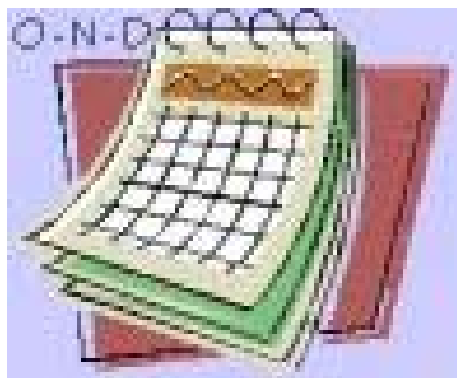
Harry Gee, Immigration
Lawyer. 4:00-5:30 p.m. Seawall
Hall Rm. 301 **February 7**

* **RISA, Special Lecture**

On the Earthquake of Southeast
Asia: The Untold Story
4:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sewall Hall,
Rm 301. **February 16, 2006**

* **Cultural Fair**

12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at RMC
March 3



* **Tax Seminar for Rice**

International Students
Thursday from 3:00- 4:30 p.m.
March 23

Fall Orientation is looking for Volunteers
to assist the new international students to have a
great start at Rice. Please contact Lily Lam at
llam@Rice.edu or call X8755.

* **OPT Workshop**

February 20, 3-4
February 21, 12-1

* **CPT Workshops**

February 23, 12-1
February 24, 3-4

* **Employment Workshop**

SIR Meetings

Meeting for the international
ladies, noon of the
First Wednesday of the month,
starting February. A great time
for lunch and social time. Stay
tuned for the announcement from
the OISS listserv.