Some of the OISS staff members contemplated this past summer on what places they recommend for our Rice international students and scholars to visit. We hope you enjoy the variety of things to do.

A great resource to explore the city is the Houston Greeters (http://www.houstongreeters.org/). They provide free tours of various places in Houston. All you have to do is: 1) click on their website, 2) choose a place of interest, 3) request a “greet”, and 4) a volunteer will arrange to meet you and show you around their favorite part of the city. It is a friendly mix of hospitality, offer of friendship and exploring.

Personally, I like visiting the many Texas State Parks. The costs are always minimal and the great variety of landscape and natural beauty is remarkable. There are always beautiful views and hiking trails. To review the many Texas State Parks in and around Houston, visit: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/. The park information has great details as to what you can do and see in the parks, and includes short videos of the beauty.

One of my favorite destinations is a short trip to Huntsville State Park (http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/huntsville/). In little over an hour, you can enter a beautiful park that makes you feel you are much farther away from the big city bustle. You can go horseback riding through a beautiful trail (a bit pricy) and enjoy many hiking trails. It is a great place to go when you don’t have a lot of time to get away, but need a break from the big city noise.

I know you will enjoy the other recommendations by the OISS staff. Happy exploring!!

(Article continued on page 4)

2nd Annual International Football Clinic & Tailgate – A HUGE Success!

Under the stadium lights on the football field, 250 Rice internationals enjoyed playing games, eating stadium food, and learning from Rice’s wonderful football team and coaches. It was one of the best cross-cultural experiences at Rice, and lots of friends were made, as the players taught the international students and scholars how to run drills, and learn the rules of American football. If you missed it, be sure to come next year. Look for your friends in these videos while you enjoy the highlights!

Video 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZWQwNAa9Y02
and
Video 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSWj2rI_thk
**LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear Rice International Students & Scholars,

We welcome you all to a new academic year, and hope that your goals will be realized in the next few weeks and months. At the OISS, we seek to do what we can to help you meet those aspirations, and welcome hearing from you about what we can do to help you.

With number of internationals rising every year, we ask you to plan well in advance for any immigration benefits, so you can maximize your options while also giving the OISS staff adequate time to deal with the paperwork. With the exception of emergencies, it is best to make an appointment to see an OISS advisor to discuss immigration status and benefits, by calling x6095 (on-campus extension) or 713-348-6095.

Best wishes for a great semester and we look forward to seeing you throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Adria L. Baker
Executive Director, Office of International Students & Scholars / Associate Vice Provost for International Education

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**Changes in the OISS**

The OISS has encountered many changes in the last few months. We are excited about our new staff members who are with us, and we know you will join us in helping them feel welcome. The new employees are:

**Ben Colston** – Program Manager & Sr. International Advisor, came to us from Washington State University, and previously at the University of Houston. His experience of teaching English in China for three years and several years of foreign student advising and programming provide us with the foundation needed for his position.

**Von Nguyen** – Visa & Administration Specialist, has worked at Rice for several years in various offices including the Jones School of Business, Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance and Jewish Studies, as well as volunteering and working on many special projects with the OISS.

**Tarja “Andy” Meretoja** – International Departmental Coordinator, worked in the OISS as a temporary employee for several months before becoming our newest full-time employee. She and her husband, who works in the Department of Bioengineering, are citizens of Finland and bring so much to Rice.

We also shed many tears with the departure of the beloved **Lily Lam** and **Vanessa Uribe**, who both left us in the summer. Lily has many professional aspirations that she has been wanting to expand on, including utilizing more of her counseling credentials, doing more training, and having time to travel. Vanessa needed more time at home, with the arrival of her first child in September. They are missed everyday, and we are grateful for the many, many years of contributions (Lily for 12 years and Vanessa for 4 years) of which they have blessed the OISS and Rice! Thank you, Lily and Vanessa!

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**Congratulations to Cory Owen**, who was granted a Fulbright scholarship to travel to Germany with a delegation of U.S. higher education administrators for two weeks! We are very proud of you, Cory, and you will be a great ambassador for Rice!
# International Student Enrollment by Country/Region - Fall 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
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<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>Venezuela</td>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL: 1194</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Totals:**
- Enrolled non-immigrant degree-seeking students: **1194**
- Graduate international students: **827**
- Undergraduate international students: **367**
- Exchange (yearly) students: **54**
- Visiting international students: **58**
- New international students for Fall 2011: **388**

*Numbers as of 9/20/2011

**Did you know?**
- The international students make up to approximately **20%** of the overall Rice population?
- We had **683** foreign visitors and scholars conducting research and lecturing at Rice during the past year?
- Rice international students and scholars represent **100** different countries/regions?
FUN IN HOUSTON

FAVORITE PLACES TO GO IN AND AROUND HOUSTON

AGNES VAJTAI’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Hermann Park (Japanese Garden, Rose Garden, Miller Outdoor Theater)
Hermann Park [http://www.hermannpark.org/] is only a few minutes from Rice University and such a great place that offers wide range of programs and so much fun for individuals as well as families from activities such as: riding a bike, taking a paddle boat on the lake, taking a small train to go around the park, going for a picnic, or taking a walk in the beautiful Japanese Garden ([http://www.jgarden.org/gardens.asp?ID=376](http://www.jgarden.org/gardens.asp?ID=376)) or Rose Garden which is maintained by volunteers.

The Miller Outdoor Theater ([http://milleroutdoortheatre.com/](http://milleroutdoortheatre.com/)) is also in Hermann Park with free admissions to concerts, plays and other great performances. It’s definitely worth to check out and visit once in a while.

Galveston Beach
For the lovers of the sun and natural waters, Galveston Island [http://www.galveston.com/default.asp](http://www.galveston.com/default.asp) is the place to go. Less than an hour drive from Houston with its sandy beaches, Galveston offers everything, including walking/riding along the Seawall or going around on rented tricycles and of course, swimming/fishing/surfing in the Gulf of Mexico. Just a perfect spot to spend the entire day there but don’t forget your sunscreen and/or shade/umbrella!

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MATT STEIN’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Wabash Antique and Feed Store
Location: 5701 Washington Avenue, Houston (in The Heights), 77007
Cost: Free to browse
Even if you aren’t an organic gardening enthusiast, this is a fun place to stop to get a sense of an old-fashioned “feed store”. In addition to potted herbs and bags of goat food, you can go right up to the cages to see multicolored chickens, rabbits, turkeys, and other animals. There is also a garden with an eclectic mix of metal and stone animal sculptures and a small pond.

Bellaire Aquatic Center
Location: 5100 Laurel Street, Bellaire, 77401
Cost: $10 for non-residents of Bellaire
Even if you have a membership to the Rice Recreation Center and can swim for free, treat yourself once to the Bellaire Aquatic Center. Rather than just a rectangular swimming pool, this place has a 3-story water slide, a giant kids’ pool with smaller slide and water shooting in many directions, and a diving area. There is also a snack bar and lounge chairs to spend an afternoon relaxing, just 10-15 minutes from Rice by car.
Andy Meretoja’s Recommendations

Brazos Bend State Park: An amazing state park approx. 28 miles southwest of Houston that has great hiking/walking trails. It is also a home for wild alligators, so watch your step and keep an eye out for the incredible beasts. Though they may look frightening, the gators are not dangerous unless provoked, so keep a respectful distance and do not annoy them. It is also forbidden to feed the animals, since it is not smart to teach the alligators to associate people with food. You can fish at the park, but stay out of the water. And if an alligator is after the same fish, it’s best to let him have it… With proper manners and common sense, the park is perfectly safe, and the alligators calm. You can even pet baby-gators at the Nature Center! The park also has hundreds of beautiful birds for those who would rather concentrate on spotting creatures a little less scary.

The Brazos Bend State Park is also home for the Houston Museum of Natural Science’s George Observatory. The observatory is open every Saturday (and Friday, during the summer) night, weather permitting, giving you an opportunity to look through their three huge telescopes, as well as the telescopes of the volunteers, who will be more than happy to explain to you all about the Texas night sky.

Hours: Brazos Bend State Park, 8am—10pm Mon—Thu, 7am—10pm Fri—Sun
George Observatory, 3pm—11pm Sat (& Fri during summer)

Tickets: Brazos Bend State Park, $5 per person 13 and older.
Camping also available, check website for fees.
George Observatory, $5 per person, on a first-come, first-serve basis, starting at 5pm. Viewings begin at dusk.

Visit: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/ brazos_bend/ for directions and more info.

Bayou Wildlife Park: A privately owned park with hundreds of animals, including Rhinos, Giraffes, Ostriches, Antelopes, Buffalo and Watusi, father of the famous Texas Longhorn. Admission includes a safari-like tram ride that takes you across the park, literally in the middle of the animals. To make the experience even more memorable, you can purchase buckets of food to feed to the animals that come up to the tram.

Price of admission also includes pony rides for the kids, as well as a petting zoo for everyone young at heart.

Hours: 10am—4pm March—August, 10am—3pm August—February
Pony rides: Available anytime March—July, weekends only August—February,
Closed: Mondays August—February 1st.
Tickets: $18 per person, cash or checks only.
Visit: http://www.bayouwildlifepark.com for directions and more info
**Von Nguyen’s Recommendations**

Kemah Boardwalk:
The Kemah Boardwalk is a great place to take friends and family to enjoy a number of restaurants, unique shops, games, rides and activities. Kemah is 35 miles from Houston and 25 miles from Galveston Beach. The boardwalk’s highlight is the outdoor roller coaster, “The Boardwalk Bullet” and the stingray reef exhibit where you can touch real stingrays! There is also a carousel and Ferris wheel for the little ones as well as boat rides and yacht tours on the water that the entire family can enjoy. If you like to go shopping, the boardwalk has many shops that specialize in unique gift items, jewelry, candles, home decor, and even Christmas ornaments. You can end the day dining at a myriad of eateries specializing in seafood, Mexican cuisine or steaks. Come visit the Boardwalk where “the fun never stops!”

For more information, visit: [www.kemahboardwalk.com](http://www.kemahboardwalk.com)

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**Cory Owen’s Recommendations**

Houston Zoo:
One of my favorite places in Houston is right around the corner from Rice! The Houston Zoo ([http://houstonzoo.com](http://houstonzoo.com)) is a great place to spend an afternoon and is in walking distance from campus! They have so many great animals, exhibits, and activities that I find myself going numerous times a year. Plus, with your Rice ID card, you can go for free during the semester!

My favorite stops are the new African Forest exhibit and the Reptile House. There’s just so much to see that everyone will find something that they like! A new feature they recently added was a free iPhone app that allows you to see a map of the zoo and get updates on all the “Meet the Keeper” talks. This is a great way to learn more from the experts and really interact with the animals.

Every year during the Summer International College and Winter Events, I make sure to take students that are in town, so if you haven’t been to our zoo yet, come join us!

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**A special note from the OISS Team:**

Congratulations to our Executive Director, Dr. Adria Baker, who received the KC ISSS Award for Excellence for leadership in the field of international student and scholar services, and for becoming the Associate Vice Provost for International Education at Rice. We’re all very grateful for working under her leadership and learning from her dedication and experience of over twenty-five years. ~The OISS Team
FREE ADVANCED IMMIGRATION SEMINAR

You will not want to miss hearing about employment visas, avenues for gaining permanent residency ("Green Card"), and other immigration options from Board certified immigration lawyers Andrew Gee and Frank Garcia.

When: Thursday, October 13, 4:00 — 5:30pm
Where: Sewall Hall, Room 301
Who: Harry Gee & Associates

Bring a friend and learn more about immigration issues that may help you or someone you know!

WORKING IN THE U.S. AS AN F-1 STUDENT

By Matt Stein, International Sponsored and Student Advisor

Working in the U.S. while you are a student – from research in a lab on campus to a summer internship in an American company – can be a great complement to your academic work at Rice. Every semester OISS advisors assist dozens of F-1 students to obtain authorization for work during the school year, during academic breaks, and after graduation. The process is actually quite straightforward as long as you plan ahead and follow the correct procedures.

OISS offers several CPT/OPT Workshops each semester. Please plan to attend a workshop before you need work authorization. During these one-hour sessions, you will hear a complete introduction to off-campus employment, be able to pick up information handouts and forms, and ask questions of an OISS advisor. Please see the CPT/OPT Workshop dates for Fall 2011 separately in this newsletter or check the OISS web site (http://oiss.rice.edu).

On-Campus Work – F-1 students do not need separate authorization to work on campus in most situations. To learn more about how many hours you may work, employment opportunities, and more, please see our on-campus work blog post.

CPT – Curricular Practical Training is authorization to work while you are in a degree program at Rice. It can be approved by an OISS advisor within a few days once your paperwork is ready. Please read OISS’s “F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Handout” that outlines procedures. In order for your application to go smoothly, please make sure that 1) your CPT application form (on page two of the handout) is filled in completely, and 2) your job offer letter contains all of the required elements listed on the handout (start and end dates of employment, hours per week, job address, and job description).

OPT – Optional Practical Training is authorization to work after you graduate from Rice and requires an application to USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) 2-3 months before you graduate. More details about OPT can be found in the “F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) Handout.” To ensure that your OPT authorization goes smoothly, please plan ahead by 1) attending one of the OPT workshops each semester and 2) meeting with an OISS advisor to discuss your specific case so that we can plan a strategy and timeline for your stay in the U.S. after graduation.

We look forward to working with you in person!

URLS:
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) Handout – http://oiss.rice.edu/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?linkIdentifier=id&ItemID=442
Rice University’s ADVANCE program invited some high school students from The Briarwood School to a special viewing of the Rice Culture Fair 2011 tables. The Briarwood School is a top private school in Houston that excels in teaching students with learning differences and developmental disabilities.

At Culture Fair each year, Rice students from different countries and regions of the world, as well as US ethnic groups, set up booths to teach the attendees about their culture. They show artifacts, food, posters, music, games, and other cultural highlights to share the many distinctive customs with their guests. This past spring, the Briarwood students were hosted by our extraordinary Rice graduate and undergraduate students.

The Briarwood mid and high school students had been preparing for their visit by studying the countries and regions that were represented on the day of the Culture Fair. To name a few of the many highlights, they watched how their names were written in Arabic and Farsi. They had the opportunity to write their own names in Chinese calligraphy and play a typical Chinese child’s game. They tasted excellent Turkish treats, and were engaged in taking pictures of themselves behind Egyptian posters with the faces cut out. They heard accounts of the beauty of Japan and the resilience of its people despite last spring’s disasters in Japan.

The Rice students at the Culture Fair could not have been more caring to their new acquaintances. They were patient with their differences, and showed elation in teaching their new friends how to read something in a different language, despite the challenges many of the Briarwood students face often with developing reading skills. We are grateful for the kindness Rice students and scholars shared as they opened their hearts (and their doors – 30 minutes early) to the Briarwood students. This was an unforgettable event that I believe all parties will always treasure.

Rice University continues to develop a special bond with the Tuttle School division of The Briarwood School, as we find more ways to intersect the helpfulness and brilliance of the Rice students with the uniqueness and joy of Briarwood students with learning challenges and special needs. Bridges of friendship, kindheartedness and patience go a very long way to building special relationships, memories, and two-way learning for a long time.

**CULTURE FAIR BRIDGES INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO LOCAL SPECIAL STUDENTS**

**Department of Public Safety (DPS):**
In a welcomed turn of events, the DPS announced some changes in their practices and laws. They include:
1) International visitors no longer need to show more than six months of authorized stay in order to extend their driver's license (DL). Now, the DL extension will be approved until the end date of one's legal non-immigrant visa status.
2) Letters from the school's Designated School Officials (DSO) are no longer needed to apply for a Texas ID or Texas DL.
3) DPS is piloting an appointment system so that waiting in endless lines will be unnecessary. We hope the pilot appointment system (which will allow for an appointment up to 90 days) will come to Houston soon.
4) The automated appointment system will inform you directly as to the identification documents you need when you go to the DPS office, so as to minimize confusion based on the many visa classifications.
5) Applications for DLs and Texas IDs will go much quicker, as all of the information will be pre-loaded, as opposed to being input when you are waiting after waiting for long periods of time.

**H-1B Delays:**
There have existed great delays in the H-1B processing in the last weeks due to the Department of Labor's temporary suspension of the prevailing wage determination. Plan well in advance if you think you are going to apply for an H-1B in the future.

**USCIS Transformation Project:**
Presently, immigration benefit application filed with USCIS are downloaded with paper. In December 2012, USCIS plans to roll out its Transformation project which entails a complete paperless environment for immigration applications and documentation. There will be an interim paper process until there are no problems with the new way of doing business. Until you hear from the OISS, we will continue to file forms via paper, such as OPT applications (Form I-765), until we are assured of no problems. Stay tuned.
The U.S. laws that internationals must follow can be confusing, and are subject to change with not advanced notice. Three different agencies that write and enforce government regulations affecting university internationals have create special websites as helpful resources for you.

1) The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency’s website: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/ offers ten steps for navigating the immigration system.

2) U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) debuted their “Study in the States” website (http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/), in an effort to attract and retain the best and brightest international students and scholars.

3) For J visa holders, the U.S. Department of State’s (DOS) Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs’ website, http://j1visa.state.gov/, reflects their commitment to communicate more effectively, in an effort to enhance cultural and educational exchanges and promote understanding.

The OISS advisors are also available to help you with any questions you might have on maintaining your status, visa compliance and immigration regulations (as well as personal and academic issues). Our goal is to proactively help you, so as to minimize any problems you have while in the USA.

**New Scam Targeting International Students & Scholars on Tax Issues**

Please beware of this scam and many others. If you are not sure about something, please check with the OISS. If something looks too good to be true, it probably is. The scam works like this:

The foreign national receives an email to which is attached what appears to be a letter from the IRS on IRS letterhead and a Form W-4120B. The email appears to have been sent from the IRS and contains the subject line “LICR-Admin-I] [LICR]”.

The foreign national is then instructed to complete the attached Form W-4120B to be exempt from all U.S. interest income. The form asks for personal information (i.e., banking information). The foreign national is requested to fax the form to what appears to be a fax number located in Austin, TX. It all looks very legitimate, as one would expect from such a scam.

Note: IRS will NEVER – not ever – send you an email. No exceptions. And, in no case should you ever respond to an email from the IRS (or any other governmental agency) seeking personal or banking information. IF the IRS needs to reach someone or has a question, the IRS will print a letter and ship it using US postal service. And, if there is missing information from a tax return, the original or a copy of the tax return is usually sent along with the letter requesting information, in which case, the person would re-submit the filing. The IRS will NEVER solicit a taxpayer to try to file a form to avoid paying tax.
It is often believed that the best advertisement is by “word of mouth”, i.e., personal recommendations. There exist many avenues by which people learn about Rice. However, when a student returns to their home country and speaks well about their education and experience, I believe this is one of the most effective marketing tools. Further, the more people know about Rice in your home country, the stronger your degree becomes.

Onja Razafindratsima, a Rice doctoral student in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, spread the news to Madagascar. During a visit home, she made two visits: to 2) The U.S. Embassy and 2) An English Teaching program at the Ecole Normale Superieure. In both occasions, she spoke to groups of students wishing to learn more about what it is like to study in the USA. She also had the opportunity to speak of her experiences at Rice. Here is what she said:

“The attendees were Malagasy students in Natural Sciences with undergraduate level (1st to 5th college-year), and some professors. My slides were in French as this is the language we use in school but the discussion was in Malagasy. Since this was mostly intended to be a talk about my dissertation project. I was mainly discussing about the main focus of my research and study at Rice, and my fieldwork in Madagascar. However, I had an opportunity to talk about Rice and share my experiences during my talk with the students. They were interested in both my research and my studies, and also had some questions about pursuing studies in the US.”

Our hope is in the end, others learn more about the great things at Rice, and the REAP-International “ambassadors” are able to make helpful contacts in their home countries.

To learn more about how you can participate in the REAP –International program, visit: http://reap.oiss.rice.edu/
For over a year, the OISS has enjoyed hosting and facilitating visits with international delegations, special groups and visitors. It is such an exciting pleasure to greet university administrators and faculty members from around the world who come to learn more about the great things of Rice. We have called on many Rice internationals from the countries or universities that are represented in the groups, to meet and help extend our hospitality. This makes for exciting connections and potential collaborations.

Recently, some of our special visitors have come from China, Egypt, Turkey, Cambodia, Vietnam and several other places.

**Agnes Vajtai**, the OISS’ key staff member for this service, was extended an invitation by a colleague from Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, because of the great job she did in facilitating meaningful meetings when their delegation was at Rice University. Here is what she had to say about the visit:

“Rice’s MEMS department has been collaborating with Tsinghua University’s Materials Science Department for several years; they published research articles, exchanged students and organized yearly workshops together. As the continuation of this fruitful partnership, this July a delegation of students and faculty from Rice participated in the 2011 Nanomaterials Workshop in Beijing.

As a member of this delegation I was so fortunate to experience firsthand the rich history and culture China offers to its visitors as well as the warm hospitality, and the hardworking and efficient nature Chinese people are well known for. We attended presentations, visited labs, and travelled around off-campus to famous historical places as part of the official program. All of these activities provided me insight to the way Tsinghua organizes and handles international delegations, and will help arrange visits for Rice’s guests in the future, as this is a significant part of OISS’s responsibilities now. I would like to extend a special thanks to Rice University and the Office of International Students and Scholars for sponsoring my trip and for the valuable experience I was able to gain.” - Agnes Vajtai

**Ladies Networking Luncheon**

Relax in the middle of the day!!

**Who is Invited:** All Rice international ladies (students, spouses and scholars)

**When:** First Tuesdays of October, November, February, March, & April

**Time:** 12 (noon) pm – 1:00pm

**Where:** Room to be determined

**What:** Pizza and snacks, networking opportunities, craft, friends

Bring a friend! It is always lively and a great way to relax in the middle of the day!
The Graduate Student Association (GSA) and OISS collaboration level is enjoying an all-time high. This year the President of the GSA, Sumedh Warudkar, is an international student from India, studying his Ph.D. in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering. He has assembled an incredible executive team of GSA leaders, including three other international students—Sravani, Varun and Gabriel. Some highlight events include:

**Graduate International Leadership Summit:** This is a discussion forum involving the university’s higher administration, the GSA leadership and graduate student leaders of various cultural clubs/groups on campus. Into its 4th year now, this has provided an important platform for the cultural groups to engage with the GSA and also voice any concerns to the university administration.

**Graduate International Cultural Night:** This is an event that was conceptualized in the 1st Graduate International Leadership Summit and now into its 3rd year. The Graduate International Cultural Night is a cultural extravaganza involving dance, music and even stories from various countries followed by a multi-cultural cuisine dinner. Before the performances start, representatives from around 40 different countries proudly carry their flags in front of a cheering and applauding audience. It’s the sight of a lifetime!

Mark you calendars for February 17, 2012 to attend, carry your flag, or participate this year. If you haven’t seen video of this from February, 2011, visit: [http://www.media.rice.edu/media/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=15392&SnID=903143141](http://www.media.rice.edu/media/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=15392&SnID=903143141)

**International Coffee-break series:** This is an event that was conceptualized this year and has met astounding success. GSA has collaborated with different cultural clubs on campus to bring various non-alcoholic beverages and delicacies from around the world. We started the summer with Caffè Italiano, celebrated graduate orientation over the Chinese Tea Festival, and enjoyed some Indian Nashta Chai (Tea and Snacks) in September and will bid the hurricane season goodbye with a Merienda Latina (snack America).

Be sure to celebrate International Education Week with the GSA-OISS coffee break on Wednesday, November 16th from 3-5:00pm in the GSA Lounge in the basement of the RMC!!

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**Did you know that Texas is so BIG that you can “travel internationally” and never leave the state? Here are some real Texas town names and their zip codes:**

- Athens, Texas 75751
- Canadian, Texas 79014
- China, Texas 77613
- Dublin, Texas 76446
- Egypt, Texas 77436
- Ireland, Texas 76538
- Italy, Texas 76538
- Turkey, Texas 79261
- London, Texas 76854
- New London, Texas 75682
- Paris, Texas 75460

**Fun Texas Facts With No Practical Purpose**

**Why travel to other cities in the USA? You can stay within the state and visit these famous US cities!**

- Detroit, Texas 75436
- Cleveland, Texas 75436
- Colorado City, Texas 79512
- Denver City, Texas 79323
- Pittsburg, Texas 75686
- Newark, Texas 76071
- Memph, Texas 79245
- Miami, Texas 75570
- Santa Fe, Texas 77570
- Reno, Texas 75462
- Pasadena, Texas 77506
As the undergraduate international student population continues to grow (we’re almost at 11%!!!), we’re excited to see how y’all continue to contribute to the Rice culture both within your college and beyond. Here’s a quick look at some of the programs we have available:

**Peer International Advisors (PIAs):** These international students work all summer long (and into the fall semester) to help incoming international students prepare for their stay at Rice. They give advice varying from what kind of clothes to bring to what the college system looks like. They tirelessly answer emails and provide a really helpful guidebook for entry to the US!

**International Liaisons (ILs):** This group of leaders come from all backgrounds (including non-international students!) who are trained in cross-cultural adjustment and help students transition within the colleges. We have ILs in each college who are there to be a friendly face, a great listener and just a point of contact for any acculturation questions that may arise. Look for our little Sammy the Owl door placard to see who the ILs are in your college!

**OISS Lunch Munch:** Lunch Munch is one of the ways that we, the staff at OISS, try to meet you where you are. We come to lunches in serveries across campus on Mondays to just hang out, talk about certain topics, and to give you an opportunity to see you in a more casual setting. These lunches change locations every week and you don’t have to be a student in the college to attend that particular lunch!

These are just a few of the programs we have to help with adjusting to life in the US. The OISS is committed to providing more services to help meet your needs in a variety of ways, but we’re always looking for new ideas, so feel free to contact us if you’d like to participate in our programs or help us expand!

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**Fun Texas Facts!!**

- Texas' largest county is Brewster with 6,208 square miles. Connecticut (5,544 Sq Mi), Delaware (2,489 Sq Mi) and Rhode Island (1,545 Sq Mi) can fit inside this county.
- The King Ranch itself near Corpus Christi is larger than the state of Rhode Island, includes 50,000 head of cattle and more than 2,000 miles of fence.
- Texas possesses 23,292 farms with 1,000 acres or more for a total of 132 million acres, or 80% of the state land area.
- Texas has 90 mountains a mile or more high, with Guadalupe Peak in West Texas at 8,751 feet being the tallest.
- Almost 10% of Texas is covered by forest which includes four national and five state forests.
- Average yearly rainfall totals in West Texas are less than 8 inches while in East Texas totals exceed 56 inches. Texas climate statistics, Texas and U.S. weather extremes.
- The population of Texas is 24 million, not including the 16 million cattle.
- Texas possesses three of the Top Ten most populous cities in the U.S. - Houston, Dallas and San Antonio.
- Texas' most populous county and third most populous in the United States is Harris county in Houston with 3.4 million residents. The least populated county in Texas and the United States is Loving county with only 67 residents.
- Texas has 215 cities with a population of 10,000 or more.
- The Dallas-Fort Worth area has more residents - 6.9 million - than 39 U.S. states. For example, Colorado has about 5.0 million residents. (as of February, 2011)
- Texas includes 267,339 square miles, or 7.4% of the nation's total area.
- El Paso, Texas is closer to Needles, California (516 miles) than it is to Dallas, Texas (571 miles).
Please mark your calendars for the upcoming OISS opportunities for the Fall semester:

**Friday, Sept. 30** - **Free English Class Sign-up at OISS** from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. We have 4 classes. Please visit here for more details: [http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=112](http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=112)

**Tuesday, Oct. 4** - **International Ladies' Network Hour**. Place to be determined (TBD) from 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. For networking opportunities and a craft on beading. Pizza served.

**Thursday, Oct. 13** - **Advanced Immigration Seminar**. Sewall Hall 301 from 4:00-5:30pm – Harry Gee & Associates Law Firm.

**Monday, Oct. 17** - **Continued Orientation for 1st Year Graduate Students**. Place TBD from 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. Pizza served.

**Tuesday, Nov. 1** - **International Ladies' Network Hour**. Place TBD from 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. Great networking US-style. Tracey Rhoades to teach us to stamp and create our new cards by hand.

**Tuesday, Nov. 7** - **Continued Orientation for 1st Year Graduate Students**. Place TBD from 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. Pizza served.

**Nov. 12-19, 2011** - **International Education Week 2011** - Stay tuned! This is the week to celebrate YOU! (Learn more here: [http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=678](http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=678))

**Saturday, Nov. 12** - Ping Pong Tournament

**Tuesday, Nov. 15** - the President's Luncheon at the Cohen House (by invitation only).

**Wednesday, Nov. 16** - OISS is co-hosting the GSA coffee hour

**Thursday, Nov. 17** - Thanksgiving Lunch – Stay tuned to get tickets!

**Friday, Nov. 18** - International Education Reception at the Founder's Room.

**Saturday, Nov. 19** - Mini Soccer World Cup Day!

Learn about the Essay Contest for great prizes at: [http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=1163](http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=1163)

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To receive important updates, stay tuned to [oiss-announce@rice.edu](mailto:oiss-announce@rice.edu). To subscribe to the OISS-ANNOUNCE listserv go to - [https://mailman.rice.edu/mailman/listinfo/oiss](https://mailman.rice.edu/mailman/listinfo/oiss)

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*OPT/CPT Workshop Schedule:

- **Monday, October 3**, 12:00-1:00pm (Sewall 307)
- **Wednesday, October 5**, 3:30-4:30pm (Sewall 307)
- **Wednesday, November 2**, 10:00-11:30am (MBA students only)

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*Important Undergraduate Student message:* Please join us for Lunch Munch at a different servery each Monday. For the schedule, visit: [http://oiss.rice.edu/gateway.aspx?id=992](http://oiss.rice.edu/gateway.aspx?id=992)