



Editors: Cory Owen
and Ben Colston

Inside this issue:

Letter from the OISS Director	2
Fire Safety & Drills	2
OPT : Stem & Cap Gap	3
IEW International Education Week	4
J-1 Student Visas	5
International Ladies Network	5
Graduate Int'l Culture Night	6
DPS Update	6
J-1 Insurance	7
Job, Resume and Interviewing Tips	8
Tax Help	9
Winter Events	10
What to do in a Car Accident	11
R.E.A.P. International	12
QPR Training	12
Immigration Resources	13

Centennial Celebrations: Rice Internationals' Contributions

By Adria Baker, Associate Vice Provost for International Education & Executive Director of the Office of International Students & Scholars

Happy Birthday, Rice University! Please join us as we celebrate 100 year birthday all this year.

You can participate in three fun ways:

- **Add to our International Children's Book Collection** – We are seeking 100 books for various languages and countries. Will be used for children in the community to teach about cross-cultural awareness. (Thank you to those who have brought books already! Come see our collection so far.) Could you please donate a book from your country to our collection?
- **Share Your Cultural Experience** – We are seeking 100 cultural experiences to add to our VIP (Valuable International Experiences) website. Share your story and you may win a drawing prize: <http://bit.ly/CentennialVIPsurvey!>



Our Children's Book Collection so far



Our goal is to collect 100 short entries (200 words or less) of our international population's most memorable experience at Rice. We would love to hear your stories and experiences about the most memorable, interesting and/or best **intercultural** experience you have had at Rice University. You can write about an experience that is funny, educational, sad, happy or anything you would like to share with others. Thanks to our first VIP, Onja Razafindratsima! To read her VIP contribution, visit <http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=1198>

- **Sign Our International Poster** - We are seeking 100 languages for our **Centennial Poster**. Students and scholars will have the opportunity to write *Happy Birthday Rice* in their own language on a postcard. The cards will be available at OISS and OISS sponsored events, as well as at the OISS table of the Culture Fair.



Letter from the Director

Dear Rice International Students & Scholars,

We are so happy that you are at Rice University during this historical Centennial year! All through 2012 you will be hearing about ways that Rice is commemorating its 100th birthday. It is a very special year, for sure, and we hope you will participate in the many celebrations. You are an important part of our community and we want to celebrate alongside with you.

The OISS also is celebrating in its own way. Learn more about how you can contribute in a significant way (see page 1 on "Rice's Centennial").

We hope you enjoy a successful semester, and please make an appointment to see us anytime for immigration questions and benefits, personal questions, financial issues, work authorization, travel, visa issues, etc. by calling 713-348-6095 or emailing us at oiss@rice.edu.

Thank you,



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



What is a Fire Drill?

By Kathryn Cavender, Director of Environmental Health and Safety

A Fire Drill is an organized method of practicing exiting a building in the event of a real **fire**. It is mandatory that everyone participate. When you hear a fire alarm sound in your college or academic building leave quickly and gather as instructed outside. This quick action can save your life.

Each semester every college has a fire drill and each resident must participate. Even if you do not see any smoke or fire, you must still exit the building. Most individuals killed in building fires are overcome by the poisonous vapors or the heat from the fire. Very few individuals are killed by the flames themselves.

Gathering at the designated evacuation point is important. This is where the college masters or other university officials can give you further information about

the incident and make sure everyone is out of the building. Go the evacuation point and be counted!

Special OISS Note: *Since the way we do this in the USA may be different than what is done in your country, we felt the information is crucial since fire drills are mandatory for safety compliance of each individual in the Rice community.*

In the event of real fire remember to stay calm, stay low to the ground, and get out quickly. Stay at the assembly point until you have been released to leave or go back into the building. Quick action can save your life.



*Plan ahead to
ensure you
can maximize
your OPT work
authorization*

Maximizing your F-1 OPT

By Matt Stein, International Sponsored and Student Advisor

Dozens of Rice students each year finish bachelors, masters, and PhD programs and go on to work using F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT). This period of employment authorization offers 12 months of practical work experience related to the student's degree field. But what do you do after the year is over to keep working? If you're doing a post-doc, you might switch to J-1 status. If you're working for a company, an H-1B visa is a common route. But here are two other possibilities to explore:

Extending Your F-1 OPT: STEM

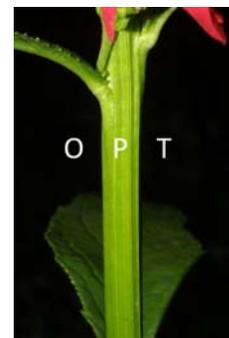
STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Students who are currently on post-completion OPT in a STEM field may be eligible for 17 months of additional OPT.

Here are the requirements for STEM:

- Have completed a degree on the USCIS "[STEM-Designated Degree Program](#)" list. The CIP Code indicated on the top of page 3 of your I-20 must appear in this official list.
- Your employer (either a university or company) must be enrolled in the government's [E-Verify](#) program. Note that there is no list of E-Verify participants, so you must ask your employer's Human Resources department for confirmation that they qualify.

The STEM OPT application procedure is very similar to your original OPT application. Here are some of the important points from the [OISS STEM OPT Handout](#):

- The earliest that you may apply for your STEM extension is 120 days before the end of your regular OPT. If you don't apply for STEM until quite close to the end of your regular OPT, don't worry: you may continue to work for an E-Verify employer for 180 days after the end of your regular OPT as long as your STEM application has been filed.
- Once you complete a new I-765 form and sign the OISS Statement of Understanding, we will issue you a new I-20 to use in your application.



Extending Your F-1 OPT: Cap Gap

A second way to extend your post-completion OPT is through a provision called **Cap Gap**. Cap Gap is an automatic extension of OPT authorization in cases where your OPT ends between April 1 and September 29 and an employer has submitted an H-1B application on your behalf before the end of your post-completion OPT.



For example, if your OPT ends on May 15 and your employer filed an H-1B application for you in April (the H-1B quota year restarts on April 1), your OPT will automatically be extended until September 30. This will allow you to stay in the U.S. and continue working until your H-1B goes into effect on October 1 (the earliest possible start date). This extension happens automatically once your H-1B petition is filed. If you would like proof of the extension, OISS is able to print a new I-20 showing the Cap Gap extension.

For more details about Cap Gap (eg, questions about travel), please schedule an appointment with an OISS advisor. For more information, please read the [USCIS Cap Gap Fact Sheet](#).

International Education Week (IEW)

By Andy Meretoja, International Department Coordinator

In November the Office of International Students & Scholars, alongside the entire Rice campus, once again celebrated International Education Week (IEW). Here's a brief recap of some of our events:

Together with the Rice Table Tennis Club and the Rec Center, we hosted our first ever Ping Pong Tournament with the help of our



Yezi Dong (L) with the winners of the Ping Pong Tournament

wonderful volunteer student coordinator, Yezi Dong. Almost 30 people came to play and the event was considered a great success. Medals went out to Dong Kyu Kim, Zehua Jin and Tommy Economou.

Every year during IEW we show appreciation to the presidents and leaders of Rice's international student clubs with a special luncheon at the Faculty Club, and this year was no exception. Dr. John Hutchinson, Dean of Undergraduates, Dr. Arnaud Chevallier, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs & Graduate Studies, and Sara Lowman, Vice Provost & University Librarian, were also invited as VIP guests.

OISS also teamed up with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to co-sponsor one of their monthly International Coffee Breaks. The event was such a great success that we had to expand the party into Willy's Pub to accommodate all of the attendees! Even President David Leebron was in attendance to try some of the wonderful treats from around the world.

We also held an International Education Reception to announce the winners of our inaugural International Education Week Essay Competition. Well over 40 people submitted essays for our panel of judges and the quality of the texts was amazing! The top three authors took away an incredible \$1500 total in prize money and places 4th through 6th received honorable mentions. Below is an excerpt from Mauro Rinaldi's winning essay.



Word Cloud representing the most commonly used words in the essays



Dr. Adria Baker with Mauro Rinaldi, 1st Place Essay Competition Winner

Have you ever hugged an American? It is an interesting experience. It starts with getting close, but leaving the window open to escaping the interaction, which gets you off to a rocky start. When you both realize the hug is going to happen, you start opening your arms wide, unsure of how much you will or should exactly bring them together later and dilate the approximation to assess just that, which I call the "slow motion" phase. And finally, you get close at an uncomfortable angle, but without touching, and very awkwardly hug the air around the other person to quickly pull yourself back out to safety again. That kept happening to me until I discovered the sideways hug. You cannot go wrong with the sideways hug; no possibility of face-to-face touching and clear visuals to readily break the embrace.

International Education Week (cont.)



The Americas Team won the Mini Soccer World Cup

Droubi's at the Student Center joined the IEW celebrations by serving an international menu throughout the week. On Thursday, they prepared a traditional Thanksgiving meal and OISS gave away tickets to 100 students for free lunches and invited them to join the staff for some fun conversations about the holiday, its history and the traditional way of celebrating it.

The IEW festivities were concluded with some friendly games of soccer, as teams Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe competed in the Mini Soccer World Cup – a Rice IEW tradition since 2005. This year we piloted a new tournament format, suggested by our amazing volunteer student coordinator Ahmed Elnably, and received a lot of positive feedback for it, so we are likely to try it again next year. This year's champions: Team Americas!

For more information on IEW, please visit: <http://iew.state.gov>.

For the full list of IEW events at Rice, please visit: <http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=678>.

J-1 Student Visa Reminder!

By Cory Owen, Program Manager & Senior International Advisor

Don't forget that if you're on a J-1 student visa, that you must get **all** work authorized by an OISS advisor before you start working! For graduate J-1 students on a fellowship, TA or RA, we will automatically give you authorization for that on a yearly basis, but any other employment must be verified by us *before* you begin working. If you'll be working on-campus, we'll need the following on letterhead:

- A brief statement of the job assignment
- Beginning and ending dates of employment
- The number of working hours per week (not to exceed 20 hours per week during the school year)

For off-campus work, please read our [Academic Training handout](#) carefully and then make an appointment with an OISS advisor.

International Ladies' Network

By Andy Meretoja, International Department Coordinator

The ladies of OISS have set up a forum for all international ladies at Rice (students, scholars and spouses alike). This group will be a meeting point for discussions on events, acculturation, support, and fun! Hoping to get information about our monthly ladies' networking lunches? Looking for someone to go shopping with? Sign up for the Google group and you can find both, and more!

Visit: <http://groups.google.com/group/rice-international-ladies> and click on "Join this group".

Ladies' Networking Lunches for Spring 2012

(First Tuesday of the month, [McMurtry College](#), Room 107, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.)

- March 6: RUPD officers will talk about safety and self defense; what to do in a threatening situation and how to avoid getting into one.
- April 3: Rice staff member Tracey Rhoades will teach us how to make cards by stamping.



Snowflake making project

Third Annual Graduate International Culture Night

By Ben Colston, Program Manager & Senior International Advisor

On February 17 GSA (Graduate Student Association) presented the Third Annual GICN, which was enjoyed and experienced by a sell-out crowd in Grand Hall.

The evening began with the flag presentation. The international graduate student population hails from sixty-five different nations. Students from fifty-five of those countries proudly presented and carried their flags to the front of the hall to the cheers of the audience. This in of itself was a wonderful display of the many nations and cultures represented at Rice.



Latin American Graduate Student Association



Rice Iranian Society

But the evening had just begun. The audience was treated to traditional music from India, Iran, Latin America, Nigeria, China, and South Korea, and of course food from around the world. There were also demonstrations of Argentine Tango and Kuk Sool Won, a Korean martial art. Interspersed in the performances and demonstrations were trivia questions about the international representation at Rice as well as important events and accomplishments at Rice during the last 100 years. All of this contributed to the celebration of Rice's 100th birthday as well as its rich diversity of culture. If you missed it, here's a video from Rice News for you to enjoy: <http://news.rice.edu/2012/02/22/around-the-world-in-an-evening/>.

*Photos taken by Varun Shenoy Gangoli

News from DPS

By Agnes Vajtai, International Delegate & Compliance Specialist

Supporting letters for driver license or Texas ID no longer needed

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) has recently updated its policy about the required documents for F1 and J1 visa holders when applying for a driver license or a Texas ID. **As a result, a supporting letter from the school is no longer required.** However, the rest of the procedure remains the same, thus taking with you all of your original immigration document is still necessary when visiting one of the DPS offices:

- Passport
- Visa stamp
- I-94 card
- I-20 or DS-2019

You should also expect to pay the application fee with credit card, cash or money order (currently \$25 for driver license and \$16 for Texas ID).

Required documents for all visa holders can be found in the following chart: <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/documents/ImmigrationStatusChart.pdf>.

For further information regarding Texas driver license and ID visit the DPS homepage at <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us> or go to the OISS website at <http://oiss.rice.edu/>.

Texas driver license without a written or driving test?

Good news for those who are staying longer than 6 months and have a valid driver license from **Canada, France, Germany or South Korea***: the foreign driver license can be exchanged for a Texas one as part of a signed agreement for mutual recognition of driver licenses between the State of Texas and these countries. In this case, as stated on the [DPS website](#), you don't need to take the written and driving tests. Only the vision examination is required, but you must surrender your foreign license. For all other countries you must complete the requirements for an original applicant which, includes all three examinations (written, driving and vision tests).

*Since South Korea has been recently added to the list, as of today it has not been updated on the DPS website.



Updates and Guidelines on J-1 Insurance Coverage and Proof

By Von Nguyen, Visa & Administration Specialist

All J visa holders are required by U.S. Department of State law (federal regulations) to carry a specific level of health insurance throughout their duration of stay in the USA. The OISS is striving to ensure better compliance with the government's regulations on J-1 insurance coverage and have started doing more thorough insurance checks on J-1 visa holders. Here are some things to keep in mind when providing proof of medical, evacuation and repatriation insurance (you **must** have all three types of insurance):

- **You must have insurance coverage during the entire time you are on J-1 visa status.** You have the option of purchasing insurance annually, semi-annually, or even month to month if your insurance company allows it. However, you must turn in proof of your updated coverage dates to the OISS every time you renew or extend your policy. You may drop the proof off in person or email a scanned copy to oiss@rice.edu.
- **Expiration date or end date of policy must be shown.** Often, if the expiration date is not listed on your actual insurance card, it can be found in your purchase receipt (if you purchased it online), confirmation letter or somewhere in the policy packet the insurance company sends you. You may also contact the insurance company directly for proof of the end date of the policy.
- **Proof of Medical Evacuation and Repatriation should be clearly identified and highlighted.** Please look through your policy and identify the sections that show your insurance covers medical evacuation and repatriation. Sometimes it is listed on the front page, and other times you have to read through your entire policy to find the section on evacuation and repatriation.
- **Rice Aetna Insurance through Rice HR Benefits does not cover ME&R.** J scholars who signed up for Rice Aetna through Rice HR



Benefits must be aware that the Rice Aetna insurance policy does **NOT** cover Medical Evacuation and Repatriation. If you have Rice Aetna, please be sure to purchase supplemental Medical Evacuation and Repatriation insurance through BETA (www.betins.com) for about \$30 a year, or you may choose any other insurance company that you prefer that meets the minimum requirements.

- **Dependents' insurance must meet the same minimum requirements as J-1 visa holders.** If you are bringing your spouse or children on a J-2 visa, their insurance coverage must meet the same minimum requirements as a J-1 visa holder.
- **You should carry your insurance card with you at all times.** In case of an emergency or if you need to seek medical help, every hospital, or clinic will ask for your insurance card.



For details on the health insurance requirement, as well as recommended health insurance providers, please visit <http://oiss.rice.edu/gateway.aspx?id=228>.



Don't forget that this year's Culture Fair is coming up! This year's theme is **The Amazing (Human) Race** and it will be held on Friday, March 16 in the Grand Hall from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Please stop by our booth and sign a birthday card for Rice's Centennial Celebration!

Job Searching, Resume and Interviewing Tips

By Von Nguyen, Visa & Administration Specialist

Have you started looking for a job but don't know where to begin? Finding a job can be a long process with the large amount of applications you have to fill out, customizing your cover letter and resume to fit each job, going on interviews and, finally, getting the job. There are a few key things to keep in mind in order to have a successful job hunt.

Here are a few tips to help you get started:



GENERAL TIPS

- Be diligent and determined. It is often frustrating to look for and apply to jobs. Some people set a goal such as applying for three jobs every day, no matter what.
- Make connections and remember to network! Tell your classmates, friends, family, advisors and contacts that you are looking for a job and let them know what type of work you are interested in doing in case they know of any job leads or hear about job openings.
- Stay positive. Looking for a job can get very discouraging and can take anywhere from months to a year or more depending on the type of job you want but just keep in mind there is the right job out there for you.

Cover Letters and Resumes:

- Customize your cover letter to the company and the job that you are applying for and try to find the name of the Human Resources person or the manager hiring for the position. Generic cover letters usually do not work as well as customized ones in getting a call from the recruiter.
- Ask around to see if any friends or colleagues can help you with writing or re-viewing your resume.
- You can do a Google search for "resume templates" or look at Microsoft Word templates to get you started on the format, style and layout of your resume.
- Always save your documents in "PDF" format so the employer cannot see changes you made previously which can happen if you send them as word documents.
- Here are some more very useful tips on Resume writing:

<http://www.dailywritingtips.com/resume-writing-tips/>

Interviewing:

- Prepare for your interview by doing research on the company and position to which you are applying. Study the company website and identify important people and key players. This will show the employer you are greatly interested in their company and that you did your homework.
- Be personable and engaging. If you know the names of the people interviewing you, research them and their backgrounds so you can converse about common interests or goals.
- For the actual interview, always arrive on time or earlier. If you are late, a brief but sincere apology would be appropriate. However, do not ignore the fact that you are late because the interviewer(s) will notice.
- Dress for success! Have you heard of the saying "When you look good, you feel good"? This is very true when you go on an interview. Your attire should be professional, neat and clean and appropriate for the position.
- Realize that the job interview is as much about the employer interviewing you as it is about you interviewing the employer and getting a good feel of not only the position, but your future colleagues. Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Good luck with your job search!

Need Help to File Your Taxes?

By Sandra Bloem-Curtis, Sr. Associate Director, Int'l Compliance, Systems Management & Administration

Filing your U.S. tax return can be a confusing and daunting process. But we don't want you to feel too overwhelmed, so keep reading for some helpful tips on how to complete this requirement.

If you were in the U.S. as an international student or scholar for any period of time during 2011, then **you must file U.S. tax forms by April 17, 2012**. Those who did not receive any income during 2011 may only need to complete Form 8843. Those who **did** receive income (scholarships, stipends, on-campus or off-campus employment, etc.) may also need to complete forms like 1040NR.

To be in compliance with all US laws, please be sure to mail off your tax forms to the U.S. IRS on time.

Helpful Resources for Tax Filing:

Glacier Tax Prep – A web-based software program that will assist “non-residents” for tax purposes to prepare their tax forms. The program can also help to determine if you are considered a “resident” or “non-resident” for tax purposes. For information on how to purchase a \$2 software license visit: <http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=132>.

University of Texas international tax website, an excellent resource for any international: <http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/>.

For residents for tax purposes, check out IRS Free File (tax preparation software) information <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=252506,00.html?portlet=108> or chart version at: <http://www.irs.gov/efile/article/0,,id=118986,00.html?portlet=6>

Tax Filing Requirements:

Tax forms are due to the IRS by **April 17, 2012** to avoid penalties.

Before filing your taxes, make sure you have received all your supporting tax documents from employers, Rice, or other scholarship/fellowship sponsors. You should receive a W-2 (for wages earned) or a 1042-S (for scholarships or fellowships). Some of these may be available electronically, check with the employer/sponsor.

Foreign nationals who have tax treaties should pay close attention to the terms of their treaties



Tax Workshop

Please join us for a workshop on taxes for Rice international students and scholars. We are welcoming Crystal C. Gates, Tax Manager, from **Briggs & Veselka Co.**, who will be available to answer tax questions.

Keck Hall 100 on Tuesday, March 20

First Year International Students

5:00 p.m.—5:45 p.m.

All Other International Students

6:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

Please bring your tax documents and questions with you!

Winter Events

By Cory Owen, Program Manager & Senior International Advisor



Houston Aeros Hockey Game

We had another wonderful year of activities for this year's Winter Events!

This year's outings included an exciting Houston Aeros hockey game. We all rode the light rail downtown for some ice action! While we were there, we were lucky enough to be serenaded by some students from local elementary and high schools! It was the first hockey game for a lot of people in our group, but we had a blast with all forty Rice Owls showing their support!

We also did our popular NASA trip again—but this was the first time we did it in December. Even though it was really cold that day on the tram tour, everyone got a great opportunity to learn more about our amazing space program (and try the freeze dried ice cream!). We are lucky to have such an historic and interesting place so close to Houston!



NASA Space Center

Another exciting activity was our trip downtown to watch the ice sculpture competition in Discovery Green. There were some amazing sculptures that we got to see created right in front of our very eyes! We ended that trip with a quick stop at the brand new Phoenicia Deli which has food from all around the world. The ice sculpture pictured here is a dragon in celebration of the Lunar New Year.

Probably the highlight of this year's Winter Events was our first-ever trip to the Bayou Wildlife. It was a thrilling day for all of us as we got to feed some friendly animals. We took a tram tour that allowed us to get up close and personal to various animals such as the deer, emu, ostrich, camels, and zebras! Plus, we were lucky enough to be there the day after a little goat was born.

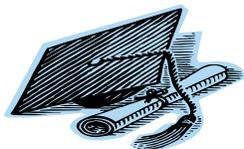


Bayou Wildlife Tour

As always, stay tuned for more events that we host throughout the year, but especially during the winter and summer breaks! If you have any suggestions on events to do over the breaks, please feel free to let us know! We love to explore Houston with you.



Discovery Green Ice Sculpture Competition



Need to invite someone to graduation?

Would you like to invite your family or friends to your graduation? Just click the following link to request a letter: <https://my.rice.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1316527962130>

What to do in a Car Accident

By Su Yeon Yoo, International Administrative Coordinator

If you are involved in a car accident, please to try to remain calm and follow these few steps:

- Make sure you and your passengers are O.K. Safety and well-being should be the first thing you need to make sure of.
- Call the police (dial 911) if there has been substantial damage, if anyone is injured, or if anyone is acting confrontational.
 - Stay in the vehicle if you are injured and wait for the ambulance or police with seatbelts fastened and hazard lights turned on. The police will check out the situation and investigate what happened.
 - If you are O.K., please gather or exchange important information as much as possible:
 - *If possible, move your car out of traffic and turn on your flashers.*
 - *Write down with legible handwriting the name, address, phone number and driver license number as well as the insurance carrier and policy number of other drivers involved in the accident, along with the names of anyone with injuries and any witnesses.*
 - *Don't argue over who is at fault or admit blame. (If the driver's name is different from the name of the insured, establish what the relationship is and take down the name and address for each individual.)*
 - *Take photos of the accident scene (vehicles involved, street sign, plate numbers, etc. before moving vehicles)*
- Give police the details you remember and any other information. The officer will give you a police report number.
- Contact your insurance carrier immediately
 - You will be required to provide a statement, usually recorded, with the details of the accident. This will serve as your claims deposition.

***In case of non-emergency, no substantial damage and no serious injury: Move cars to the side of the road and out of the way of oncoming traffic.**

- Usually with minor damage less than \$500 and no injuries: It is left up to the insured two drivers involved whether or not to report to the police. If all parties agree not to call the police, please follow the italicized steps above.
- You don't have to converse with the other insurance company about damages when you are called—just let the case worker of your insurance company work on your behalf.
- Please keep in mind that all drivers are required to stop in case of any accident.
- The only form you should sign after an accident is a ticket from the police. Signing a ticket only means you will appear in court or choose not to contest the ticket. It is not an admission of guilt, and if you do not sign, you may be arrested.



Helpful contact numbers and references

Rice University Police Department: 713-348-6000

Houston Police 713-222-3131

Emergencies: 911

If you suspect that you or any of your passengers were injured, have a checkup done at a hospital because not all injuries are immediately apparent. A key element of a claim is documentation of damage. Make sure that you keep records of hospital visits and their associated costs as well as lost time from work or school. If your injuries affect your daily life, such as your interactions with others, note that as well. Keep track of how much you paid or your insurance company paid for car repairs.

Helpful websites:

<http://www.progressive.com/vehicle-resources/car-accident-tips.aspx>

<http://www.edmunds.com/car-safety/what-to-do-after-a-car-accident.html>

R.E.A.P. International

By Ben Colston, Program Manager & Senior International Advisor

R.E.A.P. (Rice Experiences Advertised to Prospects –*Internationally*), is a program designed to increase Rice University’s visibility on a broad-based scale to prospective international students, through hearing about Rice students’ experiences. Rice University international students choosing to participate with REAP International will be serving as a type of “ambassador” for our school. This is a great opportunity to showcase your experiences at Rice to prospective students in your home country.

Upcoming R.E.A.P. Information Sessions

Lovett Hall Entrance A, Room 201E:

Wednesday, March 7, 4:00 – 4:30

Thursday, March 15, 4:15 – 4:45

Monday, March 19, 4:15 – 4:45

If you are currently an enrolled, degree-seeking international student on a non-immigrant visa at Rice, you are eligible to participate in REAP International program. Upon completion, you will receive a certificate of appreciation for your service and a \$125 honorarium. Please attend one of our information sessions to learn more about this rewarding opportunity. You can also see the schools visited by previous R.E.A.P. ambassadors on our website: <http://reap.oiss.rice.edu>.

QPR Gatekeeper Training: Ask a Question, Save a Life

By Salimah Khan, Assistant Director of Rice Counseling Center



Research suggests that early detection of mental health issues results in increased prognosis for recovery. Early intervention can be critical. The Rice Counseling Center Team believes that early detection of mental health issues is an important component of their work and that a student who wants or needs help should not be left to struggle on their own. Therefore, The Rice Counseling Center now offers “**Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR)**” a nationally-recognized suicide prevention program.

Much like CPR, QPR is designed as an easy to learn intervention and can be applied by anyone, including people outside of mental health professions. QPR is a behavioral intervention that focuses on helping a distressed student access appropriate professional help. It is intended to teach front-line individuals or “gatekeepers” (e.g. Masters, resident advisors, college coordinators, academic advisors, students, faculty, and staff) how to recognize the warning signs of suicide, including verbal, behavioral, and situational clues. QPR provides clear direction for how to: **Question** a person about suicidal thoughts, **Persuade** them to get help, and **Refer** the person for help. Presented by a certified QPR instructor, each 60-minute QPR gatekeeper training includes information on:

- The problem of suicide nationally and locally
- Common myths and facts associated with suicide
- Warning signs of suicide
- Tips for asking the suicide question
- Methods for persuading suicidal individuals to get help
- Ways of referring at risk people to local resources
- AND time for Questions and Answers

Upcoming QPR Trainings

Location: Wellness Classroom at the [Gibbs Wellness Center](#)

To register visit: <https://signup.rice.edu/QPR/>

Date	Time	Presenter
4/16/12	6pm	Kasey McKee (RUPD owl-cop class)

Each participant will receive a QPR booklet and card with information on suicide prevention and important crisis contact resources.

Immigration Resources

By Adria Baker, Associate Vice Provost for International Education & Executive Director of the Office of International Students & Scholars

With the Internet, Facebook, and all kinds of online communication, there are so many places to get information on immigration questions that you might have. However, it is crucial to your success while in the USA to get the right information for YOU! Where is it best to go?

- The [OISS website](#) keeps updated information on issues that affect you. For example, if you are seeking work authorization, you can find introductory information there. There are also past OISS newsletters that have reference guidance. Information on upcoming workshops are there, as well.
- Make an **appointment to talk to an OISS advisor**. How do I do this? Call x6095 to find a time that best works for you.
- Join and read the OISS-Announce listserv. Special immigration trainings and workshops are announced on a regular basis. To subscribe, visit <https://mailman.rice.edu/mailman/listinfo/oiss-announce>



The **USA government's** various agencies and departments have put up websites just for international students and scholars. Here are some examples:

- "Study in the States" by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at: <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>
- U.S. Department of State's information on student visas: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html
- U.S. Department of State's information on general visa information: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/>
- "Student Process Steps: How to Navigate the US Immigration System" Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE): <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/>
- Immigration services and benefits from U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) at: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>

We want Rice internationals to get the best immigration advice possible. Oftentimes the situation is quite complex, and an OISS advisor will refer you to an immigration lawyer, who is an expert on our complicated U.S. immigration laws. It is important to seek information on your own. Your case is unique so please do not refer to your friends for advice as each situation needs to be evaluated by an OISS advisor.

When all else fails, ask first! Only a slight misstep can cause a non-immigrant visa holder in the USA to fall out of status. The OISS always will advise conservatively, but will do all they can to help you get as many immigration benefits, for which you are eligible.

Free English & Culture Classes

Anyone in the Rice community (students, scholars, spouses) can join us for our free English and Culture Classes!

Advanced/Intermediate Conversation

Every Monday (until April 23)

1-3 p.m. in the Ley Student Center,
2nd Floor Conference Room

English Idioms & Slang

Every Wednesday (until April 18)

Noon until 1 p.m. in OISS
Lovett Hall, Entrance A, 3rd Floor

Beginning English Conversation

Every Thursday (until April 19)

Noon until 1 p.m. in OISS
Lovett Hall, Entrance A, 2nd Floor