Howdy! This is the final Newsletter you will receive before arrival to campus. Are you excited?! Our team here at OISS can’t wait to meet you! We have included some finalized tips for your arrival to Houston and to Rice.

REMEMBER! HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT OPEN!
Enroll at  [http://oiss.rice.edu/studenthealth/](http://oiss.rice.edu/studenthealth/)

Notice for Late Arrivals on the F or J Visa
Please note that you are expected to arrive by the program start date listed on your I-20/DS-2019 and that attendance at international orientation is mandatory. If you are experiencing visa delays outside of your control and might not make it to Houston by your start date, you may request permission for late arrival from your department. Keep us posted!

Travel & Arrival Tips
- JET LAG! Plan to arrive to Houston a few days before OISS check-ins to get acclimated to the time zone.
- CASH! It is recommended to have about $1,500-$3,000 USD with you upon arrival (keep in a safe place).
- CURRENCY CONVERSION! Know currency conversion rates to USD and prices of things you may need right away.
- RENT! It is customary in the US to pay a full month’s rent up-front upon moving in. For this reason, you want to ensure you have enough money to write a check right away to pay for the month in advance.
- STIPENDS/RICE FUNDING—Note that you might have to wait to receive Rice stipend/funding for 2 to 4 weeks after arrival. As mentioned, rent is usually due right away so don’t rely on Rice monies to cover any expenses during your first month.
- CVS/WALGREENS—these are small convenience stores throughout Houston that have most things people need (pharmacy, groceries, water, hygiene products, etc.). Feel free to Google “Walgreens near me” once in Houston.
- HOUSTON CLIMATE & A/C INDOORS—Be sure to expect a hot and humid city upon arrival! :) It is recommended to dress for warm weather but carry a jacket and umbrella.

Your Intake Checklist at Rice
- **MANDATORY!** Attend check-in at OISS (preferably on August 15th OR 16th)
- **MANDATORY!** Attend Graduate International Orientation (August 19th AND 20th; hosted by OISS)
- **MANDATORY!** Attend the Graduate Student Orientation (August 21st; hosted by GPS & GSA)
- Report to your academic department
- Set-up/activate your NetID, ESTHER account, and Rice e-mail account
- Register for classes & visit the Cashier’s Office for payments & Metro Q Card
- If receiving a stipend/funding, please visit the Payroll office
- Obtain your Rice student ID at the Rice University Police Department (RUPD)

Metro Q Cards
As a graduate international student at Rice, you are able to obtain a Metro “Q” card at the Cashier’s Office (located in the Allen Center building) on campus. The card will cost approximately $50 and will be pre-loaded with $500 worth of Metro credits to use for transportation provided by Metro, Houston’s public transport system. Houston is a large city and it is very helpful to have the Metro Q card for use of the public transportation system’s buses and rails.
Online Pre-orientation Session by GSA!
Members of our Graduate Student Association (GSA) are hosting a pre-orientation session online to connect with YOU in the coming weeks. They will share helpful tips and answer questions you may have about the real process of coming to America and starting your life in Houston and at Rice. *Stay tuned for the invitation email in the coming days!*

Check-in at OISS Upon Arrival
([oiss.rice.edu/prearrivalinfo/](http://oiss.rice.edu/prearrivalinfo/))
You are required to check-in with our office at Lovett Hall once you arrive to the U.S.—preferably on **August 15 OR 16**. Please bring original immigration documents (and photocopies): passport biometric page, visa page, port of entry stamp, I-20/DS-2019 if applicable, and printed I-94 from [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home#section](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home#section). If you are unable to have your immigration document photocopies ready by check-in, we can make copies for you at OISS. We will have over 600 incoming students checking in with our office so be prepared to check-in early! Immigration check-in is mandatory and the session lasts about 1—1.5 hours. **No registration is required.**

**Helpful “GIO” Orientation Tips**
- Arrive to Lovett Hall at Rice University on Monday morning (August 19th) & again on Tuesday (August 20th).
- First go to the Registration area to get your orientation folder and name tag. The name tags will be arranged in alphabetical order by **FIRST (GIVEN) NAME** and **not** by your surname/family name.
- The Registration and light refreshment area will be near the end of Lovett Hall, next to Herzstein Hall.
- You will have about 45 minutes (8:45 am - 9:30 am) to get your nametag, orientation folder, and light refreshments. You will then be directed to one of the two rooms where the OISS Graduate International Orientation will be hosted, starting promptly at 9:30 a.m.
- Your room assignment will be provided during the first-day registration on August 19th

**Your Preliminary Orientation Itinerary**
- 8:45 a.m. Registration & light refreshments
- 9:30 a.m. Orientation begins—morning sessions
- 10:30(sh) a.m. Break for 20 minutes
- 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Orientation continues—afternoon sessions
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch

**Vaccinations @ Target!**
Be advised that all graduate students must have a Tetanus vaccination, as well as two MMR vaccinations, prior to registering for classes. Target (popular store in Houston) is one of several places that offers vaccinations. Feel free to hop on the Rice shuttle from the Rice Village Apartments (RVA) or Rice Graduate Apartments (RGA) on **Saturday, August 17th** anytime between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. More information can be found at [https://transportation.rice.edu/schedules/rice-graduate-shopping-shuttle](https://transportation.rice.edu/schedules/rice-graduate-shopping-shuttle).

For more information, please visit [https://oiss.rice.edu/prearrivalinfo](https://oiss.rice.edu/prearrivalinfo) and see our page specifically designed for YOU at [https://oiss.rice.edu/orientation](https://oiss.rice.edu/orientation)

Left to right: Irene Mendez, Maria Corcuera, Agnes Vajtai, Elmira Ganiyeva, Scott Pett, Adria Baker, Marjorie Corejo, Irena Aleksi, Andy Meretoja
Not pictured: Sandra Bloom-Curtis, Jenny Brydon

**Kind regards,**

*OISS Team*