Greetings! This is the second of three newsletters you will receive from OISS this summer. We hope you are enjoying your time before arriving to campus! The following are some useful tips for preparing your arrival to Rice.

**What to Have on the Plane**

You MUST have the following documents with you when boarding the plane to the USA and will be required to present once you land in the US (before you are able to go to baggage claim). Do not leave any of these at home or place in checked luggage! Additionally, if you are coming on the F visa, you must enter the US between the “Earliest Admission Date” and “Program Start Date” as listed on your Form I-20. Students coming on the J visa may arrive up to 30 calendar days prior to the program start date listed on Form DS-2019.

♦ **Passport**: Please ensure your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months into the future upon entry into the US.
♦ **Visa**: Your passport should have the appropriate visa sticker and if you have multiple visas, be sure to only show the correct one for your arrival to Rice. Canadian citizens are not required to have the visa and may ask for the appropriate status at the US port of entry.
♦ **Form I-20 or Form DS-2019**: Students arriving on the F or J visa must have the original immigration document issued by Rice University. You will be required to present this document along with the correct visa in order to receive the proper immigration status upon arrival.
♦ **Admission offer letter** from Rice University
♦ **Financial documents (originals)** used at your visa interview, if applicable

**Health Insurance - Enrollment opens July 9th!**

All Rice-sponsored F-1 and J-1 students must enroll in either the Aetna or SAS plan during the Open Enrollment period (July 9, 2019 - August 30, 2019). Please visit [http://oiss.rice.edu/studenthealth/](http://oiss.rice.edu/studenthealth/) to review the brochures and fliers for Aetna and SAS, then select your insurance option and enroll.

**Attention Doctoral Students!**

♦ PhD students may be eligible for health Insurance subsidy. Please check here for more information: [https://graduate.rice.edu/healthinsurancefaq/](https://graduate.rice.edu/healthinsurancefaq/) and [https://graduate.rice.edu/healthsubsidy/](https://graduate.rice.edu/healthsubsidy/).
♦ Students who enroll in the SAS plan are not required to apply for a waiver. OISS receives the enrollment confirmation directly from SAS in about a week after your enrollment.
The preferred Check-in times are on Thursday (August 15th) and/or Friday (August 16th) from 9:30 am until 3 pm. If you cannot attend either one of these days, we will have additional times on Saturday morning, August 17th, and during the week of August 19th—23rd (not preferred). Check-in appointments normally take about one hour and no prior registration or sign-up is required.

**Orientation at Herzstein Hall (dark circle)**
Next to Lovett Hall, you will find Herzstein Hall, which is where our Graduate International Orientation will take place. We will have registration tables and light refreshments in the Lovett-Herzstein cloister from 8:45 am until 9:30 am. The orientation will begin promptly at 9:30 am and will last until lunchtime (around 12:00 pm noon) each day. Remember, attendance on BOTH days of orientation, August 19th and 20th, are required!

**Houston Weather**
The temperatures in Houston during July and August can be hot and humid [a high of 90-98 °F (32-37 °C)], but classrooms can be cold because of air-conditioning. This is true for the rooms we will be in for orientation. It is recommended to dress comfortably for hot weather and bring a sweater for indoors in case the A/C makes the room too cold. Also, it is recommended to bring or purchase an umbrella. Houston loves to have pop-up rain storms. :)

**Getting Around Houston**
Like pretty much everything in Texas, Houston is HUGE. You are encouraged to visit our website page “Surviving in Houston without a Car” at https://oiss.rice.edu/surviving-houston-without-car. You may also find it helpful to do a little research on our public transportation system called METRO (https://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/index.aspx). If you plan to use public transport to come to campus, then the bus and MetroRail locations can also assist you in finding the most convenient place to live. Additionally, all full-time graduate students will have the opportunity to purchase a preloaded Metro Q Card ($500 credit) for only $55.

For more useful information, please see our page specifically designed for YOU at http://oiss.rice.edu/gio/!

If you have questions, please contact us at oiss@rice.edu or 713-348-6095.

Warmest regards,
Your OISS Team