Welcome to Rice!
We hope you are having a great summer and we look forward to seeing you soon. This is the first of the three newsletters you will receive from the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) between now and the start of fall. It contains important information for planning to begin your journey at Rice.

YOUR TRIP TO THE USA

The first step to begin your exciting journey to Rice University is to acquire a visa from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Please start with checking the expiration date of your passport and renew your passport if it expires in less than 10 months. When you arrive in the U.S., your passport must be valid for at least 6 months.

We are aware of the U.S. Department of State’s decision to temporarily suspend the visa services due to the current global pandemic. Be sure to constantly check the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate websites for the latest information regarding the re-opening, visa appointment availability, and application process. We have great tips for you on our website that can help you to succeed in your visa interview (https://oiss.rice.edu/visa-tips).

OISS plans to mail out the original copy of your I-20 form no later than mid-June. However, if you have not received your I-20 form in the mail before your visa appointment date, you may print, sign, and use your electronic I-20. Once you receive your I-20 in the mail, please check all the information on the document, and sign your name and date in blue ink.

As an F-1 or J-1 visa student, you should plan to arrive to the U.S. within 30 days prior to your I-20/DS-2019 start date. Initial F-1 students are permitted to arrive to the U.S. on/after the “Earliest Admission Date” as listed on your Form I-20.
COVID-19
Due to the restrictions put by the current global pandemic, like unavailability of visa appointments or flights, some of you may not be able to arrive on campus on time for the Fall semester. To help you with planning OISS has compiled a list of FAQs and important information applicable to our new international students. Visit our COVID-19 related webpage at https://oiss.rice.edu/covid19/ which we update regularly. If you can’t find the information you’re looking for, please email us at oiss@rice.edu.

For Rice’s most current COVID-19 information, please visit Rice Crisis Management’s website at https://coronavirus.rice.edu/.

GETTING TO KNOW HOUSTON
Get excited! You are coming to Houston, one of the most diverse cities in the U.S. with more than 145 different languages spoken in the city. Did you know that Houston’s restaurant scene is considered to be one of the best in the country? Or that it is home to the world’s largest medical center?

More than anything, Houston is a BIG city, with plenty of things to do and neighborhoods to visit. To learn more about the city, visit https://www.visithoustontexas.com/.

HOUSING RESOURCES
Still need to find a place to live in Houston? You are not alone! We understand that it is hard to make these decisions, especially if you have never been to the city before. Many international students live close to campus (located in University Place) and commute via walking or biking, while others choose to live further away and use public transit or drive to campus.

To learn more about off-campus living, we encourage you to visit some helpful resources and housing guides below:
- https://oiss.rice.edu/housing
- https://offcampus.rice.edu/housing
- https://gsa.rice.edu/guide-to-grad-life/housing/
- https://graduate.rice.edu/applicants/after-admission/housing

We will also be having a Zoom meeting on June 17th at 8:00 - 9:00AM CDT to discuss off-campus housing in more detail.

Important Notice: When looking for housing options, always watch out for scammers!

Did you know that...
- In 1961, Houston was selected to be the home of NASA’s Manned Spacecraft Center (now called the Johnson Space Center) on land made available to the government by Rice University.
- On September 12, 1962, President John F. Kennedy gave the famous “We choose to go to the Moon” speech at Rice Stadium.
- In 1963, Rice University established the first Space Science Department in the nation.
- On July 20, 1969, “Houston” was the first word broadcast from the surface of the moon during Apollo 11 mission.

Want to talk with us in person? Tune in to our very first Zoom meeting on June 2nd at 8:00 - 9:00AM CDT (1:00 PM GMT)! We’ll be sending out the call details via email.

Office of International Students and Scholars
Questions?
Email us at OISS@rice.edu or Visit us at oiss.rice.edu