Significant DHS Changes & Challenges

By Adria Baker

Agencies that report to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have implemented changes that affect non-immigrant students and scholars studying in the USA through a series of: 1) policy memos, 2) updated interpretations of policies and practices, 3) new forms, and 4) higher fee proposals. Two agencies: the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) report to DHS, and regulate the laws and benefit applications affecting students and scholars on F student visas, and J exchange visitor visa categories.

USCIS’ recent policy memos and changed business practices have unfortunately resulted in increased turn-around times for processing applications for immigration benefits, such as Optional Practical Training (OPT), as well as denials of other benefit applications. The changes include less requests for evidence (RFE) and more direct and unanticipated denials. These changes are affecting Rice students and scholars, as well as others colleges and universities around the country.

In addition, the unlawful presence and visa overstay practices have been reframed by one of the policy memos, and it came into effect on August 8, 2018. The result of its implementation is increasingly uncertain, in terms of how long one can stay in the USA while various application determinations are being made. While appeals of immigration benefits are not available, filing the Motion to Reopen can be an option, in an effort to re-review cases that have been denied. That said, the decision to apply for this should be made with extreme caution, in that unlawful presence and/or visa overstay will come into play if the Motion to Reopen application is denied. What is the consequence of unlawful presence? A 3-year or 10-year re-entry bar to the USA (or indefinitely).

Another change is proposed higher fees. To learn more about these and other changes, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, posts frequent updates for international educators and advisors. The OISS advisors are monitoring these and other updates, as well as offering an advanced immigration seminar.

We highly recommend that you attend the “Advanced Immigration Session” on Thursday, October 11th at 4-5:30pm in Herring Hall 100 to gain a better understanding of these updates from an immigration attorney who is well versed in “tricky” cases. With this more restrictive review of U.S. immigration policies, we caution you to stay informed, attend CPT/OPT Workshops, and read OISS-announce updates from the OISS.

Pandas Create Positive International Collaborations

By Adria Baker

On August 19, 2018, a very congenial group of new and continuing Rice international students, scholars and friends gathered with OISS staff to see “Pandas 3D” at the IMAX theater in the Houston Museum of Natural Science. This traditional IMAX visit happens annually on the day before classes begin of a new academic year.

All IMAX movies consist of interesting documentaries, real-life individual stories and spectacular panoramas of nature. However, “Pandas 3D” carried an additional interesting international element - a story of relationships that were developed through shared experiences, and scientific research. In sum, there existed strong collaborations between individuals of very different backgrounds from China and the USA. The joint learning of expertise and passion for the survival of the pandas and other bears in the film hit close to the heart, as that is core critical to what we do at Rice—collaborate on research to solve critical problems.

I personally enjoyed the movie on several levels: entertainment, natural beauty, relationships, interdependence and joint scientific discovery. However, I was equally intrigued by the film’s portrayal of the transnational /intercultural bridges and friendships that were established and on-going, as a result of the shared knowledge, expertise and passion. At Rice, we experience this everyday, as our amazing departments, students, faculty and researchers create meaningful global connections.
Dear Rice International Students & Scholars,

Opening an new academic year and semester with each of you is such a privilege. We, at the Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS) are always very excited to welcome the new international students, and greet all continuing students and scholars at this time of year!

You will be hearing from us on a weekly basis, as we send out our email reminders of trainings, meetings, and important updates relevant to you. My couple of tips of advice for today: Consider planning early for any immigration benefit, as wait times have increased significantly. Also, consider multiple options in your future plans. We are finding that thinking about a “Plan B”, as well as your original immigration plans, can be helpful in navigating your path as you move through your degrees, research and future. We, at the OISS, want to help you throughout your time at Rice, and as you think through your academic and future plans. Please take advantage of the workshops and activities we offer, so you can get the most information possible. It also gives us an opportunity to get to know you better. YOU ARE SO WELCOME HERE! (see our video).

Wishing you a tremendously successful academic year! Thank you for being at Rice University! Gratefully,

Adria L. Baker, EdD, Executive Director, OISS
Associate Vice Provost for International Education

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**Advanced Immigration Workshop**

Do not miss the opportunity to hear Judy Lee, a well known immigration attorney in practice for years. She will come to campus on Thursday October 11, 2018! Mark your calendars and bring a friend to this free advanced immigration seminar!

**Who:** Judy J. Lee, Partner, and Kari Konikowski Blackman, Senior Attorney, at Foster LLP

**Date:** Thursday, October 11, 2018

**Time:** 4:00 pm —5:30 pm

**Where:** Herring Hall 100

**Topics:** Come learn about H-1B work visas, applying for a green card, and other visa options for employment in the U.S. now and for your future plans. Current immigration issues, limitations and opportunities will be discussed.

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**OPT/CPT Fall Workshops (1 hour)**

- **Oct. 5**, Friday, 12:00pm (OISS)
- **Oct. 25**, Thursday, 11:00am (OISS)
- **Oct. 31**, Wednesday, 11:30am (McNair 212) for MBA students
- **Nov. 7**, Wednesday, 11:00am (OISS)
- **Nov. 29**, Thursday, 11:00pm (OISS)
- **Dec. 11**, Thursday, 11:00am (OISS)
- **Dec. 13**, Wednesday 11:00am (OISS)

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**Texas State Parks**

By Adria Baker

Thoughout the great state of Texas, public lands have been reserved as *Texas State Parks*. Each state park has its amazingly unique lands, attractions and “flavor” of the natural habitat of Texas from that area. One actually does not have to travel very far to enjoy one of the many state parks. Within an hour’s drive from Houston, you could visit: 1) Brazos Bend State Park, 2) Huntsville State Park, 3) Stephen F. Austin State Park, 4) Battle-ship Texas Historic Site (located right near), and 5) San Jacinto Historic Site, to name a few.

One of my personal favorites is Palo Duro Canyon State Park, in the “Panhandle of Texas” (not close to Houston, however). It is a kind of mini-Grand Canyon, with a fun cultural outdoor musical and play during the summer months, called “Texas”. The beautiful canyon itself is the backdrop and stage for the performance.

Closer to Houston, south and central Texas have a multitude of state parks, which include historical markers describing interesting and historical stories. Mustang Island State Park is located near Corpus Christi, and is a great place to enjoy the Texas gulf coast beach.

No matter which state park you visit, you will enjoy the quiet of nature, see the natural wildlife and experience Texas in a unique way. Each park has a minimal cost per person. If you wish to camp overnight, there are policies to follow with additional fees. (Check out ROPE to learn about renting camping gear and other opportunities available for Rice students.)

You are so welcome in Texas and we hope you will take time to enjoy our state and be a part of the fun Texas culture!
### Countries/Regions Represented by Rice Degree-Seeking Students & Multi-level Visiting Scholars

#### International Students & Scholars By Country/Region - Fall 2018 *

| Country/Region                  | UG | GR | S | | Country/Region                  | UG | GR | S | | Country/Region                  | UG | GR | S |
|---------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---------------------------------|----|----|---|---|
| Albania                         | 0  | 2  | 0 | | Iceland                        | 1  | 3  | 0 | | Peru                           | 2  | 4  | 4 |
| Argentina                       | 1  | 3  | 3 | | India                         | 22 | 145 | 105 | | Philippines                    | 1  | 1  | 2 |
| Armenia                         | 0  | 0  | 2 | | Indonesia                    | 2  | 4  | 2 | | Poland                        | 1  | 1  | 3 |
| Australia                       | 4  | 5  | 5 | | Iran                          | 0  | 29 | 17 | | Portugal                       | 0  | 0  | 2 |
| Austria                         | 0  | 1  | 2 | | Ireland                      | 1  | 0  | 2 | | Romania                       | 0  | 4  | 3 |
| Bangladesh                      | 1  | 2  | 3 | | Israel                      | 0  | 1  | 12 | | Russia                        | 2  | 9  | 7 |
| Bahamas                         | 1  | 0  | 0 | | Italy                        | 2  | 8  | 22 | | Rwanda                        | 1  | 0  | 0 |
| Belarus                         | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Jamaica                    | 3  | 0  | 0 | | Saudi Arabia                  | 0  | 1  | 1 |
| Belgium                         | 2  | 2  | 2 | | Japan                       | 1  | 12 | 40 | | Serbia                        | 1  | 2  | 5 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina          | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Jordan                     | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Singapore                    | 9  | 1  | 2 |
| Brazil                          | 4  | 23 | 42 | | Kazakhstan                  | 1  | 2  | 0 | | Slovakia                    | 0  | 1  | 0 |
| Bulgaria                        | 1  | 1  | 2 | | Kenya                      | 0  | 2  | 0 | | South Africa                | 0  | 1  | 2 |
| Cameroon                        | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Korea (South)          | 41 | 45 | 23 | | Spain                      | 5  | 3  | 17 |
| Canada                          | 21 | 27 | 31 | | Kuwait                   | 0  | 3  | 0 | | Sri Lanka                  | 0  | 3  | 3 |
| Chile                           | 1  | 1  | 1 | | Kyrgyzstan                | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Sudan                    | 1  | 0  | 1 |
| China                           | 252 | 679 | 272 | | Lebanon                   | 0  | 3  | 2 | | Sweden                     | 0  | 0  | 3 |
| Colombia                        | 2  | 7  | 3 | | Macau                    | 1  | 0  | 1 | | Switzerland          | 2  | 1  | 2 |
| Costa Rica                     | 0  | 1  | 7 | | Madagascar            | 0  | 0  | 1 | | Syria                   | 1  | 0  | 0 |
| Czech Republic                  | 0  | 0  | 1 | | Malawi                 | 0  | 0  | 4 | | Taiwan               | 9  | 25 | 16 |
| Denmark                         | 1  | 1  | 1 | | Malaysia              | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Thailand                | 5  | 2  | 1 |
| Ecuador                         | 0  | 5  | 0 | | Mauritius            | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Trinidad & Tobago             | 0  | 1  | 0 |
| Egypt                           | 3  | 2  | 2 | | Mexico                | 8  | 30 | 31 | | Tunisia                | 0  | 1  | 1 |
| El Salvador                     | 1  | 2  | 0 | | Nepal                 | 1  | 0  | 0 | | Turkey                  | 5  | 15 | 39 |
| Estonia                         | 0  | 0  | 1 | | Netherlands         | 0  | 3  | 13 | | Ukraine                   | 1  | 2  | 3 |
| Finland                         | 0  | 1  | 2 | | New Zealand            | 3  | 2  | 2 | | United Arab Emirates        | 0  | 5  | 0 |
| France                          | 1  | 8  | 16 | | Nicaragua         | 0  | 2  | 0 | | United Kingdom          | 9  | 4  | 15 |
| Germany                         | 2  | 9  | 28 | | Nigeria               | 0  | 7  | 6 | | Uruguay                | 0  | 2  | 0 |
| Ghana                           | 0  | 0  | 2 | | Norway               | 2  | 0  | 39 | | Uzbekistan         | 0  | 2  | 1 |
| Greece                          | 1  | 4  | 8 | | Pakistan            | 1  | 11 | 5 | | Venezuela                | 0  | 6  | 2 |
| Guatemala                       | 2  | 0  | 0 | | Palestinian Authority | 0  | 1  | 0 | | Vietnam              | 7  | 7  | 8 |
| Hong Kong                       | 1  | 5  | 0 | | Panama              | 1  | 0  | 0 | | Zimbabwe              | 0  | 2  | 1 |
| Hungary                         | 0  | 1  | 3 | | Paraguay              | 0  | 0  | 1 | | TOTAL Students: 1672 | TOTAL Scholars: 912 |

**Totals:**
- Enrolled non-immigrant degree-seeking students: 1672
- Graduate international students: 1217
- Undergraduate international students: 455
- Exchange & Visiting international students in 2018: 194
- New degree-seeking international students Fall 2018: 521
- International scholars (teaching/research) 2017-2018: 912

**Did you know?**
- The international students make up 23.9% of the degree-seeking Rice student population.
- Rice international students and scholars represent 95 different countries/regions.
- 721 Rice students studied abroad in 2017-2018 (includes credit and non-credit programs).

UG = Undergraduate degree seeking students  GR = Graduate degree seeking students  S = Scholars

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Volume 34 Issue 1, Fall 2018
Regulatory Resources and Updates

**IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE: Local Address Update**

*By Elmira Ganiyeva*

One quote caught my attention while I was randomly reading anything and everything in Internet just to occupy myself and not to be bored. “When you have no idea how tall you are in feet, how much you weigh in pounds, and what to wear in 30 Fahrenheit...” (No worries, you will get all that very soon.) I’m here to add one more issue to that list “how to maintain your international student or scholar status” as while studying or being engaged in research in the US it is one of the most important tasks from the immigration law stand point.

As an international student/scholar, you are required to regularly report a change of address within 10 days of change by updating a valid local address as the place of residence while in the US. Failure to do so can result in serious consequences, including the termination of visa status.

**How can you report your change of address?**

Update your local Houston address in the Mailing Address field in ESTHER.

**Students:** If you do not have a Mailing Address field to update, please email registrar@rice.edu for assistance in creating one.

**Scholars:** If you do not have a Mailing Address field to update, you may update your Permanent Address field with your local address information.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) for more specific instructions and formatting requirements.

**If you are on a visa type other than F-1 or J-1, file Form AR-11 (online OR by mail).**

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**Keeping Up with Compliance**

*By Sandra Bloem-Curtis*

Staying on top of your immigration compliance keeps you in valid visa status and prevents headaches in the future. Here are just a few friendly reminders for F-1 and J-1 visa holders, to make sure you are staying on top of your immigration requirements.

1) Reporting requirements:
   a. **Moving?** Report your new address in ESTHER within 10 days
   b. **Change your phone number?** Update ESTHER with your new number within 10 days
   c. **Changing majors?** Adding a new major? Pick up your new I-20 from OISS
   d. **Traveling?** Provide OISS a copy of your new I-94 upon your return to the US
   e. **Need to drop to part-time status?** There are limited circumstances that will allow you to receive permission to drop below hours. Please see an OISS advisor before you drop to discuss the particulars of your situation.
   f. **Need to take a leave of absence?** See an OISS advisor for the proper steps regarding your immigration status and Rice process.
   g. **Completing your program early?** Notify OISS of your early departure for your SEVIS record to be properly closed out.
   h. **Need to stay longer?** Request an extension from OISS before your immigration documents expire
   i. **Want to take online classes?** If you are on a J-1 visa, be sure that you have no online classes counting toward your full-time status requirement. If you are on an F-1 visa, be sure that no more than 3 online credit hours are counting toward your full-time degree requirement.
   j. **Want to work?** See an OISS advisor regarding the proper work authorization you need for your particular circumstances, and ALWAYS get work authorization before you begin working. Remember, unpaid internships still require proper authorization to maintain status.
   k. **Cleaning house?** Don’t throw away any old immigration documents!! Be sure to keep all current and former immigration documents in a safe place. You will need these should you ever want to apply for immigration benefits down the road.

2) Immigration benefits: Immigration benefits such as work authorization, extensions, visa renewals, etc. are not an entitlement. Immigration benefits are options that you may be eligible to request, but there are no guarantees. Stay compliant, keep copies of all supporting documents, and stay tuned to immigration updates from OISS regarding trends and changes in immigration benefit requests.

3) **Ask before you act!** Immigration laws are written in a way that require authorization to be done in SEVIS prior to taking the action, so please see an OISS advisor before engaging in any activity that may impact your immigration status. Also, check out OISS’s newly revamped website for a wealth of information, handouts, procedures, and guidance for our most frequently asked questions.

International students and scholars bring a beautiful cultural diversity to our campus, and we are excited to see you succeed. Please know that OISS is here to help you navigate your immigration requirements so that you can successfully complete your program.
Regulatory Resources and Updates

What is SEVP's New Tool That the Whole City is Talking About?

By Agnes Vajtai

If you are an international student studying on an F visa you already know you have many reporting obligations to maintain your status. But have you heard that if you are close to graduating and planning on working in the US on your OPT\(^1\) you will need to use the 'SEVP Student Portal', a new and helpful tool, to report your personal and employment information to the US Government?

The SEVP\(^2\) Student Portal currently allows students on OPT\(^1\) and STEM\(^3\) extension to directly access, monitor, and update their information on their SEVIS\(^4\) record which previously required assistance from OISS\(^5\). Thus, students have greater role and consequently greater responsibility in reporting their information accurately and timely.

The good news is that creating and maintaining your portal account is simple, quick and convenient. SEVP\(^2\) will send detailed instructions once your request for optional practical training has been approved and your OPT\(^1\) started, and afterwards you will be able to log in and report electronically any changes in your address, telephone number or employment information from anywhere, anytime. And since the changes appear in SEVIS\(^4\) instantly, you do not need to build superfast paper airplanes to send the required information on time to meet the deadlines.

The three main things to remember are: time is important, and similarly to other reporting requirements, changes should be reported within 10 days; continued access to the portal requires frequent (every 3 months) log in; and all necessary information as well as additional resources can be found on our website: [http://oiss.rice.edu/sevpportal](http://oiss.rice.edu/sevpportal) and we are here to assist you further with anything we can.

Abbreviations:

1. OPT: Optional Practical Training
2. SEVP: Student and Exchange Visitor Program
3. STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
4. SEVIS: Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
5. OISS: Office of International Students and Scholars

For Graduate Students: OPT & I-20 End Date

By Irena Aleksic

Students pursuing a PhD or a thesis-based Master’s degree have several options for choosing a program completion date. It is best to discuss your individual timeline with your academic advisor/faculty member to determine the most appropriate choice. You are also encouraged to attend one of OISS’ CPT/OPT Workshops and meet with an OISS advisor to discuss any visa implications.

**NOTE:** Your program ends when you complete degree requirements (may be before the end date on your current I-20). Your I-20 will be updated to reflect an end date matching one of the options below.

**Program Completion/I-20 End Date Options:**

1. Commencement/Degree Conferral (most common)
2. Last Day of Final Semester (typically 1-2 weeks before graduation)
3. Thesis/Dissertation Defense Date*
4. Thesis/Dissertation Submission Date *

* **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Choosing defense or submission date can be very risky. You must defend/submit ON THAT EXACT DATE. Deviations from this may cause issues and delays in OPT processing, especially if your OPT application is pending at USCIS. Please meet with an OISS advisor to discuss.*

**Sample “Defense Date” Scenario:** You could, in theory, defend your thesis on November 1 (chosen end date), start OPT on November 2, submit your thesis on February 1 during your OPT period, and have degree conferred in May. However, if something causes a delay in your defense and you are unable to complete this on time, you would no longer qualify for post-completion OPT with a requested start date of 11/2/18. Most likely, you will need to cancel the application and start all over again. USCIS will charge another $410 fee and will take approximately 90 additional days to issue the EAD.

**Questions?** We are here for you! Please call 713-348-6095 or email [oiss@rice.edu](mailto:oiss@rice.edu) to schedule an appointment with an OISS advisor. Additional information can be found on our website at [http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork](http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork/).
Regulatory Resources and Updates

Is STEM OPT For Me?

By Irena Aleksic

You may be wondering how you can extend your legal status in the U.S. and gain further training in your field of study. STEM OPT is one way to do this! Before applying, we encourage you to understand the requirements and limitations of STEM OPT.

-What is STEM OPT?

STEM OPT is a 24-month extension of F-1 OPT status for students that have earned a U.S. degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) field. To know if you are eligible to apply, please check to see if the CIP code on your I-20 is on DHS’s STEM Designated Degree Program List.

The application process is similar to that of regular post-completion OPT; however, your employer must be E-Verified and complete an I-983 Training Plan for you.

-What Is The Cost?

The USCIS application fee is $410. There is also a one-time Rice administrative fee of $500 to cover additional resources and compliance for this benefit. You may pay the $500 Rice STEM OPT extension administrative fee with a credit or debit card at https://signup.rice.edu/STEMextension.

-When Should I Apply for STEM OPT?

You must currently be in valid F-1 status and on post-completion OPT to apply. You may apply to USCIS as early as 90 days before your OPT expires. USCIS must receive your STEM OPT application before your OPT expiration date.

Keep in mind that there are two separate approvals needed to process a STEM OPT Extension:

1. OISS: submit required documentation to OISS via email, fax, or mail, in order to obtain a new STEM OPT I-20 and SEVIS Employment History
2. USCIS: once you have received new I-20 and SEVIS employment history, assemble STEM OPT application materials and mail to USCIS in order to obtain Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

-How Is It Different From Regular Post-Completion OPT?

STEM OPT is a 24-month extension of your 12-month OPT period, permitting an additional 2 years of work experience. STEM OPT requires more employer participation than regular post-completion OPT. Your STEM OPT employer must complete a training plan and sign annual self-evaluations that you complete.

Furthermore, there are additional reporting requirements with the STEM OPT extension. You must complete validation reports every 6 months and report any changes to your I-983 Training Plan to OISS as soon as possible.

-Can I Apply For STEM OPT If My Employer Is Sponsoring Me For H-1B?

Yes, although you are not required to. Depending on the timing of your OPT expiration and H-1B application, you may want to apply for STEM OPT as back up in case your H-1B does not come through. If you are not sure you want to stay with your current employer, STEM OPT may be a good option as you are permitted to change employers while on STEM OPT. The H-1B is employer-specific.

Please be aware that any employment while on STEM OPT must meet all requirements (E-Verified employer, directly related to STEM degree, at least 20 hours/week, paid position, completed I-983 training plan, etc.).

-Can I Be Self-Employed on STEM OPT?

No, the job must be in the context of a bona-fide employer-employee relationship. Self-employment does not constitute a qualifying job for purposes of the 24-month STEM OPT extension.

NEW WEBSITE!!

OISS is proud to present the new and improved oiss.rice.edu!

We hope you find our new site user-friendly and informative.

PS. Did anything break in the move? Please email Andy at thm1@rice.edu if you notice any problems.
Helpful Resources for Rice Internationals

What is a Credit Score?

By Irena Aleksic & Irene Mendez

What it is: A credit score is a rating given to your financial history. It tells lenders how risky it would be to loan you money. It is a three-digit number between 350 and 850, with good scores ranging from about 700 and up.

How it works: In order to have a credit score you will need to build credit. The credit score is calculated by assessing several factors including how many accounts you have, the amount of available credit, percentage of credit used, your payment history, and the length of your credit history. The types of accounts you have (such as credit card, mortgage, etc.) also make an impact on your score.

What it is used for: Credit scores are used primarily by banks and insurance companies to determine your financial responsibility, including any risk factors associated with lending you money. The higher your score is, the better chance you have to get loans, credit cards, and well-priced insurance coverage.

How it affects YOU: Poor credit can cause issues with things like:

- Getting a credit card (the credit limit is low with very high APR)
- Getting a loan approval (loans have very high interest rates)
- Getting a reasonable insurance rate
- Leasing an apartment
- Applying for a mortgage

Ways to Build a Good Credit Score:

- Opening a bank account: having a savings account and regularly transferring money to that account as well as setting up direct debit payments for your bills shows that you can be responsible for your finances.
- Utility Bills: Making regular payments on all your utilities (such as gas, electric, phone, internet, etc.) is another way to prove to lenders that you are responsible with your payments and will be a suitable applicant for a loan or credit option.
- Obtain a credit card: Using a credit card responsibly is a way to build and maintain a good credit score. Although it can be difficult to find a company that will allow you to open a credit card, it is possible to find companies that will allow you to open a credit card as an international student.

Credit building may not seem like a top priority when you first arrive in the US, but the sooner you start building good credit the better. Just as you are building a strong resume with your education at Rice in order to appeal to employers, a good credit score will appeal to lenders in the future.

Should I or Shouldn’t I? Tipping Tips

From the Emily Post Institute

Traveling to a foreign country, as exciting as it is, might also be intimidating for not knowing every little detail about the culture, and the proper etiquette or expectations in each situation. If you are from a country where tipping is not a huge part of the culture, trying to figure out: 1) should you, or should you not tip, 2) how much is enough or 3) how much is too much, might be a stressful and daunting task.

In the US, tipping is a common practice (and actually expected, since waiters and waitresses’ wages are small, and they depend on tips for their salary) and people should pay the tip above the actual bill for a great service to show appreciation or say thank you. For restaurants in general, giving an extra 15-20% of the pre-task bill can be applied to most cases. You are encouraged to review a detailed list created by the Emily Post Institute (http://emilypost.com/advice/general-tipping-guide/), in case you find yourself in one of those areas where tipping is expected.
Helpful Resources for Rice Internationals

Doerr Institute for New Leaders:
Serving a Diverse Group of Rice Students, Expands Programming

From Armin Pajand

As you return to campus this semester, you will have a leg up on their peers at other higher education institutions across the United States: the opportunity to participate in a state-of-the-art leadership development program. The university’s Doerr Institute for New Leaders is the country’s first professional leadership development program offered at no cost to all undergraduate and graduate students and is the only leadership institute that provides individualized coaching and actionable guidance from credentialed coaches for college students. “Being smart and learning a lot of material, that’s really important,” Rice President David Leebron said in a video the institute created this summer. “The question is, how do you translate that knowledge into having an impact on the world? We want them (students) to graduate not with the idea that they can spend the next five or 10 or 15 years becoming leaders. We want them to graduate prepared to be leaders at every stage of their career.”

As the Doerr Institute’s presence on campus has grown, graduate students have become a key group for the institute. Ruimin “Rachel” Wang, a student in the Master of Global Affairs program, heard about the institute during international student orientation and was instantly intrigued. “I came from China, and … I feel like we didn’t have a lot of those (leadership) programs in Chinese universities,” Wang said. “At the beginning of last semester, I was so stressed because, all of sudden, this was a totally new environment. This was my first time to come to the U.S. My (Doerr) coach helped me a lot during the first semester.”

This fall, the institute is ramping up its efforts with new programming and will be offering the following leader development training to graduate students and post doctoral scholars:

Embrace Conflict: Turn disagreement into insight
What do you do when you encounter conflict or tension with others? Do you tend to shrink back and withdraw, or do you enter into adversarial confrontations? Learn how to address conflict in a way that preserves and improves relationships, creates new opportunities, and increases productivity.

A) October 17, 6:00-8:00 pm; November 6, 6:00-8:00 pm
OR
B) November 7, 6:00-8:00 pm; November 13, 6:00-8:00 pm

Influence Outcomes: Build buy-in and create accord
How skilled are you in gaining commitment from your faculty advisor and peers? Good leaders know that influencing others is critical for building support and teams.

October 2, 6:00-8:00 pm; October 16, 6:00-8:00 pm

Accept Challenges: See new situations as positive opportunities
Effective leaders know how to extract lessons and learn from every experience. Gaining experiences and learning to be agile with future experiences will help you reach your leadership goals.

October 1, 6:00-9:00 pm; October 8, 6:00-7:00 pm
OR
B) October 2, 6:00-9:00 pm; October 9, 6:00-7:00

Mark your calendar and click www.riceleader.org if you’re ready to take the next step in your leadership journey. For more information about the Doerr Institute for New Leaders, go to https://doerr.rice.edu.

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Cultural Activities

2018-2019 Initiatives for International Undergraduates

By Jenny Brydon

The following initiatives will take place over the 2018-2019 academic year. More detailed information will be sent out to international undergraduates before event dates.

Coffee with Jenny. RMC Coffeehouse. 8 -9pm. August 29, September 13, October 16, and November 6. If you need immigration advising after hours, this is a great time to get your questions answered. I will be located in or near the coffeehouse and look forward to meeting with you. Spring dates will be announced in January.

Undergraduate International Alumni Newsletter. Late Summer Fall. The purpose of the newsletter is to create stronger connections with international undergraduate alumni with the hopes of establishing networking opportunities between international alums and current international students.

UNIV 180 – Intro to Rice - Internationals. Location: TBA. Mondays from 4:00PM - 4:50PM (20-AUG-2018 - 12-NOV-2018). Survey course geared for new undergraduate international students to the USA and Rice. Adjustment and acculturation topics include Rice culture, US culture and academic success. New internationals – this is a great opportunity to stay engaged with the international community in your first semester at Rice!

Lunch, Learning, and Leading. Faculty Club. 4-5 luncheons per year, exact dates TBA. The purpose of these luncheons is provide a select group of undergraduate international students (approximately 7-10 students) the opportunity to meet with a Rice, industry, or government leader in an intimate setting that encourages conversation and networking.

Workshop Series. 4 - 5 workshops per year. Exact dates TBA. The purpose of the workshop series is to provide “how to” guidance on areas of interest to undergraduate international students at all levels. Workshop topics will include: Understanding your Rice Insurance Plan and How to Use It, Start-ups and International Students, Employer Panel, Car Basics 101 (buying a care, changing a tire, purchasing auto insurance and more!), Jobs 101 (accepting or rejecting an offer, salary negotiation, retirement plans and more!), and Living on Your Own (how to cook basic meals, signing a lease and more!)

I-PREP Advisor Hiring. Hiring will take place in January and February. If you are interested in being part of the student leadership team for I-PREP 2019, be on the lookout for applications in January 2019.

Thanksgiving Share program. Thanksgiving Day. Are you staying in Houston for Thanksgiving? This program will give you the opportunity to eat Thanksgiving with a local family and experience, first-hand, one of America’s favorite holidays.

Amazing Job!

A special thank you to the I-PREP 2018 Student Team that put on a fantastic I-PREP for our newest international undergraduates.

Pictured: Brian Tumusiime, Mariana Najero, Andrew Keat (I-PREP Student Director), Sofia Ruiz Castillo, Noor Elsonbaty, and Kaiqi Bao
Cultural Activities

It’s All about Hospitality!!

By Andy Meretoja

The Oxford English Dictionary defines hospitality as “the act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.” That is what we here at OISS are all about (well, that and immigration compliance)! Therefore, it is one of our priorities to offer a selection of hospitality programming every year, to ensure that all Rice internationals truly feel the goodwill!

Free English & Conversation Classes

The English & Conversation Classes are offered during the academic semesters, and they are available for all Rice students and scholars, as well as their spouses. These classes are taught by wonderful volunteers, who enjoy meeting and helping Rice internationals, and receive no compensation except the pleasure of meeting and working with you! In addition to providing an opportunity to practice your language skills, these classes are a great way to meet new people, make friends, and learn more about American culture. To learn more, please see http://oiss.rice.edu/english-classes.

You can find all OISS Events on our Event Calendar at oiss.rice.edu/events. If you want to be sure you never miss an OISS activity, you can subscribe to the Google Calendar through the same website.

International Ladies’ Networking Luncheons

These lunch meetings are intended to provide a networking opportunity for all the wonderful ladies at Rice, including students, scholars and spouses! They are organized on the first Wednesday of the month during the academic year (October – December & February – April) in partnership with the Graduate Student Association (GSA), who generously allow us the use of their Lounge space in the RMC. Each luncheon has a special topic, with either a presentation, a craft, or something completely different! Some lifelong friendships have started at the Ladies’ Luncheons, so we hope to see you there! To learn more, please see http://oiss.rice.edu/international-ladies.

International Friends at Rice

The International Friends at Rice is a friendship program for new international graduate students, where they will be matched with a local U.S. friend or family to meet a few times during the student’s first 6 months at Rice. Through these friendships the students have a great opportunity to learn more about the U.S. culture, share cross-cultural experiences, and help a local community volunteer learn about their home country. To learn more, please see http://oiss.rice.edu/international-friends.

International Education Week

International Education Week (IEW) is co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education, with a goal of promoting the value of international education and exchange. This weeklong celebration of the international community takes place in November, and here at Rice we always have a full schedule of events for you to enjoy! Some annual traditions include a Thanksgiving meal and the Mini Soccer World Cup tournament. To learn more, please see http://oiss.rice.edu/iew.

Is there an event or activity that you would be interested in? Please email your suggestion to oiss@rice.edu!

Summer & Winter Events

We will not forget about you even during the school breaks!! OISS is excited to organize programming and activities during the Winter and Summer breaks for all students and scholars who are not traveling back home. We hope you will join us for these fun trips and activities, which are also another great way of making new friends! Traditional activities include trips to NASA, visits to the area museums, going to a Houston Rockets basketball game, volunteering at local organizations, and much more! To learn more, please see http://oiss.rice.edu/summer-winter-events.
Cultural Activities

Adjusting to Living In, and Loving, Two Countries

By Marjorie Cerejo

To live abroad is one of the best experiences one can have. It broadens your sense as a human being and the way you perceive yourself and others. Squeezing your life into a suitcase and leaving your native country behind is like turning your life into a self-discovery journey that will make you grow up in unexpected ways.

For the last 20 years I had the opportunity of living in the U.S. for 13 years then going back to my home country, Brazil, for 7 years, and just recently, returning to America. I know now that I love and cherish both countries even with all their differences.

Even after all these years, whether I go back to my home country or to America, there are still some adjusting that needs to be done. I found out that being proactive and having an open mind is key to manage and overcome some of the readjustment processes and new challenges – and believe me, there are always new challenges.

Here are a few things that helped me adjust:

Making new friends – with a great group of friends, our experience can be one of the best of our lives. Befriend at least one native person. Get to know people from your home country, connecting to them will help ease some of the feeling of being homesick.

Keeping in touch with friends and family back home – no need to say this is essential, and modern technology has made it so easy to stay connected and share our experiences with loved ones.

Joining a group to build a network – participating in a group gives us an opportunity to be with people who are likely to have a common purpose.

Getting involved in local activities and exploring our surroundings – getting out of our comfort zone and exploring local sites will teach us things we would never understood on our own. Houston is one of the best cities to explore with a fusion of culture and lifestyles.

The feeling of calling home for two places so different from each other, creates in us fascinating emotions, as it allow us to be more respectful of the diversity among people and cultures. We also start perceiving things differently and cherishing small things. The best of it all is to have had a chance and strength to adapt to, and love both places.

“Sometimes your only available transportation is a leap of faith.” Margaret Shepard.
Cultural Activities

Carpets Come in Every Size and Shape

By Maria Corcuera

This summer a group of Dutch artists, called We Make Carpets, are showcasing their unique and beautiful art for the first time in the United States in an installation, “Crêpe Paper Carpet,” at the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University. The carpet like installations are made with everyday materials, like paperclops, candybars and shells, but they are not meant to be walked on or touched, just admired. They can be hung on a wall or set on the floor, and each of them are a rare work of art.

For OISS, it is a privilege to work with other departments at Rice in bringing people from around the world. We enjoy welcoming brilliant students, scholars, artists, scientists and other personalities to our beloved campus. It always amazes us how we are surrounded by so much talent in so many areas and, as in the case of “We Make Carpets,” enjoy art exhibitions, film presentations, concerts, and much more.

Our experience is always more interesting because we have to get in touch with our visitors months before their arrival. Corresponding with them to process their information in a timely manner gives us the opportunity to get to know them little by little. It was very gratifying to finally meet the artists of “We Make Carpets”: Marcia Nolte, Stijn van der Vleuten, and Bob Waardenburg, in person when they arrived at Rice.

I asked Marcia Nolte about their experience at Rice, and here are some of her comments:

Q: Tell us about you and the group.

A: “We are born and based in the Netherlands and since 2009 we have worked together. We have an education in art and design and met in Eindhoven, where we made our first installation during the Dutch Design Week”.

Q: What inspired you to make your piece at Rice University?

A: “We were asked by the Moody Centre for the Arts, to come over and make a piece during summer jam. We got total freedom in this beautiful space. Marcia was invited in November 2017 to Houston to see the exhibition space and to experience the culture of Houston. We usually search for a material that fits the place, the space and environment. She went to different grocery shops, hardware stores and also to the small pilahata shops. She found out there was a true symbiosis between the Mexican and Texan culture. She thinks that the Tex-Mex culture comes through in different fields, from food to street life. Coming back to the Netherlands, we felt that Crêpe Paper could be a material to work with. We like to enrich these kind of materials and put them in a different perspective”.

Q: Does your exhibit at Rice have a purpose?

A: “All our installations have in the basics the same purpose, make an installation out of every day materials. Materials from which people forget to see the beauty in itself. We create patterns out of hundreds and thousands pieces of the same material, varying in color. We don’t know the outcome before we start making the installation. For this particular installation we wanted to make something free-standing or hanging, because we had all the freedom to use the whole space. We wanted it to be an architectural intervention in the exhibition space. When we chose the material Crêpe Paper, it was clear we couldn’t make something hanging, so we ended up making stacks of Crêpe Paper, which finally made this free standing installation”.

Q: What did you like and what you did not like of your visit?

A: “It was very nice to experience a part of the United States in these two weeks. We experienced Houston as a colorful city. We think that the environment of Rice University is very beautiful; it is nice to walk there, even though it was very hot. We missed the possibility to go to a baseball game, but we were glad we didn’t miss the great bar Valhalla!”

Q: Did you meet any interesting people while at Rice?

A: “While making the installations we had a couple of people working with us, people from the Moody team, students and just graduates. We are thankful for having them with us these two weeks. Without them it would have been quiet a tough challenge to be finished before the opening.”

We at OISS want to invite and encourage our community to participate and take advantage of these wonderful cultural events, to relax and enjoy life at Rice’s campus.

The exhibition will be from June 9 - September 08, 2018 in the Central Gallery of the Moody Center. To learn more about We Make Carpets please visit: http://www.wemakecarpets.nl/
Cultural Activities

Summer at Rice

by Elmira Ganiyeva

Every summer has its own story. Rice internationals enjoyed every moment of the summer time, not only engaging in high-profile research, but exploring Houston as well. We wanted everyone to feel welcome to Rice and offer opportunities to meet each other and see things beyond the hedges.

It all started with exploring the Houston Downtown Tunnel System, which even many Houstonians are not aware of. The Houston Greeters local guide told the interesting history of Houston, and introduced the beautiful art deco treasures of downtown and its tunnel system. It was also a great chance to escape the Houston heat.

If you are already fascinated by Houston downtown art, the best place to broaden your knowledge is the Fine Arts Museum of Houston. The Internationals enjoyed their visit as the museum guide explained the story behind many beautiful pieces by world famous artists, like Monet, Renoir and Van Gogh, etc. It is definitely the highlight of the summer in Houston for many internationals.

NASA Space Center is not only one of the top attractions of Houston for Rice Owls. We are always proud that famous JFK’s “We choose to go to the Moon” speech took place at Owls’ stadium on May 25, 1961. The international students and scholars enjoyed the trip a lot as they found it very educational and entertaining.

We are very lucky at Rice that Houston’s finest museums are in a walking distance from us. Houston Museum of Natural Science is one of the jewels of the city. We spent a wonderful afternoon in the museum exploring its vast collection and learning the history of our civilization from museum guides.

Every Wednesday internationals gathered at OISS for Cookies & Conversation during which we discussed fun cultural matters while studying and working in the USA, learned the things to do in and around Houston, and enjoyed fun English Idioms & Slang in informal conversation.
Mark Your Calendars

Calendar of OISS Fall Events

**Free English & Culture Classes:**
- **Tuesdays from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** in OISS, Beginning English Conversation — Heather Dyusseková
- **Thursdays from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** in OISS, Grammar & Pronunciation — Chris Sneller
- **Wednesdays from 1-2 p.m., or 2-3 p.m.** in the Ley Student Center, Meyer Conference Room, Advanced/Intermediate English Conversation — Catherine Spain
- **Mondays from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** in OISS, English Idioms & Slang Class — James Bartlett

**Advanced Immigration Workshop:** See page 2 for details.
- **October 11, Thursday 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.** at Herring Hall, Room 100

**International Postdoctoral Associate Luncheon:**
- **October 4, Thursday, Noon, at Esther M. Cohen Room, Faculty Club**

**CPT/OPT Workshops:** Visit [https://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork/](https://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork/)
- **Oct. 5, Friday, 12:00pm (OISS)**
- **Oct. 25, Thursday, 11:00am (OISS)**
- **Oct. 31, Wednesday, 11:30am (McNair 212) for MBA students**
- **Nov. 7, Wednesday, 11:00am (OISS)**
- **Nov. 29, Thursday, 11:00am (OISS)**
- **Dec. 11, Tuesday, 11:00am (OISS)**

**Graduate IGNITE Sessions:**
- **October 2, Tuesday at Farnsworth 12:00 pm—1:00 pm “Academic Success & Grad Support Services” — GPS**
- **November 6, Tuesday at Farnsworth 12:00 pm—1:00 pm “Networking for Professional Meetings” — Beth O’Sullivan**

**International Ladies Network (Fall):** See page 11 for details.
- **October 3, Wednesday at Miner Lounge, RMC from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**
- **November 7, Wednesday at the GSA Lounge, RMC basement from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**
- **December 5, Wednesday at the GSA Lounge, RMC basement from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**

**Thanksgiving Luncheon:** Part of International Education Week (IEW)
- **November 15, Thursday at Farnsworth Pavilion (with ticket only)**

**International Education Week (IEW) 2018:**
- **November 12-16, Stay tuned for IEW 2018 at [https:oiss.rice.edu/iew/](https:oiss.rice.edu/iew/)**
- **November 14, Wednesday, 3:00pm—5:00pm GSA-OISS International Coffee Break**
- **November 10: Annual Mini World Cup Soccer Tournament**

More international celebrations to come!

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**International Postdoctoral Associate Luncheon**
Meet with members of OISS and GPS, as well as catching up with other Rice postdocs from multiple disciplines. Please RSVP by emailing Jenny Brydon at jbyrdon@rice.edu with. Include your name, department, email and phone number.

**October 4, Thursday at Esther M. Cohen Room, Faculty Club Noon**

**Stay Tuned for Winter Events!**
Random Quotes on “Character”

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.
Abraham Lincoln, American president, Statesman, Lawyer

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering the soul can be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.
Helen Keller, Author, Activist, Deaf-Blind lecturer

The final forming of a person’s character lies in their own hands.
Ann Frank, Diarist, Holocaust victim

Good character is not formed in a week or a month. It is created little by little, day by day. Protracted and patient effort is needed to develop good character.
Heraclitus, Pre-Socratic Greek philosopher

Life is a series of experiences, each one which makes us bigger, even though sometimes it is hard to realize this. For the world was to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and grieves which we endure help us in our marching onward.
Henry Ford, Business magnate, “captain of industry”

Don’t let your special character and values, the secret that you know and no one else does, the truth – don’t let that get swallowed up by the great chewing complacency.
Aesop, Greek storyteller

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.
Billy Graham, Evangelist, Preacher, Activist

Most people say it is the intellect that makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character.
Albert Einstein, Physicist, Nobel Prize recipient

Sound character provides the power with which a person may ride the emergencies of life instead of being overwhelmed by them. Failure is . . . the highway to success.
Og Mandino, Author, Speaker

. . . honor, integrity, name, rectitude, reputation, repute, standing, uprightness, virtue. . .
Synonyms of “character” (http://www.thesaurus.com/browsecharacter)