विद्या बन्धुजनो विदेश गमने

"In a foreign land, education helps like a relative" – Bhartr Hari

Indians' Life @ LaTech, USA

Association of Indian Students

Fall Students Orientation 2011

Overview of AIS, Tech, and Ruston

AIS Fall Students Orientation 2011

September 05, 2011

AIS: The Legacy

- Feel at home - Sprit of Indian-ness to the Tech campus
- Oct. 02, 2000 → Big Day to AIS
  - 11 years since the start of AIS
- Serving the student community
  - Guidance from university application process till visa application process
  - Pickups and temporary accommodation to incoming students; AIS also picks up international students!
  - Orienting students to life in the USA/Tech

AIS: Events

- Events Organized by the AIS
  - Diwali Nite (Fall): The Festival of Lights
  - India Nite (Spring): Annual Celebration of India
  - Sankranthi (Winter): The Harvest Festival
  - Independence Day (Summer), Republic Day (Winter)
  - Helps coordinate Ganesh Chaturthi (Fall)
  - In the past: Sports tournaments, Holi, Bakrid, and more
  - Helping and taking part in ISO/ISA events

Ruston: An Introduction

- U.S. Central Daylight Savings Time Zone
  - 10.5 hours behind IST (March-November)
  - 11.5 hours behind IST (November-March)
- *Safe* city (and campus) but be careful always! Don't carry *much* currency!
- Hot summers and cool winters
- Little town with southern hospitality – We are loved here!

Ruston: Boring? No way!

- Recreation:
  - Campus events
  - Celebrity Theaters: 8-screen multiplex
  - Dixie Theater: Plays and concerts
  - Lakes: D'Arbonne Lake (Farmerville), Claiborne Lake, Lake Bistineau (near Shreveport)
  - Parks: Lincoln Parish Park, Hide-Away Park
  - Shopping Malls: Pecanland Mall (Monroe), Boardwalk Mall (Shreveport), Bossier Mall (Bossier City near Shreveport), Arcadia Factory Outlets (Arcadia)

Ruston: Eating out

- Restaurants:
    - Mexican: El Jarrito, Old Mexico, Cactus Jack
    - Cajun: Ponchatoulas
    - Oriental: China Wok, Peking, Z Buffet, Hong Kong Buffet, 102 A Bistro, Pho Paris
    - Italian: Monjini's
    - Pizzas: Papa John's, Domino's, Pizza Hut, Pizza Inn, Johnny's Pizza
    - Other: Ryan's, Chili's, Applebees, Rabb's, …
- Coffee Shops: Crescent City Coffee, Starbucks Coffee
- Others: Smoothie King, Country Culture Yogurt, Maggie Moos, TCBY, …
- Fast Food Chains: McDonald's, Taco Bell, Subway, Raising Cane's, Church's Chicken, Popeye's, KFC, Wing Stop, Captain D's, Sonic, Griff's, Burger King, Waffle House, Huddle House, …

LaTech: Facilities

- International Student Office (229 Tolliver Hall):

  - **Our best friend at Tech!!** Approach for any question or issue!

  - Dropping a course in the middle of the quarter? Want to go to India or any other country? Maintaining legal status in good standing? Lost your passport/I-20/I-94? Questions about student insurance? Family visiting from India? Need to apply for EPT/CPT/OPT? Need a driver's license?

  - Guidance with filing income tax returns, coordinating Drivers' Education class on campus, organizing seminars on Immigration issues, and more!

LaTech: Facilities

- International Student Office (Contd.):
  - Interact at International Coffee Hour weekly
  - Watch International TV channels daily
  - Picnics quarterly, some coordinated with local (American) student groups and community.
  - Mutual coordination with International Student Association (ISA), Association of Indian Students (AIS), Namaste Nepal Association (NNA), Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA), and Muslim Student Association (MSA) in organizing all international events
  - ISA events: International Dessert Night (Fall), International Scholarship Dinner (Winter), International Day (Spring)
  - Participation in local events with Ruston community: Big Event, Peach Festival, Ruston Fire & Ice Festival, and more!

LaTech: Facilities

- Prescott Memorial Library:
  - 1st to 9th floors of Wyly Tower of Learning
  - NetLibrary
  - Inter Library Loan (ILL): Borrow books from many major university libraries
  - IngentaConnect (for journal articles not in PML or ILL): Free for articles priced $30 or less and $300 per month
- Counseling Services:
  - Career Center: Résumé building, Seminars, Career Fairs
  - Psychological Counseling

LaTech: Facilities

- Bulldog Achievement Resource Center (BARC):
  - Improve the quality of your class reports and thesis
  - Study and Consultation rooms, dictionaries, grammar handbooks and textbooks
  - Grammar hotline for urgent queries
- Computer Labs:
  - Student Technology Labs (STL): Wyly Tower, Prescott Memorial Library, George T. Madison Hall
  - Departmental labs: Nethken Hall, Bogard Hall

LaTech: Facilities

- Sports:
  - Max-Lambright Intramural Center: Gymnasium, Yoga, Racquetball, Table Tennis, Pool/Billiards, Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton, Bowling
  - Lawn Tennis Courts
  - Jim Mize Track & Field Complex
  - M S Carroll Pool (Natatorium)
  - Ball games: J C Love Field, Joe Alliet Stadium, Thomas Assembly Center
  - Reserve university playgrounds for cricket, volleyball, or other sports — for tournaments or even casual play!

LaTech: Facilities

- Student Center:
  - Main Floor: Venue of most Indian/international events
  - Cafeteria
  - ATM (Community Trust Bank)
  - Outdoor seating area
- Tolliver Hall:
  - Cafeteria (Annex)
  - Java City (Coffee Shop)
  - ATM (Community Trust Bank)
  - Indoor seating area
  - Public computers

LaTech: Facilities

- Research Centers:
  - Institute for Micromanufacturing (IfM)
  - Center for Biomedical Engineering Rehabilitation Science (CBERS)
  - Trenchless Technology Center (TTC)
  - Center for Applied Physics Studies (CAPS)
  - Center for Secure CyberSpace (CSC) (In collaboration with LSU)
  - Center for Entrepreneurship and Information Technology (CEnIT)

- Enterprise Campus (Under construction):
  - Tech Pointe
  - Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center (EIC)
  - Research Park

LaTech: Events

- International events:
  - ISO Picnic each *quarter*
  - ISA: International Dessert Night, International Scholarship Dinner (ISD), International Day, Sports events
  - Nepal Nite
  - Chinese New Year
- Ticketed/Free events at Wyly Auditorium, Howard Auditorium, Stone Theater, Planetarium, and more – Look in "The Tech Talk"

LaTech: On-Campus Jobs

- Cafeteria
- Library
- Computing Center
- BARC
- The IDEA Place
- University Police
- Intramural Center
- Bookstore
- Post Office
- Housing Office
- Comptroller's Office

Life @ USA

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Safety First!

- Ruston is safe!
  - Tech Police, Ruston Police, Lincoln Parish Police safeguard Ruston all the time!
- Still, stay safe!
  - Walk in small groups, if possible, particularly at night.
  - **<u>Carry an identity card at all times!</u>**
- Tech Police is a phone call away!
  - Remember locations of emergency phones on campus.
  - Call Tech Police for escort service for pick-up/drop-off within campus at night.

U.S. English is not *the* "English"

Indian English	American English
Petrol	Gas
Post	Mail
Mail	E-mail
Prepone	Move forward / Advance
Lakh / Crore	! (Millions / Billions)
Cover (Postal)	Envelope
Cover (Carry bag)	Plastic bag (Carry Bag)
Cheque	Check
Toilet	Restroom
Glass	Cup
Dress	Attire
Bill	Ticket/Check

Culture and Etiquette

- America is friendly but ***not*** informal!
- "Hi!" ☺ at ***every*** face you look at
- Acknowledge, Appreciate …***Express***, and nod <u>right</u>!
- **Hold the door** open till the last person walks in/out
- On road, **walk on the side and cross at signals,** wait in buffer lane if necessary

- Don't convert into rupees! (For your own good)

Culture and Etiquette

- Maintain distance with people and do not stare at anyone!
- Silence please!
- Respect privacy – No peeping into computer monitors! No personal questions!
- **Speak in common language!**
- E-mailing is a <u>formal</u> and preferred way of communication
- Always make yourself available during AIS, ISO events for volunteering and participation

Culture and Etiquette

- **Interact**
  - Learn other cultures
  - Teach your culture – they don't know yours, like you don't know theirs!
    - Learn it right yourself before you share it with others!
  - Don't get emotional or jingoistic!
  - Avoid heated debates on politics and religion

You are a community!

- What we do as individuals reflects on whole India and/or all of Indians!

  - "If a white person tips poorly, then he or she is just a *poor* tipper. If I do the same thing, I am a *poor-tipping Indian.*" – Ms. Shoba Narayan, NY-based writer

  - "I used to think Indians are at a higher level than us Americans. I am glad to see you are not sky-high really but a little less!" – (Name withheld), a resident of Ruston (about Indians not helping/regarding each other)

Maintenance

- **Clean your apartments regularly!** – Roach and bedbug problems put Indian students in low light!

- **No noisy midnight parties** – Inform neighbors, or they can call the cops!

- **What you live in is your HOME here and not a dormitory! Maintain it like it is your own home!**

- **Clean and vacate!** Or, forfeit security deposits!

- **A few unclean apartments can change management policies and affect everyone!**

At School

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University Procedures

- Sep. 6: International Student Orientation
- Sep. 7: Registration for classes
  - Meet your advisor during office hours
  - Register at Keeny Hall (KH 207)
  - Pay fees at Keeny Hall
  - Obtain Student identity card at Tech Express Office
- Sep. 8: Obtain network/e-mail id at Computing Center
- Sep. 8: Classes start; Drop/Add classes (start)
- Sep. 12: Drop/Add classes (end)

Meeting A Faculty Member

- Read his/her profile page before meeting a faculty member

- Address as "Dr. <Last Name>" or just "Doctor"

- Make sure that you dress up properly

- DO NOT go in the attire you were wearing while cooking food

- Make sure you have an appointment to meet them

  - It may be okay to knock on one's office door during one's office hours – See signs posted on one's office/webpage.

In The Class

- Just raise your hand if you have a question.

- Tell them that you have a "question" and NOT a "doubt".

- Be on time to the classes, some professors might decrease your marks if you are not punctual/regular to classes.

- Do not go and irritate a professor for marks – Ask them if there is a genuine mistake.

- **Be original** in your assignments and **DO NOT COPY** which might sometimes include combined work.

- **Plagiarism can lead to F grades and/or expulsion!**

- GOOD GRADES are VERY IMPORTANT!

Frequently Asked Questions

AIS Fall Students Orientation 2011

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FAQ: Earlier Orientation Sessions

- Social Security Number (SSN):
  - Can apply if you have an on-campus job or an assistantship
  - Records the complete database of the person
  - Linked to credit history
    - Every bank transaction and penalty is accounted

FAQ: Earlier Orientation Sessions

- Registration & Fee Payment (Fall 2011):
  - Last Date for Registration: Sep. 07; You can drop/add classes until Sep. 12 once you register.
  - Last Date for Fee payment: Sep. 07
  - Can be paid by checks, cash, travelers' checks, draft; credit/debit card (2% service charge)
  - Excess amount in fees would be refunded by Sep. 17
  - For any courses registered after Sep. 07, fee payment must follow registration
- Registration & Fee Payment deadlines are published on cover page of "Racing Form" (online).

FAQ: Earlier Orientation Sessions

- Textbooks & Resources:
  - Library may NOT have prescribed textbooks, but has a lot of print and digital journals
  - Tip: When buying books, use price-compare websites such as fetchbook.info or isbn.nu for best deals.
  - Used books are usually in good condition.
  - Ask the course instructor if an "exact match" international edition and/or older edition is okay. (Such editions cost considerably less.)
  - Google Books (or a similar service) can help a lot!
  - Wikipedia is usually NOT considered as a valid reference!
  - **See Slide #8 again to know more about library facilities!**

FAQ: Earlier Orientation Sessions

- Maintaining a good GPA:
  - Assignments may involve harder and longer working hours than your primary guess! Start early, preferably on the same day as they are assigned and NOT the day before they are due!
  - Take-home exams may require referring a lot of books/journals and frequent trips to the library.
  - Do NOT write formal class reports while simultaneously reading reference material, in order to avoid possible plagiarism! (A match of even a few words/phrases without reference can be considered plagiarism!) **Plagiarism can be a BIG issue!**
  - **Not all information is available online! Not all information available online is reliable!**

FAQ: Earlier Orientation Sessions

- Commute at Tech/Ruston:
  - Most commute within the campus and to and from the campus is on foot.
  - A bicycle ($80 and above) may prove useful for commute to/from/within campus and in the rest of the city.
  - A car is only optional. Learning driving and obtaining a driver's license may still be useful (so that you can rent a car when needed). **You may need to attend Driver's Ed class on Sep. 25 before you can get a license.** (Look for e-mail from the ISO.)

FAQ: Earlier Orientation Sessions

- Places of Interest around Ruston:
  - Nearest Indian Restaurant: Namaste Indian Cuisine, Monroe (30 mi. E)
  - More Indian Restaurants: Shreveport (70 mi. W, approx.)
  - Nearest Hindu Temples: Jackson, Mississippi
  - Nearest Islamic Center: In Ruston!
  - Nearest Gurudwara: Jackson, Mississippi
  - Churches: Hundreds of them in Ruston, for various denominations!

- Big cities around Ruston:
  - Jackson, MS: 150 miles east (approx.)
  - Little Rock, AR: 170 miles north (approx.)
  - Baton Rouge, LA: 220 miles south (approx.)
  - Dallas, TX: 250 miles west (approx.)
  - New Orleans, LA: 300 miles south (approx.)
  - Houston, TX: 300 miles southwest (approx.)

FAQ: Current Orientation Session

- Louisiana State ID:
  - Apply at Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
  - Carry your passport, I-20, I-94, and current fee receipt
  - SSN not required
- Driver's License:
  - Louisiana State Learners' Permit (or license from another state in the U.S.) mandatory!
  - International Drivers' Permit (IDP) cannot be used in LA!
  - Apply at Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
  - Drivers' Ed class required (May be exempted if you have Indian Union Motor Driving License or IDP)
  - I-20 must be valid for at least 6 months of stay from the date of issue! **Apply much before you graduate!**

FAQ: Current Orientation Session

- Thesis option in M.S. program:
  - Involves graduate level research
  - 24 course credits + 6 thesis credits
  - Most favorable (among other options for M.S. program) for Graduate Research Assistantship positions
  - Thesis defense and report submission at the end (Various deadlines from COES and Graduate School)
  - May also pursue internship despite working on thesis: **Communicate with your research advisor in advance**
    - Present Statement of Intent for short and long term goals
  - Usually takes over two years
  - **Finding/using multiple approaches in problem-solving, task assessment, and working with deadlines prepare you better for your life and job!**

FAQ: Current Orientation Session

- Practicum option in M.S. program:
  - Involves project work – much like undergraduate project work but at a graduate level
  - 30 course credits + 3 practicum credits
  - Graduate Research Assistantship may <u>not</u> be offered ; other Graduate Assistantships may be available
  - Practicum defense (optional in some Departments) and report submission at the end (Less work and lesser COES/Graduate School deadlines than thesis report)
  - May also pursue internship despite working on practicum: **Communicate with your project advisor in advance**
    - Present Statement of Intent for short and long term goals
  - Can finish within two years
  - Provides limited practical, hands-on experience in your domain: May <u>not</u> be innovative experimental work

FAQ: Current Orientation Session

- Coursework-Only option in M.S. program:
  - No research/practical orientation possible usually
  - 36 course credits
  - Graduate Research Assistantship will <u>not</u> be offered; other Graduate Assistantships may be available
  - Completion of stipulated core and elective courses by the end
  - May also pursue internship: Communicate with your academic advisor
  - Can finish within 1-2 years

FAQ: Current Orientation Session

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT):
  - Internship (CPT) can only start after 9 months or more have passed since arrival in the U.S.
  - Maximum of 6 months (University-prescribed limit) – Spring+Summer or Summer+Fall okay but two consecutive, "regular" quarters is not
  - Approval required from Program Chair, and Advisor, and possibly the Dean of College
  - Credits from internship may <u>not</u> count as course credits
  - Minimum GPA requirements possible: Use undergraduate GPA if you apply in Fall

FAQ: Current Orientation Session

- Optional Practical Training (OPT):
  - Apply when you are about to graduate
  - Must start by the 50th day since graduation
  - Initial period of approval: 12 months; Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) students can apply for an extension for 17 more months through an employer
  - Each higher degree provides a fresh OPT period: Ph.D. students can avail 1 year of OPT after M.S. and 1 year again after Ph.D. (Only <u>one</u> OPT for two M.S. degrees)

WHAT MORE?

You ask us!