

Helpful Tips for International Students:

- **Tax:**

- As you will be told many times by the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) here at Baylor, you will fill out the tax form **1040NR-EZ** and not the form **1040**. The NR stands for Non-Residential, which you are. And also, do not buy TurboTax or pay any Tax accountants at Walmart or other establishments to do your tax because as Non-Residential you cannot file tax return electronically but rather will have to print out the forms and documents (which can be **filled out** electronically) and mail it to the IRS office in Austin after signing them.
- As a non-residential alien, you will also have to fill out the form **8843** and send it along with the **1040NR-EZ**. Don't forget to attach the **W2** and **1042S** (if you are receiving a fellowship) with the tax return. Both documents contain how much you have earned for the previous tax year and may be collected from the Payroll Office at the Robinson Tower by the I-35 and University Parks drive or be mailed to your local address (more on that later).
- The taxes may look daunting but the CGE always buys subscriptions for tax software like Winstar or SprinTax and gives out the secured access of these software to the International students every year around February-March. Just register or log in using the provided credentials and they will help you fill out the tax return forms electronically (**1040 NR-EZ** and **8843**) by asking you a series of questions. Keep your **W2, 1042S, Social security number, recent I-94, SEVIS I-20** and **Passport** along with you while filling out the forms through the software. Once you are done filling out their queries regarding income, deductions (they will have instructions for it), exemptions allowed (according to any Tax treaty with your country and US, don't worry the software knows where to put what, you don't need to know any details) etc., the software will generate a PDF document that you will **print, sign, put in a secured envelope along with W2 and 1042S** and **send it to the IRS office** (address will be provided by the software).
- Also, you should know that you can count the student fees that you are paying every semester to Baylor as a deductible expenditure, which reduces your taxable income by a lot. So, if you are claiming that deduction, please include a printed payment page from the Baylor E-billing website that shows the amount you have paid to Baylor and when

you have paid it. The CGE always holds a seminar around February where they discuss everything that I mentioned in detail. If you miss it, you can come back to this page.

- **Photo ID:**

- When you are travelling around in US through air or any other mode always carry your Passport around as that is your only valid photo identification till you get a valid Driving license. Your University student ID card has no value outside the University

- **Local address:**

- As soon as you arrive here, put your local address down as your preferred mailing address in the Bearweb website (under Personal Information). The same thing when you move out to a new place. Even after you have updated your local mailing address in Bearweb, you must visit the Robinson Tower Payroll Office and check if they have your current address down. This is to avoid mailing off crucial documents (especially during Tax season) to your previous residence or worse back to your home country.

- **Driver License:**

- A drivers license requires address proof, photo ID (Passport), and legal proof of your stay in the US. The last part requires a recent **I-94** printed from the Customs and Border Patrol website (which is pretty easy to do) and your **SEVIS I-20** form that shows you the proof of your F1 or any other related visa status. Carry them with you when you visit the Department of Public Safety for Driver License application and/or exam. This will save you multiple trips and waiting in long lines.

- **SEVIS I-20:**

- Whenever you plan to leave the country for a visit home, **always have the CGE officials sign your I-20 beforehand** to avoid getting stopped at the Airport Customs. The signatures are valid for a year so you can have multiple trips with the same signature. Also, be on top of your Visa and I-20 expiration dates. These two may not always coincide as they are issued by different departments (State and Homeland Security). Remember **you can stay here with an expired Visa as long as your academic needs are not fulfilled**, but you **cannot reenter the US once you leave with the expired entry Visa**.

And remember **you cannot renew your Visa while you are in the US**, you will have to leave the country, reapply for a new Visa and then you can comeback with a renewed Visa. **But you will have to renew your I-20 form** to legally stay in the US with your F-1 status and pursue your degree.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have questions.

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