



# **Handbook for International Students**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi



## OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Dear International Students,

Welcome to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC), the Island University. We are delighted that you have chosen to become an Islander. The Office of International Education (OIE) was established to help you gain an enjoyable and rewarding experience while studying on the island.

This handbook was created to support your adjustment to the new environment and your academic success. With these purposes in mind, we organized this handbook into four chapters that highlight your upcoming journey. The first section, *Preparing for Your Departure*, addresses important topics that you should consider prior to your journey to the United States. The second section, *Settling down in Corpus Christi*, provides useful information to help you set up your living in a new environment. The third section, *Starting Your First Semester*, is a step-by-step guidance on how to get ready for your study at TAMU-CC. Finally, *Creating foundation for your academic success*, discusses non-academic issues which may significantly influence your academic success.

In addition to this handbook, our office provides the new international students orientation as well as other social events throughout the year. You are encouraged to participate in those events to extend your learning beyond classrooms and forge lifelong friendships with people from diverse backgrounds. We want to make sure that TAMU-CC is and remains an inclusive learning environment for all students. We are here to hear any questions, ideas, or concerns that you may have. We look forward to your arrival at the Island University.

Sincerely,

**Office of International Education**

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# Chapter 1: Preparing for Your Departure

## 1. Legal documents

One of the first things you will need to do before your departure for the U.S. is to get all of your legal documents in order. You will need to prepare the following documents in order to travel to and within the U.S. Please maintain them well and make sure the documents are always up-to-date.

### *Passport*

This document is issued by the national government of your home country to certify the identity and nationality of its holder. *If you obtain a new passport, and your F-1 visa is in your old passport, you need to keep and travel with both of them.*

### *Visa*

This document is usually inserted into your passport and states your purpose for being in the U.S. The visa also allows you to gain entrance to the U.S. *It is legally acceptable to have an expired visa once you have entered the U.S. as long as your I-20 is valid. However, if you plan to travel outside of the U.S. after your visa has expired, you will need to re-apply for a new visa in order to gain re-entry into the U.S.*

### *I-20*

Form I-20 is your Certificate of Eligibility to study at an institution in the U.S. You will need to show this legal document in order to do any of the following:

- [Apply for a nonimmigrant visa](#)
- [Enter the United States](#)
- Change visa status
- Apply for available benefits to F and M students
- Apply for a driver's license
- Apply for a social security number
- Sign contracts with housing, internet, or any other accommodation service providers
- Transfer money from home country (depend on the country).

### **How to maintain your I-20**

- All students should receive an I-20 document after they have been admitted to the University.
- Upon receiving your I-20, review it to make sure that all of your information is correct, especially your name, date of birth, academic program, and the graduation date.
- *You are not allowed to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the “report to school date” on your I-20.*

**To update your I-20**, please contact the Office of International Education. *It is NOT legally acceptable to remain in the U.S. with an expired I-20.* Your I-20 must be valid for the duration of your stay. Hence, it is important to *keep your I-20 updated all the time.* You will need to update your I-20 document when:

- You change your major, level, or school
- You plan to travel home, or outside the U.S., during semester break
- Your current I-20 expires.

### ***I-94***

The I-94 is proof of legal entry into the U.S. that is issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). When entering the U.S. as a non-immigrant, the DHS officer will examine your passport and visa and then issue a passport admission stamp, called Form I-94, to prove that you arrived legally and indicates how long you are allowed to stay in the U.S. *You do not need to have your I-94 before you enter the U.S.*; however, you should either receive your I-94 card or I-94 confirmation information after your arrival. You should know how to get access to and print your I-94 after your arrival in order to prove your legal status.

*To access your I-94*, visit: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/recent-search>, and input your personal information into the appropriate search boxes. *Please note that all of your information on your I-94 has to match with the information on your visa.* Sometimes, DHS officers can make mistakes when entering your information into the system which can lead to you not being able to find your record. If you are not able to find your record in the system, or if you find a mistake with your information in the system, please inform the Office of International Education, so we can correct and update the information for you.

## 2. Housing

Before you depart for the U.S., you will need to determine where you will live when you arrive to Corpus Christi. There are three housing options to choose from: on-campus housing, off-campus housing, and temporary housing.

### *On-campus housing*

It is highly recommended that students live on-campus for the first semester to have enough time to adapt to school, the city, as well as make new friends.

*Those who are interested in living on-campus should submit on-campus housing applications as soon as possible after their admission into the university.* On-campus housing is limited, so applications/requests are processed on a first come-first served basis. Move-dates for both Miramar and Momentum Village usually occur in mid-to-late August for students starting the fall. Students starting in the spring term usually can move-in to Miramar or Momentum Village in mid-to-late January. Actual move-in dates are determined and assigned by the Islander Housing Office, so once your housing has been confirmed, the Islander Housing Office will notify you of when your actual move-in date will be. Please contact the Islander Housing Offices for on-campus housing requests or questions:

#### **Miramar**

[Miramar@americancampus.com](mailto:Miramar@americancampus.com)

**361-825-4663**

#### **Momentum Village**

[MomentumVillage@americancampus.com](mailto:MomentumVillage@americancampus.com)

**361-825-4663**

*Please note that both Miramar and Momentum Village require a non-refundable application fee, so if you apply for on-campus housing and then change your mind, you will not get your application fee back.* There is a financial difference between select floor plans, so is important that you select a floor plan that meets both your needs and your budget. It is **your** responsibility as a TAMU-CC student to ensure that you select on-campus housing that fits your budget since you will be directly responsible for your housing fees. Students who choose to live in on-campus housing are required to buy a meal plan. For more information about campus meals, please visit <https://mealplans.tamucc.edu/> and read the [Meal Plan Terms and Conditions](#).

If you come to Corpus Christi prior to the on-campus move-in date, you can work with the Islander Housing to see if they will allow you to move-in early. If the Islander Housing allow you to move-in early, you will be charged additional fees those additional days. The other option, for those who arrive early, is to find a hotel room for those extra days until your actual move-in date. You can find a list of suggested hotels in the [Hotel](#) section of this handbook.

***Off-campus housing***

For those wanting to live off-campus, we recommend that you find a location that is not too far from campus, regardless of whether or not you have a vehicle. Below is a list of potential apartments that you may want to look into. These apartments are located not too far from campus and are located next to the following bus lines/bus routes.

<b>Apartment Complex</b>	<b>Bus #37</b>	<b>Bus #63</b>	<b>Bus #5</b>
<a href="#">The Shores</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">Sendera Bay Point</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">La Joya Bay</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">Camden South Bay</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">Campus Quarter</a>	✓	✓	
<a href="#">Aspen Height</a>		✓	
<a href="#">The Palm</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Coral Cay</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Midtown</a>	✓		
<a href="#">Towne Oaks</a>	✓		
<a href="#">The Kristi</a>			✓
<a href="#">Parkview Apartment</a>			✓
<a href="#">The Sterling</a>			✓
<a href="#">Alameda Apartments</a>			✓

For more apartment options, you can check at some search tools such as [Apartment.com](#), [Apartment Guide](#), or [Rent.com](#).

## ***Hotel***

All students, regardless of whether they decide to live on or off campus, will be required to sign a lease or housing contract. It is extremely important to know what the length of your lease or housing contract will be. Many housing contracts are typically for 6 or 12 months. If you are not certain about signing a long-term lease agreement, or if you have not secured housing prior to your arrival, you may need to consider staying temporarily in a hotel for a few days until you have had a chance to secure housing. Below is a list of hotel options that close to either the university, or some of the other housing options listed previously:

- [Comfort Suites Near Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi](#)
- [Hyatt Place Corpus Christi](#)
- [Hilton Garden Inn Corpus Christi](#)
- [Town Place Suites Corpus Christi](#)
- [Hampton Inn & Suites Corpus Christi](#)

## **3. Airport pickup**

The university does not currently offer an airport pick-up service; however, there are a variety of ways students can get to their housing locations, or to campus, from the airport. Most travelers will utilize taxis and shuttle services.

**Taxis:** You can find taxis available for hire outside of the baggage claim area of the airport. You can find a list of Taxi companies listed in the [Getting a Taxi](#) .

**Shuttles:** If you will be checking into a hotel for your first few days in Corpus Christi, you should check with your hotel to see if they offer shuttle services to/from the airport. Some local hotels offer free shuttle service to and from the airport as part of their amenities or services for hotel guests. You should be able to find this information when booking hotel reservations. If you aren't sure if your hotel offers free shuttle services, you can find hotel contact information listed on the telephone call board located in the baggage claim area of the airport.

## 4. Healthcare

Before you depart for the U.S., here are some health-related things that we recommend you complete prior to your travel:

### *General Checkup*

Though it's not required, we recommend that students get a comprehensive health check-up at least 6-8 weeks before their departure. This ensures that existing health conditions are regulated, and any new health conditions are treated prior to departure.

### *Prescription Medications*

If you are currently taking any prescription medications (such as asthma inhalers), work with your healthcare provider to secure the proper prescription documentation (in English) to make sure that you are able to obtain enough medications for the duration of your program studies. Students may be able to work with local healthcare providers in the U.S. to obtain continuing healthcare services or obtain refills for prescription medications.

### *Eye Test*

Because many health care plans do not cover Opticians or eye-care services, we recommend getting an eye-care screening before your departure. If you currently wear glasses or contact lenses, make sure you obtain a copy of your prescription from your regular eye-care doctor before your departure. It's also recommended that you bring additional pairs of glasses, or contact lenses, to last the duration of your program.

### *Dental Care*

Dental care is also something that might not be provided through your insurance plan, so we recommend getting a dental check-up prior to your departure as well. The cost for dental care in the U.S. can be expensive. Make that visit to the dentist you have been putting off!

### *Vaccination*

Most, if not all, students are required to have to have the bacterial meningitis vaccination or booster as well as Tuberculosis Screening.

### **Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination or Booster:**

In accordance with Texas Senate Bill 1107 (SB 62, effective October 1, 2013), Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) requires all new students under the age of 22 to provide certified proof from a health practitioner that they have received a valid bacterial meningitis vaccination or booster within the last five years. *Students must submit their proof of vaccination or booster to the TAMU-CC Office of Recruitment and Admissions at least 10 days prior to the first day of class for the intended term of enrollment.* Students who fail to submit certified proof of vaccination or a valid booster within the required timeframe will be unable to register for their intended term. Please note, vaccinations older than 5 years will require a booster and all bacterial meningitis vaccinations and boosters must be administered by a health practitioner authorized by law to administer an immunization. For more information about the Meningitis Vaccine, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mening.html>

**Tuberculosis Screening:** Depending on which country you are from, some international students may be required to submit Tuberculosis (TB) screening test results as part of their enrollment requirements at TAMU-CC. You are required (prior to the first day of classes or moving into on-campus housing, whichever occurs first) to provide documentation from a U.S. health care provider of a negative TB skin test (Mantoux tuberculin test) or negative chest X-ray. The report should be submitted directly to the University Health Center.

In accordance with the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), USA, a skin test is required even if you have had a BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) vaccine. A chest x-ray is recommended for persons with a history of positive TB skin tests. Students in nursing, the clinical laboratory science track in biomedical sciences, and education programs must meet specific immunization requirements.

## **5. Packing guide**

### ***Corpus Christi Weather***

The city has a humid subtropical climate, with hot summers and very short, mild winters. Between the months of November through February the weather is the coolest. The weather starts to warm up in March and gradually gets warmer leading into the summer months. The summer season occurs between June through September with August being the hottest peak of summer. October is usually the most pleasant time of year with warm weather and less humidity. Corpus Christi, as well as the

campus, can be very windy due to its close location to the coastline. Wind speeds can reach as high as 25 miles per hour (40 km/h) with gusts reaching more than 35 miles per hour (56 km/h).

### ***Airport Packing Tips:***

#### Items to be placed in your personal bag:

When it comes to packing for your plane ride to Corpus Christi, it is recommended that passengers keep important documents, or items that they need to access frequently, in their personal carry-on bags. We recommend keeping the following items in your personal carry-on:

- All identification documents: passport, visa, international driving license (if you have one)
- All admission documents: I-20, financial statements (an original statement in U.S. currency which provides evidence of funds for your study), copy of TAMUCC acceptance letter and all other supporting documentation.
- All flight details: booking number, ticket confirmation, flight numbers, terminal numbers, times of departures and arrivals (understand time zones); whether to check-in luggage again in transit or not.
- Your wallet with one or two credit/debit cards, and some U.S. currency
- Your mobile devices, and appropriate charging devices or cords

#### Items to be placed in your carry-on luggage

Similar to the personal carry-on bag, your carry-on luggage, will allow you to have access to items in the case of an emergency; however, these may be items that you might not need frequent access to. We recommend keeping the following items in your carry-on luggage:

- Prescription medication in original container, backup supply, and letter in English from doctor. Instructions for treating any allergies or unique medical conditions in English (in case you need emergency care)
- Some extra change of clothing, and personal items (in case your luggage is lost).
- Extra U.S. currency, remember to hide them in multiple places, see more tips [here](#).
- Laptop and other electronic devices.
- A light jacket, ear phone, ear plugs, sleeping pillow, sleeping mask, reading materials, notebook, pen, or any other travel comforters.

### Items to be placed in your checked luggage

- Copies of all immigration documents, your passport, visa, I-20, letter of acceptance, financial statement, etc.
- Seasonally and culturally appropriate clothing, undergarments, shoes, and accessories
- Traditional dress/outfit or Small items representative of your home and culture
- Eyeglasses and extra supplies of contacts
- Electrical outlet adapters for electronics (voltage in the U.S. is 120V/60Hz; Type A and B sockets)

### Additional Items That Can Be Purchased After Arrival

Unless you have a very specific brand that you use, most of the following items can be purchased in the U.S. You can also check online markets such as [Walmart](#) or [Amazon](#) to see if your brand and type can be purchased here. Please make sure that you make financial preparations for any items that you need to purchase after your arrival. If you bring these items from home, they should be packed in your checked luggage. Some necessary items are:

- Bed sheets (for students living on campus, bring extra-long twin sheets), blanket, pillow, and pillowcase
- Towels and washcloths
- Toiletries and cosmetics (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap, deodorant etc.) to supplies for 2-3 days
- Medicines such as over-the-counter pain reliever, cold/flu, and allergy medicine. First-aid kit, pain reliever, cold/flu, and allergy medicine

## **Chapter 2: Settling Down in Corpus Christi**

### **6. Mobile**

Welcome to America! If this is your first time coming to the United States, you may want to consider purchasing a new sim card and mobile plan to contact others. Buying a mobile plan in the United States can be tricky because there are a lot of plans and services to choose from. Here are some recommendations:

If you need immediate phone service, using brand name carriers such as [T-mobile](#) or [AT&T](#) may be good choices because they have multiple shops in Corpus Christi. They can also provide you with a sim card, phone, same-day activation and service plan all at once. However, some of these phone carriers do require customers to sign up for a long-term contract. Services can be approximately \$40/month or higher depending on the phone and plan you select. Do not sign up for long-term contract/service agreements if you do not plan to keep your phone/service plan for a long time.

There are less expensive options available; however, there are drawbacks or limitations such as phones that have fewer interactive features, or a longer wait period between purchase and when your phone gets activated. If you're looking to keep costs to a minimum when it comes to your cell phone bill (less than \$20/month), you may try plans from [Ting](#), [Project Fi](#), [Mint Sim](#), [Republic](#), [Sprint Unlimited Freedom](#), or [Boost](#). Some of these phone carriers may offer month-to-month plans, or allow you to select your service plans base on usage.

## 7. Transportation

### *Riding the bus*

Corpus Christi public transportation is **FREE** for students with a student ID (SandDollar card). You need to show your student card whenever you board a bus. Among all routes, the **37 Crosstown/TAMUCC** is the most direct line which can connect you with the university and most other public places such as restaurants, La Palmera mall, or Walmart. For other destinations, please check other bus routes & schedules at <https://www.ccrta.org/rider-info/routes-maps-schedules/>. To check real-time bus location, download [TransLoc Rider](#) to your phone, then enter your city and routes.

### *Getting a taxi*

Another way to move around Corpus Christi is by Taxi Service. Below is a list of Taxi Cab Companies which operate in Corpus Christi:

- Taxicab: 1-800-829-4222
- Airport Taxi: 361-884-3211
- American Cab: 361-563-2294
- Corpus Christi Taxi: 361-548-7656
- Express Cab: 361-960-9222

- On Time Taxi: 361-444-4444
- Super Yellow Cab: 361-855-5555

### ***Buying a Car***

If you wish to have a car for your time in Corpus Christi. Here are some steps to do: Getting a driver license, Searching for a car, Buying auto insurance, Getting a parking permit.

The following documents are needed for a driver license application:

- [Application form](#)
- Valid Passport
- Current Visa
- Valid I-20
- Unexpired I-94
- Two documents to verify your current address (leasing agreement, electricity bills, internet bills, utility bills which you are the contract holder)

You will also need to complete and pass a driving test. Driving tests are conducted/completed at:

**Texas Department of Public Safety  
Driver License Mega Center  
3506 Twin River Blvd.  
Corpus Christi, TX 78410**

To get more details about the driving test, visit the following website

<https://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/ApplyforLicense.htm>

You can purchase your car from any of the local car dealerships or you can try searching online at sites like: Cargurus.com or Carsmart.com; however, do not purchase a car without physically seeing or test driving the vehicle first. Also, be very cautious of any car sellers who ask you pay for your car purchase online. [Kelly Blue Book](#) is a good reference to check whether the car is in good price or overpriced. After buying your car, you will need to obtain insurance for your vehicle, as well as register your vehicle with the county.

If you plan on driving or parking your car on campus, you also will need to purchase a parking permit. You can buy a parking permit from the University Service Center (Round Building). To learn more about how to purchase a parking permit, as well as rules and regulations regarding

parking your car on campus, visit [police.tamucc.edu/park/parkingPermitForms.html](http://police.tamucc.edu/park/parkingPermitForms.html). Many apartment complex also apply parking stamps for residents only, so you may need to register your car with the rental office to obtain a parking stamp. Last but not least, when you park off-campus, pay attention to whether the parking lot is free or paid, reserved or non-reserved. If it is paid or reversed and you do have the ticket, you may encounter unwanted costs for towing fee.

## 8. Finance

There are many banking institutions in Corpus Christi. Students can easily find a listing of local banks online prior to their arrival; however, most banks will require students to go, in person, in order to open up a bank account. For your convenience, there is [Wells Fargo Bank](#) which operates in the University Center for you to easily open an account.

### *Types of bank accounts and cards*

Most people, when they open a bank account, tend to start a checking account which provides them with more flexibility when it comes using the money in that account. In order to keep your money safe, we recommend that students open both a checking and savings account. The checking account will allow you to spend money daily while a savings account is intended for storing money for longer term basis.

When opening up an account, most banks will automatically provide you with a **debit card** which is tied directly into your checking account and allows you to make purchases/transactions based on how much money you have in your account. The debit card also allows you to make purchases wherever debit cards payments are accepted. You can also use your debit card at ATM machines to make cash withdrawals, transfers, or deposits.

If you have a job and hold a social security number, you will be able to apply for a **credit card**. A credit card will allow you to pay in advance for purchases and pay it back later. The amount that you have available will depend on how much “credit” the credit card company, or bank, will extend to you. The minimum line of credit is usually \$250-\$500 for individuals who have not credit history. It is suggested that you should pay the full balance of your credit card every month to build a good credit history. If you can’t pay the full balance, you have to make a minimum payment stated in your monthly statement. All remaining balances will accrue interest every month, so you will be charged

interest until your balance is paid in full. When opening up a credit card, you want to make sure that you find a credit card company, or bank, that charges a low interest rate to keep your credit card payments low.

### ***Receiving Money from Home***

Most students will transfer funds from a bank account in their home country to their U.S. bank account in order to be able to use the funds freely during their time in the U.S. You should contact and work with both your bank in your home country and your U.S. bank to learn more about what their policies are regarding fund transfers.

### ***Writing & Cashing Checks***

Once you open a checking account, can order checks to use as another form of payment. Businesses that accept check payments may require that you show identification before they can accept your check. If you receive a check from someone else, you can deposit the funds in your checking or savings account, or you can choose to cash it at your bank.

Writing a check is easy, but you there are a few details that you need to keep in mind.

1. **Date:** the date you are writing the check, or date you make your purchase
2. **Pay to the Order Of:** Name of business or person you are writing the check to
3. **Blank Amount Box:** Write the amount in number format
4. **Dollar Amount Line:** Dollar amount – spelled out in English writing
5. **Memo Line:** What your purchasing, or why you are writing this check
6. **Signature Line:** Your signature

	DATE (1) <u>May 20, 2009</u>	101
(2) PAY TO THE ORDER OF	<u>H.E.B.</u>	\$ (3) <u>\$45.65</u>
(4) <u>Forty five and 65/100</u>		DOLLARS
 <b>MoneyInstructor.com Bank</b> 1221 Main Street Anywhere, US 10001		
FOR (5) <u>Groceries</u>	(6) <u>Your Signature</u>	
⑆21460278 ⑆	8161843000 ⑈	0101 ⑈

## 9. Shopping

### Grocery

You can buy food and other personal or daily use items from some stores listed below:

- [HEB](#): HEB offers groceries, health products, and every day household items in one convenient location. There are multiple HEB stores located within the city. To find the nearest HEB store to your apartment or bus route, click [here](#). *(Note: You can take bus #63 or bus #5 from campus to one of their stores.)*
- [Walmart](#): Walmart offers groceries, health products, every day household items, as well school supplies for students. There are multiple Walmart locations within the city. To find the nearest Walmart to your location, click [here](#). *(Note: You can take bus #37 from campus to one of their stores.)*
- [Sprouts](#): Sprouts offers a variety of premium quality organic groceries and health/nutrition products at reasonable prices. The Sprout that is closest to the campus is located at: 1440 Airline Rd, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. *(Note: You can take bus #37 from campus to this market.)*
- [Dollartree](#): This is a low-price store that sells everything for \$1 or less. You will find a variety of household and personal use items available in the store. The closest Dollar Tree store from campus is located at: 1340 Airline Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. *(Note: You can take bus #37 from campus to get to this store.)*
- Other Specialty Stores or Markets:
  - **Asian Market**: Offers Asian groceries and food products. Store location: 4101 South Padre Island Drive. Tel: (361) 854-7483
  - **Hongkong Market**: Offers Asian groceries and food products. Store location: 2033 Airline Road. Tel: (361) 356-6142
  - **Miso Market**: Offers Korean groceries and food products. Store located at 2222 Airline Road, Suite B3. Tel: (361) 728-3357
  - **Middle Eastern Market & Deli**: Offers a variety of groceries and food products from Middle Eastern countries. Store located at: 5405 Everhart Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. Tel: (361) 854-9445

- **Reezo Mart:** Offers African and Mediterranean groceries and food products. Store located at: 3801 Saratoga Blvd. Suite 104; Corpus Christi, TX 78413 Tel: (361) 452-8236

### ***Restaurants***

Corpus Christi has a great variety of restaurants to offer its residents. Prices and quality will vary, but we encourage you to venture out and explore the different restaurants in town. We are sure that you will find your “favorite restaurant” in no time. You can find a comprehensive list of restaurants at: <http://www.visitcorpuschristitx.org/eat/>

### ***Pharmacies***

CVS and Walgreens are the two local pharmacies where students can purchase personal and pharmaceutical products. They offer a variety of over-the-counter medications as well as prescription medications; however, for prescriptions, student will need to work with a local healthcare provider, in order to obtain prescription medications or re-fills.

- **CVS**: There are many CVS stores in Corpus Christi. The nearest one from campus is located at 7798 S Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. (*Note: Take bus #63 or bus #37 from campus to get to this location.*)
- **Walgreens**: There are many Walgreens stores in Corpus Christi. The nearest one from campus is located at 1301 Airline Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. (*Note: Take bus #37 from campus to get to this location.*)

### ***Books***

Whether for leisure reading or for your classes, you can buy, or sell, books from the following stores:

- **Barnes & Noble**: For textbooks for your courses, we recommend you use the book store on campus located on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the University Center. If you would like to purchase other books for personal use, you can shop at the local Barnes & Noble Store located at: 5129 Blanche D Moore Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78411.
- **Half Price Book**: This book store offers books at discount prices; however, there is not a large selection of textbooks available at this store. This bookstore is located at 5425 S.P.I.D, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. (*Note: You can take bus #63 from campus to there.*)

- [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com): If there's a book, or other course materials that you aren't able to find in one of the local bookstores, don't forget that you can order books online on sites like Amazon.com. You might find better deals online but do keep in mind that you may have to purchase books early to get them delivered to you on time.

### ***Fashion***

When it comes to clothing and accessories, there are a lot of different shops available. Here are some shops that we recommend for you:

- [La Palmera Mall](#): 5488 S Padre Island Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. *(Note: You can take bus #37 or bus #63 from campus to this mall.)*
- [Burlington](#): 5858 S Padre Island Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78412. *(Note: You can take bus #37 from campus to this place.)*
- [TJ Max](#): 4938 S Staples St, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. *(Note: You can take bus #37 or bus #63 from campus to this place.)*
- [Marshall](#): 5425 S Padre Island Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. *(Note: You can take bus #37 or bus #63 from campus to this place.)*
- [Ross](#): 4717 S Padre Island Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78411.

## **Chapter 3: Starting Your First Semester**

### **10. Office of International Education (OIE)**

One of the first stops you should make after your arrival is to the Office of International Education (OIE) to complete the “Check-In” procedures. Our office provides important programs and services for students and scholars. The Check-In procedures requires us to collect the necessary documents and information from you to allow us to confirm your arrival and move you through the university system, so you can prepare for your studies here and register for classes. All new international students should receive an email from our office with instructions on what to bring in for check-in. To complete your check-in, stop by our office which is located in University Center (building 31), room 226. To find us and other offices, please download or print the [TAMUCC Campus Map](#)

Beside this first time check-in, you are also welcome to visit our office whenever you have questions regarding to

- ✓ new student admission application
- ✓ new international student orientation
- ✓ international student legal policies
- ✓ Curricular Practical Training (CPT) application
- ✓ Optional Practical Training (OPT) application
- ✓ J-1 program/exchange program
- ✓ International travel approval
- ✓ Transferring service
- ✓ Study abroad advising
- ✓ Cultural and social events
- ✓ English training program referral
- ✓ Life adjustment consultation

**Our staff:**

Derek Yu, Director: [derek.yu@tamucc.edu](mailto:derek.yu@tamucc.edu)

Elizabeth Reyes, International Student Service Advisor: [elizabeth.reyes@tamucc.edu](mailto:elizabeth.reyes@tamucc.edu)

Melisa Jarman, Administrative Assistant: [melisa.jarman@tamucc.edu](mailto:melisa.jarman@tamucc.edu)

Kabee Vue, Study Abroad Coordinator: [kabee.vue@tamucc.edu](mailto:kabee.vue@tamucc.edu)

**To contact us:**

International Office: [international@tamucc.edu](mailto:international@tamucc.edu)

Study Abroad Office: [study.abroad@tamucc.edu](mailto:study.abroad@tamucc.edu)

Office Location: University Center, Room 226

Office Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Monday - Friday

Phone: 361.825.3346

Website: <http://tamucc.edu/oie/>

Facebook: TAMUCC.OIE

## **11. Student Accounts**

The first thing you need to complete when you start your journey at TAMU-CC is getting your university account identification. There are three pieces of identification you will need to confirm or obtain: Student ID#, Island ID, and Student ID Card.

### ***Student ID# or A-number***

In order to protect the privacy and security of students, the university provides you with a unique, assigned identification number. This is a series of eight numbers called the “A-number” or the “Student ID”. It will serve as your universal student ID during the course of your attendance at TAMU-CC, and will be used to verify your identity in lieu of your Social Security Number.

You will need to remember this number to identify yourself in university systems such as computers, email, SAIL, Blackboard...etc. You can find your A-number on the university acceptance letter. In case you lost the letter, you also can contact Office of International Education or Office of Recruitment & Admissions to look up your number.

### ***Island ID or Islander Email***

Beside the numeric identification number mentioned above, your account is also associated with an alphabetic username called the “Island ID”. This usually consists of the first initial of your first name, followed by your last name. (For example: John Smith = jsmith). Your Island ID is linked with the university email system, so people also call it as the “Islander Email”.

As a new student, you will need to activate your Islander ID.

1. Go to <https://passwords2.tamucc.edu/>
2. Click on ***New User***
3. Enter your A-number (Student ID) and date of birth, then Submit.

After activating your Islander ID, you will need to change the password associated with that username (Islander ID).

1. Go to <https://passwords2.tamucc.edu/>
2. Click on ***Forgot your password***
3. Enter your Island ID, Student ID, and date of birth, then Submit.
4. The next window will allow you to set up your own password.

After activating your Island ID and password, you should log into the university email portal.

1. Go to <https://islander.tamucc.edu/mail/>
2. Enter your Island ID with your newly set-up password

Please note that any official university correspondence, updates, as well as notification from our office or other campus departments will be sent to your Islander email, so check your university email account frequently.

After activating your Islander ID and changing your password, you should be able to connect to the University Wi-Fi on both our computer and mobile devices. Simply looking for the Wi-Fi network named “Islander\_Student” and log on with your Island ID and password.

### ***Student Card or SandDollar Card***

While you are assigned a Student ID and Island ID once you get accepted in the university, you will **NOT** be able to get your Student ID Card, or SandDollar Card, until you have checked-in with OIE (step 11) and registered for classes (step 12).

To get your Student Card, visit Sand Dollar Office at University Center, Room 107. They will take a picture of you and print your Student Card with that picture, so prepare to look nice.

### ***Things you can do with your Student ID Card/Sand Dollar Card:***

- *Deposit money into it to use on campus (please ask the Sand Dollar Office or Library Worker on how to do that)*
- *Pay for dining, vending machines, copy machines on campus*
- *Ride the bus free of charge.*
- *Check out books at the library*
- *Access to our recreational, fitness facilities, and athletic events.*
- *Some local events or shops also have discounts for students if you hold a Student Card*

After setting up your Islander ID, you can use it to log in SAIL and Blackboard to manage your academic information and class content.

### ***S.A.I.L.***

S.A.I.L. is a secure student portal where you can access your student, academic, and financial records at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. By logging into S.A.I.L., you can gain online access to:

- *Maintain your contact information*

- *Register for classes*
- *Accept your financial aid awards*
- *View your unofficial transcripts, grades, and class schedules*
- *Request transcripts electronically*
- *Purchase your parking permit*
- *Pay your tuition*
- *...and more!*

Visit <http://sail.tamucc.edu/> and log in with your Island ID and password.

### ***Blackboard***

Blackboard is the online system used by faculty for daily class activities such as:

- *Accessing the syllabus, course content, and grades*
- *Submitting assignments and viewing instructor feedback.*
- *Engaging in discussions, blogs, wikis, and other interactive tools as directed by the instructor.*

Not all instructors use Blackboard; however, if your instructor uses Blackboard, you can visit:

<https://bb9.tamucc.edu/>, and log in with your Island ID and password.

## **12. Registration**

After checking-in with OIE, you need to register for classes. Before you can register for classes, you need to make sure that you remove any holds on your account. There are different kinds of holds that can be placed on a student's account. To see which holds have been placed on your account, you should log in to SAIL, then click Student - Student Records - View Holds.

### ***Remove holds***

A registration hold is restriction that can be placed on your student record to prevent you from registering for classes. Regularly, some holds may be placed on your account if you miss certain requirements. For example, our office will put the ***International Hold*** on your account if you do not check-in with us. The Health Center will put the ***Meningitis*** and ***Tuberculosis*** hold on your account if you do not provide documentation or proof of vaccination or test. The Academic Testing Center can put a hold on your account if you do not submit proof of **SAT or TSI scores**, or proof of having

met sufficient language requirements. The Welcoming Center may put a hold on your account if you do not register to attend **orientations**. The Business Office will put a hold on your if you do not pay certain fees or bills on time. During the check-in process, our advisor will tell you which specific holds are placed on your account. You will need to come to specific offices which place those holds to get instructions to remove the holds.

### ***Meet Academic Advisor***

Your Academic Advisor is the person who will help you map-out your studies, or degree plan. Each college has a number of academic advisors ready to assist you with your degree plan. To find your academic advisor, please visit [https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic\\_advising.html](https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_advising.html). You are advised to call Advising Office of each college to book an appointment with the advisor. Your advisor should tell you what classes you should take in this semester and how to register for those classes on SAIL portal.

## **13. New Student Orientations**

The beginning of each semester at TAMU-CC starts with many orientation session. You may be required to attend **University Orientation** program which will introduce the university system, services, and processes to you. If you are a graduate student, you may be required to attend **Graduate Orientation** which will give you general guidelines on how to success in the graduate school. Students of other major colleges will be required to attend Major-specific Orientation.

Our international office hosts a separate, mandatory, orientation for all new and transfer international students. *All new, and transfer, international students are required to attend the **New International Student Orientation** before starting classes.* In the OIE New International Student Orientation program, we address university processes and specific rules for F1 students. Although we will remind you of those rules throughout the semester, it will be good for you to understand immigration rules from the beginning to avoid unfortunate terminations.

## 14. Campus Supporting Services

During the orientation, you probably have an overview of all student services on campus. However, to fully understand your supports and benefits at TAMU-CC, it is better for you to personally visit those offices, ask what they can do for you, and figure out what you will need in the future.

### *Campus Tour*

A campus tour is handy for you to locate campus operations and offices. You can [schedule a tour](#) from the Welcoming Center. Another way is take [a virtual tour](#) which introduces all building and its functions.

### *Mary and Jeff Bell Library*

A must-visit place to ensure your study success is the library. Come and check out different types of books, magazines, academic journals, wikis...etc. available for student use. If you are not sure, or need additional assistance, you can speak to a librarian about the following:

- Find and check out a book
- Borrow books from interlibrary loan (free)
- Use [the library website](#) to do a research
- Book a group study room
- Use the computer, and scanner (free)
- Use the printer, and copy machines (charged)
- Access to the GROW resource (if you are a graduate student)

### *Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA)*

Another great resource for your study is the [CASA](#). From here you can get one on one tutoring, group instruction, editing essays, academic assistance and mentorship. All services are free, but you may need to book appointments in advance. Thus, make sure you know how to utilize their services.

### *Career Services*

[The Career Services Office](#) is there to help you plan for your career. Regardless of whether you're just a freshman, or even if you have no prior work experience, the Career Services office can help

you with a lot of things. Check out their career choice tests, career counselling service, resume revision, mock-interview, workshop presentations, [job search portal](#), and career fairs.

### ***Recreational Sports***

As a TAMU-CC student, the student fees that you pay allow you to use many of the buildings and services on campus including the Recreational Sports' fitness facilities. As a student, you can use many of these programs for FREE, [group fitness classes](#), [student wellness program](#), and join [active clubs](#), [wellness seminar](#), and [nutrition consultation](#). Please check their [hours](#) and [policies](#) before visit.

### ***Health Center***

**24-Hour Care:** If you find yourself in need of minor health or medical care but are not able to get to the TAMU-CC Health Center, they do have a 24-hour care phone line that you can call. You can (361) 825-2601 and speak to a certified nurse. The phone line is staffed during regular office hours (8AM-5PM) by the Health Center nursing staff and by CareNet nursing staff after hours. If you are calling after normal business hours, also press option #2.

**Walk-in Visits:** For illnesses or injuries requiring prompt medical attention, the Health Center offers a Walk-in Clinic. Walk-in patients are accepted beginning Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., or until the clinic's maximum capacity is reached. The walk-ins are seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

**After-Hours Emergency Care:** If you find yourself in an emergency, or in need of serious medical assistance after hours, you can call the University Police Department at: (361) 825-4444, or dial 9-1-1. In the case of an emergency, the University Police can help transport you to an urgent care facility, or to your Primary Care Physician (PCP).

To see your urgent care facility options, visit: <http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu/after-hours-contact-info.html>. You can find more information about the Health Center, and the services it can provide, at: <http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu/>

## ***Counseling Center***

Not only is physical health important, but so is mental and emotional health. During your time at TAMU-CC, you may experience times of high stress. The University Counseling Center provides variety of the following services to help students who may be undergoing personal issues:

- ***Relaxation Room:*** Relaxation is an important part of self-care. Hence, a relaxation room is set-up to provide a quiet, peaceful space for students to develop and practice relaxation skills that can enhance their academic productivity and their sense of well-being.
- ***Academic Success Counseling:*** The University Counseling Center provides counselors who can help you better understand factors that can interfere with your academic success, and, then, work with you to develop an individualized academic success plan. Some of the issues that our counselors can help with include: *Learning Strategies/Study Skills; Test Taking; Test Anxiety; Attention & Memory Skills; Procrastination/Time Management; Stress Management; Goal Setting; Anger Management; Assertive Communication Skills*
- ***Personal Counseling:*** There may be times when students may require more in-depth assistance working through personal or emotional issues. In these instances, students can work with certified counselors who can help aid you in *increasing self-awareness, improving self-confidence and acceptance, enhancing your ability to cope during changes and challenges, improving your decision making and communication abilities, and teaching you strategies to replace hurtful or self-defeating thoughts, feelings, and actions with healthy, adaptive, alternatives.*
- ***Group Counseling:*** Some specific counselling groups are created every semester to provide students with an opportunity to meet in a safe, supportive setting with other students who share similar concerns and issues. Visit the University Counseling Center's [website](#) to check which groups are available.

Students interested in exploring any of the Counseling services listed above, should contact the University Counseling Center. You can visit them in the Driftwood Building, or call (361) 825-2703 for more information.

## *Scholarship Office*

Every year, there are numerous scholarships that students, both international and domestic, can apply for. There are a variety of university, regional, and national scholarships available to student. You can find more information by visiting the Scholarship Office website at: <http://scholarships.tamucc.edu/index.html>.

## *Dinning on campus*

Our University offers a variety of food options for students in various locations around campus. Students can purchase food to eat at one of the two main dining areas on campus (The Cove in University Center or the Islander Dining Hall), or they can stop at one of the many smaller shops located in the various buildings on campus. You can find the following dining services in the following locations:

- *The Cove (University Center):* Balance Kitchen, Crisp, Grill Nation, So Deli, Chick-Fil-A, Pizza Hut, and Panda Express
- *Islander Dining Hall:* Baker's Crust, Island Market, Grill Nation, Hearth Stone Ovens, myPantry, TerraVe, and the Kitchen
- *Bell Library:* Subway
- *O'Conner Building:* Bottom Line Café
- *Faculty Center:* Starbucks
- *Bay Hall:* Outtakes
- *Center for Instruction:* Chick & Grill
- *Island Hall:* Einstein Bros Bagels

## **15. Health Insurance**

The U.S. healthcare system offers some of the best medical care in the world, but it is complex, and difficult to navigate. All international students are required to have health insurance (through AHP, or a comparable health insurance provider) in order to remain enrolled in the university. **All** international students are automatically enrolled in the AHP insurance **unless** they have completed the insurance waiver process with AHP and have their waiver approved, are enrolled in a similar insurance plan (i.e., student athletes enrolled in insurance plan by the Athletic Department), or students obtain a graduate assistantship.

Students enrolled in the AHP insurance plan should take time to learn more about the health benefits and coverage at: <https://tamucc.myahpcare.com/>. If you have questions regarding your health benefits, please call the BCBSTX Customer Service line at 855-267-0214.

**Please Note:** This information is for all international students enrolled in the AHP student health insurance plan. Graduate Assistants have employer sponsored coverage and will need to visit the TAMUC Human Resources [website](#) for information on their health coverage.

## 16. Maintaining F1 Status

This unit may be boring to you as it mentions all F-1 visa rules and regulations. However, this is the most important part of this handbook, which serves as the foundation for your success at TAMU-CC. Therefore, please read carefully.

As an international student, you must maintain your F-1 status at all times. If an F-1 student fails to maintain status, their F-2 dependents are impacted as well. Once a student has fallen out of legal status, he/she cannot receive any F-1 benefits, such as employment authorization. Here are some common reasons why students can lose their F-1 status.

### *Common Reasons Why F-1 Students Lose Legal Status*

- Allowing your legal documents to expire
- Enrolling in less than full-time without permission
- Working without work authorization.
- Violate other legal rules or requirements.

To avoid losing your legal status, you must keep your documents and records current, maintain full-time enrollment, obtain work authorization, and consult with the Office of International Education Office before taking any legal-affected actions. We will discuss in more details below.

## Update Your Documents

There are three documents that you must update if they are going to expire: Passport, I-20, and I-94.

- Passports should be valid for at least six months into the future when entering and re-entering the U.S. The expiration date can be located on your passport I.D. page. You cannot work or sign in any official documents with an expired passport.

*You should extend your passport no later than six months prior to the expiration date.* Students may



contact their local embassy or consulate for instructions on renewing their passport or renew when they go back home.

- Form I-20 will expired if the current time is over the **Program End Date** specified in the first page of your I-20. If your I-20 expires before you graduate, you will immediately be out of legal status. Hence, if you continue your study but your I-20 is going to expire soon, you will need to contact Office of International Education to extend your I-20. You will need to send us the following documents in that case:

SCHOOL INFORMATION		SCHOOL ADDRESS	
SCHOOL NAME	8872 School, 504 Advanced Office Studies	SCHOOL ADDRESS	9042 Nancy Lane, Ft. Washington, NE 27144
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL	DeLana Richardson ID#00	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE	8841179181329 30 APRIL 2015
PROGRAM OF STUDY		MAJORITY	MAJORITY
EDUCATION LEVEL	POSTGRAD	Education, General	05-2401
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH	12 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	proficient
PROGRAM START DATE	01 JANUARY 2015	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES	student in position
PROGRAM END DATE	31 MAY 2016		
FINANCIALS		STUDENTS FUNDING FOR 9 MONTHS	
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR 9 MONTHS		Tuition and Fees	\$ 23,500
		Living Expenses	\$ 4,500
		Expenses of Dependents (1)	\$ 3,500
		Tuition	\$
		Overseas Funds	\$ 3,000
		Scholarship and Teaching Assistantship	\$ 29,500
		Private Forfeiture Income	\$
		Overseas Allowance	\$

- An email or letter from your academic department or program coordinator explaining the reason for your program extension and new anticipated graduation date. They may email the requested information to [international@tamucc.edu](mailto:international@tamucc.edu)
- An official, signed and sealed bank letter stating your estimated costs of attendance at TAMU-CC. Estimated Cost of Attendance for undergraduate students: \$33,058.00. Estimated Cost of Attendance for graduate students: \$29,478.00
- An Affidavit of Financial Support, the format is available at [http://admissions.tamucc.edu/assets/affivadit\\_of\\_support.pdf](http://admissions.tamucc.edu/assets/affivadit_of_support.pdf)

Be sure to keep all of your I-20s for your records, and make sure all information is current. *If you plan to travel outside of the U.S., please confirm your travel signature on page 2 of your I-20 is within the last 6 months.*

- Your I-94 will be considered expired if there is a date under the “Admit Until Date”. All F-1 visa holders must have “D/S” under this section. The D/S notation indicates your I-94 is valid until you complete your studies. If you have a date mentioned at Admit Until Date, you must contact the Office of International Education immediately. To check your I-94, visit <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/recent-search>

The screenshot shows the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website. At the top, it says "U.S. Customs and Border Protection" and "Securing America's Borders". Below that, there are two tabs: "Get I-94 Information" and "I-94 FAQ". Under "I-94 FAQ", there is a section titled "Most Recent I-94". The information displayed is as follows:

- Admission (I-94) Record Number: 404468
- Most Recent Date of Entry: 2014 September 25
- Class of Admission: K1
- Admit Until Date: 2014 December 23 (circled in red)
- Details provided on the I-94 Information form:
  - Last/Surname: Sincero
  - First (Given) Name: Yuri
  - Birth Date: 09 April 1988
  - Passport Number: ED3541365
  - Country of Issuance: Philippines

At the bottom right of the screenshot, there is a button labeled "Get Travel History" and a small note: "Effective April 26, 2013, DHS began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully at..."

Please note you may remain in the U.S. if your visa expires while you are studying and do not leave the United States. If you travel outside the United States and your visa is expired, you will not be allowed to return to the U.S. You will need to renew your visa in order to return to the U.S. Visas cannot be renewed within the U.S. Please contact the International Student Advisor, Ms. Elizabeth Reyes, for information concerning going to Mexico or Canada with an expired visa.

### ***Update your record***

F-1 students must notify our office if you experience any of the following changes: change your address change your major and change your degree level. Changes must be report to our office within *10 days of the change*. Please contact Ms. Elizabeth Reyes at [Elizabeth.Reyes@tamucc.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Reyes@tamucc.edu) regarding any changes.

F-1 non-immigrants are required to keep the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) informed about their place of residence at all times while living in the U.S. Your local address must be updated within ten days of any change of residence. To update DHS of your change of address, please e-mail Ms. Elizabeth Reyes at [Elizabeth.Reyes@tamucc.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Reyes@tamucc.edu). You must keep our office informed of any change of physical address, email address, and phone number. If you fail to update our office in a timely manner, you could lose your legal immigration status and be subject to deportation.

Students must also inform the University of any changes of address. To update your address in the University records, you must log on to S.A.I.L. (<http://sail.tamucc.edu/>) and make the necessary changes. All University correspondence will be sent to the address you have registered in S.A.I.L.

### ***Maintain Full-Time Enrollment***

In order to maintain your status, students must enroll in a full-time course of study each Fall and Spring semester. Summer enrollment is not mandatory unless, the summer term is your first term.

- Graduate Students – 9 credit hours
- Undergraduate Students – 12 credit hours
- F-1 international students can only count ONE online course toward their required full-time status during Fall and Spring.
- Please note if you only need one course to complete your program of study, the course cannot be online.

### ***Obtain Work Authorization***

F1 students can work on campus. If you wish to work off-campus, you must obtain work authorization. There are a few options for obtaining work authorization off-campus. Before a student graduates, they may be eligible to participate in Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Find more information about applying for CPT in [Curricular Practical Training](#) sections.

### ***Avoid Violating Other Rules***

There are other actions that may impact your legal non-immigrant status. If you are unsure, speak with the International Student Advisor, Ms. Elizabeth Reyes, before taking action. You can also visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students> for additional information on immigration and visa rules.

# Chapter 4: Creating Foundation for Your Academic Success

There are A LOT of things that you have to do before and after you arrive to the United States; however, there are additional issues that you may want to consider in order to maximize your learning experience here.

## 17. Cultural Shock

Okay, so you just moved to a totally new environment, and there are still a lot of things that you don't know, yet. This uncertainty may create a lot of anxiety, sadness, loneliness, shock, depression, or even real pain for you that can become obstacles to your personal and academic success. However, learning how to recognize these emotions and work through these obstacles can help you build new perspectives, better understand yourself, and redefine your life objectives.

Here are “*Eleven Principles to Combat Culture Shock*” as suggested by Dr. Carmen Guanipa, Department. of Counseling and School Psychology, San Diego State University (1998):

1. ***Recognize the sorrow of leaving your old country.*** Allow yourself to feel sad about the things that you have left behind: your family, your friends, etc.
2. ***Accept the new country.*** Find ways to live with the things that don't satisfy you 100%. If you encounter an unfavorable environment, don't put yourself in that position again. Learn to be constructive.
3. ***Focus your power on getting through the transition.*** Establish simple goals and evaluate your progress.
4. ***Don't forget the good things you already have!*** Remember, there are always resources that you can use or seek help.
5. ***Learn to include a regular form of physical activity in your routine.*** This will help combat the sadness and loneliness in a constructive manner. Exercise, swim, take an aerobics class, etc.
6. ***Relaxation and meditation are proven to be very positive for people who are passing through periods of stress.***

7. **Maintain contact with your ethnic group.** This will give you a feeling of belonging and you will reduce your feelings of loneliness and alienation
8. **Maintain contact with the new culture. Learn the language.** Volunteer in community activities that allow you to practice the language that you are learning. This will help you feel less stress about language and useful at the same time.
9. **Develop a hobby.**
10. **Maintain confidence in yourself.** Follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future. If you feel stressed, look for help.
11. **Be patient, the act of immigrating is a process of adaptation to new situations, it is going to take time.** Be easy on yourself.

## 18. American Culture

Other things that you can do, to help with your transition to living in the United States is understanding some cultural differences between your own culture and the dominant U.S. Culture. Here are “*Ten Tips for Daily Interactions with Americans or American Culture:*”

**Making Eye Contact:** In some cultures, it may be a sign of respect to not make eye-contact when speaking to someone of a higher status; however, in the United States, looking someone in the eye when you speak to them is a way to show respect and sincerity.

**Waiting in line:** As a way to bring sense and order to a lot of public places, Americans wait in line for almost everything: at restaurants to be seated, in the grocery store to pay for groceries, at the bank to talk to the cashier, at the movie theatre to buy your tickets, etc.. It is considered very rude to step ahead of someone that is already waiting in line. You must always wait for your turn.

**Making Appointments:** Americans prefer organization and systematic order; hence, making appointments to meet doctors, professors, advisors, technicians or administrators is considered “the norm” and shows that you respect others’ time and schedules and provides them to prepare for your meeting.

**Asking for Help:** If you have *difficulty in class, don’t know how to find something, you are lost, you don’t understand what you must do, you want to find a specific item in the store--ask for help.* You

will learn that the majority of people that you meet are happy to help. If the person you ask tells you that he or she does not know the answer to your question, they may refer to the correct person, or they may tell you to ask someone else.

***Shaking Hands:*** In some countries, bowing or kissing on the cheek, is considered a polite way to greet someone for the first time. In the United States, when you meet someone for the first time, it is polite or customary to shake hand with them. You shake with your right hand with a firm grip that's not too hard or too soft.

***Politeness:*** Saying words like: "***Please***" when making a request; "***Thank you***" whenever you receive help; or even "***Sorry***" for any inconvenience for others is usually customary. One other thing that you will find common to Texas, or the southern U.S., is that many people will address you as "***Ma'am***" or "***Sir***" regardless of how old or young you may be. It's quite common to hear someone respond with a "***Yes, Ma'am,***" or "***Thank you, sir,***" as a way to be polite or respectful.

***Giving Compliments:*** Though not everyone gives and receives compliments on a daily basis, you might find that giving out and receiving compliments often is a way to enhance self-esteem and make others feel good. The key to giving good compliments comes down to appropriateness, timing, and genuineness.

***Being Hygienic:*** It is customary to shower regularly and to maintain good hygiene habits. These include brushing your teeth using toothpaste every morning, using deodorant daily, washing your clothes and your bedding regularly (at least every other week), maintaining your room/apartment free of debris or spoiled food as this would attract pests (roaches, rodents, etc.), and dressing appropriately for the occasion.

***Student Code of Conduct:*** Texas A & M has a strict code of conduct. In order for the university to protect its educational community and to maintain social discipline among its students and student organizations, *all members of the university are entitled to freedom from suffering deliberate hurt, injury, or loss regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity.* You can find an copy available

online at: [studentconduct.tamucc.edu](http://studentconduct.tamucc.edu), or you can pick up a copy from the Office of Student Affairs in University Center, Room 318.

### ***Concerning Safety:***

- ***Pay attention to your surroundings;*** try to walk in groups at night; keep your cell phone with you, in case you need to make calls. And remember, if you have an emergency, call 9-1-1.
- ***You must be 21 to drink alcohol!*** In the U.S., you have to be 21 years old or older in order to purchase and consume alcohol. Using a fake ID, or being caught drinking underage, may lead to you being arrested which may affect your academic program or your F-1 status. If you are of the legal drinking age and you live on campus, you may be cited by the apartment managers and/or Student Affairs, if you have alcohol around or provide alcohol to any roommates, or visitors, who are under the age of 21.
- ***Driving while intoxicated is a serious crime.*** Drinking and driving are never a good combination. If you choose to drink and are too intoxicated to drive, it's best that you not drive; have a sober, designated driver take you home; or hire a taxi/uber, to get home. Drunk driving, or driving under the influence of drugs, can lead to high fines, jail time, or in some cases injury or death.

## **19. Class Selection**

### ***Catalog Search***

If you haven't declared a major, yet, or if you need more information about the different degree plans and course requirements, you can find more information using a catalog search on the TAMU-CC website. All programs, degrees, and course introduction are available at: <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/>.

### ***Course Search***

If you need more information, or a short description, about a specific course, you can find more information by using the Course Search online. You can also log into **SAIL** and select "***Student/Registration/Look up classes***" in order to find more information. You also can look up detail information of coursework from previous course syllabuses available online here: [http://rattler.tamucc.edu/Syllabi\\_Courses/index.php](http://rattler.tamucc.edu/Syllabi_Courses/index.php).

### ***First Year Program***

The First Year Program is designed specifically by the Department of Undergraduate Studies for new, incoming freshman students. As a new freshman student, the transition from high school to college can be challenging; especially, in a different country! The First Year program was established to provide both academic and social support for first-year students. They provide a variety of First Year Learning Communities and Seminar Courses to help students within their first two semesters on campus. To find out more about the First Year Programs, visit: <https://fyi.tamucc.edu>

### ***Honor Program***

The Honors Program, also housed under the Department of Undergraduate Studies, is an enhanced plan of study that works with your major to provide life-changing opportunities that help you challenge yourself beyond your own expectations. No more than 50 students are sent invitations to join annually. The program emphasizes the three pillars of educational and intellectual development: undergraduate research and creative activity, study abroad and travel, and service. To learn more about the Honors Program, visit <http://honors.tamucc.edu/> or stop by Corpus Christi Hall (CCH), room 262, to talk an advisor.

### ***Academic Calendar***

Not sure when classes start or end, when mid-terms are? Don't worry! You can find out when all of the important term dates are by checking the academic calendar online at: <http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/>

## **20. Activities**

Being away from home can be difficult and can leave you feeling lonely and isolated. Those negative feelings can hinder your learning; however, you can help overcome those feelings of loneliness and isolation by remaining active and getting involved with campus or local community. Being active can help you discover new lifelong friendships and build a new support network that will help you beyond your time in Corpus Christi.

One of the easiest ways to get involved is to attend different campus events. There is always something going on around campus--whether it's a special speaker on campus, a free movie showing

on campus, a social in the Breakers Room, or an intramural sports tournament in the Dugan Wellness Center—there’s always something free, or low cost, for students to do. Students will get weekly emails from INews sent to their Islander Email account with upcoming events or activities. Students can also check the [I-Engage website](#). To find local events going on in the greater Corpus Christi community, you can search online at: <http://www.visitcorpuschristitx.org/events/all-events>.

Another way to get involved is to join a student organization. As a TAMU-CC student, you are encouraged to participate in as many student organizations as you care for. There are more than 140 established student organizations on-campus. You can find a current listing at: [I-Engage website](#). Clubs range from culturally-related groups to academic organizations to special interest. If there’s a club that you’re interested in that doesn’t exist on-campus, you are more than welcome to create a student organization as well. Check with the Student Engagement Office of how to establish, or start, a student organization.

Volunteering for a non-profit organization in Corpus Christi is another way that students can get to know more about the local community. However, there are some guidelines that international students have to be mindful of when looking for volunteering opportunities. Please check with the Office of International Education before committing to a volunteer activity. You can find more information about volunteering activities at: <https://www.101corpuschristi.com/volunteer>.

Students can also stay up-to-date about what’s going on in the local community by watching the local news or reading the local paper, such as the Caller Times, which can be accessed at: <https://www.caller.com/>

## **21. On-campus Jobs**

International students are allowed to work on-campus. On-campus work is limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during fall and spring semesters. It may be full-time (more than 20-hours/week) during summer and official school breaks.

### ***Searching for a Job***

While getting a job may be challenging, most international students at TAMU-CC are able to secure a job on-campus. Here are some things that you should keep in mind when searching for a job:

- **Visit Career Service Office.** The Career Services Office can help you not only look for available positions, but they can help you better define your career goals, narrow down your job search, polish your resume, and practice job interviewing skills.
- **Start an Account on Handshake.** Most on-campus position postings are done so through the Handshake program. Students can create a profile, update their profile, and keep tabs on the job search process through the online and mobile app. Jobs are posted daily, so check Handshake regularly for new postings.
- **Establish relationships with your professors.** Professors or instructors not only are helpful with academic coursework and learning in the classroom, but they can also help you find leads about jobs that may be opening up in their department, provide a referral, or write recommendations for you. Take the time to get to know your professors well; especially, in your core/content courses for your major.
- **Visit your department coordinator or internship coordinator.** Each department often offers jobs for students within the major, and many times, each department may have a Department Coordinator, or Internship Coordinator, who can introduce you to any current or future job openings within the department, or a related field.

### ***Social Security Number (SSN)***

Every U.S./American citizen is provided with a Social Security Number. The social security number also acts as a national identification number, so all U.S. citizens have to provide a social security number whenever they apply for or obtain a job. International Students will need to apply for a Social Security Number once they obtain a job, or assistantship, on campus in order to get paid for their job or assistantship. In order to obtain your [social security card](#) , international students will need to:

- **Provide the Office of International Education (UC, 226) with a copy of their official letter from their employer.** The letter allows OIE to issue you a support letter, which will need to accompany your application for the Social Security Number/Card. Both of these letters are required by the Social Security Administration because they 1) verify your on-campus employment, and 2) verify your full-time enrollment status.
- **Complete the Application for Social Security Number/Card.** It is **FREE** to apply for a social security card; however, all applicants will need to complete the Social Security Card

Application Form (<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>) and provide the necessary documents/required evidence, in order to be approved for and obtain a social security card.

- **Submit the Social Security Card.** Take your completed Social Security Card application form, your employment letter, the support letter issued by the Office of International Education, and your immigration documents (passport, I-20 and I-94 card) to the Social Security Administration Office located at 3801 South Port Avenue, Corpus Christi, TX.
- **Once your application has been approved, the Social Security Administration Office will notify you, and send your social security card to you directly.**

### **Taxes**

All students who obtain employment, will need to file federal income taxes in the State of Texas. You will use your SSN to complete your required tax forms. Federal Income taxes must be filed between January 1 and April 15 every year. Tax forms and filing procedures are different for international students, so please check with the University Payroll Department (in the University Service Center) for more information about how to file your taxes and what documents you will need in order to complete your tax forms.

## **22. Off-campus Jobs**

### ***Curricular Practical Training (CPT)***

CPT is defined as employment which is an integral part of an established curriculum, including: “alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.” Curricular Practical Training must be an academic requirement as listed in the TAMU-CC catalog. This means your academic program mandates the practical training is mandatory for all students in order to graduate.

Additional information for CPT:

- Have a ***job*** offer which meet academic requirements
- Maintain ***full-time*** enrollment during fall and winter
- Have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for ***one academic year*** unless your academic program requires immediate participation for all students.
- Continue to pursue a ***required course work*** while on CPT. CPT will not be granted to students who have finished the program coursework requirements, and merely delay graduation to make use of CPT.

- Not be enrolled in an intensive English language training program
- Enroll in a CPT course which is normally named as Internship. Be aware that adding a CPT course may have an impact on your tuition and fees, and failure to complete the CPT course will result in your falling out of legal F-1 status.

#### When to apply for CPT?

- Because CPT must meet academic requirements and students will be receiving university credit and a grade for the internship, the international may not begin earlier than the first day of the semester and must end no later than the last day of the regular semester.
- CPT cannot be authorized after the academic add/drop period is over
- Required CPT is available only prior to the completion of your degree program, and after one academic year.

#### How long does CPT last?

- CPT is authorized on a semester basis. If you want to continue working on your CPT, you need to do the whole process over.

#### How many hours per week can I work?

- During the normal university semesters, students may only work 20 hours or less per week. If CPT is approved during the official university breaks, students may work for 20 hours or more per week. Please be aware that 12 months or more of full-time CPT will eliminate your eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

#### Planning for CPT authorization

1. Meet your academic advisor to discuss what type of CPT and when you should take CPT to fit your degree plan.
2. Meet with OIE advisor to make sure your status and requirements
3. Secure an internship offer
4. Meet your academic advisor or program coordinator to get them sign in your Employment Letter, and CPT Application Form.
5. Register your internship course
6. Meet OIE advisor to submit the following documents
  - Completed CPT Application Form
  - Employment letter which specify employer contact information, employment job title, start & end dates, salary, number of hours working per week, job description.

- Proof of internship credit or requirement
  - Passport & Visa
  - I-94
  - I-20
7. Return to OIE to pick up your CPT authorization I-20 in 5-10 business days

### ***Optional Practical Training (OPT)***

#### What is OPT?

OPT (Optional Practical Training) is a temporary work authorization opportunity for international students. Most students use OPT to authorize work after completing their academic degree. There are three types of OPT:

- Pre-Completion OPT: A type of work authorization for F-1 students before a student completes their academic program. Please note Pre-Completion OPT reduces the length of your Post-Completion OPT.
- Post-Completion OPT: A type of work authorization for F-1 students who are completing a bachelor's or graduate degree in the U.S.
- 24- month STEM OPT: A type of work authorization extension for F-1 students who have completed a bachelor's or graduate degree in certain STEM fields. To see the list of STEM degrees, visit website  
<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>

#### Who is eligible for OPT?

In order to start your OPT application, you:

- Must be in legal F-1 status
- Must have been in full-time student status for at least one academic year by the requested start date of your OPT
- Must NOT have been previously authorized for 12 months of Full-Time CPT at the same degree level
- Do NOT need a job offer at that time, however you will need to have employment within 90 days of OPT approval.

*Note: Students in English language training are not eligible for OPT.*

### When to apply for OPT?

You may apply for OPT 90 days before your program completion date or 60 days after. In general, it can take up to 3 months or more for USCIS to process an OPT request, hence, please plan ahead.

### How long does OPT last?

- Standard Post-Completion OPT is available for a cumulative maximum of 12-months per educational level. That duration (12 -months) is counted from the day your OPT application is approved (not from the day you start your job).
- After completing 12-months of Post-Completion OPT, only STEM degree students can apply to extend their OPT for an additional 24- months.
- Part-time OPT (available for Pre-completion OPT only) will deduct the length of post-completion OPT (e.g. 4 months part time = 2 months full time deduction).
- Unused periods of eligibility from lower level degrees cannot be accumulated for use with later degrees at a higher level.

### How many hours per week can I work?

- Pre-completion OPT is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and the student still has coursework to complete. Full-time employment can be requested for Pre-Completion OPT approved during official school breaks.
- Post-Completion OPT may be part-time or full-time. Full-time employment is 40 hours or more per week. Part-time employment no more than 20 hours per week.

### Where can I use OPT?

Students on OPT can work for any employer in the U.S. which qualifies for OPT standards.

- Paid employment: Students may work part-time (at least 20 hours per week when on post-completion OPT) or full-time.
  - Multiple employers: Students may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to the student's degree program and for pre-completion OPT cannot exceed the allowed per week cumulative hours.

- Short-term multiple employers (performing artists): Students, such as musicians and other performing artists may work for multiple short term employers (gigs). The student should maintain a list of all gigs, the dates and duration. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing a list of all gigs.
- Work for hire: This is also commonly referred to as 1099 employment where an individual performs a service based on a contractual relationship rather than employment relationship. If requested by DHS, students must be prepared to provide evidence showing the duration of the contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.
- Self-employed business owner: Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, the student must work full-time. The student must be able to prove that he or she has the proper business licenses and is actively engaged in a business related to the student's degree program
- Employment through an agency: Students on post-completion OPT must be able to provide evidence showing they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.
- Unpaid employment: Students may work as volunteers or unpaid interns, where this does not violate any labor laws. The work must be at least 20 hours per week for students on post-completion OPT. These students must be able to provide evidence from the employer that the student worked at least 20 hours per week during the period of employment.

### How to apply for OPT?

#### *Step 1: Complete USCIS forms*

- Complete Form I-765 available at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- Complete Form G-1145 available at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1145.pdf>. If you want to receive an email and/or a text message that your Form I-765 has been accepted at a USCIS lockbox facility, form G-1145 is required to be clipped to the first page of your application

#### *Step 2: Copy your identification documents*

- Two passport-style photos
  - Taken within the past 30 days on white background

- The photos must be 2 x 2 inches. The image must be 1 inch from the hair to the chin and 1 ¼ inch from eye height to the bottom of the photo. Your first and last name and I-94 number must be printed in pencil or felt pen on the back of the photos.
- Paperclip your photo and your check together, and place into a standard envelope. Then paperclip on top of your OPT application.
- Copy of Passport identity pages, photo page, page with passport validity dates including renewal page if original has expired, and pages showing amendments such as name changes, corrections, etc.
- Copy of U.S. visa, if applicable
- Copy of I-94 Form (front and back)
- Copy of All previous I-20 forms, especially if you were previously authorized for CPT
- Copy of Previous Employment Authorization Card (EAD), if any

*Step 3: Prepare OPT application fee*

1. Write a cover letter for your OPT application package which listing all of your document. See a sample [here](#).
2. Make a copy of the entire packet for your records.
3. Prepare a check or money order of \$410 made payable to “The U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. On your check or money order, please write out “OPT Application Fee”. See a sample [here](#).

*Step 4: Make an appointment with International Student Advisor*

- Schedule a meeting with our International Student Advisor to let us review your application package and start your application process. To schedule an OPT appointment, please call 361-825-2246.
- If you have not graduated, ask your program coordinator or academic department to note in DegreeWorks the following: your academic standing, program start date and expected graduation date (mm/dd/yyyy format) or completion of course requirements.
- If you are double-majoring, please be sure the department includes this information for each major.
- If you graduated already, provide evidence of program completion, i.e. a copy of your diploma or transcript

4. You will get a new I-20 at the meeting with our advisors. Copy of new I-20 reflecting OPT issued by OIE (one for your personal record and the other for your OPT application package)

*Step 5: Mailing your OPT Application Package*

5. Your OPT application must be sent to USCIS no later than 30 days from the date of OPT I-20 issuance. We recommend that you mail your application by certified mail with a return receipt or by courier service (e.g. FedEx) to have proof that your application was received. Please make a photocopy of your application before mailing it.

For U.S. Postal Service deliveries:

USCIS Dallas Lockbox  
USCIS, P.O. Box 660867  
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express mail & courier deliveries:

USCIS, Attn: AOS  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business, Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

*Step 6: Receiving Notice of Action & Employment Authorization*

6. Within four weeks of USCIS receiving your application, they will send a “Notice of Action” letter that serves only as a confirmation receipt of your application. If you don’t receive a “Notice of Action”, please send an email to [lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov). Use: "no notice of action" in the subject line of your e-mail
7. When you receive the Employment Authorization Document, you must provide our office with a copy of the front and back. You may email a copy to [international@tamucc.edu](mailto:international@tamucc.edu) . Please do not forget to check your Employment Authorization Document for any errors. If you find any errors, please call USCIS Customer Service listed on your Receipt Notice.

## **23. Prepare To Graduate**

### ***Part-time enrollment***

If you are going to graduate, you can enroll in less than full-time (see section below for what is considered “full time”), however you need to complete the Reduced Course Load Form.

Please schedule an appointment with us to address this. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

- Full-time status for undergraduate students- 12 credit hours
- Full-time status for graduate students – 9 credit hours

- If you will graduate in Summer and only have one course to complete your program of study, the course cannot be completely through online or distance education.

### ***Post-Graduation Options***

If you are scheduled to graduate, please let us know what you plan to do. Remember you have three options after you graduate:

- ***Apply for Post-Completion OPT-*** You may apply for OPT 90 days before your program completion date and no more than 60 days after your program completion date. Please note in general it can take up to 3 months or more to process the OPT application. Please plan ahead. Do not wait until the 60<sup>th</sup> day. If you wish to apply for OPT after you complete your program, we recommend that you apply for OPT at least one week earlier than the 60<sup>th</sup> day.
- ***Transfer:*** If you plan to continue your education at another U.S. university, you must transfer out your SEVIS record within 60 days of your program completion. Please stop by our office for the transfer out form.
- ***Leave the U.S.:*** If you return to your home country after graduation, please let us know what day you will leave the U.S. and provide your departure flight information.

## **24. Emergency Plan**

### ***Hurricane Evacuation***

Hurricanes are serious storms that cause water surges in the coastal bend, flooding, and high violent winds. In the event of a hurricane, or other dangerous weather events, the university may shut down to keep students, faculty, and staff safe. The warm weather and close proximity to the Gulf Coast puts the city of Corpus Christi at high risk for severe tropical storms or hurricanes. Hurricane season runs from June 1 – November 30.

If the university administration makes the decision to shut down campus, all individuals will need to evacuate campus. Students living in the dormitories (Miramar or Momentum Village), should consult with the Islander Housing staff for more information about their hurricane evacuation plan. Students who live off-campus should work also have a hurricane evacuation plan in place. Evacuation plans should include knowing what to pack, knowing where to go, and how to get to evacuation sites or safe locations. You are welcome to evacuate by your own method to a city that

is not in the storm pathway if you have a transportation. However, if you have no way to evacuate, please wait for further instructions from the university, or the city, on how to utilize public transportation services being provided for evacuation purposes.

### ***Individual Evacuation Plans***

- An evacuation or campus closure could last 2 days or 2 months, so students should have both a short term and long term plan.
- The following highways are recommended depending upon your destination:
  - Houston – U.S. 77, 77A to U.S. 59
  - San Antonio or Austin – Interstate 37 or U.S. 181
  - West of Corpus Christi – FM 624 west from Corpus Christi and I-35 North from Cotulla.
- Texas Highway 35 along the coast is very often impassable due to high tides pushed in front of a hurricane. This route is not recommended. Consider a route which will take you directly away from the coast, not parallel to it.
- Keep at least a half tank of gas at all times during hurricane season (June 1 – November 30)
- Keep cash with you.
- Store these phone numbers (to get current information & to see if it is safe to come back on campus): 1-888-234-4887; 1-361-825-0000

### ***University Evacuation Plans for On-Campus Residents***

- If necessary, the university will evacuate Islander Housing residents to either Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas or to Palo Alto College in San Antonio, Texas.
- When the university makes the decision to evacuate and close the campus, no one is allowed to stay on campus.
- Students are taken by bus (no personal cars allowed) to one of the universities and will be housed in a gym. Students will sleep on a gymnasium floor (with a thin mattress) and will be provided meals for free.
- Evacuees must bring sheets, pillows, blankets, clothing, and personal care items. Evacuees will return to campus once the university is open.

### *City Evacuation Plans for Off-Campus Residents*

- In the event that an evacuation is called for and an off-campus student does not have a vehicle, the student can evacuate with the City of Corpus Christi.
- The city will transport residents by bus to another city and will return once the city grants permission.
- The City will provide more information on the evacuation on their website:  
<http://www.cctexas.com/departments/fire-department/hurricane-preparedness>

Students evacuating with the university or the City of Corpus Christi should know the following:

- You can take only 2 small bags, No pets are allowed, & Smoking is very restricted (or may not allowed at all)
- Once you are at an evacuation site, they cannot leave. If they do leave, they are not allowed to return to the evacuation site.
- Have all important documents/medications in an accessible location where you can grab them all easily if you need to move.

**IMPORTANT.** If an evacuation is declared, **YOU MUST TAKE YOUR IMMIGRATION PAPERS WITH YOU**. Be sure to have the following documents with you when you evacuate:

- Passport
- Visa
- I-20
- I-94

If you do not take these with you, you will have a lot of trouble getting back to the university.

**BE SURE TO TAKE THE DOCUMENTS WITH YOU!!!** We recommend putting all of your important immigration documents in a convenient location so in the case of an emergency you can easily grab them as you leave your residence.

## 25. Useful Contacts List

Department	Phone	Website
Office of International Education (OIE)	361-825-3346	<a href="http://oie.tamucc.edu">oie.tamucc.edu</a>
Mary & Jeff Bell Library	361-825-2609	<a href="http://rattler.tamucc.edu">rattler.tamucc.edu</a>
Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA)	361-825-5933	<a href="http://casa.tamucc.edu">casa.tamucc.edu</a>
Career Service Office	361-825-2628	<a href="http://career-services.tamucc.edu">career-services.tamucc.edu</a>
Recreational Sports Department	361-825-2454	<a href="http://recsports.tamucc.edu">recsports.tamucc.edu</a>
Counseling Center	361-825-2703	<a href="http://counseling.tamucc.edu">counseling.tamucc.edu</a>
Health Center	361-825-2601	<a href="http://healthcenter.tamucc.edu">healthcenter.tamucc.edu</a>
BlueCross & BlueShield Texas (BCBSTX) Customer Service	855-267-0214	<a href="http://tamucc.myahpcare.com">tamucc.myahpcare.com</a>
Scholarship Office	361-825-3703	<a href="http://scholarships.tamucc.edu">scholarships.tamucc.edu</a>
Business Office	361-825-2600	<a href="http://businessoffice.tamucc.edu">businessoffice.tamucc.edu</a>
Islander Housing	361-825-4663	<a href="http://housing.tamucc.edu">housing.tamucc.edu</a>
College of Business Advising	361-825-2653	<a href="http://cob.tamucc.edu//Students/advising_services.html">cob.tamucc.edu//Students/advising_services.html</a>
College of Education and Human Development Advising	361-825-2662	<a href="http://education.tamucc.edu/academics/advising">education.tamucc.edu/academics/advising</a>
College of Liberal Arts Advising	361-825-3466	<a href="http://cla.tamucc.edu/advising">cla.tamucc.edu/advising</a>
College of Nursing and Health Sciences	361-825-2648	<a href="http://conhs.tamucc.edu/contact">conhs.tamucc.edu/contact</a>
College of Science and Engineering	361-825-3928	<a href="http://sci.tamucc.edu/advising">sci.tamucc.edu/advising</a>
University Police Department (UPD)	361-825-4444	<a href="http://police.tamucc.edu">police.tamucc.edu</a>
Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA)	361.883.2287	<a href="http://ccrta.org">ccrta.org</a>
Local newspaper		<a href="http://caller.com">caller.com</a>
Immigration & Visa		<a href="http://uscis.gov">uscis.gov</a>
International Student Rules	703-603-3400	<a href="http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students">studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students</a>
Additional campus contact		<a href="http://phonebook.tamucc.edu">phonebook.tamucc.edu</a>

