October 29, 2008

Dear [Name],

We are pleased to inform you that you have been admitted to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi for the Spring 2009 semester to pursue the following program of study:

Master of Science in Computer Science

Admission into this program is contingent upon your successful completion of the ESL program, as well as successful completion of the following:

Leveling Coursework
Acceptable GRE score
Acceptable Goal Statement

The Office of Graduate Studies is also pleased to inform you of a scholarship opportunity. You will be eligible for a Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi scholarship upon completion of the ESL program and the above listed requirements. This scholarship would adjust the out of state tuition rate to the Texas resident tuition rate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office directly at (361) 825-2177 or via e-mail at gradweb@tamucc.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Harvey Knull
Graduate Dean/AVP Research
October 30, 2008

Dear [Name],

Greetings from the Lone Star State!

Congratulations on your acceptance to ESLI at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. Please send the ESLI Processing Center in Sedro Woolley, Washington, your confirmation of attendance form as soon as you can.

If you request an airport pickup, an ESLI staff member will meet you at the Corpus Christi airport (at the baggage claim area). Should your arrival change (early or late), please call Mrs. Janie Rodriguez during office hours at 361-825-3435 so that we can update pickup arrangements. After office hours, call 361-774-3775.

While you are in the plane on your way to the U.S., you will be asked to complete a small white card called the "I-94 card" (or "Arrival/Departure record"). Be certain to write your complete name on this card EXACTLY as it is printed on your passport.

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to Texas.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Janié Rodríguez, Director
ESLI at TAMUCC
CONFIRMATION OF ATTENDANCE
English Language Program

4528 Humphrey Hill Road
Sedo Woolley, WA 98284 USA
T: 360-724-0547  FAX: 360-724-0548

THIS MUST BE RETURNED TO ESLI AS SOON AS YOUR VISA IS
APPROVED AND YOUR FLIGHT IS ARRANGED!

Name:  ____________________________  ESLI ID#:________________________
Admitted for: ____________________________  Campus: ____________________________
Program: ____________________________

Student Response:

☐ No, I will not attend ESLI. Please cancel my admission.
☐ Yes, I will attend, but I need to postpone my arrival until a later semester. I would like to
  attend the following semester in the year 20_____:
  □ Spring
  □ Summer
  □ Fall
  □ Yes, I will attend.

Arrival Information:

☐ I will need Airport Pick-up service. My flight information is:
  Flight #: ____________________________  Airline: ____________________________
  Date: ____________________________  Time: ____________________________
  ☐ I will not need any airport pick-up service. I will arrive on campus to register on: ____________________________ (date)

Housing Information:

☐ I would like to live in the dormitory on campus.
☐ My dorm application & Deposit are attached.
☐ I have already sent my dorm application & Deposit: (date) ____________________________
☐ I will not need ESLI to arrange housing for me. I am 21 years old or older and will be living on my
  own at:
  Address (if known) ____________________________

Money Information:

☐ I have already sent $ ____________________________  Date: ____________________________
☐ Bank Wire
☐ Check
☐ I have enclosed $ ____________________________

AGENTS: Please forward all documents to ESLI at 360-724-0548. Thanks!
Welcome

Welcome to ESLI at Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi. The information contained in this pre-arrival guide will help you prepare for your VISA interview and arrival in the U.S.

If, after reading this guide, you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

ESLI at Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Drive
Unit 5712
Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5712
Fax (361) 825-3860
Office (361) 825-3435
Cell (361) 774-3775
E-mail: janie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu

Arrival Requirements & Arrival Dates

Please do not arrive more than three days before your start date if you are coming at the beginning of a term because the University, students, and teachers will be finishing the business of the previous term. For example, students who plan to take the ________ term, which starts on ____________, should make plans to arrive on ____________, or ____________ in order that they may get the maximum attention to all details, and to have time to deal with all business from all the officials, departments, and staff at TAMUCC and ESLI. If you come earlier, you may have to stay in a motel for a few days, at your expense, until the dormitories are prepared.

Government Documents

Non-immigrant students admitted to United States institutions of higher education must obtain certain documents prior to their arrival in the U.S. Below is a list of these documents and an explanation of each:

1. **Passport** – Your passport is a booklet issued by your government for travel outside your country. You must obtain a passport before you apply for your visa. If you already have a passport, it must be valid for six months beyond the date of your planned arrival in the U.S.

2. **I-20** – Your I-20 is a document issued by ESLI which outlines for the U.S. consulate your degree program or plan of study. Also included in this document is information about the length of your program and the cost associated with that program.
3. Visa – The visa is a permit stamped inside your passport by an official of another country’s consulate or embassy that enables the holder to enter that country. You must have an unexpired F-1 or J-1 visa in your passport to enter the U.S. A visa is valid for a stated number of entries within a stated period of time.

Note: After receiving your I-20 you must complete the SEVIS I-901 Fee form and pay the $100 fee prior to making your appointment with the U.S. Consulate. The form should be completed and the fee paid on-line at https://www.fmjfee.com/index.htm]. Please remember that it may take a considerable amount of time to obtain a visa depending on what country you are from. Please plan ahead to avoid any problems.

Ten Things to Remember When Applying For A Visa

1. TIES TO HOME COUNTRY – All applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the U.S. Having “ties” to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence; such as a job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intent or promise of future employment, obligations to family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects in your home country. Each person’s situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter, which can guarantee visa issuance.

2. ENGLISH – Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview. If you are coming to the U.S. solely to study Intensive English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.

3. SPEAK FOR YOURSELF – Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example, about financing, they should wait in the waiting room.

4. KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS – If you are not able to explain the reasons why you will study in a particular program in the U.S., you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career when you return home.

5. BE CONCISE – Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision mostly on the impressions they form during
the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer’s questions short and to the point.

6. SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION — It should be clear at a glance to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will only have 2-3 minutes of interview time.

7. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENTER THE U.S. ARE NOT THE SAME FOR EVERY STUDENT — Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where students have remained in the U.S. as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be viewed as intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the U.S.

8. EMPLOYMENT — Your main purpose for coming to the U.S. should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly explain your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S. If asked, be prepared to verify what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S.

9. DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME — If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to verify how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be especially tricky if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family members will need you to send money from the U.S. in order to support them, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.

10. MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE — Do not argue with the consular officer. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

NOTE: Once you receive your visa, you are now ready to begin an adventure of a lifetime. Below is some important information for your journey to the U.S.

Baggage Limitation

Check with your travel agent or the airline that issued your ticket for details on how many bags you can check and how many you are allowed to carry on with you. Please ask about weight and size limitations.

If you find that you are unable to bring all the items you need for your stay in the U.S., you may choose to send some items ahead of time. If this is your situation, you may want send
these items to the ESLI Office prior to your arrival. Please note that only one or two boxes may be shipped to ESLI due to space limitations.

The address is: ESLI at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
Central Receiving
6300 Ocean Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

Each box should be clearly marked with your name and return address. You should also send it to the attention of Janie Rodríguez, Director ESLI. Please fax or e-mail us a message with your name and the expected date of arrival for your box. Fax (361) 825-3860 and E-mail: janie.rodriguez@mail.tamucc.edu

Caution Note: Please be aware that neither Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi nor ESLI is responsible for lost or broken items. In addition, if you send items and then fail to come to ESLI/TAMUCC, you will be responsible for sending us money to ship these items back to your home country.

Airline “Carry On” Items

Please bring at least 2 sets of personal clothing, pillow, bed sheets, and personal grooming items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush or comb on the airplane with you in case your luggage is temporarily delayed.

Illegal Items

Certain items are prohibited or restricted in the U.S. Information listing such items is available from the U.S. embassy or consulate in your country. Please make sure you are informed of these restrictions prior to your travel date.

Prescription Drugs

Students bringing prescription medication into the U.S. should bring a letter from their physician stating what it is, what medical condition it is for and the quantity in their possession. The note must be in English. Be aware that some medications used in other countries are considered illegal in the U.S. and are not permitted and, therefore, may be confiscated. Check with the U.S. embassy or consulate regarding such items.
Medical Health Insurance

Please note that ESLI and its host universities have a mandatory medical/health insurance policy. All international students must show proof of insurance upon arrival and check in with our office and the International Student Office at TAMUCC. They must also show proof of continued insurance prior to each period of enrollment.

Students may either purchase the university insurance policy for a cost of $152 U.S. dollars per semester, a policy from another U.S. company, or bring proof insurance coverage from their home country that is equal in coverage to the university plan or provides better coverage. Policies other than the university insurance policy must include the following information to be acceptable:

1. Medical benefits of at least $50,000 U.S. dollars per accident or illness.
2. Repatriation of remains in the amount of $7,500 or more.
3. Medical evacuation to one’s home country of at least $10,000 or more.
4. A deductible amount not to exceed $100 per accident or illness.
5. Specific dates of coverage: When coverage begins and renewal date.
6. U.S. contact numbers to file claims for payment of services.

**Any policy that does not include the above information will be rejected.** Students must be prepared to purchase the university insurance plan prior to registration if their policy does not meet the above requirements.

Clothes and Weather Information

Corpus Christi enjoys an average of 300 sunny days a year with warm, humid climate. During the summer months (June to September) temperatures often reach the 90’s. Light weight clothing is worn during these months. The winter months, late October to March, require warmer clothing, including a jacket for cold weather. Please bring a variety of clothing for the changing seasons.

Students usually wear casual clothing. Both men and women wear trousers, blue jeans, short pants, shirts, sweaters, and jackets. Men will find a suit or jacket and tie appropriate for more formal occasions. Women will probably want several dresses and skirts and blouses. Traditional national attire is appropriate for many occasions. Please avoid bringing clothing that is revealing like strapless or sheer tops or extremely low pants or jeans. Such clothing is not appropriate in either ESLI or university classes.

It is better to bring clothes that are easy to care for, such as “wash and wear” items. Coin-operated washing and drying facilities are available in campus residence halls and in some off-campus apartment buildings, as well as at nearby laundromats. Dry cleaning is much more expensive.
Electrical Equipment

The electrical current used for small appliances in the U.S. is 120 volts, 60Hz. Appliances from outside the U.S. may require adapters.

Arrival At the U.S. Port of Entry

Prior to your arrival in the U.S. and while you are still on the airplane, you will be given a form to record your arrival into the U.S. This form is called an I-94 card.

Upon arrival, you will go through U.S. customs and immigration for inspection. You will be asked to show your passport, visa, I-20, and I-94 card. Your picture and thumbprint will also be taken. In addition, the officer may ask a couple of questions about your studies. These questions are usually general in nature and every effort should be made not to appear nervous. It is important to remain friendly, polite, patient and completely honest while going through this process.

Customs Declarations – At the customs clearance point you will be asked to declare the amount of money and the value of items that you are bringing into the country. You may be asked to pay taxes on money or on goods exceeding a certain amount. You should check with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for current information concerning customs regulations prior to leaving the U.S.

Although the inspection at the port of entry is generally very efficient, please plan on a delay of at least an hour for this process. This is especially important if you have to make a connecting flight.

Once you complete the inspection/immigration process, please make certain you have the following in your possession:

1. Passport
2. I-94 Arrival/Departure record (often stapled in your passport by official)
3. I-20 pages 2 (instruction page), 3, 4
4. Any additional letters or documents relating to financial support, scholarships, or other letters of importance presented to the official.

Travel Safety

If your plans require you to have overnight stay at a port of entry city such as New York, Los Angeles, or Houston, please be careful. While most Americans will be helpful and
Medical Health Insurance

Please note that ESLI and its host universities have a mandatory medical/health insurance policy. All international students must show proof of insurance upon arrival and check in with our office and the International Student Office at TAMUCC. They must also show proof of continued insurance prior to each period of enrollment.

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It is better to bring clothes that are easy to care for, such as “wash and wear” items. Coin-operated washing and drying facilities are available in campus residence halls and in some off-campus apartment buildings, as well as at nearby laundromats. Dry cleaning is much more expensive.
Housing

We strongly encourage students to apply for a TAMUCC dormitory room. A completed housing application, notarized Lease Guaranty, and $375 deposit must be sent to ensure a room.

There are some apartments off campus available for students to rent. However, most are not within walking distance of the University. These apartments are privately owned and not connected with the University in any way. The ESLI Office has a list of apartments within the city of Corpus Christi but does not monitor their availability. Students may request a list of these apartments prior to their arrival. ESLI can help arrange “off campus” housing, but a better suggestion would be for you to arrive about 1 week before the semester begins to find an apartment.

Students who choose to live off campus must understand the expenses associated with such an arrangement. Not only does a student have to pay for a monthly rental fee, but the initial costs of obtaining an apartment are much more expensive than a dormitory. There is an initial deposit. The monthly rental rates vary in range, but are generally over $600 per month. There are also deposits needed for electricity and water service as well as a deposit for phone service. Other considerations are furniture, cooking equipment and many other needs. The cost to set up a functional apartment can be over $1,000.

In general, it is best to live on campus for at least 9 months (shortest lease) until you learn your way around TAMUCC and the city of Corpus Christi. Once you have familiarized yourself with the area, you can look for an apartment that will suit your needs.

Money Issues

Banking: Upon arrival and check-in with ESLI, we will assist you in opening a local bank account. There are several banks within walking distance of the university, but we recommend Wells Fargo, a branch is located on campus.

Credit Cards: If you plan on using a credit card issued by a bank in your home country, please make sure that the credit card can be used in the U.S. In the past, there have been some cases where foreign credit cards could not be used in the U.S.

A final word to our students: The ESLI staff is here to help students in any way possible. If you find your questions have not been answered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact our office with specific questions or for additional information.
honest, there is the possibility of a dishonest person trying to take advantage of you being a stranger in the city.

If you plan to stay overnight in the city, ask about the availability of bus or limousine service from the airport to the hotel when you make your reservation. Hotels sometimes provide free transportation. If you need to use a taxicab, use only those clearly marked a "TAXI" with a properly identified driver. Be sure you know the cost of the ride before you get into the taxi. Tell the driver why you need to go and ask how much it will cost. Most drivers are very familiar with the cost of taking passengers to area hotels.

Arrival Information

As soon as you know your travel plans for arrival in Corpus Christi, please notify the ESLI Processing Center with this information. You may either e-mail us at: esli@esli-intl.com or fax this information (360) 724-0548.

Transportation to TAMUCC

The city of Corpus Christi has an airport. When we receive your arrival schedule, ESLI will arrange airport pickup for you. Whenever possible, the person meeting you will be fluent in both your language and in English. This will be helpful to you if there are any problems with your baggage. ESLI will help you get settled in your dormitory and open a local checking account.

If for any reason your travel plans do not go well and you are delayed, please contact the office as soon as possible. Our office number is (361) 825-3435. If you call at a time when the office is closed, please leave a message on the recorder. Please make sure you tell us your full name, country, and the change in plans.

Check-In Procedures

If you arrive in Corpus Christi during regular work hours, the person meeting you at the airport will bring you directly to the ESLI Office located in the Classroom East Building, Room 117. We will help you with any needs you may have during your initial arrival. Please bring your passport, I-20, I-94 arrival card, and your insurance documents to the office with you.

If you arrive during a time when the office is closed, you will be taken to your dormitory, apartment, or a nearby hotel. Please come to the ESLI office as soon as we reopen for regular business hours.
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