**Tickets:** Reserve your tickets at the earliest to get one smart deal. It is very difficult to get a cheap ticket at a late date. You should plan with enough time for getting your VISA. Plan to arrive in San Antonio around 3-7 days before the orientation date (mentioned in your school documents). Inform us as soon as your travel plans are made in case you need a pickup at the airport. A weekend would be ideal. Most of the students here do not own cars and must plan your airport pick-ups with others who would most probably be working on weekdays. So, try to reach San Antonio either in the evenings or on a weekend, but of course, whenever you reach, we'll try our best to receive you at the airport. It will be very convenient if you can plan your journey with friends coming to UTSA. It is imperative that we are informed well in advance, of your arrival, to avoid any confusion. Remember, that San Antonio is 10.5 hours (from April to September and 11.5 hours for the rest of the year) behind Indian time.

**Luggage:** By now, you must have received tons of advice on what to take with you from all and sundry. These "tons of advice" will normally translate into "tons of luggage" and while you may not be averse to the idea of performing the Herculean task of carrying it around airports of the world, we doubt if your back or the airlines would look kindly on this venture. The bag dimensions, the number of bags and the amount of luggage involved changes based on the flight carrier so check with your travel agent or airline site for that information.

**Documents:** REMEMBER - keep all your immigration-related documents (I-20, passport, etc.) with you. Do not keep them in the check-in luggage. Keep them either in your handbag/purse or carry them with you in your hand. Also keep some clothes (for 2 or 3 days) in your hand luggage.

**Immigration:** You will have to go through customs and immigration at your port of entry. Sometime before the plane lands, the flight attendant will distribute customs declaration forms and immigration forms. Fill these out on the plane. You will submit them to the appropriate US Customs authorities after you land. If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.

**Customs:** Even if your luggage is booked through to your final destination, it will be off-loaded at your port of entry. . Just before you land in the port of entry you will be given a form to fill out in the flight, which will reflect your details, country of citizenship, visa status passport number, etc. This document is called the I94 and you can click here to download a sample of the I94 form. After passing through the immigration area, you will collect your baggage and then, with your baggage, pass through customs. A customs inspector will ask you to declare what you have brought into the country. She/He will inspect your bags and review the customs form you have filled out on the airplane. Penalties for concealing declarable items can be severe, so be honest and make a full declaration. As far as edibles go, just remember that there should be no fruits, vegetables or anything raw. Pickles, Spices, etc will be allowed in as long as they are packed properly and sealed. Spices are usually classified as non-perishable and dehydrated and you may declare them as such. You need to be ready with you passport, visa, filled I-94 form and your I-20 while heading to the Immigration check counters. The officer will endorse the I-94 form and staple it to your passport. Make sure you do not lose it.

**Connecting Flights:** If you will be continuing your journey by air, check in at the appropriate airline counter as soon as you are through customs. In most airports, you might have to change terminals to board your connecting flight. Please ask the airline representative at the counter about changing terminals. You might have to use the Airport Transport System to do so. These counters are right outside the customs area, usually. Remember, it is your responsibility to collect your baggage after passing through immigration, clear it through customs, and get it checked in again for the onward connection. In case your baggage does not arrive on the same flight as you, do not waste too much time hunting for it. Mention it to the airline representative and give them a forwarding address and phone number where you can be reached. In any event, do not miss your connecting flight. In case your flight came in late, or the onward flight is cancelled, it is the responsibility of the airline on which you flew into the country, to make arrangements for another flight and if the delay involves an overnight stay, then the airline has to put you up for the night and also pay for your meals. Do not let the airline representative convince you otherwise.

**NOTE:** Please don't panic if it so happens that your flight arrives late and the time for the connecting flight is too near (say, within the next 10-15 minutes) for you to make it due to Immigration and Customs delays. Simply follow the same actions outlined above and get your airline to arrange things for you. Don't be rude, but be firm while dealing with the airline representatives.

If a representative from the airline on which you will be traveling is outside the customs area, tell him/her that you are taking the plane to Dallas. (Many times he/she will telephone ahead and the plane will be held for a few minutes for you.)

**IMPORTANT:** In case you miss your flight and you have requested for an airport pickup it is imperative that you call up the ISA officials and let them know of your modified itinerary. You will find public pay phones throughout the airport and in case the ISA official doesn’t pick up your call you can leave them a message on their voice mail.