Dear friend,

On behalf of the Persian Student Association at Stanford University, we sincerely congratulate you on your admission to this university, and hope that you will take great advantage of this unique opportunity for your personal and professional growth and progress. We are enthusiastically waiting for you to join our community. Our purpose in writing this letter is to inform/remind you of some important points, your attention to which will make your trip smoother and prevent possible difficulties.

1- Carefully study the handbook “A Guide for New Graduate Students,” sent to you by the university. In the case that you have not received the handbook, you can find it online, along side some other useful information, at http://www.stanford.edu/.

2- Create a SUNet ID as soon as possible. The SUNet ID is your access key to all Stanford University services on the internet.

3- All the administrative processes of the university, including enrollment in classes, are done through a system called Axess. Go to http://axess.stanford.edu/ in order to access this system. Remember, you will need a SUNet ID for this.

4- The university may contact you by email for official businesses and holds you responsible for responding in a timely manner. Therefore, regularly check your Stanford Mailbox at http://webmail.stanford.edu/, as well as any other email address through which you have had contact with the university.

5- When completing official forms and documents, absolutely make sure that the spellings of your first name and last name are identical to what is printed in your passport. Pay special attention to space and dash characters.

6- In almost all official forms and documents in the US, there is a section for “middle name”. Please note that we do not have any middle name in the Persian language.

7- The most important document that indicates your legal entry to the United States and is a requirement for your stay in this country is the I-94 form. The I-94 form is a white-colored form that will be given to non-US citizens by the immigration services officials. Usually this form will be handed to you in the airplane together with the U.S. customs form. Please make sure that this form is filled out correctly and is consistent with your personal information printed in your passport. A sample I-94 form is shown in the figure attached to this letter.

8- Always protect your I-94 form with care. Losing this form could result in problems regarding your immigration status.

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*This letter was produced based on our experiences of the past few years, solely for the purposes of providing information to new incoming students. The Persian Student Association and the authors do not accept any responsibility or liability with respect to the contents of this letter.*
9- Always keep the following documents accessible during your trip (do not check them in with your baggage): Passport, I-20, admission letter, letter from your advisor (if you were given one), your funding support documents, address of residence in the US and any other important documentation that you have received from the university.

10- You can find out the complete address of your assigned housing by emailing the housing office. To find out their email address, check their website at http://www.stanford.edu/dept/hds/shs/gradhousing/

11- If you do not have financial support from the university, ensure that you will have access to enough other financial resources before traveling here. The experiences of the new students over the recent years show that without initial university funding, you may have to provide for your tuition and living costs for at least two quarters (approximately $12,000 US per quarter) before you can find a reliable source of funding.

12- If the university has promised you financial support, note that it will take you 2-3 weeks before receiving your first paycheck. Therefore, you must be able to provide for your initial expenses (about $1500) before receiving your first paycheck.

13- A medical examination at the university’s health center (Vaden Health Center) is one of the requirements for registration in the university. Having your medical history documents (including vaccination history) with you will facilitate and expedite the completion of this process. Note that the tuberculosis test performed in Iran not only is not accepted here, but also increases the chances of the second test showing positive. For more information, please see the associated handbook.

14- The Stanford medical insurance does not cover dental work or prescription glasses. Given the high cost of these services in the US, get a thorough dental and eye examination before your trip.

15- We strongly recommend that you coordinate with a friend to pick you up at the airport upon your arrival. The international airports are far from Stanford - for example, San Francisco Airport is 37 km away from the university. Using public transportation on your first day to get to the university is expensive and impractical. Furthermore, the Stanford campus is quite big and it would be hard to find directions on your first day without a car.

16- Due to the large number of flights arriving at international airports in the US, the person who will pick you up from the airport will need to know accurate information about your arrival: the airport at which you arrive, time and date, airline, and flight number.

17- If you need a ride from the airport, please contact us for help in arranging your pick-up.

18- If you want to buy electronic devices such as a Notebook computer, note that the prices of these items are usually lower in the US. Also, they should be compatible with 110V power supply.
19- Stanford has a relatively moderate climate. The minimum temperature in winter is around 0 °C and the maximum temperature in summer is usually less than 40 °C. However, the temperature varies largely over a day/night cycle. Remember to bring appropriate clothing for such weather for the first few weeks of your stay.

20- “Homestay” is one of the most useful and interesting programs that Stanford University offers to help familiarize the incoming students with the new culture and environment and facilitate their integration into the social life here. Through this program, you can stay with a local family for about a week before the first day of the quarter and moving to your university residence. This gives you the opportunity to become familiar with the new culture, and is also very useful for practicing your English skills. Most of the students keep a very good friendship with their Homestay families for many years.

21- Bringing any fruits, seeds (even baked seeds used as snack), and dried fruits to the US is extremely prohibited. Considering the ease of obtaining almost any ingredient used in Persian cuisine from the nearby stores here, there is no need for bringing these items with you.

➢ For more information, please visit http://psa.stanford.edu/incoming/

Hoping to see you at Stanford,
Some of your friends,
Sample I-94 Form