UNITED STATES LAW
KNOW YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS
In general, non-immigrants in the United States have the same constitutional protections as U.S. citizens do.

Non-immigrants enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, protection from unreasonable searches and seizures, and the other protections included in the “Bill of Rights” attached to the U.S. constitution.
Your Legal Rights

At the same time, non-immigrants are subject to immigration laws that do not apply to citizens.

- Non-immigrants can own property (land and buildings) if they wish.
- Non-immigrants are protected against discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, color and national origin.
- Students are protected from the college giving out information about them without the students’ permission.
Get good advice when buying a car to help evaluate the car’s condition and the asking price.

Register the car within 90 days. All cars must display an up-to-date license plate. See: http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/

You MUST have a valid drivers’ license. North Carolina does NOT honor an International Driver License. A VALID license issued by a government agency from a home state or country is required. See: http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/.
Purchase automobile insurance. This is coverage on the risks of driving or owning a car. It can include collision, liability, comprehensive, medical, and uninsured motorist coverage.

- If you drive someone else’s car, be sure the car is insured. If it is not, **DO NOT** drive it unless you have insurance.
Stay Out of Trouble! (with Law Enforcement)

- If you are driving and a police car pulls up behind you and flashes its lights, the officer wants you to “pull over.”

- **DO NOT** possess, purchase, or drink alcohol if under 21 years old.

- **DO NOT** give alcohol to anyone who is under the age of 21.

- **DO NOT** drive with an open container of alcohol in your car

- **DO NOT** drive after drinking alcohol.
Stay Out of Trouble! (continued)

• If you are **angry** at a friend, classmate, neighbor, spouse, or child, find some way to deal with your anger rather than hitting.

• If you have small children, make sure there is **always** an adult watching them.

• If you want to take merchandise from a store, pay for it **first**.
Stay Out of Trouble! (continued)

- **Before** you make a major purchase, compare prices.

- **Before** you sign a lease, contract, purchase agreement, or any other such document, be sure you fully understand what it says.

- **Inspect** any apartment for damages before you rent it.
Attorneys

- Immigration lawyers can be extremely helpful because they should know the latest laws and have skills in handling complicated immigration issues.
- To find a good immigration lawyer, check with the local bar association.
- If you need a lawyer to start the immigration process from outside the U.S., the American consulate or embassy may be able to help you.
- In all cases, shop around, and be careful about paying high fees at the first meetings.

**NOTE:** There is a difference between “immigration” attorneys and “criminal” attorneys. Criminal attorneys are specialized in criminal law procedures. Seek the advice of a criminal attorney for cases involving criminal offenses like shoplifting and drunk driving. We STRONGLY recommend that students seek the advice of a criminal attorney AND an immigration attorney if they have been charged with a criminal offense. Criminal charges can have serious consequences on students’ immigration status.