Immigration Documents: Travel and Re-entry as an F1 Student

Understand your F1 Visa, I-94, and I-20

1. What’s a Visa? What’s an I-94?
   - A Visa is your permission to apply for entry to the USA.
   - The I-94 indicates your non-immigrant status (permission to stay in US for a set period of time).
   - You must have a valid F-1 visa in your passport when you seek entry to the United States, unless you are from a country which is exempt from the visa requirement (such as Canada, Bermuda, etc.)
   - If you changed your status to F1 while you are in the United States, you must obtain an F-1 visa in your passport before re-entering the country.
   - As long as you are admitted in F-1 status, you are admitted for duration of status. Your I-94 should indicate your status (F-1) and D/S (Duration of Status), which means you can remain in the United States as long as you maintain your F-1 status.

2. Your I-20
   - Form I-20 has 3 pages.
   - Page 1 contains SEVIS Student ID number, your program and biographical information.
   - Page 2 consists of pre-printed instructions.
   - Page 3 contains spaces for travel authorizations.
   - You must keep all of your I-20s including the ones issued from previous schools!

Before you leave the United States, you must...
   - Notify your Designated School Official (DSO) about your trip.
   - Make sure your passport and F-1 visa are still valid.
   - Have your I-20 signed (on page 3) in a timely manner by the DSO if you seek re-entry as F1.

Re-entry to the United States
   - You must have in your possession a valid passport, a valid F-1 visa, and an endorsed (signed) SEVIS I-20.
   - You should be aware that travel restrictions may apply depending on your situation.
   - You must present the DSO with the most current I-94 once you have re-entered the US.