



UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD

#### STAFF

Rick Lane (He / Him)  
Director

Rachael Matingi (She / Her)  
Immigration Specialist

Tracy Rakes (She / Her)  
Immigration Specialist

Joel Short (He / Him)  
Immigration Specialist

Jolene Vollmer (She / Her)  
Immigration Specialist

Erika Suzuki (She / Her)  
Program Coordinator

Geraldina Mulville (She / They)  
Graduate Assistant

Lynise Gutierrez (She/Her)  
Student Employee

Miles Lumpkins (He/Him)  
Student Employee

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**ISA's March Events** 2

**Student Spotlight** 3

**WORLD** 4

#### CELEBRATIONS

**Student Employee** 5

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS &** 6

# International Student Services Newsletter

ISSUE 1

APRIL 2022

## *From the Director's Desk*

### "Coming soon"

We see those words often in advertisements on TV, billboards, even vacant construction lots, but for you, "coming soon" means the end of the spring semester at UIS. For some, that also means graduation, travel, return to your home country, Optional Practical Training, or a brief vacation before you begin a new program of study. Whatever "coming soon" has in store for you, those of us in International Student Services wish you the very best and will continue to offer our support. Let us know what plans you have and how we can help.

For those continuing with us in the summer and/or fall, I hope that you have gotten registered for your courses. Some of them fill quickly. It looks like we will have a larger group of new international students this fall than we have had since before the pandemic hit. That is great, of course, but it does mean that, once those students begin to register for their courses, you will find fewer options available to you. Get that done right away.

Speaking of new students, we do want you to know that we are very happy that you will be coming to join us. We are already preparing. Be sure to pay close attention to every email message that you receive from us. Some of them will contain time-sensitive recommendations or requirements.

Some of them will contain information that will make your transition go much more smoothly. All of them are important. If you have any questions, contact us right away. You will find all our staff ready and willing to help. Please visit our website often. We update it at least weekly. You will find announcements about upcoming events, information about our staff, answers to frequently asked questions, the latest immigration-related news, and much more. If you have trouble finding what you are seeking, just make use of the search feature or the site map. There is a lot to be found. I especially recommend the section called "Life in the USA." It will be very helpful as you plan your trip.

Finally, I do want to comment on this crazy weather we have been having. It may be the "new normal." I hope not. We are all ready for it to warm up some and stay that way for a while. It would be great for everyone to be able to get outside as exam week approaches. You deserve to have some relaxing moments during this final stretch.

Enjoy!  
Rick Lane

## Snow Star: Snowboarding & Skiing Event



Students learned to snowboard and ski at Snow Star.

## *ISS's March Events*

### *Ice Staking*



### *Sky Zone Event*



Students went to Sky Zone, an indoor trampoline park. Students played dodge ball, tug-a-war, and played in the foam pen.

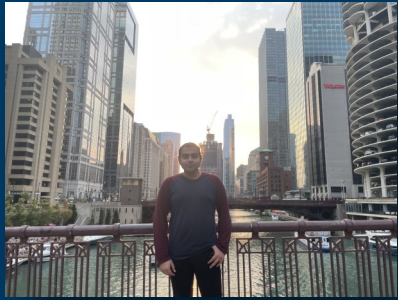
### *St. Louis Trip*



Students visited the St. Louis Zoo and visited the UNESCO World Heritage Site: Cahokia Mounds.

## International Student Spotlight:

## Usama Inaam Rasheed



My pronouns are he/him. I am from Faisalabad, Pakistan. In Pakistan I speak Urdu and in the US I speak English. Pakistan, officially the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is a country in South Asia. It is the world's fifth-most populous country. It has the 2nd most beautiful Capital city in the world called Islamabad. Pakistan is very famous for its tourism and traveling the northern areas of my country is what I love to do most. Some hashtags that best describe me are #GymRat, #TechBros, #DeliciousFood. In my home country I love Biryani (Riches and Chicken dishes). In the US I really like Chicago-style deep dish pizza. I am computer Nerd with an addiction of working out at the gym 5-6 days week. More than that I just love to travel and explore different kinds of cities and it's culture. I have visited Dubai and Qatar and continue to find new places to travel. My major is in Masters of Science in Computer Science. I want to work in Big

Tech firms and explore the inner workings and culture of such firms. I chose UIS because two of my cousins graduated from UIS and they told a lot of good things about UIS so I decided to come here for my masters. The thing I like the best about this city is that people of Springfield are welcoming and hospitable. At UIS I am involved in the International Student Association and Computer Science Club. Also I am a GPSI intern, working with the State of Illinois in the Department of Human Services. After UIS, right now, I am not sure if I will go back to my country or keep working in the US. But I am sure it will be full of excitement. :) A tip I have for new students is to participate in activities and join different clubs. UIS has students from all around the world get to meet more students here. Be more interactive with others this will make your time at UIS amazing.



## World Celebrations: The Burmese Water Festival Festival

Happy New Year in April! In Southeast Asia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand follow a lunisolar calendar and celebrate the New Year in mid-April (April 9– 16). Usually these New Year celebrations last from 3 – 7 days, which varies among the individual countries. One unique aspect of these celebrations is that the participants throw water at each other to symbolically wash away any bad luck or misdeeds of the past year. This idea is based on Buddhist tradition. For example, Thingyan is a New Year's Day festival in Myanmar and is known as the "Water Festival." Water guns, balloons, and hoses are used throughout the country. Water plays an important role in New Year's celebrations in Thailand (Songkran), Laos (Pi Mai Lao), and Cambodia (Chaul Chnam Thmey).

In the neighboring country of Bangladesh, the New Year is celebrated on April 14 following the Bengali solar calendar. They celebrate this national holiday with many cultural programs like colorful parades, traditional feasts, clothing, music, and performances. It is also a time for visiting friends and family. The celebration is enjoyed by all Ethnic Bengalis regardless of religious and regional differences. ([reference](#))

UIS has international students from Thailand, so let's join them in celebrating the New Year this April!



## World Celebrations: Easter in the U.S.

Though many of you are familiar with Easter as a Christian holiday, there are many cultural traditions unique to this holiday as well. The history of the Easter bunny in America reportedly dates back to the 1700s. German immigrants are said to have introduced the now famed bunny to the holiday. Some children leave carrots out on the eve of the holiday, much like the tradition of leaving cookies for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. On Easter morning, children are given Easter baskets, sometimes filled with gifts, chocolate, and candy. Children gather eggs, decorated and filled with candy, that were delivered in the night by the Easter bunny. Children across America participate in these Easter egg hunts. Egg rolling contests are also popular. The White House Easter Egg Roll is an annual contest in which children gather to roll their decorated eggs across the White House lawn. Easter happens to fall in the month of April this year, and will be celebrated on Sunday, the 16th. ([reference](#))



# ISS's Student Employee Appreciation Week: APRIL 4 - 8, 2022

Thank you for all the work and dedication to our office!

Get to know our hard working student employees!



**SAM NUNES**

## International Student Ambassador

Hi! I am Sam Nunes and I am an International student from Mumbai, India. I am professionally a Pharmacist and currently

I am pursuing my dual Master's in public health and public administration here at UIS. Along with being an amateur astronomer some other hobbies of mine also include reading, cooking, hiking and swimming.



**ABHISHEK SONI**

## International Student Ambassador

I am Abhishek Soni, a freshman majoring in Biochemistry in the Capital Scholars Honors Program at UIS. I am the event coordinator in the International Students Association club at UIS and employed at the Office of International Student Services as the International Student Ambassador. I love meeting new people, and any outdoor activities. Let's say hi when we cross paths with each other.



**MILES LUMPKINS**

## Student Employee

"Hi my name is Miles Lumpkins and I'm majoring in business and minoring in marketing. Some things I really enjoy doing is going out with friends and playing sports. "



**LYNISE GUTIERREZ**

## Student Employee

"Hi, my name is Lynise Gutierrez and I am currently a sophomore at UIS majoring in criminal justice with a minor in psychology. Some of my hobbies include reading, running, painting and volunteering around my community. "

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Etiquette Dinner Workshop: April 1st, 5:30 pm, @ Union Ballroom

Hiking at Starved Rock State Park: April 16th, 9 am

[Tax Filing Deadline](#): April 18, 2022

International Congratulatory Ceremony: May 13th, 2pm, @ Union Ballroom



## Office of International

*Find Us:*

University of Illinois Springfield  
One University Plaza, MS HRB 10  
Springfield, IL 62703-5407

*Contact Us:*

Phone: 217-206-6678

Email:

[ISS@uis.edu](mailto:ISS@uis.edu)

[On Facebook](#)



**Hours:**

**Monday—Friday**

**8:30am—5:00pm**