



UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD

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International Student Services Newsletter

ISSUE I

MAY 2022

From the Director's Desk

It's May, and that means a lot of changes for everyone. Some of you are completing your programs of study at UIS and moving on to a new employment opportunity, either in the US under F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT), or back in your home countries. Others are taking a summer vacation before starting a new program of study, either at UIS or elsewhere. Still others are only partially finished and are making plans for a vacation in the US or back home or looking at getting another course done during the summer. And then there are those who are making final preparations (visas, plane tickets, housing arrangements, etc.) to join us for your first semester at UIS this fall. Many changes for many people. I hope that whichever category is yours, you are excited about the new adventure that you are facing and will find it to be everything that you have hoped it would be.

For those of you who are leaving UIS, please stay in touch, with both our office and the Alumni office. We will help you to stay in touch with friends in Springfield. Once a Star, always a Star!

For those returning in the fall, I hope that you have already registered for your classes and are looking forward to a more normal

university life, now that most of the pandemic-related exceptions to the norm are being relaxed or ended. Let us know if you have any questions.

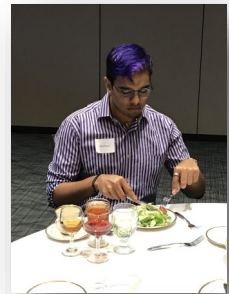
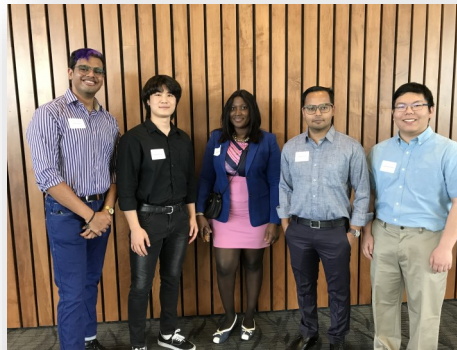
For those joining us for the first time, you should know that we are very excited to be welcoming the largest group of new international students to come to UIS in the past several years. Of course, that also means that you need to work hard to get your visa (if you have not already done so), find one of those remaining seats on one of those remaining flights, get your preferred housing in Springfield (hopefully on campus) lined up, etc. We are looking forward to holding our first in-person orientation session since before the pandemic and to meeting you face-to-face on the morning of August 17. Be sure to read every email message that you receive from us between now and then and to ask us any questions that you may have.

May all of you have a wonderful May.

Rick Lane

ISS's April Events

Etiquette Dinner



Students learned formal etiquette and hospitality rules with the help of Randy Williams as the facilitator.

Starved Rock Hiking



Students visited and hiked Starved Rock State Park.

International Student Spotlight:

Morgan Ratcliffe



My pronouns are He/him. I speak English and only English unfortunately. I am from Manchester, England. England is old, authentic and a bloody great night out. We have a great culture and are proud of where we are from which makes it feel like a community. My favorite food in my home country is steak and ale pie and chips. In the US I would have to say something like a burger, I'm not sure what American food really is? I think maybe steak or burgers. A hashtag that describes me is #HardWorkPaysOff. I love to test myself in all areas of my life. I compete in MMA and have a fight coming up on May 14th. I also write a weekly finance newsletter at www.insidertrading.online. I would love to travel to Peru and it's on the list once I graduate. My major is Applied finance. My dream job is to scale Ratcliffe Group LTD which is owned by me and my

younger brother. I choose UIS because of the great soccer team and the GPSI program is great for the resume. Right now, I played for the men's soccer team last semester which broke many UIS records finishing 16th in the nation. I learnt a lot from the team including hard work and determination. A tip I have for new students is, organization is key, keep your schedule tight and don't drink on Sundays. Life after UIS is hopefully to continue down the path of finance. Scaling our business with my brother and winning a few fights along the way!

Taste of Culture: Hamamatsu Kite Festival



HAMAMATSU, JAPAN - MAY 3-5, 2020



This festival celebrates the birth of a child. Hamamatsu Festival's origins date back to the 16th century when the birth of an heir to the domain was celebrated with a kite display. The tradition is echoed around the country when carp flags are flown on Children's Day on May 5, the climax of the festival. Over the three days, more than 100 large kites take to the skies. The highlight is a battle between 100 kites. The aim is to cut your opponent's string using friction alone. You can fly your own kites nearby, but the battle is for experts only. In the evening the streets see a parade of 83 festival floats accompanied by traditional music. Each float is elaborately carved and decorated, and they are referred to as "palaces." Other attractions include dancing and drum and bell performances. Hamamatsu has a substantial non-Japanese community who take part in the festival, giving it a welcoming and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

World Celebrations: Cheung Chau Bun Festival



Hong Kong, China May 6-9



The Cheung Chau Bun Festival is one of the liveliest and certainly one-of-a-kind of Hong Kong Festivals, full of folklore and tradition and sets in picturesque Cheung Chau Island, just a short ferry ride from the city. The trademark of the festival are the huge bamboo mountains covered with handmade buns which are set up near the Pak Tai Temple where the majority of the celebrations take place. According to the legends, the festival originated after the island was plagued by an epidemic that killed thousands, and the disease was only conquered until the locals brought in the god Pak Tai to Cheung Chau who drove the plague and evil spirits away. Since then, this festival that is dedicated to Pak Tai has been celebrated every year, on the Buddha's Birthday, and the week-long festivities encompass a wide range of activities from the prayers and offerings to the god, to floats, parades, lion dances, and the culmination of the festival with a "bun scrambling" contest at midnight of the last day. The major part of the festival day is the parade which runs from Pak Tai temple around the village and returns to the temple. Originally replicating the tour of the village by the image of Pak Tai it is now joined not only by many other images of Taoist gods but also traditional and not-so-traditional performers from all over Hong Kong. With plentiful drums and lion dances leading the way there are also brass marching bands, boat dancers from Yuen Long, and of course the most important part which is the Children's Float. Each of these floats holds two local children dressed in costumes of famous characters doing what appears to be an impossible balancing act, with one child standing on the outstretched hand of another for example. The imaginative themes and costumes of the floats are kept a closely guarded secret by the various street associations who organize them until just before the parade. The festival culminates with a very unique and peculiar "Bun Grabbing Contest" at midnight on the last day of the celebrations. A 60-foot-tower is set up for this purpose and a dozen participants climb up the bun-covered structure as they scramble to grab as many lucky buns as possible in three minutes. For the two and a half days before the festival, there are only vegetarian foods in the Buddhist style. No eggs, milk, meat or fish are served. Even the local McDonalds serves only a "vegiburger". However, some of the more tourist-oriented seafood shops do continue to serve some meat. However, all the traditional restaurants will be serving various "Jai" dishes involving lots of bean curd items formed into different shapes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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



Office of International

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Hours:

Monday—Friday

8:30am—5:00pm