



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
SPRINGFIELD

University Illinois Springfield

July, 2023

## From the Director's Desk

It's July and central Illinois is in full summer mode. The days are hot, but the area pools and lakeside activities are open for the enjoyment of those who are spending the summer here. If you have access to a vehicle, check out the drive-in theater. There are not many of those remaining in the US, and you can get two movies for the price of one. And, of course, there are a lot of fun things to do outside of the immediate area. Don't let the summer go by without experiencing something new!

July also means that many of our new students are trying their best to get their visas so that they can join us in August. If you are among those, don't give up too easily. Check the consulate website every day to see if new appointment slots have opened. If not, and you can make a trip, check other consulates in your country or even in neighboring countries. Depending upon where you live, there may actually be a consulate in a neighboring country that is closer to the one in your own. Once you have your visa, log into [iStart](#) and upload a pdf copy as soon as possible, so that we can release the hold on our class registration. Classes are filling quickly.

Should you be unable to obtain a visa appointment in time for you to arrive prior to the program start date shown on your form I-20, or if your visa is denied and you need to try again, you will need to contact the Office of Admission prior to the start of the fall classes to request a deferral to spring 2024. Once you do that, we will update your form I-20 and send it to you so that you can keep

trying. We also strongly encourage you to contact the [EducationUSA center](#) nearest you for some great local advice on how to better complete your visa interview.

Watch for regular messages from Tracy. Every one that she sends contains important information and reminders about how to prepare for your move to the US. It will be much easier for you to take care of those things now rather than later. That said, anything that you receive from fellow students or sources outside our office (unless it is from another office at UIS or from our partners at UIS Global) should be verified with us before you act on it. We have found that there are unscrupulous people out there who like to take advantage of new students. Don't fall for their scams.

Finally, for both continuing and new students, I have a request: In addition to our office there are many offices at UIS both in Student Affairs and on the academic side eager to assist you with any concerns that you may have. We meet from time to time to discuss these. If you have questions or concerns for which you have not received a response, please let me know. I will compile those and take them to our next meeting. We are always looking for every way possible to make your UIS experience one of which you will have fond memories for the rest of your life.

Rick Lane

## STAFF

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Tracy Rakes (She/Her)

Joel Short (He/Him)

Jolene Vollmer (She/Her)

Program Coordinator:

Erika Suzuki (She/Her)

Graduate Assistant:

Claudia Falcon (She/Her)

Student Employees:

Mariam Abdulsalam (She/Her)

Lynise Gutierrez (She/Her)

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# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Clement Okoduwa



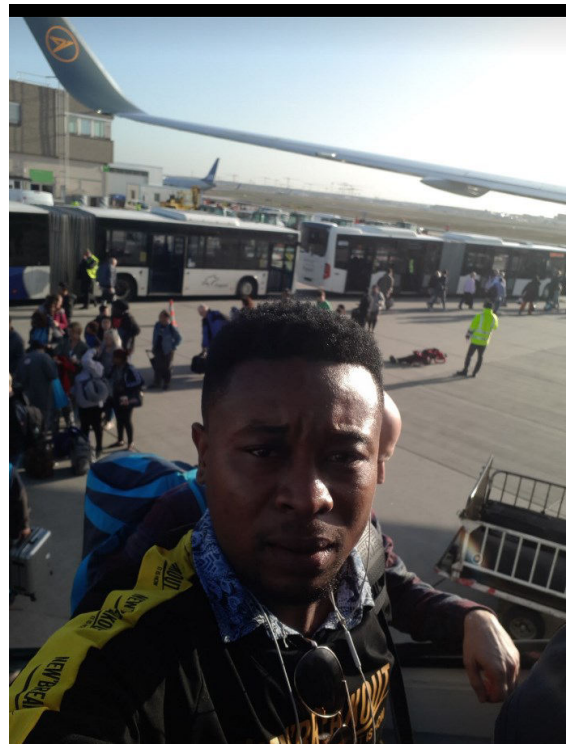
Education, A Tool for Economic and Social-political Change." This article emphasizes the crucial role of education in fostering social, economic, and political development.

I chose UIS for several reasons: the Graduate Public Service Internship program, which aligns with my passion for public service and desire to make an impact; the curriculum in Educational Leadership aligns with my previous studies and provides a solid foundation; the program curriculum aligns with my career pathway; and UIS strategic location in the state capital offers networking opportunities with professionals in the education, public, and government sector. The small size of UIS allows for close interaction with professors and a supportive community conducive to collaboration and personal attention.

Beyond my academic and professional endeavors, I have diverse hobbies and interests. Soccer holds a special place in my heart, and I enjoy both playing and watching the sport. Traveling is another passion of mine, as it allows me to immerse myself in diverse cultures, broaden my horizons, and gain valuable insights. I have also volunteered during the Covid-19 Pandemic helping my previous company in Trinidad and Tobago donate relief supplies to those who were affected badly by the pandemic either from the economic hardship caused by the pandemic or illness.

My name is Okoduwa Ehiaguina Clement, but I prefer to be called Ijedima-Orjere or IJ for short. I am a Nigerian and a resident of Trinidad and Tobago, embracing a multicultural background that fuels my passion for knowledge and cross-cultural experiences. I speak Ika (Dela-Igbo), Esan, and English. Nigeria, is a captivating and diverse country that embodies a rich cultural heritage, stunning natural beauty, warm hospitality, delicious cuisine, and remarkable individuals. With over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is a melting pot of traditions, languages, and customs, resulting in vibrant festivals, captivating music, and energetic dances. Cultural expressions are a source of immense pride and joy. Nigerians are known for their warmth, hospitality, and resilience, which is reflected in our incredible cuisine. In Nigeria, my favorite food is Egusi Soup with pounded Yam. It is a delicious combination that I absolutely love. In the US, my favorite food is Gumbo.

I am currently studying a master's degree in Educational Leadership. I recently completed my first semester in my postgraduate studies, and I am proud to share that I achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA during that time. Education has always been a driving force in my life, stemming from my undergraduate studies in Nigeria and my previous experience as an elementary school teacher. To further highlight my dedication to education and contribute to meaningful discussions, I published an article on Medium.com titled "Slaves in our Land: Constitutional Reform and



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## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Clement Okoduwa

Furthermore, I have a strong appreciation for the arts and museums. Various forms of art provide me with solace and inspiration, and I find boundless joy in visiting museums to delve into the rich history and creativity they highlight. I am deeply fascinated by innovation and continuously stay updated on the latest advancements in technology and scientific breakthroughs.

I have a few lists of Favorite movies, with no other of preference: Dead Poets Society due to its message about the transformative power of education and the importance of following one's passions resonates with viewers of all ages; The Blacklist because it raises ethical questions about the nature of justice, the blurred lines between good and evil, and the lengths some people may go to achieve their goals; Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey, this documentary series explores the wonders of the universe, science, and the history of scientific discovery, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, rationality, and the pursuit of knowledge; Inception explores the concept of dreams and the power of the human mind and delves into questions of reality, perception, and the nature of existence.

#HolisticHumanitarian is the hashtag that describes me because it combines the elements of being holistic, representing a well-rounded approach to life, and being a humanitarian. It encompasses the qualities of being morally cultured, disciplined, having moral values, loving life, nature, arts, museums, education, charity, community building, and networking.

My ultimate career aspiration is to ascend to the pinnacle of leadership within the realm of Higher Education, whether it be in public service or the private sector. In this

role, I aim to harness my passion for Academic Affairs and Education policy. I am currently working as a Data Support Intern at the Illinois Community College Board through the GPSI. This opportunity allows me to gain valuable skills and knowledge in community-based education policy, data analysis, grant management, and program review. I am also engaged in an exciting research collaboration between the America Institute of Research and the Illinois Community College Board. The study, titled "Equity in Bridge Program," aims to contribute to the understanding of equitable practices in bridging educational programs. In terms of extracurricular activities, I am interested in participating in charity and voluntary activities if opportunities are offered. I believe in giving back to the community and contributing my time and skills to meaningful causes.

Tips I can give to new students are: build a supportive network, manage your time effectively, familiarize yourself with campus resources, and stay organized. I will carefully consider the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead after my time at UIS. Life after UIS for me will involve a combination of professional growth, personal development, and contributing positively to society. UIS's emphasis on practical learning, internships, and industry connections would have provided me with real-world exposure and a competitive edge in the job market.

I plan to leverage these opportunities to secure relevant internships and employment both within the United States and internationally, capitalizing on the diverse perspectives and experiences I will gain as an international student. I will remain connected to the UIS alumni network, which can provide ongoing support and opportunities for professional and personal development. Staying engaged with the UIS community will enable me to give back and support future students, fostering a sense of continuity and shared growth.







## Fourth of July – United States Independence Day

The Fourth of July, also known as Independence Day or July 4th, has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the American Revolution. On July 2nd, 1776, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence from England. Two days later, delegates from the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by Thomas Jefferson.

From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from fireworks, carnivals, fairs, parades,



picnics and concerts to political speeches and more casual family gatherings and barbecues.

Firework shows are held in many states and often accompanied by patriotic songs. New York City has the largest fireworks display in the country sponsored by Macy's, with more than 22 tons of pyrotechnics exploded in 2009. The first week of July is typically one of the busiest United States travel periods of the year, as many people use what is often a three-day holiday weekend for extended vacation trips.





## OTHER COUNTRIES' INDEPENDENCE DAY



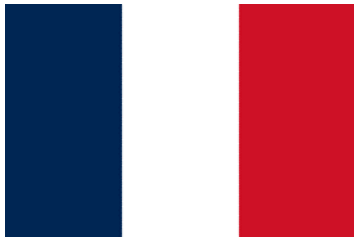
July 1st: Canada



July 5th: Venezuela



July 9th: Argentina



July 14th: France



July 20th: Colombia



July 21st: Belgium



July 26th: Liberia



July 28-29th: Peru



# International Student Services Office .....

## FIND US:

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

## WALK-IN HOURS

**Monday-Thursday 2:00-4:00pm**

## CONTACT US:

Phone: 217-206-6678  
Email: [ISS@uis.edu](mailto:ISS@uis.edu)  
[On Facebook](#)

If you need to speak directly with an immigration specialist, you can come during walk-in hours, or call us to make an appointment.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◇ Virtual Admissions Open House: July 19, 2-5pm.  
Register [here](#).

