

International Student Services Newsletter

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University Illinois Springfield

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From the Director's Desk

October brings a lot of exciting opportunities at UIS, not the least of which is the annual [International Festival](#), scheduled for Saturday, October 21. Gather your friends and start your planning for how you will participate. This is the most fun event of the year! Don't miss it.

We often tell international students that their first and best source of information about everything related to them at UIS is [our website](#). That is true for new students getting ready to come, for current students needing information related to immigration status or benefits, and for all as you plan ahead for upcoming events. Check [this page](#) regularly, to see what is coming your way.

Another big thing happening in October is the physical move of the ISS office. The dates and details are still a bit flexible. Let's just say, we will send out a mass email once we are more certain about those, and, if you come looking for us after

the move and find someone else occupying our former space, you will need to check our website to find our new home.

October also brings cooler autumn weather to central Illinois. If you joined us this fall and have not yet experienced a fall and winter here, now is the time to start shopping for some warmer clothing. The cold will sneak up on you before you know it. Be prepared.

Every month we spotlight a different international student both on our bulletin board outside the office and in our monthly newsletter. Would you like to share more about yourself with your fellow international students and our other readers? If so, just let us know via email, and we will send you some questions to get you started. We want to know you better. Others will, too.

Some of you are completing your studies at UIS in December. We

recently sent out a mass email about all the different things you should be working on. If you did not read that, you will want to go back and do so. It included OPT, program extensions, transfer information, etc. Plan ahead. You will not want to leave any of those things until it is too late. If you did not keep or read the email, or if you just need additional information about any of these, visit our website. You will find it all there.

Finally, we have another big group coming in January. If you are a part of that group, pay special attention to the information for Newly Admitted Students found [here](#). It is especially important that you get your visa and confirm your arrival as early as possible. We want to be ready for you.

Best,

Rick Lane, Director ISS

ISS's September Events

New International Student Welcome Party—September 1st

Our new international students attended the Welcome Party. They could meet each other, made connections, and had fun together with BBQ, quizzes, and sport games!



Trip to Gateway Arch National Park, St Louis —September 22nd

A trip to St. Louis was planned by our office and international students learned a lot of American history visiting the Gateway Arch and the museum.



International Student Spotlight

Varun Kumar Bhakta

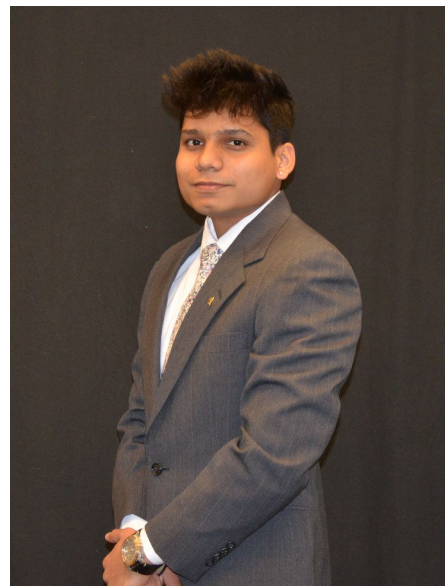
Namaste! I hail from the vibrant city of Hyderabad, located in the southern part of India. My pronouns are he/him and I am quite a polyglot, English, Hindi, and a dash of Telugu (the language spoken back in Hyderabad) are all in my linguistic repertoire!

India is an absolute marvel! We've got it all rich cultural heritage, ancient temples, majestic palaces, and mesmerizing forts showcasing architectural marvels that'll leave you awestruck. And the landscapes, oh my! From the breathtaking Himalayas in the north to the serene backwaters in the south, picturesque hill stations, and the awe-inspiring Thar Desert, it's a diverse treat for the eyes. Now, let's talk food – diverse dishes like mouthwatering curries, scrumptious biryanis, and heavenly desserts like Gulab Jamun and Rasmalai will make your taste buds dance with joy! Not to forget the spiritual seekers and wellness enthusiasts who can delve into the birthplace of various religions and embrace Ayurveda and yoga practices. And hold on, we're not done yet! Vibrant festivals, warm hospitality, thrilling safaris, and the joy of shopping for unique handicrafts and textiles as souvenirs. India's got it all!

My major is Management Information Systems. UIS stole my heart! The GPSI program had me hooked, offering experiential learning opportunities at state and local agencies. But that's not all – small class sizes here mean I get the best of both worlds: top-notch professors and a close-knit student community! I served as the philanthropy chair for Delta Kappa Epsilon International Fraternity - Kappa Beta chapter at UIS. Hosting brother bonding activities and philanthropic events is an absolute joy! One of our recent events, "Pie a DEKE," was a roaring success, a lot of laughter and fun all around.

I am all about inspiration and productivity! High-performing individuals ignite a fire in me, and I can't resist picking their brains about their day-to-day routines. When I am not getting inspired, I dabble in portrait photography, strum my way through learning acoustic guitar, and hit the gym for some muscle-pumping weightlifting. Cardio and functional training just don't stand a chance. As for my favorite food, in India, my heart belongs to the divine "Hyderabadi Biryani" and those indulgent desserts like Gulab Jamun and Rasmalai. In the US, it is all about the classic Thanksgiving turkey that steals the show.

Hashtags that best describes me are #Cool and #BeDifferent, that's the way I roll! As I step onto the horizon beyond UIS, my heart races with excitement! New adventures, fresh opportunities, and a world full of wonders await. But I'll tell you what, I'll miss the college time, the friendships forged, the networking galore, and the exhilarating events. Learning never stops, and life is about to become one heck of a ride Happy Learning. Listen up, new students! Networking is the name of the game not just with fellow students, but with lecturers, alumni, and everyone you can connect with! Joining organizations cultural, literary, academic, sports, you name it, is a surefire way to expand your circle. Oh, and here is a golden nugget: go for that GPSI scholarship! It's your ticket to real-time work experience that complements your classroom knowledge like magic!



Celebration of Halloween

October 31

Halloween is a holiday celebrated each year on October 31. The tradition originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints. Soon, All Saints Day incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween.

This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31 they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth.

Over time, borrowing from European traditions, Americans began to dress up in costumes and go house to house asking for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's "trick-or-treat" tradition. Also, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, and eating treats.

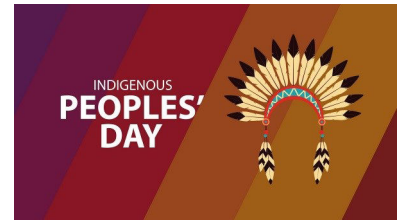


World Celebrations

October 1st—National Green City Day: This day highlights the progress and innovations that cities are making to become more sustainable and gives everyone the chance to highlight milestones addressing the issue of climate change.



October 9th—Indigenous People Day: This day recognizes the Indigenous communities that have lived in the Americas for thousands of years. It became increasingly popular as a replacement for Columbus Day, which was meant to celebrate the explorer. Also, the day is intended to honor the sovereignty, strength, and contributions that Native Americans have made to the world.



October 10th—World Mental Health Day: This day raises awareness and mobilizes efforts to support mental health. Mental health issues are finally getting the attention they deserve. Healthcare workers and individuals feel they can discuss mental health more openly. However, that doesn't mean there isn't still work to do.



October 11st—National Stop Bullying Day: This day brings together students, faculty, and parents to end bullying. Bullying comes in many forms. It occurs repeatedly and is a way for the perpetrator to show their power. Whether the bullying is verbal, physical, relational, or cyberbullying, the results are detrimental.



October 15th—National Shawarma Day: This day celebrates the Middle Eastern rotisserie method of cooking meats such as lamb, chicken, and beef and the dishes it makes. Not only does shawarma bring mouth-watering flavor, but it also can be enjoyed in a variety of ways. Customize this flavorful dish with fresh vegetables, cheese, a variety of herbs and special sauces. No matter how you like your shawarma, the combinations are endless.



October 24th—United Nations Day: This day recognizes the founding of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. The UN consists of 193 member states and 2 observer states and their mission is to maintain international peace and security. They set terms for protecting human rights around the world. In 1948, they created international law with a Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Source: National Day Calendar

International Students Services Office

FIND US:

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

WALK-IN HOURS:

If you need to speak directly with an immigration specialist, you can come during walk-in hours, or email ISS@uis.edu to make an appointment.

CONTACT US:

Phone: 217-206-6678

Email: ISS@uis.edu

[On Facebook](#)

Monday-Thursday 2:00-4:00pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◇ 45th International Festival: October 21, 2-5pm @ TRAC.
- ◇ Pumpkin Carving: October 26, 2-4pm @ UIS Community Garden.



@ TRAC | 2-5 P.M.
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023
Free Admission • Food Samples • Live Performances

Hosted by International Student Services & International Student Association

