



December, 2023

University Illinois Springfield

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From the Director's desk

Happy holidays!

During the month of December people all around the world celebrate a wide assortment of holidays in a broad variety of ways. In whatever way you and your family celebrate these occasions, those of us in the Office of International Student Services wish you a joyous and festive time with family and friends. If you have not made your plans, consider hosting your own. There are likely others who would welcome an invitation.

Of course, December also brings the end of another academic term at UIS, and, for some, the end of your program of study. Exams and project due dates will be upon us before you know it. Be sure to plan ahead for what comes afterwards. Take a moment right now to examine your immigration documents to verify that all are up-to-date and ready for your next steps. Now is the time to request an extension if you will need one, apply for OPT if you have not already done so, request a Change of Level form I-20, or one with a valid travel

endorsement on page 2. You will want to take care of any of these that apply to you before your exams, and definitely prior to leaving campus.

Some of you who are reading this article will be on the beginning stages of your UIS journey. If you have not completed all your pre-arrival tasks, you need to move quickly. We need to know that you are coming in order to have everything prepared for you once you arrive. Sign into [iStart](#) and submit your confirmation and a copy of your visa. Registration is already open, and some courses are filling rapidly. You will want to take care of your own registration as soon as possible in order to increase the likelihood of getting into the courses that you want and need during your first semester.

Don't forget to make your housing arrangements before you leave home and to arrange your transportation from the Springfield airport, bus, or train station to your new home. Once you are settled, and before classes begin in January, take

some time to explore the campus and the city. [This page on our website](#) offers some great recommendations.

The Office of International Student Services will be closed from December 22 until January 2 in celebration of our own holidays. If you have need of any of our services, you will want to make sure that we know about those prior to December 22. In fact, the earlier in the month you can make us aware of those needs, the better. Once we return to the office on January 2, we will do our best to follow up on all correspondence received while we were gone. We will do it in the order received, and it may take us several days to catch up. Wait for a response to your message. Sending multiple messages will not help or result in a prompter response.

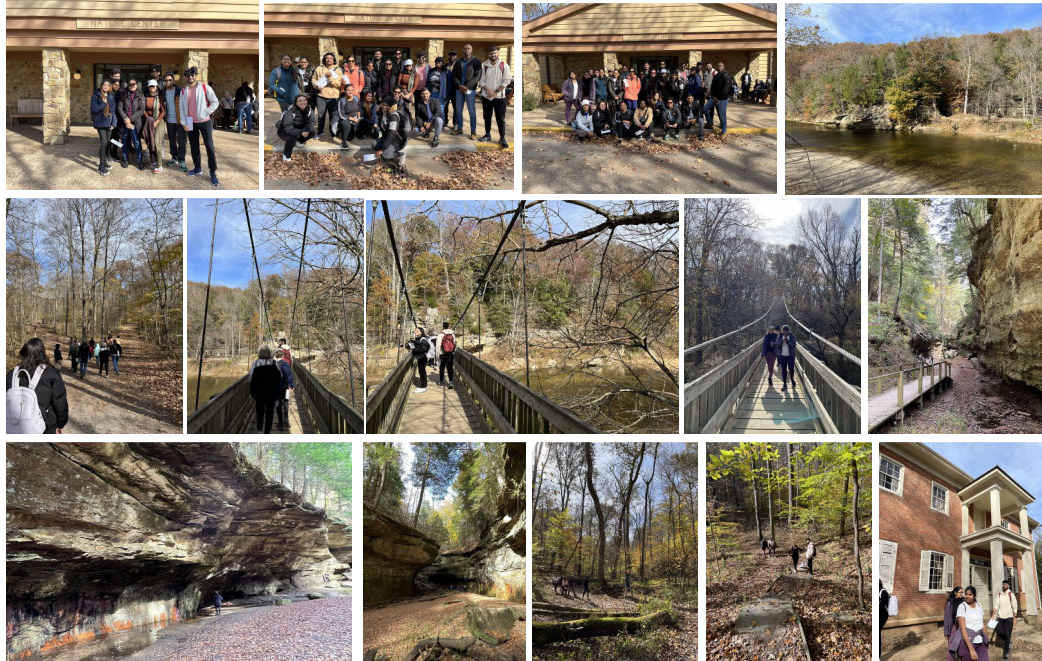
We are looking forward to the new semester and all the opportunities that it will bring. See you in January!

Rick

ISS's NOVEMBER EVENTS

Hiking at Turkey Run State Park—November 3

The ISS office provided a trip to Turkey Run State Park in Indiana. Students had fun while visiting the canyons nestled in the shadows of sandstone cliffs and hemlock gorges, which are the main features of the park.



International Thanksgiving Luncheon—November 21

UIS Food Services served some traditional Thanksgiving meals and international students were able to learn about the American traditions on this holiday.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Rafael Rojas

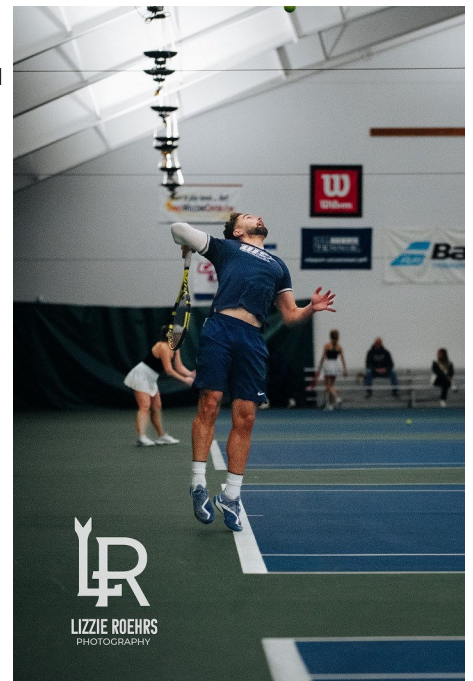


I am from Madrid, Spain and can speak Spanish and English. My pronouns are he, him, his. Spain is my home country and I love everything about it, the people, the traditions we have, the food, the culture, etc. It is a very welcoming country in the South of Europe and you should all visit if you ever have the chance.

I graduated in business finance and economics degrees at UIS and now am doing an MBA in applied finance. I am very involved in the community since I am on the men's tennis team, I work as a graduate assistant for the college of business and management, and also try to make good relationships with my classmates, teammates, and peers from the other athletic teams. I chose UIS because of their prestigious business program and the possibility of joining a top division 2 tennis team.

I have been on the tennis team at UIS for five years and love all sports. I also like reading and spending time with my friends during my free time. My favorite food back home is Spanish omelette and my favorite food in the United States is chicken wings. My favorite movie is Avatar since it was the first movie I watched in 3D and I was so amazed by it.

Hashtag that best describes me would be #GoStars. My dream job would be to become the CEO of my own company. I will probably start working as a business or financial analyst/consultant and would love to have my own firm one day. After UIS, I would love to stay working in the United States and find my ideal job. I would love to move to California because I love the weather and all the outdoors activities that you can do there. I would recommend new students to take advantage of all the opportunities and resources offered at UIS. There are plenty of resources such as Career connect, International Student Services, TRAC classes, and many others that will make your experience at UIS far more enjoyable.



INTERNATIONAL TAX WORKSHOPS

Be ready for the tax season!

If you worked on campus during this year 2023, you will need to be ready for the tax season in January. Please check an email from System HR Services and take appropriate action before December 31, 2023. For more details, please visit the System Human Resource Services website.

The office of International Student Services is planning to support our F-1 international students with Sprintax service. Sprintax will provide Nonresident Tax Webinars until April, so we strongly encourage you to participate in the webinar and learn about the nonresident tax in the US. **2023 tax forms must be filed by April 15, 2024!**



Sprintax Nonresident Tax Webinar (EAP)

In these tax webinars, international students, scholars and professionals will be run through everything they need to know about nonresident tax for the 2023 tax season. Topics will include who must file, tax residency, FICA, State returns, implications of misfiling as well as how to use Sprintax to prepare a compliant tax return.

- > Thursday, December 14th @ 1pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Thursday, January 25th @ 12pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Wednesday, February 7th @ 1pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Wednesday, February 28th @ 12pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Monday, March 11th @ 4pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Thursday, March 28th @ 3pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Wednesday, April 3rd @ 2pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Thursday, April 11th @ 1pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Monday, April 15th @ 11am EST – [Register here](#)

Sprintax Nonresident Tax Overview for OPT/CPT

Topics covered in these webinars will include residency for tax purposes, tax liabilities when on OPT/CPT and pre-employment tax forms when on OPT/CPT. The Sprintax team will also provide an overview of Sprintax Forms which can be used to prepare your pre OPT/CPT employment tax documents.

- > Thursday, November 16th @ 12pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Wednesday, December 13th @ 1pm EST – [Register here](#)
- > Tuesday, January 23rd @ 1pm EST – [Register here](#)
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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY



Christmas Day has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1870 and is celebrated on December 25. This is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are religious and secular in nature. Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, a spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of their religion. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends, and waiting for Santa Claus to arrive.



OLD CAPITOL HOLIDAY WALKS EVENTS

Each year, Downtown Springfield and locally-owned shops pull out all of the stops for the most magical time of the year– the Old Capitol Holiday Walks! They offer a month full of holiday cheer that the whole family can enjoy through December 23rd! You can find more information on the Downtown Springfield website: <https://www.downtownspringfield.org/holiday-walks/>

ABE & MARY LINCOLN SATURDAYS December 2, 9, & 16, & 23, 11am-5pm	WINTER FARMERS MARKET December 16, 8am–12pm
JAYCEES HOLIDAY LIGHTS PARADE December 2 at 5:30pm	HOLLY THE LIGHTED BUS December 6, 13, & 20, 4:30-5:30pm
VISIT SANTA DOWNTOWN December 2, 10am–1pm @ Products Holiday Expo December 9, 10am–1pm @ Kidzeum December 16, 10am–1pm @ Lincoln Library December 23, 10am-1pm @ Visitors Center	LRS ICE SKATING RINK December 2, 9, & 16, 10–6pm December 6 & 13, 4–8pm December 20, 5-8pm December 23, 10am-8pm
COPPER COIN BALLET COMPANY'S 'THE NUTCRACKER' AT THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM'S UNION THEATER Wednesdays & Saturdays 5:30pm	ILLINOIS PRODUCTS HOLIDAY MARKET December 1, 4-9pm December 2, 11am–6pm December 3, 11am–4pm
DANA-THOMAS HOUSE FESTIVE FRIDAYS December 1, 8, 15, & 22, 4-7pm Tours every 30 minutes starting at 4 p.m., last tour at 6:30 p.m.	DANA-THOMAS HOUSE EVENING HOLIDAY TOURS December 6, 13, & 20, 4-7pm Tours every 30 minutes starting at 4 p.m., last tour at 6:30 p.m.



NEW YEAR'S EVE



Every year on December 31st, people around the world celebrate New Year's Eve, the last day of the year. It's a day to say "goodbye" to the old and "hello" to the new. This is one of the most exciting holidays of the year. Some countries, such as the Philippines and Latvia, celebrate New Year's Eve as a public holiday. In Japan, it's a government holiday. In other countries, many businesses let their employees off of work early so that they can partake in the many festivities.



Many cities throughout the world go all-out to celebrate this exciting night. Fireworks, concerts, countdowns, and ball drops are usually among the many festivities. Some of the best cities to celebrate include New York City, Sydney, Bangkok, Dubai, Cape Town, London, and Las Vegas. In Spanish-speaking countries, it is a tradition to eat 12 grapes during the countdown to midnight, symbolizing wishes for the new year. Around the world, eating anything in the form of a circle or ring symbolizes coming full circle and is considered good luck.



There are many reasons this day is one of the biggest nights of the year. Not just because it's a time of big parties and celebrations all around the world. New Year's Eve can be a significant turning point in your life. It's a time to reflect on the past year and all of the lessons you have learned. It can be a time you decide to start making better choices. If you have had a rough year, New Year's Eve offers a feeling of relief. Also, you can be thankful that the year is finally over.

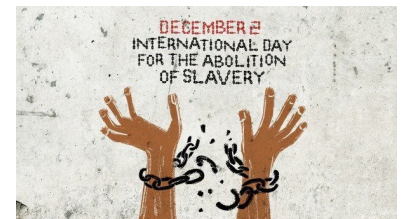
New Year's is also a time to forgive past mistakes and form new habits. Many people make New Year's resolutions. Although, only 8% of people actually accomplish them. Instead of making resolutions that you're not going to keep anyway, it's better to set three or four goals. Breaking down goals into actionable steps, and reviewing your progress daily helps to keep them. It's also a good idea to find a friend or mentor that can hold you accountable.

OTHER WORLD CELEBRATIONS

December 1—Antarctica Day: This day recognizes the anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty. This Treaty ensured that all exploration and research on the continent would be for peaceful purposes only. It also promoted the idea of cooperation between countries and that all scientific observations would be made freely available. Additionally, the continent could never be used for military purposes or radioactive waste disposal.



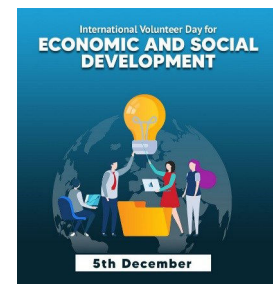
December 2—International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: The day draws attention to slavery that still exists in the world. Today, slavery and human trafficking is a billion-dollar business. Global profits are believed to exceed \$150 billion. According to the United Nations, slavery traps over 40 million people around the world. Modern slavery victimizes one in four children, globally, who experience unimaginable suffering.



December 4—Wildlife Conservation Day: The day seeks to spread awareness about preserving and protecting the natural world and its inhabitants. Additionally, the observance strives to put an end to wildlife crime and supporting the Endangered Species Act.



December 5—International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development: The day celebrates people and organizations who volunteer their time and energy to improve the lives of others. Along with recognizing volunteers, this day also aims to invigorate volunteerism. Every act of volunteerism is an act of kindness. It's a way to pay it forward without expecting anything in return. It's a gesture of peace and goodwill.



December 20—International Human Solidarity Day: This day seeks to celebrate the world's unity in diversity. It's also a day to raise awareness about the importance of solidarity, which is defined as an awareness of shared interests and objectives that create a psychological sense of unity. Solidarity also refers to the ties in a society that bind people together as one. According to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, solidarity is among the fundamental values that are essential to international relations and is convinced that solidarity creates a spirit of sharing, which is essential for eradicating poverty.



International Student Services Office

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[On Facebook](#)

UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
SPRINGFIELD

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.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◇ Spring 2024 Orientation: January 11 & 12th. Time and location TBD.
- ◇ Spring 2024 Welcome Back Week: January 16—19th.

ISS Closed for Holidays

Please note, the ISS office will be closed Friday, December 22nd, 2023, through Monday, January 1st, 2024. We will resume normal hours on Tuesday, January 2nd. If you have plans to travel over the break, please make sure have an updated travel signature.

The ISS team wish you all and your families a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year!

