Happy New Year!

This new year brings many new adventures for many of you. Some will be boarding a plane to travel half-way around the world to find a new home in a new country and to start a new program of study at UIS. Although it is a cold season in Illinois, we do want to extend a warm welcome and to encourage you to contact the Office of International Student Services with any questions or concerns that you may have. Even if you are seeking information outside our areas of expertise, we can likely point you in the right direction to get what you need. We look forward to seeing you in orientation on January 11 and at our new international student welcome party on the 19th.

If you are in the group of students addressed above and have not yet logged into iStart to upload a copy of your visa, do that right away. Classes are filling up, and you cannot register until you confirm your attendance with us and upload that visa copy. You will also want to look at the UIS Health Services website to submit your immunization records and at Residence Life to make your housing arrangements. There are, of course, a limited number of off-campus apartments in Springfield, but you will find it much more convenient, especially when the snow comes, to be able to walk out of your campus housing and right into your classroom building. If you do choose to live off-campus, you will also want to take into consideration the local bus routes and wait times.

If you were hoping to come for this spring semester, but you could not get your visa in time to make it by January 11, please contact the Office of Admissions before that date to defer your enrollment to the fall term. When Admissions confirms the deferral, we will update your form I-20 and get that to you so that you can start to work on your arrangements for fall.

That was a lot about the new students. We have not forgotten those who are continuing with us, either in your programs of study or in Optional Practical Training. Those still taking classes will want to verify that the program end date on your form I-20 matches your actual plans. Those entering your final semester and not needing a full course load will want to request authorization for a Reduced Course Load prior to the start of the semester. Those who have already finished your courses and are now completing OPT will want to make sure that you are fulfilling your reporting requirements.

Let's all make 2024 a great year at UIS!

Rick
My pronouns are he/him. I am from Schwandorf, Germany and can speak German, English, and a bit of Italian. I appreciate the rich cultural heritage of Bavaria, Germany, where traditions are cherished by people of all ages, fostering a strong sense of community and identity. One notable example is the tradition of wearing Lederhosen on special occasions, symbolizing a connection to history and a commitment to preserving cultural practices.

I am a graduate student completing my Master of Business Administration, and am going to be a GPSI intern starting February 1st. Additionally, I play on the UIS men’s soccer team, and also participated in the Volleyball intermural tournament. The combination of playing soccer on a good level and gaining work experience while earning an excellent degree was the reason I committed here.

I enjoy spending time with friends and meeting new people. As a hobby, I play volleyball, soccer, and skiing. At home, my favorite dish would have to be cordon bleu paired with potato salad, a delicious schnitzel variation featuring a succulent blend of ham and cheese encased in a crispy outer layer. In the US, I tried Pumpkin Pie at Thanksgiving and I really enjoyed it. I like the Mission Impossible movies. The seamless blend of action and comedy, coupled with Tom Cruise’s exceptional acting makes these movies highly entertaining for me.

Hashtags that best describes me are #studentathlete, #engineer, and #communicative. After UIS, I will probably return to Germany to start my professional career. There’s also the possibility of pursuing a Ph.D. in collaboration with a German company. However, my current focus is on getting a solid master’s degree at UIS and having another successful soccer season next fall. My dream job is to work in the German car industry as an Industrial engineer.

Tips I can give to new students are to take advantage of new opportunities, stay organized, and prioritize self-care to effectively balance your academic and social life.
INTERNATIONAL TAX WORKSHOPS

Be ready for the tax season!

If you worked on campus during 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 ISS office 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!**

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Sprintax Nonresident Tax Webinar (EAP)

- January 25th @ 11am – Register here
- February 7th @ 12pm – Register here
- February 28th @ 11am – Register here
- March 11th @ 10am – Register here
- March 28th @ 11am – Register here
- April 3rd @ 11am – Register here
- April 11th @ 10am – Register here
- April 15th @ 10am – Register here

Sprintax Nonresident Tax Overview for OPT/CPT

- Thursday, November 16th @ 12pm EST – Register here
- Wednesday, December 13th @ 1pm EST – Register here
- Tuesday, January 23rd @ 1pm EST – Register here
- Wednesday, February 28th @ 1pm EST – Register here
- Thursday, March 31st @ 12pm EST – Register here

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Sprintax Nonresident Tax Webinar (EAP)

- January 23rd @ 12pm – Register here
- February 28th @ 1pm – Register here
- March 21st @ 2pm – Register here
ISS BULLETIN BOARD

In case you didn’t know, there is a tunnel that connects the Health Sciences Building (HSB), Brookens Library, and PAC. If you are cold on these winter days, use the tunnel and check out the ISS bulletin board, located below the library. It has been updated with winter events, activities, and important information about registration for Spring 2024.

Go take a look at it!
For this Spring 2024 semester, we are receiving one international student coming from Malawi and other two coming from Kazakhstan. Below some interesting facts about these countries.

**Malawi:**
- Located in southeastern Africa.
- It is endowed with spectacular highlands and extensive lakes.
- Most of Malawi's population engages in cash-crop and subsistence agriculture.
- The country's exports consist of the produce of both small landholdings and large tea and tobacco estates.
- Malawi has received a foreign capital in the form of development aid, which has contributed greatly toward the exploitation of its natural resources and has allowed them to produce a food surplus.
- Most Malawians reside in rural locations.
- The country's few large urban centers include Lilongwe, the capital, and Blantyre, the seat of the country's judiciary.

**Kazakhstan:**
- Located in Central Asia.
- It is bounded on the northwest and north by Russia, on the east by China, and on the south by Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, the Aral Sea, and Turkmenistan.
- It is the largest country in Central Asia and the ninth largest in the world.
- The country dominates Central Asia economically and politically, generating 60 percent of the region's GDP, primarily through its oil and gas industry.
- Its major exports include agricultural products, raw materials, chemical products, and manufactured goods.
- Their climate is sharply continental, and hot summers alternate with equally extreme winters, especially in the plains and valleys.
- About three-fifths of Kazakh families live in rural areas.

Source: Britannica.com
WORLD CELEBRATIONS

January, 1—New Year’s Day: Nearly the entire world recognizes New Year’s Day on January 1st and it’s one of the most celebrated holidays of the year. The start of New Year’s Day, at midnight, is heralded by fireworks, and parties, which are often televised. For many, it is a day of recovery from the New Year’s Eve celebrations the previous night. The birth of the first baby in the New Year is often celebrated with gifts to their parents and appearances in local newspapers and on local news shows. Many people make New Year’s resolutions. These are usually promises to themselves that they will improve something in their own lives. This is a state public holiday and state government offices, schools and businesses are closed on this day.

January, 1—World Day of Peace: This day invites all people to reflect upon the important work of building peace. When trying to define peace, people often use words like tranquility, calm, and quiet. Some associate peace with law and order. No matter how the word is defined, most people enjoy the feeling of being at peace. The Pope gives a special message that reflects the theme for the year and to pray for peace.

January, 1—Euro Day: This day celebrates the issuance of the monetary unit of the European Union. This monetary unit is called the euro. The United Nations recognizes 180 currencies used by the Member States throughout the world. We typically refer to currency as money. Currency includes paper, metal coins, banknotes, and cotton. The dollar, peso, franc, yen, and yuan, are all examples of different kinds of currencies.

January, 24— International Day of Education: This day celebrates the role of education in global peace and sustainable development. Education is essential for many reasons. It provides knowledge and helps people better themselves and understand the world around them. Additionally, education paves the way for employment. However, over 72 million children around the world do not have access to education. Many more millions of children and adolescents don’t have the opportunity to complete their education.

January, 26—Australia Day: Australians celebrate the day their country was founded as a British colony in 1788. On this date, the first governor of New South Wales arrived at Sydney Cove and raised the first-ever Union Jack flag. This day is a celebration of freedom. It’s a day to celebrate the land, people, and cultural diversity of Australia. State Governments host numerous events across the country. Families gather to watch parades and enjoy many other fun-filled events. Many will fire up the Barbie (BBQ), spend time on the beach, watch fireworks, and wear the Australian flag.
WALK-IN HOURS:
Monday-Thursday
2:00-4:00pm

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

Upcoming Events

◊ New International Student Orientation: January 11, 9am @ Student Union Ballroom.
◊ New International Student Welcome Party: January 19, 5-7pm @ Student Union Ballroom.
◊ OPT Workshop for Spring 2024 grads: February 2, 2-4pm @ Brookens Auditorium.
◊ OPT Workshop for Summer 2024 grads: March 22, 2-4pm @ Brookens Auditorium.

International Student Services Office

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