

STAFF

DIRECTOR

- Zafrul Amin
(He/Him)

IMMIGRATION SPECIALISTS

- Jolene Vollmer
(She/Her)
- Tracy Rakes
(She/Her)
- Rachael Matingi
(She/Her)
- Joel Short
(He/Him)

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

- Erika Suzuki
(She/Her)

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

- Musa Baldeh

STUDENT EMPLOYEES

- Mariam Abdulsalam
- Enimien Deborah
Esangbedo



Walk-In Hours: Monday-Thursday 2:00-4:00pm



University Plaza, UHB 1006



217-206-6678



ISS@uis.edu

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



Greetings!

Welcome to the fall semester. I trust you had a restful and enjoyable summer and that your academic endeavors are off to a strong beginning.

The start of each semester is always an important and active period for the International Student Services (ISS) office. Our team supports international students from the time of admission through their transition to campus life and beyond. This semester, we were pleased to host orientation sessions for our newest cohort of international students—a truly meaningful occasion for the entire UIS community. In addition, we organized a welcome party to ensure that our new students felt supported and at home from the very first day.

In this newsletter, you will also find features on two exceptional UIS students. The first is Enimien Deborah Esangbedo, who recently joined the ISS office as a student employee. The second is Adam Adam Knaz, a dedicated member of the UIS soccer team. Their accomplishments reflect the talent, leadership, and spirit that enrich our university community.

I am also pleased to share that the Annual International Cultural Festival will take place on October 25, 2025. This signature event is a celebration of cultural diversity, featuring a flag parade, cultural performances, food exhibitions, and many other activities. It offers an excellent opportunity for students to share their heritage while fostering cross-cultural understanding within UIS and the Springfield community.

Please remember that the Designated School Officials (DSOs) in the ISS office are here to assist you. Walk-in advising hours are available Monday through Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. For your convenience, you may also schedule an appointment by phone or email if those times do not align with your schedule.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and for your continued engagement. It is a pleasure to see our students active and thriving on campus, and I look forward to a successful semester ahead.

Warm regards,

Zafrul Amin
Director of ISS, PDSO

Orientation Ceremony Held for New International Students



The Office of International Student Services (ISS) held an orientation ceremony for the new cohort of international students at the Student Union Ballroom.

In his welcoming remarks, the Director of the ISS, Zafrul Amin, congratulated the students for choosing the right place to enhance their academic careers. He emphasized that UIS is a student-friendly university that has created an enabling environment for students to achieve academic excellence.

The ceremony was attended by Designated Student Officials (DSO), International Ambassadors, representatives from various UIS offices, and returning students who shared valuable experiences with the newcomers.

As is customary, several presentations were delivered on a range of topics designed to help new students understand how to maintain their F1 visa status, access various resources on campus, and navigate class registration.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

My name is Enimien Esangbedo, and my pronouns are she/her.

I am from Nigeria, specifically Edo State, Igueben Local Government Area. Nigeria is in West Africa and is known for its rich cultural diversity, natural resources, and vibrant music and film industry (Nollywood). It is often called the “Giant of Africa” because of its large population and influence on the continent. One interesting fact is that Nigeria has over 500 different languages and ethnic groups, making it one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world.

I am pursuing a Master of Public Health with a concentration in Environmental Health, along with a Certificate in Epidemiology at the University of Illinois Springfield. I chose this field because of my background in Biochemistry and my professional experience in the oil and gas industry, where I saw firsthand how environmental factors affect human health. I discovered the program through research on universities that combined strong public health training with practical opportunities for international students.

My career aspiration is to become a Global Health Specialist, focusing on the intersection of environmental health, chronic disease prevention, and health equity. I hope to work with international organizations like UN and WHO, NGOs, or public health agencies to design and implement sustainable health programs that protect vulnerable populations and promote global well-being. I would also love to work with Multinational Oil and Gas Exploration companies focusing on occupational and environmental health risks, corporate health, safety, and environmental (HSE) policies.



My experience in the US has been enriching and eye-opening. I have enjoyed engaging with people from diverse backgrounds, exploring new academic opportunities, and gaining hands-on experience through my role at the International Student Services Office. Adjusting to the culture and academic system took some effort, but overall, the support from faculty, classmates, and campus resources has made the transition positive.

My advice to new students is to embrace every opportunity for learning and connection. Don't be afraid to ask questions, seek guidance, and use campus resources—they exist to help you succeed. Balance academics with self-care, because maintaining your well-being is key to thriving. Finally, build relationships with peers and professors; these networks will support you during your studies and beyond.

UIS International Festival



Around the World in a Day

Saturday, October 25

TRAC | 1-4 p.m.

Free Admission • Food Samples • Live Performances

Hosted by International Student Services & International Student Association



UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
SPRINGFIELD



Athlete of the month

My name is Adam Knaze.

I am from Slovakia, from a small city called Bojnice. One fun fact about my city is that it has a beautiful castle, which is considered one of the most beautiful castles in Central Europe.



I play soccer for the men's soccer team. My position is left-wing back which requires a lot of running and strong technical abilities.

I started playing soccer at a young age because of my grandfather and it has stayed with me until now.

I can't fully answer this question because, to be honest, I don't really know how the rankings work. However, I believe my team was ranked #8 in the preseason poll in the GLVC.

I come from a semi-professional environment back home, so if everything goes as planned, yes, I have professional aspirations in soccer.



WORLD CELEBRATIONS

Sept. 4th

National Wildlife Day



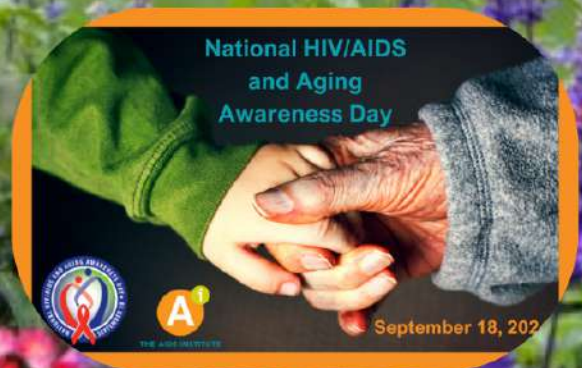
Sept. 11th

Patriot Day



Sept. 18th

National HIV/AIDS & Aging Awareness Day



Sept. 27th

World Tourism Day

