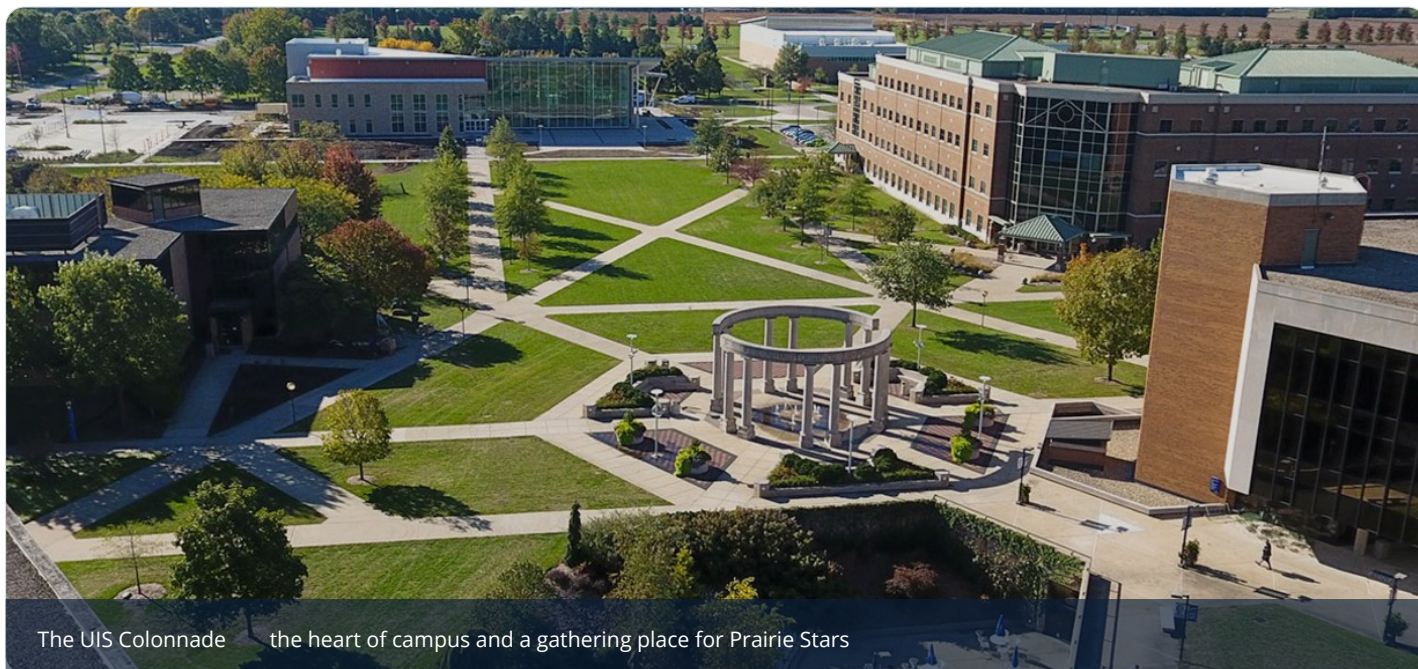




The UIS Colonnade — the heart of campus and a gathering place for Prairie Stars

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Prairie Stars at the Colonnade fountain

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Walk-In Hours

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Location

University Plaza, UHB 1006

Contact

217-206-6678 | ISS@uis.edu

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

From the Director's Desk

Greetings!

Welcome to the fall semester! I trust you had a restful, enjoyable summer and that your academic endeavors are off to a great start.

The beginning of each semester is always an exciting, busy time for the International Student Services (ISS) office. Our team supports international students from the moment of admission, through their transition to campus life, and beyond. This semester, we were thrilled to host orientation sessions for our newest cohort of international students—a truly meaningful milestone for the entire UIS community. We also hosted a welcome party to ensure our new students felt supported and at home from day one.

In this newsletter, we are proud to feature two exceptional UIS students:

- Getrude N. Nyabawa, a graduate student pursuing a Master of Public Health.
- Karan Kumar, a graduate student pursuing a Master of Public Health.

Their accomplishments reflect the talent, leadership, and vibrant spirit that enrich our university.



Zafrul Amin, Director of ISS, PDSO

I am also pleased to share our October Calendar of Events. These upcoming events offer excellent opportunities for students to share their heritage while fostering cross-cultural understanding both within UIS and the broader Springfield community.

As a reminder, the Designated School Officials (DSOs) in the ISS office are always here to assist you. Our walk-in advising hours are Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00–4:00 p.m. If these times do not work with your schedule, you are always welcome to schedule an appointment by phone or email.

Thank you for your time, engagement, and continued support. It is a true 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



The UIS Colonnade at night a landmark of community, tradition, and Prairie Star pride

Student Spotlight

Getrude Nyasha Nyabawa (She/Her)

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH • EPIDEMIOLOGY & COMMUNITY HEALTH • ZIMBABWE

My name is Getrude Nyasha Nyabawa, and my pronouns are she/her. I am an international student from Zimbabwe, currently pursuing a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology and Community Health at the University of Illinois Springfield.

I come from Zimbabwe, a beautiful country in Southern Africa known for its rich culture, warm and welcoming people, wildlife, and natural wonders, including the magnificent Victoria Falls. Zimbabwe has given me a strong appreciation for community, resilience, and service. These values have shaped my journey and continue to influence my aspirations.

My career goal is to work in global health with the United Nations, particularly UNICEF, where I hope to contribute to improving the health and well-being of children and communities. UNICEF's health work includes immunization, maternal and child health, disease prevention, community health, and strengthening health systems—areas that closely connect with my public health training.



My interest in this path developed through my experiences working with international organizations and UN-related initiatives. Those experiences introduced me to the world of international development and showed me how diplomacy, policy, and public health interact. They inspired me to pursue an MPH so that I could combine my passion for international affairs with technical expertise in health.

My experience at UIS has brought me closer to that vision. Through Model United Nations, I have had the opportunity to represent countries, engage with international issues, and experience the type of diplomacy that I hope to pursue professionally at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. I have also served as an International Ambassador with International Student Services, helping connect students and contribute to an inclusive international community.

Another meaningful opportunity has been my role as a Graduate Assistant in the Dean of Students Office. Working directly with students has strengthened my leadership, communication, and advocacy skills. It has also taught me that meaningful leadership begins with listening to people, understanding their needs, and connecting them with opportunities and resources. UIS has given me access to supportive faculty, small classes, valuable campus resources, and a diverse community where I have met people from different countries and learned about different cultures and languages. I have grown academically and professionally because I have been willing to step beyond what is familiar.

To new students, my advice is simple: take the opportunity, and put yourself out there. Join organizations, introduce yourself, ask questions, apply for opportunities, and do not be afraid to dream beyond your current circumstances. Opportunities often come when we are willing to search for them and have the courage to step forward.

I carry Zimbabwe with me wherever I go, while preparing myself to serve on a much larger global stage. My goal is not simply to earn a degree; it is to use my education, experiences, and voice to contribute to healthier communities and a better future for children around the world.



At the United Nations



Beside the Nelson Mandela statue



With peers at an international conference

Student Spotlight

Karan Kumar (He/Him)

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH • ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH • INDIA

My name is Karan Kumar, and my pronouns are he/him. I'm from India — specifically the northern part of the country, from Punjab, in the district of Ludhiana.

I'm pursuing my Master of Public Health, focusing on Environmental Health, at UIS. Before coming to the U.S., I worked in clinical pharmacy and in the pharmaceutical industry in India. Over time I realized that so many of the health outcomes I cared about — access to care, disease prevention, health equity — are shaped by systems and data, not just individual treatment. That pushed me toward public health. I chose UIS because of the program's applied focus and the flexibility to combine my clinical background with hands-on public health experience.

My long-term goal is to work as a public health researcher and epidemiologist, using data to identify health disparities and shape more effective, equitable interventions. Since coming to UIS I have built toward that in several ways: I am a graduate research assistant working on FDA adverse event data, I completed a public health internship with the Illinois Public Health Association analyzing statewide HIV surveillance trends, I lead a team on UIS's Digital Accessibility Remediation Team, and I recently co-authored a



study published in BMJ Paediatrics Open.

I also founded UIS's first American Statistical Association (ASA) student chapter this year, because I wanted other students to have access to the same kind of applied data training that has been so central to my own path. Last year I participated in a cultural event where I performed Bhangra, a folk dance from Punjab, and it was wonderful to see how engaged people were with it.

It has been an amazing experience overall — meeting new people, learning new things, trying new cafés, and exploring Chicago. People here have been genuinely supportive and friendly, which made the transition easier than I expected. A special thanks goes to my advisor, Dr. Yu-Sheng Lee, for giving me the opportunity to build real research and epidemiology skills. I have also attended five conferences so far, and each one offered a different perspective and real networking opportunities.

Along the way, I have started building a presence on LinkedIn and publishing on Medium, served as founding president of UIS's ASA student chapter, reviewed for a couple of conferences, and celebrated my first publication in BMJ Paediatrics Open. It has been a busy couple of years, but every part of it has added something.

Be curious and don't wait for opportunities to come find you — go build them. A lot of what shaped my time at UIS did not exist when I arrived. I had to ask, propose, and follow through, whether that was asking my advisor about research opportunities or starting a student organization that did not yet exist.



Recognized as MVP



Best Collaborative Team Award



Launching UIS's ASA student chapter

Upcoming October Events

Ideas & Activities for International Students



OCTOBER 1

International Coffee Day

International Coffee & Culture Day — students share coffee traditions, snacks, and stories from their countries.



OCTOBER 2

International Day of Non-Violence

Peace & Unity Day — international students share messages, artwork, or cultural perspectives about peace.



OCTOBER 4–10

World Space Week

Global Space & Science Night — international trivia, space-themed activities, and presentations about space programs around the world.



OCTOBER 5

World Teachers' Day

Thank Your Professor Day — students write appreciation cards or recognize professors who have supported them. UNESCO observes this every October 5.



OCTOBER 10

World Mental Health Day

Global Wellness Day — yoga, relaxation activities, mental-health resources, and cultural approaches to wellness.



OCTOBER 16

World Food Day

International Food Festival — students bring or display foods, recipes, or food traditions from their countries. This could be one of the biggest social events of the month.



OCTOBER 24

United Nations Day

International Students' Global Village — country booths, flags, traditional clothing, music, trivia, and information about different cultures.

Immigration Update

Preliminary Injunction Prevents Final Rule from Going into Effect

Dear International Students,

We want to bring an important legal development to your attention regarding recent federal immigration policy. On September 14, 2026, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction preventing the Final Rule from going into effect as originally scheduled. Hence, the proposed Duration of Status Final Rule is currently postponed. Please note the status of this Final Rule may change at any time depending on the outcome of the pending litigation. The Office of International Student Services is closely monitoring the progression of this litigation. We are actively collaborating with our legal and university partners to ensure we understand every implication for our international student community.

What does this mean for you right now?

The preliminary injunction means the status quo remains completely intact. Because the rule has been halted before it could take effect, there are currently no changes to the regulations governing your F-1 or J-1 visa status, your travel requirements, or your eligibility for employment authorizations such as Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Action Items for UIS International Students

01 Continue as normal

Keep attending your classes and maintain your full-time enrollment status.

02 Monitor official channels

The legal landscape can shift quickly. Rely only on communications from the UIS ISS office or official sites such as ICE.gov and USCIS.gov.

03 Avoid rumors

Social media is often filled with misinformation. If you read something alarming online, verify it with our office first.

04 Travel cautiously

Always have a valid travel signature on your I-20 before leaving the United States, and consult an ISS advisor if you have unique travel concerns.

Your presence, academic contributions, and diverse perspectives are what make the University of Illinois Springfield an incredible place to learn. We remain fully committed to supporting you and advocating for your success. If you have immediate concerns about your individual case, please visit us during walk-in hours or schedule an appointment with an Immigration Specialist.

Questions about your status?

Walk-in advising is available Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00–4:00 p.m. at University Plaza, UHB 1006. You may also call 217-206-6678 or email ISS@uis.edu to schedule an appointment with a Designated School Official. Please rely only on official UIS ISS communications and government sites such as ICE.gov and USCIS.gov.

UIS Welcomes International Students

Orientation and Welcome Party

The University of Illinois Springfield was excited to welcome our international students for the Fall 2026 semester! We began with an International Student Orientation, where new and continuing international students learned about important campus resources, immigration regulations, academic expectations, and ways to get involved at UIS. The orientation provided a great opportunity for students to ask questions, meet with International Student Services staff, and connect with other students.

Following the orientation, we celebrated with a Welcome Party — a time for international students to meet new friends, reconnect with familiar faces, and enjoy a fun and supportive community. The event featured great conversations, activities, and a chance to experience the warm and inclusive Prairie Star community.

We are so happy to have you here and look forward to an amazing year together!

International Student Orientation



Students during the orientation session.



ISS staff welcoming students and sharing resources.



Students engaged in the orientation presentation.

International Student Welcome Party



International students enjoying the welcome party.



Students connecting and making new friends.



A fun and welcoming atmosphere to start the semester.

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing."

— Abraham Lincoln