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ISSO Weekly Newsletter, March 21, 2014

University of Northern Iowa. International Students and Scholars Office.

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Amana Colonies Trip Sign-Up

Our final trip of the semester will be on Saturday, April 5 to the Amana Colonies (<http://amanacolonies.com/>) in Amana, Iowa. The bus will be leaving from Wisconsin Street behind Maucker Union at 8:30 am and returning at approximately 4:30 pm. Total cost of the trip is \$10 per student. Lunch may be purchased on your own. Come to the ISSO Office (113 Maucker Union) to sign up. Please bring \$10 cash (exact change) when signing up. This is a great opportunity to explore the German culture, do some shopping, tour museums and hang out with friends. Sign up closes Wednesday, April 2.

ISSO is Hiring for an Office Assistant for the 2014/15 Academic Year

The International Students and Scholars Office is hiring for an office assistant for the 2014/15 academic year. If office work and assisting with events and programming attract you, please consider learning more about the position at <https://access.uni.edu/cgi-bin/finaid/employ/StudentViewsJob.cgi> and applying by March 28, 2014.

Graduation Fair March 26

Are you graduating this year? Join us from 1:00 pm-5:00 pm on March 26, 2014 in the Old Central Ballroom in Maucker Union for the Spring 2014 Graduation Fair! Take care of such things as purchasing your cap and gown, commencement ceremony information, graduation checks, financial aid exit counseling, resume critiques, receiving graduate school information, and much more! Participants also have the chance to win prizes such as an iPad Mini!

Mini Comic Con March 29

The Rod Library is hosting a mini comic book convention on March 29 from noon until 5 pm. The event will include gaming competitions, trivia contests, costume contests, panel discussions, guest speakers and an artist/author alley.

Reaching for Higher Ground Food Matters Project

Film and Discussion: King Corn at 7:00 pm on March 24 in the Center for Multicultural Education (CME). Should Tomatos Have Fins! Should Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) Food be Labeled? discussion on March 26 from 4:00-5:15 pm in the CME.

UNI International Students & Community Schools Cultural Exchange Program

ISSO is excited to announce a new cultural exchange program that involves UNI international students and local community school children. All UNI international academic students can volunteer to educate local school children about your country's culture and customs. Volunteer opportunities will be spread throughout the semester. You can choose to volunteer once a semester, once a month, once a week - whatever

works for you! There are a variety of ways in which you can choose to do this, such as playing games, creating arts and crafts, cooking a national dish, presenting a slideshow about your country, or come up with your own original idea! If you like working with children ranging in ages between 5 to 13 years old, are excited about educating others about your culture, and you want to see a different perspective of American culture, then sign up to be a volunteer at <http://www.uni.edu/internationalservices/forms>. If you have any questions or want to know more information, please contact Bridget at international.services@uni.edu or [\(319\)273-2862](tel:(319)273-2862) or Maucker Union 113. We can't wait to get this program started!

Optional Practical Training (OPT) for Eligible F-1 Students

If you have an F-1 visa and you are planning to graduate in May 2014, now is the time to think about applying for Optional Practical Training as you are probably eligible for this 12 month period of employment authorization within the U.S. See our website for more information on OPT at <http://www.uni.edu/internationalservices/f-1-student-employment-information>. You may also go ahead and schedule an application appointment with the Immigration and Visa Coordinator if you are ready to submit your application or if you have questions. Contact the Immigration and Visa Coordinator Ross Schupbach at Ross.Schupbach@uni.edu for questions.

Academic Training for Eligible J-1 Students

J-1 students can consider Academic Training if they would like to work off campus in the U.S. before or after graduation. See our website for more information on J-1 Academic Training at <http://www.uni.edu/internationalservices/j-1-student-employment-information>. You can also contact the Immigration and Visa Coordinator Ross Schupbach at Ross.Schupbach@uni.edu for questions and for a copy of the Academic Training Information and Application Guide.

Full-Time Enrollment Requirement

This is a friendly reminder that all F-1 and J-1 students must be registered as full-time students. (12+ hours of undergraduate credit or 9+ hours of graduate credit). Being enrolled less than full-time without proper approval will result in the loss of your good immigration status and may prevent you from earning your UNI degree. Even worse, you could be arrested and deported from the USA! If you have questions, do not ask your friends, but ask the professional staff in the International Students and Scholars Office. You should review the reminders at this web page at least once per semester: <http://www.uni.edu/internationalservices/immigration-regulations>. Exceptions to the full-time rule are: certain academic difficulties (improper course level placement, initial difficulty with American teaching methods), medical/health reasons, final semester of study, and graduate students working full-time on research or dissertation. ALL of these exceptions MUST be approved by the Immigration & Visa Coordinator in advance!

Student Admissions Ambassadors (SAA) Taking Applications

The Student Admissions Ambassadors (SAA) are now taking applications for Fall 2014. Please apply at the following link: <http://uni.edu/admissions/saa>. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 28 at 5 pm.

Income Tax Season

Students may be hearing about W-2 forms and filing "income tax" returns for 2013. An income tax return is a report that you must make to the Internal Revenue Service (<http://www.irs.gov>) of the U.S. Government for any calendar year when you earn income in the United States. Fortunately, you do not need to do these alone. On Monday, March 10, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program will begin helping international students prepare 2013 income tax returns. Assistance will be available at the times indicated on the attached flyer. Income taxes can be confusing and complicated, so you are encouraged to seek free assistance from the V.I.T.A. volunteers. Be sure to bring your W-2 form from UNI and any other tax forms you have received or do receive before March 10. You will also need your I-20 or DS-2019 form, your passport and I-94 information. If you did not have a job in 2013, you should still file IRS form 8843, available here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf> You will only need to complete Part I and Part III before signing at the bottom of the form and sending it to the IRS at the address indicated in the instructions. April 15, 2014 is the deadline for filing all 2013 tax returns!

My Waterloo Days People in the Park June 12 and 13

My Waterloo Days (MWD) is a community-wide, annual festival organized by volunteers to showcase and celebrate Waterloo's cultural and recreational opportunities. Visit the website at <http://www.mywaterlooday.org/>. Part of this celebration focuses on different cultures, foods, music and art. The MWD committee wants to reach out to other cultures and celebrate them. If you'd like to share your cultural heritage with the people of Waterloo, please consider participating in People in the Park, June 12 and 13. There are opportunities to share your musical talents, to perform traditional dances from your country or to demonstrate native crafts. Food from many nationalities will be sold during this event too. If you're interested in participating or performing at this event, please e-mail liz.conklin@uni.edu.

Like and Follow Us!

Like us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/UNI.ISSO?ref=tn_tnmn and follow us on Twitter https://twitter.com/ISSO_UNI to stay informed about ISSO news and events!

ISSO Office Hours

ISSO office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

ISSO - Enhancing International Experiences

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Regular office hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Summer office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The University of Northern Iowa provides transformative learning experiences that inspire students to embrace challenge, engage in critical inquiry and creative thought, and contribute to society.