

12-19-2019

ISSO Weekly Newsletter, December 19, 2019

University of Northern Iowa. International Students and Scholars Office.

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ISSO Weekly Newsletter

Thursday, December 19, 2019

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

International Coffee Hour January 16!

Join us for the first International Coffee Hour of the semester in the International Students and Scholars Office, 113 Maucker Union from 3-4 pm on January 16.

Winter Clothing Drive

The International Student and Scholars Office winter clothing drive has been very successful. Coats, scarves, gloves, etc. are available to international students who are not prepared for the Iowa winter. Please come to 113 Maucker Union to pick up some items!

Winter Break ISSO Hours

We want to remind you that The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) **will be closed from December 23 – 27 (Monday to Friday) as well as December 30, 31 and on January 1 (Wednesday)** for the winter break. The Office **will reopen on Thursday, January 2. Please make sure to complete any immigration or advising business with ISSO before December 17.** Otherwise, it will have to wait until Wednesday, January 2, 2020.

Now is the perfect time to **check your immigration documents (I-20 or DS-2019) for expiration so that there is time to extend** your status before December 17. For those who will **travel outside the U.S. over the winter break, please don't forget to check your I-20 or DS-2019** for a valid travel endorsement before you depart. In case of emergency, please call UNI Public Safety at 319-273-2712 or 911.

Winter Break Campus Dining Hours

Winter Break Campus Dining Hours during December 20-January 12 are [here](#).

New International Payment Features

International students now have the ability to pay with Flywire using the Make a Payment link in Student Center. After logging in and choosing "Go to My Student Center", click on the Make a Payment link. You will have the option to pay by electronic check (US bank account) or International Payment via Flywire. The process to make a payment through Flywire will not change. If you have questions on making international payments via Flywire, visit our [International Bank Payments](#) website, or contact student.accounts@uni.edu.

International Communication Opportunity

Professor Victoria DeFrancisco invites international students to partner with US students in her intercultural communication course this spring to meet approximately once a week for an hour to have conversation, share cultural resource information, and hopefully build friendships. The students in her class will be writing papers about their experience. No other requirement is expected of the international students outside her class. The class meets from 11-12:15 on Tuesday/Thursday and international students are invited to visit if they wish. If you choose to participate, it will be important to commit for the whole semester as this could adversely affect another student's grades. If you have any questions or you would like to participate, please feel free to contact Dr. DeFrancisco directly: defran@uni.edu

2020 Mary Ann Bolton Undergraduate Research Awards

Applications for the 2020 Mary Ann Bolton Undergraduate Research Awards, which are administered by Rod Library, are now being accepted. The application deadline is April 3, 2020. These awards recognize and celebrate extraordinary research and scholarship on the part of undergraduate students through the generous support of alumna Mary Ann Bolton (Class of 1970). Three awards will be given: First Place - \$1,000; Second Place - \$500; Third Place - \$250. More information about the awards, including submission guidelines, is available [here](#).

The Learning Center at Rod Library

All students are encouraged to use The Learning Center @ Rod Library for assistance with writing, math, science, and college reading and learning strategies. Beginning week two, The Learning Center (TLC) operates on a walk-in basis and is open 10:00 am to 10:00 pm Monday through Thursday. For more information, go to <https://tlc.uni.edu/tutoring>, email TheLearningCenter@uni.edu , call 319-273-6023, or visit the TLC desk located on the main floor of Rod Library. If you are unable to come in during normal tutoring hours, online tutoring is available through Smarthinking. You will need your CATID and passphrase to gain access. To access the Smarthinking platform go to <https://tlc.uni.edu/schedule>.

IMMIGRATION

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

If you hold F-1 status and you are planning to graduate in December 2019, now is the perfect 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 web site for more information about [OPT](#).

Travel Endorsement

If you plan to travel outside of the U.S. over the breaks and return to UNI to resume your studies, you must make sure that you have a valid **travel endorsement** on page 2 of your I-20 form or page 1 of your DS-2019 form. Travel endorsements are valid for one year, so new endorsements are only needed if your previous endorsement will expire before you plan to re-enter the U.S. If you are not sure if you need a travel endorsement, please check with us and we will be happy to review your documents.

Maintaining US Immigration Status

International students are responsible for **maintaining their U.S. immigration statuses**, and an important part of this is **always having a valid, unexpired I-20**

or DS-2019 form. We recommend that F-1 students check the "Program of Study" section near the center of their I-20 forms once per month to make sure they do not study past the program end date indicated in that section. J-1 students should always be aware of their DS-2019 form validity dates in section 3. Page 3 of all I-20 forms specifies that "If you cannot complete the educational program by the program end date on page 1 of your Form I-20, you should contact your DSO at least 15 days before program end date to request an extension." Ross Schupbach is your Principal DSO, and he is always happy to help when students need extensions.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

International Student Support Group

International Student Support Group starts on September 16 and will meet every Monday from 3:30-5:00 pm in the Student Health Center, 2nd floor. The International Student Support Group allows international students to share their experiences with others who can understand and relate to their concerns. To learn more about the group, you can consult a counselor by calling or walking into the counseling center from 8 am-4 pm, no appointment required. Contact 319-273-2676, Student Health Center, 2nd floor.

Like and Follow Us!

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Office hours 8:00 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.



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