

2-20-2020

## ISSO Weekly Newsletter, February 20, 2020

University of Northern Iowa. International Students and Scholars Office.

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## ISSO Weekly Newsletter

### Thursday, February 20, 2020

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#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

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#### **International Coffee Hour Every Thursday!**

Join us for our International Coffee Hour every Thursday in the International Students and Scholars Office, 113 Maucker Union from 3-4 pm.

#### **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!

#### **Musical Bingo Night February 20**

CAB is sponsoring a Bingo Night TONIGHT! 7-10 pm in the Maucker Union Coffeehouse. Come and try your hand at musical bingo. Hear the song and have it on your card and you win! Free chicken wings included! Prizes include a tv, groceries and gift cards!

#### **Smooth Sounds in Your Second Language March 2**

Learn about ways to improve your pronunciation. This panel is open to learners and speakers of any additional language. Presenters will discuss practical ways to make your speaking comprehensible through self-teaching pronunciation. Monday, March 2 from 3-4 pm in the Rod Library ScholarSpace.

## **Income Tax Season**

Students may be hearing about W-2 forms and filing "income tax" returns for 2019. An income tax return is a report that you must make to the Internal Revenue Service (<http://www.irs.gov>) of the US Government for any calendar year when you earn income in the United States. Fortunately, you do not need to do these alone. This year for the first time, UNI has made special software available for \$6.24 per person to use for income tax filing. The Office of Business Operations has reached out to students who were employed on campus during 2019 and/or who might have taxable benefits and need to file tax returns. So, please watch your inboxes for this important information from UNI. We encourage you to use Sprintax, and if you have questions about how to get started with it please ask Ross at [ross.schupbach@uni.edu](mailto:ross.schupbach@uni.edu)

If you have tax-related questions or concerns and if you would like further assistance, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program will have one or two stations set up for international students to come in to use a computer to access Sprintax; if you have questions during the process they may be able to offer help. However, Sprintax has a 24/7 chat online for any questions you may have. VITA student volunteers will not be certified to work with international students until March 2nd, so that station will not be available until then. If they want to file sooner, Sprintax is your best option. VITA will be open Monday 6-8 PM, and Wednesday 3-5 PM. They will NOT prepare any 1040NR tax returns, so all non-residents will have to use Sprintax. If you did not have a job in 2019, 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, 2020 is the deadline for filing 2019 tax returns!

## **Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Scholarship**

The Iowa chapters of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International will be awarding \$1,000 grants to several international women students enrolled in Iowa colleges or universities. The applications and attachments must be completed and postmarked by April 1, 2020. Recipients will be notified by May 15, 2020. See attachments for application and criteria.

### **2020 Merchant Scholarship**

This is to announce an annual scholarship opportunity for graduating seniors and UNI alumni pursuing graduate studies. Scholarships typically ranging between \$2000-\$4000 will be awarded for graduate study for the fall of 2020. Recipients must be attending, or planning to attend, an accredited graduate or professional school as a full-time student. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2020. Please refer applicants to <https://provost.uni.edu/resources/merchant-scholarships> where additional information and a link to the application materials are located.

### **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](mailto: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

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

If you hold F-1 status and you are planning to graduate in May 2020, 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. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will begin accepting applications from UNI students that they receive on or after February 10, 2020. If you desire to begin employment soon after the semester ends on May 8, it will be necessary for you to submit your OPT application in mid-February because it takes USCIS approximately 3 months to process these applications. See our web site for more information about [OPT](#).

### **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

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### **International Student Support Group**

International Student Support Group meets every Monday from 3:30-5:00 pm in the Student Health Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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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### Contact Information

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