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ISSO Weekly Newsletter, April 9, 2020

University of Northern Iowa. International Students and Scholars Office.

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ISSO Weekly Newsletter

Thursday, April 9, 2020

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

International Students and Scholars Office Online Services

Due to the public health and social distancing practices that have been instituted at UNI and in the state of Iowa, scheduled and walk-in appointments, and services with ISSO advisors will now be conducted online. Office hours will remain Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm. For information contact international.services@uni.edu or Julie.Hill@uni.edu, Immigration & Advising – Ross.Schupbach@uni.edu, Director – Isabela.Varela@uni.edu

Student Emergency Fund

The [Student Emergency Fund](#) assists University of Northern Iowa students by providing limited emergency financial assistance to currently enrolled students who are unable to meet immediate, essential expenses due to an unexpected emergency. Examples of unexpected emergency situations include accidents, illness, death of a family member, fire damage, or the need for temporary housing. Priority will be given to students whose tenure at the university may be at risk because of said expenses.

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.

Sprintax has a 24/7 chat online for any questions you may have. 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. July 15, 2020 is the new deadline for filing 2019 tax returns!

Make Your Mark Scholarship Program

To celebrate the fourteenth year of LewerMark's iconic Make Your Mark scholarship program they are offering two brand new international student scholarships that allow faculty and staff to nominate a worthy student for either a Need-Based or Merit-Based award. Need-Based: \$3,000 award and a Merit-Based: \$3,000 award. The application deadline for both scholarships is **April 15, 2020**. Visit the Make Your Mark website to learn more about eligibility requirements and how to submit a nomination on behalf of your international student: <https://www.lewermark.com/lewermark-scholarship/>

The Learning Center at Rod Library

The Learning Center REMOTE (TLCRemote) is NOW OPEN. As long as The Learning Center@Rod Library remains closed to the public, TLRRemote will be available 24/7. UNI Students who need academic support can explore their options by going to <https://tlc.uni.edu/>. The alert homepage message instructs students to select "COVID 19 TLRRemote" to review current academic support options. Option #1 encourages students to take advantage of Smarthinking, a 24/7 online tutoring service. Option #2 directs students to our newly developed Zoom tutoring center where we offer half-hour tutoring for math/stats, science, writing, and academic coaching/specialty tutoring. Questions can be directed to TheLearningCenter@uni.edu

IMMIGRATION

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. 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

UNI Student Health Clinic Telehealth

The Student Health Clinic is moving to telehealth appointments only beginning Monday, March 23. The clinic will no longer provide face-to-face office visits, but will support students via telephone and Zoom telehealth visits. Students must call 319-273-2009 opt#1 to be assessed over the phone. Clinic staff will remain available 8-4:30 Monday through Friday. The Counseling Center will also provide mental health services via telehealth (through Zoom). Please call 319-273-2676 to schedule an appointment.

Student Health Insurance

The Student Health Clinic needs to know if you are planning to leave the US during summer break. You must email Connie Potter (connie.potter@uni.edu). You will need to provide the date that you are leaving and the date you are returning to the US. The Student Health Clinic will suspend your insurance coverage during that time. If you're not enrolled for the summer session and the Student Health Clinic does not hear from you, your coverage will automatically continue. It is important for you to tell the Health Clinic before you leave the US as they cannot remove the coverage when you return to UNI in the fall.

ASSISTANCE OFFERED

Assistance Offered

Nadir Khan and Huzaifa Islam Shah are offering their help to anyone who needs it. If any of you need any kind of help, you can contact them directly through their contact information: **Huzaifa:** huzaifa@alumni.edu, **ph:** 319-575-8114 and **Nadir:** nadirk@uni.edu, **ph:** +1 201-603-3450. Nadir and Huzaifa are UNI Alumni and they served as the President and Vice President of MSA last year.

SUBLEASER WANTED

Subleaser Wanted

Subleasing my room from May to July. Can move in as early as April 16th! April rent is already paid.

Very clean master bedroom. You will have your own private room & bathroom & walk-in closet.

Only 15min drive to UNI!! If you are looking for a quiet, safe, and friendly neighborhood it is a perfect place for you :Pet friendly so more then welcome to bring your furry friend! The whole house has 3 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms with a huge living room. There will be 2 other housemates and they are very nice, respectful, and easy to get along with (one goes to UNI and the other works). Since its has a master bedroom, it is a great place for couples to live too. If you are interested and want pictures of the room & house, please email or call. kimaac@uni.edu 319-883-2848.

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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 socie



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