



# International Student Service



## Newsletter



### Inside this Issue

- Student Spotlight
- Recent Events
- Athlete of the Month
- Upcoming Events
- World Celebrations

DECEMBER 2024



The end of the semester, the end of the calendar year, and, as mentioned in the November newsletter, the end of my tenure at UIS are all rapidly approaching. There is much for you and I to get done in just a short period of time. Let's discuss yours first.



If you are completing your studies at UIS this month, you will want to make sure that ISS is aware of your plans. Those might include starting a new course of study either at UIS or at another school, applying for post-completion OPT, seeking a Change of Status with USCIS, or just spending a little time with family or friends before returning to your home country. You have a grace period of 60 days within which to take action on one of these. Contact us if you have any questions. We wish you the very best whatever your plans may include.

If you will be continuing with us next semester, you will want to register for your classes as soon as possible. Some of those are already filling quickly. If you are traveling outside the US during the break, see the travel page on our website for guidance regarding your documents and be sure to plan your return date before the start of classes. If next semester is your final term and you will need less than a full course load to finish your program of study, make sure that you log into iStart and request the Reduced Course Load approval prior to the start of classes.

If the spring term will be your first term at UIS, you should be confirming your arrival (via iStart), making your housing arrangements, purchasing your tickets, etc. There is an entire page on our website specifically designed to assist you with everything that needs to be done prior to your arrival. Check that out and get moving on some of those items. Orientation is on January 9, and the 8th is the last day that Customs and Border Protection should admit you to the US. We have a lot of important information and activities planned for you and look forward to meeting you at New International Student Orientation.

My own plans for my upcoming retirement include catching up on some much-needed sleep, returning to some beloved hobbies, working on some home projects, and spending some time with family. Having worked with university students for the past 45 years, I will most definitely miss the vitality and energy that you and your predecessors have brought to my work. I have come to consider many of you lifelong friends. My one request of you is that you support my colleagues and my successor in their efforts to strengthen international education in general and the programs at UIS in particular.

See you around town,

*Rick Lane*



# STAFF

## DIRECTOR,

- Rick Lane  
(He/Him)

## IMMIGRATION SPECIALISTS:

- Tracy Rakes  
(She/Her)
- Jolene Vollmer  
(She/Her)
- Rachael Matingi  
(She/Her)
- Joel Short  
(He/Him)

## PROGRAM COORDINATOR

- Erika Suzuki  
(She/Her)

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

- Musa Baldeh

## STUDENT EMPLOYEES

- Mariam Abdulsalam
- Sai Pratyush Danthala



**Walk-In Hours: Monday-Thursday 2:00-4:00pm**



**University Plaza, UHB 1006**



**217-206-6678**



**ISS@uis.edu**

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





## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

My name is Airi Kawakita, and my pronouns are she/her.

I'm from Japan, an island country in East Asia. Since 75% of the country is mountainous and we have four seasons, you can enjoy beautiful nature throughout the year in Japan. As an island country, seafood is popular throughout Japan as you may know Sushi and fish roe.

However, we also have high-quality meat like Wagyu, various vegetables, and delicious rice so that you can enjoy a wide range of Japanese food. My favorite food is Karaage, which is a Japanese fried chicken so please try it if you visit Japan! The country has a long history, dating back approximately 2,700 years, and we have many traditions and historical heritages, such as the Samurais, Ninjas, Kabuki, and Sumo. Also, Japanese pop culture, such as anime, manga, and video games, has been noticed recently.

I am an exchange student from Saitama University and will be staying at UIS for one year before returning to Japan after the next semester. My major is sociology. While here I have learned deeply about cultural anthropology. I wanted to experience real culture rather than just studying textbooks in my homeland. Here, at the University of Illinois Springfield, there are few Japanese students but a lot of international students so I can learn a lot of different cultures and experience many things. Although my future job is still undecided, I want to learn more about international cultures and work in an international field.

My experience in the U.S. so far has been great. There are so many things that cannot be seen in Japan, and I love everything about it—the beautiful scenery and buildings, delicious food, and kind people. As this was my first experience leaving my family and home country, and I lacked confidence in my English skills, I felt nervous at first. However, everyone helped me and took care of me a lot so I rarely had a hard time. I can't believe I have already spent almost half of my time as an exchange student at UIS. I am truly glad to be here, and these experiences will remain precious memories for me.

For new students, I recommend participating in as many events as possible, talking to various people, and embracing all experiences. Time flies, so make the most of it and enjoy every moment!



Mount Yōtei in Hokkaidō, Japan



## UIS Students Participate in 'Travel Around the World' Event



As part of celebrations marking the International Education Week, students from the UIS participated in the 'Travel Around the World' event in Illini Union, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

The students, led by Erika Suzuki, the Program Coordinator of the Office of International Student Services, had the opportunity to engage in a variety of educational, cultural, and recreational activities, organized in collaboration with student groups, centers, colleges, units, and local partners. The goal of these activities is to highlight the diverse international education opportunities and resources available within our community, fostering greater awareness and engagement.





## Athlete of the Month

My name is Edoardo Matteo Pinna.  
I am from Rome, Italy. I play soccer as a goalkeeper.

I chose soccer because it has always been my passion. I started playing at a very young age and quickly fell in love with the unique role of the goalkeeper. While most kids preferred to play as forwards or attackers, I was drawn to the risks and challenges of being a goalie. I enjoyed the responsibility, the thrill of making decisive saves, and the fearlessness required to dive and jump. From the beginning, I knew I wanted to be a goalkeeper, and I've been playing in professional academies since I was 8 years old, fully committed to this position.



Our journey in the GLVC tournament ended in the quarterfinals with a goal in extra time, leaving us with a bitter sense of disappointment. While we had the quality to perform better during the regular season, we truly deserved more in that final game.



I played at a high level in Italy and came close to signing a professional contract while playing for Lazio. Later, I joined a fourth-division first team while also pursuing my education. Despite having the prospect of becoming a professional player, I never abandoned my studies. After a few years of not securing a contract, I had the opportunity to come to Springfield, combining my academic and athletic paths. I took this opportunity to study for an MBA after earning a BA in Sociology.

Soccer, even though I didn't turn professional, gave me the chance to travel across the world, meet new people, and invest in my future. Now, I aim to integrate my sociological and cultural background with my MBA and marketing studies to build a strong foundation for my career.



# WORLD CELEBRATIONS

December 3rd

International Day of Persons with Disabilities



December 4th

World Wildlife Conservation Day



December 5th

International Volunteer Day



December 21st

Winter Solstice



December 25th

Christmas







## Sprintax Webinar Series 2024/2025 Season (EAP)

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### Sprintax Nonresident Tax Webinars (EAP)

In these webinars, international students, scholars and professionals will be run through everything they need to know about nonresident tax for the 2024 tax season. Topics will include who must file, tax residency, FICA, State returns, implications of misfiling as well as how to use Sprintax to prepare a compliant tax return.

- **Tuesday, November 26th @ 12pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Wednesday, December 11th @ 1pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Thursday, January 23rd @ 12pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Thursday, February 6th @ 11am EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Wednesday, February 26th @ 12pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Tuesday, March 11th @ 2pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Thursday, March 27th @ 1pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Thursday, April 3rd @ 1pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Thursday, April 10th @ 2pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Monday, April 14th @ 11am EST** – [Register here](#)

### OPT Webinars – Sprintax Nonresident Tax Overview for OPT/CPT (E)

Topics covered will include residency for tax purposes, tax liabilities when on OPT/CPT and pre-employment tax forms when on OPT/CPT. The Sprintax team will also provide an overview of Sprintax Forms which can be used to prepare your pre-OPT/CPT employment tax documents.

- **Tuesday, November 19th @ 12pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Wednesday, December 11th @ 1pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Tuesday, January 21st @ 1pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Wednesday, February 26th @ 2pm EST** – [Register here](#)
- **Thursday, March 27th @ 12pm EST** – [Register here](#)



## Announcement of IEW Trivia Quiz Winners

The Office of International Student Services is pleased to announce the winners of the International Education Week (IEW) Online Trivia Quizzes. Below are the names of the students and their scores:

Name	Total points
● Esther Darkwah	49
● Sudip Kumar Shrestha	49
● Sharanya Mysore Shivalinge Gowda	48
● Camille Terre	47
● Alice Abegunde	46
● Sree Lekha Kolla	46

The competition, which lasted from November 18th to the 22nd, challenged participants' knowledge of flags, geography, food, and tourist attractions of countries around the globe. All seven highest scorers will be awarded gifts.

The aims are to prepare Americans for a global environment and to attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences.



Monday, Nov. 18 – Friday, Nov. 22  
**IEW Online Trivia Quizzes**  
 International Student Services  
 Online on Campus Announcement daily

Monday, Nov. 18  
**International Admissions 101**  
*Time: 11 a.m.*  
 Office of Admissions - Online

Monday, Nov. 18  
**IEW 2024 Kick-Off Table session**  
*Time: Noon – 4 p.m.*  
*Union North Entrance Tables*  
 International Student Services

Tuesday, Nov. 19  
**Travel around the World in UIUC**  
*10 a.m. – 4 p.m. • UIUC*  
 International Student Services

Wednesday, Nov. 20  
**Badminton Tournament**  
*8:30 p.m. • TRAC*  
 Campus Recreation

Thursday, Nov. 21  
**15 Ways to Say “Hello”**  
*10 a.m. – 1 p.m.*  
*Union North Entrance Tables*  
 International Student Services

Friday, Nov. 22  
**Thanksgiving Luncheon**  
*Noon – 1 p.m. • Union Ballroom*  
 International Student Services

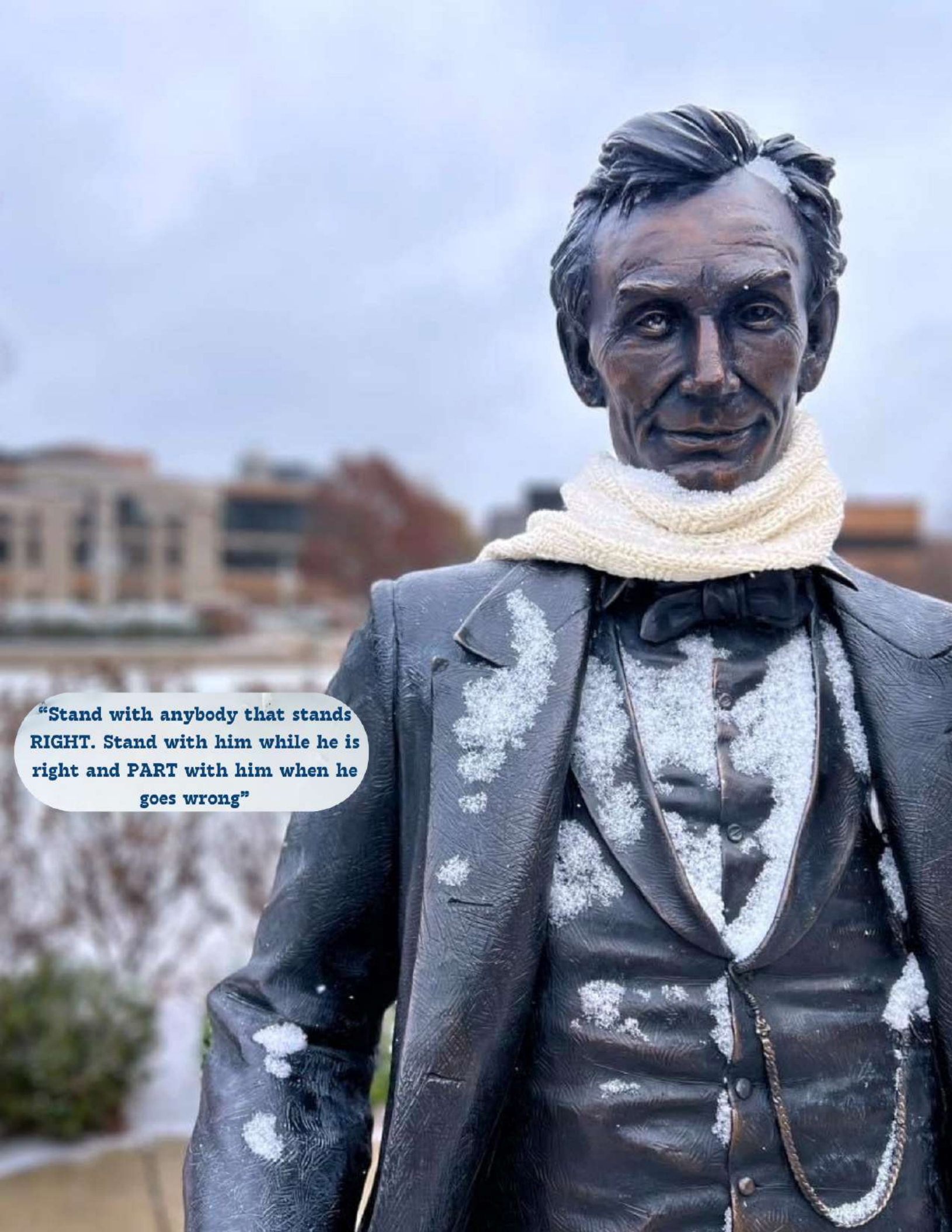
Friday, Nov. 22  
**Accents and Acceptance:**  
*6–7:30 p.m. • Brookens Auditorium*  
 A documentary film spotlighting the communication experience of international students in UIS during acculturation.  
 Film producer: Bwayisak Tanko  
 UIS School of Communication and Media under the supervision of Dr. Kathy Novak



Visit [IEW.State.gov](http://IEW.State.gov) | #IEW2024







**“Stand with anybody that stands  
RIGHT. Stand with him while he is  
right and PART with him when he  
goes wrong”**