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## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

November has arrived, and with it changes in the weather and the countdown to the end of the term.

Enjoy the warm days when they come as they will become less and less frequent. Make preparations for the winter, including all the immigration-related matters that lie ahead.

If this is your final term in your current program of study, you will want to apply for OPT, gain admission to a new program of study, apply for a change of status, or enjoy your 60-day grace period while you prepare to return to your home country. Check with ISS if you are uncertain about what steps to take related to any of these.

If you will be continuing at UIS in the spring and plan to travel outside the US during the break, you will want to register for your spring classes right away, check all your immigration documents, and make sure that the travel endorsement on page 2 of your current form I-20 is still valid.

There are still number of programming events coming up in what remains of the semester. Don't miss the American History trip to St. Louis on November 15, the International Education Week activities November 18-22, and the Thanksgiving Luncheon on November 22. These will all fill up quickly, so be sure to sign up as soon as registration opens.

On a personal note, I wanted to let all of you know that I will be retiring at the end of the current calendar year. I have been working with students in one capacity or another throughout my entire adult life and will very much miss the vibrancy that you and all those who have come before you have contributed to my personal journey. I am confident that the many international students who I have had the pleasure of knowing over so many years, and yes, generations, have collectively contributed to the betterment of our country and the world as a whole. It has been a great ride!

As I take my leave, others will step in to continue to provide you with the support that you need and deserve. A search is already underway for the next ISS director, and I am sure that there will be opportunities for you to meet the finalists for the position soon. If you have questions to ask of the candidates, please make an effort to be present in the open sessions. You can play an important role in the selection process.

Best,

*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 Bwayisak Tanko Maiyaki, and my pronouns are she/her. I'm from Nigeria, the most populous Black nation on earth. Nigeria is incredibly rich in cultural diversity, with over 300 tribes and languages spoken within the country.

While we have hundreds of native languages, English is the official language. The most widely spoken native languages are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, and Nigerian Pidgin English, which connects people from different regions.

I am currently a master's student in the School of Communication and Media at the University of Illinois at Springfield. I earned my undergraduate degree in Mass Communication from Madonna University in Nigeria. When I decided to further my studies abroad, America was my first and only choice due to its high educational standards and flexible learning environment. My interest in communication has always been strong I'm fascinated by the science and art involved in effective communication. So, choosing communication as my field of study for my master's degree was an easy decision.

Interestingly, I initially had a list of schools I was considering. But one day, while scrolling on Instagram, I saw an ad from the University of Illinois at Springfield. The post highlighted UIS as an inclusive environment with small classes, and when I researched further, I discovered the GPSI program. At that moment, I knew UIS was the right fit for me.

I aspire to be a film producer, scriptwriter, and public speaker who tells stories that illuminate our shared human experiences and interconnectedness and navigating intercultural communication.

I have been working on a documentary film called the "Accents and Acceptance" which explores the communication experiences of international students from Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East as they navigate acculturation. The documentary sheds light on the challenges, stress, and misunderstandings involved in intercultural communication and highlights how these students work to communicate effectively in their host communities.

My experience in the United States has been a roller coaster of emotions. Some days, I feel on top of the world, while other times, I struggle with a sense of not fully fitting in due to cultural differences and unfamiliar communication styles. However, my professors, supervisor, colleagues, and the staff and students I've met have been incredibly warm, kind, and supportive, making the integration process smoother for me.

Despite their efforts, there are moments when I still feel somewhat out of place. But regardless of my feelings on any given day, I consciously view my experience with optimism, embracing each challenge as part of the journey.

There will be days when you feel like quitting. On those days, remind yourself that you are not alone. Millions of international students have faced similar challenges, and those who persevere have their success stories to tell.

If you're hesitant to approach people from different cultures, take a small step outside your comfort zone; it will only get easier from there.



## International Students Visit Forest Park



**More than 30 international students from UIS visited the famous Forest Park in Saint Louis, Missouri on Friday, the 17th of November 2024.**

**The visit is an annual activity spearheaded by Erika Suzuki, the Program Coordinator of the Office of International Student Services, designed to enhance the experiences of international students.**

**During the visit, the students also took time to tour the Saint Louis Zoo, which houses hundreds of animal species, and the historic Saint Louis Art Museum, where they could view thousands of objects from across different cultures and regions of the world.**



## Athlete of the Month

Camille Terre and my pronouns are she/her.  
I am from Annecy, France.

My sport is running! I used to be a 100 and 200 sprinter, but now I'm into the 400 and 800. I also ran 6km cross-country races during the season.

Running was not my favorite sport when I was younger. I used to ski and swim a lot when I was little, then I started triathlon. When I had to move house, there were no sports teams except athletics. At the time, my coaches told me I had this "little nice thing" for sprinting, and I really enjoyed working on the start and speed parts. I was able to rank in the top 150 French sprinters in the 100m and 200m in 2019.



The cross-country season is over! The boys placed 3rd in the conference championships and the girls 4th. The top 7 girls and boys raced at Lewis last Saturday at regionals. Now, everyone will start preparing for the indoor track season, where everyone can race their own specialty.

I would like to stay in the sport professionally speaking. After having been a volunteer at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, I really want to be part of the preparations for this type of international event. I would like to join the Olympic committee, or an international federation (either athletics, swimming or skiing).

# WORLD CELEBRATIONS

November 1st

All Saints' Day



November 11th

Veterans Day



November 17th

International Students' Day



November 25th

International Day for the Elimination of all Violence Against Women



November 28th

Thanksgiving Day



University of Illinois at Springfield  
School of Communication and Media Studies

*presents*

A documentary film by Bwayisak Tanko

DIRECTED  
BY BWAYISAK  
TANKO

SUPERVISED  
BY DR. KATHY  
NOVAK

# ACCENTS AND ACCEPTANCE

6:00 P.M. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2024

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD BROOKENS AUDITORIUM  
(ONE UNIVERSITY PLAZA, ONE WILLIAM MAXWELL LN, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703)



# International Education Week

November 18–22, 2024



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS | SPRINGFIELD

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



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

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### Sprintax Nonresident Tax Webinars (EAP)

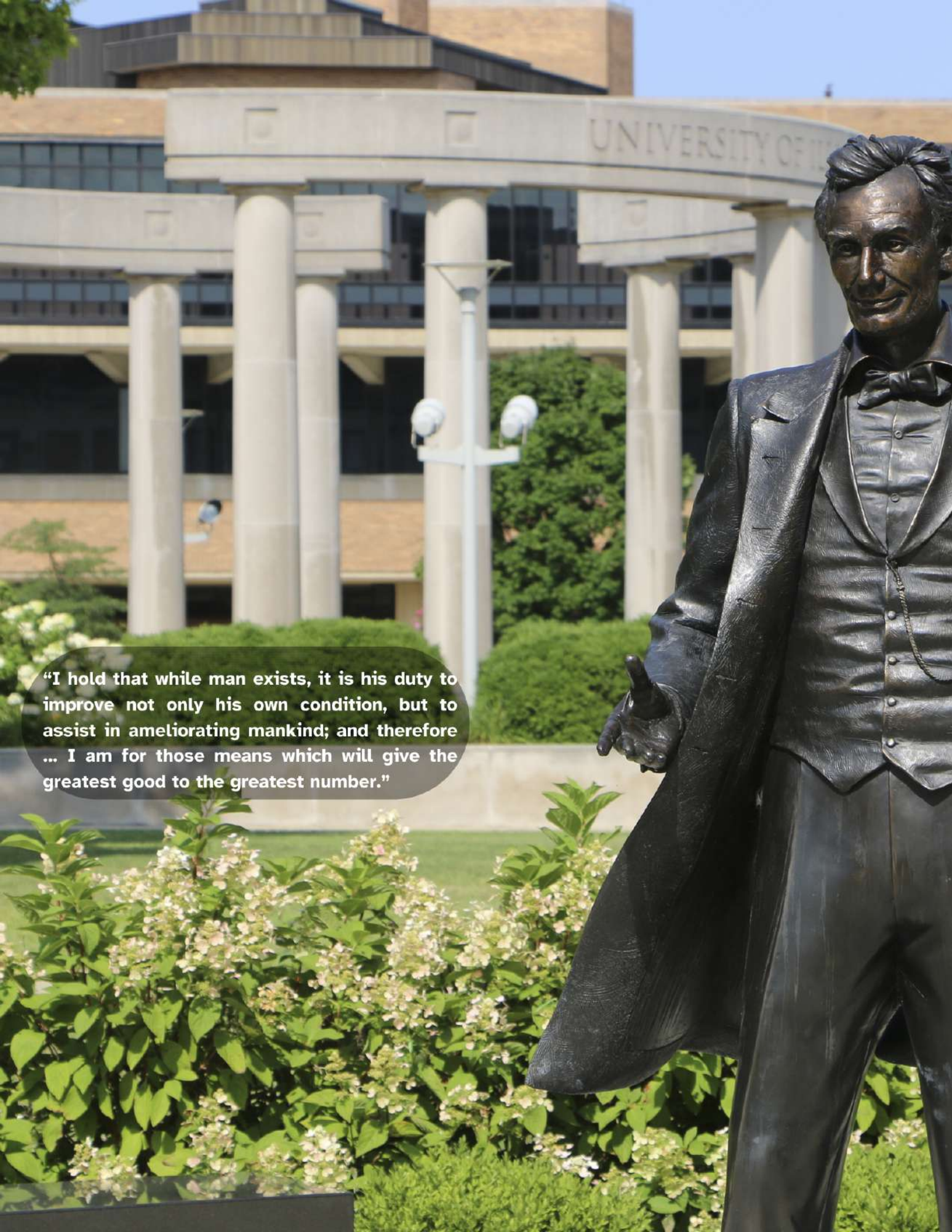
In these webinars, international students, scholars and professionals will be run through everything they need to know about nonresident tax for the 2024 tax season. Topics will include who must file, tax residency, FICA, State returns, implications of misfiling as well as how to use Sprintax to prepare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



**"I hold that while man exists, it is his duty to improve not only his own condition, but to assist in ameliorating mankind; and therefore ... I am for those means which will give the greatest good to the greatest number."**