ISSS35 & ISSSTRAINS

2019-2020 Activities Report





Table of Contents

3	Mission
4	Letter from the Director
6	Impact
8	ISSS35 Highlights
12	ISSSTRAINS Highlights
14	Pivot to Virtual
16	Goals for 2020-2021
17	Partnerships
19	Staff

Our Mission

International Student and Scholar Services is committed to providing culturally sensitive services of the highest quality. We strive to create an environment that is conducive to a successful educational, personal, and professional experience. We serve our international population and campus units through advising, immigration services, programming, advocacy, and outreach.













Letter from the Director



ISSS35 and ISSS TRAINS are two initiatives we're very proud of at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), and this publication highlights the work done in these two programs in the 2019-2020 academic year. Of course, it's hard to review 2019-2020 without acknowledging the huge shift in university life caused by the global pandemic, but as I hope you will see in this publication, despite a mostly remote staff and despite a cancellation of in-person events, the engagement and commitment of our students, scholars and campus partners remained strong. We were able to find news ways to connect

and demonstrate that even during such unprecedented times, ISSS would continue to provide ways to grow the international experience on campus.

ISSS35

ISSS35 was developed in 2016 as a commitment from ISSS to the international population of the campus that programming would remain a priority for the office and the university. Regardless of how many resources were needed to be committed to ever changing immigration and visa issues, ISSS would not lose sight of the fact that our students and scholars are here for a fully rounded international educational experience, and that means social and cultural events that enhance both the campus and the student experience. The name comes from the 35 weeks of the Fall and Spring semesters, demonstrating we will have 35 weeks of programming year-round.

Although the programming we do continues to evolve, the ideas we built ISSS35 on remain consistent. Create programs that meet clearly defined goals. No programming for programming's sake; instead, programming that is wanted by our international population. Standardized evaluations and marketing. These things continue to remain at the core of ISSS35 as we try to provide programming that is unique. Uniquely engaging, uniquely stimulating, uniquely Illinois.

ISSSTRAINS

ISSS TRAINS is a newer initiative that was created from the desire of our wonderful colleagues around campus to learn more about our international population so they could serve them better. ISSS saw this need on campus, and we created a training series that encompasses workshops, student and scholar panels, and coaching to build the global skills that lead to more effective and enjoyable intercultural communication. This involves blending intercultural theory and international experience to help our colleagues grow their global competence as they serve our diverse, international populations.

These two initiatives have succeeded because three different groups of people come together to make it work. Firstly, the ISSS staff, who happily and eagerly give up evenings and weekends to create the programs you'll see listed in this publication. Secondly, our campus partners who collaborate on so many of these events and enthusiastically promote them. But thirdly, and most importantly, our international students and scholars who participate in the programs, assist with our trainings, and tell us what services they want to see from ISSS. This highlights a wonderful aspect of Illinois culture — faculty and staff, students and scholars, all coming together to create something amazing.

Thank you to everyone involved in the training, events and programs highlighted in this publication. We look forward to working with both you and new partners in the coming year!

Martin McFarlane

Director, International Student and Scholar Services

Impact

37 ISSSTRAINS programs in 2019-2020

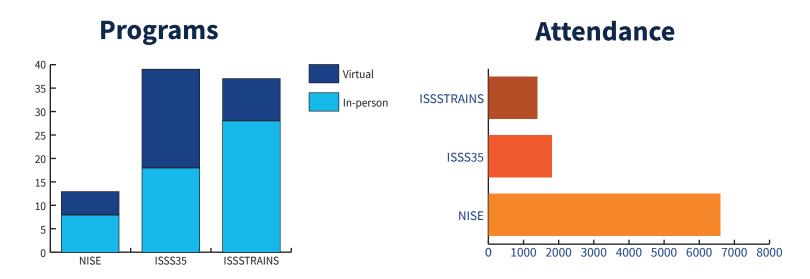
28 in-person & 9 virtual TRAINS programs

1,387 total attendance for ISSSTRAINS

26 in-person & 26 virtual ISSS35 programs

8,403 total attendance for ISSS35

Impact







ISSS35 is an all-encompassing series of programs addressing four distinct areas: Uniquely Global, Uniquely USA, Uniquely Illinois, and the New International Student Experience. All events include cultural exchange and educational themes for the purpose of enriching the international student and scholar experience at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. There were **26** in-person and **26** virtual programs with a total attendance of **8,403**.

Categories & Objectives



Uniquely Global

These programs highlight the internationalized experience of life at the university. Linguistic, cuisine, cultural, and educational events foster intercultural exchange through mutual understanding and respect.



Uniquely USA

These programs provide opportunities to learn about different aspects of "U.S." culture. Events include lifestyle outings, sporting events, recreational activities, meeting local organizations, and history.



Uniquely Illinois

These programs connect and engage with the campus and surrounding community to enrich connections and networks. Events include athletic spectatorship, local festivals, nature hikes, and community service.



New International Student Experience (NISE)

NISE introduces new students to campus by providing opportunities to meet other new students through informative events focusing on immigration policy, campus resources, student support services, and fun social events.

We kicked-off the academic year with great opportunities to engage in-person. With our campus partners, we welcomed 3,360 new international students in Fall 2019. Our events saw record-breaking attendance, with 1,400 students attending orientation and 1,500 students and family members gathering at the Memorial Stadium New International Student Welcome.

One standout Uniquely USA program was the Indiana Dunes camping trip. 34 international students and several staff from ISSS and other units ventured to the shores of Lake Michigan for a quintessential "American" camping experience. Students bonded across cultural differences, slept in tents, and told ghost stories around the campfire.

Indiana Dunes Camping Trip





Another highlight of Fall 2019 was the first ever Homecoming Global Talent Show in October 2019, a Uniquely Global program. This was also the first time that the campus had an intentionally international event during the annual homecoming celebration.

One attendee reported that the showcase of talent from our international student population was fun and refreshing, because it spotlighted the diverse talents of our diverse international students. Piano, dance, beatboxing, singing, magic, and more. This was truly a night to remember!

Global Talent Show











ISSS hosted the annual Indoor World Cup again this year. The world cup includes teams for different nations that come together to play indoor soccer.

Another event for students was Travel Around the World. Travel Around the World is an interactive experience that promotes cross-cultural understanding and engagement. Each "traveler" that enters the event will receive an Illinois travel ticket on which they can collect stamps as they navigate cultural destination booths designed by University of Illinois students from across the globe.

Travel Around the World

Indoor World Cup







ISSSTRAINS

ISSSTRAINS builds the capacity of our campus partners to welcome and serve international students and scholars in culturally appropriate and effective ways. We offer intercultural communication training, focusing on accessible and broadly applicable knowledge, skills, and attitudes. We also brought together student and scholar panels through our Intercultural Spotlight Series.

ISSSTRAINS had **37** programs during academic year. There were **28** in-person programs and **9** virtual with a total attendance of **1,387**.

Categories & Objectives



Training Workshops

Participants leave our interactive workshops with the intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to succeed on diverse teams as they serve our international population.



Intercultural Spotlight

Through this series, participants hear directly from international students and scholars about their home countries, cultures, family dynamics, education systems, their university experience, and more.



Global Competence Coaching

We work with participants to assess individual and team global competence, provide custom development plans, and work with teams as they build new habits and systems of intercultural communication.

ISSSTRAINS

During the New International Student Experience in August 2019, we focused our ISSSTRAINS efforts on building the capacity of campus partners to welcome new international students and scholars. We worked with two large campus units, Dining Services and Campus Recreation, to train their staff to provide just-in-time training for their employees. At one point, this meant there were four simultaneous intercultural communication trainings, and we were able to reach **656** participants across nine events in the first three weeks of August.

In Fall 2019, ISSS hosted three ISSSTRAINS panels. These were Intercultural Spotlights: Understanding Students and Scholars from Nigeria, India, and China (pictured below).

Intercultural Spotlight Series



Pivot to Virtual

As we pivoted in Spring 2020, we began to focus heavily on intercultural connections in virtual environments. We offered several orientation presenter preparation sessions and worked with several units to offer training on intercultural communication and presentation skills, cultural considerations in the virtual environment, and more. We were proud to see the efforts of our campus partners pay off, as their slides become clearer and easier to read, they chose their words more intentionally, and they honed their content to communicate more clearly to students.

ISSS35

In Spring and Summer 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged us to re-imagine inperson programs. We introduced several new virtual programs, trainings, and orientation events based on the feedback of our international community gathered at our Virtual Town Hall. ISSS hosted online social events as a way to create an opportunity for the university community to get together and learn about various topics. The *Never Have I Ever* watch party provided an opportunity to have timely conversations around adaptability and assimilation, expectations, the model minority myth, adjusting to American culture and how culture plays a role in discussions about sex, race and colorism. Museum Tour Tuesday gave an opportunity to discuss art and culture via virtual museum tours.

ISSSTRAINS

In Fall 2019, ISSS hosted three ISSSTRAINS panels. These were Intercultural Spotlights: Understanding Students and Scholars from Nigeria, India, and China. Pivoting to virtual in Spring 2020 actually *increased* attendance and engagement at these events. In April, we put the spotlight on students and scholars from Iran, Brazil, and South Korea. Panelists shared their personal stories about life in their home country, coming to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and what their experiences have been like since arriving.

Virtual Programs







LEBANON: WEDNESDAY 10/21 CAMEROON: THURSDAY 10/22 COLOMBIA: FRIDAY 10/23

LOG IN EACH DAY FROM 3PM TO 430PM FOR A PANEL FROM EACH COUNTRY DISCUSSING LIFE, CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND MORE!
REGISTER: GO.ILLINOIS.EDU/SPOTLIGHTS

ISSS PRESENTS

Virtual Coffee Hour

an open forum for international students

Join ISSS staff, other campus partners, and fellow Illini from around the world for an informal coffee hour.

Bring your own coffee or tea (optional!), questions for us, and ideas for coping in this new environment!

Champaign 9:00 am London 3:00 pm Cairo 4:00 pm

Delhi 7:00 pm Beiiing 10:00 pm

Seoul 11:00 pm

Register here: https://go.illinois.edu/ issscoffeehour

more info:

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nternational Student & Scholar Services

Goals for 2020-2021

Uninterrupted Service to Our Campus & Community

We will continue to provide culturally sensitive services of the highest quality to students, scholars, University staff, and the community. The need for engaging programs and transformative training has not diminished, nor has our commitment to provide them.

Fresh & Innovative Programs

We will continue to innovate in virtual training and programming, multiplying our reach and our impact through live virtual events, social media, and video.

Increased Impact in the Field

We will share best practices for programs and training at regional and national conferences.







Partnerships

ISSS is proud to have partnered with so many amazing campus units over the past year. We may not be able to list everyone, but here are a few highlights. A very special thanks to:

David Chih, Yun Shi, and everyone at the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, especially International Education and the Asian-American Cultural Center. This past year would not have been the same without Interconnect, in partnership with the Counseling Center! We loved partnering with GLOBE: Global Leaders Orange and Blue Engagement, iCU and Global Engagement Lounge, and even weekend-long overnight educational trips.

Dr. Parker, Dr. Ogbudimkpa, and everyone at McKinley Health Center, especially Health Education and Special Populations. It was a pleasure collaborating to improve the health and wellbeing of our students and scholars at Weathering the Winter, Orientations, and more.

Mike Doyle, Kasey Umland, Cynthia Markstahler, and all our friends at the University YMCA. International Dinner remains one of our favorite events. It truly is a joy to work with your staff, volunteers, and volunteer chefs to welcome and serve a truly global dinner to our friends and neighbors from the Champaign-Urbana area.

Ted Beranek, Lori Holmes, and everyone at the Illini Union who make New International Student Fun Night such a blast! Was packing 900 new students into the Illini Union Recreation Room a good idea? Absolutely it was. Thanks for hosting a night of welcome, socializing, networking, and just plain fun.

Josh Whitman, Cassie Arner, DJ Taylor, and their teams in the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA). Host nearly 1,500 new international students and their families at Memorial Stadium? Check. Make Grange Grove *the* place to be for international students on Homecoming? Check. In these and many other ways, DIA gave a warm welcome to our international students.

Partnerships

Corey Thoss, Lisa Jackson, Jim Fry, Curtis Johnson, and their team of dozens of Orientation Leaders. They train all spring semester to welcome new students to campus in summer and fall, and we are proud to partner with them to help new international undergraduate students transition to their new home at the University.

Marcus Jackson, Alana Harris, Ella Bailey, Jake Benjamin, Cherise Marks, and the rest of the outstanding staff Campus Recreation. They proved to be gracious hosts for our new international students and scholars. They showed their commitment to making a place for everyone at Campus Rec ever day, but especially in partnering with ISSS to have Campus Rec staff offer ISSSTRAINS intercultural training to hundreds of student workers.

Un Yeong Park and his fellow servant-leaders at the Career Center. Tireless, enthusiastic, Un Yeong and his colleagues demonstrate a passion for helping international students succeed. ISSS appreciates our collaboration on Intercultural Spotlights, International Illini Networking in Chicago, and many other programs!

Joe Lenkart and all the libraries and librarians dedicated to helping international students and scholars make our university a leading global research institution. International Student Research Connection, library tours at every orientation, and intercultural training opportunities highlight the commitment of our libraries to international student success.

The work of ISSS is always a partnership as we support our international students, scholars, and dependents in meeting their academic, professional, and personal goals at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Thanks to everyone in our community who join us in this work. We truly could not do it without you!

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