

ISSS35 & ISSSTRAINS

2020 - 2021 Activities Report



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International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) 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 ISSSTRAINS are two initiatives we continue to be proud of at International Student and Scholar Services, and this publication highlights the work done in those two areas during the 2020-2021 academic year. This academic year saw us continue the pivot to virtual programming and training that had been started in the previous year necessitated by the global pandemic. However, despite an entirely remote staff, the engagement and commitment of our students, scholars and campus partners remained strong. We were able to demonstrate that even when we cannot be physically together, ISSS would continue to provide ways to grow the international experience on campus. We

recognize that due to the virtual nature of the last academic year that this publication will contain fewer photos and images than previous years. After all, there are only so many screenshots you can see before they all run together! However, the content remains the key to the success of these programs, and we are proud of what we were able to facilitate.

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 it. 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, and *uniquely Illinois*.

Letter from the Director

Our cultural and social programming is complemented by **ISSSTRAINS**, a series of intercultural training workshops and sessions 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. ISSSTRAINS 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, Assistant Director for Training and Programs Nicholas Dunn and 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 and we look forward to working with both you and new partners in the coming year!

Martin McFarlane

Director, International Student and Scholar Services

Impact

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, ISSS was able to maintain a robust offering of programs with great attendance in a primarily virtual environment. The NISE numbers in particular indicate a continued commitment to providing excellent transitional orientation services to incoming international students, even with significantly fewer numbers of students studying in-person.

21 ISSSTRAINS programs in 2020-2021

6 New International Student Experience events for 1,568 students

331 individuals trained through ISSSTRAINS

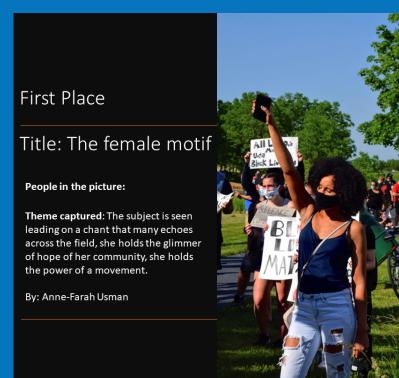
Impact

16 ISSS35 events in 2020-2021

598 total attendance for ISSS35 events

Pictured on right, the International Women's Day Photo Contest flyer and winning image from our collaboration with the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations and Women's Resources Center.





ISSS35

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 27 programs with a total attendance of 2,166 in 2020-2021.**

Categories & Objectives



UNIQUELY GLOBAL

These programs highlight the internationalized experience of life at the university. Linguistic, cuisine, cultural, and educational events foster inter-cultural 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.

ISSS35

ISSS collaborated with several campus offices and other universities in the Big 10 Academic Alliance to strengthen students' ties with each other in a time where it can be challenging to feel connected. A few of our stand-out programs include:

- American Football Watch Party, where students from B1G schools watched the Super Bowl live.
- Global Summer of Wellness, a joint initiative focusing on mental health and wellness.
- Global Film Series on "He Named Me Malala," featuring conversation with a social entrepreneur and a faculty member from the university.









ISSS35

Through the CU in the Kitchen series, ISSS joined local restaurant kitchens to learn about a signature dish. Students were encouraged to take on the challenge of recreating each dish in their own home. A big thanks to our participating chefs:

- Gayle Starks of Neil Street Blues, who taught us how to make chicken alfredo (top left).
- Zack Schweig from Hamilton Walker's, who taught us how to make penne seafood (top right).
- Mubanga Chanda from Stango Cuisine, who taught us how to make Nshima (bottom right).









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. **ISSSTRAINS** had 21 programs during the academic year with a total attendance of 331.

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 SPOTLIGHTS

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.

Unfortunately, due to the remote nature of the ISSSTRAINS programs, no photos are available this year.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to the new academic year, we look forward to the return of in-person programming, training, and events. In fact, we already have several programs in the works!

We know the need for engaging programs and transformative training has not diminished, nor has our commitment to provide them. ISSS looks forward to seeing you at one of our events soon!



Staff

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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.

Thank you to everyone in our community who join us in this work. We truly could not do it without you!



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