

I n t e r n a t i o n a l S t u d e n t a n d S c h o l a r S e r v i c e s

## Homecoming: A Fall Tradition

Melissa Chin

Every fall, alumni from across the United States return to their former academic institutions, also referred to as their “alma maters,” as part of a tradition that allows them to reconnect with their former classmates and professors while celebrating their school’s unique history. This tradition, known as “Homecoming,” serves as an opportunity for past and current students alike to bond over their shared school pride while also gathering at sports events to cheer their beloved school teams on to victory.

Although Homecoming is a popular event at both high schools and universities in the United States, university homecomings tend to operate on a larger scale and attract bigger crowds. The University of Missouri often receives credit for having the first Homecoming in 1911. This event, which invited alumni to “come home” to their alma mater to take part in a parade and watch the university’s football team compete against one of its biggest rivals, attracted over 9,000 spectators. The event’s unprecedented popularity quickly led to Homecoming becoming an annual celebration. Thousands of academic institutions across the nation have since adopted the practice of inviting their alumni back once a year to attend a parade and football game, among other games and school spirit-centered events. The University of Illinois is one of the institutions that proudly takes part in this tradition.

The 2015 University of Illinois Homecoming, which will take place from October 18-25, will be a week-long event celebrating generations of Illini Pride through a variety of activities that include everything from art exhibits and alumni lectures to award ceremonies and of course, sports. With a Parade and Pep Rally taking place on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 PM and with Football and Women’s Soccer games taking place on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM and 6:00 PM respectively, there will be plenty of opportunities for current and former Fighting Illini to come together and celebrate their love of orange and blue.

For a full list of Homecoming events, please see <http://homecoming.illinois.edu/>.



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# School Spirit in American Universities

Nick Dunn

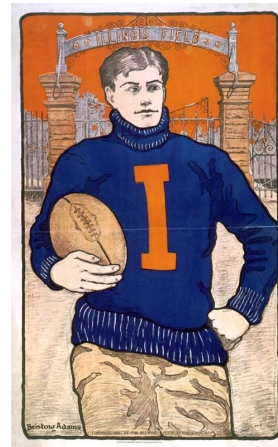
American schools are unique in many ways, particularly in school spirit. School spirit is a kind of feeling toward one's school, as well as a set of cultural practices peculiar to your school. While every school has its own identity, most American schools express school spirit.

School spirit is a kind of affection for the school and its sports teams, as well as one's classmates, alumni, and future generations of students. You can see examples of this at the University of Illinois. All around you everyday, people wear orange and blue to express their identification with and pride in the university. If this is your first autumn here, you may be surprised at the outpouring of support for Illini football and basketball, as the campus turns its attention entirely toward our teams, and tens of thousands of fans stream in from all over Illinois and beyond. School spirit also binds together past, present, and future students. The University of Illinois expresses this sentiment best in the inscription on the statue of our Alma Mater: "ALMA MATER, To thy happy children of the future, those of the past send greetings."

School spirit also describes a set of cultural practices that build on and foster love for one's school. Students, staff, and surrounding community members wear the university's colors, cheer the university's teams, and generally take pride in the accomplishments of the university (even if they have no direct personal part in them).

At sporting events, there are many well-choreographed expressions of school spirit. Cheerleaders lead all the Illini supporters in movements and chants. The student section, Block I, cheers and displays "card stunts," where they use different colored cards to spell out messages, or even create Illini-themed images. The marching band performs before the game and during half time with classic marching songs, special arrangements of modern songs, and of course school spirit songs. A perennial favorite played every game is March of the Illini:

We are marching for dear old Illini,  
For the men who are fighting for you.  
Here's a cheer for our dear Alma Mater,  
May our love for her ever be true.  
While we're marching along life's pathway,  
May the Spirit of old Illinois  
Keep us marching and singing  
In true Illini spirit  
For our dear old Illinois.



Want to learn more about American football and Illini spirit? Join us for Football 101 on Wednesday, September 16 at 6pm. The Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, International Student and Scholar Services, and Inclusive Illinois host this event at Memorial Stadium (just south of the ARC). We'll work with football staff and cheerleaders to practice our football skills, learn the traditions of Illini football, and even learn specific cheers to show our school spirit. See you there!

# The Season for Festivals!

Jennie Avery

## Sweet Corn Festival



CORN. Central Illinois is known for producing an impressive amount of it. Each year Champaign-Urbana celebrates the region's corn-growing prowess with a festival of corn. The Urbana Sweet Corn Festival features live music, food trucks, local artists selling their work and, of course, plenty of sweet corn slathered in butter to enjoy while you're there. This year's festival will be held on August 28-29 in downtown Urbana. For more information, please visit this [website](#).

## Sangamon River Music Festival

Another fun music festival held in the fall is the Sangamon River Music Festival in Mahomet. This two-day festival includes performances by a number of bands, alongside the Crafters' Village, carnival rides, and games. For more information, please visit this [website](#).



## C-U Oktoberfest

C-U Oktoberfest recreates a traditional German Oktoberfest celebration right here in Central Illinois! Come out and enjoy delicious German fare (pretzels, sausages, beer) while listening to live music! This event is also kid-friendly, with special activities designed for younger attendees from 3-5pm. The event will take place on October 10 from 3-11pm. Please visit the event's [Facebook page](#) for more information.



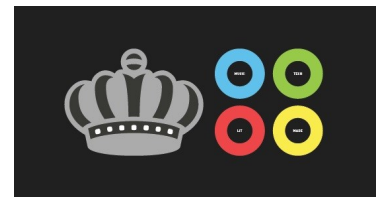
## ELLNORA Guitar Festival

The ELLNORA Guitar Festival, named for Ellnora Krannert who, together with her husband, Herman, founded the Krannert Center, is a celebration of music. It features musicians from around the world, and highlights the true spirit of the Krannert Center – a place to bring people together. The event's artistic advisor, David Spelman, refers to the festival as a "guitar summit on the prairie," and it is certain to be a fun-filled event, with outstanding performances, delicious foods, the chance to meet some of the artists, and an opportunity to relax and unwind. The ELLNORA Guitar Festival will be held at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts on September 10-12. For more information, please visit this [website](#).



## Pygmalion Music Festival

The Pygmalion Festival celebrates its 11<sup>th</sup> year in 2015 with various artists performing at venues all over the city. Pygmalion is not strictly a music festival, however, and includes a wide array of vendors, as well as presentations and panel discussions by technology industry VIPs and authors. This festival has something for everyone! Pygmalion Music Festival will be held on September 23-27. For more information, please visit this [website](#).



## ISSS Back-to-School Movie Picks

In honor of the beginning of the academic year, the ISSS staff share their favorite school-themed movies to help get you in the back-to-school spirit!

Afroza: *10 Things I Hate About You* - Set in a high school, this contemporary adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the perfect intersection of Shakespeare's classic work and modern-day romantic comedy.

Amira: *Grease* - The ultimate back to school movie. This movie has numerous fun and energetic elements such as dancing, singing, sports, and fashion. You think it can't get any better? It was originally performed on stage in Chicago, and was filmed there too! Go Illinois!

Helen: *Sky High* - Fantasy, fun - Kurt Russell is a superhero "The Commander" who is married to Kelly Preston "Jet Stream" and their son has no powers as of the first day of superhero high school. Love all of the different super powers!

Jennie: *Dead Poets Society* - Robin Williams plays an English teacher at a preparatory school for boys, and shows us the immense inspiration that teachers are capable of giving their students. Even though it is a bit dark, the movie succeeds in inspiring viewers to be true to themselves and seize the day.

Liz: *October Sky* - It was one of my favorite movies to watch when I was in high school. It's very uplifting and features a young Jake Gyllenhaal.

Martin: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* - A school themed movie? A professor on vacation returns to his school, where he is loved and respected, to discover new challenges awaiting for him. That fits this category, right?

Nick: *The Karate Kid* (1984) - No one sums up this martial arts film revolving around high school relationships better than noted film critic Barney Stinson: "The Karate Kid's a great movie. It's the story of a hopeful, young karate enthusiast whose dreams and moxie take him all the way to the All Valley Karate Championship. Sadly, he loses in the final round to the other kid. But he learns an important lesson about gracefully accepting defeat... I root for **the** karate kid, Johnny Lawrence from the Cobra Kai dojo."

Stephanie and Briaunna: *Mean Girls* - This is a great movie with a great cast. It's fun to watch Cady (played by Lindsay Lohan) try to take down Regina George (played by Rachel McAdams), the most popular girl in school. Also, the movie makes you think that for the most part, the popular people in school are usually the most ridiculous in many ways, and it's okay to not want to conform!

Will: *Lean on Me* - This movie is based on a true story, has vintage Morgan Freeman and the line "They used to call me Crazy Joe, now they call me BATMAN."



Have anything that you'd like to see in future Cultural Spotlight editions? Sports, holidays, local wildlife? Let us know! Email Jennie Avery at [jsavery@illinois.edu](mailto:jsavery@illinois.edu) with your suggestions for future content!