Another school year is underway, and the staff of ISS extends its best wishes to all members of the international community, both students and scholars.

Whether you are new to Purdue this fall or returning for another term, we’re glad you’re here and wish you every success as a member of the Boilermaker family!

If you are new to Purdue, I hope that you feel the initial transition to life here has gone well – that you are learning your way around and beginning to feel comfortable.

Please don’t hesitate to ask questions or ask for help if you need it. Your academic advisors, your major professor, and staff in your living facility are there to help you.

If you are not new to Purdue, please be aware of our new arrivals and think about your own experience. Do you remember your first few weeks in the States or at Purdue?

What questions did you have, and what challenges did you encounter? Did you find it easy to make friends and get to know your teachers, classmates or lab mates?

Remember your own first year, and then offer a word of welcome and encouragement to those who may be in a similar situation now.

For both new and returning students and scholars, I strongly encourage you to be intentional about making connections. Your time at Purdue is a rich opportunity to network, learn and grow both personally and professionally.

Research has shown that the connections you make now will greatly influence the trajectory of your life and career after you finish your college degree program.

Make it a personal goal to network with other students who are NOT from your country. Build friendships and connections with American students and other international students and then maintain those connections after you return home.

From personal experience, I can tell you that these relationships will become a rich resource in years to come.

Make the most of the friendship and networking opportunities you have before you this year. You’ll be glad you did!

Dr. Joe Potts,
Director of ISS

Traveling soon? Don’t forget your travel signature!

Be sure that your I-20 or DS-2019 has been signed within one year of the date that you plan to return to the US.

If it has not been signed, please visit ISS during walk-in hours to obtain a signature at least two weeks prior to your departure date.

You must bring your passport, visa and I-20 or DS-2019.

Our office is located in Schleman Hall, Room 136. See page 8 of the ISS Insider for a list of our office hours.

For more information about travel, visit the ISS website.
What are you doing for winter break?

Need something to do during the upcoming winter break? Here are some opportunities that might interest you:

Christmas International House

Christmas International House (CIH) is a national program that provides hospitality to international students during the Christmas holidays. It is an excellent way to leave your campus during winter break and see other parts of the United States and be hosted by an American family.

With Christmas International House, you can make friends with Americans and other international students, experience the celebration of Christmas with an American family, visit another region of the United States, and create a unique friendship and understanding between international students and the American community.

Keep in mind that this is not a time to meet with other friends outside the program or to take a tourist trip. Also, although programs are run by churches, proselytizing is not part of the CIH experience.

CIH is a peacemaking program, working to improve relations among peoples of the world and an outreach to the country’s new international visitors who would otherwise have no way to share in the holiday season.

If you participate, you will need to pay your way to the program. After you arrive, you will be the guest of the American community/family for two weeks, from December 18 through January 2.

Please note that Christmas International House is not affiliated with Purdue. If you are interested in participating, be sure to first read about the host organization on their website, where you can also find an application form:


Community Collaborations International

Community Collaborations International (CC International) organizes teams of volunteers from universities all over the country and puts them to work where they are needed most. Everyone does their part and lots of work gets done.

CC International provides volunteer opportunities for winter, spring, and summer breaks.

The volunteer organization has a variety of projects addressing issues such as homelessness, the environment, disaster relief, and early childhood education.

CC International takes care of food, lodging, tools, safety equipment, permits, and all project coordination, but there is usually a project service fee required to participate.

The organization was founded in 1994 and has managed over 5,000 volunteers.

Please note that CC International is not affiliated with Purdue. If you are interested in participating, be sure to first read about the organization on their website:

www.communitycollaborations.org

“As individuals, our impact is limited. When we pool our resources and work together, much can be accomplished.”

-CC International
Literacy software and other assistive technology help students reach academic goals

Reading and writing never came easily to Aimee Bjornstad during her college career. Visual field loss in her left eye made it difficult for her to follow line breaks in text books, and a head injury suffered as a teenager slowed her ability to recognize words.

But with help from ITaP’s Assistive Technology Center (ATC), Bjornstad didn’t allow her learning disabilities to stop her from accomplishing her goals. She used literacy software supported by the ATC to complete reading and writing assignments, graduating in the spring of 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in wildlife biology.

“I would not have succeeded to the degree that I have if assistive technology was not available to me,” Bjornstad says.

Bjornstad relied on applications such as Kurzweil 3000 and Read&Write GOLD, which feature text-to-speech tools that allow users to hear words as they appear on a computer screen. The auditory reinforcement helped Bjornstad nearly double her reading speed and identify errors in her writing.

“If I hear my writing, then I can recognize the mistakes,” Bjornstad says. “In a sense, having a software program that can read my work back to me is like having someone proofread by reading aloud.”

Read&Write GOLD, available to all faculty, staff and students with a Purdue career account, is one of the primary tools Bjornstad turned to for reading and writing assistance. The software, which opens as a movable desktop toolbar, boasts more than two dozen tools and video tutorials to help users study, write papers, and work with scanned documents, PDFs, websites and graphics.

The text-to-speech feature allows users to highlight sections within a document to be read back aloud, with control over speed, voice, pronunciation and translation.

Purdue users can access Read&Write GOLD for PCs or Macs (Purdue career account required) from any ITaP computer lab. Read&Write GOLD Web tools made for use via Web browsers anywhere, as well as on tablets and mobile devices, can be accessed using login information found on the ATC website.

Those familiar with the software say it is especially beneficial for people with disabilities that affect learning and for non-native English speakers, but can be helpful to anyone.

“Some people struggle with reading and writing but don’t necessarily get identified as a person with a learning disability,” ITaP assistive technology specialist David Schwarte says.

“Instead of a program that just fixes errors, the tools within Read&Write GOLD help students along the path of learning.”

Beyond literacy software, the ATC, located in Stewart Center, Room 111, is dedicated to supporting the Office of Institutional Equity’s mission and University compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act by helping students with all forms of disabilities access technology.

Software programs like JAWS, a screen reader, and Zoom Text Magnifier, a screen enhancer, provide benefits for people with visual impairments, while Naturally Speaking voice recognition software and alternative keyboards and pointing devices help students who have difficulty using a standard keyboard and mouse.

Many of these technologies are available at ITaP computer labs or can be made available on ITaP-supported computers upon request within 24 hours.

Promoting Web accessibility among faculty, staff and students is another initiative spearheaded by the ATC to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access online information, such as course material uploaded to Blackboard Learn.

Resources for creating accessible documents in compliance with Purdue’s Web accessibility policy are available at the Purdue Web Accessibility website, including tutorials on creating accessible Microsoft Office documents.

“When creating online documents for the classroom and audiences outside the University, it’s important that faculty and staff take into account people with disabilities,” ITaP assistive technology specialist Dean Brusnighan says.

“The resources listed on the Purdue Web Accessibility website provide tips and techniques faculty can use to improve the accessibility of documents as they are created.”

For more information on ATC services or to schedule a consultation on teaching students with disabilities and supporting access to information technology, send a message to atc-info@purdue.edu.

By: Jonathan Hines, ITaP
Global Fair at the Fountain

Around 900 international students, staff, and faculty members attended Global Fair at the Fountain. The event was held on Friday, August 16, and it was the culminating event of the ISS “Weeks of Welcome” for new incoming international students.

The Global Fair took place around the fountain at the Purdue Mall. This year, the fair featured a catered American barbeque meal, welcome speeches from ISS Director Joe Potts and Dr. Timothy Sands, performances by the Purdue Twirlers, and photo opportunities with Purdue Pete.

Community and campus organizations were at the fair, providing interested students with information about their groups. Students also had a blast in a big bounce house and a large inflatable obstacle course while listening to music from all around the world. The international music even inspired students to join together in dance.

International students had the opportunity to enter a raffle to win one of two bikes and a Purdue blanket.

The ISS Office offers a very big thank you to all student and community volunteers for making this year’s Global Fair at the Fountain a success!

All photos by Mark Hiew
Helpful Immigration Reminders

ISS would like to share some important information about upcoming deadlines and timely topics. Find out more below!

Remember to Update Your Local Address

Federal Regulations require ISS to provide the Department of Homeland Security with your current local address while you are attending Purdue University. You are required to update us with your local address within 10 days of any change. Failure to provide us with your local address is a violation of your status. Not sure how to update your address? Just follow the instructions below:

1. Log in to myPurdue (mypurdue.purdue.edu) using your username and password
2. Click the Need to Know tab
3. In the Quick Links box on the left side of the screen, click Addresses and Phones
4. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and select “Local” from the list of address types to the right of the word “Insert”
5. Enter your current local address, phone number, and the start date and end date of your current lease (You do not need to enter County information)
6. At the bottom of the screen, click Submit to save the information

Graduating in December?

**F-1 students** who have completed their academic program have a 60-day grace period to: change their education level, apply for OPT, change their status, transfer to another U.S. institution, or depart the U.S.

OPT applications must be received by the service center no later than 60 days after your program end date.

**NOTE:** International undergraduate students and international non-thesis option graduate students who applied for (or will be applying for) Optional Practical Training (OPT) based on completing a degree in December 2013, must complete all degree requirements by the end of the fall semester.

If you know or learn that you will not be receiving a passing grade in one or more courses, or will not be able to complete all degree requirements by the end of the semester, **be sure to speak to an immigration counselor in the ISS office before the end of the semester.**

Failure to do so may lead to your loss of legal nonimmigrant status and losing eligibility for the OPT.

**J-1 students** who have completed their academic program have a 30-day grace period to: change their education level, apply for Academic Training, change their status, transfer to another U.S. institution, or depart the U.S.

**NOTE:** Students in the J-1 program may matriculate to a higher degree level, but may not change to a lower degree level.
As part of the Perspectives and GO Purdue! programs, international students and scholars have many opportunities throughout each semester to get involved in the local culture and also explore some of the surrounding areas with fun and exciting trips.

This semester, students have already cruised on the Madam Carroll, tailgated at Purdue Football Homecoming, and visited Lake Michigan for GO Purdue! Trips.

Interested in visiting Chicago? We have a trip planned for October 12.

Check your email for information about purchasing tickets for upcoming events. GO Purdue! emails are sent out to students at the beginning of the month.

The Perspectives program is an informal, end-of-the week class, and is a chance to make new friends and explore a variety of cultural topics.

Perspectives meets at 4:30 on Friday afternoons, in different locations across campus. They occasionally enjoy trips into the community.

This semester they have already played ultimate Frisbee, listened to student experiences about studying abroad, toured Ross-Ade Stadium, visited a local apple orchard, and more!

Get on the email list for weekly reminders and locations by calling 765-494-5770 or emailing nancym@purdue.edu.

You can also join the group on Facebook by liking Purdue ISS Perspectives.


Above: Enjoying the evening on the deck of the Madam Carroll on Lake Freeman. The boat is considered Indiana’s largest inland vessel. Students and scholars relaxed on the large upper deck and enjoyed the beautiful scenery while cruising past lake homes and forests, listening to the music, chatting with friends, and watching other boats on the lake.

Above: Photos from the ISS Homecoming Tailgate Party hosted by Crosswalk Commons. Students enjoyed breakfast, learned the rules of football, practiced catching a pass, and went to the game together.

Upcoming Events:

10/11 Perspectives: Hayride and Harvest Party (at local farm)
10/12 GO Purdue! Trip to Chicago
10/18 Perspectives: Meet the Greeks
10/25 Halloween Party
11/15 Thanksgiving Dinner (at Campus House)
Quilting Around the World

Liz Semmel works in the International Students Scholars Office as a Information Specialist. She recently completed a quilt that now hangs in the lobby of the ISS office in Schleman Hall Room 136. The quilt features 9 different panels depicting various cities around the world. Find out more about Liz and the quilt below:

Q: What inspired you to make the quilt?
A: I’ve always loved sewing and quilting and when I saw there was a blank wall here in the office I thought it might be a good way to fill the spot. Besides, now that my kids are grown I don’t have anyone to sew for so I am always looking for projects to do!

Q: How did you decide which cities to feature?
A: I had a book of patterns to choose from and had several people here in the ISS office look through it to help select the cities. We wanted to have each continent represented, as well as the countries that have the most students here at Purdue.

Q: How long did it take you to finish the quilt?
A: It took me about 6 months, but I was also working on other things during that time. The sewing time on each block was approximately 24-36 hours depending on the complexity. That doesn’t count trips to the fabric store of course.

Q: How long have you been quilting?
A: I started sewing when I was in grade school and have been quilting for almost 30 years on and off. Since I liked to sew and had a lot of fabric scraps, learning to quilt was a natural step.

Q: How long have you been working at ISS?
A: I started working in ISS last December as temporary help and liked it so much I stayed. I’ve worked at Purdue for several years before working here, in Admissions and also in the Ag and Bio Engineering department and the Beck Center.

Q: What do you enjoy about working at ISS?
A: I love meeting people from all over the world. I think it would be very difficult to come to a new country and adapt to a new culture along with the pressures of school and understanding the immigration regulations, so I really admire the students we work with.

Q: Do you have any travel experiences you’d like to share?
A: Since my brother lives in Russia and my sister lives in Singapore, I have been able to visit them and see some other countries. I have a playing card collection and try to get a deck of cards from as many countries as possible when I travel.
International Students and Scholars

Schleman Hall, Room 136 ● 475 Stadium Mall Drive
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2050
Phone: 765-494-5770  Fax: 765-494-685
Business Hours: Monday through Friday*
8:00am—5:00pm
Phone Counselor: Monday through Friday*
8:00am—Noon and 1:00pm—5:00pm
Walk-In Hours: Monday through Friday*
9:00am—11:30am and 1:30pm—4:00pm
General Appointments: Call to schedule an appointment* (Thirty-minute face-to-face appointments with an Immigration Counselor)
*Counselors are not available on Thursday mornings.

This Issue’s Idiom: Straight From the Horse’s Mouth

Image of a horse

Meaning:
Information that comes from the highest authority, source, or origin.

If you get information straight from the horse’s mouth, you’re getting firsthand information that is credible, trustworthy, and reliable.

History:
Some say this idiom originated in the world of horse racing. While helping others make bets at the horse track, a tipster will recommend betting on the horse that he believes will likely win.

When one such tipster was asked if his prediction was reliable, he is reported to have said that he got his information straight from the horse’s mouth.

Since horses don’t speak, the tipster really meant that his prediction was based from information received by those closest to the horse such as the jockey or stable hand. Regardless, this helped assure bettors that his information was correct and from an inside source.

Examples:
“Are you sure soccer practice is cancelled?”
“Definitely, I heard it straight from the horse’s mouth.”

“There’s a rumor that we get extra credit for attending the event, but I won’t believe it until I get it straight from the horse’s mouth.”

***If you are interested in contributing to the ISS Insider, the official newsletter of the Office of International Students and Scholars, we want you! Please email lelacy@purdue.edu for more information.