

December 5, 2023



WINTER BREAK

Dear Highlanders,

We wish you all the best of luck on your final exams and research before the UCR winter break.

Don't forget to request a travel signature for your I-20 or DS-2019 if you have plans to travel internationally or near the Mexico/Canadian borders over the break.

Review our [travel information](#) before you go!

If you have time to do so over the break, we recommend checking out the historic Festival of Lights in downtown Riverside <https://www.riversideca.gov/fol/>.

We look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Winter Closure Dates: December 22nd - January 1st 2024

All offices and resources will be closed during these dates.

In case of an emergency, please contact the UC Campus Police at (951)-827-5222 or dial 911.

WE ARE MOVING!

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISS) will be moving to the second floor of the Student Services Building (SSB) in January, 2024. The official date is yet to be determined. Please continue to monitor your UCR email account for more information.

OPT FEE

OPT Processing Fee starting January 1st, 2024

Starting January 1, 2024, students who apply for OPT or the STEM OPT Extension will need to pay a processing fee of \$100 for the regular 12-month OPT and \$300 for the STEM OPT Extension. This fee adjustment is essential to sustain and enhance the quality of our immigration services in light of Department of Homeland Security's ever-increasing demands and reporting requirements. In addition, they help ISS provide necessary immigration support to students during their OPT and STEM OPT Extension periods.

Students should submit their request forms to ISS first, at which time ISS will determine if they are eligible to apply for OPT or the STEM OPT Extension. Then, students will receive a link to pay the fee online by credit card. Once the payment receipt is forwarded to ISS, the OPT I-20 or the STEM OPT Extension I-20 can be issued. Please note that these I-20s cannot be issued before ISS receives the payment receipt. The OPT and the STEM OPT Extension fees are non-refundable, so make sure you are eligible to apply before paying the fee.

INTRODUCING A NEW ADVISOR!



Hello everyone! My name is Alan Joss and I'm excited to be joining the International Affairs team and & UCR community!

Recently, I was a Sr. Client Relationships Manager at one of the largest U.S. immigration law firms, BAL. I spent the last 7 years at the firm in a couple of different immigration-related positions serving clients in San Francisco, Austin & New York. Prior to

joining the law firm I was an International Student Advisor at Princeton University.

I started my working, immigration journey at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) in 2002 where I also earned the MS in Intercultural Communication. However, my interest in international education and immigration stem back to a study abroad program during high school. Being an international student myself in Spain I had to learn how to navigate the Spanish immigration system and how my Spanish immigration status related to travel throughout Europe.

Outside of the office, my spouse and I spend a great deal of time in nature & visiting family. Over the past 3 months I've had the opportunity to camp and hike in Stanislaus National Forest, Yosemite & Joshua Tree. Traveling is another interest, with one of my most memorable trips being to Denali National Park, from there taking a flight to the Arctic Circle. Also, I enjoy much yard time with my 1 year old rescue dog, Freya.

UPCOMING ISS EVENTS

Peer Network Social: Movie Night

Happy Holidays Highlanders!

Get into the holiday spirit and join us for a movie night! You are welcomed to attend in your pajamas and are encouraged to bring pillows, blankets, and any items to help get cozy while sitting on the floor. Limited chairs will be available. Snacks will be provided. Outside food and beverages allowed.

Date: Wednesday, December 6th

Time: 6:00-8:00pm (PST)

Location: HUB 269

Movie: Home Alone

Contact samantha.teng@email.ucr.edu with any questions



R'Time: For International Women

A safe space for international women.

Last meeting of the quarter! Lunch will be provided.

Free massage to the first 10 students.

Thursday, December 7th, 11:00AM-12:00PM at HUB 260

Hosted by the International [Students and Scholars](#) office and [The Well](#).

For questions, please contact [Jacqueline Hernandez](#)



Peer Network Series: Lunar New Year Planning Committee

ISS will be hosting a Peer Network Social to celebrate the Lunar New Year in February, 2024!

In order to include diverse traditions and cultures from all places where Lunar New Year is celebrated, we are calling out for any students interested in joining the planning committee for this event.

- Have background/experience celebrating Lunar New Year
- Have interest in promoting the cultures within Lunar New Year
- Want to volunteer a few hours towards the planning of this event



Please submit this [interest form](#) to join the committee.

The first committee meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9th, 2024, 4-5 pm on ZOOM

Contact Patricia Yin at pyin008@ucr.edu for any questions.

WISHES SURVEY

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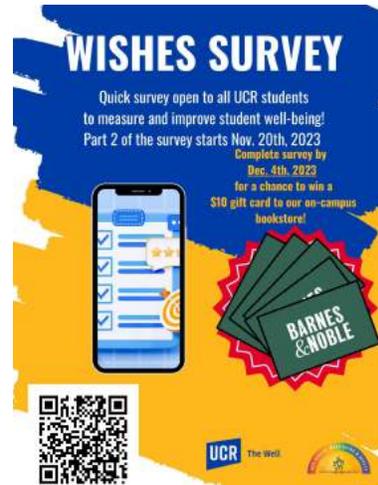
Hello Highlanders!

The Well is launching **an anonymous** brief well-being Improvement Survey for Higher Education Setting (WISHES) to provide timely and actionable data to adapt and improve institutional norms, structures, and processes so all students can thrive and flourish.

Filling out the survey enters you into a raffle for On-campus Bookstore gift cards

This survey will close on December 4th, 2023.

For any questions regarding the survey, please email thewell@ucr.eu



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Looking for Cultural Ambassadors!

Become a Cultural Ambassador (CA) and facilitate a presentation on a country, city, state/province, or location of your choice!

Presentation includes:

- A PPT or Google Slides slide presentation of 30-minute or less (Art and dance activities as part of the presentation are welcome)
- A 15-minute Kahoot! trivia game for the opportunity for your audience to win prizes!
- A 15-minute Q & A session
- See the R'Culture Resource Guide [here](#) for more information.
- Want to see a [sample presentation](#)?



[Click HERE for the Cultural Ambassador application](#)

RESLIFE STUDENT STAFF RECRUITMENT

Reslife Recruitment

UCR Residential Life is now recruiting for the upcoming 2024-2025 year!

If you are interested in applying, join ResLife and the ISS Office for an info session on January 12th from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm via Zoom.

Recruitment Website: <https://resliferecruitment.ucr.edu/> - links to the application. Applications now open.

For any questions, please contact joseph.Briones@ucr.edu



ISS FORMS AND GUIDES

Did you know that you can find essential forms, guides, and information about maintaining your status, travel, and employment on our website? international.ucr.edu/students

- [Need a Form?](#)
- Learn about [F and J requirements](#)
- [Travel and Dependents](#)

Please note that we do not recommend travel at this time since things are difficult to predict with changing governmental regulations and travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please consult with an advisor before making travel plans.

- [Employment and Taxes](#)

Contact Us

There are several ways you can reach our team. Our staff works Monday-Friday, from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM (closed from 12:00 - 1:00 PM for lunch).

General Email: internationalstudents@ucr.edu

General Phone: (951) 827 - 4113

Michael Schmelzle, Director: michael.schmelzle@ucr.edu

Kelly Eldridge Hinosawa, Associate Director: kelly.hinosawa@ucr.edu

Alan Joss, Senior International Student Advisor: alan.joss@ucr.edu

Tiffiney Tse, International Student Specialist: tiffiney.tse@ucr.edu

Jacqueline Hernandez, Program Coordinator: jacqueline.hernandez@ucr.edu

Thank you from all of us in International Affairs!

As a reminder, the International Student News is an email for international students sent monthly. You will find important information from our office, such as:

- notices from the U.S. government
- reminders to ensure that you stay in status
- UCR campus updates and cultural event information

Please read the newsletter carefully. If you have any questions, please email our office at internationalstudents@ucr.edu.