

Jan 2025

International  
Scholars

# Monthly Newsletter



## Happy New Year!

Thank you so much for Dr. Mitchell Masterson and Emily Masterson for speaking about their journey at the Meet & Greet on November 20th!

And thank you so much for all who attended.

**Before our next Meet & Greet on December 18th, learn about our next speaker, Dr. Elia Scudiero, on page 2!**

Please also keep in mind that the school is closed on January 20, Martin Luther King Day. Let's celebrate the life and achievements of this influential American civil rights leader!



## Upcoming ISS Events

### Scholar Coffee Hours

What: Meet to chat with other scholars – bring your own beverage and make some friends!

When: Fridays 11:00AM - Noon

Where: Outside of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf



### January Meet & Greet

Where: HUB 265

When: January 29, Noon – 1pm

Please come meet our new scholars! As always, we will provide lunch ☺



## How is New Years celebrated in the US?

In the United States, people begin to celebrate the New Year on December 31st, New Year's Eve. Families and friends gather to share a meal and "ring in" the New Year, often with a toast and a song. Americans also enjoy the tradition of watching the New Year's festivities at Times Square (New York City) which are broadcast on TV. New Year's Day (January 1st) is a national holiday in the United States.

A popular American tradition is making New Year's resolutions, when people promise to do something better in the year to come. Some even write down their New Year's resolutions and share them with their friends. The New Year is a celebration in many other cultures too, although it does not always take place at the same time.  
<https://americanenglish.state.gov/>

## Check this out!

Please fill out the feedback form on the ISS activities:  
<https://forms.gle/H2ciS3T4sqbHqrTK6>



## This Month's Spotlight

### Dr. Elia Scudiero Associate Professional Researcher



**We asked some questions to Dr. Elia Scudiero, who will be speaking with his wife at the International Scholars Meet & Greet on December 18th! Follow his story below.**

#### **Please tell us a little bit about your background (before coming to UCR).**

I grew up in a family farm in northern Italy and studied Environmental Sciences there. I was an exchange student in Denmark during my master and here in Riverside during my PhD. After completing my PhD, I returned to UCR as a Postdoctoral Scholar, and I was in that position from 2014 through 2018.

#### **Please briefly describe your role at UCR.**

Since 2019, I have led the Digital Agronomy Laboratory ([Link to my website](#)). My group investigates the use of geospatial sensors to improve the sustainability of water, soil, and plant management in agriculture.

#### **How did you get into environmental sciences?**

Growing up, the environmental degradation caused by agriculture and other industries was apparent in the countryside around me. I wanted to understand the causes of that degradation and play a role in improving the environment, so I studied Environmental Sciences. For my PhD, I switched to Crop Sciences, and I worked with soil degradation from salinization, a problem that is affecting many coastal areas in Italy and farmland across California and the western USA.

#### **What have been some challenges that you have faced since coming to the US?**

I miss the social network that I had back home. I grew up in a small town where everyone knows each other, and I have many long-term friends because of that. I miss my family, too. Making new friends is hard when you are in a new place, far away from home. Fortunately, I met many people in my same situation here at UCR. Especially when I was a postdoc, before having kids!, I met many other foreign postdocs who ended up being great friends. Together, we established the Riverside Postdoctoral Association (<https://rpa.ucr.edu/>) in 2014. To be frank, however, the greatest challenge is... the lack of good pizza in the USA!

#### **What are some of your favorite memories at UCR?**

I spent the last 10 years here at UCR, a place I call my home now. I met my lovely wife here, I have had two kids, had the opportunity to do exciting research and work with very talented students (some visiting my lab with a J1 Visa!), and of course making many new friends from the US and all around the world.

**Next month, we will be highlighting Professor Walter Clark, a Professor of Music, for the January Meet & Greet!**





### Cultural Conversation Class!

If you or your spouse is interested in participating in the Cultural Conversation Class to help improve your English and to meet new friends. Thank you to those who came to our last class and helped us make it successful!

**Where:** HUB 367

**When:** Every Tuesday, 9-10 AM

Our instructor is Candace Jorgensen, who has experience living in other cultures, which adds depth to her teaching the Cultural Conversation Class for international scholars and their families. She also holds a master's degree in education with emphasis on teaching English to speakers of other languages.



### What to do This Month in Riverside

#### David Allen's *The Nutcracker*

DAVID ALLEN'S THE NUTCRACKER is Riverside's Holiday Family Tradition for over 35 years, featuring the beloved characters of world-renowned choreographer, David Allen, performed on the area's largest stage. Showcasing the Nutcracker's most spectacular choreography, from snowflakes to cannon fire, dazzling sets and gorgeous costumes, with a cast of over 110 talented and internationally known ballet dancers.

**When:** December 21-22, 2024

**Where:** MV Performing Arts Center, 23300 Cottonwood Ave, Moreno Valley, CA 92553  
<https://bravaarts.thundertix.com/events/237209>



#### Rose Pruning Demonstration & Plant Pop Up Shop

Botanic Gardens staff, volunteers and local experts will demonstrate how to prune hybrid tea, floribunda, miniature roses and climbers.

Join us to learn how to take care of your roses and you may even win a raffle prize.

**When:** January 5, 2025

**Where:** UCR Botanic Garden

<https://events.ucr.edu/event/rose-pruning-demonstration>



#### Get Recognized Awards Ceremony

Join Staff Assembly's Director of Involvement and Recognition Annalicia Garcia and the Recognition Committee to celebrate our Get Recognized winners!

To nominate a member or group, please use [this form](#).

**When:** January 22, 2025

**Where:** CHASS Interdisciplinary South, 1113

<https://events.ucr.edu/event/get-recognized-awards>



### Frequently Asked Questions

#### I need to leave the U.S. and ISS has not signed my DS-2019 document! Is that OK?

Please know that you do not need a travel signature on your DS-2019 document to either remain in or to depart the U.S. You do need a valid travel signature to return to the U.S. in J-1 status. A valid travel signature must be no more than twelve months old on the date that you return to the U.S.

If you are departing the U.S. soon and know that your travel signature will expire by the time you expect to return to the U.S., please contact our international scholar advisor at [makbule.koksal@ucr.edu](mailto:makbule.koksal@ucr.edu). If your DS-2019 is going to expire soon, please consult with your department to extend your stay and then contact our scholar advisor.

#### What will happen if I end my UCR appointment early and/or depart the United States and do not intend to return to the U.S. for my J program?

If you are a scholar and you depart the U.S. early (more than 15 days before your DS-2019 end date) and you do not intend to return to the U.S. for the remainder of your J program, please discuss this with your faculty sponsor. Please also email our advisor so that she can advise you on the steps and the visa implications of ending your program early.