Chancellor Gilliam Welcomes New International Students for the Spring 2016 Semester

Welcome to the 2015-16 academic year! Here at the On January 12, 2016, new scholars, incoming international students and returning study abroad students gathered in the EUC Cone Ballroom for the Spring 2016 Chancellor’s International Welcome Reception held by Dr. Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. (Chancellor, UNCG), along with UNCG faculty and staff supporting international exchange.

Looking around the room at the reception, Chancellor Gilliam remarked, “This is what universities ought to be about – the free and tolerant exchange of ideas, in terms of academics as well as culture.”

This semester, UNCG welcomed 48 new international exchange students and 58 continuing students. These students hail from 18 different countries, with the United Kingdom, France, Japan, China, and Italy most heavily represented.

Chancellor Gilliam also recognized two visiting groups who had arrived earlier that day – eight students from Shanghai Normal University (Shanghai, China) and four students from Kyungpook National University (Daegu, South Korea), who attended classes at UNCG and visited local schools to enhance their understanding of education in the United States during their three-week stay.

Among the students in attendance were Iranian brothers, Nima and Navid Hajhashemi. Nima, a sophomore dual Biology and Pre-Med major, came to UNCG in 2013. He was attracted by the university’s strong academic reputation, large international student population and affordable tuition rate.

Nima spoke so highly of his experience at UNCG that his brother, Navid, decided to join him in May of 2014. Navid, now a freshman in the Department of Interior Architecture, also cites the university’s INTERLINK Language Center as a huge incentive for international students studying at UNCG. Navid completed a nine-week ESL course through INTERLINK, which prepared him to enroll in the university.

Both brothers described some initial apprehension about coming from Iran to study in the United States, due to the political climate between the two countries. Nima explained, “Coming from Iran, we weren’t sure how we would be received here [in Greensboro]. We were really surprised by how welcoming and interested in our culture everyone was.”

Top Story

Chancellor Gilliam addresses students at the Chancellor’s International Welcome Reception

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Today, study abroad is widely considered to be one of the best ways to build intercultural skills, foster independence and expand student horizons. Dr. Thomas Matyók (Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies) believes that international exchange is all this and more -- and has received a Fulbright fellowship to do research on his idea.

The Fulbright Scholar Program offers nearly 1200 teaching, research and special project awards per year for university faculty, staff and administrators in over 125 different countries. This will mark the third time Dr. Matyók has received the prestigious Fulbright fellowship.

Dr. Matyók’s Fulbright project, The Political Characteristics of International Student Exchanges in Strengthening the Trans-Atlantic Alliance, will look at the political and peacebuilding aspects of international student exchange. He will conduct his research at the University of Konstanz in Germany, whose dual-degree program with UNCG he helped establish. What interests him most, he explains, is how student exchanges can function as institutions of peace. He suggests that international student exchange should be viewed “as an aspect of peace scholarship and peace science” for its ability to enhance cultural and political relationships between countries. Dr. Matyók plans to use his research to see if international student exchanges can be reimagined and intentionally designed to promote these types of peaceful relations.

Of the application process itself, Dr. Matyók describes it as a “wonderful, clear, straightforward” process, and believes it has been “one of the most meaningful activities” of his academic career. To faculty thinking of applying for a Fulbright fellowship, he acknowledges that it can seem overwhelming when “you look at it, but once you get into it, it just flows.” Faculty should “be very clear and be able to communicate what exactly it is you want to do.”

His research at the University of Konstanz began at the end of December and will last approximately three months. Dr. Matyók will also teach a graduate class at the university during this time, entitled: Peace and Stability Operations: Analyzing, Assessing, and Preventing Violent Conflict.

When asked what he was most looking forward to, Dr. Matyók simply replied, “travel.” He is also excited about the implications of his research for students. “What are they [students] taking with them? Just a memory or some sort of enhanced knowledge?” It is his hope that, with intentional design of student exchange as an institution of peace, that students will come to see themselves not only as study abroad participants, but as peace ambassadors.

From February 8-March 18, 2016, the International Programs Center (IPC) is hosting Matthias Rolle-Weidemann as part of an 11-week administrative exchange. Mr. Rolle-Weidemann is a human resources development professional at Heidelberg University, one of the UNC System’s German exchange partners. The 11-week internship is embedded within an 11-month leadership course offered by Mr. Rolle-Weidemann’s home state of Baden-Wuerttemberg in southwest Germany.

The prestigious leadership academy is designed to prepare qualified young executives to take on senior management positions in all areas of public administration across Baden-Wuerttemberg. The goal of the international internship is to provide participants with insights into how other countries are governed and administered, which they ideally will incorporate into their future leadership roles. Participants are nominated by their home institutions and then apply to be selected by their respective federal ministries.

In addition to the international internship component, the
leadership program includes extensive coursework and training, a large-scale, strategic group project, consulting work for a state social organization and a second eight-week-long internship completed at the local level. The 13 participants in the 2015-16 program are currently completing international internships in the United States, New Zealand, Singapore and various countries across Europe.

After spending six weeks at UNCG, Mr. Rolle-Weidemann will round out his international internship with an additional five weeks spent at the University of Connecticut. The state of Baden-Wuerttemberg has a strong, well-established relationship with both the UNC and the UConn university systems, making these institutions natural choices for the exchange.

Although Mr. Rolle-Weidemann hopes to gain knowledge of administrative structure and processes during his time at UNCG, he cites maintaining the relationship between UNCG and Heidelberg University as the most significant factor in his decision to complete part of his internship in Greensboro.

“We share a longstanding, successful state-to-state exchange program [with the UNC system]. Doing [administrative] exchanges like this allows the universities to strengthen our existing relationship,” said Mr. Rolle-Weidemann.

While at UNCG, Mr. Rolle-Weidemann plans to devote the majority of his time to learning about Baden-Wuerttemberg’s exchange program with the UNC system. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the partnership between the two programs, and he understands the importance of continuing to support this partnership as it grows and evolves.

“Every year Baden-Wuerttemberg receives about 50 students from the UNC system, and a similar number from Baden-Wuerttemberg go to study at North Carolina universities. In order for this program to remain strong, it’s important for us to understand it from the UNC perspective as well as our own. We have to make sure that the program is working as well as it can to support the needs of both partners.”

Mr. Rolle-Weidemann is enhancing his understanding of the program by talking with UNCG students who have studied in Germany and German students currently on exchange at UNCG, as well as study abroad staff. Based on this feedback, he will make recommendations to his home institution on program improvements.

While he cautions that it is still too early in his internship to draw conclusions about the exchange program, Mr. Rolle-Weidemann says that he has already learned a lot about how to make a visitor feel welcome and supported.

“What I have learned through my training is that one of the most important qualities in a leader is the tone [he or she] sets through communication. It’s about how people talk to each other in meetings, how they ask each other for things and how they include and support each other. It makes a difference to the people that you work with how you speak to them. I can only speak from the perspective of a guest, but I think the system here serves as a very good model.”

On January 21, 2016, students flocked to the Elliott University Center’s Maple Room to explore the wide array of study abroad options available through UNCG. The semiannual event provides students with the opportunity to learn more about traditional semester and year-long exchanges, as well as short-term faculty-led trips.

Students who attended the expo had the opportunity to talk with IPC staff and select faculty-led study abroad directors about their study abroad options, degree requirements, the financial aspects of studying abroad and next steps in the process. Students in attendance ranged from those just starting
Dee Lao (Consumer Apparel & Retail Studies) has known that she wants to study abroad since she first arrived at UNCG. “I have been researching different countries and schools since my freshman year,” said Dee. Now in her fourth year at UNCG, she has narrowed her search to two countries – Australia and South Korea.

Dee’s priority is finding a school with a strong program in her major. The competitive fashion and textiles program offered by UNCG’s Australian partner, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), is at the top of her list.

“I want to have the best academic experience that I can, and for me that includes international exchange. I can definitely see myself working for an international company, so it’s important for me to understand the market in other countries,” Dee explains.

International exchange students were also on hand to talk with UNCG students about the benefits of studying in their home countries. Junior Anni Arvio (Anthropology, Art History) and sophomore Marta Kowalska (Psychology) chatted with interested students about Finland and Poland, respectively.

Logan Stanfield (Study Abroad Coordinator) was very pleased with the turnout and level of excitement from students. “We were able to answer lots of student questions about study abroad, and many of the students who stopped by signed up for an appointment with a study abroad advisor.”

The IPC would like to thank all of the students, faculty members and staff that helped make this semester’s Study Abroad Expo a success!

To learn more about leading a Study Abroad program at UNCG, please call IPC at 336-334-5404 or visit Foust 207 to discuss your plans.

To learn more about applying for Kohler faculty funding please visit http://www.uncg.edu/ipg/faculty.html

**Student Highlights**

**UNCG Graduate Student Travels to Costa Rica to Connect with Peacebuilding Professionals from Around the World**

On January 7, 2015, UNCG MA candidate Erin Coates (Peace and Conflict Studies) traveled to Costa Rica to participate in the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding’s annual Practicum on Experiential Peacebuilding.

This experiential course brings together peacebuilders from a wide array of cultural contexts and professional backgrounds to participate in a strenuous, week-long trek through the Costa Rican cloud forest. The program’s goal is to provide students and working professionals in the field with a natural “laboratory” in which to share, learn and apply leadership and peacebuilding skills.
This year’s 10 participants were chosen by a panel of Outward Bound staff based on their backgrounds and contributions to peacebuilding efforts worldwide. Included in the diverse group were a Mexican student currently attending the Costa Rican University for Peace in San Jose, a Pakistani champion for girls’ educational rights, a Kenyan proponent and practitioner of wilderness therapy with young, male refugees and the son of conflict transformation pioneer, John Paul Lederach. The group was led by an Israeli Outward Bound course director and peace activist, who has honed his skills through a life spent trying to understand and bridge Israeli and Palestinian cultures.

After meeting in Alajuela, Costa Rica on the morning of January 8, the group traveled together to the Outward Bound Costa Rica base camp in the city of Tres Rios, where they spent the night before departing for the Los Santos Forest Reserve. The bulk of the experience was built into a seven-day backpacking trip from one end of the reserve to the other. The course culminated in a full day at the United Nation’s University for Peace in San Jose, where participants attended workshops on restorative justice and conflict resolution.

From her considerable past experience leading outdoor education activities and expeditions, Erin instinctively knew that the physical/outdoor piece was powerful, as well as the pedagogical reasoning behind the course design. However, on this trip she was able to experience first-hand the “magic” of a widely diverse group of people from all over the world connecting through this shared experience.

As someone who has long been interested in both experiential education and peacebuilding, Erin explained how this experience helped her better understand the connection between her two passions.

“In past outdoor adventure jobs I used skills that I’ve since learned through my master’s program without realizing what I was doing at the time. Non-violent communication, the experiential education model of learning, mediation, circle processes – I’ve been using these tools for years. Being able to apply them and seeing them applied by other peacebuilding professionals through this experience was incredible.”

It is often said that the greatest opportunities for growth come from embracing and learning from our shortcomings. For Erin this definitely proved true. The most difficult and transformative part of the experience for her was confronting a weakness in her leadership style that she had long recognized but never addressed.

“When it was my turn to take on the role of group leader, I fell into my old habits of being highly organized, logistics driven and goal-oriented. Each moment became a checklist of tasks to accomplish. I realized that my biggest mistake as a leader is that I lead too often with my head and not often enough with my heart. I don’t always take the time to connect with the group, because I spend all of my time trying to anticipate every challenge that could arise. This was a sobering but very helpful realization.”

With her May 2016 graduation date fast approaching, Erin is more confident in her future plans than ever.

“I have long known that I want to have a career in the outdoor adventure field that allows me to incorporate the [peacebuilding] skills I’ve learned through my program at UNCG. Erin Coates rappels down a waterfall in the Los Santos Forest Reserve as part of international practicum on experiential peacebuilding
Connecting with other professionals in the field and learning how they apply these same skills in so many different ways gives me the confidence that I can make this dream a reality.”

**UNCG “PALs” Ease the Transition for International Exchange Students**

Arriving in a new place is never easy, especially when that place has a different language and unfamiliar culture. This is the challenge facing incoming international exchange students, but the International Program Center’s (IPC) PAL program goes a long way in helping to ease the transition.

The Peer Advisor and Liaison (PAL) program started in 1993 as a critical link in IPC’s efforts to establish high quality student exchange programs at UNCG. As IPC anticipated large growth in the number of international students arriving on campus through exchange agreements, it understood the need to have support systems in place for these students. At the time, IPC applied for and received U.S. government funding from the Cooperative Grants program of NAFSA’s Association of International Education to support the initiative.

The PAL program matches each newly arriving international exchange student with a UNCG student, who serves as an important emotional support and cultural liaison for him or her. The purpose of the pairing is to help exchange students adjust to life at UNCG, as well as within the larger Greensboro community.

On UNCG’s end, PALs are chosen from a pool of student applicants interested in growing their international knowledge and fostering intercultural connections, with preference given to returning study abroad students.

“We often look for UNCG students who have studied abroad before, because they have been there and can relate to what the exchange students are going through. Serving as a PAL is also a way for returning study abroad students to continue their international experience back at UNCG,” said Incoming Study Abroad Coordinator Delisha Stafford. Students planning to study abroad are also encouraged to participate in the program, as it prepares them to interact with individuals from a variety of cultures and provides continuity to their study abroad experience.

Once they are accepted into the program, UNCG students are encouraged to reach out to their PALs electronically, so that the pair can start to build a relationship before the exchange students arrive in Greensboro.

Junior Solmaz Numanolu (Nutrition), an exchange student from Istanbul, Turkey, described the importance of being able to communicate with her PAL, Chelsea Pietraallo (Nutrition), prior to arrival.

“I first sent Chelsea an email asking about the weather here in Greensboro, and I was really surprised when she sent me back a page-long detailed response. She was so warm and willing to answer all of my questions about Greensboro. I didn’t feel shy about sharing any of my concerns with her, and this really helped me to feel more comfortable about coming [to UNCG].”

Once the exchange students have arrived, their PALs play a key role in every step of the orientation process, including greeting them at the airport, welcoming them to campus, attending IPC-sponsored orientation activities, helping with adjustment to life...
in the residence halls and assisting with registration and drop/add procedures.

While students are encouraged to introduce their PALs to "student life" both on- and off-campus, the program allows room for the relationships to develop organically. The hope is that students will build friendships beyond the academic side of the UNCG experience, but this is ultimately up to each PAL pair.

In its first year, 14 UNCG PALs were identified for the program, but today that number has grown to nearly 160 participants each academic year. This number continues to grow with the increasing population of exchange students coming to UNCG and popularity of the program.

In fact, some students enjoy participating so much that they have been deemed “Super PALs”. This is the unofficial designation IPC staff members give to UNCG students who have served as PALs more than once.

Now in her junior year, Chelsea Pietraallo has been participating in the PAL program since she was a freshman. During her freshman year, she developed a very close friendship with her first PAL, Anna, who decided at the end of the exchange to stay and complete her bachelor’s degree at UNCG.

Chelsea cites support and community – both fostered through the PAL program – as the defining factors of a meaningful international experience. “With my own study abroad experience, it wasn't necessarily about the places that I went; it was the people I met there that made my time incredible. Volunteering through the PAL program has given me a chance to help provide that for others.”

International Exchange Students Get to Know Their Community and Each Other Through Spring Orientation

From January 5-8, 2016, the International Programs Center (IPC) hosted its spring orientation for international exchange students. The four-day agenda included information sessions presented by UNCG faculty and staff, tours of campus facilities, social events, and outings around Greensboro.

This semester UNCG welcomed 106 international exchange students to our campus, including 48 new students and 58 returning students. The diverse group represents 18 countries, with the largest numbers hailing from the United Kingdom, France, Japan, China, and Italy.

Orientation kicked off on January 5th, with students checking into the International House – or I-House, as it is more commonly known – in the Phillips-Hawkins residence hall. Students then had the opportunity to explore campus, with the day culminating in a group dinner.

The next three days were filled with information sessions by IPC staff on a wide range of topics, including academic advising and registration, payment options, maintaining a student visa, co-curricular opportunities and activities, and life in Greensboro and the US in general.

The orientation line-up also included presentations by faculty from the Bryan School of Business and Economics, and representatives from University Police, Residence Life, Division of Student Affairs, the Spartan Card Center, Dining Services, the Student Success Center and Student Health Services.

International exchange students were also introduced to many of the facilities on campus, including tours of Jackson Library and the Student Recreation Center.

In addition to campus life, students learned to navigate the city and get to know others in their cohort through various social activities and outings. Students explored Greensboro's shopping options, including Friendly Shopping Center, Four Seasons Mall, and Walmart, by bus. Several group meals and a hot chocolate social rounded out the orientation schedule.
Incoming Study Abroad Coordinator Delisha Stafford cited the hot chocolate social, which included a “speed friending” activity, as her favorite part of the orientation. A platonic riff on speed dating, the activity encouraged students to meet a large portion of their cohort in a short timeframe by pairing up peers for brief two minute intervals.

As Delisha explained, “The activity was designed to get students out of their comfort zones and away from others from the same country. After the hot chocolate social, many of the students who had met through the activity went to dinner together to continue their conversations, so it was very successful.”

Being far away from home, family and friends, and getting used to a new culture and routine is understandably difficult for many students. Alessandra Boldrini, an international business economics major from a small village near Milan, Italy, explained how the orientation helped ease her transition in a number of ways.

“It was very useful in terms of understanding practical things, like health services and insurance, how the campus is structured and what life is like in Greensboro and the US. Of course, it also allowed me to meet beautiful people coming from countries around the world, which I’m really glad about.”

The IPC would like to thank everyone who helped make this semester’s orientation a success!

To learn more about Study Abroad opportunities at UNCG, please call IPC at 336-334-5404 or visit Foust 207 to schedule your Study Abroad “Options” appointment.

Global Engagement

Faculty Present Globally Engaged Course Redesigns

At its January 19, 2016, meeting, the Global Engagement Faculty Learning Group heard presentations from faculty members who received course development grants through the Global Engagement initiative during the 2014-2015 academic year. The goal of the faculty learning group, headed by UTLC Global Engagement Faculty Fellow, Dr. Melody Zoch (Assistant Professor, Teacher Education and Higher Education), is to explore the Global Engagement QEP goals and support faculty in developing and revising courses, including assignments and assessments, to address global learning and increase students’ intercultural competency.

Dr. Brooke Kreitinger (Visiting Assistant Professor of German, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures) discussed her redesign of GER 406 Advanced Topics in German Culture: Unsettling Images: The Literature and Film of German Migration. The key enhancements she made to the course included incorporating the four Global Engagement Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and integrating Deliberative Dialogue strategies following scholar Kamakshi Murti’s approach in her book, A Pedagogical Afterword: Deliberative Dialogue and Social Justice.

Dr. Donna Duffy (AP Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology) and Professor Lisa McDonald (AP Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders) also shared their redesign experience for their faculty -led study abroad course, HHS 589 Exploring Intersections of Latino Individual, Family and Community Life, during Summer Session I, 2015. Through the support of IPC and the Keker

International exchange students had the opportunity to meet many of their peers through a “speed friending activity.”
Endowment, five UNCG Guarantee students were funded to accompany the group. The UNCG Guarantee is a selective scholarship program for high-achieving, low-income students from North Carolina. Guarantee student Andrew Bradford was there to share his experiences as a participant on the trip, reflecting on his work with Costa Rican children in rural areas.

The upcoming Global Engagement Faculty Learning Group meeting on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, will feature a presentation on Global Literacies in the 21st-Century U. S. Classroom by Dr. Christian Moraru (Professor, Department of English) and a special lecture on The Teaching of Literature in Post-Cold War Romania: Globalization and Its Challenges by Professor Andrei Terian (Professor of Romance Literature, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu). Visiting from his home institution in Romania, Professor Terian is a senior researcher with the G. Călinescu Institute of Literary History and Theory of the Romanian Academy. His specialties are twentieth- and twenty-first century Romanian literature, cultural theory, the history of modern criticism and comparative and world literature. All interested faculty are welcome to attend.

**Spring 2016 Schedule**

**Tuesday, March 22** (3:00-4:00 pm) Dr. Christian Moraru (Professor, Department of English) and Professor Andrei Terian (Professor of Romance Literature, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu)

**Tuesday, April 26** (3:00-4:00 pm) Dr. Seung-Hyun Lee (Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies) and Dr. Justin Lee (Assistant Professor, Social Work)

For more information about the Global Engagement Faculty Learning group, please contact UTLC Global Engagement Fellow, Dr. Melody Zoch (Assistant Professor, Teacher Education and Higher Education), at mzoch@uncg.edu.

To apply for Global Engagement Award funding, visit http://globalqep.uncg.edu/faculty/grants.htm.

**INTERLINK/New Mind**

**New Student Assistant – Heaven Pearce**

Heaven began working with the INTERLINK team in early January. She is a Second-Degree seeking student at UNCG majoring in International and Global Studies with a concentration in Asian-Studies. She received her first degree in Psychology from Lenoir-Rhyne University, located in Hickory, NC. After this accomplishment, she determined that her true passion was world languages and cultural studies and decided to transfer to UNCG. Her ultimate goal is to become a Japanese translator. She hopes to study abroad in Japan next Fall.

Heaven has loved the short time she has worked with INTERLINK. She has been overseeing the Conversation Partner Program and collaborating with her partner, Shannon, to plan weekly events for the students. The conversation program pairs INTERLINK students with a UNCG volunteer. The students meet each week and practice their communication skills, while learning what it means to be a college student in The US. She has enjoyed getting to know the students and looks forward to working with them more in the future. This week Heaven is planning a team building event for the students. She hopes that she can help the students learn applicable skills that they can use in and out of the classroom. Heaven can be reached at: heaven.pearce@interlink.edu

**New Student Assistant – Shannon O’Grady**

Shannon is a freshman student at UNCG, double majoring in Drama and Arts Administration. She is from the Charlotte area, but originally is from Rhode Island. She is excited to be working with INTERLINK students and encouraging them to utilize their newfound English skills through fun and engaging activities on campus and in the surrounding Greensboro area. She previously interacted with Saudi Arabian students learning English through a homestay program. As a student assistant she plans and organizes events for students with her partner, Heaven, including the Wednesday Weekly Event. She enjoys acting and singing and hopes to pursue a career in the arts after college. She also loves to travel and plans to study abroad in France in Spring 2017. Shannon can be reached at: shannon.ogrady@interlink.edu

**Trip to the Weatherspoon Art Museum**

Newcomers Heaven Pearce and Shannon O’Grady recently implemented a new program at INTERLINK known as the Wednesday Weekly Event. Similar to Thursday Talks, the Weekly Event is an opportunity for INTERLINK students to engage with each other in English outside the classroom through fun activities and thoughtful conversation.

On January 27th, the students visited the Weatherspoon Art Museum on Spring Garden Street. They looked at several different art exhibits, including exhibits titled Pan Americanism.
and In Motion. They all enjoyed the different types of art on display and asked each other questions about the meaning behind certain works.

“I thought it was very cool,” says Yousef Yousef, “My favorite piece was from the In Motion exhibit”.

Since then, the students expressed interest in wanting to go back to the museum for another visit. In the future, Heaven and Shannon both have more exciting events planned for this semester.

Conversation Partner Program

INTERLINK offers many opportunities to their students to help them get acquainted with the United States and adjust to life on UNCG’s campus. Of these, the Conversation Partner Program is one that pushes students out of their comfort zones and allows them to meet students who are native to The US. Not only does this interaction enhance communication skills in our students but, it also provides them with mentor and friend.

Two students, Ponyo Wang and Katy Link, been partners since September of last year. In an interview conducted by student assistant, Heaven Pearce, Ponyo and Katy spoke about the activities they do together each week. Going out to coffee shops, seeing films and even cooking for one another are some of their favorites. Katy comments that “Ponyo is an excellent cook”. When asked about what the program has taught them about international relations both students had some sound advice. Ponyo spoke about being earnest and understanding that this will help you learn more about cultures while gaining a friend in the process and Katy stated “The most rewarding aspect of this program is meeting someone you don’t know and having the opportunity to form a friendship and make them feel comfortable to practice English around you or consult you with their questions.” Katy and Ponyo continue to meet each week and are enjoying their time in the program.

To learn more about the Conversation Partner Program, visit http://nc.interlink.edu/volunteers/conversation-partners-program-2/ academic and non-academic life and visa document information.

New Mind

New Mind Education Students Welcome 2016 with Food, Fun and Festivities

The month of January for New Mind Education was full of new faces and activities! The program welcomed 11 new students on January 2, 2016. Later that week, New Mind Education held a welcome back mixer for the new students and current students, complete with an engaging speed knot-tying game called “the sheep and wolf” and plenty of hot pot. A popular Chinese food, hot pot involves boiling water with Chinese spices and cooking meat, vegetables and fried tofu in the mixture.

To help students engage more with the UNCG community, New Mind Education also held a Field Day/Basketball tournament in the UNCG recreation center on January 16. To finish off the month, New Mind Education and the INTERLINK Language Center joined together to plan an International Talent show that took place on January 29, complete with sushi, a chocolate fountain and karaoke. New Mind student Yin “Seline” Yiwen won first place for her vocal performance of the song “外面的世界”. UNCG student Yessica Orzo and INTERLINK student Brian Morillo won second place for the performance of a Venezuelan Bachata dance. These fun activities not only bring together Chinese students and foster friendships, but help New Mind Education students connect with UNCG students of all cultural backgrounds and experiences.

New Director of International Recruitment and Retention Unifies UNCG’s Efforts Around International Students

Staff Stories

Blair Brown has joined UNCG’s International Programs Center (IPC) to fill the newly created position of Director of International Recruitment and Retention.

Mr. Brown entered the field of international education 15 years ago, when he joined American University in Washington, D.C. as the Director of Graduate Studies for the School of International Service. He went on to direct the University of Virginia’s summer language institute for
three years, before spending the last nine years at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, Virginia.

In his most recent role as VCU’s Director of Graduate and International Admissions, he oversaw international admissions processing and recruitment for all undergraduate and graduate international students, and also worked closely with the university’s immigration and academic advising offices.

Mr. Brown describes his previous experience as more process-based, in contrast to his current role at UNCG. “My position at VCU provided me with a lot of valuable experience in different areas, but I am excited to have this new opportunity to focus on the bigger picture and help to create something from the ground up.”

He draws on this breadth of experience as IPC’s Director of International Recruitment and Retention – a new position that was created to support and expand international student recruitment and retention as part of UNCG’s overall commitment to internationalization.

In terms of recruitment, Mr. Brown will be working with the International Student and Scholar Services staff to continue to grow the pool of talented individuals coming to study at UNCG from around the world. An equally important part of his role is retaining these students and providing them with the continued support they will need throughout their academic careers.

“What I think is really unique about my position here is the retention piece. Most institutional structures don’t have the recruitment linked to the retention. Here, we get to work not only on bringing students to UNCG, but helping to ensure that are being academically and socially supported all the way through to graduation. It’s very rewarding to be able to see the continuum of the whole international student process.”

Mr. Brown’s efforts will be focused primarily on international degree-seeking students. The university defines an international degree-seeking student as anyone who does not have US citizenship or legal permanent resident status, and is completing a full bachelor’s, master’s or Ph.D. degree at UNCG.

There are currently around 600 international degree-seeking students enrolled at UNCG, but Mr. Brown sees enormous potential for growing this number. He acknowledges the temptation to assign a specific number to the IPC’s enrollment goals, but prefers to focus on understanding where UNCG currently stands before predicting where it will go.

“We want to collect a significant amount of data before we figure out where we go from here. Instead of saying that the goal is a 5% or 10% increase, I want to be strategic about where we have capacity. We want to invest our resources into human capital, but we want to make sure that we’re doing it in a responsible and sustainable way.”

It is clear that this strategy will include an expanded vision of the countries that traditionally send students abroad. In addition to continuing to focus on countries like China, India and Saudi Arabia, which typically send large numbers of students to the United States, Mr. Brown stresses the importance of including “up-and-coming” countries, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea and Mexico.

In a world where almost every industry is now global, the importance of creating an international learning environment for students is undeniable. This is particularly true for students who may never study abroad or travel internationally. For these students, international students really do become their ambassadors in the classroom.

“We’re providing opportunities for students to learn from others who they may not have otherwise met. On a deeper level, I think it serves to humanize all different points of view. That’s what really gets me excited about this work - providing these opportunities to our students.”

University News

“Some 2015-16 faculty funding deadlines”
Campus Weekly
http://ure.uncg.edu/prod/cweekly/2016/02/16/final-2015-16-faculty-funding-deadlines/

“URasco in the UTLC supports student success and faculty development”
Campus Weekly
http://ure.uncg.edu/prod/cweekly/2016/02/09/28950/

“Gateway Center Earns International Accreditation”
https://newsandfeatures.uncg.edu/gateway-materials-test-center-earns-international-isoiec-17025-accreditation/

“Tyra Callaway: Going Global with Research”
https://newsandfeatures.uncg.edu/tyra-callaway-
global-research/

“Linda Rupert”
http://ure.uncg.edu/prod/cweekly/2016/02/16/linda-rupert/

“Carnegie Foundation Names UNCG Professor North Carolina Professor of the Year”
https://newsandfeatures.uncg.edu/omar-ali-north-carolina-professor-of-the-year/

News from Our Partners

“UWTSD ranked first in five categories in an international survey of students’ experience”

“Best Masters Ranking; 4000 Best Masters & MBA’s in 30 Fields of Studies Worldwide” (UNC partner Université Catholique de Louvain – UCL Entrepreneurship listed in top ten)

State & National News

“International Cultural Immersion: Assessing the Influence of a Group Intervention on Intercultural Sensitivity for Counselor Trainees” (selected by the Association for Specialists in Group Work as the 2015 Best Group Research Article)

Upcoming Events

Tue, March 1 Incoming Exchange Application Deadline for Fall 2016 (Graduate)

Tue, March 1 SAE Faculty-Led Study Abroad Director’s Development Meeting (EUC Azalea, 2:00-3:30pm)

Tue, March 1 UNCEP Inbound & Outbound Application Deadline for Fall 2016

Sun, March 6 Travel Grant Application Deadline for Summer 2016 Programs

Thurs, March 3 INTERLINK Spring 2016 End-of-Term I Ceremony

Fri, March 4 Last Day to Drop Classes for Spring 2016

Sat-Mon, March 5-14 Spring Break (IPC Offices Open)

Mon, March 7 INTERLINK Spring 2016 Term II Orientation and New Term begins

Tue, March 15 Incoming Exchange Application Deadline for Fall 2016 (Undergraduate)

Thurs-Fri, March 11-12 NCAIE Conference 2016 (NC State University, All Day)

Wed, March 16 Study Abroad Nomination List Posted (Foust 207)

Wed-Thurs, March 16-17 ISSS Maintain F-1 (and J-1 degree seeking) status: under enrollment and online programs/courses (Foust 200H, 3:30pm, 4:00pm, 4:30pm)

Fri, March 18 Kohler and Global Engagement Course Development Awards Application Deadline

Sat, March 19 UNCG Study Abroad Pre-Departure Orientation Spring 2016 (SULV 101,103, 200, 201, 203, 217, 218, 227, 233, 9:00am-5:00pm)

Tue, March 22 SAE Academic Nuts and Bolts Workshop I (EUC Alexander, 3:30-5:00pm)

Wed, March 23 SAE Academic Nuts and Bolts Workshop II (EUC Alexander, 3:30-5:00pm)


Mon, March 28 Advisory Committee Memo Deadline

Tue, March 29 Travel grant eligible candidate roster due for Summer & Fall 2016 exchanges; Departmental grant contribution discussions begin for Summer 2016 exchanges

Thurs, March 31 Discretionary Funds Committee Meeting Luncheon (Faculty Center, 12:15-2:00pm)

Do something bigger altogether