



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE DIVISION OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT



March 2021 Newsletter



Inside the Issue

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

We chatted with management student Al Faisal Albusaidi about his past experience at the Intensive English Program and his current studies at UL.

CPT INFO SESSION

The DGE is hosting a CPT Info Session on March 31 to discuss the benefits of CPT just in time for summer internships.

SCAM PREVENTION

We discuss the tell-tale signs of scammers trying to get hold of your personal information and how to handle these situations.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY



March 17th

Originally a religious holiday to honor St. Patrick, who introduced Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century, St. Patrick's Day has evolved into a celebration of all things Irish.

Celebrations generally involve public parades and festivals, and Irish traditional music sessions (céilithe). On St. Patrick's Day, it is customary to wear shamrocks, green clothing or green accessories. St. Patrick is said to have used the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, to explain the Holy Trinity to the pagan Irish.



HOLI

March 28th - 29th

Holi (होली) is a Hindu festival celebrated to welcome the arrival of Spring in India. The celebrations are based on legends of the Hindu religion and the triumph of good over evil. It is a day filled with new beginnings and the blossoming of friendship.

In India, Holi celebrations begin on *Holika Dahan* where people gather around a fire, called the *Holika pyre*, and perform rituals and prayer along with singing and dancing.

The next day is called *Rangwali Holi*, and this is when the vibrant image of Holi comes to life. People throw and smear colors onto one another, while also partying and eating special foods designated for the celebration.



CPT INFO SESSION - MARCH 31

Our office will host an informative session covering Curricular Practical Training (CPT) on March 31st. Please follow us on social media for updates on all DGE events. The CPT Info Session will help F-1 students learn about the process for internships just in time for the summer. For questions or concerns about CPT, please refer to the Office of International Affairs' website. If your question cannot be answered using our website, please feel free to [schedule a virtual appointment](#) to meet with someone from our office.

TAX FILING OBLIGATIONS

If you were in the US during the 2020 calendar year or earned any income in the US in 2020, you will likely be required to file a tax return. There are many tools out there to help you file your taxes as quickly and accurately as possible! In particular, Sprintax has an online nonresident federal and state tax preparation software and will be hosting a virtual seminar on filing taxes on March 16th from 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. This session will be a great starting point for students who are confused when it comes to filing their 2020 taxes. If Sprintax determines you are a resident for tax filing purposes, you can use other tax preparation services such as TurboTax or H&R Block. Please review Tax Filing Obligations for further information on nonresident tax compliance.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: AL FAISAL ALBUSAIIDI

Meet your classmates!



Al Faisal Albusaidi is a former IEP student who now studies Management at UL. He is from Oman, and this is his second year at the university.

What is your favorite part of the program you're enrolled in?

I love meeting new people and learning new principles in how to deal with any situation in a managerial way.

What do you plan to do after your time at UL/earning your degree?

I am planning to establish my own business in 2024 and will seek a master's degree in HR management.

What was your favorite part of studying at the IEP?

I really liked the International Hour where former students came to talk about their experience at the IEP. Those students also tried to help us improve our communication skills by participating in games.

Do you have a favorite memory of your time at the IEP?

The moment I received my TOEFL exam grade. I was happy because I got the grade that would qualify me to enroll as a student at UL.



FALL ADVISING

Academic advising begins on March 15th for the Fall 2021 semester. Major-specific advisors assist students in course selection each semester and keep students on track to graduate. Once you've scheduled an appointment, go to your advising session prepared and eager to ask questions about your academic plan. After being advised, your advisor lifts the registration hold on your student account so that you may register for classes.

Keep an eye out for an email from your major advisor or your department on how to schedule an advising session. Reach out to your department by March 15th if you do not hear from your advisor or department.

It is important to remember that full-time registration (12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students) for Fall 2021 is required in order for travel authorizations during the Summer.

CHANGING VISA STATUS

The DGE strongly advises that students who wish to change visa status do so by obtaining the correct immigration documents and applying at the U.S. embassy in their home country. However, if you want to change the purpose of your visit while in the United States, you (or in some cases your employer) must file a request with USCIS on the appropriate form before your authorized stay expires. We recommend that you apply as soon as you determine that you need to change to a different nonimmigrant category.

All students who wish to change their status in the U.S., should review this document and read through USCIS regulations on change of status. Once you determine that you will change your status in the U.S., please email uia@louisiana.edu or [schedule an immigration advising session](#) so that we can provide you with the appropriate filing process to follow. Please remember that your status is not changed until you receive an official I-797 Approval Notice from USCIS.

Why should other students choose to enroll in the IEP?

The IEP is a great place to improve your English language. It helped me in many aspects such as writing, speaking, and listening. Also, never forget that the instructors there will help you on your journey.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I usually spend my time on YouTube, video games, and books.

What's your favorite book/movie?

My favorite movie is *Hacksaw Ridge*.

What is your favorite place that you've traveled to and why?

Turkey. Seeing the green trees and the beautiful lakes was a great moment. I am looking forward to visiting new, attractive places.

THE HILLIARD MUSEUM

The Hilliard Art Museum is a UL-maintained museum that strives to enhance the education of students and inspire creativity in Acadiana. Those at the museum believe "that exhibitions and critical analysis produce benefits and skills for all visitors regardless of age, ability or background."

Visit their website at <http://www.hilliardmuseum.org/> to learn about taking a visit or virtual tour of their exhibits.



ICE & IRS SCAMS

It is vital that all international students are informed about scam prevention measures to ensure the safety of their personal information. A government agency will NEVER request your information over the phone or email. Scammers will pose as government officials and try to intimidate you into providing money or personal information. If a call sounds suspicious then hang up, and never provide any financial or Social Security information over the phone.

No matter who the caller claims to be, keep your information secure! Typically scammers will identify as ICE or IRS agents when attempting to manipulate someone with their scare tactics, but the best way to keep your financial and personal information secure is to refrain from ever providing sensitive information during a phone call. Always take the proper steps to ensure someone you are providing information to is a verified government official.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & SCHOLARS ARE OFTEN THE TARGETS OF SCAMS

Be alert and remember, the U.S. government will never contact you by phone or email to ask for money.

Example of a scam

Thom: Hello?

Phone scammer: Thom, this is Officer Sims from the IRS. Our records show that you have not paid your taxes for the last 2 years and that you owe \$2,500. It must be paid immediately.

Thom: Wait... what? I haven't even been in the U.S. for that long! If I owe back taxes, the IRS is required to send me a notice in the mail.

Phone scammer: In order to stay in the U.S., you need to pay your balance now. We have your address and SSN and know how to find you.

Thom: I'm hanging up now and reporting you to the real IRS.

Questions? Contact us at oia@louisiana.edu or 337-482-6819

THE BIG EVENT!

The Big Event takes place this year on March 27th! Every year UL students, faculty, and staff make it their goal to improve our community. The Big Event is an opportunity for you to volunteer in the community too, and this year they are allowing participation both virtually and within small groups of volunteers. The last day to register for volunteering is March 12th. To learn more, visit their website at: <https://firstyear.louisiana.edu/get-involved/big-event>

You can also find them on social media @ulbigevent!

STUDENT RESOURCES & IMPORTANT DATES

Take advantage of these campus resources.

IMPORTANT DATES & REMINDERS

Advising Session for Summer/Fall 2021
March 15th - 26th

Registration Begins for Summer/Fall 2021
March 29th

Easter Holiday (Classes Do Not Meet)
April 2nd - 6th

Drop Date
April 14th

Deadline to Submit IRS Tax forms
April 15th

EVENTS TO ATTEND

March 16th-
Filing Income Tax for International Students (Hosted by SPRINTAX) -
10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

March 31st-
CPT Info Session

STUDENT RESOURCES

Handshake - Looking for a job as a student worker? Create a free account on the Handshake website and fill out a profile to find jobs specifically suited for you.

Free, walk-up COVID-19 testing on campus - Students and faculty and staff members can walk up and receive free tests from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday through the spring semester. The site is located long St. Mary Boulevard in front of Edith Garland Dupré Library. For more information, see the university's website.

Campus Cupboard- Free grab bags with non-perishable food are now available at the IEP building at 413 Brook Ave. Hours are on Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and on Tuesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students who visit the Campus Cupboard will be asked to present their University IDs. Masks required.

INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

<u>2021 Sessions</u>	<u>Deadline for Students outside the U.S.</u>	<u>Deadline for Students inside the U.S.</u>
Spring II 2021 (March 18 – May 14)	February 12, 2021	March 12, 2021
Summer 2021 (June 3 – July 30)	May 7, 2021	May 28, 2021
Fall I 2021 (August 12 – October 8)	June 30, 2021	August 6, 2021
Fall II 2021 (October 14 – December 10)*	September 3, 2021	October 8, 2021

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US!



UL Lafayette Division of Global Engagement
International Student Council at UL Lafayette



@ulglobalengagement
@ISC_UL



Interested in studying abroad? Contact studyabroad@louisiana.edu or [schedule a virtual appointment](#) to learn more or stay up to date on the latest news.