Fall 2023

UNT | INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
International Student & Scholar Services

J-WORLD NEWS

J-1 Scholars and students pose for a group photo at the International Affairs Fall Fulbright Luncheon.

Happy Fall 2023!

Greetings everyone! **We have over 70 J-1 students and scholars from 25 countries this semester at UNT!** I extend a warm welcome to all of you! I trust that your semester is off to an excellent start. Fall is my favorite season in Texas. Every year, I eagerly look forward to the Fall festivities and the cooler weather that comes with it. I encourage each of you to make the most of the chance to participate in a wide range of social activities, both on and off campus, this semester. Let me share with you some exciting on-campus events that await:

Homecoming 2023:

Homecoming will be celebrated from **October 22 – 28**. This year's theme is **Mean Green Scream**! The campus will feel festive, and you will see a lot of Mean Green spirit everywhere! There are daily events organized by the Division of Student Affairs. Homecoming week culminates with the football game on October 28th when UNT will play Memphis at the DATCU Stadium. Tickets to the game are available at https://meangreensports.com/sports/2018/7/25/footballtickets.

International Education Week 2023:

International Affairs will celebrate **International Education Week from November 13-17**. Here is a list of programs each day of the week. We encourage all of you to participate in as many programs as you can. My personal favorite is the Parade of Nations which will be held on Monday, November 13th at noon. Come dressed in your national attire and participate in the flag parade!

Monday, November 13 at Noon: Parade of Nations – parade starts outside Marquis Hall - sign-ups begin late-OCT

Tuesday, November 14 at 3:30 PM: Language Exchange at Marquis Hall, Room 130

Thursday, November 16 from 1- 4:00 PM: Swing by for a Holiday Pie at Marquis Hall, Room 130

Friday, November 17 at Noon: International Social Hour at Marquis Hall, Room 130

Please be on the lookout for emails from our office for more details on International Education Week as we get closer to the event.

Here are some off-campus events to consider:

Football is a huge pastime in Texas in the Fall and I encourage you to attend the UNT home games and may be even check out the local high school games on Friday nights – Friday Night Lights is a real thing! If you have the opportunity, you should go watch the Dallas Cowboys – America's Team at the AT&T stadium in Arlington, Texas.

Your visit to Texas is not complete unless you visit the **State Fair of Texas**! The fair which is held at the historic Fair Park grounds in Dallas, celebrates all things Texas and has taken place every year since 1886 except for World War I & II and during the 2020 COVID pandemic. One of the biggest draws of the fair is its mascot Big Tex and the food – funnel cakes, Fletcher's Corny Dogs, turkey legs, and all kinds of unique, award-winning fried foods. The state fair will take place from September 29 – October 22 this year. Check out the official fair website to plan your visit! You can ride the train all the way from Denton to Fair Park via the DCTA and DART.

The **Denton Arts and Jazz Festival** will be held from October 6-8 in Denton's Quaker Park. This event is free of charge to the public and features several well-known local artists.

The **Day of the Dead festival** held on October 27 & 28 at the Denton Square is a super-interesting event. The coffin races at the festival are a spectacular sight. Maybe you can sign-up and participate as well!

If Halloween is your thing, then be sure to check out the **Fright Fest at Six Flags Over Texas** - it is guaranteed to be very thrilling!

My personal favorite Fall event is the **Dallas YMCA Turkey Trot held on Thanksgiving Day** (November 23, 2023) in downtown Dallas. You can do a casual 5K or a slightly more intense 8-mile walk/run with friends, family, and your pets. It is a very lively and well attended even and it's a great way to start your Thanksgiving Day and weekend.

The **City of Denton also has its own Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day**. If you like bicycle rallies, then check out the Denton Turkey Roll the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Check out more events on the International Programs webpage as well as the Discover Denton and Visit Dallas websites.

Your Rights as a Nonimmigrant Visa Holder

Nonimmigrant Visa Holder Information

Spring Classes 2024:

First day of classes for Spring 2024 will be January 16, 2024.

Spring break which marks the mid-point of the semester will be from March 11-17.

Finals are scheduled from May 4-10.

View the Academic calendar here.

TRAVELING over the Fall or Winter Break?

- **You must have a valid DS-2019 with a valid travel signature to re-enter the United States.** Travel signatures are valid for 1 year or the end of your DS-2019, whichever comes first. If you need a travel signature, contact jinfo@unt.edu at least 14 days prior to travel date. We will provide you with an electronic travel signature on your DS-2019 and email you the document which you must print, sign, and keep with you while re-entering the US.
- **You must have a valid J1 visa stamp to re-enter the United States** (unless you are a citizen of Canada).
- **You must have a valid passport that has more than 6 months remaining of its validity**.
- Review immigration updates at https://international.unt.edu/content/immigration-updates
- **DS-2019 Extensions should be submitted to jinfo@unt.edu at least 14 days prior to current DS-2019 end date**. J-1 Students requiring an extension, must extend for a minimum of 1 year, unless the expected program completion date is sooner.

Please be sure you contact the International Student and Scholar Services office if there are any changes to your J program.

DS-2019 Extensions

DS-2019 Extensions should be submitted to jinfo@unt.edu at least 30 days prior to current DS-2019 end date. J-1 Students requiring an extension must extend for a minimum of 1 year unless the expected program completion date is sooner.

EVP EMERGENCY HOTLINE

Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all exchange visitors is the University of North Texas and the Department of State's highest priority. To help safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all exchange visitors, there is an Exchange Visitor Program Emergency Hotline.

This 24/7 toll-free phone number allows exchange visitors to directly contact the Department in emergency and urgent situations. A Department representative is available 24 hours a day.

EVP Emergency Hotline: 1-866-283-9090

SCAM ALERT

The UNT Police Department has been made aware of several scams circulating through our community. You can learn more about avoiding and reporting scams at consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts.

Please contact the UNT Police Department at 940-565-3000 or visit their webpage at police.unt.edu if you have any questions.

Please know that if you are ever called by someone claiming to be an immigration official, you can politely ask them for a call back number then hang up and call ISSS or UNT PD for guidance. ISSS can be reached at 940-565-2195.

J-1 SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Recep Cakir from Turkey!

My name is Recep Cakir, and I am a Professor in the Instructional Technology Department at Amasya University in Turkey. My research interests include instructional technology, open and distance education, technology integration in education, and computational thinking. I have several published articles addressing different issues in instructional technologies and presented papers at several conferences. I am also an associate editor for a journal called Participatory Educational Research (PER). I am a visiting professor under the direction of Dr. J. Michael Spector at the Learning Technologies Department in UNT. My current research is about faculty performance and professional development in online education.

In February 2023, I came to UNT as a visiting professor, accompanied by my wife, Esra. The reason for my coming here was to meet and find collaborative opportunities with respected researchers in the field of learning technology at UNT. In particular, the chance to work with Dr. Michael Spector, a globally recognized and highly distinguished scholar, is a tremendous opportunity for me.

When I first arrived at UNT, I had the chance to explore the campus, and I was truly impressed. I believe that the libraries, laboratories, UNT union, the clean campus, sports facilities, the traditional events and so on offer students a great chance and opportunity. Additionally, as a researcher, I had the privilege of meeting highly respected faculty members in my department (Learning Technology), and benefit from the collaboration, synergy, and shared exchange of knowledge.

My wife and I have made wonderful friendships. We will leave here with great benefits. Denton is a clean, peaceful, well-organized city inhabited by friendly people, far from the chaos like activities such as exploring new places, learning about different cultures, acquiring new knowledge, and meeting new people outside of the work. We have had the opportunity to travel around Texas in the last few months. We found plenty of activities to participate in and beautiful places to visit, such as Dallas, NASA in Houston, the Riverwalk and the Alamo in San Antonio, and Stockyards in Fort Worth.

The importance given to institutional culture and diversity, people's belief in collaboration, and the support provided by the institution's resources are the factors that has made my time at UNT most valuable. I am sure of one thing; I will return from here saying 'I am glad I did it'!

J-1 STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Fulbright scholar Sharon Lisseth Perez from Panama!

I started my adventure at UNT about a month ago, after spending the preceding seven months "getting ready" by improving my English in University of Missouri, Columbia. They were months filled with a lot of learning and challenges but passing them has made me feel very accomplished.

I chose UNT because they offered the "Information Science" degree program I wanted to pursue, and the department has highly qualified instructors and experts in fields in a variety of areas that interest me. I am confident that I will learn a lot from them. After I complete this project, my intention is to go back to my home country and teach others what I've learned, while working as a member of the academic community in Panamá at Technological University of Panamá. Additionally, it is a promise I have made as a Fulbright scholar.

In my spare time, I enjoy going out to eat with friends. I've discovered to love cuisines like Afghan and Korean that I never tasted before. I enjoy reading, going to the cinema, exploring new locations, museums, and libraries, going both big and little cities, and going to national parks. This country (US) is so diverse and enjoyable that I am hoping to get the chance to discover more.

Being at UNT in Texas has been a special opportunity. Thanks to the people I've met and interacted with, I've felt at home. The university is lovely and warmly friendly.

Dr. Cakir and Sharon - thank you for participating in UNT's Exchange Visitor Program. We are so happy that you are enjoying your time here!

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