Spring 2023

UNT | INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
International Student & Scholar Services

J-WORLD NEWS

Happy Spring 2023!

Spring is in the air, but some days it still feels like winter and on other days it almost feels like summer!
Oh well – that is Texas weather for you in a nutshell!

I hope everyone is having an enjoyable and productive Spring semester. We encourage all of you to participate in as many on and off campus activities and benefit from the full exchange-visitor experience.

Upcoming Campus Events

University Day - April 14, 2023
We are celebrating University Day this year on April 14 in the Library Mall. The annual party, which includes a flag parade and free food with your UNT ID, commemorates our change from college to university in 1961.

The sign-up deadline for the Parade of Nations hosted by International Affairs is April 10.

We encourage all of you participate in the Parade of Nations and partake in the University Day celebrations!

Regular programming hosted by International Affairs

Language Exchange
Practice your conversational skills in languages spoken around the world! Language Exchange is a great please to learn a new language or share your own. Open to all students at UNT!
When: Every Tuesday at 3:30 PM from April 4 – May 2
Where: Marquis Hall Room 130

International Social Hour
Make connections and meet students and scholars from around the world.
Everyone is welcome!
When: Every Friday at 12 PM from April 7 – May 5
Where: Marquis Hall Room 130

Events in and Around Denton

Denton Community Market Every Saturday from April 1 through November

The Denton Community Market (DCM) is an art and farmer's market in downtown Denton featuring live music, kids activities, local farms, local artists, food trucks, and a lot more! The market is open every Saturday beginning April 1 from 9 AM – 1 PM.

Germanfest at Muenster April 28-30

Visit the Germanfest at Muenster which is home to a unique German community of approximately 1500 people in North Texas. Germanfest is a 3-day festival with loads of food, fun, and frolic. There is also a 5K fun-run and a 100K bicycle rally if that is your thing. It is a very hilly but extremely fun route! More information about the festival can be found at Muenster Chamber of Commerce

More Things to Do!

UNT Fine Arts Series
UNT Art Gallery
UNT Dance & Theatre
UNT College of Music Calendar
UNT CoLab
UNT Calendar
Mean Green Athletics

Discover Denton
Things to do in DFW
Trip Advisor
Denton County Transportation Authority
UNT Transportation Services

Your Rights as a Nonimmigrant Visa Holder

Nonimmigrant Visa Holder Information

Important Fall 2023 Updates for J-1 Students

COVID19 Allowance for Online Classes Ends!

J-1 students must maintain a full-time course load during fall and spring semesters.

This means:

- F1 and J1 Undergraduate students must enroll in 12 credit hours or more.
- F1 and J1 Graduate students must enroll in 9 credit hours or more.
- **No online courses may count toward full-time enrollment for J-1 students.**

Please contact our office at jinfo@unt.edu if you have questions or clarifications concerning Fall 2023 enrollment guidelines.

TRAVELING Outside the U.S. this Summer?

J-1 exchange visitors who wish to travel outside the U.S. should request the ISSS office for a travel endorsement on their DS-2019. Travel endorsements are valid for 1 year or until the program-end date on the DS-2019, whichever comes first.

Please email the ISSS office at jinfo@unt.edu at least 7-10 days prior to the travel date to request a travel endorsement. In addition to a valid travel endorsement, please be sure to have the following immigration documents prior to re-entering the U.S.:

- Valid J1 visa stamp to re-enter the United States (unless you are a citizen of Canada).
- Valid passport that has more than 6 months remaining of its validity.

Note: Beginning April 27, 2023, the U.S. Department of State will allow the international office to apply digital signatures on the DS-2019. The ISSS office may digitally sign and transmit the DS2019 to the J-1 exchange visitor via their UNT email address. Exchange visitors must then print, sign (by hand), and present the paper version of the DS-2019 when re-entering the U.S.

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 following message is from the UNT Police Department. Please contact 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.

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.

J-1 SPOTLIGHT: Our J-1 spotlight this Spring is on a visiting scholar from Egypt and a team of international scholars who are integral to the cutting-edge research taking place at the BioDiscovery Institute (BDI).

Meet visiting scholar Yara Kamal Mohamed Ismail from Egypt!

Yara is a short-term visiting scholar from Egypt sponsored by USAID. She is spending her Spring 2023 semester under the tutelage of Dr. Cheng Yu from the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Yara's academic work is focused on construction projects and cold-formed steel design within the field of mechanical engineering. Her research interests include developing a new approach in the design optimization of light gauge steel buildings that will allow people to enjoy a higher standard of living at a relatively lower cost.

Yara chose to come to UNT as an exchange visitor because of Dr. Cheng Yu's expertise in cold-formed steel design. She has learned a great deal from Dr. Yu during her short time at UNT and hopes to use the scientific knowledge that she has gained from this experience to enhance international collaboration in the field of construction engineering. Yara has enjoyed all the activities and resources at Discovery Park and the main campus.

Outside of school and work, she loves to travel, watch movies, and exercise. She also likes to engage with her community by volunteering and doing charitable work. Be sure to greet Yara and give her a Mean Green high-five if you see her on campus!

Yara Kamal Mohamed

Meet the international researchers at the BioDiscovery Institute!

The BioDiscovery Institute (BDI), established in 2016 as an Institute of Research Excellence is home to several international research scholars from over eight different countries. These international research scholars are an integral part of the multidisciplinary research team that collaborate on large research projects that aim to find solutions to critical societal needs. Several of these research scholars enjoy working at BDI because in addition to being home to the biggest names in plant science, the institute has an open and supportive atmosphere that facilitates innovation and collaboration.

Dr. Anil Girija is a post-doctoral research associate from India who specializes in plant defense mechanisms. He is currently working with Prof. Jyoti Shah on plant defense towards the green peach aphid which devastates many crop plants. **Dr. Md Ashraful Islam is a plant pathologist from Bangladesh** whose research at BDI uses molecular plant pathology to develop disease-resistant wheat varieties that have improved quality and yield. **Dr. Chunliu Zhuo, who is from China**, is a post-doctoral researcher in Dr. Dixon's lab and she is doing research on a plant-natural product where the ultimate goal is to genetically engineer bioenergy crops.

Top row left to right: Julius Ver Sagun, Athanas Guzha, Digar Singh, Nicolas Esnay, Salim Makni, Sanjeevan Rajendran. Bottom row left to right: Gaelle Antoine, Anil Girija, Lei Li, Chunliu Zhuo.

It is not all work and no play with the research scholars at BDI! They enjoy meeting people from all around the world, participating in cultural and recreational activities on and off campus, as well as travelling around Texas and the U.S. with their friends and families during the breaks and vacations. Everyone loves the eclectic variety of restaurants on the Denton Square, the neighborhood parks, the music and art shows, and overall Denton college vibe. Some of the researchers like **Dr. Digar Singh from India**, who are here with their family, are very appreciative of the work-life balance at BDI and UNT. All in all, the international researcher scholars at BDI have an enjoyable and fulfilling time at UNT! We enjoy hosting them on our campus as well!

Countries represented at the BioDiscovery Institute include Bangladesh, Brazil, China, France, India, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe.

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