International Education Week

International Education Week [1] (IEW) is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education is part of efforts to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences.

We encourage you to check out the resources below and attend events held during the International Education Week.

Events

Please click on the specific event link in the event flyer for more detailed information.

Event Flyer [2]

International Student and Scholar Spotlights

The International Student and Scholar Spotlight is designed to highlight the success and challenges that current University of Michigan international students/scholars have. We hope the stories will promote empathy, understanding and awareness, as well as encourage more international students/scholars to share their experiences with the campus community.
Diksha Agrawal

Hometown and country: Kathmandu, Nepal
School of Dentistry, Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)
I was born and raised in Nepal and moved to the United States to pursue my career as a dentist. Although English was the primary language of my education back home, I had many linguistic challenges when I started my journey as a student at UofM. I was immersed in a culture that was different from home. Though I am proficient in verbal and written English, the phrases used in informal communication here baffled me. I remember talking to a classmate of mine and during the conversation she replied to me “What do you mean by that?” casually for something I said. I was startled and became nervous as I thought I had offended her. Common American lingo such as “breaking the ice” or “long in the tooth” would stump me. I was initially stressed, but later realized that familiarizing oneself with the informal jargon and non-verbal cues of a language was a learning process, which would require time and patience. I slowly picked them up and currently am fairly comfortable and confident using it. Although it seems trivial, this has helped me blend in a lot easier with everyone and make new friends.

After completing my studies, I plan to work as a dentist in the U.S. to gain some experience and then pursue my further education in cosmetic dentistry.

Rawan Bonais

Reflecting on my experience as a UM grad student, the first thing that would come to my mind is how the people on and off campus have made Ann Arbor a welcoming environment for international students. For instance, I recall when I attended a summer festival at Kerry Town last year (2019). I was listening to live music when a lady approached me and said in the sincerest tone, “you are welcome here!” right before she gave me a warm hug. This was an example of many acts of kindness that I had living in Michigan. I am an Arab Muslim wearing a headscarf. The identity I represent, unfortunately, has been subjected to misconceptions and stereotypes in the media. Yet, the lady’s heartfelt gesture reflects how I have been
perceived and treated by people here. For that, I’m deeply grateful!

I truly believe that it takes an open heart and mind to overcome prejudice against any other person who’s different from us. The lady has taught me that we also need to remind each other that we can coexist regardless of any label we give each other. After all, we were both standing there doing the same thing—enjoying a nice weather and nice melody!

After graduation, I would like to work in a diverse environment in which I could use the knowledge and skill sets I’ve acquired during my grad studies.

**Matthew Wu**

![Matthew Wu](image)

**Hometown and country: Newcastle, South Africa**

**LSA undergraduate student in Computer Science**

I haven’t been home (South Africa) in more than a year and I am sure that the Coronavirus has also affected you all in brutal ways. Being an international student is already so tough on its own and now we face even more challenges. This includes not being able to return to Ann Arbor, having to take classes in alternate timezones and so forth. I encourage you all to share YOUR stories too :)

It was early March when we were told that campus was shutting down and everyone should leave. As you can imagine for certain international students this was impossible. Many countries already closed their borders and the rate at which people were contracting the virus was increasing exponentially. To cut the story short by the grace of God I was able to land up in Taiwan (see the picture) where I spent the Summer and am currently spending the Fall semester too.

Even though this year has been tough it has taught me a lot. A huge lesson that I have learnt throughout
this pandemic is to be genuinely empathetic towards others and help out even if it means having to make a few sacrifices. I used to hold a very selfish view when it came to helping others. I would think that if I’m okay then everything is okay, and I’ll help out others only when it suits me. I’m glad that I have now grown in that aspect.

After graduation, I hope I will be able to find employment in the U.S.

**Identities Abroad** [3]

As you consider international travel in the future, the Identities Abroad will help you explore how your social identities may influence where you choose to travel, affect the way you experience life in another country, and recognize that different social identities may impact your experience abroad in unique ways.

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**Source URL:** https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/events/iew

**Links**
[1] https://iew.state.gov/
[3] https://global.umich.edu/travel-resources/identities-abroad/