Follow us on instagram @ualbanyisss

December 6, 2019

Table of Contents
1. Greeting

2. Important Announcements
- ISSS Winter Closures and Hours
- Last Travel Signature Day Tuesday, 12/10
- Set Up Your 2-Step Email Verification for International Travel
- ISSS Holiday Party Tuesday, 12/17!

3. Other ISSS Updates and Events
- Spring 2020 Buddy Program Sign-Up Open
- Final OPT Workshop of the Semester Monday, 12/9
  - Yalda Plus Comedy Night
- Recruiting research participants for learning about learning!

4. University at Albany Events
- Holiday Concert
- Twenty Drummers Drummin’
- LLC Seminar Series: Podcast Program Reveal
- Late Night Appetizers

5. Capital District Events
- Annual Schenectady Festival of Trees
- Handel’s Messiah
- 2019 Saratoga Festival of Trees
- Interfaith Story Circle -Stories of Our Ancestors and the Land
- 19th Annual Santa's Play Land Open House

1. Greetings!

This is the Weekly ISSS Newsletter that we send out every Friday. It includes very important immigration updates that you must be aware of, as well as information about events happening on campus and in the area.

Are you a part of a student organization and want to see your event advertised to your fellow students? Please send the details and/or flyer to ISSS@albany.edu.

2. Important Announcements

ISSS Winter Closures and Hours
The semester is wrapping up! To help you prepare, please take note of the ISSS office updates and availability below:

1. The ISSS office will be closed starting at 12pm (noon) on December 24th through January 1st, 2020. Regular hours will resume on January 2nd. Please also note that the office will be closed this Friday, December 6th from 12:00pm-5:00pm due to the International Celebration.

2. Students who hope to have a request processed prior to January 2nd must submit all documentation and related forms for that request no later than Tuesday, December 17th. Requests include, but are not limited to: requests for an I-20/DS-2019 extension; practical training requests (CPT, OPT, or STEM OPT); travel signature requests; and any requests for a new I-20/DS-2918. If you do not submit all required documents by December 17th we may not be able to process your request before the office closes for the holiday.

3. The ISSS@albany.edu inbox will be monitored on a limited basis between December 25th-January 1st for urgent and unforeseen cases (please see below).
4. **In case of emergency** during our office closure, please contact the University Police Department at 518-442-3131. (For example, if you are delayed at an airport because you did not bring sufficient documentation or the officer has questions about your status).

5. If you have an **urgent and unforeseen request** during the closure please email ISSS@albany.edu. Examples of urgent and unforeseen requests may include: needing to pick up an EAD card to begin employment; lost I-20 while travelling abroad; or an urgent need for an I-20 extension that could not be requested prior to the closure due to reasons beyond your control.

6. Because the ISSS@albany.edu inbox will only be monitored on a limited basis during this time-frame we ask that students make every effort to submit any requests possible prior to December 17th so that requests can be effectively addressed. For example, if you do not currently have a valid travel signature, please request one now even if you don’t currently have any plans to travel (that way you can be prepared if you change your mind during the closure).

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding and wish you all a happy and safe holiday season!

**Last Travel Signature Day Tuesday, 12/10**

Every F-1 and J-1 student must have a valid travel signature on their I-20 or DS-2019 in order to re-enter the United States after traveling outside. These travel signatures are usually valid for 1 year while you are a full-time student, though we recommend getting your I-20 or DS2019 signed every 6 months. Usually, travel signature requests take 5-7 business days. On our special travel signature days, however, we will sign the I-20 or DS-2019 on the spot. **Tuesday, December 10th (Reading Day) from 2-4:00pm will be our LAST TRAVEL SIGNATURE DAY OF THE SEMESTER!** Come to Science Library G-05 to get your I-20 or DS-2019 signed!

**We recommend that every student attend one of these days, even if you don’t have travel plans yet.**
Set Up Your 2-Step Email Verification for International Travel

Remember to set up your Albany email 2-step log-in contact to one that you know you can access in December and January so that you will be able to get the log-in code needed to access your Albany email (for example, don’t set it as an American phone number if you know you will be outside the U.S.). Consider using the 2-Step Authenticator App as this is the recommended method: https://wiki.albany.edu/pages/releaseview.action?pageId=73118049

For help with accessing your Albany email account over break, please contact ITS.

ISSS Holiday Party Tuesday, 12/17!

Join us for hot chocolate, tea, and holiday cookie decorating to celebrate the end of finals and kick off the holiday season!
The event will take place on Tuesday, December 17th from 2:30-4:30pm in the Science Library atrium.
3. Other ISSS Updates and Events

Spring 2020 Buddy Program Sign-Up Open!

ISSS is seeking current students as volunteers to serve as a "buddy" to a new international student this Spring. The buddy program allows current students to connect with new students to help welcome them to Albany and answer their questions about adjusting to life at UAlbany and in the Albany area.

Students can sign-up here: https://tinyurl.com/UAlbanyBuddy2020
Final OPT Workshop of the Semester Monday, 12/9

ISSS has weekly employment workshops, either for CPT authorization or OPT authorization. Students must attend one of these workshops before applying for OPT. If you are graduating in December, you may now apply for post-completion OPT. Remember that USCIS estimates up to 3-5 months for processing of an OPT application.

The final workshop of the semester will be on Monday, 12/9 at 3:30pm in Science Library G-05 (the conference room across from the ISSS office).

Yalda Plus Comedy Night

Join the Iranian Student Association on Sunday, December 15th at 5pm in PAC 223 (Recital Hall) for a night of fun celebrating Yalda with K-von! K-von is the most famous half-Persian comedian in the world, appearing on Netflix and NBC. The event is Free and open to the public. Contact Marzieh-Dehghan Chaleshtori, President of the Iranian Student Association, if you have any questions: mdehghan@albany.edu.
Recruiting research participants for learning about learning!
Earn $10 in cash!

About this study:
Are you a undergraduate/graduate student?
Are you over 18 years old?
Do you interested in helping with real word research?
Do you enjoy puzzles?

Come to our study! You can earn $10 in cash!

If you are interested, contact ELisabethAnn Kelly: ekelly2@albany.edu

4. University at Albany Events
Click Here for a full list of upcoming UAlbany events!

Holiday Concert
Sunday, December 8, 2019 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Performing Arts Center (Main Theatre) Main Campus
Cost: $3-$10
Description: Music Program ensembles (Chorale, Chamber Singers, Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra) are joined by student groups (Serendipity, Earth Tones, Pitch Please, Harmonic Cadences) for a concert celebrating the season.PRESENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND THEATRE

Twenty Drummers Drummin’
Monday, December 9, 2019 8:00 PM - 9:30 PM
Performing Arts Center (Main Theatre) Main Campus
Cost: $3-$10
Description: The University Percussion Ensemble performs.PRESENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND THEATRE

LLC Seminar Series: Podcast Program Reveal
Tuesday, December 10, 2019 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Humanities 354
Description: “Student Success Stories” - students will share success stories via podcasts. Co-sponsored by LACS.

Late Night Appetizers
Wednesday, December 11, 2019 8:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Description: Come join us at the Alumni, Indian, or State Quad Dining Room for FREE FOOD for all students with a valid Student ID! No meal plan required!

5. Capital District Events

Annual Schenectady Festival of Trees
Saturday, Dec 7, 2019 until Sunday, Dec 22, 2019 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Schenectady County Historical Society, 32 Washington Avenue Schenectady, NY 12305
Cost: Adults $8, kids under 12 free
For more info, click here

Celebrate the season as we fill our galleries with lighted fir trees! Decorated from classic to kooky Christmas styles, the trees glow with the enchantment of the holidays. Join us throughout December for a shimmering, festive season. Happening at the Schenectady County Historical Society and the YWCA NorthEastern NY Adults.

Handel's Messiah
Sunday, Dec 8, 2019 3:00 PM to 5:30 PM
St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 107 State St Albany, NY 12207
Cost: FREE ADMISSION
For more info, click here

The Choir and soloists of St. Peter's Episcopal Church perform Handel's Messiah under the direction of Neil Keen, accompanied by a chamber orchestra. Admission is Free. Donations received. More information at 518-434-3502

2019 Saratoga Festival of Trees
Today until Sunday, Dec 8, 2019
From December 4-8, 2019, the city of Saratoga Springs will come together to celebrate the holiday season. The Saratoga Springs City Center will be transformed into a winter fantasy filled with the bright colors and twinkling lights we all adore. Between the many events, including Family Day Breakfast and Sundaes with Santa and the Preview Reception, the Festival is a joyously fun way to kick off the holiday season for children and adults alike. The Festival’s main attraction is a wonderland of over 250 delightfully decorated trees, wreaths and centerpieces all donated and designed by community sponsors. Visitors are encouraged to savor in this visual feast and experience the magical moments that fill our spirit with hope and gladness every holiday season.

**Interfaith Story Circle - Stories of Our Ancestors and the Land**

Tuesday, Dec 10, 2019 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
Congregation Berith Sholom, 167 Third Street Troy, NY 12180  
Cost: FREE ADMISSION  
For more info, click [here](#)

Guest teller Leah Penniman, founding co-director of Soul Fire Farm and long-time member of Congregation Berith Sholom, will share her stories that teach a next generation of farmers how to be in the right relationship with the earth. When living in Ghana, West Africa, the elder women of the community incredulously interrogated young Leah, “Is it true that in the United States, the farmers will plant a seed, and they will not dance, or sing, or pray, or pour any offering on the ground, or even say thank you to the earth? Do they know the earth is alive? That our ancestors speak to us from that soil? No wonder you are all sick!” Leah and her partner built Soul Fire Farm in Grafton on the understanding that the earth is alive, that our ancestors are present, and that all beings are our siblings.
19th Annual Santa's Play Land Open House

Friday, Dec 13, 2019 until Saturday, Dec 14, 2019

Quick Response Restoration, 2077 Route 9 Round Lake, NY 12151

Cost: FREE ADMISSION

For more info, click here

For 19 year's Quick Response has been transforming their property into a magical winter wonderland for the holiday season. A community favorite, this entire event is free. Come visit with Santa and other costume characters. Take a ride on one of their "Quick Express" tractor drawn train rides or enjoy a horse and wagon ride. Children can also enjoy a selection of kiddie rides. Refreshments of cookies, popcorn and hot chocolate will be served at no charge. For the safety of everyone parking is once again offsite. Please follow the signs and shuttle bus service will bring you to the property.