James E. Smith Midwest Conference on World Affairs

Planning is under way for the 2018 James E. Smith Midwest Conference on World Affairs, scheduled to take place Monday and Tuesday, October 22-23, in the Ponderosa Rooms of the Nebraskan Student Union. The theme of this year’s conference is The World in Crisis: A Call to Activism. Some speakers who will make presentations at the conference include:

Kerry Emanuel. Professor of Atmospheric Science and Co-Director of the Lorenz Center at MIT. Emanuel’s research interests focus on tropical meteorology and climate, with a specialty in hurricane physics. His interests also include cumulus convection, and advanced methods of sampling the atmosphere in aid of numerical weather prediction.

Jane Kleeb, an experienced grassroots organizer, manager, political strategist and nonprofit entrepreneur. In 2010, she founded Bold Nebraska, leading farmers, ranchers and Native allies in an effort to stop the Keystone XL pipeline. Bold Nebraska expanded into the national Bold Alliance, focusing on protecting property rights, water, and clean energy transition.

José Ballesteros is the co-founder and editor of Zozobra Publishing, a bilingual press that seeks to publish exceptional Spanish language poetry in the U.S. Ballesteros and Sami Miranda, a Washington DC-based educator, poet and visual artist, recently collaborated on Knocking on the Door of the Whitehouse: Latina and Latino Poets in Washington DC, which showcases activist voices protesting the treatment of Latinos under the current presidential administration.

Some additional speakers include Floating Doctors Founder Dr. Ben LeBrot, professors from University of Alaska Anchorage and Colgate University in New York, and representatives of the Peace Corps, Callaway United Methodist Church, and Liberty in North Korea. Go to unk.edu/worldaffairs for conference updates.

The World Affairs Conference got its start in 1964, with the objective to “awaken and properly channel the interest of our future leaders in education in the search for an understanding of the issues facing the peoples of the world.” In 1988, the objectives expanded to reflect the new global economy and accentuate the problems and opportunities arising from interdependence, while enhancing international awareness in Nebraska for both students and civic leaders.
School Visit Outreach Program

UNK international students enjoy being ambassadors and sharing their country’s culture on campus through country-specific festivals, the International Food and Cultural Festival and International Education Week activities.

In order to increase internationalization efforts in central Nebraska, the Office of International Education has revitalized another cultural sharing opportunity, the School Visit Outreach Program.

This program gives students the chance to visit area public and private schools to educate children on the history, culture, traditions, language, games, music, dance, and clothing of their countries.

Given our geographic location and smaller population, there are fewer opportunities for Kearney area children to interact with people from other countries and cultures. This program opens the door to building cultural bridges early in the students’ lives, sparking in them an interest in broadening their cultural horizons.

International students from Chile, China, Finland, India, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Oman, Spain, and Vietnam have visited Broken Bow and Kearney elementary and middle schools this year. Additionally, Nepalese students visited an assisted living facility, and a home for Alzheimer’s patients.
In recent years, Sonja Bickford, UNK assistant professor of Communication, has taken groups of UNK students to tour Scandinavia. During these trips, they visited the University of Tampere, Finland. The students from both universities connected particularly well, so Bickford, and Antti Lönnqvist, faculty of Management at Tampere, felt a partnership would be beneficial.

In the spring of 2017, UNK and Tampere University developed an exchange agreement. The program is now in full swing, with UNK hosting its first three exchange students from Tampere University: Veera Lilja, Mikael Honkola, and Tuukka Luomaranta.

In August, Bickford will take a group of UNK students to attend University of Tampere’s summer school program, where they will take classes and participate in additional social and cultural programming. They will be joined by exchange students from all over the world.

Six students have completed the application for the summer program, which will be especially adventurous for one student who has never left Nebraska! Besides Bickford, Jake Jacobsen, senior lecturer in the Department of Communication will accompany the students.

As for the three Finnish students whose semester is nearly over, they have reflected on their time at UNK. Lilja said, “It has been amazing to see how friendly people are here.” They have also appreciated the recreation facilities at UNK, saying, “The concept of intramurals is something new for us and it has been awesome to get involved in those activities.” The size of the campus was another UNK attribute they have enjoyed, noting its “coziness and convenience.”

Assistant Director of International Education, Tracy Falconer, has been selected to be a member of the NAFSA (Association of International Educators) Trainer Corps. The NAFSA Trainer Corps is made up of approximately 300 member volunteers who develop, deliver, and maintain the NAFSA Core Education Program (CEP) curriculum and materials. Trainer Corps members deliver CEP Workshops at various events, programs, meetings, and conferences throughout the year, including NAFSA’s Annual Conference, Regional Conferences, and On-Site offerings all over the country.

The NAFSA Trainer Corps Program provides an array of professional development opportunities for Trainer Corps members, including:
- Gaining valuable training skills
- Sharing core job knowledge
- Keeping abreast of changes in the field
- Networking with other international educators

Trainer Corps members are recognized as valuable leaders within their regions and Knowledge Communities. They are ambassadors for the NAFSA CEP workshops and e-Learning courses, which build fundamental international education professional competencies for international educators throughout their career. Trainer Corps provides service and opportunity for giving back to the development and advancement of international educators all over the world.
Meeting Fellow International Alumni While Traveling the World by Camila Main, Colombia

Adam (Main) and I left Thailand in March 2017 to travel around the world. After living in Thailand for two years it was time to come home, so Adam [now husband, then fiancé] and I decided to make our way back west slowly while visiting different countries in Asia and Europe. Also, it would be a great opportunity to reconnect with and visit UNK friends I made during my undergraduate career. In fact, while we lived in Thailand in 2015, we went to Vietnam where we visited Hoa Tran Minh To, then a UNK student, now UNK international alumni. It was great to meet with her and share a meal together!

After having that experience with Hoa, I knew I had to visit more international friends. So, in March of 2017 we started in Indonesia and stayed in Bali. Then we headed to Nepal where we would be trekking in the Himalayas. Due to time constraints, I couldn’t see UNK alum Grishma Ojha, even though we stayed in touch. I was able, however, to visit Honorary UNK graduate Mr. Mahabir Pun’s café in the center of Kathmandu. It was a great honor to be there, see his UNK diploma and some of his more notable efforts to bring the Internet to the remote villages of Nepal.

After Nepal we travelled to Turkey. Istanbul has to be one of my favorite cities in the world. There we were able to reconnect with Baris Bicer, from Turkey, and Jenny McMurtry, a UNK alum from Nebraska. Jenny and Baris showed us around Istanbul and treated us like royalty. Baris and his family kindly hosted us in his native town of Izmit, about 2 hours from Istanbul. It was lovely to meet his parents and spend a weekend meeting his friends and, now wife, Elif. It was an amazing experience!

Then we moved to Western Europe. In Berlin, Germany we were able to visit my wonderful friend Valentyna. She was an exchange student at UNK from Ukraine in 2008. Valentyna and I had travelled together before. In 2008 she spent Christmas break with my family in Mexico, but I had not seen her since she left Kearney in 2009. Berlin is such a fascinating city, filled with history and wonderful places. Valen showed us around and shared amazing hidden places. Not to mention, we were able to sit down and talk, reminiscing about our memorable time at UNK, and sharing plans and hopes for the future. Even though we had not seen each other in nine years, it was like time had not passed.

Last but not least, Barcelona, Spain. My fellow Colombian UNK graduate and dearest friend Maria Victoria Rojas now lives in Spain. I couldn’t leave Europe without seeing her. Maria graduated from Kearney Catholic and then finished her undergraduate degree at UNK in 2010. Even though we had met in Colombia after leaving UNK, we were also able to share some time in Barcelona, doing some sight seeing and celebrating together. We experienced Barcelona just like locals do, and not like tourists.

Besides getting to visit over 18 cities during our travels, one of the best memories was to share and spend time with fellow international UNK alumni, who I am so proud and honored to call friends.

International Alumni, we want to keep in contact with you!
◆ Please go to unk.edu/international to update your contact information and tell us what you are up to these days
◆ Catch up on news and happenings by reading the UNK Global Newsletters
◆ See the campus activity calendar or access the UNK Alumni Association website
◆ Join the UNK International Alumni Facebook group to read about happenings on campus and around Kearney
◆ If you are interested in being a person prospective students could email about life at UNK, send an email to international@unk.edu.
◆ Finally, many current international students heard about UNK by “word of mouth.” Please share your UNK experience with your friends and relatives so they can receive the same great education you did!
Roy Machamire and his sister, Beatrice Machamirie-Ogomo, both UNK class of 2013, are Difference Makers. Being born and raised in Zimbabwe, and now living in the U.S. has given them exposure to two very different sides of the coin of life. One side has tremendous opportunities, and the other has severe limitations for one to grow into his or her full potential. Since childhood, Roy has dreamed of giving orphans and underprivileged children greater opportunities to thrive.

Last year in a conversation with Beatrice about street-kids, he learned that she has the same dream. They decided it was time to begin the process of creating the International Shine Bright Foundation. The first step was to put together a team of people who were like-minded in their passion to empower less-advantaged children, to give them hope and opportunity. Some were known through business associations; others were UNK and graduate school classmates.

Shine Bright is currently serving several less-advantaged children in the small village of Muziti, in the city of Rusape, Zimbabwe, by ensuring they are able to be enrolled in local schools. Additionally, they have acquired a small parcel of land in Muziti for a home for orphaned children.

The primary challenge for many orphanages in poor, developing countries is their rural location. Due to a resource disadvantage, many are dependent upon government support or donor funding, but when these funding sources end, the children become homeless and hungry.

The Shine Bright solution is multifaceted. First, they will ensure that poor, less-advantaged children receive an education, and they will equip them with life skills in order to gain employment through technical or manual labor, or even become entrepreneurs and start their own businesses. Shine Bright will also teach the kids to be good stewards of the resources they have in order to make a difference in their community.

Next, the orphanages will work towards becoming self-sustaining in order to be free from having to depend on government funding or other organizations. They will provide children with a safe and loving environment, clean water, and the establishment of gardens, orchards, chicken coops and rabbit hutch in order to grow and raise their own food. Additionally, they will create opportunities for service projects and other work to generate income.

Ultimately, the long term goal is to instill in the children the same dream of making a difference, thus creating a cycle of giving where the children who have graduated will “pay it forward” through helping the next generation of under-privileged children in Muziti and beyond.

For more information: shinebrightinternational.org

International Student Services Implements Career Prep Initiatives

International Student Services (ISS) has implemented a new initiative aimed at helping students prepare to make a successful transition from pursuing their education to pursuing their career.

Held in conjunction with the UNK career and graduate school fairs, ISS partners with the College of Business and Technology Career Center to present a career workshop for international students looking for internships or jobs.

The career workshop addresses skills necessary for effectively searching for a job, including: cultural norms of networking in the U.S., resume review, do’s and don’ts during an interview, how to respond to questions on immigration status, how to explain Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical training (OPT), and how to bring up sponsorship for a professional work visa.

International student advisors also have a table at the fair to be an on-hand resource for international students who have questions or need advising during the event.

In addition to the career workshops, ISS holds other workshops for international students looking for internship opportunities.

CPT workshops are for current students wanting to do internships as part of their degree programs. The purpose is to inform students of the process for applying for CPT to ensure that their off-campus internship does not violate their immigration status. It also addresses the responsibilities of the student to the employer.

OPT workshops inform upcoming graduates of the timing and application process for a one-year work permit following their graduation. This permit allows them to gain work experience in the U.S. in a position related to their degree. In addition to the application process, the workshop touches on reporting responsibilities during their period of OPT.
Three cultural festivals were held on campus during the spring semester. They include the Japanese Festival, hosted by the Japanese Association of Kearney; the Chinese Spring Festival, hosted by the Chinese Students and Scholars Association; and the Scott D. Morris International Food and Cultural Festival, hosted by the International Student Association. The students involved in each of these organizations came together to share modern and traditional cultural performances, delicious foods, and other games and activities with the UNK campus and Kearney area community members.

Chinese Festival

Japanese Festival

Scott D. Morris International Food and Cultural Festival

Food & Cultural Festival photos courtesy of UNK News and Communication