International Alumni Reunion

There was a gathering of long-time friends and familiar faces during UNK Homecoming 2017 that had not occurred in previous celebrations. This year, more than thirty international alumni, plus family members, residing in the U.S. and abroad made their way back to campus for the first ever UNK International Alumni Reunion. The Office of International Education and the Alumni Association hosted the event.

Maha Ghamedi, ’98 traveled the greatest distance, from Dammam, Saudi Arabia, to attend the reunion. Others flew in from Sweden, Japan and The Bahamas.

Alumni in attendance represented classes ranging from 1986 to 2014, though most graduated between 1998 and 2005. “The reunion gave me the opportunity to engage with old friends and meet new friends. It brought to mind what I learned in the U.S. when I was a UNK student,” said Hisako Horie, ’09 who traveled from Japan to attend the reunion.

For Jerry Fox, retired director of International Education, and Alumni Association LEAD Council member, the reunion was personally fulfilling. Fox stated, “The reunion gave me a chance to reconnect with students, many who I had not seen in years. It was great to see so many former students, several with their children. Students spend an average of four years on our campus and then move on. I always wonder what happens to all these wonderful people, knowing I may never see them again after they graduate. This reunion offers the opportunity to reconnect and learn about each other’s lives. It is a great event that we hope will continue for years to come.”

The reunion opened Thursday, September 14th with an informal reception at Cunningham’s Bar and Grill, owned by Yousef Ghamedi, ’01. Friday gave alumni the opportunity to spend the day visiting classes and professors, touring the campus, and gathering for an evening bbq under the tent. On Saturday, alumni participated in the Homecoming parade and tailgated prior to the football game.

The reunion closed with a celebration banquet during which the guests heard from Fox; Vice President of Alumni Relations and Development, Lucas Dart; Past President of the Alumni Association, Jack Kreman; Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Charlie Bicak; and Chancellor Doug Kristensen. Additionally, Annica (Nystrom) Hultfeldt, ’00 spoke about giving back to the University through donations to the Foundation’s International Education Fund.

“International students have played a very important role on our campus, helping shape our identity. It’s essential that we use this first reunion as a launching pad to much closer engagement with international alumni, whether they live in the U.S. or abroad.”, stated Lucas Dart at the conclusion of the reunion.
New Dual Graduate Degree Program Offering

The International University of Languages and Media—Milan (IULM) and UNK have entered into an agreement which enables graduate students from each university to earn dual masters degrees. The degrees include IULM’s Master in Communications and International Relations (MICRI) and UNK’s Master in Business Administration (MBA).

College of Business and Technology Dean Tim Burkink, and Director of the UNK MBA program, Dr. Sri Seshadri traveled to Milan in early November to present the program offering to the cohort of students recently enrolled in the MICRI program at IULM. The MICRI students who enroll in this dual-degree program will arrive in May of 2018. With the transfer of 9 IULM credits to UNK, they should earn the dual degrees within two years.

UNK first established a relationship with IULM during the fall of 2015, with the first group of UNK students participating in a three-week Summer in Milan program in June of 2016. In addition to seven credit hours in coursework in Italian language, fashion design, economies and the creative industries, and topics in international studies, the program includes a full introduction into the city of Milan with accompanied fieldtrips to exhibition centers and museums.

During the summers of 2016 and 2017, UNK hosted more than twenty graduate students from IULM for two weeks. While visiting UNK, the students met with professors on campus and professionals in the community, visited local media and marketing companies, and took a fieldtrip to Lincoln and Omaha. They also met with UNK students preparing to depart for their Summer in Milan program. The Summer ‘17 group of MICRI students also developed the Open for Business issue, publishing their experiences and learning during their visit to UNK.

Falcorner Presents at Kearney Area Chamber Seminar

The Kearney area Chamber of Commerce hosted a Chamber YOUniversity seminar, entitled Knowing the International Employment Laws, on October 25th. The seminar came about as a result of the initiative of UNK Assistant Director of International Student Services, Admissions and Immigration, Tracy Falconer.

Falcorner approached the Chamber earlier this year to discuss the best ways to disseminate information to the local business community on basic legalities surrounding the hiring of international employees. After meeting with the Chamber Membership and Program Director, Shanna Schulte, the seminar developed into a session that would help local businesses realize the value of hiring international students for internships and beyond.

Falcorner’s aim was to assist local business people in understanding that hiring international students is not a challenging paperwork process nor is it costly for employers. It is her hope that more local companies and businesses will provide internship and employment opportunities to UNK international students.

In addition to Falcorner, the business community heard from Randy Kissinger with the Nebraska Department of Labor, and Ryan Carson with Jacobson, Orr, Lindstrom, and Holbrook, PC LLO.
International students were given the opportunity to assist with the first-ever campus-wide diversity event, *Piece by Piece*. The goal of the event, organized by the Offices of Residence Life and Multicultural Affairs, was to create a more inclusive campus atmosphere through educating students on various diversity topics.

*Piece by Piece* was held September 27th in Nester Hall. During this unique event, students were guided through simulations held in different areas of the building.

Simulation One focused on race and culture stereotypes. Stickers naming a specific race or culture were placed on students’ backs. Students then described what was on each others’ sticker using only stereotypes, allowing them to experience the impact of stereotypes and how hurtful they are.

Simulation Two was an educational room dealing with the experiences of international students. Students from various countries discussed cultural differences they've encountered and hardships they've overcome. The goal was to help domestic students and other international students understand cultural differences faced by the large population of international students at UNK.

Simulation Three was also an educational room. Students were divided into groups and were tasked with brainstorming about hardships related to having a disability. The goal was to have students think more deeply about and gain greater insight into how profoundly people with disabilities are affected.

Simulation Four was the "Star Activity". Students selected a colored star and wrote the name of someone important to them on each corner. The room monitor read various scenarios to the students - causing them to rip, fold, or keep their star the same. The goal of the activity was to bring awareness to the hardships the LGBTQ+ community faces.

One of the most beautiful things about the world we live in is that everyone is different. Unfortunately, this individuality often leads people to be mistreated and misunderstood. Rather than being ashamed of one’s individuality, one should embrace it. *Piece by Piece* provided a safe space for education and awareness, and I hope the students learned more about diversity and how to welcome individual differences.

Ashley Bruha  
Graduate Assistant  
Residence Life and Multicultural Affairs  

Photos courtesy of University Communications and Marketing
ELI’s Adventurous Fieldtrip

Who knew perfecting English could be this exciting? Traci Gunderson, assistant director of international recruitment, marketing and the English Language Institute (ELI) did. Gunderson, who has fond childhood memories of Timberlake Ranch Camp, felt the Central Nebraska campground would be the perfect destination for an overnight fieldtrip for ELI students and staff.

According to Gunderson, “The idea behind ELI sponsored fieldtrips is cultural and linguistic immersion; getting students out of their comfort zones and into unusual environments that demand the use of the language with people other than their roommates and classmates.”

Exposure to new aspects of American culture and tradition expands the students’ understanding of Americans and what they value. Timberlake gave this group the opportunity to experience things that do not exist in some of their home countries; the overnight accommodations, for example, were The Fort.

Activities included canoeing and paddle-boatting, a high ropes course, jumping off power poles, zip-lining, volleyball, Zorb ball, and singing around a campfire.

Piano Performance Major Places in Recent Competition

Kangyoung Ban, an exchange student from South Korea, placed second in the collegiate piano performance category of the Nebraska Music Teachers Association (NMTA) State Conference.

Ban is a junior majoring in piano performance at Pusan National University, her home university in Busan, South Korea. She arrived in Kearney in mid-August.

While on exchange at UNK, Ban is taking piano lessons from Ja Young Hong, Collaborative Pianist with the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance.

“Even though this semester is her first time in the U.S., she entered two competitions and played wonderfully. Her beautiful tone and accurate technique enabled her to perform the Prokofiev Sonata No.2, Op.14 and the first movement of Beethoven Sonata Op.10 No.2 successfully.”, said Hong, speaking of the NMTA competition.

Kangyoung Ban
International Education Week

International Education Week, November 13-17, is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. It is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education in order to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences.

Individuals and institutions that have an interest in international education are encouraged to participate by holding events and activities. The Office of International Education and the International Studies Program partnered to hold several activities on campus during International Education Week.

Activities included:

- Daily brown bag lunch sessions with presentations by the following UNK faculty members
  - Dr. Toni Hill and Dr. Tami Moore—Department of Family Studies and Interior Design
  - Dr. Chuck Rowling—Department of Political Science
  - Dr. Carol Lilly—Department of History
  - Dr. Tim Johnson and Dr. Michelle Warren—Department of Modern Languages
  - Dr. Nate Bickford—Department of Biology
  - Dr. Fletcher Ziwoya—Department of Communication

- A panel of UNK faculty and staff who were once international students studying in the U.S.
  - Dr. Kazuma Akehi—Department of Kinesiology and Sports Sciences
  - Mr. Jake Kim—Office of International Education
  - Mr. J.P. Birbal—Office of Academic Services and Enrollment Management

- UNK international student organizations sharing cultural activities and language lessons in the Nebraskan Student Union Atrium

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 has been going on in your life since you left UNK.
- 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 internationaled@unk.edu.
- Finally, many of our 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!
Fall Cultural Festivals

Three cultural festivals were held during the fall 2017 semester. They include the Oman National Day celebration on Friday, November 17, the Korean Festival on Sunday, November 19, and the Nepali Night celebration on Sunday, December 3. Enjoy this selection of photos from the festivals.

Oman National Day

Korean Festival

Nepali Night

The University of Nebraska Kearney is an affirmative action / equal opportunity institution. Individuals needing accommodation under ADA should contact the ADA coordinator at UNK, 308.865.8655.