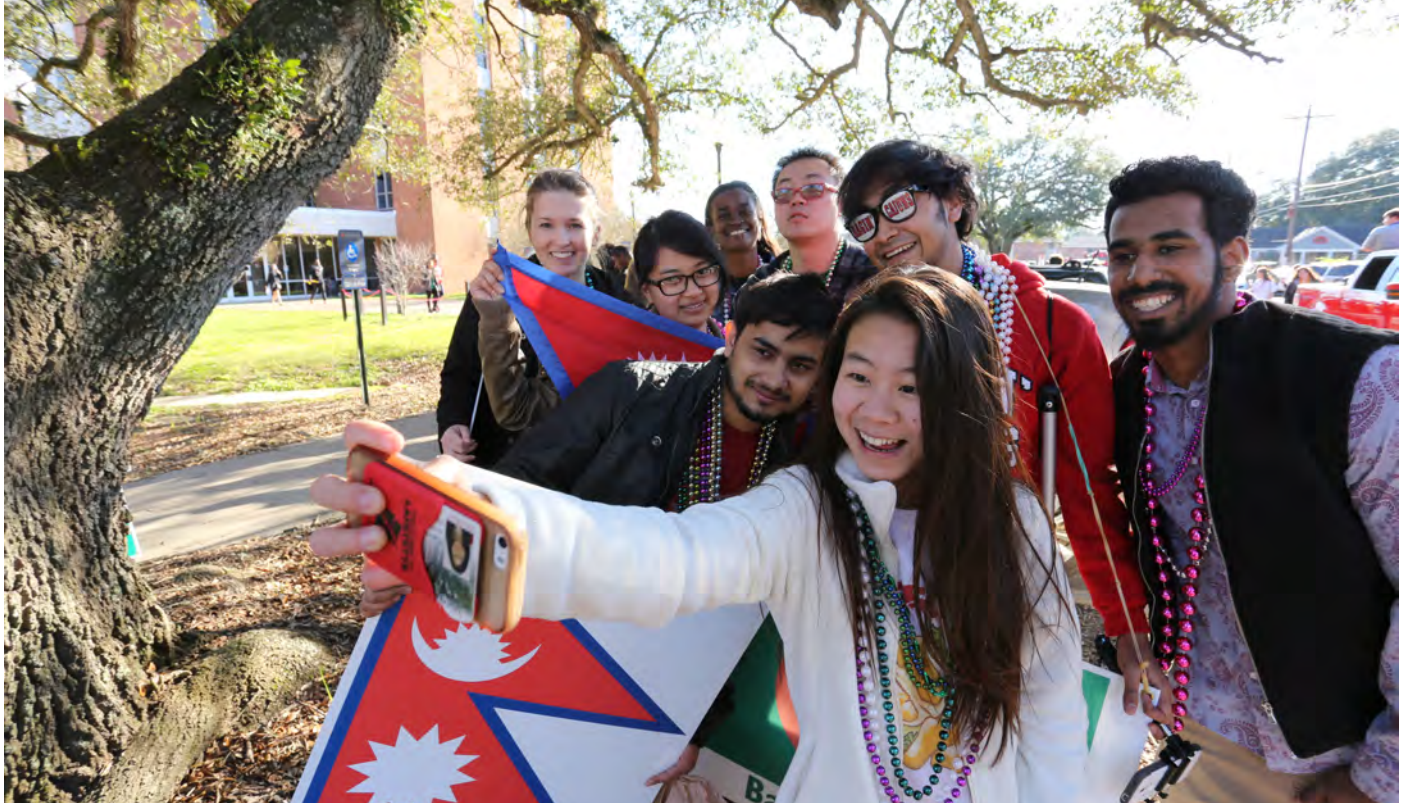




UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE DIVISION OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT



February 2021 Newsletter



Inside the Issue

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

We talked to master's student Navid Yousuf about his experiences as president of the Bangladeshi Students' Association and what he loves about UL Lafayette.

FILING STUDENT TAX RETURNS

We discuss how non-resident students in the U.S. can learn more about filing their 2020 tax returns.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

We list important dates you need to know for this semester and provide important resources you might need in the near future.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: NAVID YOUSUF

Meet your classmates!



Navid Yousof is a graduate student from Bangladesh pursuing a Master's degree in Petroleum Engineering.

Why did you choose to attend UL Lafayette?

I decided to come to UL Lafayette because of its reputation and the highly regarded research facilities of its Petroleum Engineering department. When I received the offer from the university as a graduate research assistant, I took the opportunity without any second thought. Currently, I am involved in a research project funded by the Department of Energy. Additionally, the subtropical climate of the city influenced me to come over here as I come from a similar kind of region.

What has been your fondest memory of your time at UL Lafayette?

Being the President of the Bangladeshi Students' Association (BSA) at UL has been one of my most delightful experiences over the past year. It has provided me the opportunity to engage with the nicest people of the DGE as well as the ISC. It has been an honor and at the same time, a great feeling to represent my country and the community here at the university level. Moreover, it gives me immense pleasure that I have been able to reach out and connect to people during these tough times of the pandemic. Lafayette has really become a home for me out of my home.



OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Students graduating this Spring 2021 semester who wish to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) can apply as early as **February 13th, 2021**. OPT allows F-1 Students to engage in temporary employment to gain practical experience in their field of study. Please visit the DGE's website for application documents and instructions on how to apply. You can also schedule a virtual appointment to meet our staff to discuss your OPT questions. Still have questions regarding OPT? The DGE will host an OPT Information Session on **Wednesday, February 10th, 2021 at 10 a.m.**

FILING TAX RETURNS: SPRINTAX WEBINAR

As an F-1 or J-1 student, it is important to be aware that, as a non-resident student in the U.S., you are legally required to file a tax return if you received U.S. income during 2020. Even if you did not work or receive income in the U.S., you are still obligated to file a Form 8843 with the IRS. To 'file' your taxes means to prepare and submit your income tax return from the previous year to the IRS using federal (and state) forms. The deadline to submit tax forms to the IRS is **Thursday, April 15, 2021**. There are several different ways to file your taxes including using a tax preparation service (Sprintax, Glacier, Taxback), using a certified public accountant (clarifying non-resident tax status), or self-preparation.

The Division of Global Engagement has teamed up with Sprintax to provide you with an easy-to-use tax preparation software designed for non-resident students and scholars in the U.S. Sprintax will guide you through the tax preparation process, arrange the necessary documents, and determine if you are due a tax refund. Sprintax will host a webinar on **Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.** where their staff will provide an overview of the core principles of U.S. non-resident tax for international students and scholars. Topics covered will include who must file a U.S. tax return, residency for tax purposes, FICA, amended returns, implications of misfiling, the stimulus check and much more. The link to the webinar will be sent to the University email of all F-1 and J-1 international students.

Why should other international students choose to attend UL Lafayette?

Along with all the amazing programs offered by the university, Lafayette is a great place to live—the city of the Ragin' Cajuns. You will be able to meet people and friends from all different corners of the world who will make your journey a memorable one.

As an international student, you will have the best care, support, and guidance from every concerning body of the university. Coming here as a graduate student, you will have the privilege to learn from world class professors and use the university's research facilities. Finally, the famous Cajun food and Mardi Gras festivals of Louisiana are worth coming here for!

What's a fun fact about yourself?
I'm super afraid of dogs.

What do you like to do in your free time?
I usually watch movies, listen to songs, and cook traditional Bangladeshi dishes.

What's one of your hobbies?
Although I do not have any professional training in photography, I love to capture photos and videos of the sky and nature.

If you could be any animal, which one would it be?
I would definitely be a bird. One of my lifetime wishes is that as a bird, I'd spread my wings and learn how to fly as a free soul. I would do what it takes till I touch the sky.

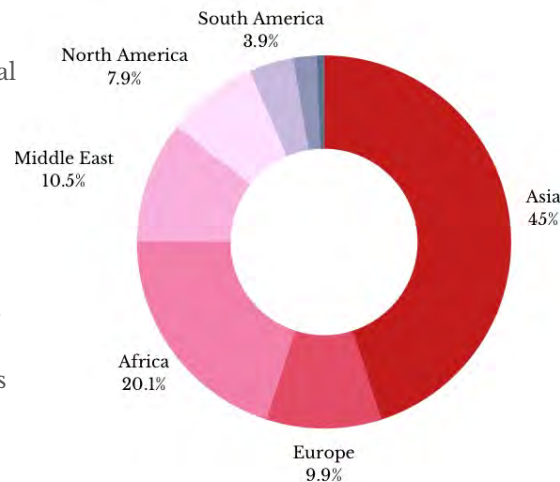
What's your favorite book/movie?
My favorite book is "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho, and one of my favorite movies is "The Pursuit of Happyness."

A quote that you live by:
"There will be ups and downs in our lives. No matter how hard the situation is, never give up."

NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT

This semester the Division of Global Engagement would like to welcome 75 new international Ragin' Cajuns! We are now home to 493 international students who represent 77 different countries.

Our new students come from countries like Bangladesh, Lebanon, Honduras, and many more across the globe. We are so happy to have these students as a part of our Ragin' Cajun family and wish them the best of luck in their collegiate careers.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month, a time for celebrating African-American achievements and recognizing their central role in United States history.

Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history.



In celebration, we would like to spread awareness that Lafayette Reads Together (LRT) is highlighting the book *Haben: The Deafblind Woman who Conquered Harvard Law*. Haben is a disability rights lawyer, author, and speaker. The Lafayette Public Library Foundation has donated free copies of the book, available to be picked up at their locations. For more information, visit <http://lafayettepubliclibrary.org/?p=51875>





MARDI GRAS AND KING CAKES

Mardi Gras is coming soon, and everyone is ready for the break and the king cake! Mardi Gras is a very unique holiday that has an exciting history. Set 46 days before Easter and marking the end of carnival season, this tradition coincides with the 40 days of Lent practiced by the Catholic Church. A popular tradition in Louisiana around Mardi Gras season is king cakes. Historically, a token would be placed in the cakes, and whoever found the token was declared royalty for the night. Now, a small plastic baby is put in the cake, and whoever finds it has to buy the next king cake!

King cakes are normally in stores around the beginning of the calendar year and stay on shelves until the day after Mardi Gras. The sweet, circular pastry is believed to have originated in France and Spain, and has travelled to the western world and become one of Louisiana's most anticipated traditions! Even though there won't be any parades this year, we hope you can celebrate Mardi Gras by picking yourself up a tasty king cake!



APPLICATIONS FOR DEGREES

All undergraduate and graduate students completing degree requirements in Spring 2021, Summer 2021, or Fall 2021 must submit an application for a degree. Applications must be submitted online prior to the deadlines listed below. If you have already submitted an application, you do not need to submit another one. Students completing degree requirements in Spring 2021 must apply no later than **Friday, March 5th**. Students who miss the deadline must complete a paper application by emailing graduation@louisiana.edu. Students completing degree requirements in Summer or Fall 2021 must apply and pay the degree fee by **Friday, March 5th**, to receive priority registration for summer and/or fall. Students who miss the deadline will not receive priority registration. Once you submit the online application, the \$90 fee will be assessed to your Statement of Account on ULink. If the fee is not paid at the time the application is submitted, a hold will be placed on your financial account. The application will still be processed.

STUDY ABROAD 2021 UPDATE

The Study Abroad Programs for the summer of 2021 have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the current data and trajectory path, it is not possible to run the programs without placing the health and safety of our students and faculty in jeopardy. Student participants would also be unable to have the full experience of a Study Abroad Program due to the restrictions, closures and the ever-changing schedules that are certain to happen.

We look forward to the summer of 2022 which includes the locations of Costa Rica, London, Paris and Florence.

We are thrilled to share there will be a new location in Rabat, Morocco for those interested in Arabic language and cultural courses.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Year of the Ox

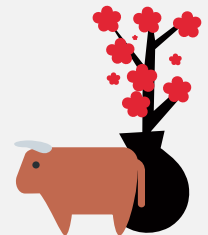
In multiple Asian cultures, Lunar New Year will begin on February 12th, starting with the first new moon of the lunar calendar and lasting until the first full moon.

While cultures vary in tradition, the celebration of the new year and new beginnings is a shared sentiment.

Family celebrations occur on New Year's Eve and on New Year's Day, usually including big meals and religious ceremonies.

A popular symbol of Lunar New Year is the red envelope. These envelopes contain money, but the red color of the envelope itself symbolizes good luck and fortune. On New Year's Day, these red envelopes are exchanged between family members.

In terms of Chinese zodiac, this year will be a year of the ox, specifically, year of the metal ox. The ox is characterized as hard-working, grounded, and trustworthy.



STUDENT RESOURCES & IMPORTANT DATES

Take advantage of these campus resources.

IMPORTANT DATES & REMINDERS

Mardi Gras Holiday-
February 15th-17th

Degree Applications
Due-
March 5th

Advising Begins-
March 15th



EVENTS TO ATTEND

February 10th-
OPT Information Session:
Navigating Post-graduation
Employment
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

March 16th-
Filing Income Tax for
International Students
(Hosted by SPRINTAX) -
12:30 p.m. to 1:30 pm.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Handshake - Looking for a job as a student worker? Create a free account on the Handshake website and fill out a profile to find jobs specifically suited for you.

Free, walk-up COVID-19 testing on campus - Students and faculty and staff members can walk up and receive free tests from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday through the spring semester. The site is located long St. Mary Boulevard in front of Edith Garland Dupré Library. For more information, see the university's website.

Campus Cupboard- Free grab bags with non-perishable food are now available at the IEP building at 413 Brook Ave. Hours are on Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and on Tuesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students who visit the Campus Cupboard will be asked to present their University IDs. Masks required.

INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

2021 Sessions	Deadline for Students outside the U.S.	Deadline for Students inside the U.S.
Spring II 2021 (March 18 – May 14)	February 12, 2021	March 12, 2021
Summer 2021 (June 3 – July 30)	May 7, 2021	May 28, 2021
Fall I 2021 (August 12 – October 8)	June 30, 2021	August 6, 2021
Fall II 2021 (October 14 – December 10)*	September 3, 2021	October 8, 2021

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