Welcome!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the International Office’s quarterly newsletter! With 2,675 current international students, 1,200 international scholars (faculty and researchers) and 300 spouses and family members from over 100 different countries, Northwestern is truly an international community. Our community is growing too: between fall 2009 and fall 2010, NU saw over a 10% increase in the number of international undergraduates alone.

The International Office (IO) is charged with helping this population navigate the regulatory complexities associated with securing a visa abroad, and further supporting their integration and acculturation into the academic and social fabric of NU. This integration is achieved through a variety of programs and events, many of which will be highlighted in this newsletter and in future issues.

The purposes of this newsletter are to provide updates on International Office programming and events, to highlight our fantastic students and scholars, and to personalize international events beyond our campus boundaries. In this issue, you’ll hear first-hand from recent NU Law graduate Mihoko Ida what it was like to experience this spring’s earthquake in Japan; this summer one of our PhD students will report on her involvement in the Tahrir Square protests in Egypt.

Northwestern’s entire community benefits from the rich cultural traditions our international students, faculty and staff bring to our campus. We look forward to updating you quarterly as our community grows in size and diversity.

Best,
Ron Braeutigam
Associate Provost

Spring event highlights

Northwestern’s international students and scholars have had a very busy spring!

-Our new monthly Brown Bag series for international graduate students continues to be popular! In May, students learned about networking from RockStar Consulting founder and NU alum David Fisher.

-The International Student Association (ISA) hosted its annual Formal and the 3rd annual ISA World Cup in April. Hundreds of NU students were involved in the World Cup as players, committee members and fans. Even President Morton Schapiro came by to kick off the games!

-Happy Hours continue to bring our diverse group of international scholars together. This spring, we enjoyed evenings at Timothy O’Toole’s in Chicago and Bat 17 & Tommy Nevin’s in Evanston.

-We held a reception to honor our outgoing International Peer Advisors (IPAs) and welcome our newest members. IPAs will serve as group leaders and mentors during International Student Orientation and the 2011-2012 academic year.

We look forward to an action-packed summer and fall!
First person perspective: Earthquake in Japan
By Mihoko Ida, NU Law LLM ‘11

I was on board an airplane heading to Japan when the big earthquake occurred. When we were a few hours from arriving at Narita airport, there was an announcement that Narita was closed due to the earthquake and the subsequent tsunami, and the airplane would go back to Anchorage, Alaska. After one day in Alaska, I was able to go back to Japan.

I really worried about my family in Japan during our detour to Anchorage. In Anchorage, I was able to contact my husband by e-mail. He was on the way to Narita to pick me up. My three-year daughter was with my parents in Ibaraki (located next to Fukushima province), but neither my husband nor I was able to confirm her safety because the power as well as other utilities were out. It took seven hours by car for my husband to return to our hometown (a trip that is usually only one hour). He was able to finally see our daughter.

Now I am with my family safely in Chicago. However, many people are still missing because of the tsunami, and the aftershocks often occur. The nuclear power plant issue has not yet been settled. I appreciate your continuous support of Japan as we recover from this natural disaster.

International Admissions Update

International undergraduates continue to apply to Northwestern in record numbers. The number of international applicants has increased almost five times in the last decade, according to Aaron Zdawcyzk, Associate Director of Admission. Zdawcyzk and two of his colleagues in the Undergraduate Admissions office are responsible for recruiting international students.

“Part of this increase can be attributed to the entry of Chinese students into the undergraduate applicant pool in the mid-2000s and the introduction of the Common Application” reports Zdawcyzk. Additionally, the introduction of international financial aid in the 2004-2005 academic year also diversified the applicant pool, bringing students from Romania, Bulgaria, Ghana, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Tajikistan and more, Zdawcyzk says.

Northwestern’s class of 2014 (current freshmen) enrolled 130 international students. Zdawcyzk estimates that the number of enrolling international students will remain constant, but also has the potential to increase.

The top sending countries for the class of 2015 are similar to previous years: Korea, China and Hong Kong, India, Canada, Singapore and Turkey. Zdawcyzk reports noticeable increases in applicants from the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, while new sending countries include Myanmar, Mauritius, Kyrgyzstan, Swaziland, New Zealand, and Cameroon.

“It’s an exciting time for Northwestern!” says Zdawcyzk. In the fall of 2011, he and his colleagues plan to visit even more countries on recruitment visits, and aim to continue NU’s upward international admissions trend. It’s an exciting time for the International Office too, as we prepare to welcome even more international undergraduates into the Northwestern community!
Student Spotlight

NU Men’s tennis team member Tobias Reitz serves up a winning combination of athletic dominance and academic prowess. A junior from Reinbeck, Germany, Reitz has defeated several tough foes in key matches this spring. Off the court, he stays busy tackling classes: he’s double-majoring in Economics and Mathematics, as well as completing Kellogg’s Certificate for Undergraduates in Financial Economics.

Reitz first heard about Northwestern through a fellow tennis player and Reinbeck native. He likes living close to Chicago and Lake Michigan and loves the English language. Outside Chicago, he loves New York, and plans to work there this summer and hopefully after graduation too. He misses “being able to travel to a lot of different countries, eating a lot of seafood and my family.” His favorite NU class has been Principles of Finance, which Reitz says “I feel like I can apply the material that I learned in my future career.”

The men’s tennis team is “competing very well this year, and getting better with each match,” according to Reitz. He hopes to finish his strong season by playing in the NCAA tournament.

How does Reitz balance his athletic and academic responsibilities? The time-demanding nature of college sports has driven Reitz to be efficient, focused and time-management savvy. He says he tries to find separate school and tennis completely, and aims to excel in both. Free time is spent relaxing with friends.

Reitz advises future NU international students to “enjoy your time at Northwestern! Being an international student at NU is an amazing opportunity.” With his successes in athletics and academics, Reitz has certainly taken full advantage of his first three years at Northwestern.

Scholar spotlight

Kenyan scholar Hassan Ndzovu first visited Northwestern as a visiting scholar in 2007 and came back this year with an exciting project. Hailing from the city of Eldoret, Dr. Ndzovu is a professor of Religious Studies at Moi University. At Northwestern, he is currently a post-doctoral fellow with the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) at the Program of African Studies. Dr. Ndzovu’s research focuses on “the changing relationship between Muslims and various political orders in Kenya from pre-colonial times to the present,” and he is currently revising his PhD dissertation on the topic for publication by Northwestern University Press. As a post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Ndzovu also taught an undergraduate course on Islam and politics in Africa, which he describes as “fun and a learning experience for me too.”

Dr. Ndzovu first heard about Northwestern back in 2004, when his academic advisor Ruediger Seesemann was leaving the University of Bayreuth in Germany to join Northwestern’s Department of Religious Studies. He later was invited by ISITA to present at a conference in 2007, and first came to NU later that year to assist Dr. Seesemann in analyzing and cataloging popular religious materials that had been collected from East Africa.

NU’s University Library has been “wonderful” in helping him prepare his book manuscript, reports Dr. Ndzovu. He is also very grateful for the office space provided, which has enabled him to have a good working environment. Dr. Ndzovu most misses “my beautiful daughters, Swabra and Jamilla.”

Dr. Ndzovu advises future international scholars to “be prepared for both hard work and fun.” He calls NU “one of the best places to work in the US,” and is happy to have “been given the opportunity to be part of the university family.” Dr. Ndzovu will be returning to Kenya at the end of the academic year and we wish him all the best!
Upcoming Events!

- The monthly Brown Bag lunch and learn series for international graduate students will continue over the summer. Upcoming topics include: Resume Building (June 3) and Travel in America (July 1).
- Fall orientations are just around the corner! International Graduate Student orientation: September 7, 2011
  International scholar spouse/family orientation: October 13, 2011
- Undergraduates:
  International Student Orientation:
  September 9-12, 2011
  International Parent & Family Orientation:
  September 9, 2011
For more information, please visit northwestern.edu/international

About the International Office @ Northwestern University

The International Office (IO) provides professional support and advising services to international students and scholars at Northwestern University regarding their immigration status in the United States. The IO is committed to providing quality advising services and supportive programming to students, scholars, and their dependents in F-1, J-1, and H-1B visa categories, among others. The Community Council for International Students (CCIS), our affiliate community organization, provides numerous programs that further augment the mission of the International Office and the overall integration of our international student population.

Our goal is to help the international students, scholars, and Northwestern faculty and staff, navigate the many complexities associated with student- and employment-based visa classifications within the Northwestern community. We are committed to providing our clients with accurate information and the highest quality of service, taking into account institutional policies and ever-changing federal regulations.