

Dear Student,

On behalf of the ISSS office, we would like to wish you a happy new year and a happy year of the ox. This time of year is usually a time to think about new beginnings, but this year feels like an especially important turning point. We look forward to a healthy and prosperous year ahead that will allow us to gather in-person more frequently and enable our community to come together on campus in the fall.

Additionally, the ISSS office is encouraged by the recent changes in immigration policies by the new US President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, who is herself the daughter of international students who met at the University of California, Berkeley. We know that stable and reliable immigration policies are critical to your success and ability to pursue your educational goals in the US. We are encouraged by the recent changes and will continue to advocate for policies that reflect the invaluable contributions that international students make to our communities, cities, and campuses.

As the new semester gets underway, we wanted to provide some information on initiatives we have been working on and resources available for you.

Hybrid Classes for New International Students: In order to support new international students arriving in the US, USF created several hybrid classes in our Fall 2020 schedule. These hybrid meetings were held in outdoor classrooms over a two-week period in November. The meetings not only met immigration compliance requirements, but also allowed our faculty and students to connect in-person. The USF communications office highlights some of these experiences in [this article](#). USF will offer these classes again for SEVIS initial students arriving in spring, and we plan to hold similar meetings in April. Students who are enrolled in a hybrid class to maintain their immigration status should look for an email in the middle of February with more details.

Course Adjustments for Different Time Zones: We have heard from many students about the challenges of time zone differences. Based on your feedback, USF analyzed the classes that international students enroll in most frequently and made evening or morning options available. We hope that our undergraduate students have been able to find schedules that work for them, and our graduate students have continued to work with their academic departments to manage the time differences. If you are struggling with your class times or accessing course materials, please talk with your faculty to see what assistance they can provide.

ISSS Town Hall Session: On Feb. 16 at 5 p.m., ISSS will offer an informational and discussion based session to help familiarize you with ISSS services, learn about the different types of work authorization, and give you a chance to ask your questions. You can register now online for the **ISSS Town Hall**, or email iss@usfca.edu if you have any questions.

ISSS Chat Feature is Live: We know you have questions and we want to help you get answers as quickly and as seamlessly as possible. To assist with this, ISSS has implemented a chat feature on our <https://myusf.usfca.edu/iss> pages. When on our website, look for the chat icon and you can type, or video call to ask your question. The chat feature will be live Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. PT, and Tuesday/Thursday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. PT. If you visit our page during this time and do not see the icon, please wait a couple of minutes and check again because the chat capacity is limited to a few students at a time.

Student Advisory Council (SAC) for International Initiatives: If you are interested in global education and international student issues you should apply for the Office of International Initiatives (OII) Student Advisory Committee (SAC). The role of SAC is to give voice to the wide-ranging interests of the student body as far as international education and international student issues and to help reflect student priorities to OII. All USF undergraduate students are **welcome to apply**.

Student Engagement Opportunities: Although we are spread out around the globe we are still a community and staying connected inside and outside of the classroom is an important part of your learning experience. We strongly recommend joining the **Conversation Partner Program** to practice your language skills and make a friend. You can also connect with other students in a stress-free and casual environment at Cafe International (next event is Feb. 7, [register here](#)). Or consider becoming a member of the International Student Association (ISA) through Instagram [@isa.usfca](#) or email isa.usfca@gmail.com.

International Shipping of Books: We are committed to ensuring you have access to the materials you need to thrive academically. We have partnered with the Gleeson Library to offer home delivery, free shipment of physical materials to your home. The Gleeson Library is also offering electronic document delivery, sending you electronic or digitized copies of library materials. [Learn more](#).

We miss seeing all of you on-campus and look forward to our return to campus in the fall. In the meantime we will continue to work closely with campus partners to adapt services to your needs. Your success is our success. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you.

Warm Wishes,

Marcella Pitcher DeProto
Ying-Sing (Cynthia) Lai
Nina Gordon Lopes
Mari McDermott
Sarah Ruskowski
Tina Ricafrente

Join the conversation **#USFCA**



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