



ISS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2025

International Education Month



Every November, UC Merced joins hundreds of higher education institutions and organizations worldwide to celebrate International Education Week (IEW). This year we've expanded the week to a full month of global celebration! This is an opportunity for Bobcats to champion the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide right here on our campus. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education is also part of UC Merced's mission to develop mutual understanding between cultures to support a more global society. Join us as we celebrate International Education Month at UC Merced!

Upcoming Events

Bobcat Cultural Showcase
Wednesday, Nov. 12th
1:00PM–4:00PM
Wallace–Dutra
Ampitheater

Let's Talk Culture
Tuesday, Nov. 18th
1:00PM–2:30PM
COB2 – 290

Global Lounge
Wednesday, Nov. 19th.
1:30PM–3:30PM
COB2 – 390

OPT Workshop
Tuesday, Nov. 25th
3:00PM–4:00PM
COB2 – 290



Contact Rico Johnson at
rjohnson26@ucmerced.edu if you
or your club are interested in
being a part of the our Bobcat
Cultural Showcase!

**Send us your favorite song
so we can add it to our
playlist! Details below:**



Rhythms of the World: A Spotify Playlist

In celebration of International Education Month, we're inviting you to share your favorite songs from around the world by contributing to a community-curated Spotify playlist. Whether it's a track that reminds you of home, a song that inspires global connections, or a melody that transports you to a different culture, we want to hear it! Submit your song suggestions and help us create a diverse soundtrack that reflects the richness and vibrancy of International Education.

[Playlist Submission Form](#)



Policy & Regulation Updates

H-1B PROCLAMATION

On September 21, 2025, the White House issued a proclamation titled Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers. USCIS has clarified this proclamation applies to "new" H-1B petitions. These are petitions filed for individuals outside of the U.S. who currently have no valid visa status in the U.S. The proclamation does not apply to visa holders changing status within the U.S. to H-1B visa status or to current H-1B holders in the U.S. extending or transferring their H-1B status.

PROPOSED D/S RULE

On August 27, 2025, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a proposed rule that would end Duration of Status (D/S) for F and J visa holders. The rule is in the review period. It is not a final rule. If the rule is finalized, several new changes will go into effect. Be sure to follow our emails with updates on this possible new rule.

You can learn more about this proposed rule on our web page:

<https://iss.ucmerced.edu/proposeddurationofstatusrule>

USCIS REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

Earlier this year, Executive Order 14159, **Protecting the American People Against Invasion** was issued which directed the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that aliens comply with their duty to register with the government under section 262 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (8 U.S.C. 1302), and ensure that failure to comply with the registration requirement is treated as a civil and criminal enforcement priority. You can find more information online here <https://www.uscis.gov/alien-registration>

In addition, a new proposed rule was issued last week for comments and then review for 2026. This is called the Collection and Use of Biometrics by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. We will keep you updated on this rule if it becomes finalized next year. You can find more information online here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/03/2025-19747/collection-and-use-of-biometrics-by-us-citizenship-and-immigration-services>

DHS ENDS AUTOMATIC EXTENSION OF EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR SOME VISA HOLDERS

Last Week, the Department of Homeland Security announced an interim final rule ending the practice of automatically extending employment authorization renewals for certain employment authorization categories.

USCIS is eliminating the maximum 540-day automatic extension of Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) that had been available to many EAD categories, including for adjustment of status and H-4 EAD renewal applicants.

Issued through an interim final rule, the new policy applies to certain EAD applications filed on or after October 30, 2025.

This rule will not affect automatic extensions for EADs related to F-1 STEM OPT. Here is the web page for further information.

<https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/dhs-ends-automatic-extension-of-employment-authorization>

!! WINTER BREAK TRAVEL GUIDANCE !!

While the official Duration of Status rule mentioned above is still in the final review phase, we do not have any updates on how it may affect re-entry into the United States if it were to be made final during the winter break. New government policies can go into effect with limited or no notice.

Our office recommends no nonessential international travel at this time especially if you will need to renew your visa stamp.

If you choose to travel, be sure to **obtain a travel signature** on your form I-20 or DS-2019. Again, be aware as stated above that U.S. immigration policies are unpredictable and subject to rapidly change without notice

If you need to **renew your visa** to re-enter the U.S., be sure to check visa appointment wait times. Recent policy states your visa interview must be scheduled in the country of your residence. Also be sure to review the [U.S. Department of State social media guidance](#) on social media vetting and screening. A new \$250 visa integrity fee announced earlier this year may apply when applying for a new visa.



UC MERCED CONTIUNES TO RISE

**UC Merced Named Top 25 Public University
by U.S. News & World Report**

UC Merced was built to advance discovery, expand opportunity and transform lives. Earning a place among the top 25 public universities in our first 20 years and ranking third in social mobility demonstrates that this vision is not only being realized but gaining national recognition.

We are proud to be shaping the future of higher education right here

in the Central Valley.

[Read the full article here!](#)



In Case You Missed It: OIA Events Recap

Exploring San Francisco Together!

The Office of International Affairs led a trip to San Francisco with international undergraduate students. It was an opportunity for students to make new connections while experiencing new adventures in one of California's iconic cities. It was a refreshing break away from classes that left everyone with some unforgettable memories.

Thank you to those students who joined us! ☆

If you're looking for more adventures like this, [check out upcoming trips through UC Merced Recreation.](#)



Staff Spotlight

For the Month of November: **Kassity Veloz** **Your International Student Visa Specialist**



Hi everyone! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Kassity Veloz, and I'm the International Student Visa Specialist!

Before working in International Education, I lived abroad in Japan for three years, teaching English. Like many of you reading this, I absolutely love traveling and immersing myself in different cultures. Experiencing daily life in another country taught me how transformative—and sometimes challenging—it can be to navigate a new language, community, and way of living. That's a big part of why I do what I do now, because I'm so passionate about helping all of the UCM F-1 & J-1 students thrive and make the most of their global experience!

When I'm not at work, you can usually find me visiting my hometown in Monterey, crafting at home, or being lovingly tormented by my six-month-old Shiba Inu puppy. (He just graduated from puppy training class, please enjoy this photo of the proud graduate! ☐)

The next new place on my travel list is Shanghai, China—so if you have

any recommendations or favorite spots, I'd love to chat about it!



International
Students and Scholars
SCAN HERE



To Make An Appointment With
Becky, Rico or Kassity

 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS
Office of International Affairs

Schedule an appointment with Kassity, Rico or Becky by scanning the QR code. Whether you have questions or need guidance, the Office of International Affairs is here to help.

 OIA
Office of International Affairs

Fall 2025
GLOBAL LOUNGE



Join us for a monthly social where international students and study abroad returnees come together to relax, chat, and build global friendships over coffee and snacks!

DATES & TIMES	LOCATION
September 17th 1:30PM - 3:30PM	KL 169 Multicultural Center
October 15th 2:00PM - 4:00PM	COB2 390
November 19th 1:30PM - 3:30PM	COB2 390

WE ALSO OFFER FREE PASSPORT PHOTOS!



For questions or accommodation requests, please contact international@ucmerced.edu

Join us for a monthly social where international students and study abroad returnees come together to relax, chat, and build global friendships over coffee and snacks!

The English Language Institute's Conversation Partner Program is a free, volunteer program in which international students and scholars at UC Merced are matched with local members of the UC Merced community for conversation and to

perhaps learn a bit about American culture. Each set of partners decides on a regular time and day to meet in person or online for an hour or more each week of conversation in English. This program is open to the UC Merced community, including graduate students, scholars, staff, faculty, and undergraduates from the US and abroad. International spouses may also participate!



Sign up any time.

SPILL THE TEA

with someone from a different country!

Join the **Conversation Partner Program** to meet with your partner for one hour per week! This is for international students/scholars and local volunteers.

Learn a new culture! Make the world a better place!



eli.ucmerced.edu / eli@ucmerced.edu

For more information scan the QR code above or go to:
<https://eli.ucmerced.edu/conversation-partner-program>

OUT AND ABOUT! LOCAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Looking for something to do? We've rounded up some upcoming community events that are great opportunities to enjoy what's happening around Merced and get involved in the vibrant activities taking place this month

Día De Los Muertos Art and Altars Exhibit and Reception

Date: Sunday, November 2nd;

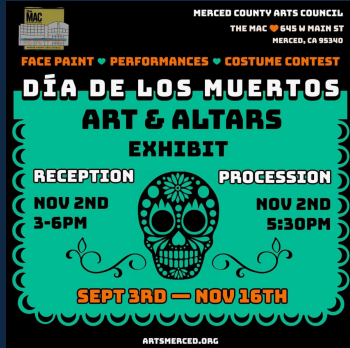
Time: 3-6pm

Location: Multicultural Arts Center - 645 W Main St, Merced, CA

Cost: FREE

Details: Day of the Dead reception - Art, altars, live-entertainment, candle-light procession and more!

[More Information](#)



MERCED COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL
THE MAC 645 W MAIN ST
MERCED, CA 95340

FACE PAINT • PERFORMANCES • COSTUME CONTEST

**DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS
ART & ALTARS
EXHIBIT**

RECEPTION NOV 2ND 3-6PM

PROCESSION NOV 2ND 5:30PM

SEPT 3RD — NOV 16TH

ARTSMERCED.ORG

Mercado Night Market: Community Offrenda Celebration

Date: Wednesday, November 6

Time: 6:00–9:00 p.m.

Location: Downtown Merced (N Street to 19th Street)

Details: Final Mercado Night Market of the year,



hosted by the Merced County Hispanic Chamber of

Commerce

Highlights: Día de los Muertos procession, classic car exhibition, live music, and 80+ vendors

Admission: Free

Salsa and Sunshine: Dance and Coffee

Date: Saturday, November 8th

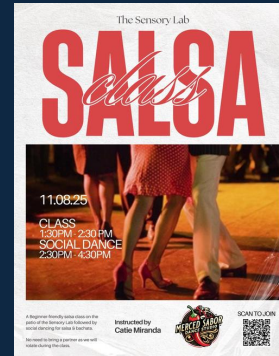
Time: Salsa Class 1:30-2:30 Social Dance 2:30-4:30

Cost: \$20

Location: ASIP Sensory Lab 847 W Main St, Merced, CA

Details: Beginner-friendly salsa class hosted by Merced Sabor Dance studio at the ASIP Sensory Lab patio. All levels welcome. Social dance after class.

[Get Tickets Here.](#)



Are You Ready For It? A Taylor Experience

Date: November 14th

Time: 7:00pm

Location: Merced Theatre - 301 W Main St. Merced, CA

Cost: \$28-52

Details: Are You Ready For It? A Taylor Experience recreates the excitement of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour with dazzling visuals, costume changes, and choreography.

[More Information and Tickets here.](#)

Holiday Pops!

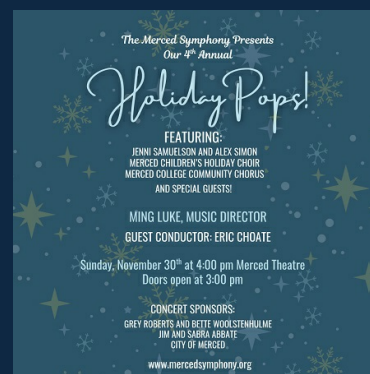
Date: November 30th

Time 4pm

Location: Merced Theatre - 301 W Main St. Merced, CA

Details: The Merced Symphony invites you to celebrate the season with its 4th annual Holiday Pops Concert. This beloved community event will once again fill downtown Merced with music, joy and the holiday spirit. And keep in the spirit of Holiday Hits!

[Get Tickets Here.](#)



Visit our

UC Merced | 5200 N. Lake Road | Merced, CA 95343 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!