# Transcript

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The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Donnelson: Did you know? That Missouri State University has more than 1800 international students enrolled this semester and that 1001 of them are physically on the MSU campus in Springfield. I'm Nicki Donnelson today on the Missouri State Journal I have Samantha Francka marketing and communications coordinator for international programs at Missouri State.

Francka: International students bring a lot to the Springfield community. Obviously they come here for an education and a US degree. But it's important for us to realize what they bring to us, so we're getting to experience so much cultural diversity that otherwise you'd never experience. In Springfield, we just have a a couple of events coming up for International Education Month. And I just got done talking with students about those, and they're really excited to share their culture and kind of present pieces of their home that you wouldn't otherwise find in Springfield. So you can experience so much in your own backyard.

Donnelson: November is International Education Month at Missouri State and serves the moment to recognize the multitude of cultures represented by our student population. Francka tells us more.

Francka: International Education Month was kind of made-up at Missouri State. Globally, they we celebrate International Education Week and it's usually the week before Thanksgiving weekend. November, but at Missouri State we had so many ways to celebrate our international students and so many different activities and events that we couldn't keep it in one week. So we've spread out through the whole month of November, so we'll have different events and banquets and festivals that will celebrate in November. And then we'll also have different events for international students specifically. That may be help them with career preparation or help them understand how to use Missouri State resources so it's just a time for us to really focus on our international students and what they need. And then what they bring to the Springfield community.

Donnelson: Throughout International Education Month, there are many ways to get a glimpse into the cultures around the globe. Francka highlights one that's coming up on November 15th that is open to the community.

Francka: There's an opportunity for community members to get to know international students and get to experience their culture on a really large scale. Coming up at the Association of International Students Banquet and show. They've done it for over 20 years. It's a really big deal for the students and the students from all over the world will present their cultures through Food First. So the students kind of compete to see whose recipes will be served for the night and the dining centers are really kind so that the students use their facilities to prepare the food. So it's actually students preparing the food and bringing it to the community, and then they after the meal they will move to the PSU theater and there'll be a show, usually around 15 different performances from international students around the world. So you might see dances or singing, or. Whatever talents our students bring to the table, it's really, really fun. We've had everything from like hip hop dance to yodeling before, so I'm looking forward to seeing what the students bring to. Us this year.

Donnelson: To give our international students another opportunity to get off campus and interact with the local community, there's also the International Friends program. She tells us more.

Francka: The International Friends program has really taken off. It's been popular for years. It's another program that's been available to students and community members for a couple decades now, but it really took off during the pandemic. Cliff was really kind to send out a tweet that said, hey, we've got some international students kind of stuck here and they need support and we had hundreds of people. E-mail and call and say how can I support students so that was really lovely to see when everything was so hard for me. Everyone at the beginning of the pandemic, and so since then we've obviously moved things away from virtual, and we're doing things in person again, and so we've kind of revamped that program so that the students are getting to connect with community members in a really valuable way. So obviously there's cultural exchange between local families and students, but we're also trying to. To emphasize the. But students can be engaged in the community like just in the ways that your family are engaged. So if there's a certain community organization, or there's events or festivals or whatever in in Springfield or the surrounding communities that your family's interested in, we would really encourage you to share that with your international student friends. And we're also looking for families or individuals. Maybe our in career fields that our students are interested in, so maybe giving a little bit of professional mentorship kind of showing them the ropes of this is what it's like to work in the US because these students are coming from all over the world. There's lots of different systems around the world, and I think that's also really beneficial for professionals in Springfield to learn how things are done elsewhere. So it's kind of a another good opportunity for cultural exchange through professional networking.

Donnelson: Interested in attending the banquet? e-mail ACS at missouristate.edu. Considering becoming an international friend, e-mail international friends at missouristate.edu that was Samantha Francka and I'm Nicki Donnelson for the Missouri State Journal.

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For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397.