



# Monthly Newsletter

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

Saint Louis University



## Volunteering vs Employment

### Volunteering:

As an international student, you can volunteer without needing work authorization.

Volunteer work can **only** be done for charitable, civic, or humanitarian causes and must be truly volunteer in nature. This means you should not receive compensation for the volunteer work you are doing and the cause should positively contribute to the community without personal gain.

This also means you cannot “work for free” for a position that would normally be paid, according to US labor laws.

Examples of volunteer work include: serving food at a homeless shelter, walking dogs at a humane society, leading a youth group for a church, building a house for Habitat for Humanity, reading to children in the hospital, passing out water at a 5k race, cleaning trash off of a beach, etc...

### Employment:

Most other work is considered employment, which means you will need special authorization from your OIS advisor. Students still need work authorization even when doing unpaid employment.

Authorization can be requested through the student portal through a CPT (or OPT, if graduating that semester) request. Schedule a meeting with your OIS advisor if you need a refresher on the CPT process.

Working off-campus without proper work authorization would be considered a violation of your F-1 or J-1 requirements. Consequences could include: loss of legal immigration status in the U.S., possible deportation by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and great difficulty in any future attempts to acquire a visa to enter the U.S.

**\*You should always ask your OIS advisor before doing any work - volunteering or employment.**

In this newsletter you can expect:

Immigration Reminders

Student Spotlight

OIS + SLU Events

Things to Do in STL and Surrounding Area

Test Your Knowledge - Quiz

OIS Contact





## Travel Signatures - What Are They? How to Get One?

### What is a travel signature?

A travel signature can be found on page 2 of your I-20 in the section called "travel endorsement."

The signature, from a DSO, is a certification of your valid F-1 status, which is required by CBP for re-entering the US after international travel.

A travel signature is **NOT permission to travel**, rather, it is an acknowledgement you have notified your DSO of your intent to travel internationally.

A travel signature is valid for one year from the date it is signed. Travel signatures do NOT specify your intended travel dates. Travel for an extended period of time during the semester will result in a leave of absence.

### How can I get a travel signature?

If you are traveling internationally and plan on re-entering the US, you will need a travel signature.

1. Update your address and contact information in Banner
  2. Register for courses for the next semester (unless it is your last semester)
  3. Submit a request in the student portal
    - a. Specify departure and return dates
    - b. A note about why you are traveling in the remarks section is a good idea
  4. Check all information is correct upon receiving I-20
- \*Summer travel signature requests will be accepted after April 15th, 2025



Meet: Ngan

Photo by: Ashish Kande

### Student Spotlight

Name: Ngan Nguyen

Level: Undergraduate - 3rd year

Major: Computer Science

Ngan is a Research Assistant at CHROME Lab, working on a haptic wearable ring set for accessible graphics, focusing on iOS app development and BLE integration with Arduino. As SSE Ambassador, she represents the School of Science & Engineering, engaging with prospective students and promoting STEM initiatives. She is also currently a Learning Assistant for a CS class. We are so proud of you Ngan!



Earth Day

### OIS Upcoming Events

#### OIS Essentials: OPT, CPT, and Off-Campus Employment

Date: 03/27/2025

Time: 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: BSC, room 251

#### Eid Celebration

Date: 03/31/2025

Time: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: CGC

#### Earth Day

Date: 04/23/2025

Time: TBD

Location: TBD





## Things to Do: SLU, STL, + Surrounding Area



### Kim Dracula and Hanabie Concert - The Pageant

Date: March 26th

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: The Pageant - Stl, MO

Price: \$39.50+

Kim Dracula & HANABIE are bringing high-energy metal with Kaonashi and Crystal Lake! Expect heavy riffs, intense vocals, and unforgettable performances. [LINK](#)



### Saint Louis Dance Theatre - Tour de Dance

Date: March 27th

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Grand Centre Arts District Stl, MO

Price: \$100+

Saint Louis Dance Theatre will present a progressive dance showcase featuring intimate dance vignettes from the 24/25 season's repertoire. [LINK](#)



### St. Louis Blues vs. Colorado Avalanche

Date: April 5th

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Enterprise Centre - Stl, MO

Price: \$28+

The St. Louis Blues will play against the Colorado Avalanche at the Enterprise Center. It's a regular-season NHL matchup between these two competitive teams. [LINK](#)



### Museum of Illusions - St. Louis

Date: March 10th - April 30th

Time: 10:00 am to 10:00 pm

Location: Museum of Illusions - Stl, MO

Price: \$25+

The Museum of Illusions Spring Break event combines mind-bending optical illusions with a blast of retro pop culture. Visitors can explore interactive exhibits, nostalgic props like Tamagotchis, and immersive experiences such as the Ames Room and Walk-in Kaleidoscope. It's the perfect mix of fun, creativity, and photo opportunities, offering a unique way to enjoy spring break while discovering the world of illusions. [LINK](#)



### St. Louis Riverfront Cruise - Gateway Arch

Date: March 12th - May 11th

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Saint Louis Zoo Stl, MO

Price: \$20+

The Chinese lantern festival Animals Aglow will return to illuminate the Saint Louis Zoo with dozens of new, towering lanterns and light displays this spring. [LINK](#)





## Newsletter Quiz - Prize Opportunity

Did you read the entire newsletter? If so, this is your chance to test your knowledge to potentially win a prize!

A quiz will be posted at the end of each newsletter about the content: immigration, events, etc....

The highest correct scores will be entered for the chance to win a small prize. One prize will be awarded per newsletter.

A new quiz will be posted each month. Winners will be notified via email. If the winner does not claim their prize within a week of being emailed, a new student will be chosen.

Quiz link: [QUIZ](#)



*Thank you for reading!*

## Student Spotlight Nominations

The next Student Spotlight could be you! Submit a nomination for yourself or a friend by scanning the QR code below, or by clicking the link.

SLU International Students can be nominated for ANY positive reason - good grades, a unique talent, helping in the community, obtaining a great internship, etc...

Students who are selected for a Student Spotlight will receive an email from OIS. The chosen student will need to report to OIS to have a professional photo taken within the dates/times listed in the email. If the student nominated does not appear for their photo, a new student will be selected in their place.

Nomination link: [FORM](#)



### **OFFICE HOURS**

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

### **CONTACT US**

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