

FEBRUARY 2025

# OISS Newsletter



## Dear Global UCSB Community,

Last month, the United States experienced a change in federal administration. While this may not be the outcome many of us had hoped for, rest assured that OISS stands ready to support our community. The lessons learned during the previous administration in 2016 have equipped us well for what may come.

OISS is dedicated to helping our international and campus community understand immigration policy changes and their potential effects. We will do our best to keep you informed with timely, factual, and documented updates. To avoid unnecessary anxiety and stress, we will refrain from providing guidance based on hearsay or unofficial statements.

While some policy changes may not align with the values of OISS or UCSB, our role is to ensure that students, scholars, and the campus community remain in compliance to protect all parties. We will continue to advocate for our community and provide as much flexibility as possible, working closely with colleagues across our industry to support our international populations.

We encourage you to stay engaged, stay informed, take care of yourselves and each other, and seek guidance from our office whenever needed to protect your immigration status. OISS remains steadfast in our commitment to highlighting the value of international exchange and supporting you during these uncertain times.

In Solidarity,

Erik Williams, Director  
Office of International Students and Scholars

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UC SANTA BARBARA  
Office of International  
Students & Scholars

# OISS Updates and Reminders

[University of California's federal immigration enforcement message:](#)



"We know that many members of the University of California community are concerned about immigration enforcement actions that may occur across the country and have asked about the possibility that enforcement actions could occur at UC. (Click above to read more) FAQ responds to your questions and provides information about how to respond in such a situation. Please keep in mind that as Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policies and practices may continue to evolve with the administration change on and after January 20, 2025; we will update this guidance as warranted."

OISS encourages you to bookmark the link above to stay up-to-date!

## International Travel Reminder

We want to take a moment to remind our international community to carefully consider any upcoming international travel plans in light of the evolving immigration landscape. While travel remains possible, recent history has shown that Executive Orders and policy changes can be issued with little warning, potentially impacting visa processing, reentry to the U.S., and other travel-related matters. Given this unpredictability, we encourage you to assess the necessity of your travel and stay informed about any new developments that may affect your status.

If you must travel, we strongly recommend reviewing current immigration policies, ensuring that your visa and travel documents are up to date. Our office is here to help you navigate any concerns and provide guidance on maintaining compliance while traveling internationally.

## Remember, your immigration record is your responsibility.

OISS recommends having all of your immigration documents saved on the cloud. If you have any questions, please contact your assigned immigration advisor

### [Student Advising Services](#)

Check out the OISS website for the updates to your Student Advisor



### [Upcoming Office Closures & Holidays](#)

February 17 (Presidents' Day)





## MARIJUANA ADVISORY FOR IMMIGRANTS!

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION:



#### MARIJUANA USE:

- USE AND POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA IS ILLEGAL UNDER FEDERAL LAW, EVEN IF SOMEONE ELSE PURCHASED IT FOR YOU. IF YOU ARE A NON-CITIZEN IT COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR YOUR LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS OR APPLICATION, INCLUDING DEPORTATION.
- THE USE OF MARIJUANA FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES (EVEN WITH A DOCTOR'S ADVICE) IS NOT AN EXEMPTION. IT COULD STILL AFFECT YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS OR APPLICATION.
- THE USE OF ANY OTHER SUBSTANCE PROHIBITED BY STATE OR FEDERAL LAW COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE IMMIGRATION STATUS OR FUTURE IMMIGRATION OPTIONS OF THE NON-CITIZEN.

#### MARIJUANA SALE:

- THE SALE OF MARIJUANA, MARIJUANA PRODUCTS, AND PARAPHERNALIA (INCLUDING PIPES) IS ILLEGAL UNDER FEDERAL LAW.
- WORKING IN THE MARIJUANA INDUSTRY COULD NEGATIVELY AFFECT NON-CITIZENS. EVEN IF A STATE HAS LEGALIZED MARIJUANA, THE SALE, PURCHASE, POSSESSION, OR USE OF MARIJUANA VIOLATES FEDERAL LAW.

### WHAT TO DO:

- REFRAIN FROM USING MARIJUANA UNTIL YOU OBTAIN U.S. CITIZENSHIP.
- IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL NEED AND NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE TO MEDICAL MARIJUANA, SEEK LEGAL ADVICE FIRST.
- NEVER CARRY MARIJUANA, A MEDICAL MARIJUANA CARD, A PIPE, OR ACCESSORIES LIKE MARIJUANA-THEMED CLOTHING OR STICKERS WHEN LEAVING YOUR HOME.

- AVOID HAVING PHOTOS OR TEXT RELATED TO MARIJUANA ON YOUR PHONE, FACEBOOK, OR ANY OTHER PLATFORM.
- YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO STAY SILENT AND NOT DISCUSS MARIJUANA USE OR POSSESSION WITH IMMIGRATION OR BORDER OFFICIALS OR ANY OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT.

- IF QUESTIONED BY AN OFFICIAL ABOUT MARIJUANA, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS YOUR DESIRE TO SPEAK TO A LAWYER AND DECLINE ANY OTHER QUESTION.
- REMEMBER YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT. ONCE YOU ADMIT SOMETHING, IT CANNOT BE RETRACTED. IF YOU HAVE ADMITTED MARIJUANA USE TO A FEDERAL OFFICER, SEEK LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROMPTLY.

# Staff Spotlight

**Name:** Brandon Hernandez  
**Title:** Career Counselor  
**Department:** Career Services



Hello! I am Brandon Hernandez, Career Counselor for [Business + Entrepreneurship](#) pathways and the community liaison for international students at UCSB Career Services! I'm a newly minted Gaucho who was born and raised in Miami and graduated from the University of South Florida in 2015. Before moving to California in October 2024, I spent the last decade in St. Petersburg, Florida working as a career services practitioner in the higher education, non-profit and private sectors. I chose to move to California because I wanted to live in another beautiful state that aligned with my values.

I am a first generation college graduate who was born to Ecuadorian immigrants and Cuban refugees. I love learning about cuisines from around the world while sharing my family recipes with friends and colleagues. My hobbies include trying new things, exploring green spaces, darkroom photography, and listening to live music.

As the community liaison for the international students at Career Services, my priority these upcoming quarters is to make more connections on campus. Whether it be meeting an individual student or collaborating with one of the various cultural groups on campus, I'm excited to support the international student body in their professional development! As a Career Counselor, I can help you or your student organization explore job opportunities, prepare application materials, develop networking strategies, and discuss how to navigate the workforce. I am also your point of contact for [Interstride](#), UCSB's global career platform.

Students can begin scheduling career sessions with me in February. Make sure to explore our [students](#) page for information on how to access our resources, drop-in advising, and career counseling appointments.

If you have any specific questions you would like to ask, you can reach me via email at [brandonhernandez@ucsb.edu](mailto:brandonhernandez@ucsb.edu). I'm looking forward to connecting with you and learning more about your professional goals!

# Campus Events

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Sat, Feb 1st [Int'l Student Ping Pong Tournament](#)

Wed, Feb 5 [Europe Student Panel](#)

Fri, Feb 7 [Mandarin Meditation for the Mind -  
Interpersonal & Homesickness](#)

Mon, Feb 10 [Africa & the Americas Student Panel](#)

Wed, Feb 12 [Asia/Oceania Student Panel](#)



International Students - Step into the new Iris Photo Booth at **Career Services** to capture FREE professional-quality pictures within minutes! Whether you're refreshing your LinkedIn profile or preparing to wow potential employers, this state-of-the-art booth has you covered.

**When:** Open Monday-Friday, 10am-3:45pm, available all Winter 2025 quarter  
**Where:** Career Resources Room, Building 599

Don't wait—stop by the Iris Booth and let your best self shine!



# OISS Events

UC SANTA BARBARA  
Professional Development  
Graduate Division

## TAX WORKSHOP FOR DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL GRAD STUDENTS

Wellness and Work-Life Balance



THU, FEB 13, 2025  
11 AM – 1 PM PST

📍 Online Event



UC SANTA BARBARA  
Health and Wellness

GLOBAL MENTORSHIP  
**GAME NIGHT**



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH  
5:30-6:30 PM

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UC SANTA BARBARA  
Education Abroad Program

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Office of International  
Students & Scholars

## UCSB All Languages Language Exchange

All Levels and Languages welcome!  
Open to students, staff & faculty



Now being held  
every first and  
third Tuesday of  
each month!

Register on Shoreline for Winter 2025  
Events will be held in the Third Floor Forum in the  
Student Resource Building from 4-5:30pm

Jan 7	Jan 21	Feb 4	Feb 18	Mar 4
				

Have questions?  
Contact: [oissprograms@ucsb.edu](mailto:oissprograms@ucsb.edu)

## English Conversation Club



<p><b>Wednesdays</b> 12 PM - 1 PM</p> <p>📍 Student Resource Building, Conference Room 3153, 3rd Floor</p>	<p><b>Thursdays</b> 10:30 AM - 12 PM</p> <p>📍 Student Resource Building, First Floor, Room 1103</p>
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[More details on Shoreline](#)

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# Career Resources



OISS, in partnership with Career Services, is thrilled to announce the launch of Interstride, a platform designed to enhance the career development journey of both international and domestic university students. Interstride offers a wealth of resources tailored to meet the unique needs of students navigating the global job market.

## What does Interstride provide to International Students and Scholars?

- **Job Search Optimization:** Access a curated database of employers open to hiring international talent and tools to tailor your job search to specific countries and industries.
- **Cultural Adaptation Resources:** Gain insights into cultural nuances, communication styles, and workplace etiquette to better integrate into new environments.
- **Visa and Immigration Support:** Interstride provides up-to-date information on visa regulations, work authorization, and immigration policies, helping you understand and manage the complexities of working abroad.

## What does Interstride provide to Domestic Students?

- **Global Opportunities:** Explore international internships and job postings to broaden your career horizons and gain global experience.
- **Cross-Cultural Competence:** Utilize resources that enhance your understanding of global markets and cultural diversity, skills highly valued by employers.
- **Networking Expansion:** Connect with a diverse community of students and professionals worldwide, expanding your professional network beyond borders.



# Happy Lunar New Year



Lunar New Year or the Spring Festival, is the most important traditional holiday in many East and Southeast Asian countries. It marks the beginning of the lunar calendar year, which is based on the cycles of the moon. The celebration typically lasts for 15 days, starting with the new moon, and ends with the Lantern Festival on the 15th day.

**Lunar New Year in 2025 is January 29 to February 12.**

The holiday is rich in cultural traditions and customs, including family reunions, feasts, giving red envelopes (filled with money) for good luck, and setting off fireworks to ward off evil spirits. Each year is associated with one of the 12 animals in the zodiac calendar, which is believed to influence the character and fortune of people born in that year. This Lunar New Year begins the Year of the Snake and is also a time to honor ancestors and deities, making it a deeply spiritual and family-oriented celebration.



**Dumplings**

Resemble ancient Chinese precious gold ingots



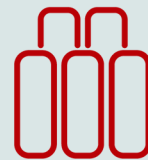
**Steamed fish**

Symbolizes wealth and prosperity in the new year



**Noodles**

Long noodles are eaten whole for longevity.



**Rice cakes**

Symbolizes prosperity and good luck in the new year



# ★ International Education Week Round Up! ★



Thank you to all of our campus partners who helped make International Education Week 2025 a success!

AS Global Gaucho Commission  
Career Services  
Interstride  
Linguistics Department  
Multicultural Center

Campus Housing, San Miguel  
Department of Geography  
Education Abroad Programs  
Health and Wellness  
Rapid Rehousing

# Thanks for Reading! —

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the OISS Newsletter. Past newsletters can be viewed on the OISS website.

## Questions?

If you are a current international student with questions regarding immigration, advising and other requests, email [oiss@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:oiss@sa.ucsb.edu).

J-1 Scholars should reach out to [j1scholar@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:j1scholar@sa.ucsb.edu). For those with questions related to employment-based visas; please contact [longtermvisa@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:longtermvisa@sa.ucsb.edu).

For any inquiries regarding upcoming OISS events, or collaboration opportunities, contact [oissprograms@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:oissprograms@sa.ucsb.edu).

If you are a UCSB department or organization and would like to publicize any information or upcoming events to international Gauchos, contact [ashleyrifkin@ucsb.edu](mailto:ashleyrifkin@ucsb.edu)

## Let's stay in touch!

Follow our social media accounts to stay up-to-date with everything happening at OISS.

