

2022 Winter Focus



# VCU IESC International Student E-Newsletter





## Message from the Dean of the School of Education

Every year, VCU and the School of Education welcome more than 1,600 international students to campus from around the globe. As part of that, we launched the Asian-American Educational Studies Center in the fall of 2019 as a hub for our visiting scholars, a support center for our international students, and a collaboration and training site for our professional development and other work with international partners.

From the beginning, our vision was to promote education beyond borders, so we continued developing programs and learning opportunities with a more international reach, without compromising our commitment to China and other Asian countries. This included expanding beyond our partnerships in China to the successful development of university partnerships in Brazil, Uruguay and Russia.

As a result of this growth, we're now announcing a new name for our center: the International Educational Studies Center. This new name reflects our broader international reach, including more activities for students and an increase in university partnerships around the globe.

International students are an important part of our school. We value your voice, care about your well-being, and appreciate your contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Welcome to VCU School of Education. I wish all of you a great semester. Go Rams!

Kind regards,

Andrew Daire, Ph.D.

# Student Visa Update



**O**n Sep 14, 2021, the U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs published an Important announcement regarding F, M, and Academic J Visas. It says through the end of 2021, consular officers have been authorized to expand the categories of F, M, and “academic J visa applicants” (students, professors, research scholars, short-term scholars, or specialists) whose applications can be adjudicated without an in-person interview in their consular district of residence, with certain exceptions. For more information please visit the official website.

**S**tudents need to check the information of the U.S. embassy in their home country to get more information about applying for a visa, making visa appointments, and preparing for future entry to the United States.

**F**or students who already got their visas and are preparing to come to the U.S. in the near future, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced a new Order for all air passengers traveling to the United States. Effective November 8, 2021, all non-immigrant, non-citizen air travelers to the United States will be required to be fully vaccinated and to provide proof of vaccination status prior to boarding an airplane to the United States. You can check the requirements for air travelers to the U.S for more information.

**A**nother important requirement that students should be aware of is VCU requires the COVID vaccination for all students who live, learn, work, or will be on campus for any reason (excluding those with religious or health exemptions). Before class reg-

istration, students must submit their vaccination documents to



University Student Health Services. International students who received the vaccines in their home country and whose record of vaccination is not in English are required to translate it in English and include the vaccine manufacture and brand name.



# Intro of Chinese New Year

**L**unar New Year is the beginning of a calendar year whose months are moon cycles, based on the lunar calendar. In China, January 31st, 2022, is December 29th of the lunar calendar. That day is Chinese New Year's Eve, and this is the year of the Tiger. Chinese who work far away will return home to reunite with their families and relatives during the Chinese New Year. Usually, they will have one or two weeks off.

**F**or Chinese people, New Year's Eve is like Christmas Eve for most Americans. They usually start preparing New Year's festivities a few weeks before New Year's Eve. New Year decorations, fireworks or firecrackers, red envelopes, gifts, and new year's Eve dinner are all the highlights of the Chinese New Year. The new year is decorated with lanterns, window flowers, couplets, etc. Red envelopes (with money inside) and other gifts are common ways to give each other

new year blessings. New Year's Eve dinner usually includes fish, dumplings, etc. but there will be different key dishes in different regions. When 12 o'clock comes, some families will set off fireworks or firecrackers to welcome the new year. People tend to wear red to symbolize auspiciousness.

# 2022 Spring Activities Around Virginia



DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	ADDRESS	PRICE
February 5	Chocolate Festival	Center of the Universe Brewing	11293 Air Park Rd, Ashland VA	From \$5
February 5	ChinaFest: Year of the Water Tiger	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts	<a href="https://reservations.vmfa.museum/state/Info.aspx?EventID=124">https://reservations.vmfa.museum/state/Info.aspx?EventID=124</a>	Free
February 11-12	Death by Chocolate	The Historic Main Street	<a href="https://chincoteaguemerchants.com/">https://chincoteaguemerchants.com/</a>	Free
February 12	3rd Annual River City Spirits Festival	Stony Point Fashion Park	<a href="https://rivercityfestivals.com/">https://rivercityfestivals.com/</a>	\$45
February 13	Sweetheart 8K Race	Midlothian VA	<a href="https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Midlothian/Sweetheart8K">https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Midlothian/Sweetheart8K</a>	\$20
February 13	2022 Valentine's Day Dinner Cruise	The Spirit of Norfolk	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-valentines-day-dinner-cruise-tickets-212629720217?aff=ebdssbdestsearch">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-valentines-day-dinner-cruise-tickets-212629720217?aff=ebdssbdestsearch</a>	\$85 + fee
February 18-20	Romeo & Juliet	Dominion Energy Center	<a href="https://richmondballet.com">https://richmondballet.com</a>	\$25-\$125
February 24-27	DC Fashion Week	The Darcy Hotel, 1515 Rhode Island Ave, NW, DC	<a href="https://www.dcfashionweek.org/">https://www.dcfashionweek.org/</a>	Registration
February 26	Mardi Gras Bar Crawl	Multiple locations Richmond	<a href="https://www.barcrawl.live.com/crawls/richmond-mardi-gras-bar-crawl">https://www.barcrawl.live.com/crawls/richmond-mardi-gras-bar-crawl</a>	\$9+Fee
February 26-27	Ravishing Rachmaninoff	Dominion Energy Center	<a href="https://www.richmondsymphony.com/">https://www.richmondsymphony.com/</a>	\$20 - \$82
March 13	Cherry Blossom Kite Festival	Washington Monument Grounds, DC	<a href="https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/event/blossom-kite-festival/">https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/event/blossom-kite-festival/</a>	Free
March 16-20	The Virginia Festival of the Book	Charlottesville	<a href="https://www.vabook.org/">https://www.vabook.org/</a>	Free
March 18-20	GalaxyCon Richmond	Greater Richmond Convention Center	<a href="https://galaxycon.com/pages/richmond">https://galaxycon.com/pages/richmond</a>	From \$35
March 20	Cherry Blossom Festival	Washington Monument Grounds, DC	<a href="https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/bloom-watch/">https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/bloom-watch/</a>	Free
April 3	Toyota Owners 400 NASCAR Cup	Richmond Raceway	<a href="https://www.richmondraceway.com/">https://www.richmondraceway.com/</a>	\$25-\$120

# Research Spotlight



## **The Experiences of Religiously and Spiritually Diverse Counselors and Psychotherapists who Work with Survivors of Sexual Violence**

Mitchell Waters, MA, LPC

**I**n my dissertation research, I am investigating the lived experiences of counseling practitioners of diverse religious and/or spiritual affiliations who work with survivors of sexual trauma. I have an international sample of practitioners from the US, Canada, India, and England who represent Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Spiritual (Collective Conscious), and Wiccan affiliations. I am investigating how these counselors engage their religious and/or spiritual identities, beliefs, and practices to cope with the vicarious traumatic stress that comes from engaging chronically with survivors of sexual violence. This research will help burnout and vicarious trauma prevention initiatives. It will also broaden and deepen the counseling field's understanding of the nuances, complexities, and similarities that exist between these practitioners of diverse experiences, backgrounds, identities, and countries of origin.

## **Capital and Global Knowledge Trade: Exploring the Influences of International Academic Relationships between the U.S. and Taiwanese Scholars on Taiwanese Art Education Development**

By Yiwen Wei, Assistant Professor in the Department of Art Education and co-researchers are Dr. Yichien Cooper (Lecturer, Washington State University, Tri-Cities) and Dr. Justin P. Sutters (Associate Professor of Art Education, George Mason University)

**T**his research project explores the issue of capital and knowledge flow within a global context. We examine the influences of international academic relationships between art education scholars and their international students on art education development across countries. In this project, we focus on the academic relationships between the U.S. art education scholars and their Taiwanese international students and fellows, who later became involved in Taiwanese art education development. This study will first trace their academic lineages and interview eligible Taiwanese scholars as key contributors to Taiwanese art education formation. We hope this study will give insights into building long-term collaborative and mutually beneficial academic relationships through graduate art education programs.



## **Liberating Preservice Educators: Shifting Pedagogical Understandings through Experiences with Alternative Instructional Approaches**

Dr. Virginia Massaro and Dr. Joan Rhodes

**S**tudy abroad experiences can be valuable to preservice teachers for many reasons. Key among these are levels of multicultural and pedagogical development that occur through preservice teachers' experiences abroad which are supportive of the further development of a culturally relevant pedagogy. In a qualitative study, 27 U.S. preservice teachers took part in a two-week study abroad program in Italy designed to immerse participants in diverse educational settings. Specific aims were to capture participants' perceptions of three different pedagogical approaches to early childhood education, including Reggio Emilia, Montessori, and Waldorf-Steiner. Through observation and interaction, researchers explored how participants' experiences in a study abroad context shaped their pedagogical understanding and how these experiences shaped participants' perceptions of working with students of differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Data suggested that participants experience significant change in three key areas: pedagogical, social interactions, and beliefs about schooling in the United States. Based on the study findings, teacher preparation programs should include additional concrete application of culturally responsive instruction and firsthand experience with English learners for preservice teachers. These kinds of international experiences can occur both abroad and through live stream events and personal or focus group interviews for individuals who are not able to travel.

This new section of our newsletter features research of students/faculty or research that has an international focus. If you have research that you would like to submit please email [olsoebe@vcu.edu](mailto:olsoebe@vcu.edu) with a 200 word or less abstract.



For letters to the editor, ideas on news articles, questions, and comments, you can also reach us at:

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