

# Continuing TTU's Internationalization in Times of Change

Dear Texas Tech University Community,

Many of you have been asking about our continued internationalization agenda in the wake of uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to assure you that the Office of International Affairs and Texas Tech University remain unwaveringly resolved to comprehensive internationalization of our great institution. Our mission to prepare globally competent students, enable our faculty and staff to be globally engaged, and internationalize our communities remain integral to our existence. Our strategies are evolving to ensure a safe environment designed to protect those we serve. Safety concerns, travel restrictions, and immigration prohibitions, no doubt, will influence mobility of our students, faculty, and staff. In addition, fiscal constraints will dictate what we can or cannot do.

We were able to provide home-cooked meals to international students living in the dorms during the campus shutdown and now into the summer. We are also operating a temporary food pantry for students struggling financially due to COVID 19. The food pantry items and the meals are donated by our community partners and dispersed at an off-campus facility following CDC guidelines. Going forward, international students who are unable to travel to Lubbock for Fall 2020 will have the option to register for online courses. For those who will be in Lubbock and need university housing, Student Housing is promoting a safe and healthy move-in experience by opening residence halls a week earlier than normal and by implementing a reservation system to limit congestion. The Office of International Affairs will have weekend and normal working hours during the first two weekends of Fall move-in to ensure adequate services for all international students arriving on campus.

We are revamping our protocol to ensure that our students and faculty leaders continue to enjoy study abroad opportunities with heightened attention to their health and safety when abroad and risk mitigation strategies when necessary. With the transition of the Center for Global Communication to OIA, we are also advancing existing and developing new educational programming and resources that enhance communication, as well as multicultural skills for students to effectively converse in a global context.

Our commitment to faculty and scholar services remains unchanged. Rapidly changing rules of international engagement, mobility, scholarly exchange, and immigration requirements have triggered uncertainties, but we have been able to maneuver many uncharted territories with ease. Although there have been no workarounds for travel prohibitions and VISA restrictions, our team has been able to guide and offer services that are legally permitted to those in need. On the bright side, our international grants administration activities have seen an uptick during the last quarter with over \$10 million in submissions.

We are determined to resume our outreach to faculty, staff, students, and community members as soon as possible. Internationally themed exhibits, invited speaker series, K-12 global education,

OIA-07/2020-001

July 2020

educational programming such as the Ambassadors Forum, celebration of internationalization efforts, public events, and Passport services will commence with a renewed pledge to provide a safe yet enlightening environment as before. We pledge to protect your safety by responding to and respecting guidance issued from state and federal officials as long as we continue to face uncertainty in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are experiencing exceptional disruption and change as all of us grapple with strategies to stabilize and return to normalcy. In this new environment, ingenuity, innovation, and adaptability are critically important, and it is gratifying to see what we have been able to do to create a safe learning environment for our faculty, staff, students, and the community members.

Sukant Misra, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for International Affairs