



CCIS volunteers continue to serve international graduate students, visiting scholars and their families at Stanford University. Read about some of our programs and events!



“Notes at the Top”

Annette Isaacson
President

A Fond Farewell!

When Board member Karen McNay asked me if I would run for CCIS President back in 2019, I said that I would be willing to serve as President for two years. When she heard this, she winked at me and said, “Well, maybe three years!” Now it has been three years, and it is time for me to step down and let someone else lead CCIS, so this will be my last President’s Column. (I will continue to serve on the board as Secretary next year.)

It certainly has been an interesting three years. Who knew when I began my term that the world would shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and our lives would change so drastically?

With student and staff safety in mind, Stanford closed its doors, students were sent home, classes were held on Zoom, visitors were not allowed on campus, everyone had to wear masks. CCIS had to cancel popular programs such as Community Advisors, Loan Closet, Hospitality, Homestay, and Windows on the West.

During this trying time, I have been so proud of how CCIS has been able to remain flexible and continue to meet the needs of the International community at Stanford. We all had to learn how to use Zoom. The English teachers, under the leadership of MaryAnn Saunders, and Friday Morning Coffee, under the leadership of Ragna Kaehler and with the help of Gwyn Dukes, found exciting ways to meet the needs of the International Spouses on Zoom.

Many EIA partners continued to meet, either outdoors or on Zoom. We initiated the Virtual Welcome Partner program to help new Internationals get acclimated once they were allowed back on campus.

So much changed. What didn’t change was the desire of CCIS members to help others by supporting the Internationals at Stanford.

When you fill out your membership renewals this summer, please consider checking the box indicating a wonderful in learning more about serving on the Board. It’s a wonderful way to meet like-minded folks and to support the international community at Stanford.

I send a huge thank you to my hardworking board members; I extend a warm welcome to new board members, Ann Fathman and Lori Reeser; and I bid a fond farewell as President to all the wonderful CCIS members who make this organization so very special.

Enjoy a wonderful summer,

Fondly,

Annette Isaacson
CCIS President

Thanks for being a part of CCIS and supporting our International Community at Stanford.

president@ccisstanfordu.org

Two programs returned in spring

After almost two years, several well attended programs returned to an in person format, much to the delight of participants and volunteers.

Friday Morning Coffee



The Friday Morning Coffee group started to meet again in person on April 22. The Friday Morning Coffee is a special weekly gathering for spouses of international students, postdocs and visiting scholars. Friday Coffee Volunteers help welcome new international spouses and families and introduce them to other internationals and to local resources related to their individual needs and interests.

The group met outdoors, with masks optional. For safety, the snacks were wrapped.

A few new features have been introduced, such as a fun “quiz” that is a great conversation starter and a large white board for posting coming events and recommendations for outings, etc. A table was set up for young children where they can draw or do an activity.

Occasional presentations have been included, such as the demonstration of how to wear a yukata, presented by Keiko from Japan. Other presentations are planned for future events.

Ragna Kaehler, of the Bechtel International Center, has a team of international spouses who help set up and put away. CCIS volunteers enjoy engaging in conversation and welcoming to the local area the spouses and postdocs who attend.

For this summer only (July 6 to August 26) the meetings have changed to Wednesday instead of Friday (the Bechtel Center is closed on Fridays). The time remains the same, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The location is on the patio and garden behind the Bechtel International Center.

Friday Morning Coffee will return to meeting on Fridays starting on September 9.

Windows on the West



Windows on the West, a film viewing series and conversation program, returned with six films. Bob Spears, a CCIS board member, has organized and run the program for many years. A dinner was prepared before the viewing and shared with the participants.

The purpose of WOW is to help all international students, post docs, and visiting scholars to understand Americans, and to adapt to American life and American academic life. All Stanford foreign graduate students are invited. WOW encourages discussion and connection at dinner and the after-film discussion.

Bob Spears reports that between 15-35 people attended the Friday night events. “I chose films mostly for their entertainment value, however, because the Ukraine War is so central to the students’ minds right now, I chose *On the Beach* and *Thirteen Days* because they dealt with the “nuclear option.” The vast majority of attendees were participants before we closed in February 2020.”

The meal preparation was organized by CCIS Board member Tooran Oshikoji and member Corliss Marie Hartge. Meal prep volunteers were international students and their spouses from Japan, China, Netherlands, Ukraine, Iran, Estonia and Sweden.

Corliss writes, “I am amazed at the dynamics that were woven together by sharing multicultural stories from home and many old family recipes. I thought the result would be to broaden our awareness. But in reflecting back, I think the strongest benefit is in what it does to strengthen the bond and pride in one’s own culture and in working alongside your own people to make sure they offered something special together.”

“We learned so much - new spices - the Japanese requirement for beauty, do you remember their flower shaped chopped carrots? - or the way the Scandinavian students called us on our food waste and recycling standards that made us rethink our behavior? And I never realized how Asian and Indian cultures cooked mostly on top of the stove, seldom with ovens like us....the casserole generation from America...”

The program will return in the fall. If you are interested in learning more or volunteering contact Bob Spears at Bob@CultureConnection.net.

An impactful Annual CCIS Meeting



After a two-year hiatus the 67th annual CCIS meeting was held in person at the Bechtel Center on May 16, 2022. The meeting began with the election of CCIS officers. Annette Isaacson, the outgoing president, spoke about her three years leading the board of directors. Shalini Bhutani, the Director of the Bechtel I-Center, detailed the efforts the center conducts to help incoming foreign students. Edward Loizeaux, a volunteer, recounted several humorous incidents in being involved with CCIS.

The most impactful portion of the meeting was a panel discussion by four graduate students from four countries impacted by the current war in Ukraine.

Kateryna from Ukraine gave a stark accounting of the devastation of cities and communities caused by the Russian forces in the then two-month long war. She also spoke passionately about the need to save democracy in central Europe and why the West needs to support Ukraine.

Giorgi from Georgia spoke about prior Russian war efforts in his country to take territory and change the country’s NATO in looking to the west and possible membership in NATO.

David from Russia talked about the ill-fated and limited protests by Russians against the war in Ukraine and the complete control of the media by Putin.

Lastly, Victoria from Belarus detailed the slide from democracy to autocracy after many questionable elections in her country. She spoke forcefully about the increasing Russian influences in her country.

Stanford students from Slavic nations have formed a group to support Ukraine. The Ukrainian Students Association at Stanford has held rallies, raised funds and created efforts to support the Ukrainian people. Learn more about the group at [Ukrainian Students Association at Stanford](http://UkrainianStudentsAssociation.atStanford).

The Homestay program will resume this fall, after a two-year hiatus. If you are interested in learning about this wonderful opportunity to help a new foreign grad student contact [Homestay program](http://HomestayProgram).

A word from the editor

As the newsletter editor, I hope you will enjoy learning more about what’s happening at CCIS. Your feedback is welcome, send an email to notes@ccisstanfordu.org.

Pamela Baird

CCIS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. CCIS Notes is published by

[The Community Committee for International Students at Stanford University](http://TheCommunityCommitteeForInternationalStudentsatStanfordUniversity)

For more information contact: info@ccisstanfordu.org