The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion bids a fond farewell to its Graduate Students and Student Worker. We asked them a few questions about themselves and about their future plans. Thank you for all of your hard work.

Courtney Kenner

Where are you from, originally? Where do you call home?
St. Louis, Missouri

What did you study as an undergraduate?
Psychology

What degree will you receive in May 2015?
Masters in Kinesiology with an emphasis in Sport and Exercise Psychology

Do you have other degrees/certifications?
No

What are your plans in the future?
I really enjoy working in higher education. I plan to continue working in a student affairs position of some sort, specifically in athletics.

Will you continue with school?
Possibly, but not right away. I want to take some time away from school.

Will you stay in the area?
I love this area, but I have been here a long time and I think it is time get away.

Will you go “home” to work/find a job? If not, where do you plan to go?
I am looking for jobs all over the place. If I find one in St. Louis, great, if not, that’s definitely great too.

Do you have a job lined up?
No I do not but I am applying non-stop and I hope to be receiving some good news soon!

What will you miss most about SIUE?
I played basketball here during undergrad and even after I graduated I could be around the team and see the other girls and the coaches as much as I wanted so it made the transition out of athletics much easier for me. I have also built relationships with a lot of the faculty and staff here and I will miss being around them as well.

What advice do you have for students coming in to SIUE?

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We will miss you all!

To contribute to this newsletter send your articles to:
Dr. Venessa A. Brown, Associate Chancellor
Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion
Room 3116, Rendleman Hall
Edwardsville, IL 62026-1020
Email: vbrown@siue.edu
Erika Hall

Where are you from, originally? Where do you call home?
Homewood, IL – South Suburb of Chicago – 10 mins away

What did you study as an undergraduate?
Business Administration – Focus International Business

What degree will you receive in May 2015?
B.S. Business Administration

Do you have other degrees/certifications?
No

What are your plans in the future?
For the immediate future, I would like to graduate with a Master of Business Administration and then find a position working with students on the East Coast.

Will you continue with school?
Yes. Masters of Business Administration here at SIUE

Will you stay in the area?
Yes. I don’t want to travel far for work and school.

Will you go “home” to work/find a job? If not, where do you plan to go?
After receiving my masters I would like to move to the East Coast, stay there a few years, then return to Chicago. Plans do change but that’s my ideal plan.

Do you have a job lined up?
No. I will start looking once I’m almost done with grad school.

What will you miss most about SIUE?
Being in the MUC. I’ve always been surrounded by plenty of people.

Omotola Soyoye

Where are you from, originally? Where do you call home?
Nigeria, Edwardsville

What did you study as an undergraduate?
Linguistics

What degree will you receive in May 2015?
None

Do you have other degrees/certifications?
Yes

What are your plans in the future?
Be established and successful career person

Will you continue with school?
Yes

Will you stay in the area?
Yes

Will you go “home” to work/find a job? If not, where do you plan to go?
Plan to stay here

Do you have a job lined up?
No

What will you miss most about SIUE?
The people

What advice do you have for students coming in to SIUE?
Study, work hard and have fun

We will miss you all!
Ramadan Celebrated across Varying Cultures
by Dr. Narjis Hyder

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Nearly one-fourth of the world will observe the annual fast which means over eight million Muslims in America will abstain from food and drink from dusk to dawn during the lunar month of the Hijri calendar. This certainly is a grueling task at any time of the year, however this year Ramadan will especially be daunting as it falls during the long and hot summer days of July. Because the cycle of the lunar calendar does not match the solar calendar, the dates of Ramadan shift by approximately 11 days each year. This year Ramadan is expected to begin on June 17, 2015, when the new crescent moon descends.

Various Islamic scholars and cultural communities have differing opinions on the declaration of the month’s beginning. Some Muslims insist on the local, visual sighting of the new moon to mark the beginning of Ramadan while others use the astronomical calculated date of the new moon. This could lead to a difference of a day or two for the official start of Ramadan, depending on where one lives and what method is followed. The prevailing opinion is that one should commit to a local moon-sighting, i.e. begin and end Ramadan based on the sighting of the moon in one’s local vicinity. Astronomical calculations can help predict when the moon should be visible, but Muslims still tend to follow the traditional method of designated people visually sighting the moon. Thus, the exact day of the beginning of Ramadan is not announced until the night before the fast begins, when the moon is actually sighted and confirmed. Regardless of when the month starts, Muslims are bracing for longer fasts during the coming summer days, in which the fasts can be as long as 18 hours.

The word "Ramadan" is derived from an Arabic word for intense heat, scorched ground and shortness of food and drink. During the month of Ramadan, most able-bodied, healthy Muslims adults must fast from dusk to dawn with no food or water, and must abide by stringent rules including worshipping and spiritual contemplation with the intention to learn patience and humility.

During Ramadan, food assumes more importance than usual. Muslims may have the Suhur, an optional predawn meal before sunrise. If they opt out of the Suhur, they have to wait until sunset. At sunset, families and friends will gather for the mandatory Iftar meal, which is eaten by Muslims to open their fasts. Iftar gathering events are exciting for Muslims and full of anticipation. It starts with a call for prayers, after which the main meal is served, and finally socializing occurs. Iftar is usually served in a buffet dinner style. As the day draws to a close, Muslims look forward to breaking the fast, families comes together and dedicate several hours to eating around the table and spending time together.

Traditions that Mark the Beginning of Ramadan

Muslims celebrate the beginning of Ramadan in different ways. While some Ramadan traditions have faded, others are still observed today. In Palestine, boys and girls set off fireworks to celebrate the beginning of the month of fasting. In Turkey, the mosques are decorated with Mahya lights which are suspended between the minarets of mosques to display devotional messages in huge letters that are visible from far away.

In Hyderabad, India the Muslim community will feast on camel on the first Friday of the month. In Egypt, traditional lanterns are lit as a symbol of the beginning of Ramadan, while cannons are fired to sound the time of Iftar. The firing of the Ramadan cannon was, and in some places still is, a widespread tradition across the Middle East. Cannon booms announce the end of the fast at sunset in such countries as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen, Sudan, Syria and Turkey. The cannons used at Ramadan are not real weapons. Their only function is to make an echoing noise to indicate that it is time to break the fast.

Many Ramadan traditions such as the use of lanterns and cannons first appeared in Egypt. The historical Ramadan lanterns, Fanous (singular) or Fanaweel (plural) can simply be made from recycled tin cans,

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Ramadan, Continued from page 3 ...

new store bought plastic lanterns that play the latest popular songs. Lanterns of various styles and hues have long been special to Egyptians at the Ramadan season. There are many variations about the origins of Fanawee. According to the most commonly told tale, the Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171 A.D.) wanted to light the streets of Cairo during Ramadan nights, and ordered his men to hang the Fanawee across the streets. Hanging Fanawee became a custom that has prevailed since that time.

Indonesia has diverse Ramadan traditions. Ceremonial musicians walk the streets beating drums and singing devotional songs. On the island of Java, many Javanese Indonesians bathe in holy springs to prepare for fasting, a ritual known as Padusa. The city of Semarang marks the beginning of Ramadan with the Dugderan Carnival, which involves parading the Warak Ngendog, a dragon-like creature allegedly inspired by the Al-Buraq, a winged horse that carried the Prophet Mohammed to visit the heavens. In the Chinese-influenced capital city of Jakarta, fire crackers are traditionally used to wake people for Morning Prayer. The Iftar meal is announced every evening by striking the Bedug, a giant drum, in the mosque.

**Iftar**

Over time, Iftar has grown from simple family gatherings to community banquet festivals. This is a time of fellowship with families, friends and surrounding communities that may also occupy larger spaces at mosques or banquet halls. Traditional dishes include everything from appetizers, main entrees, desserts and special non-alcoholic drinks are often distributed. Many of these special dishes are particularly made only during Ramadan. Methods of celebrating Ramadan through Iftar vary from one country to another in accordance with the respective historical and cultural differences of those particular Muslim societies. But generally Ramadan is a month for every Muslim culture to display the highlights of its cuisine. Water is usually the beverage of choice, but juice, milk and other specialized beverages are also served. Dates are commonplace in every culture of the Ramadan meal.

In the Middle East, the Iftar meal consists of water, juices, dates, salads, appetizers, one or more main dishes, and various kinds of desserts. Typical Middle-Eastern main dishes are lamb stewed with wheat berries, lamb kebobs with grilled vegetables, or roast chicken served with chickpea-studded rice pilaf. A rich dessert, such as Luqaimat, Baklava or Kunafeh (a buttery, syrup-sweetened Kadaifi noodle pastry filled with cheese), concludes the meal.

Among South Asian Muslims, Iftar meals consist of fried foods, meats, rice and curries. The fasts are opened with dates and Chai, a creamy tea with sugar. In the summertime, homemade lime drinks quench their thirst. These are followed by small fried appetizers such as samosas, pakodas, or the chickpea curry known as Cholay. The main entrees may be lamb or chicken curry, accompanied by basmati rice. There'll be vegetables as sides, such as cauliflower with potatoes or lentil soups called daal. For dessert, a carrot or semolina halwa (different from Arabic sesame-based halva), Gulab Jamun (deep fried ricotta cheese balls served in sweet syrup) among many other delectable delights may be served. An abundance of fresh fruit, such as mangoes in the summer, is always offered. Indian fasters are sure to be eating these traditional Iftar dishes during Ramadan.

Also popular, in their respective countries, are the following:
- Nigerian Akara is made with peeled, ground beans and fried in spices.
- Ethiopian Doro Wett is a spicy chicken stew.
- Lebanese Baba Ghanouj is a deliciously, smoky roasted eggplant in tahini and garlic sauce.
- Indonesian Nasi Goring is a fine exotic fried rice.
- Malaysia makes a scrumptious chicken curry.
- Egypt’s Ful Medames are slow-cooked fava beans.
- North African’s make Harira, a lamb and chickpea stew.
- Algeria has Iham Ihalou which is a lamb stewed with prunes.

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Sweet Dishes are very popular during the Ramadan month. Sweets have a special place in the Turkish Ramadan menu, especially Güllaç (traditional Ramadan dessert of layers of thin cornstarch pastry soaked in rosewater-infused milk), Kadayıf Dolma (shredded pastry filled with walnuts), Revani (dense sponge cakes soaked with sugar syrup), Helva (a confection made from farina and pine nuts), Baklava, and Lokum a.k.a. Turkish Delight. Baklava is enjoyed throughout the year, however it is very common in Ramadan. Basbousa is a semolina cake with almonds. Like baklava, it is drizzled with a syrup, making it not too sweet, but enough to satisfy any sweet tooth. Konfah with Cheese shredded phyllo, sweet cheese, and syrup make this dessert mouthwatering! Konfah is a special Ramadan dessert and one that people truly anticipate for the holiday! Qatayef with Nuts are also known as Arabic pancakes. Qatayef is filled with nuts and then fried. Qatayef with Cheese or cheese filled Arabic pancakes are fried or baked and make this dessert the dessert of all desserts during Ramadan.

**The Significance of Ramadan**

For Muslims, the annual ritual of Ramadan is more than just a diet. It's a spiritual time to reflect upon themselves. They feel greater sympathy for the needy and poor, as fasting plays a key role in generating empathy for the hungry and cleansing the body of overindulgence from food and other worldly desires. Muslims consider fasting as a method of self-purification by refraining oneself from worldly comforts, even if it’s for a short time. It is also intended to teach Muslims the meaning of self-control, discipline, and social belonging. Charity is an important part of Ramadan. The fast emphasizes self-sacrifice and using the experience of hunger to grow in empathy with the hungry. During Ramadan, Muslim communities work together to raise money for the poor, donate clothes and food, and hold iftar dinners for the less fortunate.

Ramadan is considered the holiest month of the year for Muslims not just because it is the month of fasting. It is also the month in which The Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed. Muslims base their religious beliefs and practices on this book that was revealed to the Prophet. Special prayers are offered throughout the month and on specific days of the month. It is a time for reflection and prayer, repentance and forgiveness. It is critical for all Muslims to not only perform the physical fasts but also the spiritual fasts that impact the soul.

**Eid-ul-Fitr**

The end of the month is signaled by a massive celebration known as Eid-ul-Fitr, which begins after the sighting of the moon the night before. This takes place either 29 or 30 days after the beginning of the month. The annual holiday has also galvanized the retail sector into coming up with a number of special offers, deals and discounts aimed at capturing the attention of Ramadan shoppers.

On Eid-ul-Fitr, the holiday begins in earnest, morning prayers are followed by feasting and celebration among family and friends. For many Muslims, Ramadan goes beyond the mere rituals. It becomes the source of internal and external transformation in which many hope they can continue to emulate the spirit of the month throughout the year. At the end of the night of celebrations, when dining is complete, friends and family usually stay to share stories of how they coped with fasting and the other strict rules of Ramadan. It is the 10 to 18-hour fast that keeps the faithful at peace. None will ever question its purpose or value. They feel purified by it, ready to begin another year of life, a time for reflection and personal growth.

**Conclusion**

While fasting is most often associated with the period of Lent for Christians or the month of Ramadan for Muslims; Many other cultures and religions around the world fast throughout the year. Although the duration, practice, and specific reasons differ, all fasts have the similar goals of sacrifice and self-reflection. Some of the religions and philosophies that practice fasting include Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Taoism, Jainism, and Hinduism. Fasting has been around for centuries and will continue to be a regular practice for many cultures in the future. It would be beneficial to remember to be culturally sensitive to those that are fasting and try to refrain from eating or drinking in the presence of fasters. Those wishing to be polite to someone who is fasting for Ramadan may greet them with “Ramadan Mubarak,” which means have a “Congratulations on the month of Ramadan.”
The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion

Introduces the Fall 2015 Book Clubs

**The Harm in Hate Speech**

By: Jeremy Waldron

Jeremy Waldron is University Professor, New York University School of Law, and Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory, All Souls College, University of Oxford.

*Casual discussions will be held*

*Monthly in the Provost Conference Room Rendleman Hall, Room 3102, 11:30 to 1:00 p.m., Thursday, September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10, 2015*

*Facilitators:*

- Dr. Nancy Lutz (nlutz@siue.edu)
  Associate Professor, Anthropology
- Dr. Venessa A. Brown (vbrown@siue.edu)
  Associate Chancellor and Professor

If you would like more information on the book club please contact Dr. Nancy Lutz

**Tell Us a Story:**

*An African American Family in the Heartland*

By: Shirley Motley Portwood

“Supplemented by recollections from the present era, Tell Us a Story is a colorful mosaic of African American autobiography and family history set in Springfield, Illinois, and in rural southern Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas from the 1920s through the 1950s.”

*Casual discussions will be held monthly:*

*Provost Conference Room, Rendleman Hall, Room 3102: 10:00-11:30 a.m., Friday, September 11, October 9, November 13, December 11, 2015*

*Facilitator:

- Dr. Venessa A. Brown (vbrown@siue.edu)
  Associate Chancellor and Professor

To Reserve Your spot, or for more information, go to: [http://www.siue.edu/FallBookClub2015.shtml](http://www.siue.edu/FallBookClub2015.shtml)
SIUE Safe Zone is pleased to announce that we will be participating in the St. Louis Pride Festival and Parade, Saturday, June 27, and Sunday, June 28. SIUE will once again host an informational booth and will also walk in the parade. We are looking for SIUE volunteers to help staff the booth and/or walk in the parade. Please click the following links to volunteer for the activity/times that work for you. We welcome all current and past SIUE students, staff, and faculty!

If you are interested in walking in the parade please click this link: [http://goo.gl/forms/41yMXbXn0e](http://goo.gl/forms/41yMXbXn0e)

If you are interested in volunteering at the booth please click this link: [http://goo.gl/forms/Dx4fGuBGw7](http://goo.gl/forms/Dx4fGuBGw7)

Happy Pride!

Marie Klopfenstein & Rex Jackson
Safe Zone Co-Chairs

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Commencement at SIUE

Congratulations to the 1,718 students who participated in Spring Commencement!

Ceremony videos: available at: https://www.siue.edu/commencement/

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Would you like to help students succeed?

We are looking for Faculty members for the following programs:

- Faculty mentoring Student Athletes
- Faculty Mentoring Students with Disabilities

If you are interested in being a mentor and helping students achieve success, please contact:

Dr. Venessa Brown, Associate Chancellor for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion
vbrown@siue.edu  650-5382

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Have a Great Summer!!!

SIUE Multicultural Center

The SIUE Multicultural Center is open this summer. From 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

If you need a comfortable place to study, to meet, or to just unwind for a while, come by and visit the SIUE Multicultural Center.

Located in room 2060 in the MUC, The Multicultural Center is a warm, inviting space for all students, faculty and staff.

If you would like more information, or would like to reserve the center for your group’s meeting, contact the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion at 650-5382.

Also, visit our Facebook page and like us on Facebook! https://www.facebook.com/pages/SIUE-Multicultural-