During your stay, you will hear me ask for your testimonials detailing your experience while in the U.S. and at SIU. This information not only advances the Center for International Education’s (CIE) mission of facilitating international education efforts on-campus, it also serves cross-cultural exchange efforts between countries and governments. Have you ever thought of yourself as a diplomat for your home country? You certainly are a diplomat! While in the U.S., you are not only learning about U.S. culture. We are also learning from you. If you have dependents in the U.S., the same may be said for your spouse and children.

The U.S. Department of State administers the J Exchange Visitor (EV) program. Today, I am including a link to the Exchange Visitor Program's Route J-1 Blog. This is a platform from the U.S. Department of State where visitors participating in the J Exchange Visitor program are highlighted. Schools and participants are encouraged to submit stories to the Route J-1 Blog via the J1Stories@state.gov email address. If you do share stories with the Route J-1 blog, please also share your stories with my office at jvisas@siu.edu. I hope that you explore the blog and learn more about what other Exchange Visitors are doing in the U.S. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the blog.

As always, if you have any questions or would like to say ‘hello’, you may stop into the Center for International Education, write us by email at jvisas@siu.edu, or call our front-desk at (618) 453-5774.

With Saluki Pride!
Tina Sickinger, Responsible Officer
International Students & Scholars
Center for International Education, SIU
I'm Ruifeng Wang, and I come from Shenzhen University of China. I'm very happy and lucky to have the opportunity to visit SIU as a short-term scholar.

After nearly three months of studying and living in Carbondale, I fell in love with this place. Carbondale has a good natural and cultural environment. The people here are friendly and helpful. Since I came here, I have met many great people and have had many interesting experiences.

During my stay at SIU, I participated in some local cultural exchanges and I chose to share there.

I live in a park. It's a beautiful place. I play basketball in the neighborhood when I'm free. There's a park beside it. After dinner, I can walk in the park. Professor Andy Wang arranged a tour for us to visit CASA programs, which were spread out in three locations: ASA Building, Quigley Hall, and Southern Illinois Airport. We have a deeper understanding of SIU.

**HOT CHOCOLATE**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1/3 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cups milk
- 3/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup half-and-half cream

**DIRECTIONS**

Combine the cocoa, sugar and pinch of salt in a saucepan. Blend in the boiling water. Bring this mixture to an easy boil while you stir. Simmer and stir for about 2 minutes. Watch that it doesn't scorch. Stir in 3 1/2 cups of milk and heat until very hot, but do not boil! Remove from heat and add vanilla. Divide between 4 mugs. Add the cream to the mugs of cocoa.
GIANT CITY HIKE

To kick off International Education Week 2018, the CIE staff hosted students, scholars, and their families to enjoy an afternoon at Giant City State Park. This was a great experience to see students and scholars; and meet their families. It was a joy to watch the reactions of students and scholars who have never been to Giant City State Park and watch them experience it for the first time.

A park ranger joined at the beginning to welcome the group to the park and to give more information about Southern Illinois state parks. S'mores were made and enjoyed with hot chocolate and coffee. It was fun to watch students enjoy this American treat and figure out the perfect roast for the marshmallow. People stood around the fire while snacking and chatted with new friends. Children enjoyed the swing set and playground that was beside the pavilion.

Scholars and students went on hikes around the area and were able to see Southern Illinois' beautiful rock formations and abundant forests.

The CIE office enjoyed connecting with student and scholars and look forward to more events like this throughout the year!

IMMIGRATION REMINDER

Travel Signature
If you are planning on traveling outside of the United States over break, please remember to email jvisas@siu.edu to schedule an appointment to get your DS-2019 signed for travel.