I am attaching our calendar for the annual International Awareness Week events. As in previous years, CIS hosted international awareness week to complement the many events we do throughout the year.

Events this year included a viewing of the Academy Award winning foreign-language film *Roma*, student-led discussions about race & study abroad as well as mental health & study abroad, and a poster session on the South Oval informing the OU Community of the impact of international students to OU, the State and the Country.

IA Week always ends with the Eve of Nations showcase. This year the students not only shared their food, culture, dance and music, but they also discussed their hope for unity, their stories of discrimination in the US and their concerns for events happening back home (specifically with Palestinian refugees, the devastating cyclone in Africa and political unrest in Venezuela and Zimbabwe). It was a positive message of unity.

And, after the blackface incident, it became apparent that many international students, faculty and staff- (and possibly even those who are not international) were unaware of the historical legacy, and associated pain, of white people dressing in blackface. In response to this, our faculty diversity committee partnered with others to put on a teach in on blackface (see attached flyer). Faculty from across campus educated a packed room about the history of blackface, and the connotations that this brings in the US context.

A place to meet the world. At OU, that place is the Davide L. Boren College of International Studies: international students share their traditions as they stay in Norman, while domestic students experience the global community when they travel abroad.

Since 1970, international students have organized the Eve of Nations, a multicultural showcase featuring dance, music and fashion from world countries. This year’s edition titled, “CXCV Shades of Unity, a reference to the 195 world countries, focused on embracing and celebrating differences in light of the racist incidents occurred in early fall. “Understand our differences; respect our differences; and UNITE under our differences” summarizes how Tara Putri, the graduate student who oversaw the event, conceived it.

Conversations about how to address racism on campus continued at the discussion session organized in a joined effort by the College of International Studies, the Office of
Diversity and Inclusion, and the Department of Modern Languages. Guided by a facilitator leading the discussion at each table, students, faculty and staff zoomed into educational opportunities to address cultural issues leading to racism. Many participants viewed continuous education and genuine discussion as indispensable tools for a cultural change.

The civic engagement that the Center for International Studies fosters on campus extends to study abroad programs such as the one in Arezzo, Italy, where the OU study center hosted the first Take Back the Night event in 2018. OU students and the community met to increase awareness about sexual assault and domestic violence. They invited representatives from local organizations to lead the conversation and to provide advice on how to get involved, become an ally, and fight back.