



**PURDUE  
UNIVERSITY®**

Office of International  
Students and Scholars

# *BRIDGING BORDERS*

**INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM**

*APRIL 2021*



**YEAR IN REVIEW**

## *Thanking Our Panel*

Special thanks to Juan Loaiza (Colombia), Snigdha Rai, Kalp Shah, Shivam Sharma, Akshay Vasan (India), Emily Cassanmagnano (Italy), and IFP Host Donna Vandergraff (West Lafayette) for kindly taking time to contribute commentary for this issue. Your input is most appreciated!

*Joseph Briller, Bridging Borders Editor*

### **Spotlighting IFP Students**

Our panel of students faced a dilemma in the summer of 2020. They wished to begin their educational aspirations in West Lafayette. But what protocols and restrictions would they face in arriving on campus during a pandemic? The consensus was that Purdue would overcome the obstacles. As Spring 2021 draws successfully to a close, they were proven right.

### **Protecting Purdue and Pursuing Goals**

Coming to Purdue from India, Shivam Sharma (civil engineering) had cause to be concerned. Most of his classes were to be in person on campus. However, he became convinced that Purdue's protocols and mandates mitigated the risks. He welcomed all, from mandatory mask wearing to modifying classrooms for social distancing.

The "Protect Purdue" pledge, and testing and monitoring student health has enabled life on campus to continue with the greatest sense of normalcy possible. In addition, Kalp Shah (management) has appreciated professors being open and responsive to students' concerns, and Akshay Vasan (industrial engineering) has appreciated how Purdue has helped students deal effectively with stress, anxiety, and uncertainty.

Purdue's commitment to alleviate the effects of the pandemic upon their studies has allowed Shivam, Kalp, and Akshay to make progress towards their academic goals without significant interruption.

## Hosting During A Pandemic

Donna and Jess Vandergraft answered a callout for Purdue IFP hosts. They decided they would love meeting students from different places and learning about their cultures and food. Cookouts were a good way for sharing these. When the pandemic hit, Donna and Jess realized that their students were isolated on campus, and couldn't return home. They set up Zoom calls so their students had "family" away from home.



## Arriving on Campus for Spring 2021 Semester

<b>Deferring</b>	<b>Overcoming</b>	<b>Caring</b>
<p>Initially Snigdha Rai (management) was scheduled to arrive in August 2020 for fall semester. Sad that her plans were put in hold, she persevered, and was welcomed to campus in January 2021 for spring semester. Snigdha described Purdue as "the light at the end of the tunnel." She is now continuing to pursue her academic and career goals.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Juan Loaiza's professors stepped in to assist Juan (communications) when he faced visa delays. Between August 2020 and January 2021, they helped Juan with paperwork, advice, and direction to available online programs. Thanks to their encouragement and support, Juan arrived on campus for spring semester, and is greatly enjoying pursuing his studies in West Lafayette.</p>	<p>Emily Cassanmagnano (finance) spent her first semester studying remotely. Arriving in January, Emily plunged into in person courses and extra-curricular activities. Set back by getting Covid at midterms, Emily worried that her grades would be affected. Thankfully she was given extra time to recover and is now back on track, appreciating how Purdue cares for its students.</p>

*"How has living through a pandemic changed you?"*

## ***Adjusting an Outlook***

Prior to the pandemic, Juan Loaiza, like most students, was highly focused on academics, employment opportunities and career goals. But living through a pandemic has broadened his perspectives. He has a greater appreciation for life, relationships, and closeness to his family.

## ***Staying the Courses***

Emily Cassanmagnano dreamed of a summer internship in New York. When Covid stymied that ambition, Emily came up with an alternative: participating in an online research program and taking summer courses. For Emily New York may be deferred, but not likely forgotten.

## ***Stepping Back to Go Forward***

Covid-19 encouraged Snigdha Rai to reconsider her priorities. Suddenly a long list of to do's would not lead to fulfillment. She now looks for where true happiness lies. She treasures the smiles of those she holds dear and has restructured her goals to benefit from every experience.



**Pictured at left:** Host Charlie Short took **Akshita Kamsali** to get her BMV proof of Indiana residency which would enable her to qualify for her Covid vaccinations.

**Pictured at right:** Akshita after her 1st COVID vaccination. Way to go, Aki! Congratulations!



## **What's Next?**

**Returning to Family**

Akshay Vasan misses his family in India. As soon as long distance traveling is feasible, he will consider a visit.

Juan Loaiza shares those sentiments, and will look forward to seeing his family in Colombia but also hopes to travel one day to non-western regions.

Hosts Donna and Jess Vandergraff miss their own family. As travel returns, they look forward to visiting their sons and their families in Ohio and Texas.

## Planning for Travel



**Kalp Shah's** favorite destination is Venice. He is delighted by its canals and surrounding waterways. Along with Venice he likes Spain for some similar attributes. They include history, old architecture and beautiful languages.

**Snigdha Rai** wants to explore the U.S., and California is at the top of her list. She loves beaches and roller coasters. Expect to see her at Disneyland and Universal Studios in the months ahead.





One place to find America's natural landscapes is in America's National Parks. **Shivam Sharma** likes staying home, but when ready to travel, the Grand Canyon comes to mind. Shivam likes beauty and serenity and he should be able to find it in America's National Parks.

**Emily Cassanmagnano** is already a world traveler. While New York is off her summer agenda and world travel is still doubtful, Emily will not be deterred from traveling. She loves Purdue and West Lafayette, and will see what she can discover in her new home state of Indiana.



**Coming Up!**

## Kinobe's Virtual Concert

**TODAY!**  
**Friday, April 2nd**  
**7:00 PM**

**Join Concert at**  
**Zoom Meeting ID: 757 904 8630**

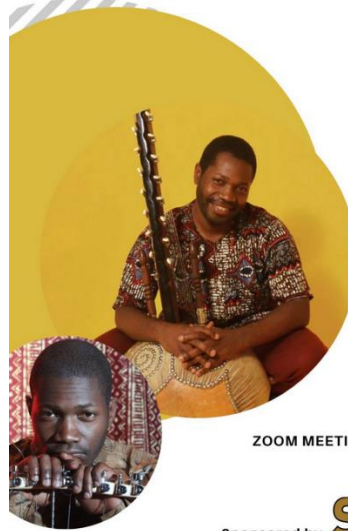
African instruments featured in Kinobe's music are the Kora, Kalimba, Tama, Endongo and Balafon. An interactive Q&A session will follow concert. Learn about his work, music, arts and approach on cross-cultural bridge building.

Hosted by FSA and OWOP  
Sponsored by SFAB

ONE WORLD, ONE PURDUE AND THE  
FRANCOPHONE STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
PRESENT:

## Kinobe's Virtual Concert

Ugandan musician,  
creative arts producer,  
educator, and  
philanthropist whose  
work has been  
described as "some  
of the most exquisite  
music coming out of  
Africa today".



ZOOM MEETING ID: 757 904 8630

APRIL 02 | 7PM EST

Sponsored by **SFAB**  
Purdue University Student Fee Advisory Board

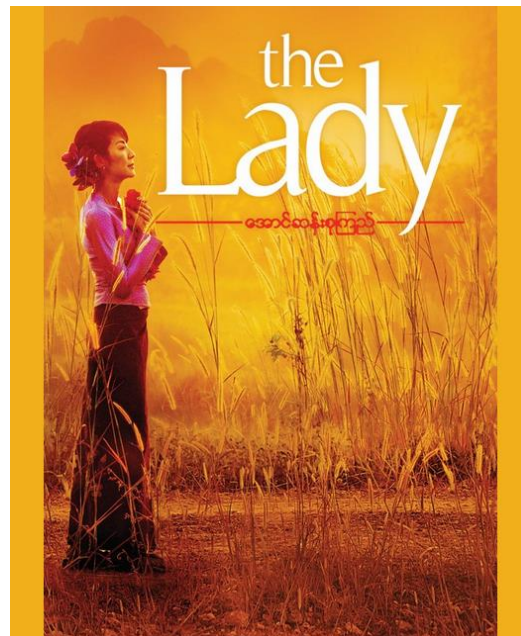
## "The Lady" France/UK: 2011 (English & Burmese)

**Sunday, April 11th**  
**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**Register [HERE](#)**

The epic story of Aung San Suu Kyi, the woman at the core of Burma's democracy movement set against a background of political turmoil which continues today.

Hosted by the Myanmar Student  
Association & OWOP



**The Politics of Hair Panel:  
Julissa Prado, Ona Diaz-  
Santin & Sulma Arzu-Brown**

**Monday, April 12th  
5:00 PM**

***JOIN VIRTUAL EVENT [HERE](#)***

Hosted by LCC, Sigma Lambda  
Gamma, Zeta Phi-Beta, OWOP  
Sponsored by SFAB



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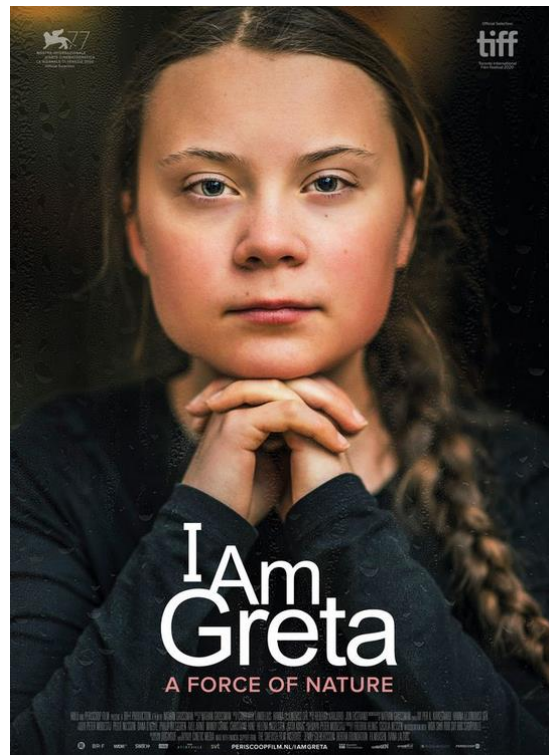
***"I Am Greta"***

**Wednesday, April 21st  
7:00 PM**

***Email [IFP@purdue.edu](mailto:IFP@purdue.edu) for link!***

This documentary follows Greta Thunberg, a teenage climate activist from Sweden, on her international crusade to get people to listen to scientists about the world's environmental problems. Screening and discussion in celebration of Earth Day.

Hosted by the ISS Office &  
The Big 10 Academic Alliance





## **IFP "Last Thursday!"**

### **"Destress Fest"**

**Thursday, April 29th  
7:00 - 8:15 PM**

IFP hosts and students are invited to a virtual "Last Thursday" in April for an hour to destress before finals.

We will enjoy a fun and rousing game of "Family Feud" along with prizes. Let's celebrate the end of year together.

Click below to register and receive a Zoom link within 24 hrs of event.



Register your group or family for a workshop today at:

***[www.McCordCandies.com](http://www.McCordCandies.com)***

### ***Strawberry Dip***

***Cost: \$18 / person***

Strawberries and chocolate...need we say more?!

You'll get 1/2 dozen giant strawberries to dip, and a gift box to carry them in.

You'll be able to choose from white, milk or dark chocolate, plus you will have lots of options to top off your dipped strawberries!





## Where is Turkey Run State Park?

IFP students and their hosts were asked in a recent travel survey what their favorite place was in Indiana, or a place they would like to visit in the future. Turkey Run State Park ranked 1st place!

This Indiana gem is located at 8121 Park Road in Marshall, Indiana, about 75 minutes from West Lafayette. It boasts a breathtaking gorge system that was naturally formed by the drainage of the creek.

A system of trails provides even the most avid hikers a challenge! Turkey Run's Trail 3 is known for its ruggedness, providing a challenge just off of the beaten path.

There are many great things to do at Turkey Run, including hiking, fishing, camping, river floating or kyaking, horseback riding, picnicking, and swimming at the pool. There is a little something here for everyone!

Fifteen miles down the road from Turkey Run is [Shades State Park](#) which some hikers find even more challenging with gorgeous views. When you go, don't miss the Pine Hills Nature Preserve with its awe-inspiring topography and river gorges. Simply spectacular!

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