

VolSphere

A monthly newsletter by the Center for Global Engagement

December 2020



Seasons Greetings from the Center for Global Engagement!

We had quite a year! While learning to navigate a new way of teaching and working in the virtual space and facing the unprecedented challenges, we have some major accomplishment to celebrate!

- We exceeded our goal of 50 new donors during Big Orange Give, unlocking a challenge gift of \$35,000 for international education.
- We hosted an exclusive Vol Town Hall for our international alumni in Asia on October 29. If you missed it, you can watch the recording. We plan to host Vol Town Halls for alumni in other parts of the world in 2021. Stay tuned!
- The Programs Abroad Office assisted 209 students in their return to the U.S. and academic contingency planning was completed for 219 students
- Announced the first cohort of the Academy for Global Scholars
- On March 18, International Student and Scholar Services began virtual immigration advising and moved entirely digital on March 23. Since then, over 250 virtual advising sessions have been conducted.

CGE has gone through a strategic visioning process as the whole university is laying our plans for the next five years. Global Engagement is one of the priority areas the Chancellor and her team have put forward. We are reflecting on and evaluating what we're doing and how we engage our students and how we're engaging in the world.

As we move through the pandemic and we build upon our proven expertise in crisis management and response, we begin to set our focus on the future, and it is clear that our work will not be the same. As a result of this pandemic, we are currently unable to travel, and yet the global crisis has emphasized how globally connected we are. Thus, the way forward is for CGE to lean into the complexities of this experience both in order to deal with the present crisis more effectively and to develop a pathway to greater resilience, cultural competency, and a deep understanding of our role as global citizens. CGE sees the opportunities that lie in these challenges as a means of reimagining much of what we do while holding true to the Volunteer spirit and the core mission of UT.

Looking ahead we have established goals to support a university culture that prioritizes and encourages global engagement by educating students to transcend national and cultural boundaries, provide resources for the campus community to extend their research across the world, and cultivate relationships with our international alumni.

Finally, we want to hear from you, our campus community partners, and our alumni. **I want to invite you to join me at the Checkerboard Chat on January 26, 2021 at 12:00pm EST.**

[Register here.](#)

In closing, we are optimistic about the years ahead and hope you will join us on this journey to bring UT to the world, and bring the world to UT.

We wish you a wonderful holiday and encourage you to stay safe and healthy over break and take the time to rest and reflect on the past year.

Best Regards,



Gretchen Neisler

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