



*—a Ferris State international education newsletter*

## **Under the Banyan: Virtual Global Conversation**

Greetings from the Office of International Education (OIE). The COVID-19 Coronavirus crisis has significantly disrupted our lives. Despite the many challenges, this global pandemic has also provided us space and time to reflect on the ties that bind us.

Two weeks ago, we decided to embrace the opportunity the Stay Home, Stay Safe executive order in Michigan has provided to engage with our international partners and colleagues. Last week, we started a new virtual conversation series called the “Under the Banyan”. During these difficult times, the challenges Ferris and our partners around the world face are both similar and unique. This conversation series allows us to engage and learn from our colleagues around the world.

We decided to name this series “Under the Banyan”. Banyan trees are native to Asia. In times past, banyan trees have been resting places for travelers and de facto trading posts for ideas and goods. The first schools of learning were conducted under the many branches of the banyan tree. Buddha was said to have reached enlightenment under a Banyan tree. Calling this conversation series as “Under the Banyan” aptly captures the essence of learning through the exchange of ideas and experiences from others. And although we are not able to physically travel to meet others, we are fortunate to be able to expand our reach virtually. Through this series, we connect with our friends and colleagues globally and take a time out of our work twice a week for meaningful conversations that help us understand our interconnectedness,

In the last two weeks, we had conversations about the COVID-19 crisis in Spain, China and Netherlands. We also had a conversation on the impact of COVID -19 crisis on our spring break Study Abroad program in Peru.

Starting next week, as part of this conversation series, we plan to invite the University stakeholders to share their thoughts and ideas on the Comprehensive Internationalization Plan (CIP) and the future of International Education at Ferris State University.

Dr. Piram Prakasam  
Executive Director, Office of International Education



## Upcoming Events:

### **Under the Banyan: Virtual Global Conversations Series**

Please join us using this zoom link every Tuesday and Thursday at 11 AM at URL: <https://zoom.us/j/98874271453>



## Moment In Time:



Pictured: Lisa vonReichbauer, Assistant Director, Office of International Education hosting the Virtual 32nd International Festival of Cultures live on the online gaming platform, Twitch from outside the International Office on Saturday April 18th.



## Past Newsletters

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