Celebrating OISS Executive Director Ann Kuhlman’s Retirement!

May 12, 2022

After 22 years at Yale, Ann Kuhlman, Executive Director of OISS, will be retiring at the end of June 2022. For more than four decades in the field of international education, Ann has dedicated her life to advocating for and supporting international students and scholars and, in doing so, has transformed the lives of thousands of international students, scholars, and family members on Yale’s campus and beyond.

Ann came to Yale in 1999 after 22 years as the Associate Director of the Office of International Programs at the University of Pennsylvania. When she was hired as the Director of OISS at Yale, the team was much smaller and was in an office building on Church Street. At that time, OISS was primarily focused on issuing immigration documents and supporting the regulatory side of the international student and scholar experience for approximately 1,400 international students and less than 1,000 international scholars.

Under Ann’s direction and leadership, OISS was transformed. She worked with Yale’s top leaders to revolutionize the university’s approach to internationalization and how OISS supports the international community, not just with immigration support, but offering support pre-arrival, settling into life in the U.S., navigating new identities, and ensuring that mental health and wellbeing is addressed. She helped the university to grow our international presence on campus, which today includes close to 3,000 students, 2,500 scholars, and nearly 1,000 family members, making Yale the truly global campus that it is today.

In 2005, she successfully opened the International Center, which is the current office and programming space of OISS at 421 Temple St. This “home away from home” for international students and scholars not only serves as a trusted place to seek guidance and support for maintaining immigration status but is also a gathering space that offers a robust set of programs that are designed specifically to meet the needs of the international community. And before the pandemic, we were affectionately known as the spot to grab a free coffee, tea, or water at any time!
For most of her time here, she was the heart of OIS (Orientation for International Students), one of the pre-orientation programs for Yale College students. For international undergraduates, OIS is a crucial part of their experience at Yale and Ann shaped this program into what it is today. She was also instrumental in implementing our flagship programs that are run out of our office such as our daily English Conversation Groups, the Thanksgiving at Home program, our Understanding America series, and launching our International Spouses & Partners at Yale (ISPY) community which supports the family members of our visiting students and scholars. These programs demonstrate just a few examples of how Ann has stewarded OISS in supporting the full international student/scholar experience and making sure that our office is viewed as a trusted resource for this community.

In 2020, Ann was awarded with Yale’s Linda Lorimer Award for Distinguished Service in recognition of her tireless work for international student/scholar mobility throughout the Covid-19 global pandemic, and all the challenges that came along with it. Ann also navigated OISS and the international community through the ever changing, and at times harmful, immigration policies and became the university’s primary contact and support person for our DACA students.

As part of her advocacy work in international education, Ann is a nationally recognized leader in NAFSA, the national association for international educators. This year, she received the NAFSA Life Member Award, and in 2001 was awarded the NAFSA Homer Higbee Award. She previously served as a national conference chair, board member, and chair of the now retired NAFSA Region IX. In addition to her work with NAFSA, she currently serves on the boards of Education Matters Africa, which supports the USAP Community School in Zimbabwe, and is the current chair of Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE). For many years, she was also on the board and served as chair of the International Association of New Haven.

Not only has Ann touched the lives of thousands of international students and scholars, but she has served as a trusted mentor for many professionals in the field of international education across the country. Her holistic approach of supporting the full international student and scholar experience is one that many offices across the country only hope to be able to achieve. Yale’s international community will benefit for years to come from Ann’s dedicated career.

Ann, please know that OISS will always be your home away from home, so please come visit us any time. Thank you. For everything.

If you would like to help us celebrate Ann’s retirement, please stop by OISS to sign her retirement memory book. It will be at the front desk beginning on Friday, May 12th – June 17th.

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