



# EAST WEST CONNECTION

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT BRYANT UNIVERSITY

FALL 2021

## International Experiences @ Bryant



Many Class of 2020 international students returned to Smithfield on May 23, 2021 for their commencement after a yearlong delay caused by the pandemic.



4MILE peer counselors outside of the Fisher Student Center. This year, 14 peer counselors and 1 program assistant welcomed 63 new international and multicultural students to Bryant during the six day program that began on August 27, 2021.



Members of the Class of 2025 tour the Krupp Library during Orientation and pose for a photo with Tupper's stand-in.



Jianzhi Liang '21, recipient of the Skeffington Scholarship to study abroad in Smithfield during his junior year, holds his newly awarded diploma during Bryant Zhuhai's Commencement on May 29, 2021.

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## Bryant University

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## Letter from the Vice President



As COVID-19 continues to ravage the world disrupting many aspects of international education, from study abroad to international students unable to return to their home countries, the Bryant community took this as a challenge to enhance our supports to international students, whether it was visa applications or online learning. In compliance with both federal and local health requirements, Bryant is holding 100% in-person classes this fall.

Prior to the start of the semester, new international students joined domestic multi-cultural students in 4MILE (4-year Multicultural and International Leadership Experience) and were welcomed by staff from both Student Affairs and International Affairs. A group of friendly and energetic student 4MILE Peer Counselors led the weeklong program, which included fun, informative, and resourceful programming.

Despite all of the challenges imposed by the global pandemic, Bryant University remains deeply committed to international education. Page 3 highlights several ongoing programs that Bryant staff made extra efforts to support international students' success in both academics and in their personal well-being.

Diversity has been a great strength of American higher learning institutions, and Bryant is no exception. Bryant's international faculty members are role models for our students, international and domestic alike, and many

international faculty are willing to share their stories. The Global Scholar Stories Series, a platform for Bryant faculty and staff to relate their international experience, whether it is about travel, research, or their academic pathways, to members of the Bryant community. Page 4 summarizes stories from two well-established Bryant international scholars.

This issue also features international faculty member, Dr. Isil Yavuz, who joined Bryant in 2019 as an Assistant Professor and the Director of the Entrepreneurship Program. Dr. Yavuz brings valuable academic and practical experience to Bryant as she continues to teach and mentor our students (Page 7).

While many international students find Bryant to be a great place to live and learn American culture, many other Bryant students step out of their comfort zones to learn foreign languages, participate in study abroad programs in countries where cultural, linguistic, and political environments are very different from home. Marisa Andreozzi did all of the above and landed a job at a multi-national company upon graduation. Her story is on page 5.

The dedicated staff members of International Affairs continue to provide a diverse suite of programs to promote cultural and intellectual diversity on campus. Through the signature program Global Community Hour, international students led virtual trips to India, Senegal, Sweden, Jamaica, and Kazakhstan. Facing a diverse media ecosystem, a group of international students organized a discussion on how to engage, evaluate, and navigate

media. Bryant International Forum brought national leaders on international education and Bryant international alumni to the Bryant community (Page 6).

Recently, the American Council for Education (ACE) has accepted Bryant's application to be included as one of thirteen higher learning institutions in the 2021-23 Cohort of the ACE Internationalization Lab program. Working with experts from ACE and our peers at other universities, this prestigious program will provide Bryant an opportunity to engage in a campus-wide learning opportunity for our international programs. We are seeking campus wide involvement and collaboration that includes students, faculty, staff, and alumni on both the Smithfield and Zhuhai campuses to gather and analyze data, review existing programs, and to make recommendations related to campus internationalization. We are looking forward to your participation.

Meanwhile, I invite you to enjoy this issue of "East-West Connection," submit your ideas and information regarding international programs, and participate in upcoming international related events to make Bryant a stronger global community.

Hong Yang, Ph.D.  
Vice President for International Affairs  
Charles J. Smiley Chair Professor

## Bryant's Commitment to Global Education Endures

A successful 2020-2021 academic year that incorporated robust safety measures, including masking, surveillance testing of the entire population and a vaccine requirement, with limited exceptions for fall 2021, has enabled Bryant University to shift from a hybrid model of learning back to 100% in-person course offerings for fall 2021.

While challenges remain for students navigating a global landscape still dealing with COVID-19, Bryant remains steadfast in its commitment to international education and to the goal of delivering a real-world-focused global education to all students. As opportunities for global learning experiences rebound, the University will continue to facilitate those experiences and prepare students to make the most of them.

In May 2021, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that international students with valid F-1 visas facing travel bans were eligible for a National Interest Exemption (NIE), which removed a significant hurdle for students hoping to return to Smithfield. Many newly enrolled international students also faced uncertainty and long waits for visa interviews. The U.S. Department of State, however, has since prioritized international student visas because of the tremendous value and goodwill generated through international education.

Bryant's Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), the first point of contact for many of the University's international students and their families, worked tirelessly in 2020-21 to stay up to date with changing travel regulations and restrictions. Outreach to new international students began much earlier and provided vital information to



Harsh Vijan '21 stands in the Rotunda with a group of exchange students from long-time partner China University of Geosciences.

families—including the steps Bryant has taken to ensure a safe living and learning environment despite the pandemic. As the start of the fall 2021 semester approached, international parents felt comfortable with their loved ones returning to Smithfield.

For international students who enrolled in their first year of college as remote learners, the challenge of adapting to a new academic culture was magnified by not being physically present in the academic environment. In response, the University's Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) made important changes to accommodate students. A shift to online required ACE to provide Bryant's tutors with additional training so that they were comfortable with online tutoring. As a result, students now have a choice to schedule peer tutoring sessions online or in-person at ACE.

Staff members in Student Affairs and International Affairs worked hard to keep international students engaged with the Bryant campus. Safety restrictions, time zone differences and busy schedules all made participating in campus programming during the spring 2021 semester more challenging for international students. Zoom drop-in office hours hosted by the OISS and 4MILE

events throughout the year kept them involved and informed.

Bryant student's enthusiasm for global experiences never ceased during the pandemic. **Bradley DeMild '22**, an International Business student concentrating in Accounting who was determined to study abroad in Germany, credits many at Bryant with helping him pursue his dream. Through a newly finalized direct study partnership with Konstanz University, DeMild had "the best experience of his life" studying in southern Germany.

As we move forward into the 2021-22 academic year, even more international opportunities are opening up. In July, 62 graduate students traveled to Iceland for a short-term Global Immersion Experience. And while fall 2021 study abroad was only open to seniors, applications for spring 2022 are open to all eligible students.

As COVID-19 remains active in the U.S. and around the world, Bryant remains in a strong position to deliver on its mission to educate and inspire students to discover their passion and become innovative leaders with character around the world. The Division of International Affairs will continue to create opportunities for all students to engage in international and global learning experiences.

## Sharing International Experiences through Global Scholar Stories

The Global Scholar Stories series at Bryant University provides a forum for faculty and other scholars to share their unique background, experience, and research with the community. The 2021 academic year featured presentations by two outstanding Bryant international faculty members: **Edinaldo Tebaldi, Ph.D.** Faculty Fellow & Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategy and **A. Can Inci, Ph.D.**, Professor of Finance.



Professor of Economics Edinaldo Tebaldi, Ph.D. Professor of Finance A. Can Inci, Ph.D.

For Tebaldi, higher education was not viewed as part of his destiny as a boy growing up in rural southwest Brazil. Early on in his life, he held jobs delivering propane tanks and waiting tables at a bus station café. He credits a combination of sheer determination and luck for many of his accomplishments.

As a high school student, he became increasingly politically active as Brazil exited nearly twenty-one years of military dictatorship. Teachers took notice and encouraged him to continue his education. With his passion for learning and entrepreneurial spirit, Tebaldi built and sold his first software program in 1990, an early success on the road to his current position at Bryant.

Tebaldi also highlighted the role that his teachers and professors, including Bryant University President, **Ross Gittel, Ph.D.**, as his Ph.D. advisor at the University of New Hampshire, have played in his life – as well as the opportunities that came along with those mentorships. He hoped, he said, that listeners would, “pursue things that have high value to you, respect your parents and boss but don’t always listen, and find mentors but also be willing to be a mentor.”

### The future is international

In his talk, Inci, who traces his family roots back to Bosnia, Greece, Georgia, and India/Pakistan, spoke about his passion for travel and growth. When he was still a baby, his parents moved his family to Australia before returning to Turkey three years later. His love of travel developed as a boy during family road trips around Europe and he spent formative years in Istanbul, where he attended Boğaziçi University with its campus overlooking the Bosphorus.

Like Tebaldi, Inci also emphasized the influence that his relationships with faculty members had on him while he was a student. As an undergraduate, he learned valuable lessons observing a professor with minority status who was continually overlooked for important assignments. As a graduate student, he learned about dedication from a professor with a severe speech impediment who had to put in additional hours of preparation for lectures. Inci learned humility from an advisor who, without taking credit or even broaching the subject with him, helped Inci secure a fellowship. As a Ph.D. candidate, he learned about work-life balance from a professor who spent time each year riding the Tour de France bicycle route.

An accomplished scholar and cosmopolitan, Inci urged those listening to his presentation to read, travel and develop a passion and system for continuous learning. He also urged everyone to exercise both sides of their brain in order to become a full, effective and efficient person.

During their talks, Both Tebaldi and Inci noted how impactful it was for them to look back at the life events that led them to join the University community as they put their presentations together. The Bryant community, in turn, is stronger and closer after hearing their stories—and drawing inspiration from their words.

As Inci noted in the conclusion of his presentation, “The future is international. Bryant students must get that exposure to international life, culture and economics. It is an indispensable part of a Bryant education.” Whether faculty, staff or students, global scholars are a driving force at Bryant as the University moves toward a new vision for 2030.

For upcoming Global Scholar Stories events, go to the Bryant Events Calendar at <https://events.bryant.edu/>.

## Marisa Andreozzi '21: Opportunities Abound

When she began her Bryant education as an International Business major without a declared concentration, **Marisa Andreozzi '21** had no idea that she would leave with two degrees, a Bachelor of Science in International Business and a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese with dual concentrations in Global Supply Chain Management and Applied Analytics. Now, as she begins her career as an Application and Program Analyst at Deloitte Consulting, Andreozzi credits the professors and opportunities she had at Bryant with preparing her to excel.

“Bryant will be what you make of it,” she says. “If you want to put in the time, people will continue to give you experiences.”

Those opportunities helped her to accomplish important goals. Andreozzi knew that learning about China and international travel were priorities for her. Through the University’s International Business program, she spent two weeks in Vietnam with Professor of Finance **Peter Nigro, Ph.D.** examining emerging financial technology markets and exploring the local business environment before spending a semester in China, an experience she describes as “amazing.”

Andreozzi gained real-world skills leading projects and organizing events. In 2017, she played a leading student role in helping to run an exhibit on *Dunhuang: An Oasis of East-West Cultural, Commercial, and Religious Exchanges along the Ancient Silk Road*. She credits that experience with introducing her to a diverse group of people that helped her



Marisa Andreozzi '21, Application and Program Analyst at Deloitte Consulting

find opportunities to do fulfilling work.

### A network of success

Andreozzi found that same level of support as she prepared for life after college. “At Bryant,” Andreozzi says, “I always had people looking out for me,” as she navigated her search for a job during her senior year. Graduating during the COVID-19 pandemic into a difficult job market, Andreozzi says that she “wasn’t afraid of not getting a job offer, more just worried about getting the right job offer for me.”

*“I would not have been as comfortable or as confident in my job search if I didn’t go to Bryant,”* she reflects. She attributes her success in finding a best-fit position to the network she was able to build early on at the University and the Bryant faculty who consistently sent new opportunities her way.

Bryant’s Amica Center for Career Education Center also helped propel

Andreozzi in making the leap from student to professional. Consulting with an Amica Center career coach, who works individually with students on career planning and goals, was invaluable, she says.

Andreozzi knew what she was looking for in an employer, and even made a checklist with twenty attributes important to her. “It had to be an MNC (multi-national company), it had to offer opportunities for continuous learning, it had to have a strong presence in East Asia,” she states. When the Amica Center for Career Education brought representatives from Deloitte to campus, she took advantage of the informal sessions to learn more about the company.

Deloitte checked every one of the boxes on her list.

Now, as one of several Bryant University Class of 2021 graduates hired by Deloitte, Andreozzi has joined the Philadelphia field office and is excited to help clients solve problems and about traveling to job sites around the globe.

## Staying Engaged with International Affairs

Bryant's ability to contain the spread of COVID-19 within the community has allowed the easing of related restrictions, creating more opportunities for in-person events. Everyone in the Bryant community welcomes this as we look forward to seeing more of each other in person and to strengthening our connections to the world. Yet even during pandemic, international programs and events carried on throughout the 2020-21 academic year.

### Celebrating art

The International Student Organization's signature cultural dance show *izi* went online in 2020. *izi 2020: Cultural Empowerment* featured dancing, food and international immersion as student organizers took the opportunity to share their cultures from their unique first-person perspectives. The online format let students participate from locations around the world.

International Affairs partnered with Assistant Professor of English and Cultural Studies **Melissa Slocum, Ph.D.**, and the College of Arts and Sciences to bring author Sejal Shah to campus for a hybrid event. Shah led a writing workshop, "What People Don't Say: Writing What Is Taboo," and discussed her experience publishing a book as a neurodiverse writer. A book reading by Shah complemented the workshop.

The two events were part of a Visiting Writer Series spearheaded by Slocum that saw poet Geoffrey Davis visit campus. Slocum described the speakers as reflecting, "a spectrum of lived experiences and backgrounds, which helps the series meet another goal—creating the ability to be interdisciplinary and enriching curriculum, conversations, and dialogues."



Mai Anh "Maya" Nguyen '22 and members of the International Student Organization welcome the Class of 2023 during Convocation in September 2019.

### International awareness

Bryant's Global Community Hour program featured five international students during the 2020-21 academic year. In October, **Nidhi Murli '21** and **Louise Barro '23**, delivered a taste of India and Senegal, respectively, to audiences. During the spring semester, **Elin Svärd '21** introduced people to Sweden, **Daniel Brown '21** presented Jamaica and **Aidana Aisa '21** acquainted audience members with her home country of Kazakhstan. At the spring hybrid events, attendees received a sample of Swedish chocolate and had an opportunity to try Kazakh cuisine made available for pick-up at the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

A student panel titled *Media Matters: How International Students Make Sense of an Expanding Media Environment* brought together students, faculty and staff for a discussion on how to navigate the news media landscape. Two multicultural students and five international students shared their views on determining trustworthy sources,

examining a publisher's agenda and developing healthy media consumption habits.

The Bryant International Forum invited Ross Lewin, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for International Affairs at the University of Maryland, to campus virtually for a session on *Reimagining International Education*.

In March, Bryant's Amica Center for Career Education, Office of International Students and Scholars, Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement and International Student Organization created a forum for five recent international alumni to share their experiences navigating the U.S. job market after graduation and starting careers in both the United States and international markets.

*International Affairs is returning to in-person events as the pandemic circumstances allow and will continue to engage virtually when appropriate. Check out the Bryant Events Calendar at <https://events.bryant.edu/> for up-to-date information on this semester's events.*

## International Faculty Spotlight – Isil Yavuz

An accomplished faculty member who has worked and studied at top institutions around the world, **Isil Yavuz, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship, brings her unique perspective to developing innovative undergraduate programs to Bryant University.

*"Our graduates need to be problem solvers and innovators. That's how you create value, whether you're creating a new business or working in another context."*

Yavuz joined Bryant in August 2019 after previously serving as an Assistant Professor at Ozyegin University in Istanbul, Turkey, where she taught international business and entrepreneurship at the undergraduate and graduate levels for eight years. She is an angel investor with Rising Tide, a financial network of over 160 women across five continents whose aim is to increase women's participation in angel investing as an asset class, including through building an investment portfolio in start-ups offering a financial return and a positive social impact.

An award-winning researcher, Yavuz was also a mentor at InoSuit-Innovation-Focused Mentorship Project in cooperation with Turkish Exporters Assembly. The project pairs experts from academia with companies where, as mentors, they help design and implement tailor-made corporate innovation systems.

Yavuz serves as Director of the Entrepreneurship Program at Bryant University. Through the program, students benefit from real-world-focused learning, student-centered faculty mentors, and a close-knit community. Yavuz, with her global perspective and entrepreneurship expertise is helping to build on the program's strengths and real-world preparation.

She especially appreciates Bryant's high-touch environment and the University's focus on helping students grow personally and professionally so they become well-rounded graduates. "Our graduates need to be problem solvers and innovators. That is how you create value, whether you are creating a new business or working in an established company. And that is why more and more companies are looking for entrepreneurial thinkers," said Yavuz.

A dedicated educator, Yavuz enjoys teaching Bryant students, whom she considers entrepreneurial and determined. "Students have



Assistant Professor of Management  
R. Isil Yavuz, Ph.D.

created businesses while they're here, and there are many family businesses among the student body," she says.

Yavuz is also impressed with how Bryant students stretch their entrepreneurial muscles in a range of student organizations supported by the Entrepreneurship Program, such as Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization, which in 2020 won the Global Chapter of the Year award, and student startup accelerator Bryant Ventures. Students in a range of majors participate in these student organizations, she notes; "You can find the entrepreneurial spirit all over Bryant, not just in the Entrepreneurship Program."

Yavuz's teaching style reflects her goal of creating strong problem solvers and analytical thinkers. During class discussions, she opts to ask provocative questions rather than give solutions. "I feel strongly that university-level teaching is not about answers, but rather about promoting an analytical way of thinking. Answers change, leaving those relying on them stranded, while those who think prevail," she says. That belief played a role in why she chose Bryant: "I was attracted to Bryant because [...] they are fully committed to creating a positive atmosphere of trust and respect where students are partners in the knowledge discovery process and not a consumer of information."

Yavuz received her doctorate in business administration from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. She is the author of *The Outsider Entrepreneurs*, a book based on her dissertation on immigrant entrepreneurs; the dissertation received a Dissertation Fellowship Award and a KFS Best Dissertation Award from the Kauffman Foundation. She has been published in top academic entrepreneurship journals including *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. Her research interests include early internationalization and innovation in new ventures, immigrant entrepreneurship, and new business creation in established companies. She holds an M.S. in social psychology and a B.S. in business administration from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey.



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## Upcoming Events

### Global Community Hour

One of Bryant's signature educational activities, the Global Community Hour helps build cultural competency by taking the audience to countries around the globe each semester. Hosted by international students and scholars, Global Community Hour events include a presentation about the focus country's culture and are followed by a small sampling of local cuisine. Seats are limited. For more information, contact the Office of International Students and Scholars at [oiss@bryant.edu](mailto:oiss@bryant.edu).

### Global Scholar Stories

Members of the Bryant community are invited to share their global experiences. Community members interested in sharing should contact Kongli Liu at [kliu1@bryant.edu](mailto:kliu1@bryant.edu). Check the Bryant Events Calendar for a schedule of upcoming Global Scholar Stories events.

### International Education Week:

**November 15 – 19, 2021**

International Education Week promotes and celebrates international education and multiculturalism. The week's highlights include keynote speakers, panel discussions, and programs geared toward increasing awareness and facilitating dialogue. The goal of IEW at Bryant is to heighten campus awareness of social and global issues to promote mutual understanding and international cooperation.

### Spring Break Cultural Exchange

Organized and sponsored by the Division of International Affairs, this program is designed to support the integration of international and domestic students at Bryant. Visit some of America's most beautiful national parks and meet new friends. Space is limited. For questions, contact [international@bryant.edu](mailto:international@bryant.edu).

### HSK Test

A six-level, international standardized Chinese proficiency test designed to examine students' ability in the application of the Chinese language in their studies and personal lives.

### YCT Test

A four-level, international standardized test of Chinese language proficiency, designed to help young students evaluate their Chinese language skills.

### Registration Deadline

10 Days prior to the exam date

*For more information, please contact Ms. Kun Xie at [kxie@bryant.edu](mailto:kxie@bryant.edu) or visit [china.bryant.edu](http://china.bryant.edu) and click on "Test Services" through the Cultural Programs tab.*

The Division of International Affairs supports the University mission to meet its global strategies. The division provides support to international students and scholars for their cultural immersion, academic success, social networking, and career preparation throughout their educational experience at Bryant.

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