March 15, 2022

Dear FIUTS Sponsors and Partners,

On Friday, March 4th, we received communication from UW Vice President Denzil Suite informing us that Student Life has decided not to renew the contract for services between FIUTS and the University of Washington, effective on June 14 of this year. We also learned that the cancellation of this contract means we will no longer be able to remain in our space in Schmitz Hall.

We are grateful for the partnership that FIUTS has held with you. With all of you, we have consistently delivered transformational programming and delivered useful information to generations of UW students and scholars, innovating and improving opportunities for engagement that span student level, area of study, and country of origin. Although we suspected that there might be changes to our agreement in the coming years, the abrupt notification and short timeline for this transition was unexpected. FIUTS was not invited to take part in the discussions that led to the decision, or to discuss ways to reduce the impact of the transition on students, alumni, or campus and community partners.

Since our founding at the UW in the 1940s, FIUTS has been an asset to the university, an innovative model providing a range of services and engagement opportunities to students at the grassroots level and inspiring connections with people throughout the campus and community. The cancellation of our contract means the end of a significant portion of our income, and brings to the end our involvement in the mandatory international student orientation. But FIUTS’ work goes far beyond the planning and coordination of orientation. In fact, we’ve only done that work for a small portion of our 74 years.

We do still plan to do some of our classic “welcome to our community” activities each quarter, including the boat cruise, community BBQ, and others. And beyond orientation, our year-round programming will continue to engage thousands of students, community members, K-12 schools, and local organizations in dynamic cultural exchange, dialogue, and learning.

What is next? FIUTS is committed to community, transparency, creativity, and integrity. We are not contesting the end of our current contract to provide international student orientation. In spite of the current setback, our work will continue, focused on students most curious and passionate about our mission. The short timeline means that FIUTS must balance our ongoing work with immediate needs – seeking new sources of funding, communicating with all of our constituents, securing new office space, and supporting our staff and current student community through the transition.
**How can you help?**

We hope that you will continue to look to FIUTS as a way to connect with international students and globally focused community members. Some concrete actions you can take now:

1. **Stay Connected!** We will continue to deliver many of our traditional programs, and we hope you will join us and continue to share our programs with your community. Follow us on social media and subscribe to our weekly newsletter to learn about upcoming programming.

2. **Sponsor a FIUTS program.** We will still have many opportunities to collaborate, including Community BBQ, Wednesday Lunch, our weekly student newsletter, and FIUTS Cultural Fest. We recognize that this change may impact your level of sponsorship, but welcome you to explore other options. We plan to have a sponsorship packet ready to distribute to sponsors by May 15.

3. **Attend an event!** Our annual fundraiser, Blue Marble Bash is in just over one month on April 21. We'll be celebrating the work we all do together and building community financial support for FIUTS programs, especially important during this challenging time.

4. **Share your resources.** Among other things, we are urgently looking for office space. Do you have a connection to a great U-district space that might work well for FIUTS? Do you have access to movers or other resources that might help us in some way? Do you have a great idea you want to share? Please reach out.

The UW has a stated commitment to equity, diversity, student mental health support, and in-person programming. FIUTS strengthens the UW’s ability to deliver on that commitment, and has done so for nearly 75 years. FIUTS and what we stand for should be a source of pride for this university, along with the students, alumni, and others touched by our work year after year. At this time in history, as we once again find ourselves faced with overwhelming global conflicts, our mission to advance international understanding is more important than ever.

In community,

Signed

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