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Ouachita News Bureau

Ashly Stracener

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For immediate release

Ouachita to host 2019 International Food Festival on Feb. 19

By Ashly Stracener

February 8, 2019

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.— Ouachita Baptist University's International Club and Daniel and Betty Jo Grant Center for International Education will host the 2019 International Food Festival on Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 5:30 p.m. in Walker Conference Center. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$5 each.

This year's theme, "Places to Go, People to Meet, Food to Eat," encapsulates the mission of the annual festival, which Ian Cosh, Ouachita's vice president for community and international engagement, explains is "to focus on international global diversity on campus."

"There are many different ways to view Ouachita," Cosh said. "Whether you look at it through the athletic lens, the academic lens or the social club lens, it's just another way of drawing attention to something that's been a really big part of Ouachita since the first international student came from China in 1936."

Dishes from approximately 30 different countries will be served, allowing for international students to share their cultures and experiences with their Ouachita and Arkadelphia communities. This year Amy Gattis, associate director of the Grant Center, is directing the student leadership team in preparation for the event.



Dylan Bester, a senior business administration/entrepreneurship major from Johannesburg, South Africa, and current International Club president, said the event "flips the coin and makes the internationals the hosts."

"I think that gives us almost a sense of home," Bester said. "It makes it more personal, and it brings a focus onto us and what we have to bring to the table."

The thought behind this event is to bring people of different cultures and backgrounds together, through the common connection of food, and breaks down stigmas that can accompany differences by initiating intentional conversations.

“In a world that’s a little bit fractious, hopefully – in a tiny way – it helps awaken people to the fact that differences can be really fun and make life much more interesting and enjoyable,” Cosh said. “Breaking bread together is a good way to help enjoy each other’s company.”

“You’re going to be able to taste something different, and different is not bad. And it’s going to be delicious for a really great price,” Bester said. “You get to go out of your own comfort zone and social circle, and you get to embrace other people.”

The International Food Festival provides a way for international students to not only serve their community and learn from positions of leadership but also to provide a place of fellowship.

“There’s something about the electricity in the room that gets you pumped up when you hear lots of people being able to talk to each other, little kids laughing, questions about food or accents,” Bester adds. “It brings all of that into one place for a big mess and a big melting pot of fun, which is what I love about Food Fest.”

For more information about the International Food Festival, contact the Grant Center at (870) 245-5197.

