

UW-Eau Claire: Celebrates different cultures during CultureFest

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Photo caption: *People from the campus and community are welcome to celebrate and learn about various cultures during UW-Eau Claire's CultureFest April 24.*

People with varying backgrounds will gather on the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's campus this month to celebrate and share their cultures with members of the campus and greater Eau Claire communities.

CultureFest — previously known as the International Folk Fair — will run from noon-4 p.m. Sunday, April 24, in Davies Center.

The free in-person event will feature performances and demonstrations by people and organizations from UW-Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley.

“The goal of CultureFest is to bring together people with different cultural backgrounds into one location,” says Lee Chepil, an international student manager in the Center for International Education. “We want to connect people to new cultures and to highlight traditions.”

Each of the 19 participating groups will have a designated room within Davies Center, where they can decorate with cultural artifacts, showcase dances, feature food, perform demonstrations or play games.

Members of UW-Eau Claire's Korean Student Association are excited that they will be part of the event, says Kelly Kim, an international student from South Korea and president of the organization. The group helps Korean students at UW-Eau Claire, introduces Korean culture, and makes active and diverse communities on campus and in the community.

“During CultureFest, we are planning to have an event like karaoke so that anyone can join and enjoy it together with us,” says Kim, a biology major who has minors in Japanese and pre-professional health. “We will focus on K-pop and drama this time and teach the Korean language, Hangeul.”

In past years, the Korean Student Association made and sold Korean food called “Hansik,” Kim says. However, because of COVID-19, there are not enough members to continue that tradition, she says.

“We hope that people can enjoy with us and know more about the Korean culture that is booming worldwide,” Kim says, noting they will have a snack booth for people to visit.

Visitors to CultureFest will get “passports” highlighting each group and their locations within Davies Center. As they visit the various rooms, people can get their passports stamped to reflect their travels to new places within the event.

CultureFest also will include presentations and demonstrations throughout the day. The featured performance will be the Bizhiki Culture and Dance Company, which will include several Indigenous dances and exhibitions. Swan Lake Ballet, a Ukrainian dance organization from Menomonie, also will perform a few dances.

There will be a cooking demonstration in Dulany Inn, and organizers will share recipes the visitors can take home.

Sally Thompson, a senior who will graduate in May with a major in marketing and minor in management, is the event planning intern for CultureFest 2022.

“I liked the idea of being a part of such a culturally immersive event that takes place here on campus,” says Thompson, a native of Delano, Minnesota. “There aren’t many events like this in the area and I am someone who loves the idea of getting the chance to share and learn all about the different cultures that there are around the world. The position also gives me a great opportunity to gain some hands-on experience relevant to the marketing and event planning industries.”

Chepil says he and other organizers are thrilled that the event can again be offered in person. It was canceled in spring 2020 because of COVID-19, and then offered virtually in 2021.

“We are excited to once again be together for this campus and community event,”

Chepil says.