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## International Coffee Hour helps spreading culture across campus

Bria Lamonica

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### International Coffee Hour helps spreading culture across campus

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Every Friday at 4 p.m. the International Student Association hosts a Coffee Hour in North Pod, Memorial Union. File Photo.





#### Bria Lamonica (https://mainecampus.com/author/blamonica/)

□ Campus & Community (https://mainecampus.com/category/culture/campus-community/),Culture (https://mainecampus.com/category/culture/) | ♥ February 5, 2018

Carrying supplies, treats and decorations through the halls of the Memorial Union, members of the International Student Association (ISA), Office of International Programs and Black Student Union (BSU) gathered together to host their weekly Coffee Hour.

Held every Friday at 4 p.m. in the North Pod of the Union, International Coffee Hour is a sponsored event meant to share and spread diverse cultures represented on campus. The hour of celebration also gives students and staff a chance to connect with students from different countries and backgrounds.

"This event was in celebration of Black History Month, and it went better than we could have expected, with a great turnout," Silvestre Guzman, director of the Office of Multicultural Student Life, said. "These activities expose international students to the different types of heritage months we have here in America, and also what kinds of programs and fun things we do at UMaine. It helps us build an inclusive community where international students, as well as multicultural and domestic students, can feel comfortable learning and growing."

On Friday, Feb. 2, the event involved a "community potluck," with dinner including cultural foods prepared by many of the students who attended the event and wanted to participate.

"I am one of the students who cooked for the potluck and brought in food. I'm a part of the Women's Resource Center here on campus and today was a collaborative event made up of many different clubs and communities around campus," Sophie Hubbert-Severance, a third-year student, said. "Each activist group works with each other and we work together to provide fun ways to get involved, support each other and meet new people on campus."

The event was sponsored and hosted by members of the ISA and community, as well as other groups and cultural clubs on campus, including the BSU. As a part of Black History Month, BSU sponsored Coffee Hour and the community potluck as part of their month-long celebration of unity and equality.

"BSU is anti-racist activist organization who focuses on racial justice and equity. We also advocate change-making-work in our campus community and greater area," Taylor Bass,

treasurer of BSU, said. "We have been cooking and shopping since 11:30 a.m. for the event and we are really happy with the turnout. The line for food wrapped all the way around the room. We have been planning for Black History Month since the beginning of the fall semester, and this is one of our biggest events of the month."

BSU runs and hosts many cultural and activist events, including trips to Washington, D.C., a Black Lives Matter flag raising, a scholarship fund, a dodgeball tournament fundraiser and many other activities to bring awareness to campus and represent activism issues in the local area.

"We are involved in almost 90 percent of the activism-related events on campus," Kirsten Daley, president of the BSU, said. "We raise money and meet in order to discuss topics and current events as a group. We plan and host activities such as these along with other trips to marches, fundraising events, and club meetings. We talk about different issues and plan our events according to what's going on around us and our campus."

The BSU and ISA have other events planned to further celebrate Black History Month as well as other upcoming heritage months. Both groups are working together to create chances for different groups of students to meet and share their culture and heritage. The next International Coffee Hour will take place on Friday, Feb. 9 at 4 p.m

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