UTA Community Explores Immigration, Survival and Refugee Experience at Festival of Ideas

“Migration, Immigration, and the Art of Survival” is the theme of The University of Texas at Arlington College of Liberal Arts’ Fall 2018 Festival of Ideas.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 4, in the E.H. Hereford University Center on the UTA campus.

This half-day forum will enable participants from the UT Arlington campus and community to examine the impact immigration has on people, ideas and actions in the United States.

Elisabeth Cawthon, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, says that the Festival of Ideas is a unique opportunity for learning about topics that are of vital interest to student and faculty scholars, as well as the wider society: “The academic community is a wonderful place to engage in discussions of controversial and even emotional subjects. In the College of Liberal Arts, we are committed to exploring issues about which individuals and groups have strong beliefs, in a respectful and well-informed manner.”

The Festival of Ideas forum is made possible through UTA alumnus Mustaque Ahmed, whose contribution helped the College of Liberal Arts launch its Festival of Ideas Global Research Institute. Ahmed’s vision for the festival was to create an outlet for students and the community to explore cultural and academic ideas together, while highlighting impressive research initiatives within UTA and the College of Liberal Arts.

In accordance with UTA’s Strategic Plan: 2020 Bold Solutions | Global Impact, the university focuses on transformational research in the areas of health and the human condition, sustainable urban communities, global environmental impact and data-driven discovery.

UTA’s diversity statement and position on inclusion underscores the university’s commitment to supporting and affirming students, faculty and staff of every race, ethnicity, and national origin. Ongoing efforts on behalf of inclusion, such as Diversity Week and the Community that Cares initiative, have helped earn UTA the title of 5th Most Diverse Campus in the Nation.

The fall festival is expected to attract in excess of 300 attendees, including students from Arlington Independent School District’s Dan Dipert Career and Technical Center, as well as the International Leadership of Texas.
Featured guest speakers for the October 4th event are Loung Ung and Jacob Monty. Each will present thoughtful remarks and share personal insights designed to engage attendees and fully explore “Migration, Immigration, and the Art of Survival.”

Loung Ung is an activist and author whose bestselling memoir First They Killed My Father, about surviving the Cambodian genocide as a child, was made into the critically acclaimed feature film, produced & directed by Angelina Jolie. The screenplay was co-written by the author and Jolie (Netflix, 09/2017). Loung was also one of the writers for the “Girl Rising,” a groundbreaking documentary film directed by Academy Award nominee Richard Robbins. For 10 years, she was the spokesperson for the “Campaign for a Landmine Free World,” a project of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation that co-founded the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and was co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997. She has been widely featured in the media, globally.

Jacob Monty has successfully practiced at the intersection of immigration, labor, and employment laws for over two decades. A nationally recognized authority on issues facing employers with large Hispanic workforces, Monty has written not one, but two books on the topic and speaks regularly in English and Spanish on navigating labor and employment matters in industries with heightened immigration scrutiny. Before attending law school, Monty was a 1991 graduate of UTA’s College of Liberal Arts, where he was a History major.

This fall’s CoLA Festival of Ideas “will engage participants about questions on immigration, refugees, and migration from both the perspectives of law and policy, and personal experience,” Cawthon said. “We believe that experienced scholars such as UTA faculty members and our guest speakers, along with emerging scholars such as students, will begin a dialogue on these complicated issues that will lead to further civic involvement and, ultimately, to lasting resolutions.”

The festival is free and open to the public. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to registered attendees. Visit the festival’s website (https://www.uta.edu/cola/events/Festival%20of%20Ideas.php#gsc.tab=0) for additional information including speaker biographies, a preview of the day’s agenda, and to register for the event.

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