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RHA hosts night of dancing, casino games at annual boat cruise



Photos by Jamshid Tokhirov

International Students Feature: France

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TECHNEWS WRITER

When international students are interviewed for this section of TechNews, food is almost always the first thing to come up. This week, Marie Thomas, a first year graduate student studying materials science, and Laure Delisle, a first year graduate student studying data science, were asked about the differences between their home in France and their life at Illinois Tech. Predictably, the diet was the first thing discussed. Thomas stated right off the bat that the food was much sweeter than she was used to. Things like brownies, cakes, and cookies used a lot more sugar here than in France. Delisle agreed with her. "It's super sweet here!" she commented. "I baked a cake the French way and gave it to some American people and they did not like it." Common desserts in France, according to Delisle and Thomas, include yogurt and fruit. Even the drinks are sweeter here: in families like Delisle's and Thomas', soda is a rare thing. Instead, water or sparkling water is served with meals. Delisle elaborated by saying, "We don't do soda a lot.

When you're partying, you buy soda, but we don't buy soda on a daily basis." An additional difference, according to Delisle, is the lack of bread. She is used to buying a fresh baguette every day so that bread can be served at every meal. Appetizers, too, are missing from American meals. "We always start the meal with [an appetizer]," Delisle explained, "and then move on to the main meal." Appetizers in France can be as simple as some carrots, but are essential to the meal routine.

Both Thomas and Delisle attended university in France, and therefore commented quite a bit on the differences between the two. Firstly, the two differ drastically in price. According to Thomas, university in France is only about 300 Euros, or about 340 US Dollars, per year. The workload is also different between the two countries. When Thomas attended university in France, she had next to no homework at all. "In my school, there were no assignments," she explained. "just an exam, and that's all." According to Delisle, a student in France is expected to study by themselves, using things such as quizzes and exams as reference material. "You

get practice because you do exercises in class, they're just not graded," Delisle continued. On another note, Thomas and Delisle say that the atmosphere is different in classrooms in each country. It is considered rude for students in France to wear things like hats and pajamas in class. "You cannot enter the school if you're wearing flip flops," Delisle explained. Thomas also expressed her confusion, saying, "Here, people are wearing caps and hats in class. In France, it's rude to wear something inside." In addition, students in France are not supposed to eat or drink in class, even water. Therefore, Delisle and Thomas were confused at the number of water bottles they saw in Illinois Tech classrooms. "I'm just glad I can bring coffee into class," Delisle admitted, "because I need coffee." Conversely, while this may paint French classrooms as a formal environment, the two French students commented on the fact that they were used to students chatting in class - even while the teacher is speaking. In the US, the students are a lot more silent, perhaps because of a stronger relationship between students and teachers. "In France," Thomas clarified, "teachers don't care about the

students. They speak, you write, and that's all." Delisle agreed with Thomas, mentioning that "teachers are friendly here. ... It's interactive here, you can ask questions."

As would be expected, the general way in which people act is also different. According to Thomas, "people are less friendly in France." In Delisle's words, French people are "less enthusiastic about everything. It's exhausting, because I'm trying to be on the same level [as Americans]. We don't make that much comment, we are more reserved. People here think we are rude, because we are not as expressive as they are. People want to know a lot about you, they want to know your 'fun fact.'" Delisle also mentioned that while she didn't consider herself a shy person at all, in America she feels like the shyest person in the room.

Next week, look for an international student feature on your peers from Central Asia!