International Students Feature: Taiwan

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COPY EDITOR

International students go through count. Their transitions to surrounding scenery, people, language, holidays, and traditions may all change, and that's not even close to an exhaustive list. This section of TechNews aims to capture the perspectives of different international students in order to help others better understand other cultures and what American culture looks like to someone newly exposed to it. This week, the spotlight is on Taiwan. Shen Chun-Ju, a second year graduate student from Taipei studying manufacturing engineering, and Yuan Kai Tsai, a first year graduate student from Tainan studying materials science and engineering, have shared their opinions on the biggest differences between Taiwan and America.

One clear similarity between almost all international students is a dislike of the American diet, or at the very least a preference for the food back home. Both Shen and Yuan miss the food back in Taiwan. In Shen's words, the "food in Taiwan is a lot of different than here." In her opinion, food in Taiwan differs so drastically from here that a lot of foreigners

Taiwanese fried chicken, usually purchased here. from a street vendor. Shen described it as boneless, with Taiwanese spices like basil, all in a white paper bag. One would "normally eat it with bubble tea, [which] originated in Taiwan." According to Shen, near her house there are three or four separate bubble tea vendors, and the competitive atmosphere makes the bubble tea even tastier. In comparison, Shen said, "bubble tea in Chinatown is bad." One thing Yuan found strange about American food is how common it was to eat vegetables raw. "In my country," Yuan explained, "we eat vegetable which is cooked, but here people eat vegetable raw. We can put some salt, or put some other sauces." Another difference Yuan noted was the presence of less seafood. "Taiwan is a small island," he said, "so every city [is] near the sea. It's easy for us to get seafood. But in Chicago, it's very difficult to get seafood." In addition, Yuan explained that the general composition of meals varied greatly between the two countries. While American meals tend to have an emphasis on potatoes, he thought, Taiwanese meals instead use a lot of noodles and rice. But while most of the food is clearly very different, Yuan mentioned that the pizza

wouldn't try it. One food she misses most is in Taiwan was very similar to the pizza offered

In terms of general culture, one of the most obvious differences is the language. And while the language barrier is a big part of the transition, there are many other changes to account for. According to Yuan, "I think one difference is about family. The connection of parents and kids is very strong in my city. For example, I know a lot of Americans [whose] parents don't care much about them after 18 years old. In my country, the connection is stronger. For example, if we encounter big challenge[s] in our lives, we can get help from our parents. Our parents can help us to solve the challenges because they have more experience [and] their age is older." Yuan also noticed that people in America seemed to prefer to stay home after they finish work, contrasting with the behavior he had become accustomed to.

differences Academically, abound. One such difference, according to Shen, is the "education system here is more practical. [The] professor will do a project, be more helpful for searching a job after we graduate." In Yuan's opinion, teachers and students interact more frequently in American

classrooms. "In Taiwan, teachers usually teach students and students don't ask any questions. It's totally different than America." In addition, Yuan said that the way students go about getting answers can also be contrasted. For example, Yuan said, "students in my country they prefer to ask teachers to get the answers, but the students here in my opinion find how to solve the questions by themselves ... the students in my country want to get the answers directly. They don't want to know what the process is to get the answer, they just want to get the answer."

While many international students have a similar opinion of the American diet, there is a also a clear trend that international students appreciate the diversity of the people and cultures here. Yuan described this feeling, saying that when the two countries are contrasted, the "big difference is human. People are from [all] countries, from everywhere. When I arrived in America and I met new people, I can know a lot of cultures from their countries or different kinds of concepts or ideas." Perhaps it is a lesson to be learned from voices like Yuan that this diversity, this opportunity to learn from so many different perspectives, is truly an American blessing.

QED holds its first thought-provoking meeting of the semester

Reno Waswil

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

QED: The Ethical Debaters, or just QED, is a student organization dedicated to discussing ethics and philosophy surrounding a broad range of fields, including political ethics, medical ethics, bioethics, metaethics, and much more. The club invites and unites students with a curiosity about ethically ambiguous situations and a desire to talk about them and understand them in light of many different points of view. The club exists to engage its members in open-minded discourse, teach and encourage them to utilize their critical thinking and reasoning, and improve their confidence and public speaking in such manners.

QED's history is linked with the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, which is an intercollegiate debate-style competition run by the Association of Practical and Professional Ethics that, according to its website, "combines the excitement of a competitive tournament with a valuable education experience for undergraduate students." The name of the organization was changed over a year and a half ago from "IIT Ethics Bowl" to its current

one, which was chosen to signify that the organization was looking to publicly broaden its role from a group that competes in the Ethics Bowl to an ethics and philosophy appreciation, education, and discussion society on campus.

Last Friday, January 20, from 12:50-3:00 p.m., the organization had its first meeting of the semester in the Crown Conference Room in Hermann Hall. Though their meetings had historically focused on discussing Ethics Bowl cases, the topic for discussion at this meeting was about the foundation of ethics. In particular, beginning with thinking about the is-ought problem (which is that what happens or what people do is not necessarily what they ought to do), members engaged in a discussion about what ethics is, where we get the virtues and goals which determine or influence our choices, and what basis there is for them. Habit dictated that references to Immanuel Kant's method of ethics, Utilitarianism, the Ethics of Care, Virtue Ethics, and moral relativism were plentiful. This is because "prescriptive" ethics, or arguing what people should do given certain circumstances, is most often the club's goal.

Members talked about what reasons there were for not acting in total self-interest,

or why one should follow any prescriptive ethics in the first place. The discourse then evolved into one almost singularly stemming from the philosophical pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer, the ethicality of having children. This followed a general agreement that the ability to exercise consent of others' actions that affect you was a justifiable virtue to be protected. A couple of the members at the meeting, both Shimer students, held the belief that, because a child cannot consent to being born, people ought not to have children.

This followed the logic that since suffering was an inevitability of living, causing the suffering of a living thing by causing the existence of the living thing without its consent, is fundamentally unethical. Just as society does not allow children, even with their consent, to engage in certain activities because they can later regret their decisions and undergo suffering, so too should we, each as decision makers, not allow children to be born to protect them from this suffering to which they cannot consent. Moreso, even if children may later not regret their decisions (or someone may not resent their life), most people believe that, because they are a vulnerable population and do not have a developed sense of the

consequences of their actions (or have no ability to consent what so ever), they should be protected from the possibility of future suffering that may be caused by those past actions. Furthermore, it is not that children are only protected because they are already living, and we do not have such obligations to the unborn. Most people, given the option to cause a great number of people misery and suffering several generations in the future in exchange for, say, free margaritas today, they would most likely feel the obligation to keep that suffering from taking place due to an obligation for inevitably living beings, which can experience suffering but do not exist yet. Therefore, everyone ought to not have children, since the child would go on to undergo suffering as a result of being born, to which they did not consent. It was quite an intriguing and thought-provoking argument for those in attendance.

The club accepts all types of people with all types of positions and meets Fridays from 12:50-3:00 p.m. (although, showing up late or leaving early is absolutely acceptable). QED hopes to continue providing a space to encourage interesting discussions for all students on the campus.

Hawks Coffeehouse returns for the Spring 2017 semester

Reno Waswil

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

Hawks Coffeehouse is the biweekly Union Board-hosted event series wherein student, amateur, and professional poets, songwriters, and musicians are invited to perform their art at Illinois Tech for the enjoyment of the student body in a cozy, coffeehouse-esque atmosphere. Since a day change last semester, the events has taken place every other Wednesday night, 7 to 8 p.m. in the MTCC Welcome Center, which is the the space between the State Street entrance and the Pritzker Club in the MTCC.

On Wednesday, January 17, the

series began anew for the Spring 2017 semester with the folk rock musical duo Hunt for Hunter. The band, based in Brooklyn, New York, consists of Michael Hunter and Ian Hunt. Hunter, who sat atop a cajon "box drum" for the duration of the show, accompanied the standing violin-playing Hunter on acoustic guitar and percussion. Hunter, while playing, would also occasionally kick his leg up to strike a cymbal, which added a bit of effect to Hunter's already vivacious "fiddling." Each displayed a veritable skill on their respective instruments, and though both sang, Hunter, with his impressive range, was the primary vocalist. Hunt even recounted that Hunter, having come down with a slight cold recently, had given him a list of a few songs he might

have to perform during their upcoming shows, and how he was a little bit worried about it.

Although both skilled and practiced musicians in their own right, they were novices of college touring. The 2016 Fall Regional National Association of Campus Activities in Covington, KY, which is where Union Board booked them, was the first they had attended.

The setlist for their show last Wednesday included striking covers of popular songs like "Viva La Vida" by Coldplay and a song Hunter explained was one of his first to learn, the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby," as well as a few originals, including "Divine" off of their new EP "No Locks & No Bars." One particularly memorable song of theirs was a novelty song in which Hunter described in

no small detail an incident of a bird pooping on him in a Whole Foods. This was followed by a warning to all audience members of one particular Whole Foods in New York that they might want to avoid.

Along with the music, students enjoyed coffee, hot chocolate, and an assortment cupcakes—slightly smushed, but cupcakes nonetheless—which were set out for attendees.

Hawks semester's Coffeehouse in full swing, readers interested in attending can look forward to coming, or perhaps even performing at the event in the coming weeks. The next such event is scheduled to take place on February 1, 2017 from 7 to 8 p.m. in the MTCC Welcome Center.

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