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# ELI STUDENT VOICES

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## **An Ordinary Story** (1st Place)

*Lwind*

*R/W 60*

Do you believe that an expectant mother's dream will affect her baby's life? In my country people did.

We believed the dreams of those mothers' were signs. A dragon might be the sign of a strong boy, or jewelry could mean babies' rich life. Mothers wanted nice and uncommon dreams for their babies, or attempted to interpret the dreams splendid and rare. A mother would even buy a nice dream from her belongings if she didn't have one. We still believe it now but with a little difference. It's because of a quite ordinary story that happened a couple hundred years ago.

Jill was an ordinary girl because her mother got an ordinary dream for her, an apple tree. Her mother tried to interpret it more uncommon but couldn't. How could an apple tree be uncommon when there were several apple trees in front of her house? She knew that her daughter, Jill, would have an ordinary life with those apple trees. A sign couldn't be changed.

However, Jill enjoyed her ordinary life. As a 17-year-old girl, she didn't have talents as the other girls with uncommon dreams, and she was not as attractive as some girls with picturesque dreams. She was so ordinary that she caught nobody's eye. But she enjoyed her life. She liked her affable parents, her vivacious dog, their old house, the tranquil village and kindly people there. Especially she liked those apple trees because she knew they were her dreams. She treated the apple trees as her friends and tended them very carefully. For this reason, they grew very well.

In an afternoon, when she was reading a book to the trees, a young man came in front of her.

"Excuse me, miss," he said. "Would you please give me some water? I've walked all day."

"I don't have water now, but," Jill took an apple from her apron, "do you like apples?"

"Sure," he took it with smile. "Thank you."

Jill looked at him eating the apple. He looked gentle and handsome. His mother must have given him a wonderful dream. Why did a person with a good dream walk around here?

"Are you a traveler?" Jill asked him.

"Sometimes," he swallowed that bite and said. "I like seeking novel things, so I like traveling. Yes, I travel a lot."

"So, I guess this is the most ordinary village on your trip, right?" Jill said.

"Not really," the traveler paused. "In a novelist's eye, most things are not ordinary. Even the sky is different blue everywhere. Maybe this village is such a peaceful place, but I am trying the most delicious apple of the world here."

"You are," Jill was happy that he complimented on her apples. "I sing for them, read to them, and protect them from the insects. These trees are my friends. The first thing I do after I wake up is to take a look at them. That's why..."

"That's why I am eating the best apple," the traveler laughed, and then he became serious. "I think you should take your apples to the palace. The King is always looking for unique things."

"I know that," Jill said. "But you must be joking. My dream is just an apple tree. That means I am that ordinary. All I have are just these common apples."

"Even the sky is different blue," the traveler finished his apple. "If you don't try, you won't know how the ordinary is unique."

Jill couldn't sleep well that night. Nobody ever liked her apples so much, and it made her cheerful. The traveler gave her confidence. If her apples were the best, she wanted to recommend them to the King and share with all the people in the kingdom.

In the second day, she brought a basket of apples to the palace and saw the King. When she told the King that she wanted to recommend her apples, everybody in the palace laughed.

"Apples?" the King said. "You mean golden apples?"

"No," Jill said. "They are...they are just apples."

"How unique are your apples?" the King asked her. "I eat apples everyday, and usually I drink apple juice. They are so common."

"My apples are the best," Jill said, and people laughed again. "If you don't try, you won't know how the ordinary is unique."

While the King was looking at those common apples in that common basket and thinking about whether he should try, there came a voice.

"I wanna try," Prince Edward walked into the palace, stepped in front of Jill, and gave her a smile. And she discovered he was actually the traveler. Edward took an apple from the basket and tasted it.

"My King," he said to his father, "it's the best delicious apple I've ever tried. I can feel how she made the ordinary so unique with all her mind."

"And," then he turned to Jill, "I can feel how unique she is." Jill lowered her head bashfully. It's the first time she felt she was so unique.

After this ordinary story, people in my country changed the viewpoints of mothers' dreams. We believe that whether your dream is ordinary or not, being yourself is unique. Now mothers like the dreams of birds, sheep or some common fruits. Some of them want to dream of the rocks. They know their babies will make them uncommon.

Let me tell you the end of this ordinary story. At Jill and Edward's wedding, she asked him the question finally.

"Maybe I made my dream unique," she said. "But how is yours? Do you believe in your dream?"

"I do," Edward said. "It said I would meet a perhaps ordinary but kindest sweetest, and most beautiful girl. That's you. My unique apple."

They had a novel happy life and governed the kingdom as well as the apple trees.

## **My Grandmother's Kitchen** (2nd Place)

*Jannet Araque*

*R/W 20*

It is always so nice to go to my grandmother's house. The kitchen smells so good and it is warm, friendly and inviting. The kitchen is always pretty, colorful fruit and vegetables in the hanging basket and, yes, a delicious dessert--like apple pie with cinnamon on the counter. Pots and pans are always stacked in order. The dishes are clean and put away. Everything is so bright and cheerful. Finally, I feel so good and enjoy my grandmother's kitchen because I can find everything that I want and it is always like coming home.

## **Mosquito Man** (Honorable Mention)

*Patcharin Hermkhunthod (Gai)*

*R/W 450*

Both Ocala and Gainesville, Florida are well-known habitats of mosquitoes, but nobody knows that deep into the Ocala National Forest there once lived the mosquito's father who was the most powerful of all creatures called "Mosquito Man." This was the most significant scientific discovery ever made.



Mosquito Man was first found by biologists in 1975, in the forest of Ocala, which later became known as Ocala Forest National Park. No science procedure could even tell his origin nor species exactly. However, the experiments showed his DNA might have developed from some species of mosquito in the warm forest. He was sent to a laboratory at the University of Florida to investigate his physical structure and ancestors. In 1980, the new experiment had shown his origin might be from another planet arriving on the earth together with a comet. This hypothesis could be true because no record of this type of living creature could be found in any living categories, and that makes all scientists feel down in the dumps. Mosquito Man was considered as the half-human since his appearance was similar to human but smaller in size. The entire body was covered by thickened green skin with no hair and which became dark red after the sunset. These special functions enabled him to see far away at least 100 feet. Two strong legs empowered his

jumping from one tree to another tree and his running on the ground was recorded at 60 miles per hour. Mosquito Man fed on small reptiles. He used the long strong tongue which served as a hand to pick up any reptiles running on the ground while his body was hanging on the tree, just as a frog does.

He usually prefers living in the quiet to busy place, hardly ever on the ground and this was the reason why the deep forest was his only home. No evidence could prove another Mosquito Man existing. Anyway, the most interesting fact that could be a big surprise in the science field was the discovery of his ability to control all kinds of creatures by psychic power. Scientists think the supernatural power will be used only when he gets into trouble by controlling all mosquitoes within 5,000 feet from his spot: mosquitoes came in huge groups to get ready for attacking their leader's enemies. The most important benefit about psychic abilities is the ability to contact the different kinds of animals and recognize a human being's mind. Thus, the latest experiment showed that he would appear in front of people who are basically more kind than cruel.

Mosquito Man actually wasn't as scary as his name--instead he was seen as the peace lover. For this reason, he stayed away from society and hardly ever harmed the people. He passed away in 1985 without unusual symptoms found.

## **Sexual Difference in Choosing Majors**

*Hyang Mi Lee*

*R/W 60*

As Simone de Beauvoir said, "a woman is not to be born but to be made." Women's education, especially higher education for women, has been emphasized in improving women's status. It is no doubt that the high rate of educated women is one important aspect of a more sexually equal society. Since Oberlin College started co-education in America for the first time in 1833, much funding to support women's education has been raised and many co-colleges have been built. These efforts have brought the increase of female college students. During the last decades, the percentage of female college students is apparently much increased. According to NCES (National Center for Educational Statistics), while in 1970 the percentage of women who gained bachelor's degrees was 43.1%, the percentage in 2001 reached to 57%, which shows women get their bachelor's degrees more than men do. This phenomenon is the same in Korea. Since 1887 when the first women college was established, the number of the women who take higher education has grown gradually. Whereas the percentage of female college students was 25.4% in 1970, the figure has been increased to 36.7% in 2001. This 'great' number is usually regarded as valid proof by the people who are willing to insist the established sexual equality in modern society. However, does this high rate of female college students prove the sexual equality of these societies? Does the higher rate of women students lead to guarantee the equal status? Closer research reveals that high rate of female college students does not necessarily mean equality.

If you look at the statistics categorized by majors, imbalance in choosing majors between men and women is very

eminent. Unlike male students occupying the majority of such majors as computer science and engineering, girls take subjects which have been traditionally considered as 'feminine.' For example, in an education field and psychology field, the percentage of women amounts to 75.1% and 73% respectively. In health professions and related science fields, like nursing, the percentage of women reached 81.6% in 1996. In contrast, in an engineering field in America, the proportion of women is only 16.1%, and in computer sciences it is 27.5%. Compared to the average figure of female college students, this ratio is very low. This pattern of subject-stereotyping by sex is repeated in Korea in the same way. According to KEDI (Korean Educational Development Institute), in contrast to the high percentage (65%) of the women students majoring in education, the ratio of male to female in engineering field is about 8 to 1. Specifically, only 70,756 degrees among 528,288 engineering bachelor degrees are conferred to female students. These figures prove that, in spite of decades of change, the traditional belief that a woman is more appropriate for teaching and nursing than a man still persists.

That higher rate of female college students does not directly lead to equal status in a society is distinctly found in a practical education field. The higher education is, the fewer female teachers are. While the percentage of women teachers in elementary school amounts to 67.1%, only 30.6% is women among high school teachers. The most obvious example of unequalness in the education system is the percentage of women principals in schools. In 2001, the proportion of women principals was only 7.2% in elementary schools and 4.5% in high schools. Despite much higher rate of female students than male students' in the education major, the administrative work in the education field is still being offered to men. In other words, the traditional hierarchy in which women's positions rank lower than those of men still repeats.

It is true that nowadays women get more bachelor degrees than men in America and two fifths of degrees are conferred to women in Korea. However, segregation by majors still exists. The stereotype of femininity and masculinity haunting people greatly affects college students' choosing majors, even though the gap is getting less. This is because, though an education system seems to be independent and neutral, it is closely related to the general idea of femininity and masculinity, which results in the division of labor in society. When students choose their majors, their decisions are influenced by the value system and employment demand of the society. Unlike the equal figures which appear to demonstrate the equality of men and women in college, biased major difference between men and women is very prevalent. Unfortunately, the quantification of equality does not guarantee the qualification of equality.

## **Couch World**

*Ismael Faycal Nana*  
*R/W 20*

The nickname of the house where I am living is Couch World. Surely you will ask why. In fact, when you enter this

house, the living room tells you right away something about that. Standing at the doorway, from right to left, first you see a pretty couch made with light blue material with tiny red spots. Next, you can see a luxurious and comfortable cream leather couch. I think that this one is very expensive. Then comes the master couch. It is very soft and relaxing. It has a nice shining green color, and it sits on a large stage. Sitting down, you feel like a chief. I like using it. Finally, along the big window, there are two huge couches. The first is raised on a little platform and made with blue background fabric with rose and white leaves. The second couch at the bottom of the other one is really strong, and it is made with thick cream fabric. Indeed, this population of couches justifies the nickname Couch World. This world likes to receive big folks and to have fun.

## **The Freer Trade We Make, the Better Living and More Peaceful World We Make**

*Sungjin Jung*  
*R/W 60*

In September last year, the WTO 5<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting was being held in Cancun, Mexico. Outside the building where the meeting was on, thousands of peasant farmers and students from all around the countries were protesting against the WTO and globalization. They were against the basic policy of WTO that its member countries should reduce or eliminate the tax on imports and pursue free trade. Among them, a South Korean activist, Lee, stabbed himself to death, declaring that "WTO kills farmers." However, when you look into it, globalization has remarkable positive aspects, which some people are not aware of. Accordingly, we have to participate in the stream of globalization and open the market to other countries.

Globalization, specifically economywise, is basically identified as worldwide economic cooperation of individual countries. Through the process of globalization, the barriers on trade of goods, services, capital, labor and information between the countries are pulled back so the world ends up becoming one huge unit of the market. In other words, in the globalized world, the trade of commodities is encouraged to exchange without tax or tariff over the boundaries as if they were bartered in one country. For example, in a grocery store you can find cheaper bananas harvested in other countries than those grown in your country. Conversely, you can sell your car in the other country probably at a cheaper price, benefiting from no tax.

This worldwide trend has the following advantages. Firstly, the free trade stimulates companies and people to be more competitive; it leads them to raise the efficiency. That is, they try to minimize the product cost and maximize the quality of products to compete with other countries. As a result, this elevates the standard of living not only for rich people but also for poor people, for people can get more access to cheaper and better products from other countries. Otherwise they couldn't help purchasing expensive goods. Free trade is certainly beneficial in that it broadens the opportunity of choice and

brings prosperity. History shows the evidence: After World War 2, West Germany, which chose free trade by opening the door, has developed gloriously while East Germany, which didn't adopt free trade, failed in economy.

Not only does free trade motivate business to be more competitive, but also initiates cultural interaction among people. Products can keep cultural characteristics so inflow of foreign products exposes the people to foreign culture. Also people will meet more often and will understand each other better to settle the deal. Thus, we can be open-minded by trying to accept the difference and diversity. To illustrate, when China opened the door to Korea on the popular music market, Chinese people got more favorable to Koreans and it helped for the two countries to improve their relation, bringing about much more trade and mutual communication. In contrast, protectionism causes conflict as we can see in the case of the steel industry war. Once America levied the tax on imported steel products from European countries, they sued the American government in the WTO and became reluctant to import American export goods, considering retaliation against America. They turned out wasting over 1 year fighting over it, which doesn't help either side. Consequently, free trade is devoted to the peace of the world in the long run.

Some people argue that free trade threatens the survival of a developing country because it has nothing to sell. However, it is not always the case. Each country has respective advantages. To illustrate, most Latin American countries have plenty of natural resources but they don't have skillful labor resource. On the other hand, Korea and Japan lack natural resources while a lot of skillful laborers are available. If they cooperate, they can enjoy synergy effect by complementing each other.

And, my opponent says free trade destroys the weak industry field because if low-priced and good products from developed countries penetrate the market, consumers will go for them. It can be true in the short run, but it is an emotional approach. If one country benefits from exporting education services like America, it can help farmers who are suffering due to the globalization by offering subsidy from money gained from exporting education services. Although it is not simple to distribute the profits equally to all social members, it works as an alternative. And, in the long run, each country ultimately has to specialize and foster the specific industry fields by innovating the industry structure.

Throughout history, people have tried various economic systems and sought an ideal one. Yet, in reality, there has been no perfect economic system. Every system has had upsides and downsides. Free trade system also has problems. It can fire up the social conflicts from the people who can't keep their jobs any more. But, it is obvious that advantages outweigh disadvantages. People can raise the standard of living and win a more peaceful world. If we can't choose the best bet, it is better to choose second best—free trade coming along the globalization.

## **My Chimpanzee**

*Terry Wany's*

*R/W 20*

Kelly, my chimpanzee, has three different characteristics. First, my pet is obedient. If I call her, she comes quickly toward me. Or when I say, "Don't touch the food in the refrigerator," she never touches it. Second, she's friendly. For example, when we walk in the store, she likes to take my hand. Kelly likes to dance and to eat with my family and me. Third, sometimes she's protective. She's similar to a person because she can become ferocious if she feels that her owner is in danger or when she sees her owner fighting with a person. She can attack him. Also, Kelly doesn't like firearms, knives, or anything dangerous. If you need company similar to human, take a chimpanzee. It's obedient, friendly and protective.

## **The US Versus Gabon Educational System: Comparison and Contrast**

*Rainelli B. Koumangoye*

*R/W 60*

I studied in College in Gabon for two years and the six last years in the North American system. These two experiences allow me to discuss the similarities and differences between the two educational systems, and to bring some criticisms on their efficiency. For the purpose of this comparative study, we can consider aspects such as: the choice of the major, the class size, the amount of homework or tests, the teacher's style and the level of instruction.

While in the US educational system, students don't have to choose their major before the first two years in college, in Gabon, the students are oriented toward a career after the fourth year of high school. Indeed, depending on their grades in math, physics, biology and chemistry, Gabonese students will be oriented toward scientist careers, or it will be suggested to them to choose a literary career if they have good scores in economics, French literature, philosophy, foreign languages, history and humanities.

The first year at University in Gabon is the most difficult that a young person can experience in his life. There are six hundred or more people in a classroom as big as a theater. Students are registered for ten to fourteen classes. One school year lasts from October to June, then there are two weeks off followed by the only exams of the year. In the US, students have only four or five courses each semester in uncrowded classes; there are twenty to forty students by class. Here, there are a lot of tests, quizzes, homework that count in the final grade in addition to the midterm and the final exam. So students can balance certain weaknesses and get the credits. In Gabon, you have to be among the twenty best scores to go in the upper level. I think that too many tests make that students learn just to pass the course. However, one exam after nine months of classes is not the solution.

In addition, here if a student got a D, an E or failed one class he can take the same course the next semester or later. Even if they meet some problems, the US students can pass through their program. So they can graduate quickly. In Gabon, when students fail, they fail the complete year and the year after, they need to retake the complete past year. A four-year program can easily become six or seven years. So, it takes a long time to graduate. For me, being an unemployed person but educated person is better than being a non-educated person who has a job. Gabonese should change their educational policy and facilitate the accessibility to education for everybody by building more schools. On the other hand, it is expensive to go to community college or college in the US, so there is no equal opportunity to get higher education. It depends on your income or your parents' income.

My Writing/Reading class teacher at the ELI is Mr. Steve Flocks. I can call him Steve. I can send him an email, and ask him anything I want to. In the US, students can easily contact a teacher and ask for more explanation. In Gabon, many teachers think that the relationship between teacher and student must be like hierarchical relationship in the army: a commander and the commanded. Students must say sir, madam, doctor or professor to call their teacher. They usually cannot send an email to the teacher and must wait for the next class. They must do anything that they didn't understand by themselves with book or friends. I think that some Gabonese teachers should not teach and maybe they should apply to work in the army. Fortunately, the new generation of teachers is different.

In conclusion, the systems are very different. As a result of the great competition in Gabonese system, only the best students succeed. But some aspects such as: the lack of universities, the difficulty to graduate and the cold teacher/student relationship need to be reconsidered. On the other side, because of the friendly style of the US teachers, a lot of students tend to mix up disrespect and student's right. And the US educational system is very expensive. However, the two systems have proved their efficiency in giving a good education for many years. But everything and everybody have changed, including society, students and teachers. So it is sometimes better to update some old practices.

## **The American University and the Japanese University**

*Etsuko Shinagawa*

*R/W 60*

Moving to the US, I have the opportunity to study at the University of Florida (UF). When I first visited UF, I was surprised at the differences from the Hiroshima University (HU), which I graduated from about ten years ago. Considering the fact that both universities are run by public organizations, and located in the countryside, I imagined that the two universities might have resemblance. However, I found considerable differences, especially in their relationship with the communities, their love of school, and the diversity which their students can experience.

UF students have the close relationship with their local community, Gainesville. The population of Gainesville is 100,000. In fact, 70,000 out of 100,000 people are involved in UF. What surprises me is that people in Gainesville love, support, and are proud of UF very much. People in Gainesville are friendly to UF students, so I feel that I have already become a member of the community as a UF student and am protected by the community, even though I am a stranger. I have never seen that kind of relationship between the community and the university.

Many of UF's products show people's love of their university. I realized that there are many UF logo and Gators (the name of UF's mascot) logo all over the places, on the show windows, on the car plates, and on the clothes. There are many shops using "Gators" as their name, and many people are wearing the clothes on which "Gators" is printed.

On the contrary, people in Hiroshima, even HU students do not show their love of their university, or merely, they do not have it. They think that HU is the place just for education. There is no HU logo anywhere in the city, actually, there is no university's product sold at any shop.

In addition, people in Gainesville and UF alumni support UF at sports. When I went to the football game of UF, it was a spectacular sight that the stadium was full of UF's supporters, wearing the "Gators" clothes. The UF football stadium admits about 90,000 people, and it was usually full at every game. I was surprised by the fact that 90,000 people come to the stadium in the city, which has only 100,000 population, and sometimes it is difficult to get a ticket to the game because of the competition. That is because not only Gainesville residents, but also the alumni who do not live in Gainesville come to watch the game all the way. In the games, the supporters cheer so wildly and enthusiastically that if UF wins, they go crazy, and if they lose, some of them get angry, or cry.

On the contrary, people in Hiroshima have no interest in HU sports. In Japan, the most popular sport is baseball, and there is a competition once a year among universities. Elimination matches are held at the stadium, which admits about 30,000 people however, it has never been full of HU supporters, even though Hiroshima city has more than 1,000,000 population. Only the people who have something to do with HU baseball team go to the games, and cheer among themselves moderately. When compared to UF games, it looks sad and boring.

Also, UF students have lots of opportunities to experience diversity. Racially, a variety of students and faculty members belong to UF. According to an article in ALLIGATOR, "Diverse faculty would help in recruiting," (Feb.18, 2004, p.6), as of 2003, UF's student body was 69 percent white, 12 percent Hispanic, 8 percent black and 7 percent Asian. And UF is trying to employ more minority faculty members because they think diversity is important for students. On the UF campus I can see a diversity of people walking around, African people, Asian people, Muslim people wearing exotic veils. Just to sit on a bench and to watch colorful people is exciting to me, and moreover, I can make friends with them. It is very valuable, because they destroy my standard values, and I can widen my view.

On the other hand, HU mostly consists of people of the Japanese race. The rate of international student is only 4 percent. When compared to UF, the sight of HU is monotonous and dull. Everyone speaks Japanese language, and everyone's fashion is similar, maybe the way of thinking would be similar, too.

The university is a miniature society. The difference of the diversity between UF and HU reflects the difference between that of American society and Japanese society. Having experienced the diversity through their life, American university students learn how to deal with diverse cultures and people, and how to lead the world, while Japanese university students are still poor to face the different cultures and people.

To live in Japan, it might be better to go to the Japanese university to form the peculiar sense which Japanese people have. However, I really enjoy attending UF, and appreciate such a wonderful opportunity.

## Believe in Yourself

*Hyungwoo Choi*  
R/W 60

I have spent 3 months since I came to USA, especially Gainesville. Now I feel that time has gone so fast that I cannot remember what I have done or how I have lived. Everything I remember is the first feeling when I arrived at Gainesville airport and the difficulty to find my own house, every classmate in the ELI, some trips in the ELI.

This is not only an essay to look back on my life in USA but also to tell something to next semester's students. I want to say, "Believe in yourself, whatever reasons you have to come here, you have done very well and you are doing your best. In addition, if you feel sudden and unendurable regret what is the meaning of your life in the ELI, it is the proof that you are doing the best as you can." I have lived with this idea during this semester. The idea always helps me smile in the morning.

Because I can have comfortable and relaxed mind compared to my country, the life in Gainesville is one of the best times in my life. Honestly, I have to have tension because we have more than 2 big exams. Now, I am trying to control myself again to have a thought that I have done very well and I have totally believed in myself.

## Penguins

*Jannet Araque*  
R/W 20

Penguins can make very good pets for several reasons. First of all, penguins are very intelligent. They are very social and live in communities with many friends. They warn each other of danger. Penguins have one pair for mating and do a good job taking care of their young. Next, penguins are just natural clowns. They usually play, hopping and jumping around like clowns. They don't walk, they "waddle" everywhere they go. Last, penguins are very independent. They catch their food

alone. They survive in harsh severe conditions. Indeed, penguins would make a fun loving pet if you like the cold and fish.

## Advice for New ELI Students

*Yannick Yeboue, Reiko Mayumi, Nayoung Kim*  
GM 30

- You should talk to many people.
- You should use an English-English dictionary.
- You ought not to worry about grades.
- You should go to the ELI activities.
- You should go to Gator Night with your Gator card on every Friday night because you can get free movie and food.

## Advice for New ELI Students

*Hyungwoo Choi, Juliana Fernandes*  
GM 30

- They should bring food for lunch.
- Applicants should know that food is expensive.
- They ought to get an apartment near Norman Hall.
- They had better get a Gator One card.
- Applicants should have a Florida driver's license.

## Advice for New ELI Students

*Ismael Nana, Carmen Rojas-Lopez, Enda Rodrigues*  
GM 30

- You should buy a bike, motorcycle or car because the public transportation is not convenient.
- You had better have money for nutrition, housing, insurance and other expenses.
- You should get an immunization certificate before you come to Gainesville.

## Advice for New ELI Students

*Francis Hoffmann, Anita Marich, Luis Carrillo*  
GM 30

- You should find information about where you can live close to the ELI.
- You should send in an ELI application.
- You should have basic knowledge of English before coming to the ELI.
- You'd better have information about parking.
- You ought to find information about immunization.

## **Student's Life in a Memorable World**

*Marco AbuAitah*

*ELI alumnus*

Here I am talking about a student who lives in a memorable world which nobody knows about. Today this world is a dangerous place full of corruption, violence, dishonesty, and competitiveness. This student lives today in an era in which human life has become equal to a bullet fired from the mouth of a ruthless military dictator's pistol. Nothing is more discouraging for this student than seeing a loved one or a friend being taken away from him by a bullet. Nothing is more frustrating than forcing this student to give up learning by shutting down his entire school. Nothing is more challenging for him than living in a curfew. In spite of all of this, especially the difficult circumstances that he has lived in, he will never forget taking his examinations while the military infantry forces were wandering in his town. He will never forget the days when his father hid behind the walls of his school while a tank was passing by and calling on people to stay home. Despite the ramifications he grew more stubborn to get educated and conquer the enemy of knowledge and education.

Among all of these circumstances he is still a human being who wants to live and enjoy his life, this world is not illusion, it's real but we don't know how to talk about it and how can we distinguish it from the others, and we shouldn't segregate it, but according to Logic we should just pay attention to this world and don't cover it with thick clouds.

It's not merely a world, it's a place where memorable human beings are living, but there is a hunter who wants to exterminate this world, this hunter is the enemy who want to do so, and that student is almost unconscious, and the other students so. It's not an independence world, it's here but we don't care about it because we don't have to live in it, and the thing that is very strange is how could this student stay alive.

## **Choosing a Major in the US and Venezuela**

*Victoria E. Carrillo M.*

*R/W 60*

Choosing a major is one of the most difficult and important decisions people make in their lives. People decide their field of study based on their skills, interests and values. In addition, there are many other factors that influence this decision like educational system, age, maturity, family, professors, etc. While many aspects of higher education in Venezuela and in the US are the same and students generally consider a lot of these same factors when choosing a major, the system and timing of major selection is very different in these two countries.

In general all high school students in the United States study the same even though they have some elective subjects. When high school seniors apply to college they don't need to already know which major they are going to study. College freshmen have to take about 5 subjects, what they call GEN ED

(General Education). Some of these subjects are obligatory like mathematics, English, science, etc. And others are electives. There's also another system that is called Exploratory, which consists of three main areas: Humanities and Letters, Social Behavior Sciences and Science and Engineering. Students have to take courses in the three first semesters in all these fields. There are also some courses that are obligatory and others not.

On the other hand, in Venezuela high school students decide if they want to take the science track or the humanity track. In the science track people take all the scientific subjects like mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, etc.; meanwhile, in the humanity track people take languages (English, Latin and French), history, art, psychology, etc. (math is also required). Not all the high schools offer the humanity track because just a small number of students take it. Most students prefer Sciences because then they can study a major related either with the Humanities or the Sciences. Meanwhile people that take the humanity track are limited because they cannot study a scientific major. Also a lot of the people that choose Humanities do it just because they "hate" physics and/or chemistry, not because they really want to study a major like: Philosophy, Psychology, Letters, Art History, Linguistics, etc. In contrast, there are people that really want to study a major in the field of humanities, but they don't do it because their high school doesn't offer it and they don't want to transfer to another one. When people begin college they start already in the major they chose.

There's a little difference in the US. High school students in the US (on average 18 years old when they graduate) don't have to make any decision about their field of study and when they enter college they still have time to think about their major. On the other hand, in Venezuela students at the third level of high school (most of them on average 15 years old) have to decide between the two tracks already mentioned. Many people at that moment have no idea about what they are going to study and less what they want in life. So they choose the science track to "leave all the doors open" and not limit their options. Both in the United States and in Venezuela people have the alternative to change their major as many times as they want. Also in both countries high schools provide students help choosing a field of work. They offer vocational tests and have advisors and psychologists to help students.

Making this decision takes a long time and it's difficult for almost all the people. People have to have a certain level of maturity and there isn't so much difference between being 15, 18 or 20. People mature at different ages. Sometimes people realize what they really want after having studied something completely different and a lot of them change their minds several times. This is not just hard for students in the United States and in Venezuela. Students all around the world are influenced by many factors and have difficulties choosing a major in which the educational system and the timing play an important role.

## **Families Are About Love, Not About Narrow Definitions**

*Victoria E. Carrillo M.  
R/W 60*

Do you know or have you imagined how life would be without parents? Life without someone to teach you all the important things you need to know and also all the small things that happen to be really important? Do you know how wonderful it is to have parents that love you? Is there any difference if they are straight or gay? It's something to think about.

A lot of people still think that gay people shouldn't have the same rights as heterosexuals. Like, for example, they cannot get married because it is against their social or religious beliefs. But these people haven't realized that these "gay issues" also involve other people like children that need to be adopted. Gay couples should have the same right as heterosexual couples to adopt kids because there are many children waiting to be adopted and many gay women and men wanting to become parents.

For many years, people assumed that if someone was homosexual, bisexual or transgender, they either didn't want to or couldn't become parents. This is not true. These people are just like everyone else; some want to have children and some don't. People's sexuality shouldn't be an item to evaluate when adopting a child because children are influenced by the loving offered by their parents and the interactions with them, not by their sexual orientation. Also, sexual relations between both heterosexual and homosexual partners are generally kept in secret from children. Therefore, what a man and a woman (or a woman and a woman, or a man and a man) do in the privacy of their bedroom is not going to have any effect on the children because they don't know it's going on.

In addition, in the United States there are many children waiting for someone to take care of them. Most of the time it's difficult to find a "warm family" for a child that is mentally and/or physically challenged, or older. People prefer to adopt a 100% healthy child than a kid with certain problems or a 4 year old rather than a 13 year old. Statistics show that most of these "special" and older children are adopted by gay people.

Furthermore, many people believe that adopted children of gay parents will grow up to have social or emotional problems, that they will be subject to harassment and ridicule and also that they won't have both paternal figures (mom and dad). However, there is no evidence that children raised by gay parents are less intelligent, suffer from more problems, are less popular, or have lower self-esteem than children of heterosexual parents. Scientific studies support children who grow up in one or two-parent gay or lesbian households are just as well emotionally and socially as those whose parents are heterosexual. In fact, there is no research that proves the opposite. But, unfortunately, gay parents' children are subject to anti-gay teasing, which can really affect them and become hurtful.

Actually, most children in the United States do not live with two married parents. In fact, according to the 2000 census, only 24% of homes were composed of a married mother and father with children living at home. This means that the majority of children in the US are raised by just one parent. Most people would agree that it's better when children grow up in a two-parent household. Gay people are more likely to both play paternal roles than straights who usually just perform the dad role or the mom role.

Many gay people are totally capable and willing to have and raise children. The fact that someone is not straight doesn't mean s/he cannot do a good job as a parent. To be a good parent means helping children to grow up to fulfill their potential in life. This takes lots of patience and understanding. Even though raising a child is without a doubt one of the most difficult jobs that a person can be responsible for, it's the most rewarding thing in life. Why not give gay people the opportunity to offer all the love they can give children? Just because they are not heterosexual? There's no difference. The only thing that really matters is to be a good parent.

Children without homes do not have the option to choose between a married mother and father or some other type of parent(s). These children have neither a mother nor a father, married or unmarried. There simply are not enough married mothers and fathers interested in adopting a child. Why not give kids the best possible chance at a normal, healthy family life instead of using them to make a cultural statement? Let's give children the opportunity to have a family because families are about love, not about narrow definitions.

## **It's Time to Have a National Health Insurance System**

*Hyang Mi Lee  
R/W 60*

When President Bush confirmed to preserve the private health care system in this year's State of Union address, it brought a lot of controversy again. Despite his promising tax-cut for more insurers, his policy does not seem to be able to solve the deep-rooted problems; in America, forty-three million people don't have health insurance, many middle-income families have difficulty in affording every year's high-rising premium, and more and more Americans become illegal consumers buying drugs from Canada. Is there any breakthrough to overcome these obstacles except padding the tattered present health system?

The WHO's report on the world's health systems (*World Health Report 2000*) suggests what to do to improve the American health care system. According to the report, while the US health system spends the highest portion of its gross domestic product but also the highest "health expenditure per capita," it is ranked the 37<sup>th</sup> for "overall health system performance," and the 54<sup>th</sup> in sharing the financial burden fairly. Furthermore, while the average percentage of private health expenses in most industrial countries is 25%, the only exceptional country among them is the US, whose private expense amounts to 56%. What makes this difference between

these industrial countries and America? Many factors can be causes, but the prominent difference is whether national health insurance exists or not. Most of the best health care countries evaluated by this report, such as France, Spain, Germany and Japan, run national health insurance systems. The report also indicated that "one key recommendation" to improve the health care is "to extend health insurance to as large a percentage of the population as possible." National health insurance will be the best way to obtain this goal.

First of all, national health insurance can save a tremendous amount of money on paperwork. A study at Harvard Medical School and Public Citizen (*International Journal of Health Services*) shows that last year 399.4 billion dollars were spent on health care bureaucracy. Unlike some people's worrying that national insurance will bring worse bureaucracy, national health insurance can get rid of unnecessary administrative procedure. For example, American hospitals now need a lot of employees to fill out each patient's diverse kinds of insurance forms and to deal with hundreds of different insurance plans. However, Canadian hospitals need the small number of employees to do the work because they do not bill each patient. If we have national health insurance, we can save half of the administrative costs--enough to cover the uninsured and to offer the insurers better service.

National health insurance can make universal health care possible. The present health system says that if you cannot afford it, you do not get health care. However, national health insurance does not depend on one's job; whether you are a student or a part-time worker, or even a full-time housewife does not matter. One can go to hospital with insurance even when one is unemployed for a while. Opponents against national insurance maintain that the easy accessibility makes people overutilize care facilities. In a short run, it will have been true; many people who did not have insurance so could not get proper treatment will go to care centers. However, this utilization ultimately saves hospital costs as well as improves people's health because it prevents a patient from falling in more serious condition.

The major argument that the pros for private health insurance insist is that competition in a private health system makes health care more efficient and better. However, the competition in American medicine actually takes place in advertising and marketing among insurance companies rather than in improving the quality of health care. Contrarily, we can find that the present national health care for seniors is being operated well. Related to this argument, the common misunderstood thing is that if we have national health insurance the government will run hospitals. However, national health insurance is different from national health services in which doctors and nurses work for the government, like Spain and UK. Hospitals are still in the private sector and doctors are paid by the fee-for-service. Therefore, competition among hospitals and doctors to be helpful for better quality will be left.

To have national health insurance is a very important and urgent issue, because the healthiness of people, especially of children, is directly related not only to the present prosperity but also to the future of a country. What makes a country powerful is not a military power to conquer other countries, but

the power of healthy people and their sound minds to make the consistent progress available. Now, it's America's turn to have national health insurance.

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This semester we were visited by Korean teachers of English from the Korean National University of Education. Here are some written "souvenirs" of their experiences and feelings. Some of these were "timed" writings which were written in 5 minutes!

## **What is a Utopia?**

*Jae-Yon Lee*

*KNUE*

First of all it should be a carefree place. Cares eat our hearts and rust our bodies. Since they come from money, business, personal relationships and many other things, utopia provides us a shield to cover or protect people from these harmful stresses.

Second it should be a place of unity. Divisions, quarreling and dispute never bring a happy atmosphere. Peace can come with unity and agreement. The utopian community is altogether "One" rather than "Two" or "Three."

Finally it should have some endeavor which all of the members thrive for. Without an endeavor, people would feel frustration and boredom. Real utopia could be achieved through a meaningful endeavor.

## **The Power of Slow**

*Soojin Lee*

*KNUE*

I'd expected much freedom and liberal atmosphere in US culture before I came here. Gainesville, and some part of life here, really shows that kind of liberalism. But what impressed me deeply is that US people do their best in their own job.

For example, the lady at the Lancôme cosmetic shop was very kind and professional. She knew what color would be good on me, even though I was a stranger to her. Besides, she did her best to make me a discount card, even though the try failed at last because I did not have a social security number. Anyway, it took around thirty minutes for me to buy an eye cream.

One more example which impressed me was at the infirmary of UF. A lady in the infirmary was very patient to let her assistant know how to fill out a form on computer. Thanks to that we had to wait more than twenty minutes before we made an appointment with a doctor. She told her assistant, "Never give up!" If I were in her position, I might fill out the form myself for that slow assistant.

As Koreans, we are apt to be very impatient. We get used to doing anything very quickly. This tendency has some

merits, but we are apt to make mistakes. The worst thing is this tendency creates some dislike to the slow or the disabled.

I think we have to learn to do more slowly.

## **The Greatest Day in America**

*Jimin Park*

*KNUE*

Early in the morning, I had a big mistake. I called 911 by accident. I just wanted to call my husband. I didn't realize that I pushed the button 911. I had to meet a police officer. Her was very tall and kind. Even though I explained I had a mistake, he went out only after he had checked my room. I was really surprised at their quick and accurate actions. I was so impressed.

MGM was not bad. I expected I would walk into t perfect movie setting like Hollywood. I was a little disappointed.

However, I had a great experience in the evening when I went to Havana's (Cuban restaurant) to eat Cuban cuisine. I could listen to live music. He (the host) sang a song next to my table. A woman (the waitress) danced Cuban traditional dance wearing traditional clothes. All women in the restaurant including me danced Cuban traditional dance. I was so shy. I wanted to escape, but I couldn't, I had to dance like a stick. But it was very exciting.

The restaurant was so small but international like a global village. They (the customers) were from Korea, Colombia, Canada, Argentina, USA, and New Zealand. The host wanted to listen to Korean music. Charles sang, "Airirang," traditional Korean song. All the people seemed to like "Airirang."

What a surprise! A couple from New Jersey greeted us. We and they had a lunch at the same table in MGM. We were very happy to meet again. We introduced ourselves and took pictures of each other.

It was a miracle meeting again in this huge land of USA. I'll never forget today. I had so many cultural experiences. It was a really wonderful day.

## **University Golf Course**

*Eung-Suk Yi*

*KNUE*

I enjoyed playing golf at the university gold course. It was really a beautiful place for students and school staff. I met a Korean student studying at UF at the golf course at the beginning of my oversea field trip. The student, who is going to receive a doctorate on April 30, is very smart and competent. He is going to work for Samsung Electronics Co. I had a good time by playing, sharing our thoughts. I really thank for his hospitality. I want to have a good relationship with him for a long time. It is lucky for me to meet a person who has good personality and competence.

## **My Autobiography**

*Young-Yean Won (Justin)*

*KNUE*

I was born in 1962 in Gang Won Do province where there used to be lots of mountains and a river including many ditches we could catch freshwater lobster, mudfish, or something like that. There was no faucet water, no electricity, and even no cars.

I enjoyed country life a lot with innocent friends until I graduated from primary school. After that, I had to go to middle school in an urban area. It's the first time I saw many cars, electric lights, especially faucet water. In my village, we used to use water in the well or pump. Although I had no electric light, I studied very well in competition with city boys. As a result, most people thought that I would go to a nice academic high school—but I really wanted to go to art and movie high school. Then I took a test for that school without being noticed by anyone. And I got accepted. After that I escaped from my village to go to high school in Seoul, the capital of Korea. But I couldn't pay for the tuition. Finally I delivered newspapers in the early morning to earn money. Then I could enjoy studying in art school for one year

Surprisingly, my father and uncle looked for me in such a large city, and I was caught by them. I had no choice but to go to my hometown. Next year, I went to academic high school to go to college. Even though I didn't like studying math and English, I just did my best. Then I could go to school for teachers as my father did. He was also principal of the elementary school. The job I really wanted to become was artist or radio performer.

But teacher is one of the jobs that I wanted. Now I like my job.

## **Getting on a Time Machine**

*Jung-Hi Ha*

*KNUE*

I strolled a Florida Heritage Neighborhood ("The Duckpond") by myself. I felt like I was in a different era, which made me become a real alien. While I was exploring the past time's houses, I was thrilled to find out the special feature in Gainesville. The houses in that neighborhood were like a movie set in Hollywood. The big difference was that ordinary people were living their ordinary lives. I stopped in front of my teacher Karen Eberly's house, taking some pictures to remember her and her story about a ghost. That story added more attractive feeling to that house. I had specially intimate feelings about that house. The style of that neighborhood's houses was very unique and antique. I wondered who is living in that kind of houses. I wanted strongly to see inside of those houses and talk to them. After exploring those intriguing houses, I explored another historic place. That was the Thomas Center. This place kept many historical stories. I was impressed by Thomas after reading explanations on the informational signs. He seemed like a big and essential

contributor to development in Gainesville. Surprisingly, UF was established thanks to his effort to locate that university. This center used to be his house and then Hotel Thomas, and then a college. He kind of donated his house in order to fulfill Gainesville's need for a resort hotel. As Mayor, he was committed to the improvement of this city. What if Thomas didn't try to locate the University of Florida in Gainesville? I bet the present of Gainesville would be very different compared with what is Gainesville now.

Thanks to the effort of Gainesville's citizens, this historic place was saved and preserved. Modern society usually tends to get rid of the old things. But here in Gainesville, I witnessed the effort to cherish the old thing and keep that in their lives. Looking back on the past, we can improve our present lives. This city knew the truth and put it into practice. Even though Thomas was the person that I met for the first time he taught me the lesson that as Mayor he did his best and that he had foresight to the future.

## **English Education in Korea**

*Young Sil Na*

*KNUE*

These days English is the most important media which people in the world can use to communicate with each other. In Korea, English is the criteria to recruit new employees. That's one reason our country is terribly crazy about learning English. Even children spend a lot of time learning English. As an English teacher, I have faced a lot of challenges from our society because there are a lot of excellent students who already have been to English speaking countries to study English. As for me, I didn't have many chances to practice speaking English or to meet English-speaking foreigners. Sometimes, I felt embarrassed and nervous whenever I spoke English in my classroom. I really wanted to be a fluent English speaker. That's why I joined this program. Moreover, the ELI focuses on improving our English fluency. I think after teachers can be confident speaking English, they can guide their students correctly and effectively in order to let students be more interested in English. Also, we are the role models for our students. They'll follow us. We should do our best to inspire our students to study English pleasantly and with interest. Thanks to ELI instructors' inspiration, I can be more confident speaking English. They helped me have great teaching lessons and interesting methodologies I can teach my students. Thanks a million.

## **It All Started With a Mouse**

*Jungsook Kim*

*KNUE*

"It all started with a mouse." That statement is Walt Disney's, which made me appreciate his remarkable creativity and imagination. Such concepts are not abstract notions anymore but have been realized as the reality in his kingdom and in the US. This is one of the driving forces of the US.

Despite its relatively short historical heritage and complicated mixture of ethnicities, the US has established a strong foundation for its future history and coordinated the solidarity between people in the name of the United States of America. Such an exceptional success, I think, stems from the creativity and imagination that Walt Disney has inspired in the next generation. I found potentials and real power of this country in the faces of parents and their children at Disney World. The parents were planting possibility in their children's minds.

## **A Typical Day in a Korean English Class**

*Eun Hwa Kim (Kelly)*

*KNUE*

I'm a high school teacher. I have four regular and one more extra morning class today. Fortunately, I was able to be in time for the extra morning class starting at 7:50 A.M. Right after that, I had to be in a faculty meeting to be informed of the things we have to do this week because it's Monday. Now, it's the 3<sup>rd</sup> regular period. I'm in class. I have 35 students in this class including 24 boys and 11 girls. They almost always take a class together so they look very friendly with each other. I can see what had happened between some students. Their faces just show it. I say hello to them in Korean very informally but the next step is different. The captain of the class stands up to salute me, a teacher. They all together say "Good morning ma'am." I'm teaching a new course called English Conversation which just started last year.

Before this course, we only had one regular English course. Now we have another course in English. The purpose of this new English course is to let students have chances to improve their ability to communicate in English. So I tell some of my students to come to the front and do a role play after practicing time. They do it half voluntarily and half against their will. They have no choice because I include this activity in assessment. The rest of the students are busy practicing, pretending to pay attention to the player in front. . . . Another tough day is passing by.

## **What Is a Leader?**

*Minjeong Seo*

*KNUE*

Many people want to be a leader. Their purpose of being a leader is sometimes not good. That is, by becoming a leader, people want to enjoy the feeling of being top among other people. So, they misuse their power and position. Such a leader has a bad influence on our community.

On the contrary, a leader who tries to devote himself to the public good, understand others, and appreciate everything around the community, has a good influence on our society.

Think about our history. By whom was our society filled with love and peace? Our world has been happy by those leaders who walked the path hard chosen--Ghandi, Mother Teresa, etc.

## What I Have Learned In My Lifetime.

Seokho Seo

KNUE

I'm a Korean. I grew up in a conservative family. It's natural to live with parents until we get married, whatever his/her age is.

My life's challenge has been to get out of my mom's hand. Ever since I was a young kid, my mom had dealt with every problem I had or determined what I should do and shouldn't do.

When I was seven years old, I would play with a friend who lived in a house just in front of ours. He was the closest friend of mine. One day, tragically, he was run over by a gigantic truck while he was riding a bike. My mom witnessed that bloody event. After that day, she banned me from riding a bicycle. Even now, at the age of 33, I'm not accustomed to riding it.

When I entered middle school, my mom bossed me around about everything relating to schoolwork and friends I made. I would pretend to behave myself before her, but when I could get out of her sight, I did whatever I wanted. I did things which never could be imagined by my mom about her son.

My university life was calm and quiet itself. At that time, I started getting in touch with my feeling. Actually, it was too late for a man to think about himself at the university age. Anyhow, I found myself indecisive and timid. I determined to change myself.

I went out into the real world to dramatically change myself. I had several part time jobs, and left my mom's house. She hit the ceiling and even cried. However, the desire to be independent was so strong that nobody could block me.

I did many things as jobs, such as waiter, laborer, tutor, and so on, and I could save a pretty good amount of money. With that money, I flew to Canada. Of course, my mom didn't want me to go to another country by myself, but I just did. I spent eight months travelling and studying in Canada.

When I came back to my home, I could get to know, not that I changed myself, but that my mom changed. Eventually, she started seeing me as a man, as an adult. Now, in many ways, she is dependent on me.

When you want to change somebody else, change yourself first! That is "What I have learned in my lifetime."

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### Thanks from the Editor

Thank you students for allowing us to share your writing. I hope you enjoy reading your fellow students' essays. Also thanks to Noreen Baker and the HUB for arranging the gift certificates, to Todd Allen for publicizing this issue of Student Voices, to the Reading/Writing instructors for supporting their students in their writing, and to Traci Bocoock, Megan Forbes, Barbara Hess Earp, and Valentina Komaniecka for reading and evaluating the entries.

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Steve Flocks



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