

The ELI Weekly

Scholarship Nominees

It is very difficult to be nominated for a scholarship. The nominees all worked very hard this semester and achieved the following criteria:

- Full-time C semester student
- Academic Excellence
- Outstanding Progress
- Excellent Attendance and Participation
- Practices English
- Successful Academic Work Strategies
- Intercultural Understanding/ Relationships
- See more about the scholarship here:
<https://eli.ufl.edu/application-information/scholarship/>



Please join us in congratulating these nominees for the ELI scholarship to study in the Summer 2025 semester!

Fabiola Polo Arevalo

Lu Huang

Tiago De Lima Martins

Maria Moncada Vergara

Alisson Poveda Gutierrez

Jeftey Saint Fleur

Out and About: Kayaking in Silver Springs

by Jinxuan (Viola) Zhou, RW41



I never tried kayaking before I went to Silver Springs State Park. A few weeks ago, I went to Silver Springs Park with my family. We were divided into groups. Only 5 of more than 20 people chose to kayak, and I was one of the five people. It was my first time kayaking. I was both excited and a little nervous as I stepped into the small kayak. Thais and I were in the same boat. It was both of our first time kayaking. At first, we even couldn't control the kayak; balancing was tricky, and every small action made the kayak wobble. We kayaked a little bit in 10 minutes. However, after a couple minutes, we got used to feeling and started to row forward faster. The lake was clear and peaceful. You even can see the fish in the spring. We kayaked slowly by the spring, trying to find the manatee that I had never seen in the spring. But due to the hot weather, we didn't see

manatees in the end. However, we saw several alligators. They lay quietly on the shore and looked for their prey. We wanted to get close to one, but Shawn stopped us. In an instant, the alligator began to attack. Fortunately, Shawn stopped us.

By the time we got to the shore, I was tired but happy. My first kayaking experience was unforgettable, and I can't wait to do it again!

Student Voices



Every semester, we have amazing student writers, so we take your writing and publish it in an online collection called Student Voices. In past semesters, students have written paragraphs, essays, creative stories, recipes, letters, obituaries, poetry, and more. You can see past editions of Student Voices (<https://eli.ufl.edu/news-publications/>, scroll to the bottom of the page) for inspiration.

We encourage you to submit anything of your work that you wish to see published. It can be from any class or something you have written on your own but ask your teachers for help editing! You can email it to Olga Moody (omoody@ufl.edu) or to your teacher. Please include your name and class on your submission. The deadline for submissions is Friday, March 28.

CIP Weekday Activities

Monday, March 24th – Coffee Talk – 6:30-9:00pm



Socialize with LAs and ELI friends at the **Panera on Archer Road**! Play games, speak English, and drink a coffee or get dinner at the restaurants nearby. Take bus 1, 12, or 34.

Address: 3443 SW Archer Rd Suite 1A, Gainesville, FL 32608

Tuesday, March 25th – Volleyball – 6:30-9:00pm



Play volleyball and hang out at **Lexington Crossing Apartments Phase 2** Volleyball Courts! No experience necessary. You can also watch, socialize, or play games on the side if you're not interested in playing volleyball. Take bus 35.

Address: 3700 SW 27th St, Gainesville, FL 32608

Wednesday, March 26th – Depot Park & Karaoke Night – 6:30-9:00pm



Join us at Depot Park for a night of fun! First we will explore the park and its trails, and stop by local shops and restaurants. Then at 8pm, karaoke night at Boxcar Garden begins! Finish the night out with a song and cheer on your friends as they sing their hearts out! Take bus 1, 5, or 46.

Address: 201 SE Depot Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601

Thursday, March 27th – Soccer—6:30-9:00pm



Come play soccer at **Flavet Field** on campus! No experience necessary. You can also watch, socialize, or play games on the side if you're not interested in playing soccer.

Address: Woodlawn Dr, Gainesville, FL 32603

Friday, March 28th – Reitz Game Room – 6:30-9:00pm



Hang out with friends in the **Reitz Game Room**! You can go bowling, play pool, and play board games. Bring your Gator1 ID for cheaper rates. It is Gator Nights this week so bring your ID to check in and see all the fun themed activities the Reitz has planned! Theme TBA.

Address: 655 Reitz Union Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611

Weekend Event

Saturday March 29th – Busch Gardens Bus Trip

Ride some of the best roller coasters in the country! Check out the animals, shows, food, rides, and more at this Florida-famous theme park! There are still spaces on the bus. Buy a bus pass for 25 dollars exact cash in the CIP office before 12:30pm. Purchase your online Busch Gardens ticket at <https://buschgardens.com/tampa/tickets/theme-park-tickets/>.

What to bring: Make sure to have your ticket already purchased online and bring your confirmation. Bring extra money for food you might want throughout the park. Remember to wear sunscreen and comfortable shoes. Bags are allowed in the park, but you will have to store large bags in lockers for most rides. Make sure to bring and drink plenty of water.

ELI Bus Schedule	
8:00 am	Students arrive at Norman Garage and check in with Tate.
8:15 am	Bus leaves Norman Garage. We will not wait for students past this time.
10:45am	Bus arrives at Busch Gardens (10165 N McKinley Dr, Tampa, FL 33612).
11:00am	Buy tickets if necessary (Please buy online ahead of time). Enter park.
7:15pm	Meet at Zagora Café for dinner.
7:30pm	Bus leaders call any missing students and tell them to meet at park entrance.
7:45pm	Leave park and get on bus.
8:00pm	Bus leaves, you must be at the bus before this time.
10:00pm	Arrive at Norman Garage, plan to be picked up or ride an RTS bus around this time.

If you purchased a bus pass, you must follow the **ELI bus schedule**. This schedule may change, all times are estimated.

Other CIP Reminders

Weekend Event Reminder

Please only sign up for Saturday events if you plan on attending. It takes slots away from other students who could have attended if you sign up but do not show up for a Saturday event. Thank you!

Conversation Partners (CPs)



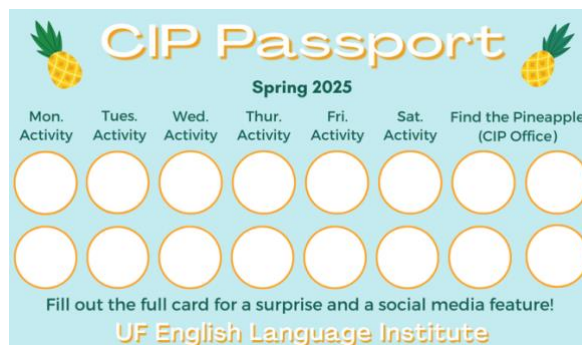
Want to meet with a fluent English speaker and make a new friend? Sign up for a CP! If you choose to sign up, you must meet with your partner for one hour a week. It can take up to two weeks to get a partner from when you sign up. Please [sign up here!](#)

Please email Joey at conversationpartners@eli.ufl.edu for any issues, questions or concerns or visit her in the CIP Office during office hours.

CIP Passports

Don't forget to get your CIP Passport hole punched from the activity leaders at the event (not after). **We don't hole punch passports after the event.** Redeem your completed passport for a small gift, a photo for the ELI Instagram, and your name published in the ELI weekly!

Need a new CIP Passport? Stop by the CIP Office



Find the Pineapple

Remember the CIP Pineapple is hidden in a new place every Monday in the CIP office. Stop by and find it for hole punches!

Notes from the Office

Safety First: Are you lucky enough to have a friend with a car who can drop you off on campus for your classes? There are several good places close to Matherly for a “drop and dash.” If you are on University Avenue and driving east towards 13th Street, there is a tiny parking lot at Library West, where you can safely drop off a passenger (but not park). Also, if you are on 13th Street just south of University Avenue, you can enter campus on Union Road, where there is plenty of space to pull over and drop off a passenger, and then go around the circle to exit back on 13th Street. *Never stop on University Avenue or 13th Street to drop off passengers from your car.*

No classes: Monday, March 31 is an instructor workday. There are no ELI classes, but the main office will be open and there will be a CIP activity.

Class photo: We will take a class photo on Thursday, April 3rd at 1:45pm (between Listening/Speaking hours) on the front steps of Tigert Hall.

People out: Christine will be out of the office from April 4-10. Please plan around these dates if you need to talk to Christine.

Charges Due: Every ELI student should log in to [ONE.ufl.edu](https://one.ufl.edu) and look at the “Campus Finances (Bursar)” tile to see if you owe any fees to the university. For example, you may need to pay for services you received at the Student Health Care Center or printing in a library. If you have a scholarship, it will not pay these charges.

Check your I-20s: If you are traveling during the break (for example, leaving the US and coming back), make sure your I-20 is signed. Also check the expiration date. You can make an appointment with Daryl to sign your I-20 or to renew your I-20 before it expires.

Financial Guarantees for Summer: Dear scholarship students, we hope to see you again in the Summer! This is an early reminder to request your new financial guarantee letter for the Summer semester, if you plan to return. If you need an enrollment letter or if you have any questions, please email Tara Mace at fiscal@eli.ufl.edu.

Apartment Leases: As the semester draws to a close, keep in mind that your lease might be ending soon. It is important to know the exact date that your apartment lease ends so you can make plans. If you're not sure when it ends, ask your apartment office. If you need help finding a hotel to stay in short-term (you should ask your friends first!), someone to take over your lease, or a new apartment, talk to Christine in Matherly 223.

US Federal Tax Forms for International Students

International students that were present in the U.S. in 2024 have a responsibility to file tax forms with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Tax forms are due on April 15th this year. They are filed for the previous calendar year, which in this case is 2024.

You must provide required tax forms *even if you did not earn any money* in the U.S. in 2024. **All F and J visa students (including dependents) must submit [IRS form 8843](#). You can get the form 8843 from the ELI main office.** Instructions for completing the form are also in the main office.

You cannot submit this document electronically. You must physically mail it to this address by April 15th:

Department of the Treasury

Internal Revenue Service Center

Austin, TX 73301-0215

Come talk to us if you have questions about how to mail the form. You can get an envelope from the ELI main office.

If you had on-campus employment in 2024 as an international student, you will receive a form from your employer reporting your income and tax withholdings called a W-2. **Because you earned reportable income, you must submit a federal tax return to file your W-2.** Talk to Daryl if you had on-campus employment last year and have questions about filling your taxes.

Photo of the Week: Sweetwater Wetlands



Birthdays

Students:

- Samuel Jimenez Deossa, 3/25
- Ildeu Da Silva Junior, 3/27

Staff:

- None this week



Manners & Culture

Q: Why do Americans say “excuse me” when they pass by you in the store?

A: It is a way to be polite and maybe to give notice that they are going to pass by you. Also, saying “excuse me” is a much nicer way to say get out of the way. Typically, the usual response is “I’m sorry.”

Q: Why do Americans care a lot about punctuality?

A: Many Americans place a lot of significance on time. When they make an appointment, they find it important to be on time. It is a show of respect. If you are late, you are saying that your time is more important than their time.

Q: Why do the bathroom doors in America have a gap? No privacy!

A: I have no idea. Most Americans don’t realize that this is unusual compared to other places.

Grammar

Q: Is the Oxford comma really important?

A: This is a hotly debated topic in the world of punctuation! The Oxford comma is the last comma in a list of items. Let’s look at an example sentence:

- I have pencils, pens, and textbooks in my backpack.

That last comma before the word ‘and’ is called the Oxford comma. Some people argue that you do not need the Oxford comma because the word ‘and’ separates the last two items in the list. This argument is valid most of the time. However, sometimes the sentences get more complicated. Here is an example without the Oxford comma:

- I like turkey, peanut butter and jelly and ham and cheese sandwiches.

Whoa! That is an awkward sentence! How many different types of sandwiches are we talking about there? There are a lot of funny memes about how the meaning of a sentence might change when you leave off the Oxford comma. The best rule of thumb is to use the Oxford comma if there is any way the sentence would be confusing or misinterpreted.

Joke of the Week

What did the tree say when spring finally arrived?

A: What a re-leaf!

Notes from the Editor



I still need your help with the ELI Weekly. Send me a paragraph about fun activities you have tried in Florida or send me a story about an interesting place in your country. Send me grammar questions, culture questions, or even jokes. Send them to mshastri@ufl.edu. Use the subject heading ELI Weekly.