

MARCH 2020 ISSUE

# Slater

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION  
AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE



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# TANA



***Our Director***

## ***Dear International Community,***

I'm so inspired by the international community we have here at Wellesley and can't wait to continue finding ways to build community together! I'm happy to say that international students inspired this newsletter along with the "Ask Me About My Culture" buttons and *International Women's Day* student panel! The purpose of the newsletter, as with other student inspired events, is to give voice to our community, share our collective stories, and bring Slater to the rest of campus.

When Julia came to me with the idea of creating a student led newsletter, I supported it immediately. Julia and Veeksha, along with the Slater EBoard, have rallied together to bring this first edition to you and we just can't wait to see what the next iteration will bring! More than anything, we want to continue to build a close knit international community, share experiences, and support one another in positive ways. As always, if you too have an inspiring idea please share it with us! We will do our best to bring your vision to reality.

Please enjoy this newsletter and have a peaceful semester.

# A NOTE FROM *our editors*



The world is currently experiencing turbulence in the form of fear and polarization. At Slater, our response has been to strengthen all possible relationships through intercultural communication so as to help us navigate cultural blind spots. This newsletter attempts to engage with each other as well as a celebration of Wellesley's unique multicultural camaraderie. Wellesley's liberal learning champions intellectual diversity and fosters an understanding of our common human vulnerabilities.

It is a dream come true to see this Newsletter take life as I have imagined it one year ago. I was sobbing in Tana's office trying to encapsulate the sea of emotions overwhelming me. She offered me the ultimate push to create a safe space for dialogue. A space for internationals at Wellesley. Everything we did here, we did it with love for the innumerable traditions, cultures, and values defining Slater as it is: *a home away from home*.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we enjoyed putting them together!



# *North America*



"It's been a pretty busy week, but same old, same old. Also, *Canada is still standing*," I say during our personal and regional update during our weekly EBoard meeting.

This is something that I've said multiple times, almost too many times to count. My name is Caitlin Gordon, and I've been Slater's North America Rep since the fall of 2018. This is a position that I love, not only because I get to take cute photos where I hold a Canadian flag (see any of my election photos,) but because I get to preach my love for my home country, and I get to hold fun events where I feed you awesome food and we put maple syrup on snow. I'm from Vancouver, BC, a beautiful city flanked by mountains and the ocean, one of which is missing in the great state of Massachusetts. (*Hint: it's not the ocean.*) I live three hours north of Seattle, WA, which leads many people to ask, "are you even really an international student?" (Hint #2: My passport, I-20, and F1 visa status beg to differ.)

I am a Canadian student living in the United States, a country that is very similar, but also just different enough to notice. Universal health care isn't a thing. I have a time difference. Currency exchange is a pain. Going home often isn't the easiest option. Customs still slightly scares me. This is not an exhaustive list, but you get the idea. On the other hand, there are many similarities. Classroom culture isn't that different. There's no language barrier, aside from local jargon. Canada has a similar tipping culture. Maybe the weather's a little bit different, but that's mostly a West Coast problem. I might not act like your typical idea of an "international student," *but on paper and in real life, I very much am one.*

Going back to my starting quote, it is so easy for me to lose myself in this strange place of being "*not that international.*" I am the kind of person where home is wherever I currently am. I am guilty of not keeping up with the day to day events in Canada, but that doesn't mean that I don't care. Even as I scanned the news before writing this article, it was hard to find anything of note that even compares with the other occurrences in this world. Canada is simply calm – as I say, Canada is still standing.**page 6**



This should not be taken as me not caring, as that is not the case. I keep up with the major events and headlines, but that doesn't necessarily happen everyday. I was all in for the federal election (you may have seen me at the election watch party this past fall,) and I mourned the retirement of Tessa and Scott with the rest of the country. I keep track of everything while I'm at home, while I'm fully immersed in everything, but it really just seems to be that much harder here for me. This does not make me any less international than the next person. I am simply me - living in the land of "international, but not from overseas" - and I love it. It's easy for me to blend in some days, but if you ever ask me anything about my home country, you'll know where my heart truly lies.



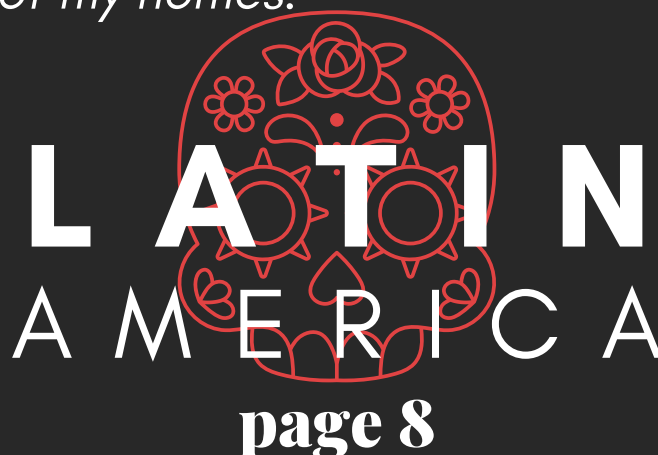
**An article written by  
Caitlin Gordon**

**Country of origin:**  
*Canada*



*D*id you know that there are more than 500 languages spoken in Latin America? While Spanish and Portuguese are two of the most widely spoken languages, other languages of power that are left over from European colonization include French (French Guiana), Dutch (Suriname), English (Guyana and Belize).

As an Education Studies major I am interested in how multilingual societies and countries structure their education. Linguistically diverse countries face the challenge of providing equitable schooling to communities that do not speak the dominant language. This has been a demanding task in Latin America even prior to European colonization, and it continues to be a struggle today. In my education policy class last semester I was able to explore this question by focusing on bilingual education in Peru. I chose Peru because I lived in the capital, Lima, from 2009-2012 with my family. While this was many years ago, *I am proud to call Peru one of my homes.*



Before Spanish became the official language (and the language of power) in Peru, the Incan Empire used Quechua to unify its multilingual and multicultural population under its rule. At the same time, the Incan Empire demonstrated that they valued the other spoken languages such as by teaching Aymara and Puquina. Today with a population of over 32 million and with certain states where 80% or more of the inhabitants are non-Spanish speakers, the Peruvian government has the similar responsibility of effectively serving a linguistically and ethnically diverse people.

In 1993, the Peruvian government decided that students who speak an indigenous language or who are in the midst of recovering their native tongue have the right to bilingual education at every age ("Ley Nacional de Lenguas," 1993). As a result, Educación Bilingüe e Intercultural (EIB, also known as Bilingual Intercultural Education) emerged and is valued for its role in developing national, cultural, and individual identities. A crucial element for delivering culturally comprehensive and linguistically accurate EIB curriculum lies in the training of teachers. There are sustainable and innovative programs already taking place in Perú that focus on in-service teacher training.

One in-service teacher training program in the Peruvian Amazon not only looks at teaching the mechanics of native languages, it emphasizes the empowerment of cultural knowledge, pride, and community engagement. Since 1998, the NGO known as El Programa de Formación de Maestros Bilingües de la Amazonía Peruana (FORMABIAP) has been working in the state of Loreto (Pérez, 2009 p. 204). This NGO works alongside the teacher training centers in Loreto and the Interethnic Association for Development in the Peruvian Amazon. Community elders are enlisted as Specialists who collaborate with teachers to deploy EIB in classrooms ("Los sabios y sabias...", n.d.). This in-service teacher training has current teachers spend half the time learning about the language and culture in the classroom, and the other half of the time working in the communities and with these Specialists.

Peru and other Latin American countries have a demanding task to improve their bilingual education in order to provide a higher quality of public education to students of marginalized languages. Education policy has the ability to reinforce Spanish and western dominance or to lift up indigenous languages from the margins. To accomplish the latter, the policy and practice of bilingual education must be culturally competent and approach indigenous language and culture with an asset-based mindset.

## **An article written by**



**Nora Pearce**

**Country of origin:**

*Chile/USA*





# EUROPE

*Bonjour!*

Greetings from your local European Representative! My name is Sophie, and I'm so excited to spend this semester bringing communities at Wellesley together over a shared passion for European culture. While I can only bring you a small sliver of Europe from my own lived experience, I look forward to connecting with a variety of students from all over the region and deepening my own ties to Europe in the process. I see this semester as an opportunity to create a safe, welcoming space for anybody who feels connected to European culture. Through small get-togethers (mostly centered around food, obviously), I'm excited to make new friends and work together to build a home away from home.

Born in Portland, OR (USA), I moved to France with my family at the age of 6. There, I attended French schools until moving to Wellesley in 2018. Although my background is American, the heart of my cultural identity still lies in France. I expected to feel a deeper connection to the US upon coming to college, but instead found myself alienated in what felt like a foreign culture.

Although I feel so much more at home here than I did last year, I still miss Saint-Germain en Laye, my hometown, every single day. Saint-Germain is a small city located about 30 minutes outside of Paris. Despite being tucked away in the suburbs, it has everything anyone could need: cafés, restaurants, schools, more pharmacies than I could count, a train station, and--last but not least--a beautiful castle, complete with a sprawling park, where Louis XIV himself was born. In high school, I spent most of my free time in this compact city with friends. We would linger for hours in cafés, wander aimlessly through the park, and, whenever possible, hop on a train headed into Paris. Despite living so close to the big city, it still feels so unfamiliar to me. There are entire arrondissements that I have yet to explore, and countless more restaurants to visit.

Now, I'm excited to go back and continue exploring with friends from Wellesley. Likewise, I look forward to exploring much more of the European continent that is still so unfamiliar to me. There's so much more for me to see, and I hope to spend a lifetime exploring. In the meantime, I'm excited to start right here at Wellesley, through conversations with peers from around the world.

**An article written by  
Sophie Lemmerman**

**Country of origin:**  
*USA/France*



# Middle East North Africa



I was born in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), in the year 2000. By the time I grew up, the Emirates, particularly Dubai, was awash in opulence – unfathomably high buildings, grand malls, glitzy hotels, fast cars and luxurious villas by the sea. Dubai had come to be known as the ‘City of Superlatives’ and ‘Manhattan of the Middle East’. The shiny present of the Emirates has eclipsed another narrative – UAE’s rich cultural and traditional past. It is this cultural narrative of the Emirates that has always intrigued me, and I have discovered Emirati heritage through their architecture and poetry.

First, some historical context. Back in the day, Abu Dhabi and Dubai were tiny fishing villages rife with warring Bedouin tribes. Pearling and trade with India brought economic prosperity to the impoverished region. However, the advent of Japanese “cultured pearls” caused an economic decline with widespread poverty. The unforgiving sun and sinking sand made life inhospitable.



Still, the spirited Emiratis' resilience and adaptability helped them overcome these challenges. The same spirit is reflected in many of their present-day practices. The discovery of oil in the 1960s swept the shores of the Emirates like a tidal wave of change, ushering in a new era of progress.



I also found the Emirati hospitality truly remarkable. Most Emirati homes have a 'majlis', Arabic for 'a place of sitting'. These tented areas are lined with brightly colored 'tekay', or floor cushions. The head of the family hosts gatherings of people, friends and strangers alike, at sunset. 'Qahwa', Arabic coffee, which is a blend of coffee, cardamom and saffron is served along with dates and traditional pancakes.

Historically, majlis sheltered desert travelers and their camels from the beating sun and harsh winds. There are no camel-back desert travelers anymore, yet the spirit of welcoming strangers has endured. Today, the Emirates is home to over 200 nationalities who constitute over 80% of the population. The UAE Government identifies 'tolerance' as a fundamental value, even establishing a Ministry of Tolerance, Happiness, Youth and the Future.

The Emiratis have a rich tradition of oral poetry called 'Nabati'. Early Emiratis were nomadic tribes - books were too heavy to be carried around and hence they memorized verses. Most poems speak of travel, love, and nature. Personally, I enjoy the poems of travelers pining for their loved ones - they speak of the loss of time as well as a promise and hope for tomorrow. Nabati poems serve as a record of history, offering glimpses into the livelihoods of the nomads. They are a breadcrumb trail to Emirates' rich heritage for young post-oil Emiratis who have never had to endure the hardship of their ancestors. Al Khansa is a renowned 7th century Nabati poetess renowned for her elegies. Nabati poems are a distinct part of several festivals and national celebrations even today. My hope is for these poetic treasures to be translated into other languages so that Arab culture can be better understood.

Since the discovery of oil, the Emirs have invested over \$2,000 billion into modernizing the Emirates and diversifying the economy. The Middle East is a deceptively convoluted region - civil wars, upheavals, revolutions such as Arab Spring make the region a hotbed of volatile politics. The Emirates' efforts to build tolerance into the fabric of its young society in order to maintain peace and progress is laudable. As Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid says "There can be no bright future for the Middle East without an intellectual reconstruction that re-establishes the values of ideological openness, diversity, and acceptance of others' viewpoints, whether intellectual, cultural, or religious."



So when you are in UAE, head over to the authentic souqs for a flavor of The Emirates. Visit The Sheikh Mohammed Center for Cultural Understanding ([www.cultures.ae](http://www.cultures.ae)) and experience an Emirati lunch. Take the less beaten path to Al Jahili Fort, Al Ain, which houses the exhibition of British explorer Wilfred Thesiger's photographs of pre-oil Emirates. ([www.jahili-fort@dctabudhabi.ae](http://www.jahili-fort@dctabudhabi.ae)). I would also recommend reading "Between Sips of Coffee - Oral Narratives from the UAE" translated by Khaled Al-Masri of Swarthmore College. I look forward to welcoming you to #myDubai.

**An article written by**  
**Veeksha Madhu**  
**Country or origin:**  
*UAE*





# A F F R I C A A F F R I C A A F F R I C A

**Dear all,**

Happy belated New Year and New Semester! We hope your semester is off to a great semester. We are so grateful for the support from our colleagues at Harambee house (especially WASA), the staff at Slater, and other Slater student leaders. A lot has happened on the continent this past couple of months, but we would like to highlight a few.


This past year has been a challenging one for the continent as many countries experienced changes in political systems and governance in countries like South-Sudan, Nigeria, and Senegal, just to mention a few. We also want to remember several black-Africans who died in the xenophobic attacks in South-Africa. We hope we can use the new year to reflect on how we can make our respective countries a better place for us to live and return to after our daily toil.

## On the continent:

-February 11, 2020 marked 30 years since Nelson Mandela, former South African president and an advocate for the anti-apartheid revolution, was released from prison. If you want to learn about Mandela's journey, watch Mandela: *Long Walk to Freedom*.




-Trump adds four other African countries with substantial muslim population to the travel ban: Nigeria, Tanzania, Sudan and Eritrea. This travel ban will affect immigrants to the U.S. Non-immigrant students, scholars, and visitors to the U.S. are not affected by the ban nor are those who already hold U.S. green cards or dual citizenship. For more information please watch out for the immigration attorney that is visiting Slater in April.

# Black History Month 2020:




## "The Black Vote"

<p>Monday, Feb. 3, 5:00pm <b>Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am Screening</b> Speaker: Dr. Akua Sarr, Vice Provost, Boston College <b>COLLINS CINEMA</b> Co-sponsored by Human Resources and Rho Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated</p> <p>Tuesday, Feb. 4, 5:00pm <b>Welcome BLACK Community Gathering</b> <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p>Friday, Feb. 7, 7:00pm &amp; 9:15pm <b>Harriet and Queen &amp; Slim</b> <b>COLLINS CINEMA</b> Co-Sponsored by Harambee House and the Film Society</p> <p>Saturday, Feb. 8, 7:00pm &amp; 9:15pm <b>Queen &amp; Slim and Harriet</b> <b>COLLINS CINEMA</b> Co-Sponsored by Harambee House and the Film Society</p> <p>Tuesday, Feb. 11, 4:30pm <b>Losing Laroche: The Story of the Only Black Passenger on the Titanic</b> Speaker: Professor Kellie Carter Jackson <b>NEWHOUSE CENTER</b> Sponsored by Newhouse Center for the Humanities</p>	<p>Wednesday, Feb. 13, 4:30pm <b>Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy and Premature Birth</b> Speaker: Professor Diana-Am Davis <b>LIBRARY LECTURE ROOM</b> Sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies</p> <p>Wednesday, Feb. 19, 4:30pm <b>Brown Eyed Handsome Men: Sex, Race, and Rock 'n Roll in the West</b> Speaker: Professor Lynda Shapiro <b>NEWHOUSE CENTER</b> Sponsored by History Department and Newhouse Center for the Humanities</p> <p>Thursday, Feb. 20, 12:30pm <b>Davis Museum Black History Month Tour</b></p> <p>Thursday, Feb. 20, 6:30pm <b>Cypher - Electoral Politics: Young, Black, and Undecided</b> <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b> Co-Sponsored by Lambda Upsilon Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Xi Tau Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.</p> <p>Saturday, Feb. 22, 5:00pm <b>WCD's Caribbean Expo</b> <b>JEWETT AUDITORIUM</b></p>	<p>Monday, Feb. 24, 5:00pm <b>BHM Read-In</b> The Water Dancer by Tananarive Coates <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p>Friday, Feb. 28, 7:00pm <b>BHM Coffeehouse</b> Featuring Poet and Performer Danez Smith <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p><b>WASA's Africa Week</b></p> <p>Sunday, Feb. 9, 7:00pm <b>Open Meeting + Vision Board M</b> <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p>Monday, Feb. 10, 6:00pm <b>Film Viewing</b> <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p>Tuesday, Feb. 11, 7:00pm <b>Afrocats Zumba Class</b> <b>KSC</b></p> <p>Wednesday, Feb. 12, 6:30pm <b>Cornrow Workshop</b> <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p>Thursday, Feb. 13, 6:00pm <b>Cooking with WASA</b> <b>HARAMBEE HOUSE</b></p> <p>Friday, Feb. 14, 6:00pm <b>Film Viewing + Spa Night</b> <b>SLATER</b></p>
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**WELLESLEY**  
HARAMBEE HOUSE



Web: <http://www.wellesley.edu/harambee>  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/harambee.house](https://www.facebook.com/harambee.house)  
Twitter: @harambeehouse  
Phone: 781.235.2131

If you need accommodations due to a disability or health related need to participate in these events, please contact: Jin Wica, Director of Disability Services (781) 235-2434, [disabilityservices@wellesley.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@wellesley.edu)



## On campus:

This month at Wellesley, we celebrate Black History month. If you want to participate in any of the events that are happening, please check out the Black History 2020 Calendar. As always, we are here for you whether you are from the continent or interested in learning more about the continent.

With a smile,  
Oluwakemi and Shukri

**Countries of origin:**

**page 18** *Nigeria and Somaliland*

## A Culmination of the Past with the Present

As I get out of the airport onto the dusty streets of Calcutta, the city my father grew up in, I feel the nostalgia of an old crumbling city structure spreading all over me. As we walk towards the car, my grandmother reminisces about how different these streets once were and the changing landscape of development and decay at the same time. But for a girl from the busy metropolitan city of Mumbai, Calcutta feels like a city stopped in time. I look around to cycle-run rickshaws and street vendors amongst the grandeur of buildings reminiscent of the fading presence of the British colonial rule in India. The sense of space as evident in the sinewy narrow lanes, the unhurriedness of small town, the rundown buildings, the rusting unused tram line, people eating and chatting at bus stops crowded queues at the bus stops and bus driver shouting names of places the bus will stop – all concepts largely unheard of in more developed cities. The car ride home reminds me of the old black and white movies based on Rabindranath Tagore's stories that I watch ever-so often from our 38th-floor apartment looking over the high skyscrapers and modern architectural developments of Mumbai. There is a stark contrast in the pace and infrastructure of the two worlds. Yet, I find it easy to relate to both these two worlds and its influence in my sense of identity.

We arrive at my grandparent's small apartment on the second floor of 6 Ballygunge Place. But by Kolkata's standards, this apartment is not small. Dulal, the building keeper my father's family has known for years, helps carry our luggage indoors. He wears many hats; as a security guard, electrician, plumber, person to run errands and much more. Upstairs, we are greeted by Bimal, a widower living on the floor above. His warm, welcoming smile and the wrinkles on his face from his years of living are a comforting constancy in our trips. He often sends food cooked by him to the house. Food is often a display of love and care in India. It is not unlikely to be overfed when having a meal in an Indian household.

In the evening, we sit around the living room sipping masala chai and eating my favorite egg wraps from a nearby shop. We listen to stories over three generations. First, from my grandmother of my grandfather of patriotism, freedom struggle and pride in history. Then, my father and his siblings of rowdy school days at missionary schools, respected English schoolteachers and principals and stories of famine, floods and electricity shortage. And finally, from my sister and I; trying but mostly failing to find relatable stories to share except for others version of Calcutta that we heard and saw in their words.

I wake up the next morning to loud bellows of "Aloo", "Tamatar" and "Kanda" - I look out the window to a small old man wheeling a large wooden cart with full of colorful fruits and vegetables. He has a cloth wrapped around his head to shade himself from the heat of the scorching sun.



Over the years, on my trips to Calcutta, I have realized that the city is full of elderly people and a few young people. Most of the youth choose to travel to bigger cities and abroad in search of better opportunities. The old people often complain that their children or grandchildren don't visit often enough. It seems their children such as my father have left the simple rhythm of life here behind for economic prosperity of larger, bustling cities such as Mumbai. I sense the sadness in their parents' eyes watching the decay in their beloved city which once was a hub of literature, art and culture and business activity.

A visit to Calcutta is incomplete without a taste of the lip-smacking street food. We get out of the taxi and I look around and hear the sounds of popping spices and breathe in the aroma from the food stalls. I put a handful of jhal moori (puffed rice mixed with masala) in my mouth. The strong mustard flavor hits my tongue immediately with green chilies tingling my taste buds. Unlike the west with its advanced refrigeration methods, food in Bengal is adapted to the changes in climate. You will find a different set of preparations for every season in Bengal. Bengali food ties relationships together, recipes passed down generation to generation, a bond formed over delicious flavors. There are changes coming in Bengali food driven by integration with different regions and changes in family structures, which no longer offer the luxuries of elaborate cooking. With time, these records may be the only reminder of our memorable experience with Bengali food.

My family talks about how much the city has changed but I can see how this is still the same old Calcutta to them from the relationships to the food and lifestyle. I learned to appreciate my father's childhood coming from a humble deprived background to a position of responsibilities, and success beyond the comprehension of most people we meet on the trip, yet his relationships back home have remained unchanged.

Perhaps this was just my experience – statistically Calcutta has grown immensely in the last 50 years with a new city center opening up, modern looking shopping malls and health facilities. I often struggle between new development and the preservation of the past. The past comforts those who experienced it but development keeps us with the world for future generations to come.

Growing up in Mumbai, I saw myself as part of the increasingly global forward-looking future and my trips to Calcutta showed me glimpses of the past in the shadows of the city. And in between the two, I, in the present realized the past and the future are woven together in me and are equally defining for me as an individual.



**An article written by  
Sunaina Chatterjee**

**Country of origin:**  
*India*



This year's Chinese New Year's Eve was on January 25th, 2020, much earlier than any that I could remember. For many Chinese students, it was perhaps the first and only time during their four years at Wellesley that they were able to celebrate this most important Chinese holiday at home. According to the Chinese zodiac, which features a 12-year cycle with each year represented by a specific animal, this year is the Year of the Rat. People born in the Years of the Rat including 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, and 2008 will experience their Zodiac Year of Birth (Ben Ming Nian).

Many traditions are associated with the New Year and often differ across regions in China. Usually, people will clean and decorate their houses, buy new clothes, and prepare dishes for the New Year's Eve dinner, which has always been my favorite part of the festival. Parents would also give lucky money wrapped in red envelopes to their children as best wishes.

This year's New Year has also been very difficult and sad for many families in China because of the coronavirus outbreak. Thousands of people in Wuhan, the center of the outbreak, were not able to reunite with their families as the government locked down the city starting from January 23rd. Below is an up-to-date summary of the coronavirus that is attracting the world's attention.

## **Coronavirus**

Since the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus has been the focus of news and media outlets worldwide; spreading from Wuhan, China, this new and highly infectious disease has caused international panic, fear, and racialized responses and/or discrimination towards people of East Asian descent. The coronavirus surfaced in an outdoor seafood and poultry market in Wuhan late last December, and since then, it has spread to nearly all of mainland China, with tens of thousands of people infected and more than one thousand people dead. The coronavirus has spread internationally, with cases confirmed in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States, and the World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus to be a global health emergency. Wuhan, a central Chinese city, has been placed on lockdown since the beginning of the Lunar New Year, and flights from or to anywhere in mainland China are increasingly rare. Many countries and institutions are quarantining passengers that travel from mainland China for at least 14 days, during which symptoms of the coronavirus will emerge if the person is infected. In an instance that sparked worldwide interest and concern, more than 3600 passengers were quarantined on their cruise ship in Yokohama, Japan, after a two week trip to Southeast Asia; as of February 13, 218 people on the ship had tested positive for the coronavirus – the largest number of cases outside China.



While the rapid spread of the coronavirus across mainland China and internationally is certainly concerning, the radicalized responses towards the coronavirus are almost even more shocking. During this extremely nerve-wracking and emotional time for the people of China who are most directly affected by the outbreak, Western news coverage and social media seem to not only be ridiculing and making light of the situation in China (through racist tweets, instagram posts, tiktoks), but also creating an unsafe environment for East Asian people everywhere. Disrespectful jokes about Chinese being “dirty” people and “deserving to get the virus because they eat bats” are too prevalent, and show the lack of empathy Western countries and peoples have for crises outside of their own cultures.

During a community discussion and response to the coronavirus hosted by PAC, WAA, CSA, Slater, and ASU, Wellesley students shared how they had been impacted by the coronavirus. Some even reported having experienced various microaggressions from their classmates who would take a step back once hearing that they had returned from traveling in Asia; others shared the emotional toll of worrying about family living in China, and the helplessness and frustration they feel in being separated from their loved ones.



Wellesley's community is directly affected, as there is a student who is unable to return to Wellesley for the semester; flights from her hometown of Wuhan were terminated, and she had also expressed frustration at the situation and the fact she can't return to resume courses at Wellesley. Our thoughts are with all members of the Wellesley community that are affected by the coronavirus; as always, we would like to extend our support as the Asia-Pacific representatives – please do not hesitate to reach out! Pay attention to your own implicit biases; the ways you process information ultimately translates into actions, and so we must all consciously work to make Wellesley a safe and supportive environment.

**Some ways to combat the xenophobic and racist reactions towards the coronavirus are to educate yourself and those around you with facts rather than fear. The current death toll of the coronavirus is 1,873; in the 2019-2020 flu season alone, there has been more than 14,000 deaths and 250,000 hospitalizations in the United States!**

## **"Parasite"**

Even though people in the Asia Pacific region are suffering from coronavirus, there are still happy moments that deserve our celebration. "Parasite", a South Korean dark comedy thriller film, won four Oscar awards: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and Best International Feature Film. The movie tells a story of class conflict and social inequality, and also makes a commentary on American colonialism in Korea. A poor family, the Kims, con their way into becoming the servants of a rich family, the Parks. However, their easy life gets complicated when their deception is threatened with exposure. "Parasite" became the first South Korean film to receive the Academy Award, as well as the first non-English-language film to win Best Picture!

**An article written by  
Haiyi Zhang and Stephanie Fan**



**Country of origin:** *China*



# TAX RETURNS



## A STUDENT'S GUIDE ON HOW TO QUICKLY DO YOUR TAXES

We are happy to announce that starting in 2020, Wellesley College will offer its international students a new, more comprehensive, manageable, and unambiguous free online tax preparation platform – **Sprintax.**

Before proceeding with the ins and outs of Sprintax, it is important to remind you why filling tax returns matters? **Not filling your tax returns, will most likely not have an impact on getting a work visa [JS1] after your OPT expires.** However, what your omission of filling tax returns might have an influence on is application for permanent residency in the US (as known as the Green Card). If you fail to file your tax returns, then this can be used against you by the state during your residency application process.

By providing Sprintax, Wellesley will be joining many neighboring schools such as: *Babson, Northeastern, Olin, and Harvard*, which already offer the platform to their international community members.



After you receive your login information from the Slater International Center at the beginning of Spring Semester you will be able to explore what Sprintax has to offer. In order to complete your tax return, you will be guided through a six steps long process which consists of questions regarding the following: residency, getting to know you, let's talk money, offset your expenses, about your college, state taxes. This process allows the platform to best personalize your tax documents making sure that you are not paying too much in taxes by not being aware of tax deductions you qualify for.

For all the recent alumnae reading this newsletter, if you are still on an OPT, Sprintax is also available for you, all you need to do is reach out to the Slater International Center for login details.

If you would like to learn more about the platform itself either because you are so relieved filling your tax returns will be so much less confusing now or this column was not enough for you to understand how it works, watch out for an email from Leanne as members of Sprintax will be visiting Wellesley during the Spring Semester to give more information about their platform.

# *Spotlight: A conversation with a Slater Alumna*

**IOANA PETRESCU**

When I emailed her back in November, I expected simple satisfaction for my hand gesture of pressing send. There was this post that was circulating which caught my attention: “for my 30th birthday, I want to get rejected 30 times.” As in, putting yourself out there irrespective of the odds. Thus, I was fulfilling this prophecy of getting ignored, rejected, or dismissed for about 20 times. However, the odds ironically turned in my favor and she answered in a couple of days. Next month, she invited me outside of the capital where we talked about life, Wellesley, and maybe a plan over the summer. Fast forward in April, I get an email that we should have lunch on campus next day.

I opened up my phone recorder and we began talking about life.

What I liked about her is that it was clear I was talking to somebody in politics. It didn't matter which or whose politics, I just knew it made me feel a tad important than my fellows and I was fine with that. So, I dived right into it. But first, let me clarify something. We held the interview in both Romanian and English just because some words are missing from Romanian and can be very well found in the other language. Or, I don't know, it beats me, every Romanian I know cannot make it past a few sentences without switching it for a hot second in English.

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**CLASS of 2003**

**MAJOR:** *ECONOMICS AND  
MATHEMATICS*

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** *ROMANIA*

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"Did they belittle you? The Americans. When you came here, did they make you feel, say, less important?" "No." I think she knew this question was coming, I feel like I may have complained about it too much, but she seemed like a safe space of unwinding and familiarity, so I took my chances. "I had to explain where I am coming from, yes. It was a struggle to talk about what culture we have, what language, the fact that we are most certainly not communists and we do not speak Russian. That needed extra explanation. But no belittling." I kept changing my position every five words trying to grasp it all in. "I may not need the recorder," I was thinking.

"Did you have any regrets coming here? In the States?" It has been a long time since she left Wellesley; in that long time, she probably got to experience whatever Wellesley preached left and right. "No, I don't think there was a moment I regretted." Her face contorted in a smile. "I think it was hard at the beginning adjusting. I was telling myself that I needed to survive these four years and then I will come back immediately." That's when it clicked. See, all this time, she has been feeding me the plat principal de Wellesley, the greatness of it and how it changed her. All my struggling-self needed to hear was that she struggled too. That at one point in the past, no matter how great life is right now, she wanted home too. "However," she took a deep breath "it was a very good step. Somehow, it opened my mind to a lot of things that I would have never experienced in Romania ever. People I would have never met in Romania. At the beginning I wanted to return much sooner, but now I want to stay even longer."

“Um, okay, okay. What if you stayed home? What do you think would have happened?” “Rule number one in communication is to never ever answer what-if questions.” She did narrate a what-if story, fellas, but I will leave it out for pure enjoyment of pursuing your own curiosity. Alas, one can only imagine the contrasting reality of what would have happened had she stayed home. Yes, exactly! I wouldn’t be posting this article and ultimately quit my amateur blogger lifestyle. She did us all a favor by not staying.

Only by touching the surface of her image, I was still left with the idea that there is more. I wanted more but there was no time and place to demand it. “Do you still think we have a future back home? What about all of these young people leaving our country behind swearing to never return?” She looked down at her already empty plate. In hindsight, it was a pretty ironic question since we were having this talk in the United States in the best women’s college in the world. Something we would never even dream to find at home. When her eyes met mine, the full-circle feeling shaped. “There is hope home. After all, it is their choice if they wish to never return as we both made our choices to leave. But at the same time, this country can be saved since in Romania work still needs to be done. If there is a critical mass of smart people staying demanding change, how can things stay the same? However, it needs to come from within.” I laid back in my seat and let out a sigh of relief. The core shaking of my body stopped and I drank the last sip of water. “Thank you. It will be beyond useful.”

For the entire interview, go to [juliaboca.com](http://juliaboca.com)

 Romania-Insider.com

## Former Romanian finance minister returns to US as visiting

...

Ioana Petrescu, an economist who served as the finance minister between March and December 2014 in the cabinet of Victor Ponta, will be a ...

Jul 4, 2019







**FIRST YEAR  
AS AN  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT  
AT WELLESLEY  
COLLEGE**

*A new place filled with new people and new ideas!*

An exciting start to four amazing years ahead! For many, the transition to college is exhilarating. But for others, this change seems terrifying; the butterflies of fear and anxiety constantly flutter around in the pits of our stomachs. For some, “home” is a 30-minute drive away, for others, perhaps a 3-hour flight away, and for many international students, going “home” may involve crossing multiple seas, oceans, and timezones. It can often feel like everything familiar seems a lifetime away, especially during the beginning of the transition process. College, as seen in movies, seems like a whirlwind of fun, a constant sleepover with the people who immediately become your best friends. The challenges manifested in small, everyday activities are often overlooked, and one can’t help but feel just a bit out of place.

On a particularly warm and sunny afternoon, I joyously told my friend “Oh my god, it’s like 20 degrees today. We NEED to have a picnic (just to take photos of the Instagram-worthy setup, of course)”. I was shocked by her confused and terrified response. She exclaimed that I was “crazy” and that I would “literally freeze to death.” Similarly, I often find myself equally (if not more) confused when I’m told that “65 degrees” is a nice day out. On another occasion, I can recall a sleepless night in which I spent what felt like an eternity trying to find out why my code for a Computer Science problem set wasn’t working properly. Was there a fundamental gap in my knowledge? Was I just incapable of life? No, I simply wrote “colour” instead of “color”. On top of that, I am just simply confused by money. How much is this \$6 bubble tea really worth? Well, \$6 USD is almost \$9 Singapore Dollars, which is the value of almost four bubble teas. This constant conversion from the unfamiliar to the familiar can be tedious and tiring. With the pressure of trying to balance academics and social life, adjusting to life in a foreign place can feel like a burden and it is easy to feel lost and helpless as the small incidences begin to accumulate.

While international students may sometimes feel alienated from their new surroundings, domestic students feel just as confused by new mannerisms. So, open-mindedness is crucial for everyone. While we are all often boxed as either an 'international' or 'domestic' student, we are here to learn from each other as individuals, share stories, and continue to grow with the knowledge we gain from one another. At the end of the day, the unique and varied experiences of every single person making them a distinctive asset to our community.

**An article written by  
Lamees Rahman**





## HELLO WELLESLEY!

As the snow starts to melt and the temperatures start to rise, Slater has lots of fun events in store for everyone this spring. Here are a few to look forward to...

- Spring Festival, a traditional Slater celebration to welcome the warm spring weather;
- Alumnae Brunch, another traditional event to connect with international Wellesley alumnae in a variety of fields;
- Slater Formal, a new gathering for you to showcase your culture and have a good time with friends;
- and of course, more events by our Regional Representatives, which range from cooking tasty food to holiday celebrations to lectures!



We also support the world-recognized cultural and heritage months celebrated this semester, including Black History Month in February, Latinx Heritage month in April (as celebrated by Wellesley), and Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May. Did we miss any? Let us know!

If you are interested in getting more involved with Slater events and getting to know our Executive Board members, we invite you to come to our weekly E-Board meetings! This semester, meetings will be held **Thursdays, 7pm - 8pm** at Slater House, and they are always open to everyone, international-identifying or otherwise. We would love to hear your ideas; your Slater E-Board is here for you!

Besides getting directly involved with us via our open E-Board meetings, remember you can always use the house! Here are a few ways you can enjoy the space: watch a movie, grab some snacks, study in the dining room or cook up a storm in the two kitchens. Every international student automatically has 24/7 swipe access to Slater House, and the house doesn't require swipe access all day on weekdays. If you want swipe access or aren't sure if you have it, contact Slater Center! Remember that this is always your home away from home.

Lastly, to stay up-to-date with our events, please join the Slater WEngage! You can find events more easily on the site and also receive emails from us.

***Much SlaterLove,  
Alice & Stephanie  
Slater Executive Board President &  
VP***

# Common misconceptions

It is not a compliment when you are surprised how well I speak English.

Do not make assumptions about someone based on their outside appearance.

It is bothering when people say "You can't understand, it's an American thing" or "Why on Earth would you study here?"

The misconception that we are the loudest in any group and we are never on time.

Please be considerate of those who cannot necessarily go home and see their families when you talk about going home at every break.

It's been weird feeling like I'm not Chinese enough to connect with mainland Chinese students and not feeling quite domestic enough to really feel the "same" as others.

## ANONYMOUS COLUMN



# credits, thank yous, and the future

Veeksha and I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the production of Slater's first newsletter. Special and heartfelt thank you to Tana, Leanne, and the Slater E-board for helping us materialize our dream. We hope our future holds even more newsletters of the kind at the beginning of every new semester. If you would like to be part of the editing process or writing team for the next issue, please do not hesitate to contact us at [jboca](#) or [vmadhu](#).

## Contact

Instagram: [@slater\\_center](#)

Facebook: [@Slater International Center](#)

Email: [slatercenter@wellesley.edu](mailto:slatercenter@wellesley.edu)

**Feel you were not represented enough?  
Please reach to your Slater rep!**

# THANK YOU!

**“It’s a big world out there, it  
would be a shame not to  
experience it” – Jo Andrews**



***Slater Culture Show  
Fall 2019***