

**CALLING  
IN**

**Slater**

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
ORGANIZATION  
AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE

To encourage greater understanding among all cultures...



...Through personal association and cooperative endeavors.

**Fall 2020 ISSUE**



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*Dear international community,*

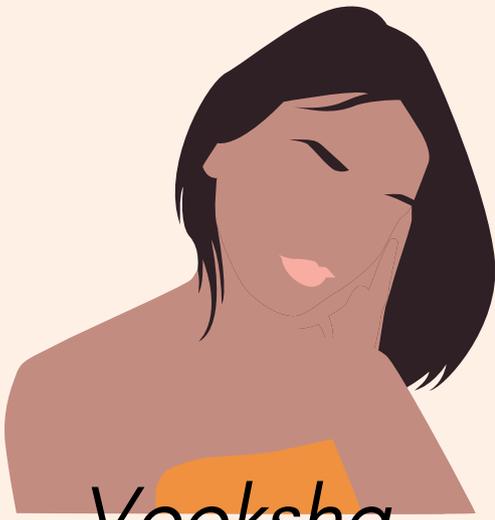
As we move through this world together, we want to let you know that the Slater Center stands with our international community. We understand how trying 2020 has been for our students, their families, loved ones, friends, and partners. In such trying times, there are always moments of hope and opportunity.

These times will, I am certain, make us stronger as individuals and as a community. We have a lot of work to do in re-imagining and re-building our world, and the work we do both inside and outside of Wellesley. I have no doubt that any challenge placed upon us, we can and we will handle together.

I thank each and every member of our community that took the time to create the second iteration of this newsletter. It is a true testament that even during the greatest of challenges, voices can still be heard.

All the very best,

*Tana Ruegamer  
Slater Director*



*Veeksha*



*Julia*



*Dear Peers,*

First and foremost, we hope that wherever you are, you are surrounded by love, happiness, and safety. We acknowledge the difficulty of these times and we deeply empathize with our incredible community. The past few months have not been easy, especially as an international student. We have collated this newsletter in hopes of bringing us closer more than ever. We hope these pages will bring Wellesley to you, wherever you are on the globe and we are counting down the days, when we are all back together drinking tea in Slater's living room.

A NOTE FROM

*our editors*



# From Our Africa Co-Representatives

Any international African student who comes to Wellesley can attest that adapting to the Wellesley environment is one of the biggest moments of our transition. The weather, the lake, the people, and new foods can be as breathtaking, as they can be alienating. No matter how beautiful the scenery, it can take time to immediately feel like you belong. This year we are faced with an even more complicated challenge; COVID-19 has dispersed us all across the world, and everyone was forced to create Wellesley wherever they were. We are now realizing how challenging it is to feel like a part of Wellesley, when we are not all here together physically.

All this to say: First-year African students who are on and off-campus, we are happy that you are part of this community, and we welcome you! While we all feel the pressures of

college at this particular moment, we encourage you to savor the beginning of your Wellesley journey as much as you can. Wellesley is lucky to have you, and we cannot wait to see you around.

In addition to the global pandemic, some events in the last few months have taken a toll on some African countries. Nigeria is facing an inter-generational revolution that was sparked by anti-police brutality protests, also known as #ENDSARS. The Democratic Republic Congo is also fraught with political instability, armed clashes, and human rights violations at the moment. In Namibia, there have been youth-led protests demanding immediate political action on sexual gender-based violence, given the rising numbers of sexual violence and femicides.

Although it can be heart-wrenching to watch what is happening on the continent through the screens, it is also important to notice how young people have taken it upon themselves to make a

difference. This should be of great encouragement to all of us -- to see to it that no life ever be taken for granted and to always work in the best interest of our communities and continent. Or as the Zulu saying goes: *umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu*: A person is a person, because of the people.



Best of luck with everything!

-Annelle & Bilqis



# THE JOURNEY

**LISELI A. FITZPATRICK**

**PROFESSOR AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE**

**JB: When did you come to the U.S. and why?**

**LF:** Part of my experience growing up involved frequent family vacation travel to the U.S. My parents ensured that my elder siblings and I had an enriching life rather than a luxurious one. However, in 2006, I came to the U.S. when I was awarded a partial scholarship from Ohio State University, where I attained my B.A. in Psychology (pre-law), with a double minor degree in African American and African Studies (AAAS) and Visual Communications. On a natural continuum, I remained at OSU and earned my M.A. and, subsequently, in 2018, became the first Ph.D. in AAAS. My presence in the U.S. was and still is driven by my passion for truth, empowerment, and equity; and, a dedicated quest to effect emancipatory change in the co-creation of a more compassionate, harmonious, and inclusive world. Education was the most viable and sacrificial path for me. In order to do what I am doing, I need(ed) to be inside the institution — true change begins within. Through teaching, I am driven to create spaces of belonging, being and becoming by presenting a(n) expansive and non-hegemonic worldview. Education is meant to enlighten, encourage and empower not exploit.

**JB: Why did you choose the U.S. over any other country?**

**LF:** The U.S. provided the perfect environment and conditions for emancipatory change.

*"My spirituality, Trinidadian culture, accent, home environment, and penchant for love and compassion all constitute and contribute to who I am. I embody all of these and remain resolute."*

**JB: How did you adapt as an international at first?**

LF: On a two-way street, I'd rather like to think that my openness and rooted love for my home country Trinidad and Tobago have drawn others to learn more of my cultural background and heritage. There is always some mystique in the cosmos that I live. Significantly, my unshakable sense of self and outlook on life have allowed me to navigate the world with relative ease.

*"I see myself as  
Universal rather than  
international.. "*



LF: The international community is definitely alive at Wellesley. I trust that it will, however, continue to grow in vibrancy and presence. Since my time here, I have attended the "*Slater Carnival: A Celebration of Cultures*" Annual Show and other events led by our international student bodies that showcase and highlight unique cultures from around the world. Currently, I serve as faculty advisor for the MasterCard scholars along with Professor Ama Baafra Abeberese. In the spring, I was invited to co-host the Global Tea Series another wonderful initiative.... The needs of our international students and faculty are ever-evolving. Personally, I look forward to deepening and strengthening my involvement in Wellesley's international community.

**JB: What has the U.S. taught you about being an international professor?**

LF: It has been affirming. Every time I enter the classroom, or my office, my reason for being here becomes more apparent and fulfilling. I value the honest engagement and stimulating exchange between my students and myself. Given the uniqueness and richness of our backgrounds, we offer fresh and diverse perspectives to each other. For me, this environment fosters a sense of belonging, community, and inclusivity.

**JB: Do you think you understand your international students better than a domestic professor in the teaching context?**

**LF:** I cannot wholeheartedly say that I am able to better understand international students compared to my domestic peers. I think we all have the capacity to understand our international students, more so, where my domestic peers might also have a longstanding association with international students or, themselves, experienced international study residency in a foreign country. However, what I can surely say is that I meet my students where they are, but this might be more attributable to my universal outlook on life. Certainly, my experience as a non-U.S. national would have afforded me an intimate and empathetic understanding of some of the specific experiences, needs, and issues, which our international students encounter.

### *Country of Origin:* Trinidad and Tobago

*Professor Fitzpatrick teaches inside the Department of Africana Studies at Wellesley College since the Fall of 2018. Her lifework and research are both centered around African Sacred Cosmologies and Ontologies. Her courses include New World Afro-Atlantic Religions, The Black Church, African Civilizations to 1700s, and Caribbean Cultural Expressions and the Diaspora.*





The history of the Slater International Center dates back over a century ago, beginning in 1902, when the house was first built. In 1921, the house was subsequently enlarged, and four decades later, in 1968, Priscilla Allen Slater (Class of 1916) and her husband decided to establish a fund to bring European students to study at Wellesley College.

The following year, the Slater Fellowship Program was established. This program enabled students in their junior year to study abroad, while also providing international students the opportunity for resident fellowships. In 1970, however, Priscilla Allen Slater passed away, causing uncertainty about the use of the Slater Center's funds.

Two years later, it was decided that the Slater International Center would officially open. Its mission was "to encourage greater understanding among all cultures through personal association and cooperative endeavor." In the same year, an Ad Hoc Advisory was formed for Slater and an International Student Advisor was appointed: Joan Nathanson, a Wellesley alumna.

At this time, 5% of Wellesley College's overall student body consisted of international students. Students came from the West Indies, Argentina, Cameroon, Greece, India, and Malaysia. The next year, in 1973, the Slater International Student Organization was founded.

# wellesley college

## office of information services

1875-1975  
centennial

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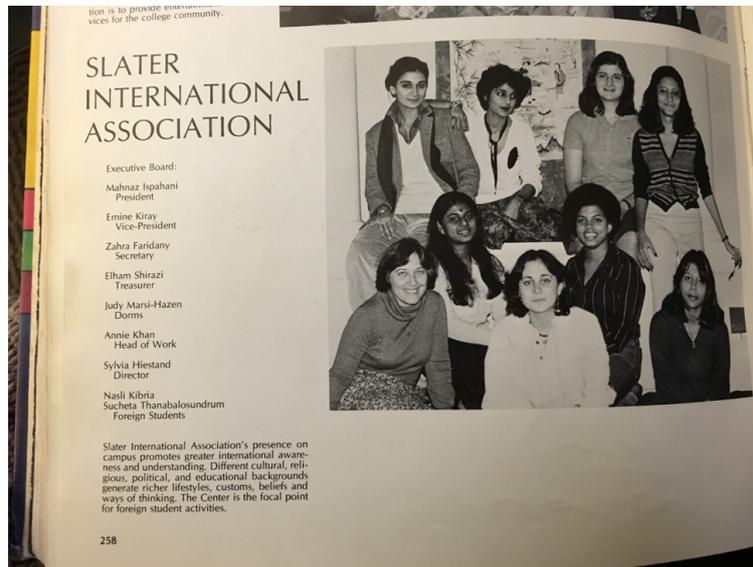
For immediate release  
October 25, 1972

Wellesley College will dedicate the new Slater International Center on the campus in Wellesley, Mass. in ceremonies on Sunday, October 29 at 5:30 p.m. Barbara W. Newell, president of Wellesley, will unveil a plaque for the Center and express the thanks of the College to the donor, Ellis D. Slater. The Center supplements the Slater Fellowship Program which provides funds for Wellesley students to study abroad and also brings foreign students to the College for a year. The program was established at the College in 1969 by Mr. Slater and his late wife, Priscilla Allen

Then, in 1974, Slater International Center began bringing foreign scholars to Wellesley College. These scholars served as Visiting Professors, teaching students a variety of classes in different academic departments.

One decade later, Allen Slater, the son of Priscilla Allen Slater, spoke at the 25th anniversary of Slater International Center. The celebration marked a milestone for the almost-century old home. Three years later, in 2000, Wellesley College became a founding partner of the Davis United World Scholars Program.

*"Five years later,  
international students  
at Wellesley were  
notably featured in  
The New York Times."*



In 2008, with the international student population making up 13% of Wellesley College's student body, Director Sylvia Heistand introduced the Peer Advising Leaders Program (PALs). This initiative trained international peer advisors who could then offer support to other international students

Two years later, in 2010, Karen Zuffante Pabon became the Director of Slater International Center and the International Student & Scholar Advisor. In 2013, Wellesley College announced the launch of the MasterCard Foundation Scholar Program.

During the same year, Wellesley College celebrated its first International Education Week. From October 22-29, 2013, international students coordinated events on campus. Most recently, in 2015, Wellesley College was comprised of a 13.22% international student population on campus, consisting of 288 students from 55 countries.



**Slater International** Center exists as both a forum and a catalyst for educating our community about foreign cultures and countries, and the issues and events connected to them. Each year, the Center sponsors and organizes a variety of events and lectures. Annually, Slater organizes the Third World Seminar held in the fall semester, and International Week in the spring, which includes the popular International Fair, which features exhibits of food, dance, crafts, games and clothes from around the world



# A Cultural Exhibit

Stephanie PRES

“

Welcome to (or back) to Wellesley, lovely sibs! I am so excited to share the #slaterlove with you all by serving as the President of the Slater International Student Organization this year! The Slater Org has been an integral part of my Wellesley experience and was the first space on campus that truly felt like home. I hope that this year, regardless of where you are in the world, you can find a family and a home in Slater. I'm looking forward to embracing the Slater family in new and creative ways this year! I'd also like to say that I am so grateful to Julia and Veeksha for creating this newsletter as a way to celebrate the international community at Wellesley, and for giving Ella, my incredible Vice President, and I the opportunity to connect with you all.

*-Stephanie De Avila*

”



ELLA

Something else that also plays a huge role in celebrating and shedding light on our International community is the **Slater Culture Show**! Stephanie, you have a very close relationship with our Culture Show don't you?

With performances from Aiko, Wushu, Yanvalou, WCD, WADO, Wellesley On Tap, the IMIX dance crew from Northeastern, the Wellesley Widows, Fiddleheads, Russian Club, Hu'I O Hawai'i, Harvard Bhangra, Cielito Lindo, FreeStyle, WAWA, student performances showcasing Peking Opera, Bulgarian love songs, Latin American poetry, and Belly Dancing, it goes without saying that all are welcome to perform at the Slater Culture Show!

Culture Show has always provided and will continue to provide a space for everyone to come together in celebration of the incredible community of international students that come to study at Wellesley, and we won't let anything stop us from continuing this tradition.

*-Ella Apostoiaie*



Stephanie  
PRES

I served as Co-Cultural Chair on Slater E-Board, my second year at Wellesley, which meant that my Co-Chair and I were responsible for organizing the Slater Culture Show in the Fall semester with the help of the rest of Slater E-Board. Slater Culture Show is traditionally the first and biggest culture show of the academic year and aims to celebrate the many cultures and countries that Wellesley students consider home through a variety of performances. In short, Slater Culture Show is an opportunity to learn about and honor the kaleidoscope of cultures at Wellesley.

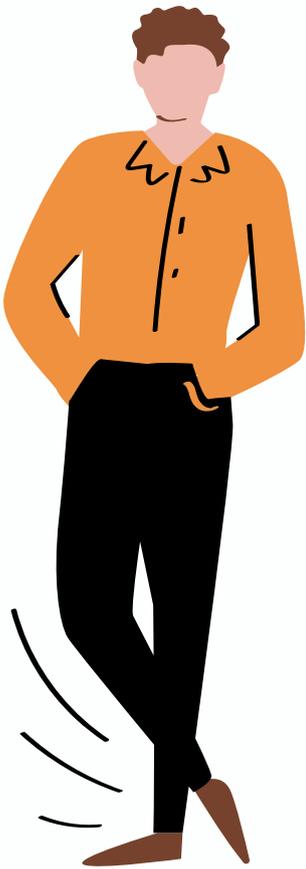
These are challenging times, but recognizing the hardships we as international students have been through and, more importantly, celebrating our strong and vibrant international community is important work we are committed to continuing. The needs and concerns of the international community will always be a priority for Slater. We are here for you and we are committed to making you feel seen and heard. That being said, we are striving to ensure that all students who want to be part of the Slater family feel welcomed, supported, and of course, celebrated!

-Stephanie De Avila

Don't forget to social distance



**THE COVID-19  
TALE: AN  
INTERNATIONAL  
PERSPECTIVE  
FROM  
WELLESLEY**



I should have been preparing for midterms, instead I was scrolling Twitter for updates on the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation around the world. Countries were either closing borders or issuing travel restrictions. Scared, anxious and confused, mindfulness helped me hold my nerve. Thankfully, Wellesley's decision to close came in the nick of time. I had less than 24 hours to reach Dubai, my hometown, before the UAE government closed all airports. My parents scrambled to find tickets on the earliest flight home. Packing my dorm into two suitcases was hard, but I have kind friends who offered to take my things back to their homes. Saying goodbye to friends was even harder.

On the 15-hour flight home, all I could think about was the mid-semester exams and how I would complete the semester. Would I see the fall colors at Wellesley? Would I be able to witness Waban metamorphose into a white blanket? Would the closedown of countries ameliorate the pandemic? Innumerable and unanswerable questions thronged in my mind.

The great sense of relief and joy at the Arrivals terminal of Dubai airport did not translate into hugs. Instead, my parents and I smiled through our eyes as we wore masks and kept distance. Once home, I quarantined in my room for a fortnight. As Dubai went into total lockdown, an eerie silence replaced the characteristic bustle of the trading hub. Movement was completely restricted, with only one outing per week allowed for stocking up on essentials. Finding normalcy in an abnormal situation was impossible.

When remote classes resumed, however, I was overjoyed to be connected with my professors and peers again. Reconnecting with Wellesley, even if only virtually, was as close to “normal” as it could get. My classes would begin late night local time and would stretch into the wee hours of the morning. The video calls required far more focus than face-to-face interactions, and were sometimes exhausting. Paying more attention to process non-verbal cues like facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice consumed far more energy. Living a few blocks away from a hospital, blaring sirens from ambulances transporting Covid-19 patients to the hospital was a grim reminder that normality was a distant fallacy. My professors stretched to make every class impactful by fostering connections between students. Remote teaching was new for them, yet they massively raised the bar in how they patiently and kindly persevered to make learning effective. Covid-19 has made me value my liberal arts education - in divisive and distressing times, I see many of my classroom discussions unfold in real time.

Months into the lockdown, we are still gripped by fear and uncertainty. My maternal grandfather passed away in India and we could not travel to bid him goodbye. Covid-19 left us insanely helpless during a hopeless situation - a downward spiral with no bottom. Uncertainty, grief and isolation make a toxic concoction. I knew I had to fight back to find an emotional balance. I applied to volunteer at a 3-D printing company that is making face shields for frontline Covid-19 fighters. Overcoming this debilitating circumstance was only possible when we empower ourselves, and I chose community engagement as my sabre. While at work, I found genuine hope in collaborative effort. In our shared

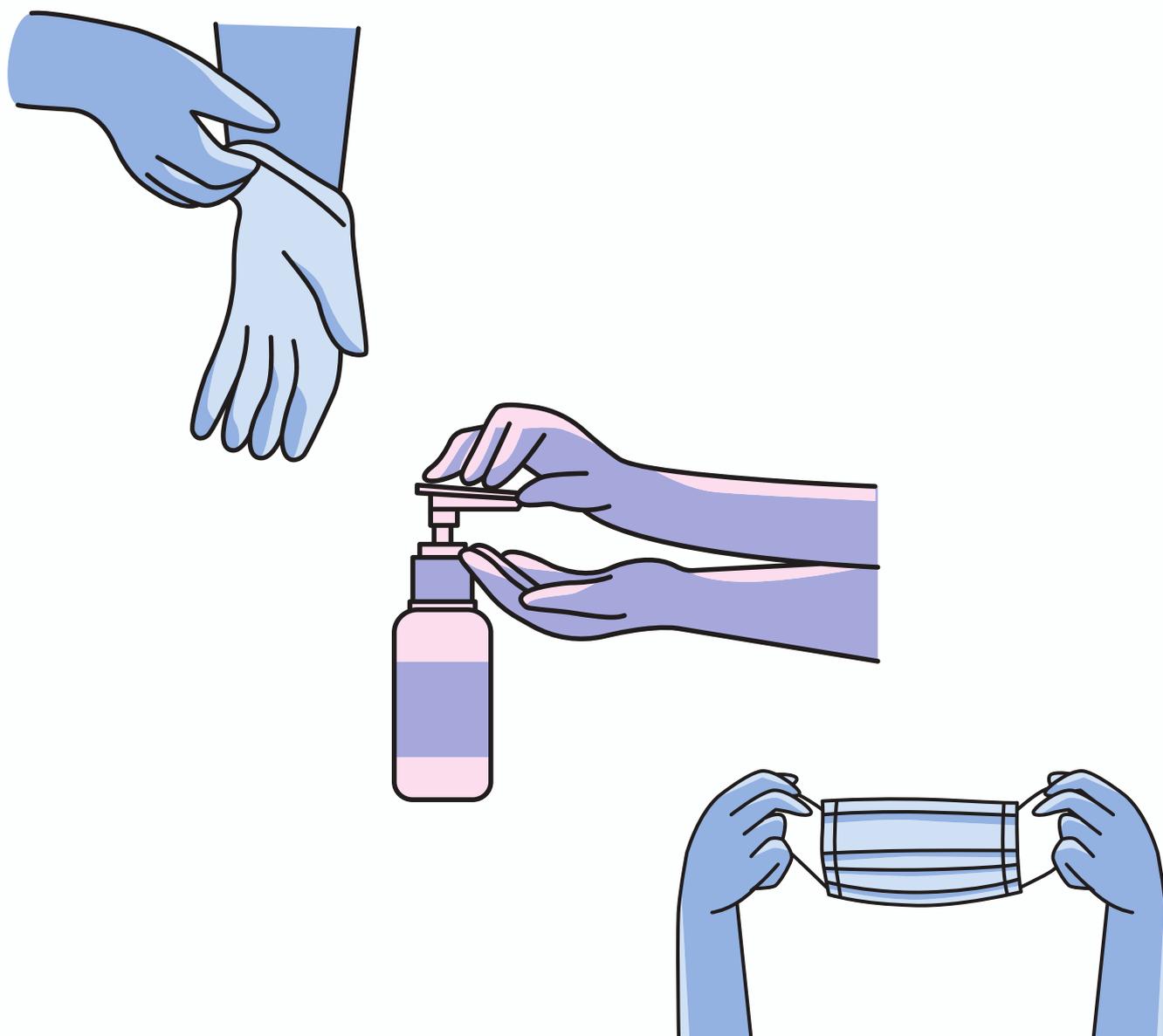


vulnerability, I discovered a nurturing of compassion. Disconnecting from news, my family spent more time reminiscing about our happy times.

Even as the Department of Homeland Security changes rules everyday, I remain anxious about being an international student. Watching colleges combinedly fight back the illogical rulings and proactive communication from Wellesley's Slater reinforced my belief that Wellesley has my back.

Covid-19 has altered my being - I've found a new way of seeing and a new definition of self. As uncertainty abounds, I will carry on with courage and stay the course.

*-Veeksha Madhu*





*My two cents:*  
Life As The Only  
Romanian Student  
At Wellesley



“Ah, I just bought a *Kürtőskalács* from the store. I think it was my sweet tooth that did it, actually,” Andrea told me, a Wellesley Romanian graduate, Class of 2011, over the phone a couple of days ago. *Kürtőskalács* represents a delicacy in Transylvania, as it is specifically Hungarian. She informed me that she mulled over the decision to come back to Romania, in Targu Mures, after she packed her bags back in the States. It was through the help of the Hive, the same platform that helped me track her down. Funnily enough, I was searching for a completely different Romanian 2011 graduate, however she was the only one I stumbled upon.

“Yes, I know her. There were a couple more of us. I remember we made a sincere effort to meet at least once a week at Slater to cook dinner and stay in touch.” I gulped. A group of Romanians on campus actually meeting up and staying connected? That seemed a fantasy to my 2020 reality. If you look at the statistics, I am the only one roaming this campus alone.

It was a deeply appalling and saddening aspect of my life at Wellesley in the beginning. Having no community of my own, it seemed as though the subtleties told me I didn’t belong here. That I was merely a diversity factor, ascending to the statistical aesthetic. I think I made sure that most of the people I interacted with knew this strange fact about me: I hated that I was the only one. This sense of performative diversity angered me to my core and it seemed like people did listen, but there wasn’t much anyone could actually do to make me feel like “home.” And when I knew of at least four Romanian students applying to Wellesley in my first year, however with no luck of acceptance, it boiled my blood even more. Weren’t we good enough anymore for Wellesley or were we too poor to attend in such high numbers, like the rest of the international groups on campus that had 100+ members of their own?

Our culture is vastly different and ambiguous for individuals that didn't take the time to understand South-Eastern European reconstruction after the fall of communism. Ours happened (presumably) in the winter of 1989, but I am here to tell you that the fascist mindset still breeds deeply within our borders. Although we did enter the European Union in 2007, our records and statistics show no improvement and we are rapidly approaching the status as the worst country in the EU. I was one of the lucky ones to get out. However, that does not mean in any way that I wasn't lucky to be born where I was. It took me one year in the States to realize that.

I somewhat was familiar with the fact that people might react with ignorance upon hearing my ethnicity, but nobody prepared me to answer the same ignorant questions all over again. Do we speak Russian? Is Romanian even a thing? The common misconception that all Romanian are Romani and the virtual lack of knowledge about the amazing history of their own. Where is Romania? How am I so smart for being a girl from there? Wait, is it near Venezuela? In hindsight, I was righteously angered about these, but now, almost two years have passed and I have grown to interpret these clashes differently.

Life as the only Romanian on campus could take a massive toll on yourself in silo. We, as a community, and moreover, as a Moldovian girl with a great taste of red wine from our grandparents' old vines, need to stay together. There is an unnamed factor in our prosperity, when we get together around a wooden table, pouring plum brandy in every empty glass, unable to stop ourselves from eating warm *sarmale* with sour cream on top. The polenta sits nicely in the center for everyone to reach, while traditional music blasts in the background. For every Romanian dinner I attended and the liveliness of it, is common practice I have found in every household. I lacked that at Wellesley during my first year.

For some reason, though it might be harder for general acknowledgment, I do not want to mention that yes, indeed, I did find my community. If I go ahead and stand by this, there is a certain clarification I have to make: I found my community through sacrifices of my own. I embraced the multitude of other cultures surrounding me, whilst trying to hold onto mine by force. I never wish to forget my roots, especially when I need to undergo assimilation to fit in a system, that simply was never designed for our kind. Slater and its astonishing community made sure that I built my home away from home, with only the materials that they had and for that I am forever grateful. The only connections I have with home might come from alumna that I hear over phone calls, or pesky emails in which I beg for a connection. No matter how small or insignificant. As Ioana Petrescu (Class of 2003, Romania's ex Finance Minister) said when we were having lunch in Lulu, *"I wanted to go back home badly as well. I didn't. Eventually, it turned out to be the best decision I have ever made."*

*-Julia Boca*

### Slater Culture Show 2019



*I am not  
going  
anywhere,  
Wellesley.*

# GLOBAL TEAS



by *Helena Zeng*

*Dear Wellesley College Community,*

I am Helena Zeng, one of your old *Global Tea Coordinators* at the Slater International Center. Between Fall 2018 and Fall 2019, this position has brought me the most precious memories of engaging with our incredible, loving community, and motivated my growth together with everyone involved, through a coherent process of planning, organizing and coordinating campus-wise discussions on global affairs.





Amongst the 13 Global Teas during my office, we covered a wide range of global and multicultural affairs including the trade war, populism, anti-globalization, “the trans-human code”, U.S. midterm elections, social justice and security, environmental tax, global science fiction and beyond. We’ve worked with a wide spectrum of speakers on and off-campus, and engaged a range of student participants into our discussions. Wellesley organizations and members including *the Economic Student Association, CPLA, EnAct, WAMI, the college Buddhist Chaplaincy, Campus police, faculties at the Comparative Literature, Economics and East Asian Studies Departments*, they were all active leaders of Global Tea workshops. Our international speakers involved a former National Geographic editor, CEO of boutique investment banks, the president of Harvard College China Forum, an MBA graduate from Harvard Business School, a humanitarian documentary filmmaker and beyond.

The first important thing that Global Tea has brought me is the feeling of deep engagement both on campus and with the world: A commitment to finding out the global issues on students’ minds, bringing relevant resources on campus and providing an open platform for discussions that breaks the silence and doubts.



*"GT brought together Wellesley students, who care deeply about social justice issues and cannot stop their enthusiasm for truth, peace, and the power of change for the better."*

Looking back, I remember the my first Global Tea in October 2018, **"Insiders' Narrative in Global Banks"** in which I invited Harvard and Wellesley students in bulge bracket banks to share their experience. This discussion attracted many students interested in finance, breaking the record of the number of attendees for Global Teas. It responded to the growing trend among college students in our era. A year later, I hosted another Global Tea with an HBS MBA graduate *"The Impact of Trade War on Cross-Border Transaction: A Discussion on Anti-Globalization, Populism and Science Advances."*

It was immediately shared and echoed by over 100 students, who sent me emails and requested seats on the first day it was announced. It ended up attracting even students from Harvard College. The reason for the popularity of this event was its timeliness, given the socio-economic climates during the US-China trade war, which had a large impact on international employment and the career outlooks for students at Wellesley College. These two global teas leaned more formal and professional, then the ones we've had in the past, but they carried out "the elephant in the room" and won popularity with their pragmatic concerns.

*"It has been the most fruitful adventure for me to be your Global Tea Coordinator."*

# SPOTLIGHT

## *In Conversation With A Slater Alumna*



### **Kavindya Thennakoon**

Wellesley College '19,  
Stanford School of Education '20

*Q: How do you remember Wellesley from an international student perspective?*

**K:** “Oh! Wow”... Kavi gave a small sigh. “Obviously, I had a Wellesley mentor before, someone I worked for when I was in Sri Lanka so, I sort of had the idea of where Wellesley was, you know, and I was prepped a little bit. The first experience I had was with Slater, and thankfully, I also had a host family I was linked to. She came to pick me up from the airport, I was coming into this new country with just two bags. “It was crazy,” she reminisced. “The most shocking part to me was how almost every international student had come with at least one parent and I was there all alone.” Delving deeper into her experiences through the term, she chuckled as she shared her experience at her first-ever remix. “Remix was such a shock - what, why are people half-naked, what is going one!?” Summing up her first semester she said, “It was a shock, but a good kind of shock.”

*Q: Overall, do you have good memories from your first year?*

**K:** “Yea I think I have a good memory, I definitely felt very lonely at the beginning, but afterward, I sort of found started making friends with different friend groups. It took me a while to find “my people” at Wellesley, but I did.”

*Q: What helped you overcome missing home, your culture, your mother, your country?*

**K:** “I was able to go home often because I was on a full-ride, and I worked on campus, so I was able to spend that money on plane tickets. I brought with me photographs and tea, and that kind of stuff from home so my space was very similar to back home. My mum lives on the outskirts of the city, where the connection still isn’t great, and my first year she was learning how to use a smartphone, and figuring out how WhatsApp works. So my first year was a little hard because I would sometimes talk to her once in two weeks. But I think working at Slater, and being in Shafer created a sense of community for me. So yeah, I did a lot of things to miss home less, but I was still homesick.”

*Q: Were there other students from Sri Lanka at Wellesley?*

**K:** “No! There was one Sri Lankan-American student, and it was nice to connect with her, but there were no international students who were from Sri Lanka.”



*Q: Could you go back a little and tell me how you found out about Wellesley?*

**K:** “Haha, that’s a funny story. I’m currently staying in the house of the alum, who introduced me to Wellesley out here in California. I was born and raised in Sri Lanka, and after high school, I was doing work around election monitoring and gender-based violence, basically trying to figure out stuff. Because of my work, I was given the opportunity to address the Sri Lankan parliament, and I didn’t think much of it and delivered my speech. But, in the audience, was the deputy-head of UNICEF, who was a Wellesley alum. She was accompanied by the U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka, who was also a Wellesley alum. I hadn’t even heard of Wellesley at that point, and I wasn’t really thinking about applying to colleges. One of the alums was setting up a Youth Advisory Panel at the U.N. and she invited to apply. I did, and I was picked up and worked with her for a year or so. And it was during that time she started mentoring me, advising me on colleges, next steps to take, and that’s when I heard of Wellesley. When I first looked at Wellesley I thought “Hell no, this is so expensive and I won’t get in.” But I later found out that the alum was emailing the Admission’s Office every week to ensure Wellesley worked out for me.” Kavi also highlighted how some international students don’t have the same access to resources everyone else does, “Oddly enough I’d done my SATs for something else, but I had no idea how to write an essay or market myself to a college.”

*“So it was meant to be!”*

*K: “Oh god, I always believe in trusting the process. I feel like, certain things happen, you’re in a certain place at a certain time, on a particular day for a reason.”*

*Q: Did classes seem intimidating at first? Maybe because of the language barrier? How did you navigate that?*

**K:** “I didn’t know how to cite, or include a bibliography in my paper. I came from a British education system, where I could study and answer an exam. I had never written a research paper or even a paper in my life. I thought I could just read and write about it. Essentially, I didn’t know how things were done. I had good ideas, I was very curious, I was good at synthesizing information, but I didn’t even know how much I didn’t know. I remember submitting a paper, and the professor asked me if I’d forgotten to include the references, and I gave him a confused look.”

*Q: Let’s talk about some of your not-so-pleasant memories as an international student.*

**K:** “I think in the beginning some professors didn’t get me, and they weren’t in the frame of mind to understand where I was coming from. But when I finally figured out anthropology was what I wanted to do, I realized I fit in perfectly at the Anthro department. However, when I took other classes, I felt like I didn’t know where to fit my ideas in the American or Western framework. And then I realized I shouldn’t, and that I should make my own. But, that was a difficult process.”

*Q: What’s your greatest memory from Slater?*

**K:** “Senior week, Slater threw a party and it was a great way to end the four years. I got to meet everybody, and I remembered the exact place I sat down in Slater, as a first-year to get my papers processed. I was sitting there so awkwardly, looking around, I hadn’t had any friends. And then to be sitting there for years later, thinking wow, things have changed so much in the years. That was a beautiful moment of coming back a whole circle for me.”

*Q: What advice do you have for future international students, not necessarily at Wellesley?*

*“As an international student, you come in with a different set of experiences, and your American peers aren’t able to place you on their success metric.”*

**K:** “Don’t be afraid to speak your mind, and to question the status quo. But I also think you need to be a little strategic in the beginning to speak their language. Because sometimes, when you’re saying something, you feel like you’re talking to a wall. But when you start using their references and frameworks, you get them to understand you are speaking sense. It is a very careful dance between the two, but at the end of the day, it’s about realizing that you have to offer a valuable perspective. It’s important to point out to your peers that they come from a very American or euro-centric background, and you are coming from a different one, and maybe your curriculum or reading list doesn’t accommodate that, but we need to have this conversation.”

*Q: What’s the best advice you got at Wellesley?*

**K:** “Persistence. To have a goal, and just be bold, and so relentless in pursuing it. And I think at Wellesley we all embody that. The second piece of advice I got from my mentor was to pass things on, opportunities, mentorship, because we are all raised on the shoulders of other people. Especially students of color or international students, we need help breaking into these systems.”



# 6th of July: An Attack On International Students



*The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that foreign students attending schools, operating entirely online will not be permitted to remain in the United States*

It was senior year of high school. The chatter around our campus and at my home was college selection, and one often repeated the line “It’s Trump’s America, don’t go to the U.S.” I distinctly remember setting my heart on Wellesley, and determined that not even a xenophobic administration could dissuade me from being there. However, nothing could have prepared me for ICE’s ruling on international students earlier this year.

Abruptly being told to pack my dorm into two suitcases and leave campus was heartbreaking enough. The anxiety, panic, and emotional distress caused by the pandemic can hardly be explained. These were unprecedented and rapidly evolving times, and everyone was doing their best to survive. Then ICE’s July ruling disallowing students, who take their entire course load online completely shattered every belief that I held about higher education in America. Like a vortex, my mind was rapidly churning out thoughts and emotions.

On July 6th, 2020 The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency said that to maintain lawful status, international students currently in the United States and enrolled in online programs, to either depart the country or transfer to an educational institution operating with in-person instruction. ICE further confirmed that impacted students, who do not take one of these steps “may face immigration consequences including, but not limited to the initiation of removal proceedings. International students, who were already in the United States and whose universities were not planning in-person classes for the fall semester due to the coronavirus crisis, were required to leave the country as soon as possible.



As many U.S. universities and colleges were planning to provide primarily online instruction for the fall semester to limit the spread of COVID-19, a large number of international students were likely not be able to transfer to a school that offers in-person instruction before the August 4th deadline. According to the ICE announcement, students who were overseas and who had made plans to study in the United States for the fall semester, would not be granted an entry visa and would not be allowed to enter the U.S. to take online course-work.

The policies were an attempt by the current Administration to ensure schools and universities opened in person. They tried to push their political agenda, but at the financial, emotional, and academic cost of international students. As an international student myself, I often feel targeted and discriminated against in the United States. We need to prove that we are worthy of pursuing an education in this country, and constantly need to remind others that we are not pawns in this larger game of chess.

The stress that the proposed rules caused me and my family was immeasurable. We discussed the pros and cons of leaving my safe haven of a home country for another, more socially distraught, pandemic-stricken country that may not be as welcoming given the new circumstances. What if I contracted COVID-19 and the medical bill was too expensive? What if Wellesley shut down half way through the semester and I had to come back again? But the most important question, still remained - what if I lost my visa and status as an international student in the United States?



Through all the anxiety, came a ray of hope from the Harvard-MIT suing ICE for their anti-foreign student regulations in federal court. In a matter of hours, over 200 universities and colleges had supported their case, sending in Amicus Briefs. It was heartening to know that even though the country did not want us, our institutions were ready to fight for us. But it was hard to see Twitter accounts talking about the economic cost of international students not returning to the country- as if our futures didn't mean anything, but the amount of money we spend does. On the day of the hearing, international students all over the world were refreshing their news feeds to see if the verdict was out. But our grueling time had come to an end, and the court had ruled in favor of Harvard and MIT.

Although we are now safe, and where we choose to be- whether at home or in the States- this experience has left an impact on me. It has reminded me once again, we are not always going to be welcomed into this country. It also served as an eye-opener that this administration is capable and willing to change policies overnight. And so, for the remainder of my time in the States, I must be prepared for anything, at any time.

*-Anonymous*



THANK  
YOU

The Slater Team wants to offer its heartfelt appreciation towards everyone, who contributed to our Fall issue. Many thanks to Leanne and Tana, who have endlessly supported the international community at Wellesley. Irrespective of these trying times, our Slater family has become stronger than ever.

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***See you next semester!***



*Slater Culture Show 2016*

