Slater International Student Newsletter

50 YEARS

Slater Center

Spring 2022 Issue
Acknowledgments

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. Special thank you to Leanne Dolat and Tana Ruegamer for all the support and ideas.

Thank you to the Archives for all the amazing old photos of Slater!

Thank you to Wellesley’s Alum network and the constant support is gives to Wellesley’s current and graduating students. Alums—we can’t wait to welcome some of you in June for the Reunion. You’re always welcome at the Slater House, please stop by to say hi.

If you are interested in wiring a piece or being featured in the newsletter, please reach out at et103 or ms120.

Photos of Home Project

Every Spring Slater Center collects photos from students of their home and decorates Slater House’s living room with them. Here are some of this year’s submissions!

Tenzin Yangchen’25, Lhasa, Tibet
Misheel Amarsanaa’25, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
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Welcome to the Slater Newsletter! The Slater Center is busy collaborating with students and hosting programs this spring semester. The Slater Center's mission is to encourage greater understanding among all cultures through personal association and cooperative endeavor.

This was the purpose of the Center, as established by the benefactors Priscilla Allen Slater '16 and her husband Ellis Dwinnell Slater in the 1970s. Today, the Center continues to focus on the advancement of this mission through its activities, services, and involvement in the larger College community. We have done so through event programming like International Women’s Day, Global Tea, and Slater Socials. We continue to educate the greater Wellesley domestic and international student population through 21 Days of Immigration Reflection Challenge and, most recently, educated participating faculty and staff through 14 Days Immigration Reflection Challenge.

Both programs are designed to call people in to understand immigration and international student issues from a place of research, statistics, and lived experiences. Certainly the participating staff and faculty reflected on ways in which to make the classroom more inclusive while keeping international student's unique experiences and immigration challenges in mind. We also continue to advocate on a local and national level for immigration reform through professional organizations and local government leaders. Finally, we acknowledge the current crisis around the world that many of our students are directly affected by. I'm here to meet with all international students and those international students who may need additional support and resources in times of war, crisis, and conflict.

As always, we invite you into our space, one in which we hope you can call a home away from home.

Kindest regards,
Tana
It has been an amazing journey to work with the Slater Team and Rin! I’m so grateful for the opportunities, support and trust I was given as a Co-Visibility Coordinator. We’ve been working very hard on this issue and now we hope you can celebrate with us the Slater Anniversary and enjoy reading the newsletter during your long well-deserved break <3 We are excited to finally see our work on paper and we look forward to work on future issues!

Marcela Silvera-Tafur ’25
Co-Editor
Slater Through Time

1902 - Slater House first built

1921 - The house was enlarged

1968 - Priscilla Allen Slater ’16 and her husband establish a fund to bring European students to Wellesley

1969 - Slater Fellowship Program Established

1970 - Priscilla Allen Slater passes away, uncertainty about the use of the Center’s funds

1972 - Slater International Center Officially opens

1972 - Joan Nathanson was appointed International Student Advisor

1972 - 5% of Wellesley College’s student body consisted of international students from West Indies, Argentina, Cameroon, Greece, India, and Malaysia

1973 - Slater Student Organization was founded

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

1977 - Sylvia Hiestand was appointed as the Director of Slater International Center

1982 - International students at Wellesley were notably featured in The New York Times (article title “For Women, Cross-Cultural Trip to Limbo”)
1987 - The Slater Student Organization held a successful world fair

1997 - Allen Slater, the son of Priscilla Allen Slater, spoke at the 25th anniversary of Slater International Center

2000 - Wellesley College becomes a founding partner of the Davis-United World Scholars Program

2008 - 13% of student population are international students

2008 - 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

2010 - Karen Zuffante Pabon became the Director of Slater International Center and the International Student & Scholar Advisor

2013 - Wellesley College announced the launch of the MasterCard Foundation Scholar Program

2013 - Wellesley College celebrated its first International Education Week

2018 - Tana D. Ruegamer becomes the Director of Slater International Center and the International Student & Scholar Advisor

Credit: History of Slater International Center by Katherine Wang

Edited by Rin Tsavalyuk
Name: Akino Nakamura Fukuda  
Exchange Student 03-04  
E-mail: akino.fukuda16@gmail.com

After my short, but fulfilling, experience at Wellesley as an exchange student, I returned to Japan to complete my bachelor’s degree at Japan Women’s University. My interest in the field of public relations motivated me to pursue a career in communications.

It was my stint at Wellesley that gave me the confidence to engage with people from diverse backgrounds and to be proactive in taking strategic initiatives. I am happy to share that I have been a communications professional for over 10 years and derive great satisfaction working with colleagues driving promotional campaigns that help build a brand narrative.

Based in Tokyo, I am currently working at a global integrated risk assessment firm, Moody’s Corporation, as a communications strategist, primarily focused on media relations. I will be happy to connect with and mentor students with an interest in PR and communications, as well as students who are looking for opportunities in the field in Asia, especially in Japan.

Name: Audrey Mandela ‘80  
Major: English Literature  
Email: audrey@2hhg.uk

My career has been in the tech sector, which stemmed from a summer job at a then-new market research and consulting firm. I joined the Yankee Group right after graduation and stayed 20 years, ultimately running all of the company’s international activities. My husband and I then co-founded an internet mapping business, Multimap, which was acquired by Microsoft in 2007. Today I have a portfolio career; I sit on start-up and charity boards; I chair a network for women in tech; and I mentor and invest in tech start-ups with female founders. I’m currently the president of the Wellesley alumnae club in the UK, after having served as the Club secretary for a number of years. I’d be happy to hear from students who are from or interested in the UK, and also those interested in careers in tech for may not be that technical themselves!

Alumnae Highlight

Name: Mihoko Manabe ‘81  
Major & Occupation: East Asian studies major, working in financial services.  
Location: Tokyo, Japan  
Email: mihokoed@gmail.com

I am living my bucket list, with my family in an exciting metropolis, where I am doing what I love to do.

Learn more about Mihoko and how she connected with her Wellesley friend after many years on the next page!
Suddenly on Linkedin, there she was, Mihoko, my sprightly friend from the Severance dorm, and a flood of Wellesley memories came back to me! I was one in a lucky group of international Slater students at Wellesley in 1978-79. We came from many parts of the globe and shared friendship, laughter and inspiration at the beautiful college campus. I heard about Wellesley College from my mother Barbro Westerberg (Wendt) ’54(? Tbd) who spent two years in America in the first wave of international student exchanges after the war. Her time at Wellesley in the early 1950s was a great experience and when she returned to Sweden on a transatlantic passenger ship she was greeted by her family as a cosmopolitan icon of adventure, wisdom and style. My father was instantly smitten, they married and came back to the US within a few years for his studies at the Harvard Business School.

For me to join the college through a Slater fellowship some 25 years later and experiencing America for the first time was absolutely exotic. Wellesley’s unique environment and friends like Mihoko gave me confidence, experiences and many insights from stepping outside my comfort zone, from diving and whale watching to theater performances. I will never forget my premiere as a fairy in A Midsummers Night’s Dream as a member of the Shakespeare society.

Not an instant success I fear, but rhyming in Elizabethan English and being part of it all was absolutely wonderful! Much has happened since then and after a career in the communication business I today spend my time half in sustainability consulting, half in my new passion – art history. Life is truly an adventure!

Katarina Wendt (Englund) ’79
Stockholm, Sweden

This past winter, I was cleaning out my parents’ house as they prepared to move to a retirement community. Rummaging through closets and drawers full of half a century of family life there, I found a trove of photos from my time at Wellesley.

My favorite photos were from that sophomore year 1978-79 in Severance when I was a part of a group of some amazing young women who came from faraway places and all kind of backgrounds — Japanese, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Lithuanian, Lebanese/Norwegian. Among us were Slater scholars from Germany and Sweden, studying at Wellesley for a year.

One of them was Katarina. I had never known anyone from Sweden before. She put Malmo, her hometown, in my expanding world view. I admired her for self-possession, while being approachable. She blended seamlessly into the campus life, which for our group included a lot of hanging out in the dorm, listening to Billy Joel records and confiding about our latest crush.

Katarina made our holiday season magical. One night in mid-December, I was awakened to find her standing there with a crown of candles on her head! She said it was St. Lucia’s Day and offered me a plate of holiday cookies.

Fast forward over 40 years. I hear about this Slater newsletter, and I am reminded of that old photo I discovered and wondered about Katarina. Thanks to the wonders of Linkedin, we have reconnected!

Mihoko Manabe’81
Tokyo, Japan

Left to right: Najwa Saad ’81, Irene Grubauskas ’80, Alicia Arisso ’80, Suzanne Kunda ’80, Elisabeth Herrmann Slater ’79, Katarina Wendt Slater ’79

Mihoko Manabe’81
Azizah Yasin is a graduate of the “Purple Reign” Class of 1994. She earned a double-major B.A. degree in Psychology and Africana Studies, and was granted Departmental Honors for her senior thesis on Classical Interaction with Africa. In 1997 she earned her J.D. degree from Boston University School of Law with a Concentration in Litigation and Dispute Resolution. She is licensed to practice in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and the Supreme Court of the United States. Azizah maintained her own law practice for nearly fourteen years and currently serves the Massachusetts Trial Court as a First Assistant Clerk-Magistrate. Azizah credits much of her personal and professional journey to her education and experiences at Wellesley College. She lives about an hour from campus, so she frequently comes back to her second home. Because of Azizah’s diverse identity as a Black Muslim American woman of African, Native American and Chinese descent, it is no surprise that her global perspective, worldly travels and Wellesley’s Sed Min values make up the fabric of who she is today. Inspired by her martial arts training, Azizah studied Japanese at Wellesley for a year so that she could study abroad in Japan in her junior year. She credits Wellesley for launching her international travel and has visited sixteen countries on five continents. She hopes to visit all American states and all African countries with her family.

Azizah was very involved in student leadership while at Wellesley, including having served on the Minority Student Admissions Committee and Harambee House’s first Renovation Committee. Azizah has such a deep love for Wellesley and tirelessly dedicates her time, talents and treasures to support the academic and wellness journeys of prospective and current Wellesley students. For the past fifteen years, Azizah has volunteered for the Admissions Office, having served as an Alumnae Admissions Representative, Book Award Sponsor, Alumnae Admissions Liaison, Alumnae Ambassador, and frequent program panelist. She enjoys calling admitted students’ families during the Admission yield season to excitedly share her Wellesley experiences in the hopes that they, too, will have Wellesley joys of their own to tell one day. As an alum, Azizah is an active member of the Wellesley College Alumnae Association (WCAA) and three of its Shared Identity Groups (SIGs): Wellesley Asian Alumnae Association (W3A), Wellesley Muslim Alums (WMA), and Wellesley Alumnae of African Descent (WAAD).

From 2016-2021 Azizah served as WAAD’s New England Regional Representative. During that time, she envisioned expanding WAAD to reflect both the diversity of alums throughout the African Diaspora and the international nature of WCAA, which has local clubs worldwide. As the current Vice President of Programs for WAAD, she is doing just that. This effort includes Azizah’s outreach to and connection with Slater International Center, one of several beloved spaces on campus where students of African descent find comfort, familiarity and support. She hopes cross-pollination programming with Slater and WAAD will give students of African descent a sense of community and belonging so that when they become alums they, too, will know that WAAD is inclusive and welcoming of all alums of African descent, wherever in the world they may reside.

Azizah looks forward to engaging with you and would love to hear from you. Please feel free to contact her at ayasin@wellesley.edu to connect and say hi!
Q: Your name, pronouns, position, where are you from?
A: Leanne Dolat, She/her, Program Coordinator for Slater, home for me is Maine and Seoul.
Q: Fun fact about you:
A: I used to throw shot put, discus, and javelin!
Q: When and why did you join Slater?
A: I joined Slater in July of 2018. I was new to the field of international education and I wanted to support international students & scholars in their study abroad experience here in the U.S.
Q: What did you do before joining Slater?
A: I taught English as a secondary language for two years in Daejeon, South Korea. Afterwards, I returned back to the U.S. to complete my Master's degree.
Q: What does your day to day job at Slater look like?
A: Organizing and facilitating our amazing Slater Center Student Events & Programs! Overseeing our Slater Center Team of student coordinators & office assistants. Making sure that the Slater House is welcoming to students & scholars, so it can be their home away from home.
Q: Why do you like working at Slater?
A: Being in community with such accomplished and talented students & scholars from all over the world.
Q: A place that you would want to visit/ dream destination:
A: I would really like to return back to South Korea. I would like to reconnect with my friends and eat 떡볶이 (spicy rice cake) all day long!
Q: Your name, pronouns, position, where are you from?
A: My name is Jen Cammarn, I’m the SEVIS Coordinator here at Slater. My hometown is in Norwich, NY.
Q: Fun fact about you?
A: I own 24 different Kingdom Hearts games. There are only 10 unique games in the series.
Q: When did you join Slater?
A: I joined Slater in December 2017.
Q: What did you do before joining Slater?
A: Before coming to Wellesley I was doing an internship in the Harvard International Office as a part of my degree from Lesley University. Funnily enough, Tana Ruegamer was my supervisor while I worked at Harvard. She interviewed me in Summer 2017 and I ended up interviewing her for the position at Slater a year later!
Q: What does your day to day job at Slater look like?
A: I start by importing data changes to our database (ISSM) from Workday. Things like major declarations, phone number updates, or units enrolled. Sometimes these updates mean that you’ll get a new Form I-20, so I start the process for doing that. Once I’ve requested new I-20s, I’ll download yesterday’s Forms I-20 from the SEVIS website and notify students to come pick up their documents. If it’s Admissions season I’ll prepare and send Welcome Packets to the incoming class. I also do OPT work authorizations for graduating seniors. A lot of my work depends on the season, but it’s never boring!
Q: Why do you like working at Slater?
A: I like that we have a well balanced team at Slater. Tana does a good job handling the overarching goals of Slater, Jill advises students in a kind and compassionate way, Leanne makes sure we have engaging events and stops the house from following apart, and I get to manage the data. If any staff member is confused or unsure what to do, there’s a team of people to help with different knowledge sets.
Q: What else are you involved in besides working for Slater?
A: As a lot of you know, I’m an avid cross-stitch and I held a cross-stitching workshop last semester. It helps me relax and make something for the people I love. Aside from that, I stream video games on Twitch and I’m heavily involved in a community around the video game series Kingdom Hearts. I actually met my husband within an online video game!
Q: A place that you would want to visit/ dream destination:
A: Not so much a dream destination, but I’d love to take a transcontinental rail trip through the U.S. There’s a lot of the middle of the U.S. I haven’t visited and a train tour seems like the best way to do it!
As end of the year and graduation approaches, we are highlighting Slater Student Org’s President and VP. Sophie and Angela, thank you for all your work!
Q: When and why did you join Slater? What do you like the most about Slater org?
A: I joined Slater my first year, because I met a lot of fun people during international student orientation and I wanted to stay involved with the community I found during that time. What I love most about the Slater org is that even though all of us come from different places and different cultural backgrounds, we all fundamentally understand each other and find ways to share our culture together.

Q: What is your favorite Slater event?
A: Culture Show has always been my favourite Slater event. Angela and I were randomly assigned to take care of decorations for the show our first year, which is actually how we became friends. This year’s Culture Show was my favourite by far though: seeing so many people fill Alumnae Auditorium up felt surreal, especially since we hadn’t had an in-person show in two years. We also killed it with our Eboard dance!

Q: How did the pandemic affect what the org does?
A: The pandemic unfortunately made most of our events transition online. One major change was that we couldn’t host anything with food and drinks last year, which is really hard, especially for a cultural org, where many bonding events revolve around food.

Q: What is your favorite memory as part of the org?
A: My favourite memory as a part of the org was our Slater Eboard secret santa: We bought blank mugs and everyone decorated one for each other. We had hot chocolate and just hung out together!

Q: Why did you decide to become Pres and VP of Slater?
A: I decided to become President because I wanted to restart the community and support that was lost due to the pandemic. I couldn’t think of a better person to do it with than Angela, one of the most hardworking and kindest people I know.

Q: What do you miss the most about home?
A: I miss my parents, and going out to get coffee with them on Saturday mornings at a cafe at our local market street. I would always get tartines (baguette and butter) with a hot chocolate, and my parents would get a croissant and a coffee (if anyone knows of a place to get a good baguette in Boston, please let me know).

Q: Do you have any words of wisdom for underclassmen?
A: Be proactive about doing things you want to do and meeting people you want to meet! If your first couple semesters aren’t great and you feel like you haven’t found your people yet, don’t worry. Don’t be scared to quit an org that isn’t making you happy, join a new org instead, or even ask a couple classmates out to lunch. Try to step out of your comfort zone - I promise it’s worth it!
When and why did you join Slater? What do you like the most about Slater org?
A: As soon as I met the Slater student leaders during my orientation, I knew these were thoughtful and kind leaders that I wanted to learn from. I joined Slater in my first year as Slater's Senator. What I like about the Slater org is how I've met so many amazing people and learned about their backgrounds.

What is your favorite Slater event?
A: My favorite Slater event is definitely our annual culture show! Actually Sophie and I became close because we were the culture show decorations committee team in our first year, and then we were in charge of the fashion show in our sophomore year. I love seeing all the cultural orgs perform and the fashion show participants walk down Alumnae Auditorium while proudly waving their flags.

How did the pandemic affect what the org does?
A: International food is always an essential part to our events, so it’s unfortunate that we couldn’t have our usual cooking nights or buffet-food at culture show. But we made the most out of the regulations, by offering grab-and-go options at culture show and international candies/snacks at winter festival.

What is your favorite memory as part of the org?
A: My favorite memory is the white elephant Eboard bonding events right before winter break, where we bring gifts and “steal” them from one another. This year, we adapted it by gifting each other with mugs that we decorated. With hot chocolate and holiday music in the little blue house, the bonding events make me feel right at home.

Why did you decide to become VP of Slater?
A: When Sophie asked me to join her, I didn’t hesitate at all. We loved doing it during our entire time at Wellesley, so it feels natural to continue. Honestly, my Wellesley experience would feel weird if I wasn’t a part of Slater!

What do you miss the most about home?
A: I really miss my younger siblings and our daily banter. It’s sad that I can’t fly home due to travel restrictions, but at least we now have FaceTime!

Do you have any words of wisdom for underclassmen?
A: Stay curious and thoughtful! Being part of the international community means we have one label that unites us, but that doesn’t mean we know each other’s experiences from various cultural backgrounds around the world. Wellesley is a great place to learn about these similarities and differences.
On March 10, the Slater International Center & Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) held the 2022 International Women’s Day (IWD) and introduced the #BreakTheBias social media campaign. We started off with the introduction of our event by Tana Ruegamer, Director and scholar advisor of the Slater International Center: "We gather together to celebrate social, economy, cultural and political achievements of women, and mark a call of action for accelerating equality in our 2022 IWD."

Our last in-person IWD event held by Slater and the college was in 2020, and during IWD we acknowledged how much the world has changed and how much is continuing to change due to COVID-19. We also acknowledged that the world is affected by diverse crisis and wars, and we must work together in these hard times. We continued the event by introducing our remarkable speaker for International Women’s Day, Pashtana Durrani.

Pashtana is an Afghan human rights activist and community development expert, whose focus is girl’s education. She is a visiting fellow at the WCW, where her research continues to help Afghan women and girls pursue education and support the health of Afghan mothers and babies.

Pashtana is also the founder of LEARN Afghanistan, an organization established to safely and securely provide education to girls through a distributed network of tablet computers using an offline platform. She has developed models on education, healthcare, and menstrual hygiene management. LEARN has educated 7,000 girls and boys in Kandahar, Afghanistan, trained more than 80 teachers in digital literacy, and trained 700 girls in menstrual hygiene management.

Pashtana was named an Education Champion by the Malala Fund. She was a global youth representative for Amnesty International. She is also a winner for the 2021 Tällberg-SNF-Eliasson Emerging Leader prize, and she was among the BBC’s and Time’s 100 influential women lists of 2021.
Alongside Pashtana's outstanding work, we invited four student speakers to the podium to introduce the women that they nominated through the **Women in the World Nomination**. The students highlighted the work and impact that each of these women have made.

Our first student speaker was **Marcela Silvera Tafur ‘25**, who introduced Maria Elena Moyano Delgado, an Afro-Peruvian human rights activist. Maria Elena was active in the Movimiento de Jóvenes Pobladores (the Shantytown Movement), and she believed in non-violence and speaking in favor of social justice. Maria was assassinated by the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), which sparked a public outcry bringing attention to her work and the plight of economically marginalized women in South America.

Our second student speaker was **Manasvi Khanna ‘23**, who introduced Dr. Trinetra Haldar Gummaraju. She is Karnataka’s first openly transgender doctor. She is an activist who spreads awareness and advocates for the LGBTQIA+ community, on the themes of gender, sexuality, queerphobia, bullying, mental health, and feminism. According to Dr. Trinetra’s experience as a doctor: "I thoroughly enjoy the operating room. It’s the one place I can use my artistic skill in a humanitarian way, because surgery, I feel, is the noblest kind of art that exists."

Next in our stage we had **Arzy Abliadzhyieva ‘25**, an international student from Ukraine, who introduced Zarema Barieva. Zarema is the Manager of the Crimean Tatar Resource Center, educating and advocating for the Crimean Tatar people and the human rights situation in Crimea. Additionally, we want to bring to everyone’s attention, Arzy’s speech about Ukraine’s current war situation: "I could be hiding in a cold bomb shelter, like my friends, hoping that Russia will miss the target and that my home won’t be destroy."

And our last student speaker is **Fernanda Gonzales ‘25** who nominate her mom at the very second that she got the opportunity to nominate inspirational women. Her mom, Monica Mayela Gonzalez, grew up with a strong spirit, ambition, and a heart that loved and loved fiercely. In her youth she accomplished many things, from academic awards to leading the marching band. But her greatest talent has always been her artistry. Her hands worked gently against the canvas and despite their scars, she created art with them. Her mom’s spirit remains strong, her heart fierce, and her dreams bright. She is an artist with words and Fernanda’s greatest inspiration, and she hopes to someday inspire others just like her.
We would like to end with a huge thank you to everyone who attended our IWD in-person event or join virtually through Zoom! We are delighted for the collaboration with Wellesley Centers for Women and the amazing efforts of our entire Slater International Center Team!

One of few things we would like everyone to take home with you is to reflect in our everyday actions. When was the last time you witness or experienced a gender bias? Where was it? and What kind of actions did you make?

We all have the power to break the bias to reshape the dynamics, and create a better future for women where our voices are heard and not overlooked or ignored.
Q: What is your education path that lead you to Wellesley?
I did all my education in Argentina, specifically at the University of Buenos Aires. However, during my last year as an undergraduate, I did an internship in Belfast Northern Ireland, and one in Szeged, Hungary, both experiences opened my eyes to the international and collaborative nature of science and gave me a taste of adventure.

Q: How did you arrive in Wellesley and how long have you been working here?
I came to the United States in 1998 as a Postdoctoral Fellow to work in the labs attached to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. In 2003 I applied for a faculty position at Wellesley and I am currently a Professor in the Biological Sciences Department here at Wellesley.

Q: What do you want to leave to your students? What is the impact you are trying to make in your teaching career?
When I teach time really flies, I love it. I would be super happy if students take from my classes or from working in my lab, an excitement for science and an appreciation for biological diversity and for nature. A definite plus is if I manage to convey that evolution is the thread that ties all of biology together. Most importantly, if I can bring into the conversation that pursuing your intellectual passion is doable and that who you are is compatible with a career in science then my job would feel really complete!

Q: Is there something you missed about your home country?
Striking up conversations with people on the streets or with shopkeepers. That is something I realize I do a lot more when I am back visiting in Buenos Aires, and then I know I am missing it :) I guess it took me a while to become immersed and understand the culture so I missed that sense of “knowing” that I had back at home.

Q: Any food you particularly like and dislike?
I have not gotten used to peanut butter but have learned to love iced coffee.

Q: What’s your favorite place at Wellesley?
The greenhouses (Now Global Flora)

Q: Any movie, song or book you could definitely recommend?
Any book by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Borges’ short stories...magical, puzzling and super imaginative, For a natural bend and more magic, I would definitely recommend “Cuentos de la Selva” (Jungle Tales) by Horacio Quiroga. Have fun reading!
Q: What classes are you currently teaching?
I'm currently teaching PEAC 205 and PEAC 204. PEAC 204 covers the theory of conflict resolution and methods to confront conflict. We discuss why conflict arise and its psychological, and social dynamics. In this class we get to know how conflict can bring to live justice in society, conflict is needed to address justice but can be distractive when is address to violence. We do role play and simulations, is a very interacting class.

Q: What do you want to leave to your students? What is the impact you are trying to make in your teaching career?
I don't like to lecture so my class are interactive and I like to hear my students and what they have to say, how they represent themselves. I also think that students can teach a lot to each other and I'm there to facilitate their education. I want to leave them with a sense that they can be agent of social justice. I want to instate a sense of profound compassion for the world, empathy and kindness. I want them to know that it's okay to not know everything, and they can go around and be curious of their surroundings, because being curious makes you a step ahead of being compassionate.

Q: What is your education path that lead you to Wellesley?
I was born and lived in Brescia, in the north of Italy, until I was nineteen and then I moved to Florence for college where I studied Political Science. After graduation I found a job as a language fellow and moved to Vassar College.

Q: How did you arrive in Wellesley and how long have you been working here?
My boyfriend at that time (and now current husband) moved to the US to study at the university of Notre Dame and when I visited him I saw the program of Peace studies. I quit my job and went to get my master degree in International Peace Studies at the same university, then we moved to LA to study with a feminist scholar and got my PhD in the University of Southern California. I started to work at Wellesley since 2010 and I'm an associate professor and a Co-Director with Professor Nadya Hajj of the Peace & Justice Studies Program.

Q: Is there something you missed about your home country?
It has been 29 years since I moved to the US. I miss my family, my father who is older (95 years), my sisters and the food (specially pizza!). I also miss the spaces in Europe and being able to just walk around. I could go to all sort of places, visit people or spend time in parks doing my day to day activities with just walking.

Q: Any food you particularly like and dislike?
I like that here in the US you can find food from different countries and traditions, it may be not exactly the same as eating from that same place, but I like that I can experiment. I love to find new food from different places.

Q: Any movie, song or books you could definitely recommend?
A book that I really like is The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood and Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides. The protagonist in the book of Middlesex is an intersex man of Greek. When I was growing up, the reason I went to study abroad in Ireland, was because I was obsessed with U2 (I even had a mullet!). Also there are Italian bands like Måneskin that I like.
Q: What is your education path that lead you to Wellesley?
I was born in Albania, a tiny country in the South Europe between Greece and Yugoslavia, with lots of the Ionian Sea. I finished my Master Degree in Electronic Engineering in Albania and started working as a lecturer in the university. I went to Germany and did my PhD in 2007 and then moved to the US.

Q: How did you arrive in Wellesley and how long have you been working here?
In 1997 I have all these dreams of becoming a professor and do research but it wasn't possible in my country because of the civil war in Albania. We had bigger concerns such as food or water, so there wasn't a lot of support to do science. Unfortunately the state collapsed and I had to leave the country because of the war and instability. I moved to the US in 2008 and met Professor Metaxas from the CS department of Wellesley. We both lived under authority regime and military dictatorship, my case from Albania and in his case in Greece. We started talking about technology and all the information that came from Google, as we both shared the experience of living under control of propagandas from the government. We decided to started doing research together and I became a visiting scholar in 2008.

Q: What classes are you currently teaching?
I'm teaching CS 315 (Data and Text Mining for the Web), CS 111 and CS 234 (Data analytics and visualization). While I teach in the CS Department I'm more a person who analyzes data and I'm part of the Data Science major (an interdisciplinary major combining CS, Mathematics and Statistics) as a Co-Director. I enjoy advising students and helping them choose their courses.

Q: What do you want to leave to your students? What is the impact you are trying to make in your teaching career?
I care about the low numbers of women in the STEM field, particularly in Computer Science. Growing up in Albania, half of our class in Engineering School were women and the other half were men. There wasn’t a thing that women couldn’t do and I grew up knowing that women could do anything. One of things that I’m interested in is, how can I empower women at Wellesley to embrace technology as something that they can do and can do as well as anyone else. I’m also interest in the focus of a Liberal Art education as I went to an engineering school and I only did math, physics and CS. I think students are so fortunate to have that opportunity. I want students to be prepared for having these interdisciplinary conversations and develop independence and the confidence in their own skills because they are capable of doing amazing things.

Q: Is there something you missed about your home country?
One thing I missed about Albania are the large family gatherings. I miss going to my grandmother’s house and have all the grandchildren together in the house. My grandma was cooking for us with that love and affection and I miss the people who I love, and who are all my Albania.

Q: Any movie, song or books you could definitely recommend?
Where do we start?! I love reading multiple books at the same time because each one them is about different things and I can read them at different times during the week when I might be in different moods to to read different books. Since the beginning of the pandemic I started to listen to books and one that I’m listening to is a book that just came out called To Paradise by Hanya Yanagihara, which is about an alternative history of America where anyone in the society was accepted for who they were especially same same sex couples. My favorite author by far is Kazuo Ishiguro and one his novel is Klara and the Sun. Whenever I meet with students, I ask them what books they’re reading what would they recommend. You can learn a lot about people just by learning what books they love and what kind of things they love to read.
Let’s welcome the
Purple Class of 2026

Mara Casals
(She/Her/Hers)

I’m an first-generation international student from Lambaré, Paraguay, and also a prospective Neuroscience major and Psychology minor

Q: What were your interests that lead you to apply to Wellesley?

When I started my research about which universities I was going to apply to, I remember that I heard about Wellesley because I knew that there was a Paraguayan student. Wellesley sparked an interest in me the first time I started to get to know more about it, as it shared my ideals and encouraged me to become a bold woman. In the educational background of Paraguay, we don’t have a Liberal Arts focus, we just have to choose a major and it is almost impossible to take classes outside of our major. So getting to know more about different courses was a plus for me. And also, I’m really interested in working in research but in Paraguay is not well promoted and I felt that I could be encouraged and motivated to work with professors at Wellesley, as I really wanted to work with them in their projects that focuses on trauma as predictors of developmental psychopathology across the lifespan.

Q: What was your biggest challenges during your application process?

During my application I started to compare myself to other people. I was focused on everyone that were not from my country and the opportunities they had such as internships or research experience. I wasn’t able to have the same access to the opportunities and I felt that I haven’t done enough and that my profile as an applicant wasn’t good enough. Also from my high school experience in Paraguay we aren’t used to writing a lot of essays so I needed to work on thousands of drafts and spent hours learning about methods of writing styles.

Q: What resources or people gave you the most support during your application process?

I participated in programs that allowed me to prepare myself for my application such as Competitive College Club (CCC), Latin American Leadership Academy (LALA), Global Citizen Year Academy (GCYA), and EducationUSA. In CCC we had a mentor who read our essays and gave us feedback. In LALA I met Marcela and through EducationUSA I met Maria, both are current students at Wellesley who encouraged and guided me in my application. I also received help from my uncle, with all his moral and even economical support that helped me to afford parts of my application. And even thought my mom didn’t understand much of what I was doing because she doesn’t speak english, she became my strength during the process.
Q: Do you have concerns or hopes when you get to Wellesley?

Moving to Wellesley will be my first going to the US and it's going to be a shock for me to go from a Spanish speaking country to completing talk in English 24/7. It's going to be a challenge as I'll have words that for me sound better in Spanish and has more impact than saying it in English, and it's going to be difficult to express myself but I know I'll get better with time. And I know that because one word that you can use to describe a Paraguayan woman is hardworking :) I'm also a low-income students and as everyone I went through a lot of situations that helped me to adapt. My experiences in Latin America are going to help me to get use to my new college life and also contribute to conversations or discussions during my classes.

Q: How do you see yourself in the future?

I had opportunities to talk to a lot of Wellesley students and I sensed strength, boldness and confidence from all of them and I hope to be like them. Being surrounded by women is going to be an environment for growth, and I'm sure that this would one the only place I could feel like that. I know Wellesley is going to make me more empowered and confident with myself. I'm currently learning to fight for what I know is right and now I want to fight for my education. Having access to an amazing education is going to helpful with the future I want to reach. I know for sure that the Wellesley is hard, but I can also always find support from my mentors, my big sisters, my professors and hundred of people who I'll meet in my journey. When I graduate in a few years I hope to be a smart Wellesley woman.
Q: Why did you decide to come to Wellesley?
I wanted to be in a small liberal arts college and in a historically women's college. These are two things that are very rare in France and in Europe. I have many academic interests, and this college allows me to explore them before deciding on my major. I also love the campus, both because of its beauty and because of its location. Being next to Boston allows me to travel home and back more easily than some other colleges would allow.

Q: What are you involved in on campus?
I am the Europe Regional Representative for Slater. I love the Slater community, it is so friendly and welcoming! I am also involved in Res Life: I am one of the “Snack deities,” “Birthday fairies,” and “Vice president” for Munger Hall. Lastly, I am a member of the archery team.

Q: How is school going and how is it different from your academic background?
My academic background has prepared me for Wellesley, but I had to make a few adjustments. In the social sciences, we are expected to share personal opinions about the material a lot more than in France, where you are mostly supposed to learn a lot of material by heart. I also greatly enjoy being able to learn about structural discrimination in societies, which is not something we learn about in France.

Q: How do you see yourself in the next few years at Wellesley?
In the next few years I hope to grow both personally and intellectually. I am learning so much from my Wellesley sibs every day, and I hope to find the one subject that I am most passionate about.

Q: What do you miss about home?
One of the things I miss the most is the food. My friends hear me rant a lot about the bread here, as it is very different. Another thing I miss a lot is being able to speak French.

Q: What is your favorite book or movie you'll recommend to us?
I love too many books to name just one as my favorite, but I enjoyed reading the La Passe Miroir series by Christelle Dabos, and would highly recommend it!
Udita Bajaj, she/her, 2022  
Double Major in English and Data Science  
(Concentration: Political Science)

Q: Where is home for you?  
A: Home for me is New Delhi, India. I spent my childhood in Harare, Zimbabwe so I consider that a part of my home too.

Q: What are you/have been involved in at Wellesley?  
A: Currently, I am a co-South Asia Representative at Slater - it’s a perfect end to my Wellesley journey. If there’s one word I’d use to describe this e-board, it’s camaraderie. I love it! I was a Ministrare Fellow and Albright Fellow my junior year and I served as the prose editor for The Wellesley Review my first year first semester.

Q: What do you love the most about Wellesley? What do you think you’ll miss the most about Wellesley?  
A: What do I love most about Wellesley? Gosh, there is so much. I think two things take the top spot - Lake Waban and having discussions with friends till an ungodly hour. This has been happening every day this year...not only do we enjoy each other’s company so much, the fear and reality of separation after graduation is trickling in. I'll also really miss Bollywood nights at the Pub. The one my sophomore year was the highlight and I hope the other classes get to experience something like it soon. The exhilaration of MarMon will always be very close to my heart. But these events, traditions, are nothing without the people. I'll miss the people the most. This is probably said a lot but it cannot be any truer. And the professors too - I've made great bonds with some of them and I'll carry their compassion and mentorship with me for life.

Q: What was your favorite class at Wellesley and why?  
A: My favourite class at Wellesley...I think there are three (at least), and these are definitely not correlated with the grades I got in these classes! Fall 2019 - Politics of Russia and Eurasia. Professor Igor taught that class, and while he is no longer teaching at Wellesley, he truly impacted the way I - and many of us - have been subject to perceiving politics. Through the western lens. So this was eye-opening. I remember really struggling with the final research paper and I also got to know at that time that he was leaving in the spring but the last time I met with Professor Igor (who knew at the time that it would be the last time), he gave me a momento to - as he put it - “motivate me to write this paper” : it was from his hometown Kyrgyzstan, and I still carry it with me to this day.
Q: How was your experience at Slater?

A: As I said, Slater has been home. I spent most of my junior year spring semester in the Slater house - it served as a middle point for some of my friends in the Quad and me (I lived in the French house then) to meet. It soon became my place to play mariokart for hours but also my refuge - junior spring was turbulent, to say the least, as my home country among many was destroyed by the pandemic. Slater was the only place I felt safe and so many friends made it feel like home. Being on the e-board this year was one of the best decisions I made. I know as soon as I set foot in Slater for eboard meetings, there will be laughter. After a long Thursday, it is exactly what I need.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: Ah, plans after graduation! So, I often find myself contemplating what would’ve happened if I’d narrowed down my majors. No regrets - I’ve learnt a lot - but it’s made finding a job hard. It is a monumental task when you’re an international student anyway! That aside, I want to impact people’s lives in a positive way. This is the long term goal but I understand that to secure myself financially, get visa sponsorship, I may not be able to do what I want right away, and that’s okay. Hunting for jobs, right now (pray for me that I get one soon!), and then, we’ll see.

Q: Anything you wish people knew about your home country or culture?

A: There are a lot of things I wish people knew about my home country and culture. The history, in particular. The colonialist history and the history from millennia ago. And the important discoveries and philosophical thought that exists, the in-depth scientific knowledge in the Vedas, for example. So much of what is now being taught in schools as Western thought/philosophy or European discoveries in math, science, and philosophy - it has its roots in the east. Not just my home country, but so many parts of the east. It truly breaks my heart.
Cielito Lindo

Latinx Culture Show 2022
Hi everyone, my name is Victoria (she/her/hers) and I’m a sophomore double majoring in art history and economics. I’m from Toronto, Canada and I’ve been this year’s Global Tea Coordinator! This position entails organizing events that allow students to discuss multicultural issues and learn more about the global community both at Wellesley and beyond. I’ve loved meeting new international students throughout this year, as well as creating safe spaces for international students to share their experiences. It’s been wonderful to collaborate with a wide range of guest speakers, and we’ve hosted events on topics ranging from LGBTQIA+ manga to deconstructing narratives around post 9/11 Afghanistan.

Wellesley’s Davis UWC Scholars are first and foremost leaders, and you can see this in all aspects of campus life. During their time at Wellesley, they build relationships with their peers and faculty as they demonstrate a commitment to community, social service, and civic engagement. They are well-represented in Wellesley’s leadership and service programs, including the Global Engagement Awards Program, and their leadership with cultural and civic student organizations, including the Slater International Center. Recently, Wellesley’s Davis UWC Scholars have created the Global Tea Series as a way to gather all interested students, faculty, and staff together to discuss issues important to them. Derived from the events and discussions that were a daily part of life at their Davis United World Colleges, the Global Teas engaged the campus community in an examination of important international issues.

Scholars wanted to find a way to spread awareness about important international matters and, at the same time, make Slater and Wellesley more like their Davis UWC homes while transforming Slater’s programming.

As part of celebrating Slater’s 50th anniversary, we’re introducing the history of Slater programs. Global Tea is one of Slater’s programs that creates space to learn about different cultures and global topics. Learn about the history of Global Tea Series and hear from the current Global Tea Series Coordinator!
History of Slater Crossword

Across
3. Slater House belonged to this currently existing Wellesley society
4. one of the positions at Slater Center - ___ Coordinator
6. in 1968 Slater fund was established to bring students from this region
7. one of the Slater Org annual events ___ Festival
9. Slater Director 2010-2018
12. first appointed International Student Advisor

Down
1. one of the countries where international students came from in 1972
2. first name of Wellesley alum founder of Slater Center
5. This Slater Director introduced the Peer Advising Leaders Program (PALs)
8. 2013 Wellesley announces the launch of this scholar program
10. current Director of Slater Center
11. in 2000 Wellesley becomes founding member of the UWC scholars program
