

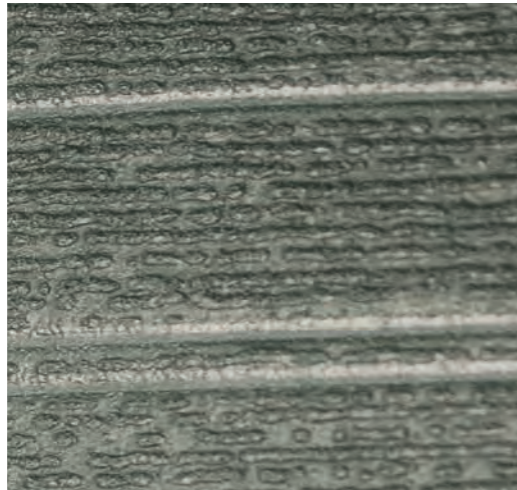
# THE UIC SCRIBE

SEVENTEENTH EDITION  
2019 WINTER



# 20/20 VISION

SCHOOL  
SOCIETY & CULTURE



The UIC SCRIBE was founded in 2006 as the official student newsletter organized by UIC students.

CONTACT : [scribe.uic@gmail.com](mailto:scribe.uic@gmail.com)  
WEBSITE : <https://yonseiucscribe.com>



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## C O N T R I B U T O R S

### Editor-in-Chief

*Elaine Natalie . IS 16.5*

### Editors

*Dongwoo Kang . IS 15*  
*Mijin Kim . CLC/SDC 16*  
*Suzie Park . Econ 17*

### Designers

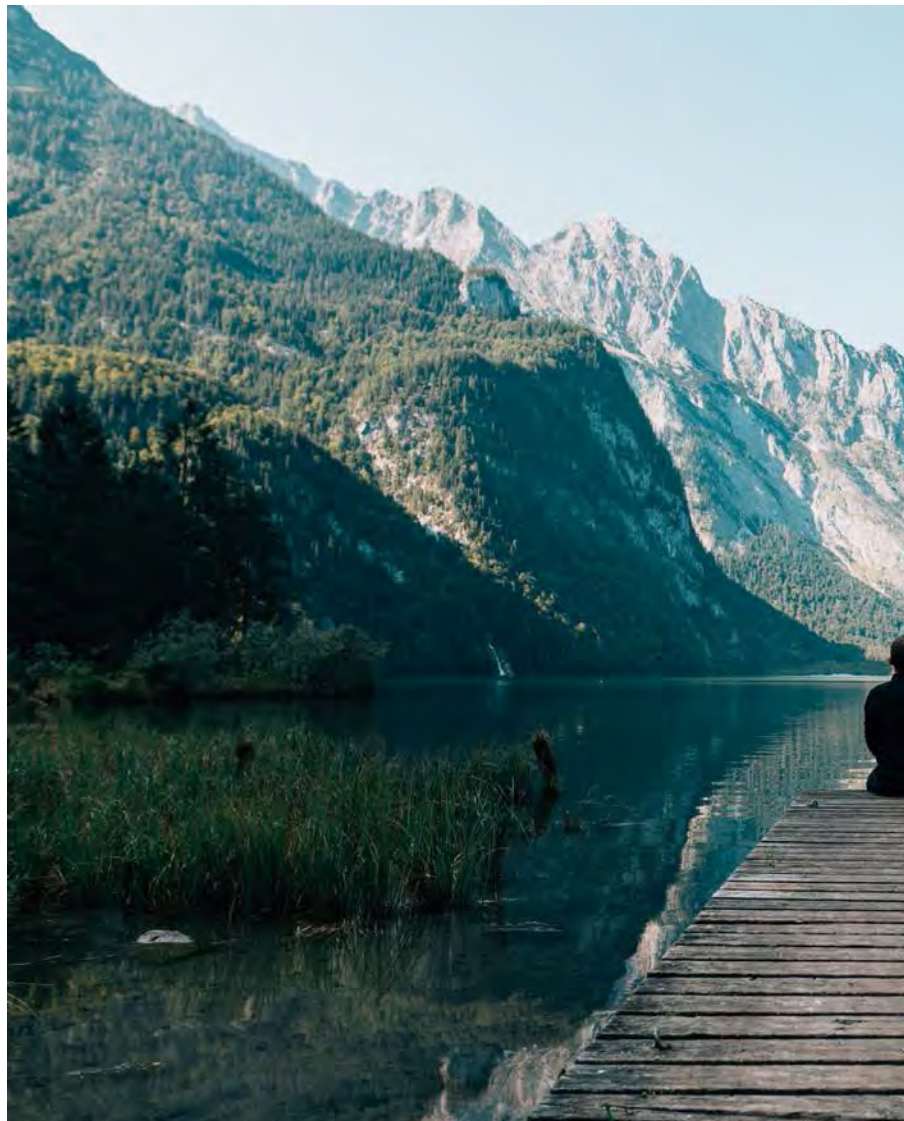
*Saehyun Lee . ASD 17*  
*Seoyoung Rhee . IID 18*

### Reporters

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*Min Jun Kim . Econ 15*  
*Se Jeen Park . CTM/CLC 16*  
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*Hyunjae Lee . IS 17*  
*Yeon Seo Koh . IS 17*  
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### Advisor

*Professor Milan Balaz*



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 17th edition of the UIC Scribe, **20/20 Vision**.

Although both ‘sight’ and ‘vision’ describe the power of seeing, there lies one key difference between the two terms: sight is the ability to merely see things as they are, while vision is the ability to see things as they should or could be. Sight is limited to our current environment, while vision allows us to see beyond the present, to future possibilities.

If we want to enact change, we must have vision, not simply sight. Sight without vision is dangerous—it blinds our hope for a better future. Operating by sight causes us to see the problems that surround us, instead of the potential solutions that would lead to progress and improvement. I hope that the articles in this issue of the UIC Scribe will help you gain vision to overcome the difficulties around you, and give you hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Natalie  
Editor-in-Chief

A stylized, handwritten-style logo for 'UIC Scribe'. The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'U' and 'I' at the start, followed by 'C', 'S', 'c', 'r', 'i', 'b', 'e'. The logo is positioned at the bottom right of the page.



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# Re-Born:

## *Reusing and Recycling*

**2019. 12. 19**

written by **Sejeen Park**

Few undergraduate students can say that they've started their own businesses. It's not enough to just have a good idea; you have to find people who are willing to invest, find teammates with complementary skill sets, and drag your grand idea back to earth with a realistic business model. Re-Born, an organization founded and run by a group of Underwood International College (UIC) students, shows that all of these can be accomplished if you take advantage of the resources and opportunities that are available.

The first step to starting a business is finding an idea. You can't have an organization without a sense of what you want that organization to accomplish. Re-Born cofounder Daye Song, a sophomore currently majoring in Sustainable Development and Cooperation (SDC), found inspiration for the Youth Diary Book, a scheduler made of recycled paper designed to help young people plan out both short and long term goals, when she was in high school. She saw that people would print out an excess of one-sided newsletters and exam papers at her school's printing station, with most of them being thrown out, despite how perfectly good the unused side was. "I thought this was a huge waste," says Daye. "I wanted to do something about it."







Eager to find a way to put this waste to good use, Daye began binding the paper together to create notebooks to sell at her high school. Her homemade exercise books were met with explosive popularity, selling out all ten times they were put up for sale. When Daye arrived at the Yonsei International Campus in Songdo, she was hit by a feeling of déjà vu when she witnessed the same issue with unnecessary paper waste. She met like-minded people Margeunsaem Lee, Sumin Lee, and Jaehun Shim at the UIC-exclusive Social Innovation Creators Academia (SICA) who sympathized with her concerns, and thus, Re-Born was born.

Re-Born's founders decided they wanted to create a recycled notebook to help youths navigate the complexities of self-actualization. Now that the team had a solid idea, it needed to draft a business model that would appeal to potential investors. Using a business model canvas, it mapped out its cost structure, key activities, target market, etc., and keeping all these factors in mind, got to work on a prototype for the Youth Diary Book.

The first prototype was created in late 2018 and distributed to 80 people. Due to quality issues and risk of copyright infringement, Re-Born was unable to use one-sided paper in its prototype, but, as it still wanted to stay true to its environment-friendly message, it replaced pages with the slightly more conventional recycled paper. The Re-Born team took the feedback it received and created a final version of the diary, which focused on both environmental sustainability and helping people to find success in their life journeys.

With hard work and the loss of countless hours of sleep, Re-Born was able to win first place at the 2018 SICA exhibition, a biannual event organized by co-organized by the Yonsei Center for Social Innovation (YCSI) to showcase students' socially innovative projects, where it was then converted into an umbrella project for further development. SICA and its parent organization YCSI provided Re-Born with mentoring and advice for nearly every step of the way. Even after YCSI was shut down, Re-Born managed to stay on track through funding from Yonsei's Institute for Higher Education Innovation (IHEI).

In order to go beyond its status as a student project, the Youth Diary Book needed a boost to cash flow. Re-Born decided to use the Korean crowdfunding site Tumbbug to increase public interest and distribute the final prototype of the Youth Diary Book, and it successfully raised 106% of its target goal. Copies were also distributed for free to high school students participating in the 2019 Korea Scholar's Conference for Youth (KSCY), a 3-day event co-organized by YCSI open for teenagers who want to make meaningful social contributions, further spreading brand awareness. Re-Born diary books are currently available for purchase via Re-Born's official Instagram page (@svreborn) and are also pending launch in several offline locations, such as Moonwoodang Bookshop in Sokcho.

The moral of the story is simple: make the most out of what you have. Re-Born's success was largely thanks to its founders perseverance while taking advantage of UIC-exclusive resources and platforms, such as SICA. Especially with the closing of YCSI, it is important for UIC to create new programs to guide and foster entrepreneurship among its students.



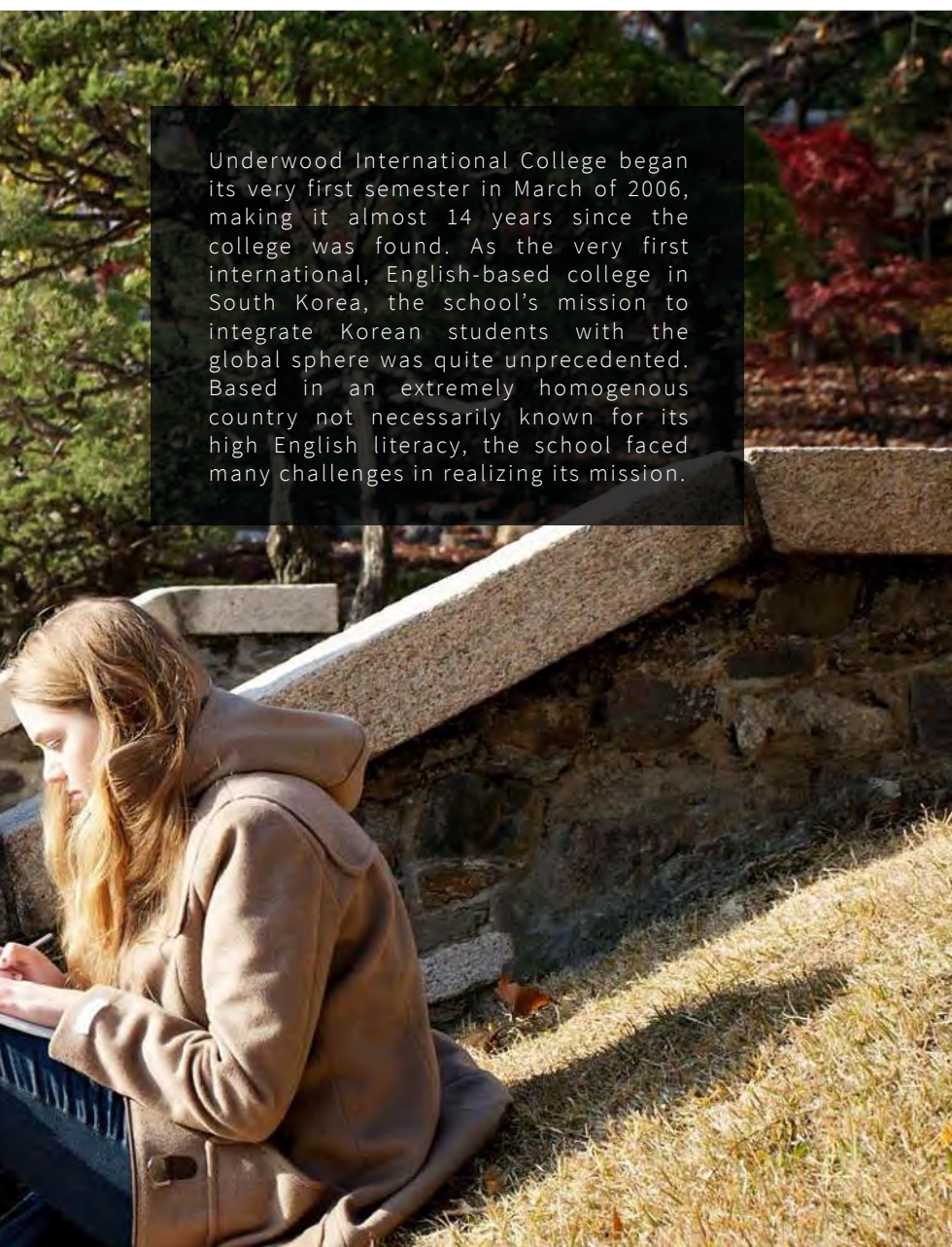
UIC'S

FOREIGNER  
FRIENDLINESS

EVOLUTION

2019. 12. 19

written by Emma Nijssen



Underwood International College began its very first semester in March of 2006, making it almost 14 years since the college was found. As the very first international, English-based college in South Korea, the school's mission to integrate Korean students with the global sphere was quite unprecedented. Based in an extremely homogenous country not necessarily known for its high English literacy, the school faced many challenges in realizing its mission.

## Issues that international students face at UIC

Some of the common complaints made by non-Korean students at UIC include the lack of information provided in English--even though this is the official language of the school. Also, the school provides limited support for international students who have no family in Korea for issues like storing of their personal belongings during school breaks, forcing them to look for off-campus solutions that may be inconvenient and expensive, when they have to move out of the dormitories every semester.

Alumni Lucie Bénévise, who entered UIC in fall of 2015 and majored in Information and Interaction Design, shared some details from her experience as

an international student. She recalled the frustration among the international student body when it was revealed that the Korean students had been divided into "homeroom" groups that held events together, while the international students were not made aware of the existence of this system at all. Issues such as this have created a certain division between the international student and Korean student bodies. However, she notes that along with the increase in the number of foreign students over the years, "the school has worked really hard on the integration of international students," and overall, she is impressed by what the school has done--but mentions that there is still room for improvement.



## Ways that international students deal with these issues

Luckily, there are several support systems in place to help diminish the international students' concerns. Student organizations and clubs have risen over the years to help each other out, such as UGC (Underwood Global Community), which holds events to help international students and Korean students mingle, and organizes airport pickup events for students coming to Korea for the first time. Also, FSU (Foreign Student Union) provides international students with the information they need to thrive at Yonsei and answers any questions students may have. The Office of International Affairs is making efforts to outsource any programs that the school cannot yet implement itself, such as free personal counseling in English for undergraduate international students. Aside from these groups and organizations, another support system comes from the solidarity that forms between international students from all over the world, that comes from their shared struggles in a foreign country. Furthermore, the Korean students of Yonsei are typically more than happy to help out their international classmates and peers.





## Improvements that UIC has made over the years

Over the course of my own two and a half years at UIC, I have witnessed a significant improvement in the school's efforts to cater to their international students. Previously, inconsideration could be seen in situations such as speakers at the mandatory English chapel sessions used to speak in Korean more often than not, information about scheduled fire drills were not translated into English, and it was not uncommon for UIC professors to teach classes in Korean. But through cooperation between students, student organizations, and the school itself, many of these issues have been resolved. International students should be proactive and ask for help when needed, in order to help the school continue to progress in a direction that is positive for all. In an interview, the UIC Dean, Professor Taeyoon Sung expressed his eagerness to support student activities that can harmonize UIC students of all nationalities together, and emphasized that UIC's strength comes from the globalization that students go through from

being exposed to more cultures and backgrounds. He revealed plans to expand the resources available for all UIC students, including adding more academic advisors who can help solve not only academic but also personal issues for students. Furthermore, he encouraged all students to "try to be open to other students, administration staff, and faculty members," and said that "by cooperating more, you can become really globalized and talented graduates."

Despite UIC's foreigner friendliness evolution over the past years, there are still some improvements to be desired. But UIC's faculty are working hard to become a truly international space for global-minded students to come together, and in the meantime, international students can rely on each other, their fellow Korean students, and student organizations in order to make the most of their time at this school.



# FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

**2020. 01. 03**

**written by Ariunzaya Munkhuu**

Finding food, let alone a meal, to eat during the narrow break students have in between classes is a challenge on its own. Especially in Yonsei University's Sinchon Campus where the faculties and the affordable restaurants are located far away from each other. Students will need to calculate the distance, the taste of the meal, the cost of the meal, whom to eat with and most importantly, how long it will take to travel and eat. It's a lot of thinking, but fret no more. The following is a list of restaurants and cafeterias where students can enjoy a big, tasty, and healthy meal at a reasonable price within a short amount of time.

## - SCHOOL -



### Gyojigwon Cafeteria (한경관, 교직원 식당) 1st floor

Located in the small but spacious and warm building of Hangeong Hall, the Gyojigwon Cafeteria provides several full-course Korean meals, including soup and other food that only costs KRW 6500. It is a perfect cafeteria that fits a university student's budget and stomach, and it is frequented by not only students but also by professors too.

One drawback of Gyojigwon is the fact that it only opens between 12:00 and 14:00 and that it has a fixed food plan per day. In other words, they provide one type of meal on Mondays, but provide another type on Tuesdays, and so on.

But due to its good taste, cheap price, big and fast serving, and proximity to the Yeonhui Building and Daewoo Annex in general, it's a perfect place for UIC students to visit during their lunch breaks.

**Recommended meal:** They serve a different type of meal everyday.



### Student Union Building, 1F Cafeteria

This is another Korean food cafeteria located on the 1st floor of the Student Union building. It works between 7:00 to 9:00 for breakfast, from 11:00 to 14:00 for lunch, from 16:00 to 17:00 for dinner on weekdays and is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The price often varies between KRW 2500 (breakfast) to KRW 6500 and students are provided with a full Korean meal which is enough to fill anyone's stomach.

Personally, I think the breakfast meals are the best here, and not many students show up during breakfast period, so you can enjoy your meal in relative peace. However, the lunch and dinner are very busy as it is always full with students and faculty members.

The cafeteria also offers snacks such as ramen, kimbap and a cafe is located right next to it on the same floor.

**Recommended food:** Breakfast (KRW 2500)



### Delicious steamed tofu and kimchi (맛있는 순두부앤김치찌)

This exceptionally long-named 24-hour restaurant is located a few blocks down from the Seolnongtang restaurant mentioned above. It is a busy restaurant with mostly foreign customers coming in and out. The staff there is always the same, two women who serve you really fast, but there's a reason why its always full—their sundubu jjigae (tofu stew) is to die for.

Customers have a variety of choices. 18 different ways to have their tofu stew, ranging from ham and stew, beef, seafood to dumpling tofu stew, which all cost KRW 7500 each. Moreover, there's a sign in the restaurant that says "Please don't crack eggs on your friends' heads—Yes, it's happened before" in Korean, lightening the restaurant's mood.

**Recommended food:** Any of their sundubu jjigae, but recommend the beef one specifically (KRW 7500)

### Sinseon Seolnongtang (신선 설농탕)

"Sinseon Seolnongtang" is a 24-hour restaurant located just outside of Yonsei's Sinchon Campus in the street where Daiso and No Brand are located. It is a clean-looking, white glass building that offers variety of seolnongtang, or ox bone soup, and other Korean meals such as bulgogi and kimchi pancakes.

Due to its location outside of campus, its price is slightly more expensive than the campus food, ranging from KRW 8000 to KRW 21000. However, for students and faculty members, they can eat a healthy and full meal with KRW 8000. Also, the staff of the restaurant is quite clean and welcoming.

**Recommended meal:** Seolnongtang medium (KRW 8000)





## - SCHOOL -



### Daimon Kitchen

A wooden cottage-like building with the “One Piece” Pirate Flag hung in the interior—this lovely restaurant is a Japanese ramen food place located between Sinchon and Ewha. Even though it will take students an hour and a half to eat there and then go back to school, this restaurant was included in the list because of its superb taste.

Daimon Kitchen is a good place to visit as it offers tasty ramen with 3 slices of pork meat. It works from 9:00 - 22:00 and the different types of ramen (all in a huge bowl) cost between KRW 6500 to KRW 8500.

**Recommended food:** Miso ramen (KRW 7500)

All in all, this is a short list of restaurants and cafeterias students can visit at Sinchon Campus. This list, undeniably, has excluded other good restaurants and cafeterias located in and near Yonsei University, Sinchon Campus. However, I am confident that I have covered the major, important ones that cost under KRW 10000. Also, I am hopeful that this list will help students to eat healthy and frequent meals during their stay in the university. After all, health is one of the most important aspects of life.



# The Divided Yonsei

: ARE WE REALLY TOGETHER?

The Yonsei Campus scenery remains the same no matter what day it is—friendly faces chatting together, relaxing on benches or turning red while running late to class.

Foreign students mostly remain with foreign students.

Korean students stay with their Korean friends.

Both groups gather together from time to time, to discuss class matters and missed assignments, but then everyone leaves to their assigned territories.

What is peculiar is that exactly the same image can be seen in UIC main building, Daewoo Annex Hall, as well. Yet, UIC is supposed to be different, international. Why are we not really living up to this image?

*Underwood International College – a place for international minds*—a slogan featured in the recent UIC advert at Times Square in New York.

However, are we truly international? The UIC administrative system divides its students amongst three categories—Koreans, Overseas Koreans, and International Students. Each category has a

separate admission process and usually enters at different times of the year. Those graduating from Korean based high schools start college in the spring semester while International students and Overseas Koreans from high schools abroad come in fall. This semester difference might not seem like much, but it creates a significant barrier amongst the two groups. Unlike their spring counterparts, fall freshmen rarely get to go on a freshman welcoming MTs or are assigned to homerooms. If they want to take part in these freshman traditions, they have to wait for the events held in the spring semester. However, by then the divide is already deeply rooted in the class and thus the participation is very low amongst international students. UIC boasts to host students from over 40 different countries but seeing those students actively involved in many of the UIC or Yonsei based events is very rare.

To get more insight into the reason why there exists almost a barrier between most Korean students and non-Koreans at UIC I asked various students their opinion on this matter.

Just as I assumed, most of those who graduated from Korean high schools had



friends from similar backgrounds while international students stuck together as well. Every single response also confirmed that there is a divide between the two groups. Nevertheless, the reasons why remain a mystery. Some suggested it was due to the .5 class system, others blamed the low numbers of international students, making them a secluded minority.

***“I think the foreign students are a minority which will tend to divide them even further. If there were a bit more foreign students, I think it would be a bit easier.” (UIC Student)***

When asked what could be done to help improve this situation, everyone proposed more events aimed to help Korean and international students to interact.

***“There should try to attract more foreign students. And try to create more programs for foreign and Korean students to interact.” (UIC Student)***

***“Korean students seem to forget their previous ‘international’ experiences once they return to UIC.”***

This comment made me really think of how much UIC is still reliant on the typical Korean university experience. Most of the university events are run solely in Korean, the potential gatherings that could help international students get in touch with other students are often poorly advertised or only in Korean. The language problem even impacts English-based UIC classes, where for years and years, students have been complaining about the frequent use of Korean. It seems that all of this inevitably pits the two groups against each other and makes it almost impossible for us to freely interact regardless of our nationalities. Some say it’s the language barrier, but even for internationals English is often not their first language. We have all decided to study at UIC so it would be nice if everyone could feel a bit more comfortable, a bit more welcome.

*In the end, we are all in this together.*

- SCHOOL -

School

# Two-Week Summer Program at KYOTO UNIVERSITY

2019. 11. 14

written by Hyein Ahn

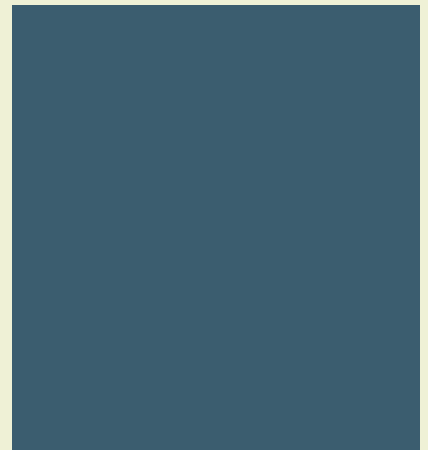


## 一期一会 (*ichigoichie*)

This Japanese saying by Sōji roughly translates into “one life, one encounter.” It describes every meeting as a once-in-a-lifetime encounter and encourages us to give each moment of our lives our all. 一期一会 also happened to encapsulate the two weeks that the four UIC students spent in Kyoto. This summer, four UIC students were given an opportunity to participate in a program offered by Kyoto University. They were able to make

the most of those new intellectual experiences and friendships in a beautiful city where centuries of history intersect with the hustle and bustle of the present.

Kyoto University (also known as Kyodai) is a national university in Kyoto. Its heritage is matched by its fame for producing world-class researchers, including 18 Nobel Prize laureates, two Fields Prize medalists, and one Gauss Prize recipient. It is currently one of Asia’s highest ranked universities



## - SCHOOL -

and a top-tier university in Japan. Three to four UIC students are invited to this institution every year for the “Kyoto Summer Program (KSP) for East Asia and Germany Students with KU Students.” This year, the selected UIC students took part in the program from July 29th to August 9th. The four students from different majors and different stages of their college years engaged with those from even more diverse backgrounds. The participants—whose majors spanned from everything between electronic engineering to French literature—were from Peking University in China, the University of Hong Kong in Hong Kong, National Taiwan University in Taiwan, and several German universities along with students at Kyoto University.

Despite the variety, all of the participants took the same lectures on aesthetics in Japanese literature, the human mind in zoology, environmental technology, and Japanese language. The lecture on aesthetics in Japanese literature especially left a lingering impression on the participants as the lecture delivered authentic aspects of traditional Japanese literature that could not be learned elsewhere. The Japanese literati often associated environmental elements with their work, as they had a tendency to cherish the essence of nature. This is why many haikus—a short, classical form of



## - SCHOOL -



Japanese poetry in three phrases—center on the theme of nature. One of the UIC students even raised a question, comparing a haiku with the theme of winter to a novel by Korean modernist author Yi Sang.

The program was not conducted solely in the classroom, as it also offered the advantage of relishing in historical sites and beautiful sceneries distinct to Kyoto. The students said that the field trip to Lake Biwa was especially memorable and impressive. Lake Biwa, and its surrounding wetland regions, is home to many animals, such as an abundant fish population and migratory water birds. At the same time, Lake Biwa draws the attention of tourists with the 17th-century Hikone Castle. The students were invited to the laboratory at Shiga University for a simple lecture and an experiment using mud extracted from the wetland region. Afterwards, they went sailing on the stunning lake and conducted another experiment by themselves. With a gentle breeze all around them, they drew water from the lake, purified it, and shared cups of it to drink.

The KSP participants of 2019 mostly started out as a crew of strangers, but in the end, they grew to recognize one another as companions, roommates, and so much more. Throughout this program of lectures and field trips, the students were able to enrich a bond with one another which transcended the boundaries of nationality, language, and culture. In the words of Jaeyeon Jeon, class of 15 majoring in CLC, the KSP program was an opportunity to explore the world, and especially so in the sense that it differs greatly from UIC, an environment which he believes to be heavily influenced by the English language and its culture. While English remains the main means of communication between students from different parts of East Asia and Germany, trilingual or even quadrilingual students did not refrain from leading conversations in Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese. He said that it may have been simply due to differing levels of mastery in English but the fact that everyone had different approaches to the language, which rendered it as nothing more than *one of the options*, reminded him that there was no shame to not being able to speak a foreign language as one speaks his/her mother tongue. This sounds self-evident but it is also easily forgotten when surrounded by fellow UIC students.

The experience left the participants with invaluable encounters that took them beyond their textbooks and showed them a whole new world. These two weeks spent at Kyoto University helped all of the participants to become academics and individuals who deeply appreciate both what has come before them and what lies ahead.



# The Revolutionary Alzheimer's Disease Research at Yonsei University

*A look inside Professor YoungSoo Kim's laboratory*

**2019. 12. 27**

**written by Yerim Kim**

Professor YoungSoo Kim of Underwood International College's Bio-Convergence Major has been doing revolutionary research in the field of Alzheimer's disease. Professor Kim uses animal models to simulate Alzheimer's disease to find drug candidates and biomarkers that can indicate the presence of the disease early on in its development. The research that Professor Kim does is interdisciplinary, as it combines various disciplines of natural sciences including organic chemistry, chemical neurobiology and biochemistry. Professor Kim's laboratory uses solid-phase peptide synthesis, protein-based in vitro assays, HTS drug screening, and in vitro animal studies.

Alzheimer's disease is characterized by memory loss and cognitive deficits. The pathophysiology of Alzheimer's disease is the formation of two types of brain lesions. These brain lesions are senile plaques and neurofibrillary fibers. The formation of the brain lesions occurs years prior to the presence of clinical

symptoms. Thus, it is imperative to find early detection tools. In terms of Alzheimer's disease therapeutics, Professor Kim's laboratory is working on finding drug targets to alleviate the symptoms of the neurodegenerative disease.

Professor Kim's research is largely divided into three categories – drug discovery, diagnostic methods and methodology development. In drug discovery, a key molecule that Professor Kim's team found was 4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazinepropanesulphonic acid (EPPS). EPPS can break down neurotoxic plaques of amyloid- $\beta$  ( $A\beta$ ) that form during Alzheimer's disease development. The disaggregation of  $A\beta$  plaques was observed to mitigate symptoms of cognitive deficits and memory loss in mice models. An important implication of EPPS's ability to reduce the level of behavioral deficits in mice is that the formation of  $A\beta$  plaques is a crucial factor of Alzheimer's disease progression.





In diagnostic methods, Professor Kim's laboratory developed a blood test that can detect Alzheimer's disease. Amyloid- $\beta$  ( $A\beta$ ) protein is strongly correlated with the onset of Alzheimer's disease.  $A\beta$  is a biomarker that is able to cross the blood-brain barrier. EPPS can be used to separate  $A\beta$  aggregates into monomers and this can be quantified. While the direct causation of Alzheimer's disease as  $A\beta$  aggregates is not fully confirmed, there is a strong correlation with the concentration of  $A\beta$  and Alzheimer's disease development. It is critical that other biomarkers are investigated to use in conjunction with  $A\beta$  to further corroborate the blood test results for the accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

Finally, in methodology development, Professor Kim outlines the ways in which Alzheimer's disease mice models can be prepared. An acute mouse model can be made by directly injecting  $A\beta$  into the intracerebroventricular injection. In addition, Professor Kim developed a method to efficiently synthesize  $A\beta$ .

Professor Kim was highly successful in identifying key drug targets, diagnostic methods and the necessary protocol to develop mice models to study the brain. This does not mean that he did not face any obstacles. First, as Professor Kim is not a medical doctor, he is not able to perform his own clinical trials. This means that translational research is often difficult. However, Professor Kim is able to collaborate with Sinchon Severance's neurology

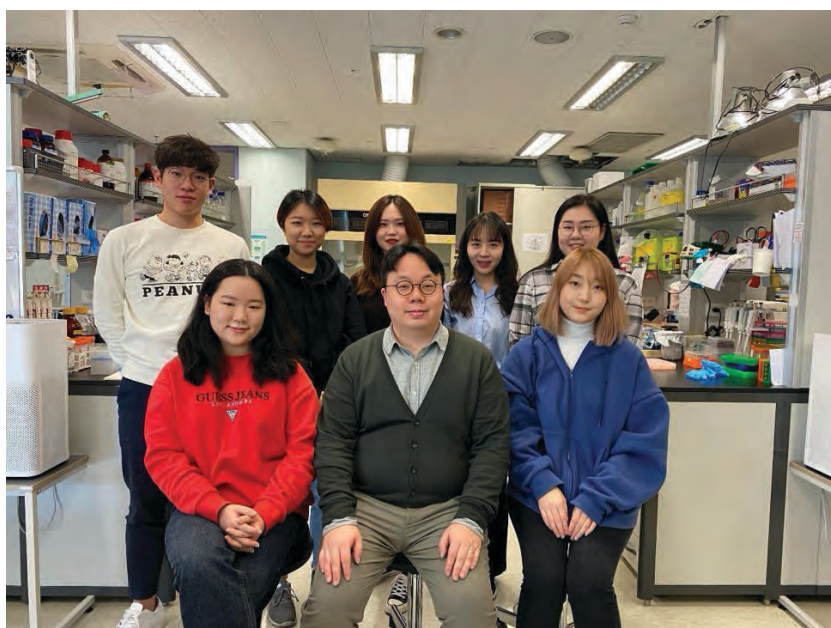
department in order to further study the effects of his research. Second, Alzheimer's Disease's main risk factor is aging. This means that the research needs time for cells and mice to age. It may take months and even years for the mice models to show behavioral deficits. Thus, it is imperative to plan ahead to age the mice to test for certain drug targets. Third, administering drugs in animal testing requires many mice models of the same gender, age and Alzheimer's disease progression. There needs to be both positive and negative controls, as well as the mice tested with the drug targets. Approximately a hundred mice may be required for a test using a single drug target.

Professor Kim gave valuable advice for UIC students interested in going to graduate school. It is very important to have laboratory experience, especially as an undergraduate student in biological sciences. Working in a lab suggests a good representation of life as a graduate student. In addition, students can interact with graduate students and get a first-hand experience of conducting their own research.

Currently, Professor Kim is working with undergraduate and graduate students from UIC and the School of pharmacy. He is organizing a remodeling of the laboratory research area to accommodate behavioral studies in mice. Professor Kim is hoping to conduct more studies to further elucidate the mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease and to find more drug targets for therapeutic effects.

**Prof. Kim with undergraduate students working in his lab, their names are (clockwise from top left)**

- Seungwoo HONG (BC '17)
- Soljee YOON (Ewha Univ. Senior)
- Hyung Ji LEE (BC '18)
- Dakyung LEE (BC '16)
- Sohee PARK (BC '16, Integrated BS/MS degree in Pharmacy)
- Heeyang LEE (BC '16, Integrated BS/MS degree in Pharmacy)
- Prof. YoungSoo KIM
- Daniella UGAY (LSBT '16)



# Launching a Career

:Student Internships in South Korea



2019. 11. 07

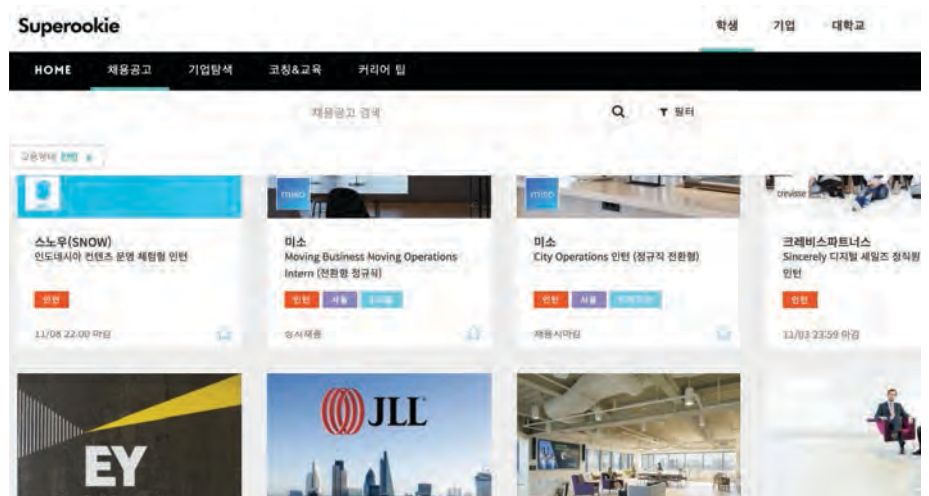
written by Yeon Seo Koh

The overall youth unemployment rate of South Korea has been continuously rising since 2001 and has reached 10.4% as of June 2019, a rate significantly higher than 3.7% of Japan and 8.6% of the United States. In the Korean context, the law defines youth as persons between 9 to 24. More and more young adults are becoming discouraged as they face the harsh reality after graduating from either high school or college. A decent educational background no longer guarantees a job. The standards of companies have become higher than ever because competition is intense with a large pool of individuals applying for limited job positions. Job market competition, however, does not necessarily begin after one graduates from college. It begins even before that with internships.

Although many Korean human resource managers claim that it is not necessary for individuals to have completed at least one internship before applying for full-time job positions, it has somewhat become a norm for South Korean college students to search and apply for internships as a strategic tool to build their future career. Work experience has become one of the most crucial aspects employers consider when they hire people. As selfish as it may sound, firms strive to minimize investment (e.g. cost and time for skill development training programs) and maximize profit by hiring individuals who are already familiar with the work environment and thus more likely to adjust quickly. As a result, a great number of undergraduate students constantly feel the pressure to work as interns at private or public enterprises, educational institutions, or international organizations.

Being accepted as an intern at a prestigious firm, however, is extremely challenging with more than a hundred applicants for intern position offerings. In fact, Henkel Korea, a chemical and consumer goods multinational company, has claimed that it receives about 150 to 200 applications for their regular summer and winter internship programs that usually have 15 openings. Similarly, the Innisfree Global Marketing Team claimed that they received 55 applications in two days for their August 2019 intern opening, forcing them to close applications earlier than expected. For P&G, an American multinational consumer goods company, the competition ratio reaches 500:1, a ratio that clearly indicates the challenge of being accepted as an intern. Nevertheless, since one applicant can and usually does apply for several intern positions, the chances are better than as it appears.

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### Applying for Internships

The most common way to apply for an internship is to visit popular online job-searching websites (e.g. JobKorea, JobPlanet, Superookie, Peoplenjob, etc.) or college career sites. Other methods would be visiting the company's career section homepage to upload one's resume to the company's database or cold-mailing HR managers even if there is no intern position opening posted at the moment.

### Resumes: Showing your Qualifications

*"Show what they[firms] want to see on the resume"*

In order for one to gain work experience as an intern and eventually carry out a successful career in South Korea, it is recommended to prepare in advance. Creating a solid resume would be the first step in securing an internship position at a prestigious firm. The resume should be straightforward and concise, a length of no more than two pages, single page being optimal. It is also important to focus on one's key achievements, experiences, or capabilities and to provide specific details rather than trying to squeeze "everything" into one's resume. One must thoroughly research the firm and read carefully the specific details of the internship before finalizing the resume. Not all firms look for the same qualities. Therefore, it is essential to figure out what the firm wants to see from the candidate and to directly show them relevant competencies.

### Interviews: Showing who You are

*"Don't think of interviews as evaluations, think of them as intellectual conversations"*

Many candidates consider interviews to be the most intimidating step throughout the intern application process. In the case of consulting firms such as Bain & Company, PwC Consulting, and Roland Berger, it is highly recommended to read Case in Point by Marc P. Cosentino, a book considered as the "bible" for the consulting industry. The book will help individuals to learn how case interviews are carried out and ways in which they can study for them. Other helpful practices would be to search online for guesstimation problems or brain teasers, the types of questions that usually pop up once or twice during consulting firm interviews. One should also prepare for more personal questions such as "Why consulting?", "Why the specific firm[e.g. Bain]?", and "Why you?"

The Korean job market is tough and hypercompetitive. For students to successfully launch their careers, it has become highly necessary to participate in internships. Searching for appropriate internship positions is a long and arduous process, from acquiring language proficiency tests and taking part in extracurricular activities to writing one's resume and going to interviews. It is indeed a frightening experience and a challenge, but with a decent amount of preparation, even the shyest and seemingly least confident can excel.

# Overview of Underwood Division Majors: **International Studies**

2019. 12. 12

written by Yeon Seo Koh

## International Studies (IS) Major

The international studies major offered at UIC combines three main fields of study: international relations, international economics, and international law. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum allows its students to acquire a well-rounded understanding of the numerous issues occurring in the globalized world at both regional and international levels. Topics range from orientalism, realism, and constructivism to human rights violations, sustainable development, and trilateral cooperation between Northeast Asian countries. Through intensive research, presentations, and discussions, IS majors learn how to express their critical opinions in a cohesive manner not only through writing but also speech. They have opportunities to exercise strategic thinking skills by integrating information and developing solutions for socio-economic issues. Students also learn how to identify and interpret new social paradigms, use comparative analysis to draw connections, and apply traditional international relations theories to the real world.

## International Studies Major Courses at UIC

UIC's international studies major's focus on fostering a global mindset makes it unique. A rich array of courses specifically focus on East Asia, thus allowing students to build a strong regional expertise. However, there are also numerous IS courses that touch upon relevant issues from an international perspective. Through rigorous course-work, students are driven to acquire an interdisciplinary and flexible mindset, a core value that serves as a strong basis for gaining future global competitiveness.

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### Brief overview of some IS Major Courses

#### **Terrorism and International Security (international relations)**

This course covers topics such as conventional military security, nuclear weapons, securitization, terrorism, economic and political security, and feminist perspectives on security. It is a course recommended to students who enjoy engaging in discussions since almost 50% of the course is comprised of discussions and presentations. There are two research papers that must be submitted but students should keep in mind that participation is the most important.

#### **Investment Analysis and Global Management (international economics)**

Students can learn basic financial terms and make real-life applications. On the midterm and final, students will be asked to answer questions like, "If you want to buy a condominium in New York, what would you have to do in order to not pay over the inherent value as a prudent buyer?" Overall, students state that the course is useful but some have complained that they had difficulty preparing for exams since the course has no textbook or powerpoints. All the content is delivered through lectures.

#### **International Law and Governance (international law)**

This course focuses on how the world's infrastructure is being shaped through law and governance. It is one of the UIC courses that provides the best quality lectures and students will be able to analyze the interface of international law and governance through the prism of issues such as piracy, global warming, and development. There are, however, a few downsides. The in-class midterm exam lasts for 5 hours while the final is 10 hours. Students might also have to sacrifice their holidays for make-up classes.

### Prospective Career Paths

International studies students have comparative advantage when it comes to choosing their career path. IS majors are not specifically confined to one field of study and this allows them to launch careers in various industries anywhere around the world. Also, UIC IS alumni have constantly stated that the high level of proficiency in English and critical thinking skills that they have obtained throughout their college life have greatly benefited them when seeking internships and full-time job positions after graduation.

Daewook Kwon [IS Class of 2009] now works for McKinsey & Company's Amsterdam office as a management consultant. When he was a junior, he also worked for Boeing Company as an intern. At a recent alumni talk, he stated that the communication and strategic thinking skills that he developed throughout his IS major courses allowed him to excel in consulting firm case interviews. He was able to construct his unique analysis framework that impressed the interviewers, securing him the job position.

Sujin Kim [IS Class of 2013] is currently working at the International Labor Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency, planning and executing sustainable development projects in South America. She said in her recent career talk that she became interested in ILO when she took the International Organization and Law course taught by professor Man Kwon Kim. With assistance from IS professors, she was able to successfully apply for the ILO internship and was offered an official job position a few months later.

Other IS alumni have become successful lawyers or law school students of prestigious universities both in South Korea and abroad. There are also individuals who have joined the Korea National Diplomatic Academy to pursue a career as diplomats while others have started a finance or marketing career in multinational corporations such as P&G and Johnson & Johnson. Thus, the IS major grants its students the merit to secure leadership positions in various areas such as government and foreign services, multinational corporations, law firms, and international organizations.

# League of Eagles: **YONSEI RC OLYMPICS**



**2019. 12. 27**

written by **Jeongwon Choi**

The sprints that carry life-or-death desperation; the dynamic tackles that inspire the fierce sense of competition; the aggressive heckling and slogan-chanting from the audience; the detonative roars that silence the opposition. At this moment, nothing else matters: the midterms you failed, the increasing unemployment rate, the evasive true meaning of life—let them be forgotten for now. You are here for victory.

The mesmerizing spectacle of sports is enough to ignite the passionate hearts of any college freshmen. That dream of racing the field with teammates, laid aside for the excuse of college preparation, beckons. You find yourself reflected in the determined athlete showering with sweat: the hero whom you once aspired to be. If you are seeking a place to rediscover that buried passion, RC Olympics will be your stage.

If Harry Potter and his friends at Hogwarts had Quidditch games, we Muggles at Yonsei University have RC Olympics. RC Olympics, a soul-stirring drama of twists and turns between the twelve houses of the RC program, is the most cherished intra-school sports competition for Yonsei University freshmen. To provide some context, the RC stands for “Residential College,” a prestigious education model that weaves classroom learning with community life by offering various lectures, performances, contests, and social events to participate in. There are in total twelve houses in Yonsei’s RC program, each with its own distinguished theme and culture—Allen, Underwood, Avison, Baekyang, Yun Dongjoo, Yongjae, Muak, Appenzeller, Evergreen, Won Chul, Chi-won, and Cheongsong.

Students train together to claim the throne of the season, which is determined by the overall performance in the following five entries: soccer, basketball,

badminton, table tennis and relay. While the teams may not play in a crowded stadium of blinding lights—with hundreds of reporters directing their cameras and professional commentators analyzing each move—they are fueled by the support and shared enthusiasm of other housemates. The bleachers for Appenzeller have always remained warm with eager Appenzeller residents and its beloved, tireless Residential Master, Professor Chad Denton.

The RC Olympics of 2019 has surely been a theater of excitement, all the way through its closing ceremony held on November 13th at the Vision Hall at Songdo campus. The ceremony consisted of three phases: the performances of pulsating rhythms prepared by RYU (Rap in da Yonsei University), the magnificent award ceremony and the adrenaline-flowing afterparty. Embarking with the congratulatory address from the dean of the RC program, the event also hosted plenty of raffles to enrich and uplift the atmosphere of celebration.

While the Yoon Dongjoo house seized the title of final champion, the Appenzeller house—one of the two international houses in the RC program—finished as few-points-short second. Below are the interviews conducted with the team coaches and Professor Chad Denton, the current supervisor for the house.

**What distinguishes your team from all the others?**

Definitely teamwork. We had many talented players we could rotate throughout the season but that is not all. We created our own identity. We belong together and the communication enabled us to utilize our strengths and weaknesses to bring out the best of the team. Beyond the sports, we are friends: a bunch of guys who badly wanted to win.

JoonHwa Lee,  
Basketball coach,  
Quantitative Risk  
Management major,  
entering class of 18

**What was the most memorable match?**

In the semifinals, we beat Yongjae house, who was the champion for soccer last year. There was a lot of pressure, but that is what made the victory even sweeter. We were losing one to zero. Then we came back even with missing the main keeper and striker. I, the coach, had to play as the keeper and it was as insane as it sounds—we almost gave up. But I relentlessly cheered for the team despite the worst circumstances and that somehow led to our comeback with four goals.

Junsung Lee,  
Soccer coach,  
Nanoscience and  
Engineering major,  
entering class of 18

**How do you feel about the achievement of your house?**

I am so excited as I have been gladly watching most of the games and I clearly understand how much work has gone into this single cup. As closely as I have been with them, I know what this means to the students and that also means so much to me.

**Do you think these RC Olympics and sports events have a positive impact on students?**

Absolutely, I think it's a great way to have much more balance in life and a good stress relief. I competitively ran the marathon this semester and got to interact with many students which was delightful. I really look forward to expanding the program and I hope next year we can add ultimate frisbee as an entry.

Professor Chad Denton,  
Residential master of  
Appenzeller



The Appenzeller house would not expect anything less of the success they have cultivated this year as Professor Denton finished the interview with a pronouncement to prospective next year's competitors: **"I am expecting even more next year. The pressure is on you, so start training!"**

# REASONABLENESS FOR CLEANERS

2019. 11. 14

written by Taewon Min

Strange fruits are hanging in the streets of Yonsei. The red and white banners all over campus grounds are written by cleaners protesting the school's alleged breach of the Labor Standards Act, unfair labor practices, and negative treatment of labor unions. The fact that these protests have occurred cyclically in recent years, not only at Yonsei but also other universities, suggests that this is not a temporary issue with a simple solution.

Universities often confer responsibilities to third-party cleaning service companies. When universities are faced with funding shortages, this inevitably leads to the restructuring of cleaning personnel or deteriorating working conditions. The schools' claims, in the words of John Rawls, would be considered as "perfectly rational" but also "highly unreasonable." While it is perfectly rational for universities to cut costs, their propositions to the cleaners are difficult to label as reasonable suggestions.

Reasonableness, according to Rawls, could be specified in two basic aspects. First, a reasonable person or entity would suggest fair terms of cooperation and willingly follow them when they are assured that others, who are of equal status, would do the same. For instance, if two equal students A and B are preparing for a group presentation, they would suggest standards of cooperation that are

mutually acceptable to both parties and would follow those standards if both parties agree. Those terms could be justified, since equal entities have agreed upon them and are therefore reciprocal, meaning they are impartial but also beneficial to those who follow them. Moreover, reasonable agencies are units of responsibility. Hence, when the reasonable terms of cooperation are broken, they take responsibility. Suppose A and B decided to each prepare for half of the presentation. This means A would be responsible for half of the presentation and would be held accountable if he or she could not complete the assigned part. Simply put, while rationality is a tool for promoting one's profit, reasonableness is a tool for one to communicate with others.

Following these definitions, it is difficult to claim that universities are reasonable in dealing with the janitorial staff. The university, first of all, suggests terms of cooperation that the cleaners would not have agreed to if they were of equal standing. Even though one might interpret the cleaners' initial decision to work as an agreement to the terms offered by the university, this interpretation fails to recognize that the cleaners, who are paid minimum wage and often have other jobs to maintain their livelihoods, are hardly in an equal position with the university and might have involuntarily chosen to work.



Moreover, it is doubtful whether the university is abiding by the initial agreement made with the janitorial staff. If the protestors' claims are true and the university had come up with a fairly reasonable agreement of cooperation in the first place, current controversies such as the potential breach of Labor Standards Act can only be understood as negligence of the initial agreement. Since the cleaners, no matter how desperate they may be, would not have agreed to such terms that would disparage their basic rights, they perceive the university to have failed to execute the initial agreement. The issue of responsibility also suggests that the university is being unreasonable to its cleaners. The school is unwilling to take responsi-





bility for the harsh working conditions of the cleaners, arguing that it is the cleaning service companies who should be taking the burden. Even though objectively there might not be a problem with this claim, it would still be difficult to argue that the university is being reasonable since their agreement with the cleaning service companies is part of the dispute. By deciding to retain the lowest bidder, the university pressured cleaning service companies to cut down costs, leading them to create harsh working conditions or restructure personnel to the disadvantage of workers. The possibility that the university could have alternatively agreed to a bidder that vowed to behave more reason-

ably to its laborers suggests that the school shares at least some of the blame.

While it may be true that the university is suffering from financial difficulties, this does not justify their unreasonable actions towards the cleaners by deteriorating their working conditions and basic rights. Therefore, by being more reasonable in Rawlsian terms, Yonsei will be able to create a community in which every individual would gain mutual benefits by following an impartial standard of cooperation and responsibility.

# Interview with Professor Sabine Frühstück, a Shinhan Distinguished Faculty Member

2019. 11. 10

written by Dongwoo Kang



*Professor Sabine Frühstück (left) with the Dean of UIC, Professor Taeyoon Sung (right)*

Since 2006, the Shinhan Distinguished Faculty Program has provided UIC students the opportunity to interact with leading scholars and experts from all over the world. As part of the program, UIC annually hosts a number of distinguished visiting faculty to give lectures and intensive seminars. The UIC Scribe had a chance to speak with this year's visiting Professor Sabine Frühstück, Koichi Takashima Chair in Japanese Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara and renowned expert on issues of gender and sexuality, military and war, and the history of childhood and emotion.

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**Q. Could you please briefly introduce yourself?**

My name is Sabine Frühstück and I am a professor of Modern Japanese Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies. I am also affiliated with the departments of Global Studies, Feminist Studies, History, and Anthropology due to my work being very interdisciplinary. I draw from the methodologies of ethnography, cultural history, and the critical study of knowledge and visual culture. My primary focus is on Japan from the late 19th century to today.

**Q. You have been invited to be a Shinhan Distinguished Faculty member here at Yonsei University. Please share with us what you are planning to do during your time here.**

As Shinhan Distinguished Faculty, I believe I have two roles. My main role is to engage with students in a course on *How Children Make War* in the format of an intensive seminar—working with students from Monday through Thursday, for two weeks. This course was prepared jointly with colleagues from Underwood International College here at Yonsei University: Professors Helen J.S. Lee, Howard Kahm, and Seto Tomoko.

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I am also privileged to give a number of talks during my time here. I will be speaking to audiences from UIC and the Department of English Language and Literature here at Yonsei, but also at Seoul National University.

**Q. You mentioned working alongside other professors teaching this course. How did you become familiar with them?**

I have known Professor Lee for a very long time. I remember first coming across her work through reviewing her manuscript, *Reading Colonial Japan: Text, Context, and Critique* for Stanford University Press. Her co-edited volume is a brilliant collection of English translations of original Japanese texts, commentaries by Japanese scholars and other experts, and overall commentaries by the two editors. It provided a completely fresh and deep look onto the Japanese colonial regime and is suitable for both scholars and students alike.

**Q. How did you first become interested in Japanese Studies?**

I grew up in Austria with parents who often traveled to faraway places primarily to climb high mountains. With and without them, I went to many different places but somehow never to Asia. Even when I traveled on my own or with friends, most of my travels were in Europe. So, I wanted to study a place I did not know much about, a place that sounded appealing, exotic, but also modern. I believe that is what drew me to Japan.

**Q. Your areas of expertise include gender and sexuality, military and war, and the history of childhood and emotion. Could you please briefly introduce your disciplines and what you have particularly focused on?**

I received my bachelor's degree from the University of Vienna in Austria. At this school, there is great emphasis on modern Japanese history and sociology. In graduate school, I became interested in the social and historical study of science, which led to my dissertation and later my first monograph, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 2003), in which I looked at the history of sexology. While writing my book, I realized that the military was the one institution that allowed the Japanese state direct access to a very large number of male bodies via their mandatory physical exams. The military had great interest in ensuring that young males joining the military were healthy and did not suffer from diseases, especially sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This was at the end of the 19th century: At the time, STDs like syphilis were greatly debilitating, both physically and mentally, and were spreading to offsprings. Subsequently, I became interested in the military not as a war-making institution but as a source of important data for nation building, for maintaining and improving the health of the population at large, and even for assessing education levels. While I found my archival work rewarding, it was a rather lonely task. Partly because of my desire to speak to living beings, my next project focused on the current-day



military in Japan and was based not primarily on archival research (although that was part of it), but participant observations and interviews with a broad range of members of the Self-Defense Forces from first year cadets at the National Defense Academy to base commanders and veterans. This ethnography was published entitled *Uneasy Warriors: Gender, Popular Culture and Memory in the Japanese Army* (University of California Press, 2007). The book's core question is how (primarily) young men who join the military voluntarily make sense of being members of a force that cannot participate in war as they are legally restricted by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. I addressed this question through life-course interviews, asking participants things such as personal achievements, family reactions, or personal goals, and many, many hours of participants observation in basic training, expert interviews, and attendance of military events. The book was translated into Japanese and became quite successful—nobody had done such ethnographic work before.

**Q. You have also focused on children through your publications and presentations. Is there a reason for this particular focus?**

While conducting research for *Uneasy Warriors*, I noticed that a significant portion of the public relations efforts of the military were primarily targeting children below their teen years. Looking deeper into this phenomenon, I realized that the military has great interest in conveying its role as a useful organization to children before they become active political individuals. This led me to my



interest in the larger topic of the interconnections between children, war, and militarism. For my recent work, *Playing War: Children and the Paradoxes of Modern Militarism in Japan* (University of California Press, 2017) I looked back into the 19th century for historical discussions on children's war games, including mock wars children play among themselves. Children would reenact the Russo-Japanese war to the point of even fatally injuring themselves, leading to adults becoming heavily concerned about children's safety and invested in discouraging such playtime activities. But by the late 1920s, public opinion had changed alongside preparations for real-life war: these children's war games were played at a massive scale, even between schools, all condoned by the state. Another aspect of the book looked at children's interactions with soldiers. Pictures of soldiers were published in children's books to convey the message that soldiers are "good men doing good deeds." Such use of visuals persisted even into the 1940s. Finally, when I looked at how the present Japanese military conveys its "good image," I saw many continuities to past wartime messages.

**Q. Is this your first time in Korea? Are there certain goals you wish to accomplish here?**

I have actually been in Korea once before, around 15 years ago as the UCSB representative to an Association of Pacific Rim Universities program that brought us all to Seoul. During the one-week program, I visited sites in

Seoul, the DMZ, and Seoul National University. Funnily, some of my colleagues had suggested that getting around in Korea would be easy due to my Japanese skills, but I found Chinese characters only on monuments. Still, I have been interested in learning more about Korea ever since my first visit here and so I try to visit at least one museum or some other historical site every day.

I am happy to be here as the Shinhan Distinguished Faculty and I wish to develop deeper connections with my colleagues and help build closer inter-institutional relationships of faculty and students with the help of the excellent professors here at Yonsei University.

**Q. Throughout your career, you sought to deeply understand and interact with a foreign culture. As students of an international college, many here at UIC are also interested in becoming a part of the greater international community, such as through being members of international organizations or working at multinational corporations. Could you provide some insights or tips on how you immersed yourself to a culture you were initially unfamiliar with?**

I feel that there are fewer hurdles today: It is easier and less costly for people to travel to different parts of the world. I think it is important to enjoy a sense of adventure, to be interested in discovering something you don't already know. To do this, you need to be perceptive and have humility. We all grow up learning our respective cultures as the norm, but you have to be open to other

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people's norms to gain a richer cultural experience. Humans all have similar needs, but cultures have addressed these needs differently. By thinking about what kinds of things other societies do differently, we can learn to adapt and apply them to improve others' lives.

Another mindset you need is a strong work ethic, a crucial part of which is the will to learn foreign languages. The acquisition of a foreign language enables you to be a responsible person in that culture. To function in everyday life in that language is important to create mutual understanding. As a resident of the United States for the past 20 years, I recognize English as a language with which you can survive in most places around the world today. But imposing a language and its inherent values on people of a different culture is deeply problematic. Even from my classes, I have observed students learning a lot just from the necessity to take a step back from the language they are comfortable in and try to communicate in a different language that necessitates alternative thinking. Thus, I recommend you take the time to learn the local language.

***Q. For those that want to pursue academia like you, could you share some personal experiences of what steps you took? What about the challenges you faced and how you overcame them?***

The most important thing is to do something you really enjoy. All other concerns are secondary to asking yourself whether you are doing something you enjoy doing.

I will share two personal challenges that I addressed in pursuing my career. I grew up in a family with a good work ethic. Self-pity was much abhorred in my family. There was no sympathy for whining. My father would always tell me, "When you fail at something, the most important thing is to pick yourself up again, realize what can be learned from the failure, and then move on." Things don't often go the way you want—I had my own self-doubts when working on my dissertation—but it is

important to deal with your inadequacies and shortcomings and not dwell on your disappointments and mistakes. When you are the driving force behind your work, you will naturally get joy out of what you are accomplishing and be emotionally and intellectually more independent.

As a woman, one faces additional challenges. Particularly at the time I was a student, Austria was a very sexist society. The university was an absolutely male-dominated culture. I realized that I had to do better work and work harder. But I also learned that I had to make sure that the people around me were recognizing my accomplishments. It is important for your achievements to be recognized as the result of you working hard and doing well, and to women that doesn't happen on its own.

One tip I have that will sound very Korean is to build connections and relationships. Your own skill set will take you only so far. At various moments you will need a social environment in which people understand what you are interested in, will think of you when a suitable opportunity arises, and will be ready to help when you need help. Don't wait for such people to discover you. You need to communicate to people what you are doing and what you need help with. I have never been afraid to ask for directions and guidance and I have never regretted to do so. Don't assume that you are expected to know everything already. Rather, take advantage of the fact that you are young, just starting out, and being surrounded by people with greater knowledge and experience who will happily share some of that with you.



## **SOCIETY & CULTURE**

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# The Earth Is FLAT

**2019. 11. 07**

**written by Se Jeen Park**

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If you have finished elementary school, then you most likely learned about how the Earth is round. The idea that the Earth is spherical has been around since ancient Greece, and it's been proven several times over with the development of science, as well as space travel. Most of us take this as common knowledge, but there's a growing subculture on the Internet dedicated to unveiling the so-called "Flat Earth Theory."

The general gist of the theory is in the name: the Earth is flat. There are minor disputes regarding the exact shape of the Earth, but the most popular theory within the community stipulates that the Earth is a flat disc, with the Arctic Circle in the middle and a wall of ice encompassing the rim. People believe that NASA is responsible for guarding this wall of ice to make sure that people do not wander too close and accidentally fall off the edge. In 1959, the Antarctic Treaty established international codes of conduct regarding the only major body of land without a native human population. This treaty was signed by all major powers, including the United States and the Soviet Union, and, according to flat-earthers, the clause included to limit travel to Antarctica was drafted to prevent people from discovering the truth. Even now, travelling to Antarctica is very difficult and costly, and people who are fortunate enough to go are supposedly banned from exploring the area without the accompaniment of a supervisor.





The belief that the Earth is flat is not new, with even the biblical story of Creation alluding to how God created a dome-shaped firmament separating the oceans and the sky and expanded all of his Creation to the “four corners” of the world. The more modern notion of the flat Earth theory likely originates from 19th century English writer Samuel Rowbotham; Rowbotham, who dropped out of school at the age of 9, was convinced that the Earth was flat after going to the Old Bedford River of the Cambridgeshire Fens and seeing that the 9.7 km stretch of water he saw was free from any sort of curvature. Rowbotham’s Bedford Level experiment and his book, *Zetetic Astronomy: Earth Not a Globe*, remain influential to flat-Earthers to this day.

Much like Rowbotham, contemporary flat-Earthers rely on their senses more than information conveyed by the government or any research institution. Out of all these institutions, the one flat-Earthers seem to trust the least is NASA, the leading source of space-related information for the general public. When NASA astronaut Jessica Meir posted pictures she took of Earth from space on Twitter, she was met with a wave of outraged flat-Earthers who accused her of lying. They claimed she was abusing her authority to feed misinformation to the public by using a fisheye lens to take her pictures of the Earth. While ultra-wide-angle lenses do tend to distort images to a certain extent, they are often the go-to choice for astronauts because of their ability to capture wide surface areas, not because they make the Earth look “rounder.”

So why and how is the Flat Earth Society gaining so much traction? According to Daryl Bockett, an International Studies professor and avid conspiracy fan at UIC, it’s likely that the conspiracy offers people a sense of comfort and reassurance. “The world is complicated and confusing, and it is just hard to get by from day-to-day for most people,” he says. “Why try to understand what somebody with a Ph.D. is trying to explain about gravity when your high school science background allows you to understand how a flat earth would work? Giving [flat-Earthers] a simple answer to complex problems makes life easier for them, especially if it fits with their instinctual and intuitive understandings.” This appeal to the senses has made an impact on the likes of Shaquille O’Neal, B.o.B., and even George Bernard Shaw, and the sudden spike in membership of the Flat Earth Society has led to an influx of YouTube videos attempting to validate the conspiracy.

With that said, the rise in the number of flat-earthers speaks to a dire need for the reformation of the education system. “If people are only going to high school,” says Professor Bockett, “we need a high school curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking skills and media literacy rather than just rote learning.” Most schools tend to lean towards teaching their students how to memorize facts and prepare for standardized testing rather than actually learn; as a result, we end up with people who are willing to abandon logic and evidence in favor of whatever “theory” they encounter on the Internet. Instead of dismissing young flat-Earthers, we, as students who are fortunate enough to have received a proper education, need to try to help guide and redirect their investigative spirits to more productive endeavors.



# BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

## Vaping Epidemic Spurs Panic and Health Warnings

2019. 11. 14

written by **Hyunjae Lee**



It was only after coming to Boston as an exchange student in February that I came to know about the pervasiveness of vaping. At my first party, I saw some fellow students smoking out of things that looked like pens and USB flash drives that people called “jewels.” Never once having smoked or set foot in an enclosed smoking area, I was stunned when my friends later informed me that they were e-cigarettes, or vaping products.

Vaping is referred to the use of battery-powered e-cigarettes whose “e-juice,” a liquid solution containing nicotine and other additives, produces an inhalable aerosol or “vapor” when heated. I discovered that the “jewel” I had been hearing about from all corners of the room was actually spelled “Juul.” Juul is a vaping product widely popular among youth and young adults, constituting approximately 75% of the US e-cigarette market share as of early October 2019. Bloomberg reported that Juul Labs Inc.’s sales skyrocketed from \$200 million in 2017 to \$1.3 billion in 2018, due to its marketing techniques: its sleek design, food-like packaging, and appealing flavors like mango or cool mint.

Most notably, vaping in general gained widespread popularity because it was initially advertised as a safer alternative to regular

cigarettes and promised to help addicts quit smoking. This friendly marketing approach raised many concerns, since it drew more people to smoke e-cigarettes, including underage adolescents whose developing bodies could be more severely damaged by vaping. It was also the lack of reliable research data regarding the safety of the liquid-based fillings in vaping products that generated worries that their promoted effects were dubious at best.

Such concerns turned out to be valid amidst a recent surge of vaping-related illnesses and deaths. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1,299 lung injury cases have been reported and 26 deaths have been confirmed in 21 US states as of October 8, 2019. Hospital admissions of such illnesses increased drastically since late June of this year. Most of its reported cases involve vapes containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a psychoactive chemical found in cannabis. Many vaping products linked to these mysterious pulmonary illnesses were also counterfeit products purchased from unofficial sources. However, doctors are still not certain of the exact causes of the reported illnesses and cannot conclude whether even legally purchased nicotine-only vapes are safe to smoke. In fact, 58% of





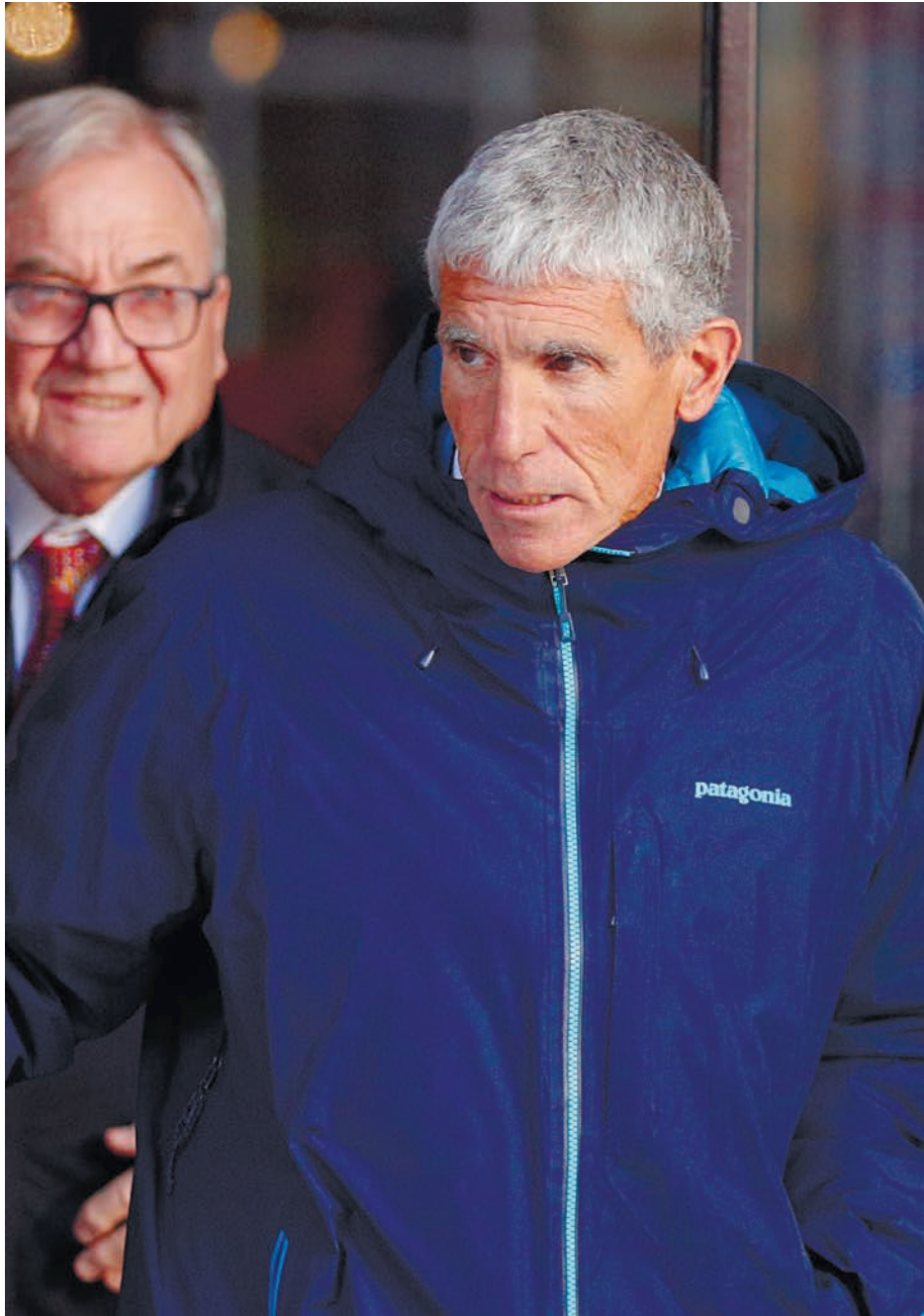
the patients reported using nicotine-containing products and 13% reported exclusive use of nicotine-based products. As the lack of research and information on the matter makes it difficult to distinguish the dangers of nicotine and THC-based vapes, the CDC cautions the use of all vaping products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), however, urges people to avoid the use of THC-containing products specifically.

80% of the patients were also found to be under 35 years old – this demographic aligns with the FDA's comment on the public health issue as the “epidemic of youth e-cigarette use.” As a response to mitigate vaping-related illnesses and deaths, several states have implemented bans on the sale of flavored e-cigarettes and vaping products. Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts declared a public health emergency and instituted a four-month ban on the sale of vaping products. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and the state's Department of Health have also enforced a state-wide ban, which is now being met with lawsuits from vape store owners. Higher education institutions such as Texas A&M University have joined the anti-vaping campaign by enacting a ban on vaping on all campuses. Wellesley College, the school I am currently on exchange in, has also recommended against the use of vapes and e-cigarettes. The Office of Student Wellness recently sent out campus-wide emails with additional links to on and off-campus resources to offer assistance in quitting.

The current panic-driven regulations on e-cigarettes in the US have generated various responses to this “epidemic” among different countries. The Indian government, fearing youth vaping health risks, banned e-cigarettes altogether in mid-September

2019, while China halted Juul's sales around this time. European countries such as Austria and Germany have subjected e-cigarettes under strict controls, viewing them as tobacco products. On the other hand, the UK has openly embraced e-cigarettes, which the Public Health England claimed are 95% less dangerous than regular smoking. South Korea is another country that classifies e-cigarettes as tobacco products. While the South Korean health ministry has advised the public to refrain from using liquid e-cigarettes due to emerging public concerns in the US, it has not enforced stricter controls. This relatively lax approach is grounded in the belief that sudden adverse health risks will not occur in Korea since THC additives including Vitamin E acetate are illegal substances and liquid cartridges in Korea contain reduced nicotine concentration levels of less than one percent, or 10 mg/ml, under existing regulations.

Although the exact impact of vaping is yet to be discovered, federal and state authorities in the US as well as other countries strongly believe there are health risks involved. More research needs to be conducted in a timely manner, which will allow individuals to make more informed decisions regarding their personal health and safety. Until more is known, however, perhaps one should think twice before vaping at a party.



William Rick Singer,  
who was found guilty of obstruction of justice and money laundering

The Meaning of  
**Privilege** in  
2019 College  
Admissions Scandal

# Society

2019. 12. 05

written by **Sukran Choi**

Ever since the controversial story surrounding the children of affluent parents scamming their way into college admissions came out, it has been a non-stop conversational topic for students rightfully enrolled in universities. Celebrities like Felicity Huffman and Lori Laughlin emerged in the headlines of every news outlet as the faces of reprehensible parents who had been caught in massive legal issues.

Although it is no surprise that there has been a history of bribery or 'generous' donation towards higher-tier, Ivy League universities, it is a first for the public to be exposed to a complete list of 50 parents who have rigged the system to sneak their children into reputable schools. This meant that those who are not granted the same resources received an insight into how these wealthy parents managed to bend the rules for themselves. Their tactics include elaborate schemes, varying from falsifying students' SAT or ACT scores to bribing coaches to recruit non-athlete students.

However, most schemes for this particular case can be traced back to a guy named William Rick Singer. Singer started the Key Worldwide Foundation, which disguised illegal transactions as a non-profit organization aiding disadvantaged children to access education in competitive schools. What is ironic is that every student involved in receiving help from this organization had extremely rich parents who paid enormous amounts to Singer to increase their chances of getting into elite universities. Singer received over \$25 million over a period of 7 years, acting as a middleman between the parents and college employees in the administration. What's more is that the Key Worldwide Foundation claims to be a non-profit, public charity so that Singer could evade taxes that would be imposed on a private charity.

On March 2019, Singer was found guilty of obstruction of justice and money laundering, with the possibility of facing up to 65 years in prison. The parents that attempted to buy their children's way into colleges have been battling their sentences, with some who have pleaded guilty and others who don't have to avoid ramifications for their actions. This further signifies the wealthy family's entitled attitude that essentially drove them into believing that they are an exception to certain rules in society. The very idea of struggling yet still enduring

the insufferable process of college applications does not register in their minds, let alone doing it without receiving innumerable help.

But what does this mean for students at Yonsei University, which has no affiliations with American universities' admission scandal? A similar instance of corrupt college admissions was recently exposed when Cho Kuk, South Korea's jurist was accused of being implicated in his daughter's false admission to medical school. Although the daughter failed her examinations twice to get into medical school at Busan National University, she managed to receive a scholarship for 6 semesters, which summed up to KRW 12 million. The ludicrousness behind awarding scholarships to someone who is not only undeserving, but also immensely privileged with excess wealth destroys the sole purpose of scholarships.

Not only do these scandals reveal the elite parents' lack of thought for implications regarding their privilege, but they also exhibit the inadequate management that runs throughout prestigious universities. Instead of basing our perception of these colleges based merely on their status, we must take into account the insufficient measures that have been taken by the administration, who in this case only focused on their self-interests (their motivations stemming from cupidity) instead of well-deserving students who could have thrived from advancing their education.

What leaves us from examining these cases, especially from the responses of the public, is the issue of unfairness or inequality in opportunities that some students were handed that facilitated their acceptance to colleges. The students' pain and rage in response to these scandals still remain after the initial shock of these revelations, suggesting that the 2019 college admission scandals represent a larger issue of disparity in our society.

# Development Aid

## :Not as Easy as Black and White

2019. 11. 28

written by Soonwoo Kwon

*“International organizations’ involvement in developing countries can deter growth”*

According to the World Bank’s poverty and equity data, in 2015, 735 million people were living below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day. Furthermore, according to UNICEF, in 2014, 22,000 children died each day due to poverty and 805 million people worldwide did not have enough food to eat. To alleviate these problems, numerous developed countries provide official development assistance to developing countries. Many international organizations such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Vision, and Oxfam International are also involved in trying to achieve international development. However, is development assistance actually helpful to developing countries?

In fact, there are many problematic and adverse sides of international development. One of the drawbacks is that corruption can lead to mismanagement of aid funds. Many public officials use development funds as opportunities to accumulate personal wealth. This leads to a vicious cycle where leaders use funds for their own benefit at the expense of others. For example, in Nigeria, a former governor was guilty of a £50m fraud while a former dictator was revealed to have \$1.3 billion in London banks. Also, corruption leads to fewer spending on investments, which increases poverty. In Nigeria, one million children are out of school, health services are debilitated, and 400,000 children are malnourished and starving. Since the aid funds are not getting to people who are actually in need, underdevelopment and economic failure continue to plague developing countries.

Furthermore, international organizations’ involvement in developing countries can deter economic growth. Social capital and trust between people are essential to the country’s development, but aid provided from outside weakens the trust within the local community. This breaks the social network and weakens social capital because of rent-seeking behavior, less pressure to reform inefficient policies, and thwarted accountability mechanisms. Also, mismanagement of aid funds can cause social unrest and possibly even civil war due to competition for resources. According to the Washington Post, there were violent

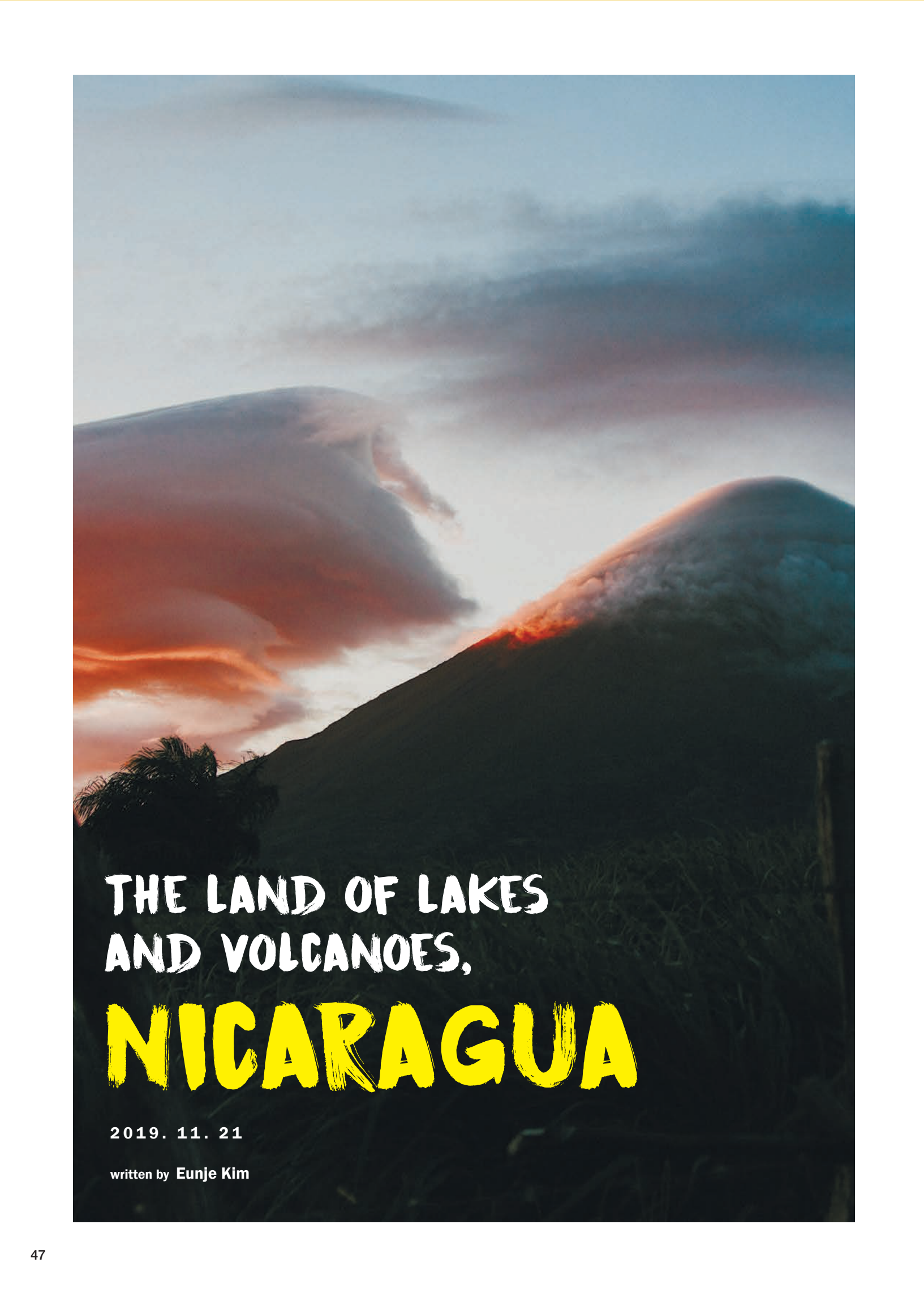
protests against Haiti’s government not only because of poverty and scarcity, but also corruption and lack of improvement in public services and infrastructure even with millions of dollars in aid. Another problem is that continuous inflow of foreign aid creates temporary growth and a false sense of stability which creates dependency and hurts the country’s long term economic development.

However, we should also look at the beneficial effects that aid and assistance by international organizations render. Aid can be central to achieving development goals and has actually resulted in unprecedented improvements in health, education, gender equality, human rights and security. Beyond income, overall progress in quality of life and happiness has risen even in non-rapidly growing countries. Success in improving health is especially noteworthy: according to The Guardian, in 1990, around 12 million children under the age of five died, but in 2010, that number decreased to 7.6 million. Also, the number of deaths of pregnant women declined by almost half. Aid has also improved education, especially for girls. In 2002, only 1 million children were enrolled in school in Afghanistan, none of whom were girls. By 2017, this number rose to 9 million, of which 3.5 million were girls. Therefore, working toward international development can actually have a positive influence in developing countries by making health and education widely available and increasing the quality of life.

International development is a challenging area and there is no definite solution since it is not as easy as black or white. Therefore, it is important for us to always look critically at both sides and try not to be biased towards either side. We should think about both the positive and negative effects of development aid and international development at the same time. In order to truly help developing countries, we have to reflect and approach our solutions critically before assisting them.

*“AID CAN BE CENTRAL TO  
ACHIEVING  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
AND HAS ACTUALLY RESULTED  
IN UNPRECEDENTED  
IMPROVEMENTS”*





THE LAND OF LAKES  
AND VOLCANOES,

# NICARAGUA

2019. 11. 21

written by Eunje Kim





*IT HAS A TROPICAL CLIMATE,  
AND IT IS SUMMER YEAR-ROUND.*

One of the most exciting parts about being a UIC student is getting to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures from all over the world. Though I am ethnically Korean, I grew up in Nicaragua before coming to UIC. During my first year, I realized that for many students, Nicaragua is a place you sweepingly hear about in history textbooks, if not at all. Thus, I would like to share a bit about this place I consider home at heart.

Nicaragua, also known as “the Land of Lakes and Volcanoes,” is the largest country in Central America. It is composed of 15 departments and two autonomous regions, with Managua as its capital city. It has a population of around 6 million inhabitants of mostly mestizo or Spanish-indigenous people. Given the historical legacy of colonization by both Spain and Britain, the official language is Spanish, but you will hear English and some indigenous languages in the Caribbean coastside. Since Nicaragua is located close to the equator, it has a tropical climate, and it is summer year-round.

As you would expect from the title, Nicaragua’s most notable terrenal features are its lakes and volcanoes. Just by looking at the map, Lake Nicaragua and Managua stand out the most.

Lake Nicaragua is the largest lake in Central America and is also one of the few freshwater lakes in the world with ocean animals like sharks, swordfish, and tarpon. Within Lake Nicaragua, there is a famous tourist attraction called Ometepe Island, which is made up of the twin volcanoes Concepción and Maderas. One of my most memorable middle school trips was climbing Maderas with my classmates. It took roughly eight hours to climb, left me shoeless and with many scratches, but with an imprinted image of its beautiful crater lagoon. Other famous volcanoes near the capital city are Volcán Masaya and Cerro Negro. At Volcán Masaya, you can see smoke coming out from the crater and lava at night. At Cerro Negro, you can experience “volcano-boarding” on its black sand-like surface. Since Nicaragua is located along the Ring of Fire, it is also common to feel earthquakes once in a while.



LAGUNA DE APOYO

**BUT ON A PERSONAL DIMENSION,  
IT HAS HELPED ME APPRECIATE  
THE UNIQUENESS OF DIVERSE CULTURES**



DOWNTOWN GRANADA

### Top 3 Places to See in Nicaragua

I would like to introduce you to three of my favorite spots and must-go places in Nicaragua: Laguna de Apoyo, Downtown Granada, and San Juan del Sur.

Back in Nicaragua, my family and I often visited *Laguna de Apoyo*, a crater lagoon, to enjoy the sight of its deep turquoise blue waters and swim. It is a one-hour drive from Managua and it is a place where you can just relax, kayak, or jump dive from floating wooden decks. I remember kayaking for the first time in this lagoon.

*Downtown Granada* is another beautiful place famous for its bright-colored colonial baroque architecture and multiple cathedrals. People take a lot of pictures at the main plaza or in front of the yellow Granada Cathedral. There are many restaurants and shops where you can buy traditional hand-craft souvenirs. You can also rent bikes and tour in horse carriages along the Calzada Street.

Lastly, *San Juan del Sur* is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Nicaragua located in the southwestern department of Rivas. It is well-known for its beaches, colorful pastel buildings, its vibrant nightlife filled with Latin music vibes, and traditional and seafood cuisine. If you are at San Juan, do not forget to visit Christ of Mercy Statue. There, you will be able to enjoy the breathtaking scenery of San Juan's main beach and surrounding mountains and buildings.

### Traditional Cuisine

Last but not least, I want to share pictures of my favorite traditional Nicaraguan cuisine.

This dish is called *Gallo Pinto*. It is made of fried rice and red beans with onion, sweet pepper, and garlic. It is often eaten with fried cheese, fried plantains, roasted beef meat, and cabbage salad. Gallo Pinto is a regular Nicaraguan meal, but I would never get tired of eating this. You can find it at any Nicaraguan food restaurant.

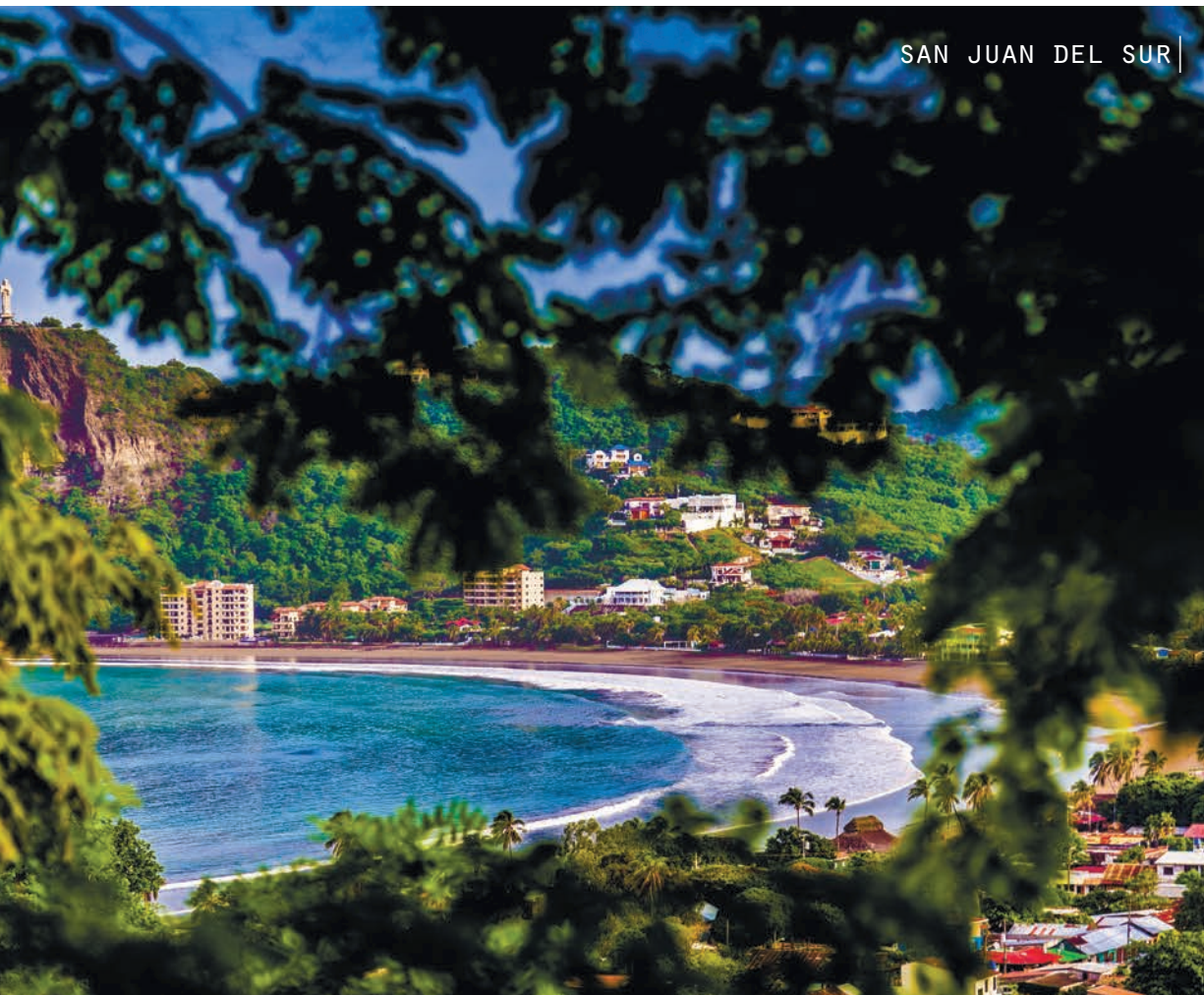
This dish is called *Nacatamal*. It is made up of ground corn filled up with pork meat, rice, potato, tomato, sweet pepper, and more. It is then wrapped into a plantain leaf and boiled in hot water for around 4 hours before it is ready to eat. It is usually eaten on September 15th, Nicaragua's Independence Day.

*Mangoes* are probably my favorite fruit, and if you like sour fruits, you will like the "Nica" way of eating them. Instead of ripe mangoes, slice green ones and eat them with salt, lemon, vinegar and chilli seeds.

So far I have emphasized Nicaragua's picturesque nature-abundant sites, but on a personal dimension, it has helped me appreciate the uniqueness of diverse cultures. Nicaragua has gifted me with long-lasting friendships and a dream. As a developing country, it faces major obstacles of poverty and socioeconomic inequality; this has partially inspired me to major in international studies and to become interested in the field of sustainable development and cooperation. As a UIC community, I hope that we can celebrate our multicultural diversity and learn from each other's insights and experiences.

## SOCIETY & CULTURE

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*“When I got my Emmy nomination this year, my third one...I thought, there has to be a bigger reason...maybe it’s about this case and maybe it’s about raising awareness so that everyone knows our lives are in danger.”*



# Shared Vision in Television:

## Achieving Gender Equality in the Television Industry

2019. 11. 07

written by Yurie Lee

Following the recent celebratory practice of loving yourself for who you are along with a number of progressive social movements, major award ceremonies have developed into the perfect platform to not only reflect positive changes in society, but also to actively call for action against a number of controversies.

Previously, politically or socially active celebrities have spoken about discrimination against women in terms of sexual harassment, limited educational opportunities, and so on. However, more recently, these ceremonies have provided the platform for people to not only raise awareness about such deeply rooted issues of women's rights, but also workplace inequality and the pay gap that women of color and transgenders face in the television industry.

The MTV Video Music Awards in 2017 sparked the beginning of an important phase in the gender rights movement of the television industry, as it was the first to drop gender-specific award categories. The same year, Emma Watson became the first to win a gender-neutral MTV award for Best Movie Performance, stating in her speech that "with acting, you put yourself in someone else's shoes...The only distinction should be between each outstanding performance."

More recently, the 2019 Emmy Awards has once again called attention to these issues. Patricia Arquette, who was awarded Best Supporting Actress in Limited Series, spoke about the rights of transgender people in her acceptance speech. Mourning her later sister Alexis Arquette who was an actor and transgender activist, she used her Emmy win to bring awareness to issues facing the LGBTQ community. "Until we change the world, until trans people are not persecuted... Let's get rid of this bias that we have everywhere."

In addition, Laverne Cox, a transgender actress renowned for her advocacy to move beyond gender roles, was recently nominated for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series at the 2019 Emmys. In her interview at the ceremony, she brought to light a Supreme Court legal battle deciding whether federal non-discrimination employment laws will apply to LGBTQ people, stating that "when I got my Emmy nomination this year, my third one...I thought, there has to be a bigger reason...maybe it's about this case and maybe it's about raising awareness so that everyone knows our lives are in danger."

For a successful social movement to happen, there needs to be awareness to mobilize resources, a common goal, and dedicated individuals. In this sense, major award ceremonies are important because of their leverage and access to platforms. They help people empathize with the social movement as they realize that celebrities have also fallen victim to discrimination just like anyone else. As celebrities are people

many admire and look up to, this adds more weight to the problem in the eyes of public, helping the narrative of anti-discrimination be more persuasive. It sends the message that gender discrimination does not happen because of one's unprivileged socioeconomic background, but that it is an epidemic problem of society that can happen to anyone—even those who are seemingly privileged, high-profile public figures.

Also, through more media coverage, the actions of celebrities bring problems up to the surface and instigate discourse. Even if people heavily criticize a celebrity's controversial statement on gender rights, this can have a rather positive effect in that it opens up more ground for debate and exchange of opinions. Through this process, people are no longer trapped in their echo chamber of unopposed beliefs, but rather gain an opportunity to check and balance their ideas.

Actress Michelle Williams, who won the 2019 Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series or Movie, used her acceptance speech to discuss the gender pay gap in Hollywood and empowerment of women. "I want to say thank you so much to FX and Fox 21 Studios for supporting me completely and for paying me equally, because they understood that when you put value into a person, it empowers that person to get in touch with their own inherent value."

Our world is far from eradicating discrimination against socially marginalized groups. Even in Korea, there are several well-known online communities that endorse extreme bias and patronization of different gender groups, breeding a toxic divide within the public.

However, the world is slowly and meaningfully making progress toward equality: consider the increasing women's legal rights in developing countries, legal reforms for domestic violence, workplace sexual harassment policies, legalization of same-sex marriage, and much more happening around the globe. Accordingly, many students in UIC have shown interest in learning about how gender conflicts and inequality issues are reflected in media. Yonsei University also provides careful measures to prevent any discrimination based on gender in class performance and have set up official sexual harassment prevention and awareness centers. Through more innovative ways to address the global issue of gender equality beyond these programs, there are hopes to accelerate structural change in our society.



**Produced by**  
Todd Phillips  
Bradley Cooper  
Emma Tillinger Koskoff

**Written by**  
Todd Phillips  
Scott Silver

**Starring**  
Joaquin Phoenix  
Robert De Niro  
Zazie Beetz  
Frances Conroy

**Cinematography**  
Lawrence Sher

**Edited by**  
Jeff Groth

**Distributed by**  
Warner Bros. Pictures

**Directed by**  
Todd Phillips

# Reviewing Joker:

**Life & death and good & evil? Why so serious?**

**2019. 10. 31**

written by **Jungwon Choi**

Let us first offer our deepest condolences to the great loss of the Marvel cinematic universe. While Marvel's beloved Tony Stark was a man of many things—genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist—he was ultimately the one in a million noble enough to choose the cursed fate of a hero over his happy ending as a father. But before the throne is irrefutably secured, its rival DC Comics has decided to make one last claim for it. So, who is its champion? Who is our new contender for the crown? Perhaps a secret agent, war hero, demigod, mutant, prince, vigilante or at least some other billionaire? Well, he is a clown. No, nothing super to it, just a clown. Save your boos, ladies and gentlemen, for they will not last long when he starts his tricks. Have no time to waste on a creepy freak who scrapes pennies off of vulgar tricks, you say? Trust me when I say he is one of a kind. Without further ado, please give a warm, welcoming applause to Joker.



The controversial yet striking masterpiece, which traces back the origin of an unconventional villain we now come to know as Joker, is not a typical superhero movie with “marveling” CGI fireworks. Grotesque and grisly as the onscreen deaths may seem, these are what tense both the audience and the critiques—that this too intimately resembles those disturbing headlines of mass shootings that can be found in the newspapers. Set aside the clown make-up, which clumsiness only enhances its creepiness, and the fancy DC labels, this film might be mistaken as a documentary of a serial killer rather than a movie from the comics industry. The truly frightening part is that the audience, at least partially, can sympathize with him in his miserable urban life—a betrayal from a friend, verbal and physical abuses in public, internal struggles overlooked by the surroundings, a series of lies from the person whom you most trusted, can all be stabs at your heart.

A murder obviously cannot be justified by any means, but the fact that there was an emotional basis behind his actions proves that Joker is no psychopath. As he puts it, “I killed those guys because they were awful.” This—a motive too simple—is the aspect of Joker that disturbs the audience. When one scrutinizes over him, one realizes that he is not some purple-skinned alien villain; Joker is not too different from us. He was just an angry clown. This anger is the troubling theme of the movie. The film is a perfect depiction of how a single spark of rage can intensify into irrepressible mayhem—or “revolution,” depending on the political context.

The fierce rallies from the public and the scenery of Armageddon sweeping the city are enough to unnerve the audience. While the situation the public was stuck with was not all sunshine and rainbows, where was that maniacal rage coming from?

A UIC student from the “Political Thoughts: Concepts and Case Studies” course agreed to share some of the insights from his class. His words were, “In the class, we observed a concept called Antisystem behavior.” The main idea is that recent statistics seem to show that people these days, especially the younger generation, are more inclined towards transgressive and antisocial behaviors, growing more defiant to the social norms. While many studies still can only speculate upon the exact source, there seems to be a persistent theme. The crux was the spread of individualism, which can develop into narcissism. He said, “To put it simply, while their hearts are permeated with individualist ethos, many people in society face limited socioeconomic status. It is not their fault. But this sense of alienation their reality throws at their face may be the possible source of resentment and angry sentiments.”

Joker during the Murray Franklin Show howls out, “Everybody just screams at each other. Nobody’s civil anymore.” This may be his critique of the self-interested, egotistical present-day society. The case for Joker was that while the majority of the people learn to cope with this tragic reality through devotion to one’s certain creed—love, money, faith, dream—Arthur Fleck had nowhere to turn to. So, his solution? He created a creed of his own. With his tainted courage and nativity, he became the hero of those “oppressed.”

For Joker, life is a simple, mischievous game. The moment he pulls the trigger against you, you will be his miserable clown. That is his feat: death to a man, down to his feet.

This resonates with the conclusion of Joker in a way: “I used to think that my life was a tragedy, but now I realize, it’s a comedy.” Look at his face powdered with ghastly flour. His lips smeared with blood torn to the cheeks only makes it merrier. Let our hearts tremble as he asks us, “Well, who is the prey now?”