

The following is an opinion piece submitted by an FIT student who wishes to remain anonymous to prevent a bias being created in an academic environment. W27 respects this wish. These views belong to said student and do not represent the views and beliefs of the paper as a whole.

The daunting thought of moving away from the comfort and familiarity of home doesn't hit most kids until it is time to leave for college. For me, this thought was a usual occurrence- I was the new kid every year in high school. Being an international student, or what many would call a TCK (third culture kid), the process of inducting myself into a new country, culture, and environment was known to me all too well. My biggest excitement about going to college was the idea of stability and the knowledge that the fate of my next four years would be in my own hands. Having said that, I was quite uneasy moving to the United States. I was educated under a British and Australian system until I was 15, where I then enrolled into an American International School. I would be lying if I did not admit I had a bias towards a European way of life.

After a semester at FIT, my impressions of America were greatly altered for the better. However, there are still times where being an international student at FIT has its consequences, which forces me to question whether FIT does not properly accommodate international students or whether I have done my part by integrating myself into a State school that is so strongly influenced by the American Culture.

Being in a school focused on such a globalized industry such as fashion, I believe that it is vital for professors and students to understand that America is not the 'be all end all' as many professors continually remind students. Yet, examples given on a daily basis are focused right down to the tri-state areas of

the United States- creating a narrow wall of shelteredness. No doubt, I have learned about many businesses stationed in such areas. Haagen Dazs, for instance, originated in the Bronx and is now stationed in Long Island. However, the acceptance of global knowledge was rejected when a fellow student and I were penalized on a midterm exam for listing examples of foreign businesses that were unfamiliar to the professor. No effort was made to clarify such claims. Instead, two red lines were scrawled in a mark of an 'X' with three question marks imprinted on the page. Though a minuscule event, such response exemplified the negativity held towards international students - be it viewed as redundant (for lack of a simple click on Google) or a pompous view of not applying what seems to be common knowledge in the class.

Outside of the classroom setting, I have been treated unfairly for being an international student. I have had my visitation rights threatened by a security guard for writing a date that 'doesn't exist.' (It is customary everywhere in the world but here to put the day first followed by the month) Since then, I have started to spell my months out rather than being confused over writing my months and days.

Could it be me, perhaps? Instead of watching Gossip Girl, I would much rather watch Skins. Rather than watching it on TV (a favourite past time here as I've come to know), I'm an online-streaming person. "Guidos" were never part of my vocabulary until talks of Jersey Shore came along. In my mind, these individuals are called "wogs." This also applies to

names of retailers. Instead of Wholefoods and Gristedes, I am familiar with Cold Storage (Singapore) and Fairprice (Singapore). My teenage years were spent wandering in stores such as Miss Selfridge, Topshop, Warehouse and River Island rather than Abercrombie, Hollister and American Eagle. I might not be able to tell you where Sears, Costco or JC Penney's fall in the retail category, but I would be able to tell you where Parkson (Asia), Harrods(UK), Tangs (Asia), David Jones(Aus) or Carrefour fall into place.

Despite my differences or 'oddity' (as the US Department of State used in their description of Third Culture Kids), I am willing to learn about the American culture and the glories of the tri-state areas. On the same token, it wouldn't hurt to move abroad across the Atlantic once in awhile to study foreign businesses. International students or exchange students might seem like a minority scattered across majors, but we should be utilized as resources. American students could greatly benefit from learning about our cultures as well and we would gladly share our experiences and way of thought if we felt more openly accepted as a whole.