

Student Forum

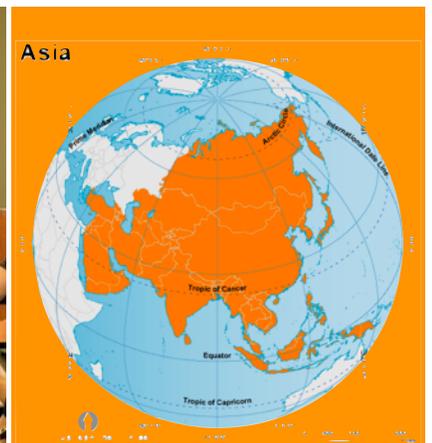
Current Events and Issues In East Asia



The audience watching the forum



Dr. Yao with his opening remarks



UTSA's East Asia Institute hosted the inaugural student forum on March 7, 2016 with the help of EAI intern, Nagisa Isono from University of Tokyo. The forum's theme was "Current Events and Issues in East Asia." The goal of this forum was for students who are currently in the Asian language classes to apply and expand their understanding on current events in East Asia and then effectively create a presentation with points of discussion. Approximately 30 students were able to present in this event with seven professors as observers and a student audience.

Dr. Wan Xiang Yao, Director of the East Asia Institute, kicked off the event by welcoming the participants, observers, and audience members. Yao encouraged them to continue to further their studies on East Asia. Within this event, there were three one-hour sessions in total with six different presentations in each session.

Prior to the forum, the students researched and prepared their submissions on their chosen

topics. They included abstracts for their topics to be used in the program. With a total of 17 groups, they were each allowed a time frame of seven minutes to discuss their current East Asian issue. After each presentation, the audience were given the opportunity to ask questions. This process facilitated a conversation between the presenters and audience to examine the topic in more depth.

Presentations ranged from serious to lighthearted views of the state of East Asian countries. In relation to Korea, students brought attention to the suffrage of people in North Korea through a perspective of survivors who have successfully escaped. Another student outlined the history of the Korean War and continual effects towards other countries as a result. Students also discussed how the current boom of pop culture within the last 20 years has positively brought attention to South Korea's culture around the world. A view of unity with North Korea through a space



program was proposed with the Russian space program as a model.

Ten presentations were given on Japanese related topics. The first dealt with views of uprising democratic party within politics and the impact of political parties on citizens. There was also a discussion on the changing military of Japan through politics by implementing an offensive stance. Same sex policies were discussed as Japan's LGBT community comes forward. Within economic presentations, a comparison on the economics of the Tokyo Olympics versus past Olympic events, and how resources will be allocated and reused post the event. Additionally, a student spoke about the adoption of negative interest rates to produce a stronger economy during recessions. Students also observed the negative population growth related to job security ideals, the escalation of elderly, and effects of stress on a hidden people or "hikikomori" which may result in dying alone. There was also cultural relativistic observation on video game markets and how Japanese companies cater to American audiences by removing the aspects of games they considered were "too Japanese" resulting in a drop in sales.

In respect to China, a presentation touched on the technological assimilation of phone apps with old traditions of "Hongbao" or celebratory gifts. Another topic of discourse went over the economic characteristics and social ranking of males and females within China's dating standards. The Americanization of "Chinese Food" was also examined.

One of the participants exclaimed, "I think this is a great idea! I hope to see this type of forum held again in the near future." While a member of the audience had to say, "Great format! A wonderful experience for students to present their work." At the end, Isono concluded the forum and encouraged participants to carry their discussions outside of the classroom. Isono also commented that discussions would help deepen their understanding and generate more ideas and topics on East Asia.

