On Tuesday, November 6, 2018, the East Asia Institute hosted an information session on EPIK (English Program in Korea) with guest speakers Mr. Kwon Ki Jung, Educational Supervisor and Mr. Jeffrey Conde, EPIK Coordinator from the National Institute for International Education that is under the South Korea’s Ministry of Education.

Conde started the presentation by showing the audience a short video about a former EPIK teacher in Korea. The video was the winner from an annual video contest EPIK holds for its teachers. It showed all the different adventures, experiences and opportunities the program can offer those interested in applying.

“EPIK is a good way to get involved with the Korean Language and culture,” stated Conde. “It’s a great opportunity to become immersed in Korean and learn as much as possible.” The EPIK program accepts applicants from various English-speaking countries, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and South Africa.

There are many requirements for EPIK Program. The most important is that the applicants must have at least a bachelor’s degree to be eligible for EPIK. Applicants with a degree in Education, as well as those with a teacher’s certificate or teaching background, are highly sought after.

EPIK teachers will be teaching in primary and secondary schools during school hours. They work Monday through Friday, eight hours a day, and will be asked to either assist a Korean teacher with their English class, or to conduct the class together. The scholar will also have to prepare materials for class and assist with activities related to the English language.

Applicants can apply through the Korean Consulate General in Houston or by emailing the EPIK office in Seoul, Korea at www.epik.go.kr.

However, since UTSA is in the process of renewing a mutual of understanding with TaLK/ EPIK, UTSA students are encouraged to consulate with the East Asia Institute office before applying. After all documents are submitted, the applicant will be interviewed and mandatory documents such as the application and required essay, two signed recommendation letters, an FBI criminal background check, a
The attendees asked questions about how one should prepare for the program, if having some Korean language skill helps, and what Korean people are like. Mimi Yu, Associate Director of the East Asia Institute, added that the Modern Languages and Literatures Department was seeking to find opportunities for the TaLK program to count as credit for the students.

Conde finished the presentation by emphasizing the EPIK program offers amazing opportunities for those that would like to teach and learn abroad in Asia, particularly in Korea. “This program is a great way to expand knowledge of the world,” said Conde.

The National Institute for International Education also provides a scholarship for the TaLK program. Students only need a minimum of two years of college to be eligible for the program. Participants of TaLK will be paired with a Korean instructor to teach English to elementary school children in rural areas. Over the last five years, more than 30 UTSA students have participated in the TaLK and EPIK Programs. For more information on TaLK, please visit www.talk.go.kr/.