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ELTI Honorable Mention

I have been in the United States for half a year, but it was like years. I met so many people and did many things that I have never imagined to do. This international experience was an intrinsic factor in expansion my thinking by realizing that the world does not end in my culture or my country. There are still gorgeous varieties and different patterns of lifestyles and cultures around the world that I have not discovered yet. By my international experience, I got the chance to see over the seas. In other words, it is like visiting the whole world without an airplane just by flying between international figures and reading their perspectives from their faces. In addition, during this trip I widened my gaze and worked on change my old opinions, previous believes and expired stereotypes and replaced them by empirical ones.

Specifically about my experience in ELTI, I met students from different origins and continents: Asians, Africans, and South Americans and of course North Americans. I cannot count what the international experience added to me. Simply, now I am not the same person who came at the first. By now, everything has changed. I could depend on myself, I loved my personality more, and I became more responsible, flexible and autonomous. About the knowledge and the information that I gained, I cannot restrict them. From just one sitting or eating lunch with my international friends, I got an enormous erudition about the history of his or her country and then started to link the new threads with the previous ones in order to edit or modify the previous image that I have taken about the world. For instance, I always heard about the Vietnam War but I did not

know its details until my Vietnamese friend told me about it, and the same situation in knowing the reasons behind North and South Korea separation from South Korean friend. Simply, it is like taking an interesting class in geography and history. Some countries I did not know them before, and others I had a different preconception about, but the truth was always the best.

Some previous stereotypes that I had about some countries or nationalities have changed for example, I thought that Americans know and care about the political issues and conditions of the other countries, but it is not accurate at all. Now I realize that there is a big gap between the policy of the government and the American public. Secondly, I thought that Chinese, Japanese and Korean are similar in their appearance and their lifestyle, but after I studied and hanged out with them, officially I can announce that I am able to distinguish and find the differences between them.

About the food, my favorite subject, I was able to taste and try types of international food. For example Souchi, Kabsa, Chinese food and so on. Some of them were spicy, acrid, odd or awesome and in some cases it was awful but it was worth a try and all of these tastes were carved in my brain as an unforgettable taste. Moreover, I tried to learn some of international dance from my friends. Actually I was not that professional, but at least I did my best and shared my traditional dance with them. About my culture, I am from the Middle East, however; this is the first time I meet people from the same region, same language, and similar cultures. It was so funny when I heard same words in my language which have different meanings in other countries and when I noticed the differences in our accents. We also as students joined our colleagues in their national days and official cultural customs.

About learning English in ELTI, every day I realize that English language is like a sea: the more you enter into, the deeper it becomes. At the first, I thought that the English ends in the Tenses but it is not. Now I am studying Clauses and I do not know what is still waiting me. It is cool to have a cosmopolitan language which all of the students compiled in one place for the same reason. Furthermore, about the religious beliefs, it is so pleasant to see Christians, Atheists, Agnostics and Muslims in one classroom discussing the differences between the principles, values and rules in every religion in a homogeneous way without any fanaticism.

Having this international experience was a milestone in my life. I spent roughly seven months in the ELTI. The information that I acquired, the food that I tasted and the people who I met were more than I had expected. In my view, the difference is the salt of the life which without it the dish cannot be eaten. Finally one of my favorite ELTI benefits is that ELTI enabled me to guess anyone's nationality depending on his or her accent.