

International Cultural Kaleidoscope: Overseas Students Showcase a Different Side of the World

Campus focus

On May 14 at 6 p.m., the Office of International and Cross-Strait Affairs' International and Mainland Student Guidance Section held the "International Cultural Kaleidoscope" event in the 10th-floor lobby of Ching-Sheng Building. The event featured cultural sharing by overseas students: Pablo Vicente Vega Fernandez, year 1 exchange student in International Tourism Management, Timur Aiusheev, year 1 major in English-taught Banking and Finance, Sati Muradyan, year 1 in Diplomacy and International Relations, and Ali Kouhi, year 3 major in the English-taught program of Computer and Information Engineering. Nearly 50 faculty, staff, and students attended.

The first to take the stage was Pablo from Granada, Spain, who introduced Spanish culture under the theme "Life is Social." He highlighted the Spanish family-centered lifestyle, late dinners around 9 p.m., and weekend family gatherings. "Life is not centered around work, but time spent with others," he shared. He also introduced Tapas culture—small dishes paired with drinks meant for socializing—and iconic festivals like the Running of the Bulls, La Tomatina, and Holy Week.

Russian students Timur and Sati followed with a presentation on Russia's vast geography, spanning 11 time zones and encompassing wonders like Lake Baikal, the Ural Mountains, and Kamchatka volcanoes. They also introduced the audience to Russia's two major cities—its capital, Moscow, and the former imperial capital, Saint Petersburg—highlighting the differences in style and cultural divide between them, and emphasizing that "Moscow is not equal to Russia." Their historical overview ranged from Kievan Rus to the Tsarist era, the rise and fall of the Soviet Union, and touched on today's issues like demographic crises, youth emigration, and linguistic marginalization.

Ali closed the event with a humorous and engaging talk on Iran's religious

shifts, daily life, and cuisine. He explained the transition from Zoroastrianism to Shia Islam, the symbolism of Mecca, and women's dress codes in public. Drawing on personal experience as a former carpet and saffron vendor, he noted, "Saffron costs \$1 per gram in Iran but can sell for 10 times more internationally." He also introduced traditional dishes like Dolma (stuffed grape leaves) and saffron chicken rice, even offering Turkish delights for tasting, filling the venue with rich Middle Eastern vibes.

Jhe-Wei Jhang, a junior in Russian, shared that he was honored to participate in the event, which was truly eye-opening. The four speakers gave rich and engaging presentations, and the venue was filled with many international students, creating a lively atmosphere. He added that interacting with the speakers made him feel, "This is not just a cultural exchange—it's also an opportunity to put language learning into practice. I hope there will be more events like this in the future, allowing everyone to grow through real-life interaction." Some students also mentioned that they were initially hesitant about trying exotic snacks, but after tasting the Turkish delight, they were left with a good impression.

