

The state of immigration at NT

Immigration hits close to home for some students

Students share their stories in response to “America First” policy

by Alyssa Pak

Amidst all of Trump’s talk of building a wall, the attitude towards immigration seems to have become increasingly less friendly.

The United States is a country full of people from every continent, which is seldom brought up in national dialogue.

Senior Brandon Lee, who immigrated from Korea to the U.S. when he was just one, was naturalized four years ago. He believes that politics have the tendency to stand in the way of making progress.

“Valid concessions could be made on both sides of the argument. Unfortunately, it’s too easy to appeal to very select, often unforgiving voter bases, leading to the current political deadlock,” stated Lee.

Junior Tristan Gomez has moved from France to England to the United States and noted that discovering other points of view helps one be more open and accepting of those who might be deemed “different.”

“It seems like each party wants

to stick by themselves and not discover what other cultures can offer, which is so strange to me how people can live by each other, yet completely neglect each other due to their differences,” said Gomez.

As a daughter of a Colombian immigrant, senior Andrea Blood-Guerrero expressed her disheartenment with Trump’s push for a border between the U.S. and Mexico.

“Even if it was brought up with the intention to increase safety, it seems to have only increased racism and religious discrimination, all of which ultimately breeds violence. Immigration allows for new perspectives, which helps our nation grow,” said Blood-Guerrero.

She also noted that without immigration, powerhouse American companies such as Tesla and Google may never have come to fruition. Elon Musk is a South Africa native and Sergey Brin hails from Moscow.

Some who are anti-immigration maintain the idea immigrants “steal” jobs from other hard-working U.S. citizens. However, senior Skye Ko, from Korea, claimed that this is far from the truth.

“My family usually ‘stole’ the jobs no one ever wanted. And when we work our way up to a higher education and sacrifice everything to obtain and maintain a decent job, many are offended? We worked equally as hard and are just picking the fruits of our back-breaking labor,” said Ko.

While her mother was constantly working, she assumed responsibility over her younger siblings. Ko explained that immigrants sacrifice “sleep, meals, hygiene, and even sanity to get by and provide a life for their families.”

For a lot of immigrants, the

transition to a foreign country is difficult and adjusting to a new life is an arduous process. Ko and her family immigrated to America before she was able to talk, and lived in Georgia before moving to Chicago.

“I experienced culture shock first-hand when I found out there were people that didn’t look like me. I didn’t think it was possible for people to be born with blue eyes and blonde hair,” she explained.

In the process of adapting to a new culture, language barriers can be a daunting obstacle.

“Early in elementary school, before moving to the North Shore, my English was awful. I attempted to get by with my lack of proficiency in the foreign language, but others would always remark with ‘Don’t bother explaining to her, she doesn’t even understand us,’” said Ko.

Because Ko believed that her shortcomings in English were the root of her problems, she explained that she stayed up well past midnight pouring over textbooks in order to learn phonetics and proper syntax, at six to seven years old.

Blood-Guerrero’s mother also faced issues with communication when she came to the U.S. at 28 years old from Colombia with her childhood best friend.

“They both knew very little English at the time which made

it difficult for them to find steady jobs.

“My mom’s first real job was working in a factory making key chains for the Chicago Bulls. From a very young age she pushed my brothers and I to work hard in school and take advantage of the opportunities that were given to us,” said Blood-Guerrero.

Trump’s rhetoric has caused tensions between parties, fueling incidents such as the conflict at the March for Life in Washington D.C. between Covington Catholic High School students and Native American advocate, Nathan Phillips. This video went viral, and people jumped to conclusions about what appeared like white nationalism at first glance.

In today’s climate, it’s difficult to remember that at heart, America is a nation of immigrants with varying levels of assimilation, and that despite the issues that immigration may cause, immigrants contribute positively to the U.S.

“Historically, America’s incredible diversity, the fact that America wasn’t defined as a nation centered around a single ethnicity or culture, has been one of the things that made it unique. Moreover, immigration is not only helpful to the growth of our country, it is essential,” stated Lee.

To build or not to build?

Trump’s border wall raises questions of financial and ethical justifications

by Darcie Kim

Despite enduring the longest government shutdown in U.S. history, one that lasted 21 days and ended on Jan. 25 when President Trump signed a short-term spending bill into law, our country has yet to see the end of arguments regarding immigration and Trump’s most controversial solution to the debate: the border wall.

In an interview on CBS “Face the Nation” on Feb. 3, Trump indicated that he will declare a national emergency on Feb. 15 to secure his requested \$5.7 billion for a wall at the southern border.

The sentiments he shared parallel his words from an interview with the “New York Times” on Jan. 31 when he expressed this same determination.

The president has repeatedly asserted that a border wall serves as protection from criminals, citing human trafficking, drugs, and gangs as reasons why refugees can be detrimental to this country.

President of Trevian Republican club and junior Frank Zawarazky supports the view that illegal immigrants are a danger and financial burden to this country.

“Illegal immigrants account for 80% of the illegal drug seizures in this country. According to USA Today Oct. 10, 2018, drug trafficking arrests on the border plunged after the zero

tolerance policy was implemented,” said Zawarazky.

Senior Will Thornton, a leader of a Super PAC, a type of independent political action committee, said that fears of terror and drugs and crime are not rational ones. “Federal data shows that only 1/7th of illegal immigrants actually cross the border illegally, most just overstay their visas,” said Thornton.

Funding for this wall has also become the topic of heated debates across the country, with individuals who either believe that the wall is a necessary use of our resources or a waste.

“Looking at last year’s Pew Research, there are 10.7 million illegal immigrants in the country and that’s a conservative estimate. Over their lifetime they [each] cost us \$70,000, ten times the deportation fee of \$7,000. Trump’s wall is costing us \$5 billion. Imagine what we could do with that \$749 billion that we would get back,” said Zawarazky.

Senior Grace Guarraia, a self-professed libertarian, however, believes that resources used

to build a border wall should be reallocated.

“[The wall] not only represents a certain negative mindset of the current administration, but its cost and the labor put into its

construction can be put towards much more

important departments and movements, such as funding education, science and

research, or infrastructure improvements in our country,” said Guarraia.

The current immigration policy of the Trump administration relies heavily on deterring asylum seekers, particularly at the U.S. - Mexico border, and refusing their requests to enter the U.S.

Zawarazky supports the increase in border patrol, and believes border patrol are under fire by the media these days.

“When you have people saying that we should abolish Immigration Customs and Enforcement that’s ridiculous. A country is not a country

without borders,” said Zawarazky.

On the other hand, Thornton considers Trump’s immigration policy a blatant misunderstanding of “immigration, economics, and Latin American politics.”

“What I disagree with most about Trump’s current immigration policy is just how far from reality the whole idea is. Who are we to tell desperate people who are fleeing war-torn countries that we helped destroy to go back home, that the third largest country in the world is full, that we have no want or need for their hard work and dedication. It’s nonsense,” said Thornton.

Guarraia agrees that the ways our country has treated immigrants seeking asylum in the U.S. has been egregious.

“Immigration is a challenging problem, and I strongly believe that our country’s jobs should be in the hands of legal citizens. Yet at the same time, it is awful to see how immigrants, especially from Central and South American countries, are being treated as almost subhuman as they attempt to enter our country,” said Guarraia.

Thornton believes this controversy can be attributed to the contemporary negative connotations associated with immigration.

“Legal immigration for most of US history consisted of simply walking off of a boat or crossing an imaginary line.

“The fact that our answer to illegal immigration now is to just build a wall on the southern border is ludicrous. If people want to come they will find a way to come. If you want to stop them, you should at least think of something a little more original than a fence,” said Thornton.

