KAKEHASHI Project (United States of America/Canada)
Inbound program for the winners of Japanese Speech Contest
Program Report

1. Program Overview
Under the “KAKEHASHI Project” of Japan’s Friendship Ties Program, 17 students from the U.S. and Canada visited Japan from January 8 to January 15, 2019 to participate in the program aimed at promoting their understanding of Japan with regard to Japanese politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy. Through the lectures, observations and interactions with Japanese people etc., the participants enjoyed a wide range of opportunities to improve their understanding of Japan and shared their individual interests and experiences on social media. Based on their findings and learning in Japan, each group of participants made a presentation in the final session and reported on the action plans to be taken after returning to their home countries.

[Participating Countries and Numbers of Participants]
United States of America: 8 participants
Canada: 9 participants

[Prefectures Visited]
Tokyo, Hokkaido

2. Program Schedule
Jan. 8 (Tue) [Arrival]
Jan. 9 (Wed) [Orientation]
[Lecture] Dr. Hideo Kimura, Executive Managing Director, Strategic International Management Associates (SIMA)
[Observation] Akihabara/Edo-Tokyo Museum
Jan. 10 (Thu) Move to Hokkaido from Tokyo
[School Exchange] Hokkaido University
Jan. 11 (Fri) [Cultural Experience] Hoko-ji Temple, Zazen/Caligraphy Experience
[Observation] Hokkaido Museum
[Meeting with Host Family]
Jan. 12 (Sat) [Homestay]
Jan. 13 (Sun) [Farewell Party with Host Family]
[Workshop]
Jan. 14 (Mon) Move to Tokyo from Hokkaido
[Observation] Meiji Jingu Shrine/ Harajuku (Exchange with Japanese students)
Jan. 15 (Tue) [Reporting Session]
[Courtesy Call] Mr. Nishimura, Vice Cabinet Secretary
[Departure]
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>Lecture: Dr. Hideo Kimura, Executive Managing Director, Strategic International Management Associates (SIMA)</td>
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4. Voice from Participants (abstract)

◆ USA, Student

I think the most significant impression Kimura sensei’s lecture had on me was his character and hearing his personal opinions on things. It was interesting to hear his educated opinion on the Japanese economy and the future of Japan’s relations.

Getting to meet students our age was very special and it helped me to see how school (college) is for students here (especially in Hokkaido). I could see similarity and differences in student lifestyles between USA students and the students at Hokkaido University.

The MOFA office was very impressive and it reminded me of a UN building and meeting. It really gave me the feeling that our presence here was a meeting of future leaders that they have an interest in Japan and want to improve Japan’s future relationships.

Personally the homestay was very very impressive to me. It was an experience that took my preconceptions and showed them a true, real Japanese family lifestyle and for that I am extremely grateful.

◆ USA, Student

During Dr. Kimura lecture what left the biggest impression on me was his slides about Zazen. It’s explanation of the Tea Ceremony really left a strong foot print in my heart.

The Hokkaido school exchange was a great opportunity for me to prepare my Japanese, but during that session I was surprised to learn a lot about college students everyday life that made me even more fascinated about Japan. When we went to Gaimusho, it gave off the feeling of a government building in America that it didn’t feel like I was in Japan, which surprised me.

Homestay was probably left the most impression on me so far. Being able to live with a Japanese family taught me things that I would never have gotten a chance to do. For example, going out to eat, going to the bookstore, or playing card game with the family while drinking a cup of tea are things that might seem mundane, I believe there something important to learn from it. I really love the Zazen demonstration. After leaving I got the feeling that I could continue to practice it.

◆ Canada, Student

The lecture introduced me everything about Japan from economy to history, from micro-level to macro-level. I was very impressed that most of materials and food including soy beans are imported to Japan. Also, the content of aging society was very impressive as while. I hope that someday the solution would come out.

After visiting the Hokkaido University, I was very impressed that many Japanese students are interested in learning English through our short communication. I learned that young people in Japan are working very hard for their future. Also I see the pressure they have towards going into society.

The homestay was the best experience so far. I really enjoyed living with Japanese people because I learned a lot about Japan including economy and history and language. I also saw how Japanese people live their live and was able to participate. We did a lot of activities and all those activities made me learn Japan better. I thought that Japanese might be cold and
strict, but the parents from homestay were very nice and welcoming. We had plenty of laughable moments.

5. Voice from Japanese Students/Schools/Host Families/Organizations

◆ Student who participated in the exchange program
I had the opportunity to introduce a Shinto shrine and about worshipping in Japan to them, so I was really able to enjoy the exchange. It was very clear to me that people from overseas have a lot of interest in Japan.

◆ Student who participated in the exchange program
I enjoyed interacting with the students from the US and Canada who are interested in Japan. I had a good time and learned a lot.

6. Dissemination by the participants

About the observation (Instagram)
Everyone say Edo!
# Edotokymuseum

About the program (Instagram)
This morning, we visited Hoko-ji Temple to participate in cultural activities such as Zazen (meditation) and Shodo (calligraphy). After that, we moved to Hokkaido Museum to learn about the relationship between the natural environment and people, the culture of the Ainu people, etc.
7. Action Plan Presented by Participants at the Reporting Session

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<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
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<td>Question: How can American and Japanese researchers work together?</td>
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<td>- Plan:</td>
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<td>- Write an article for school newspaper on how to access foreign science journals.</td>
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<td>- Talk with foreign students about how they can bring unique expertise to research.</td>
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In the next month, Presentations, Video, Posting to SNS, Inspiring youth and Write article for Japanese Embassy.