



KAKEHASHI Project (United States) In-person Alumni Meeting (Los Angeles) Follow-up Project Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

This program was conducted in Los Angeles, United States, on February 28, 2026, inviting past KAKEHASHI Project participants (alumni) to physically gather in support of alumni organizations/alumni groups and to experience Japanese culture. The aim of the program was to stimulate their interest in Japan by introducing alumni activities, the JET Programme, the MEXT Scholarship, and having them participate in sake tasting, origami folding activities, etc. The main objective of the program was also to strengthen the alumni network by having alumni interact and ask each other questions.

【Participants】 Total: 44 participants from the U.S. (KAKEHASHI Project alumni from up to FY2025)
(Breakdown) 44 participants from the U.S. (7 high school students, 3 undergraduate/graduate students, 34 working youths)

4 guests and stakeholders

Ms. Yumi Kuroiwa, Consul, Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles
Mr. Julian Ely, Advisor, Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles
Mr. Mike Penny, Program Officer, The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles
Mr. Gabriel Rebeck, Japan Programs Manager, Laurasian Institution

【Location】 JAPAN HOUSE LOS ANGELES

【Schedule】

- In-person Alumni Meeting: Feb. 28 (Sat), 2026
- 1. Opening Remarks (Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE))
【Address】 Ms. Yumi Kuroiwa, Consul, Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles
- 2. **【Presentation】**
“MEXT Scholarships and JET Programme”
Mr. Julian Ely, Advisor, Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles
- 3. **【Presentation】**
“What is Japan Foundation and What Do We Do?”
Mr. Mike Penny, Program Officer, The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles
- 4. **【Presentation】** Presentation by 2 KAKEHASHI Project Alumni
 - (1) Ms. Crystal Haik (FY2018 University students the 1st Slot)
 - (2) Ms. Elana Ho (FY2022 Winners of Japanese Speech Contests)
- 5. Commemorative Photo

6. 【Ice Breaker Session】
7. 【Exchange】 KAKEHASHI alumni networking session
 【Cultural Experience】 Sake tasting, Japanese traditional game experiences (Origami, Kendama, Taketombo (bamboo helicopters), and Otedama)
8. Closing Remarks

2. Program Photos

	
【Address】 Ms. Yumi Kuroiwa, Consul, Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles	【Presentation】 “What is Japan Foundation and What Do We Do?”
	
【Presentation】 KAKEHASHI alumni	【Ice Breaker Session】
	
【Exchange】 KAKEHASHI alumni networking session	【Cultural Experience】 Origami

	
【Cultural Experience】	【Commemorative photo】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Undergraduate Student

Thank you for sharing your insights and thoughtful words with us at the KAKEHASHI Alumni meetup. It was so nice to be able to meet up with others who participated in the program and get to hear how their experience was. The program was great and I'm looking forward to the next one!

◆ Working Youth

It was a nice program, and I enjoyed having the opportunity to network with other alumni.

4. Voices from the Guests and Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Japan Foundation Los Angeles Staff Member

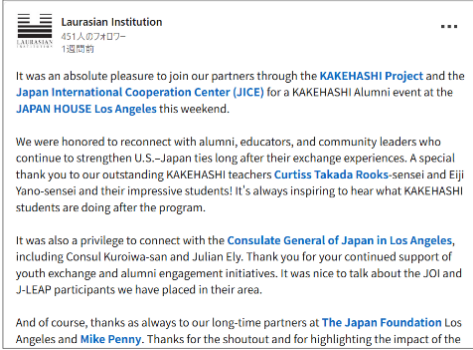
The event was well organized, and the atmosphere had the perfect balance of being both fun and informative. I found the participants' presentations to be engaging and encouraging regarding the continued success of grass-roots exchange programs such as the KAKEHASHI Project. Ample time was allocated for networking during the event, and I had the chance to meet many interesting past KAKEHASHI Project participants as well as reconnect with colleagues I had not seen in a while.

◆ JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles Staff (Venue Personnel)

On the day of the event, it was a great pleasure for me to see everyone actively engaging with one another, enjoying the networking opportunities, and enthusiastically participating in the quiz activities held as part of the icebreaker session.

I was also very pleased to observe both those who already knew other participants and those who joined the event on their own proactively networking and connecting with others, which I felt was a particularly positive aspect of the event.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

 Imuapidss と kakehashi_2025 オリジナル音源 Imuapidss 編集済み • 2週間前 LMU TOMODACHI Inouye Scholars at the Kakehashi Project Alumni Event in LA this weekend JP 🌟 Grateful to @jice_exchange, @mofa.jp_en, and @japanhousela for bringing alumni together to reconnect, reflect, and celebrate our experiences in Japan. We're grateful for the opportunity to strengthen these cross-cultural ties and look forward to more events in the future! JPUS 🇺🇸 #kakehashialumni	 Laurasian Institution 451人のフォロー 1週間前 It was an absolute pleasure to join our partners through the KAKEHASHI Project and the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) for a KAKEHASHI Alumni event at the JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles this weekend. We were honored to reconnect with alumni, educators, and community leaders who continue to strengthen U.S.-Japan ties long after their exchange experiences. A special thank you to our outstanding KAKEHASHI teachers Curtiss Takada Rooks-sensei and Eiji Yano-sensei and their impressive students! It's always inspiring to hear what KAKEHASHI students are doing after the program. It was also a privilege to connect with the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, including Consul Kuroiwa-san and Julian Ely. Thank you for your continued support of youth exchange and alumni engagement initiatives. It was nice to talk about the JOI and J-LEAP participants we have placed in their area. And of course, thanks as always to our long-time partners at The Japan Foundation Los Angeles and Mike Penny. Thanks for the shoutout and for highlighting the impact of the
March 1, 2026 (Instagram of Loyola Marymount University, a school that has previously participated in the KAKEHASHI Program) LMU TOMODACHI Inouye Scholars at the KAKEHASHI Project Alumni Event in LA this weekend Grateful to JICE, MOFA, and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles for bringing alumni together to reconnect, reflect, and celebrate our experiences in Japan. We're grateful for the opportunity to strengthen these cross-cultural ties and look forward to more events in the future!	March 4, 2026 (Laurasian Institution's LinkedIn) It was an absolute pleasure to join our partners through the KAKEHASHI Project and the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) for a KAKEHASHI Alumni event at the JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles this weekend. We were honored to reconnect with alumni, educators, and community leaders who continue to strengthen U.S.-Japan ties long after their exchange experiences. A special thank you to our outstanding KAKEHASHI teachers and their impressive students! It's always inspiring to hear what KAKEHASHI students are doing after the program. It was also a privilege to connect with the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, including Consul Kuroiwa-san and Julian Ely. Thank you for your continued support of youth exchange and alumni engagement initiatives. It was nice to talk about the Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI) and Japanese Language Education Assistant Program(J-LEAP) participants we have placed in their area. And of course, thanks as always to our long-time partners at The Japan Foundation Los Angeles and Mike Penny. Thanks for the shoutout and for highlighting the impact of the J-LEAP program! Events like this are a powerful reminder that exchange programs do not end when participants return home. Thank you to everyone who made the weekend such a success.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)