



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Inouye Program Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

The Inouye Program is a mutual exchange program between university students from Japan and the United States. On this occasion, participants were invited to Tokyo and Miyagi Prefecture with the aim of deepening mutual understanding between the two nations. During their stay in Japan, the students enhanced their understanding of various aspects of Japanese society, history, culture, regional revitalization, and post-disaster reconstruction through a school exchange and site visits. Furthermore, friendships were fostered between Japanese and American university students, networks were strengthened, and the attractions of Japan were promoted.

【Participants】 Total: 32 participants (28 university students and 4 chaperones from the U.S.)
(Breakdown)

16 university students and chaperone(s) from Loyola Marymount University

16 university students and chaperone(s) from Claremont Colleges

【Locations】 Tokyo, Miyagi

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Feb. 20 (Thu) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warnings, precautions of infectious disease, etc.
Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Video Viewing】** “Lecture on Japan” (Choose on Web Japan)

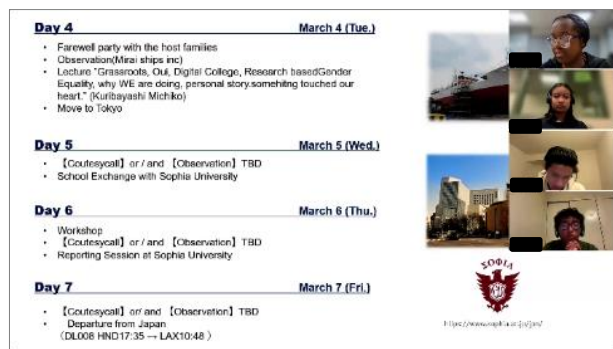
■ Invitation Program:

Mar. 1 (Sat)	Arrival at Haneda Airport 【Post-arrival Orientation】
Mar. 2 (Sun)	Travel from Tokyo to Miyagi 【Lecture】 “Seawall and Civic Action - Oya Beach Sandy Beach Restoration Town Development Project” Lecturer: Mr. MIURA Tomoyuki, Kesennuma City Council Member 【Meeting with the Host Families】
Mar. 3 (Mon)	【Homestay】 Minamisanriku Town
Mar. 4 (Tue)	【Farewell Party with the Host Families】 【Observation】 Mirai ships Inc. 【Lecture】 “Gender Equality After Disaster in Rural Areas”

	Lecturer: Ms. KURIBAYASHI Michiko, Director, Women's Eye Travel from Miyagi to Tokyo
Mar. 5 (Wed)	【Observation】 Miraikan - The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation 【School Exchange】 Sophia University
Mar. 6 (Thu)	【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans) 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans 【Courtesy Call】 Ms. ERI Arfiya, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mar. 7 (Fri)	【Observation】 TOKYO SKYTREE®, Tokyo Solamachi® Departure from Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Online Pre-study Program

 Day 4 March 4 (Tue.) • Farewell party with the host families • Observation(Mirai ships inc) • Lecture "Grassroots, Oni, Digital College, Research basedGender Equality, why WE are doing, personal story something touched our heart" (Kuribayashi Michiko) • Move to Tokyo Day 5 March 5 (Wed.) • 【Courtesycall】 or / and 【Observation】 TBD • School Exchange with Sophia University Day 6 March 6 (Thu.) • Workshop • 【Courtesycall】 or / and 【Observation】 TBD • Reporting Session at Sophia University Day 7 March 7 (Fri.) • 【Courtesycall】 or / and 【Observation】 TBD • Departure from Japan (DL008 HND17:35 → LAX10:48)	 Workshop ~ Everyday ~ Note down your findings, feelings, thoughts, etc. Anything you found and learned in Japan ⇒ ~ Workshop ~ • Share your experience with your group members • Compose Action Plans* • Preparation of presentation materials ⇒ ~Reporting~ Presenta action *Many participants have listed "Posting on social media for information dissemination" as an action plan, but it is a mandatory mission for everyone. Please come up with a different action plan apart from that.
February 20, 2025 【Pre-departure Orientation】	February 20, 2025 【Pre-departure Orientation】

Invitation Program

 March 2, 2025 【Lecture】 “Seawall and Civic Action - Oya Beach Sandy Beach Restoration Town Development Project”	 March 3, 2025 【Homestay】
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March 4, 2025 【Observation】 Mirai ships Inc.	March 4, 2025 【Lecture】 “Gender Equality After Disaster in Rural Areas”
	
March 5, 2025【Observation】Miraikan・The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation	March 5, 2025 【School Exchange】 Sophia University
	
March 6, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Ms. ERI Arfiya, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs	March 6, 2025 【Reporting Session】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ University Student

I was most impressed by the lecture portions in Miyagi. The themes of community building and civic action in response to disaster recovery were very inspiring, showing me that building trust within local communities is a crucial part of public policy. Similarly, during the Women's Eye lecture, I liked the pyramid diagram of actors from proactive to indifferent; it illustrated how Women's Eye addresses all local women and how this approach differs from the government's focus on existing community leaders.

◆ **University Student**

The most impressive parts of the exchange have been the visits to Women's Eye and the exchange with Sophia University. Women's Eye inspired us and drove us to think about not only the world and gender inequality, but how starting small can make a huge impact, so long as you start.

The Sophia student exchange was impactful because I was very nervous about not being able to connect with them, that we would be too different to get along, yet the moment I met them I felt instant connection. We were very impressed with our abilities together to come together, laugh, learn, and build bridges which we feel confident will last a long time.

◆ **University Student**

The most impressive parts that we took away from the trip were the homestays and learning about Kesennuma Sea Wall dialogues. We have never done a homestay before, and it really made us get immersed into the Japan's day to day lifestyle. It really changed my perspective on how people live their lives. The Kesennuma Sea Wall study groups and dialogue really gave us insight on how much the community was involved in the creation of the Sea Wall. The Sea Wall wasn't just a government decision without community insight; It was a community decision based on possible environmental effects, costs, beach views, and beach retention. This really gave us an idea of how close the community was in Kesennuma.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ **Exchange School Student**

We all gathered in one classroom and were able to welcome the U.S. students in a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. During the greeting and ice-breaking activities, we mainly enjoyed playing American games together, and the atmosphere of the entire room was very lively. We then went on a stroll through Shibuya, where the Japanese students actively explained about Japanese culture on the train and throughout the city, and we feel that we were able to be pretty much act like tour guides, providing a casual fieldwork experience.

It was a great honor for us to be able to convey not only the charm of Sophia University but also the atmosphere of Japanese students to the participants, and I am glad that they seemed to like us!

◆ **Exchange School Student**

I was talking with a Japanese friend of mine at the end of the fall semester about how the cafeteria prices had been keeping on going up, which is why I was surprised to hear the U.S. students say during the campus tour that the cafeteria prices were "too cheap!" This reminded me that there is a big difference in economic conditions and prices between our two countries.

◆ **Exchange School Student**

Thanks in part to the friendliness and curiosity of the U.S. students, we were able to have a very enjoyable exchange.

The students at our university were able to glimpse various aspects of the other students, such as those who can respond flexibly to various situations and people, those who enjoy themselves, those who are willing to take on challenges, and those who felt they could have done more. It was a very meaningful exchange for us.

◆ Host Family

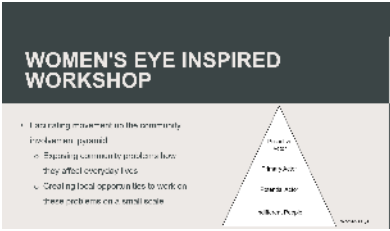
When I taught the participants how to say "Arigatou gozarisutegasuta", a word in our local dialect which is the same as "Arigatou gozaimasu", a word of gratitude that is used in everyday life, they practiced it so many times and it made me laugh so hard. I was especially heartened by their performance at the farewell party. Thanks to the participants, I was able to feel a closer connection with foreign countries.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

	
March 2, 2025 (Instagram) Today we learned about the Japanese 3/11 Tsunami and 9.0 Earthquake that hit Kesennuma, Japan The people of Kesennuma went through years of discourse and discussion on the effects that the Sea Wall would have on the environment, but in the end there was a finalized agreement on what the Sea Wall would look like	March 4, 2025 (Instagram) Very grateful to be a part of the program. In the part of our trip, we stayed in a home stay in the Miyagi prefecture - which was heavily impacted by the 3/11 natural disaster. Staying with these families was a blessing and gave me the opportunity to recognize how love, slowness, and mindfulness is executed with such grace.

6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Locations: Tokyo, Miyagi - Presentations by a total of 4 groups

Group 1		
		

【Results of the Program】

◆ Findings:

We learned a lot from the lectures in Miyagi Prefecture on the construction of the Oya Coast seawall, the visit to Mirai Ships Inc, and the lectures at Women's Eye.

We learned about how to build trusting relationships to reach a consensus on the construction of the seawall, and how they held study sessions for stakeholders from a neutral standpoint.

At Mirai Ships, we were strongly impressed by how five rival companies came together to unite, with a vision of 100 years into the future, to ensure that Kesennuma's shipbuilding industry, which was damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake, should never fade away.

We thought it was great that Women's Eye has an excellent approach to encouraging social participation by rural women through organizational support and education, and to unlock the potential of underrepresented women.

◆ Individual Prospects:

Inspired by the various programs in Miyagi Prefecture, we became convinced that our mission was to inspire and mobilize community members to bring about meaningful change in their communities.

In particular, we would like to apply what we learned about "empowering communities, balancing the opinions of others, and unearthing community toolkits" to our future actions.

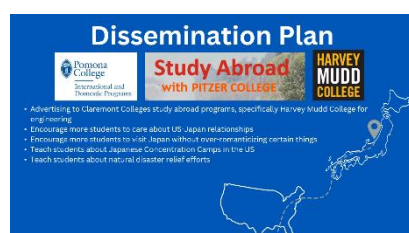
【Action Plan】

We will hold workshops at the university to share what we have learned in Miyagi, create opportunities to engage in constructive conversations, and ultimately develop emerging leaders through education.

Specifically, we are thinking of two workshops over three months: the first Tuesday in April (Intercultural Facilitator Program) and the first Tuesday in May (at Asia Pacific Student Services).

We would like to create a space where we can respect and interact with peers with diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Group 2



【Results of the Program】

◆ Findings:

The first is resilience. We learned that after disasters like 3/11, recovery and rebuilding efforts often required lengthy discussions with local residents.

Also, our interactions with the host family in Miyagi and students in Tokyo exposed us to Japanese lifestyles, customs and traditions that Americans don't usually know about. It also made us realize that people aren't all that different and the importance of deepening understanding of other cultures.

◆ Individual Prospects:

Academically, we hope to incorporate intercultural insights into our academic pursuits to enrich research and discussions.

In terms of our personal careers, we hope to develop the cultural competence and adaptability essential for working in a diverse and global environment.

As a member of the community, we hope to promote intercultural engagement by sharing the knowledge, experiences, and insights we have gained and maintaining the connections and relationships we have made in Japan.

In life in general, we hope to use the lessons we have learned from this experience to navigate and embrace diversity in our daily interactions, such as being open-minded to unknown cultures and approaching everything with gratitude.

【Action Plan】

We will create and distribute a scrapbook of our experiences in both digital (PDF) and physical (book) versions to college stakeholders. We believe this will increase people's interest in Japan. We chose this format because a too complicated format would only discourage people from taking an interest in Japan. We plan to use the scrapbook to allow each scholar to creatively express their experiences with people in Japan and what they learned from living in rural Japan. We want to give some shape to the emotional feelings we had after interacting with Japanese people, and we want as many people as possible to know about them.

Group 3



【Results of the Program】

◆ Findings:

We learned the importance of being actively involved in the local community like Mr. Miura, the lecturer on the seawall, and the possibility of starting with a small volunteer group like Women's Eye and expand activities and make a difference in society.

◆ Individual Prospects:

We will use what we have learned from this experience to create a community that ensures mutual aid and a sense of belonging. This community will allow us to speak freely and openly across cultural differences and create connections with other organizations of different cultures.

【Action Plan】

Within two months, we will create a ZINE (a self-published booklet by an individual or a small group) describing Japanese culture and what we have learned and distribute it to students in events and at distribution points on campus from spring to fall semesters to spread what we have learned and to create leaders who can communicate Japanese culture in the future.

Group 4



【Results of the Program】

◆ Findings:

At Oya Coast, we learned about consensus building among local residents, and at Women's Eye, we learned about efforts for a gender-equal society. We learned that community consensus is important in policy formulation. I also learned that trust is important for disaster recovery and unity in the community.

◆ Individual Prospects:

Since we interviewed people whom we met this time on the theme of “Ikigai,” I would like to share with Americans the Japanese way of thinking that I learned through the interviews. Since “Ikigai” does not have an equivalent English word, we believe we will be able to understand its meaning more correctly if I see it through an American's point of view.

【Action Plan】

We will write about our experiences and learnings in a campus newspaper called “The student life” and publish it one month after we return to the US. We will also share our learnings with people on campus and hold a Q&A session at a facility on campus three months after our return. Also, during a one-year period after returning, we will make an opportunity to share our experiences in the faculty of Asian Studies and other facilities on campus.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)