

OIP Travel Grant: Faculty Report

Official Version for Public Review

Date April 15, 2009
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Proposal title Visits to Oita University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan to secure 10 slots for our Exchange Programs

Country/ies visited Japan
Institution visited Oita University (exchange partner since August 2006)
Ritsumeikan University (exchange partner since December 2007)
Beppu University (a candidate for exchange agreement)
Hosei University (a candidate for exchange agreement)

Dates of travel Friday, March 20, 2009 – Thursday, April 2, 2009

Number of student participants: None

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded (list titles, countries and dates): None

Have all required reports been submitted? N/A

Other funding for this activity available/applied for:
Assistance from SDSU American Language Institute

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

I was officially appointed by Dr. Alan R. Sweedler to take charge of the SDSU Japan Exchange Programs beginning this fall. My mission is to increase the number of students who will study in Japan. I wish to visit Oita University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in this capacity during the spring break, iron out current problems, come up with workable solutions, and secure 10 slots for full academic-year programs, which would otherwise be lost.

Travel report

I had a very productive visit. I visited: (1) Oita University and (2) Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University as scheduled. I was able to iron out current problems. In addition, I visited (3) Beppu University and (4) Hosei University. I also met with a professor of (5) Waseda University (California State University International Program partner institution) regarding the possibility of creating SDSU's own exchange agreement with the School of Literature there.

Before I report on my visit, I wish to point out that the universities in Japan are suffering from a shortage of college-age students. The number of students graduating from high school has been getting lower each year, unlike the U.S. trend. This trend is expected to continue. Thus, Japanese universities are eager to create academic programs which are attractive to applicants. Study abroad opportunities are particularly attractive. Most Japanese students are interested in studying in English-speaking countries, since they start studying English at the 7th grade. Among these countries, the U.S. is always their first choice.

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(1) Oita University (Exchange Agreement signed in August 2006)

Background Information

Oita University, founded in 1949, is a small national university with approximately 5800 students situated in Oita City, Oita Prefecture. SDSU signed an agreement with them in August, 2006. Both parties are willing to exchange up to five students. SDSU sent two students for a trial during the academic year of 2007-2008, the first full year of the Agreement. There are four students currently studying there this academic year. The Selection Committee nominated four students who will be sent to Oita again next year.

However, **they have not been able to send any students at all to SDSU due to the TOEFL score requirements.** Oita University does not regard the arrangement as fair to its students, for two reasons: (1) If their students wish to attend the American Language Institute, they must pay additional tuition and fees, since ALI is not an official part of SDSU. (2) Attendance at ALI does not guarantee acceptance by SDSU.

Therefore, I wanted to visit Oita University as someone who is in charge of SDSU's Japan Exchange and meet with the faculty and staff members who are actually running the Center. I would express sympathy for their frustration, listen to them attentively, and apologize for any miscommunications that might have occurred. I would explain what kinds of options we can offer. I would also listen to their wishes and concerns.

Actual Visits and Activities

Wednesday, March 25

A Meeting with Professor Kazuko Kumo of the School of Economics (3 hours):
Professor Kumo initiated the exchange agreement with SDSU.

Thursday, March 26

A meeting with the School of Economics Deans:
Π Dr. Norio Shimoda, Dean
Π Dr. Kenichiro Ichihara, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
Π Ms. Kazuko Kumo, Associate Professor of English Literature

An additional meeting with Professor Kazuko Kumo:

Oita University (cont'd)

Friday, March 27

A brief meeting with the Center staff:

Π Mr. Yoshihiro Abe, Deputy Section Head

Π Ms. Yuko Komori, Manager, International Exchange

A meeting with the Japanese Language Faculty at the Center:

Π Dr. Mieko Sakai, Associate Professor

Π Ms. Miho Takehara, Assistant Professor

Π Mr. Suganuma Katsuhiko, Assistant Professor

A meeting with the International Program at Oita University (IPOU) representative:

Π Professor Kazumi Nagaike, Associate Professor

A meeting with Dr. Seiji Sato, Vice President, the Director of the Center, was cancelled because Dr. Sato was called to another urgent meeting. Professor Nagaike accepted the letter to Dr. Sato issued by Dr. Sweedler.

Visit to Oita University's International Exchange Residence (30 minutes):

Discussions and Recommendations

Oita University was pleased that SDSU sent me to listen to their concerns. The letter from Dr. Sweedler to Dr. Seiji Sato, Oita University's Vice President and the Director of the Center, was very much appreciated. They were ready to open up and express their concerns.

It appears impossible for Oita University to find a student who can clear SDSU's TOEFL requirement (550). Their students' scores are improving but they do not reach even 525. I wish to recommend that SDSU express itswilling to "review" the applications of the students if Oita recommends them very highly.

Oita's International Exchange House was very nice. Each room is a private room equipped with a private bathroom. The rent is only ¥5,000 (= \$50) per month, since it is subsidized by the government. It was clean and pleasant. It will take 25 minutes by bike. Students can commute by train (3 stations) or by bus. It is conveniently located.

(2) Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
(Exchange Agreement signed in December 2007)

Background Information

Ritsumeikan University, founded in 1869, is a reputable private institution in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. They opened a new university called Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (henceforth APU) in Beppu in April 2000 with a vision that Kyushu island will be the center of Asian commerce. Approximately 2,600 international students from 81 countries are studying with 3,200 Japanese students on campus.

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (cont'd)

The College of Business Administration initiated the exchange program with APU with a maximum of five students to be exchanged each year. APU sent two students for the current academic year. However, CBA has already given up on APU because they have not sent CBA the list of courses they offer in spite of her repeated requests. CBA gave me the slots to use to send non-CBA students. I cannot send our students, either, to such a seemingly uncooperative university.

I wanted to visit and meet with Dr. Yuichi Kondo, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, College of Asia Pacific Studies, and their Japanese language faculty, and find out how APU's curriculum fits the need of our students

Actual Visits and Activities

Monday, March 23

A meeting with the representatives from the Academic Outreach Office:

Π Dr. Yuichi Kondo, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, College of Asia Pacific Studies (in charge of all exchange programs)

Π Ms. Tamami Seguchi, Student Exchange Coordinator (in charge of Outbound Students)

Π Ms. Miki Nitano (in charge of Inbound Students)

Π Ms. Miyuki Ono

A Campus Tour escorted by Ms. Ono.

A meeting with the Japanese faculty:

Π Ms. Chisako Umeda, Associate Professor, Director of the Japanese Language Program

A meeting with an exchange student from the University of Buffalo.

A meeting with Mr. Eoin Jordan, Program Coordinator of Short-Term Study Abroad Programs.

Discussions and Recommendations

They were very happy to receive me and showed their appreciation with a superbly coordinated schedule. The reason Dr. Kondo was unable to send course offering information to CBA was a matter of timing. The spring courses at APU will not begin until early April. Dr. Kondo can give a rough idea of the courses and their instructors in January or February but the confirmed information will not be available until March. This is too late for CBA.

I think that SDSU can start sending students in the Fall of 2010. APU courses on Japan/Asia content in English in the Fall and in Japanese in the Spring. APU's Japanese Language Program is rigorous but flexible. I met with an exchange student from the University of Buffalo who had been having a life-changing experience at APU. The residence halls are clean and very nice. Half of the residents are international students and the remaining half are Japanese freshmen who are required to live in the dorm.

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (cont'd)

The only concern I have is the campus location. It was built on top of a hill in 2000. Everything is new and looks clean. The campus overlooks the breathtaking Beppu Bay. However, the entire campus is isolated from the rest of the world.

The meeting with Mr. Eoin Jordan who coordinates short-term language study programs was very productive. They are interested in sending students to ALI.

We should include APU in the list of exchange partners available for all majors and begin advertising opportunities at APU. Dr. Kondo says that he would like to begin with 2-3 students from SDSU for our first year.

(3) Beppu University (A Candidate for Exchange Agreement)

Background Information

I originally planned to spend two full days at APU. It turned out, however, that APU put all appointments in one day for me. I knew that I would have one free day in Beppu before I left for Japan. Thus, I contacted Beppu University (henceforth BU) to arrange a visit.

BU is the oldest four-year college in Kyushu Island, founded in 1908. It is a small private institution (approximately 2,500 students) with three Colleges. Its Department of English has "Study Abroad for All Who Wish It" Program, like Toyo Eiwa University. However, their exchange agreement list, available online, includes only one community college for the mainland U.S. This must be the exchange partner for BU Junior College. BU sends its English majors to the University of Winchester in England for one academic year. There must be some students who are eager to come to the main land U.S. to study American English. BU Junior College students might be interested in coming to the U.S. for a few weeks, too. I saw a great opportunity for SDSU and ALI.

Actual Visit and Activities

Tuesday, March 23

A meeting with Dr. Akira Nishimura, President of the University

Campus Tour escorted by President Nishimura

A visit to Beppu University's International Exchange Residence

Discussions and Recommendations

To my great surprise, Dr. Akira Nishimura, BU's President, took time off from his busy schedule, met with me all morning, and showed me around. He said that the faculty member who had a special connection with the University of Winchester left BU this academic year. He must find a university where his students can go for one year beginning in 2010. The School of International Business, which admitted its first group of students in April 2009, is expected to grow. The students of this new School will need special English training abroad. He is very much interested in working with SDSU.

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Beppu University (cont'd)

BU offers total of 9 advanced-level Japanese courses per semester as part of its regular curriculum for its 270 international students. BU also offers 5 business-content courses in English per semester. In addition, their Art courses such as “Calligraphy,” “Drawing,” “Design,” and “Manga and Animation Creation” are quite appealing to our students. If we have students whose level is beyond Level 2 and who are interested in business, art, and Japanese literature, we can send them to BU.

I went to see the BU International Exchange Residence. It is built right at the train station. It is a ten-minute walk from the BU campus. All rooms are private rooms equipped with private baths/showers. There are many stores along the street between the BU campus and the Exchange Residence. Students will have no problem purchasing groceries or cooked meals. BU’s campus and International Exchange Residence are located in the town. Our students would enjoy living within the community. I felt excited about the prospect of offering such an experience to our students.

I would like to recommend that we wait until President Nishimura contact us. I gave him enough information. He specifically asked me to give him time to check with the Senate and the staff members who are in charge of exchange programs.

(4) Hosei University (A Candidate for Exchange Agreement)

Background Information

Hosei University, founded in 1880, is a reputable private university with approximately 30,300 students situated in the heart of Tokyo. They have 300 international students from various countries. The Exchange Students from Overseas Program (ESPO) has agreements with 26 institutions in 12 countries. From the U.S., Truman State University, Baylor University, UC Davis, and Boise State University have established agreements with Hosei.

I have been working with Professor Rebecca Erwin Fukuzawa, Professor of Japanese Studies at Hosei, regarding a possible exchange agreement for several years. Becky herself was an exchange student from Earlham College to Waseda University, my alma mater, in the mid 1970s. We have been good friends since then.

Professor Fukuzawa has visited SDSU twice. Hosei already has its Senate’s approval to sign the agreement. When she learned that I was going to visit Oita University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University over the spring break, she insisted that I should revise my travel schedule and make an official visit to Hosei.

Actual Visits and Activities

Monday, March 30

A brief meeting with Mr. Hidemi Tanaka, Coordinator, Exchange Students Program (Inbound), International Center

A Visit to Hosei University Men’s Residence:

II Mr. Hidemi Tanaka, Coordinator, Exchange Students Program (Inbound),
International Center

Hosei University (con'd)

II Mr. and Mrs. Mitsuru Okano, The Residence Parents

II Ms. Aya Sumida, Manager, Residence Division, Kyoritsu Maintenance

A meeting with four exchange students from the U.S. at the Residence:
Two students from Boise State University, 1 student each from Baylor University
and Truman University

A meeting with the top administration:

II Dr. Akira Tokuyasu, Vice President for International Affairs

II Mr. Kimiyoshi Hayashi, Associate Vice President for International Affairs,
Director, International Center

II Mr. Yasuhisa Hioka, Assistant Director, International Center

A meeting with Professor Hirofumi Emura, the Director of the Japanese
Language Program.

A meeting with the International Center staff:

II Ms. Kimiko Hotokezaka, Executive Assistant

II Mr. Hidemi Tanaka, Coordinator, Exchange Students Program (Inbound)

II Ms. Chiemi Ohiwa, Coordinator, Exchange Students Program (Outbound)

A meeting with Mr. Masayuki Masuda, Manager of Study Abroad Center, Office
of Academic Affairs.

Discussions and Recommendations

I met with Hosei's top administration, the Director of the Japanese Language Program, and International Center staff members. Hosei offers a rigorous Japanese languages curriculum for international students and 10 courses on Japan-related topics (business, economics, politics, sociology, gender issues, philosophy, literature, education) in English each semester. Their curriculum is ideal for our students.

I also had a chance to visit the Men's Residence where our male students will be staying. What impressed me is that international students will be living with Japanese students and that the Residence Father who prepares meals for students is a former chef. I met with four exchange students from the U.S. staying there. They have four residence halls within 30 minutes of commuting time. The residence halls are subsidized by Hosei in such a way that the monthly rent for a private room with 2 daily meals stays ¥30,000 (approximately \$300) only. This is a bargain, especially when I think about the location and the quality of the environment.

Once the exchange agreement is signed, the manager of Study Abroad Center will visit SDSU. Once he approves our facilities (he already liked the curricula I explained), Hosei will begin sending its students to ALI for short-term programs (3-4 weeks) during spring and/or summer breaks and one semester programs in the fall. This is in addition to the regular exchange program students. Some academic degree programs at Hosei require a

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study abroad program for one semester. Hosei is not necessarily happy with the current arrangement and is looking for a new partner. In their opinion, SDSU is ideal.

Hosei University (cont'd)

We should include Hosei in the list of exchange partners available for all majors and begin advertising opportunities at Hosei. We can send 5 students for our first year. They are eager to establish and develop a productive relationship with SDSU.

(5) Waseda University (CSU-IP Partner)

Background Information

Waseda University, considered Japan's Harvard, is available through the California State University's International Program (CSU-IP). This is a highly competitive program since 23 CSU campuses nominate their strong applicants. Even if our students' GPAs clear the minimum requirement, there is no guarantee that they will be accepted.

It would be nice if SDSU could develop its own exchange agreement with Waseda. I know that Waseda's School of International Humanities (formerly "Division of International Studies") is not interested in developing a separate agreement with SDSU. Thus, I decided to meet with a professor of the School of Literature.

Actual Visit and Activities

Tuesday, March 31

A meeting with Dr. Kazuyoshi Fukuzawa, Professor of Psychology, School of Literature, Waseda University.

Discussion and Recommendations

Dr. Kazuyoshi Fukuzawa thinks that it is possible to get approval from the Senate of the School of Literature. While discussing possibilities, I realized that I must first check with Waseda's School of International Humanities regarding the policy and the support available for this agreement. If it is an exchange agreement, their office must get involved. I must visit the School of International Humanities and check their policy and opinion regarding an individual exchange agreement next time I am sent to Japan.

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In sum, I was able to work out problems with Oita University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University and regain their trust in SDSU (saved 8 slots). I was also able to make substantial progress with Hosei University regarding a new exchange agreement (up to 5 slots). I also initiated negotiation with Beppu University (2-3 students) and Waseda University through Professor Fukuzawa. My visit also brought a significant number of potential clients to ALI.