

International Center Newsletter

International Center, Osaka Gakuin University

All the world's a stage.

“As You Like It” William Shakespeare

1. A Message from International Center Director, Mike Matsuno

Experience + Discovery = A truly Life Changing experience!

Greetings from the International Center!

Beginning this year, we will be publishing an international center newsletter to update the OGU community on what new is happening at the International Center regarding study abroad and exchange opportunities, partnerships and incoming international student information, as well as all other international center related news taking place on campus. Fall 2009, we will be sending 18 students abroad to participate in one semester or one year exchange programs.

We are hoping to increase this number yearly, because we all know that a study abroad/exchange experience is a “priceless,” life-changing opportunity. OGU students return from exchange, not only with drastically improved language skills and knowledge about foreign cultures and people, but more importantly, they learn about their own identity and values and what it means to be Japanese. Moreover, no “price tag” can be placed on the life skills they acquire while they are away: superior communication and assertiveness skills, resourcefulness and problem solving abilities, and overall confidence.

Needless to say, the potential experiences, knowledge, skills, and international friendships our students acquire on

exchange will make a huge impact on their way of thinking, future employment choices, and their overall quality of life. We appreciate your ongoing support to send as many qualified OGU students on study abroad/exchange programs; long term or short term. Please help us encourage all students to experience an opportunity that can often only be done while studying at the university.

If you have any questions or need any further information, please have your students and friends come and talk to us at our new location:

International Center, Building #1, First Floor.

Yoroshiku Onegai Shimasu



International Center Director & Deputy Director

2. A Message from International Center Deputy Director, Noboru Goto

When I was a university student, I experienced my first overseas travel during one of my summer vacations. I traveled the U.S., Canada and Mexico for one month free of any travel schedule. It was my mini adventure with just my backpack and me! I embarked on the same journey two years in a row. The first year I went with a friend and the second year I traveled alone. Everything I saw and did along the way was new to me. After my return to Japan, one of my professors eagerly asked “how did your overseas adventure help you to mature and gain personal growth?” Although at first I was a little mystified by his question, after some self reflection, I realized how truly “life changing” my overseas experience was. Through some self discovery and the opportunity to view first hand how various cultures and different ways of thinking co-exist in the world, I gained both self-confidence and a broader view of the world.

Next, I went to the graduate school in Japan. Interestingly, 80% of my classmates were foreigners. There were students from Korea, China, Taiwan and Singapore. As a result, this became another invaluable experience for me. I was able to continue to learn about other cultures and diversified ways of thinking, while living in Japan. Even today, I remain in contact with many of my former classmates. My only regret is: I

wish I would have studied abroad while I was in my twenties. I believe through cross-cultural experiences one discovers foreign countries, more about their home country, and gains a better understanding of themselves. All of these experiences serve as a foundation for the future. Ideally, it is best when students take the opportunity to participate in such events during their university years.

As of May 1, 2009, OGU has 34 partner universities in which students can study for a semester or a year as an exchange student. Additionally, approximately 30 students from all over the world, are currently learning Japanese and are immersed in Japanese culture on this very campus. They look forward to communicating with you! While it is valuable for you to go overseas, it is equally immeasurable to have cross-cultural experiences on campus at OGU. The most important thing is to take the first step. You are invited to come to the International Center located on the first floor of Building #1. Take the first valuable step towards understanding differences in various cultures and becoming aware of global ways of thinking. Come to the International Center and meet an everlasting friend and become involved in limitless discussions about your future and dream!

3. 2009-2010 Exchange Students

The International Center assists OGU students in becoming exchange students at overseas partner universities and also hosts students from various partner universities all over the world. OGU has relationships with forty overseas partner universities, amongst them, thirty-four student exchange agreements exist and this number is expected to grow throughout the year. OGU recently became partners with universities in the U.S. and Europe as well as in several Asian countries. Today, students who choose to study Chinese and Korean have many more choices!

Last year, a total of twenty-one OGU students attended partner universities as exchange students and currently nine students continue to study at partner universities in the U.S., Korea and Thailand.

This year, there are eighteen OGU students studying abroad at partner universities located in the U.S., Germany, France, Finland, the Netherlands, Australia, Korea, Taiwan and South Africa. Their stories will be featured in both the International Center newsletter and website this coming fall.

The International Center is pleased to receive two scholar-

ships from the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) for OGU exchange students for the academic school year 2009-2010! The selection process for candidates is based on criteria such as students' grades, attendance and their all around academic effort. This year's two recipients are Mr. Daichi Misaki, who will be attending the University of Mississippi, and Mr. Hiroyuki Toma who will be attending the HZ University of Applied Sciences. Anyone is eligible to apply for these scholarships. If you believe studying abroad might be somewhat of a financial challenge for you, come to the International Center, together we can think of a plan for you. Don't let your dream to study abroad slip away!

All the university locations and their required language standards for admissions will be announced in June. If you are interested in learning more about OGU's study abroad programs, please come to visit the International Center. Freshmen who are considering study abroad in the future should begin preparing as soon as possible. The earlier you begin your study abroad experience, the better!

4. A Message from Kyoko Shimakawa

Kyoko is an OGU outbound student currently studying abroad at the University of Mississippi. She is an international studies major.

Eight months have passed since I arrived in Mississippi. I slowly overcame the anxiety and peculiarity I felt when I first started my new life in the US. At first, everything seemed larger in the US compared to Japan. The university campus, the roads, highways and bridges all seemed huge. It was challenging to acclimate to the new dorm living environment yet, now I feel very comfortable living in a college dorm room.

The most difficult thing for me to get use to was the "food". I never expected I would have difficulty adjusting to different types of food. I found it challenging to eat healthy foods. After I got sick one time, I was much more careful to make healthy food choices when I ate.

Despite the challenges I have experienced here, my student life has been positively influenced by other university students in the US. Mississippi is an ideal place to study because students here are serious about college and their studies. They are a great support and a positive influence on one another. Students' enthusiasm for learning and their positive attitude towards studying motivated me to do the same. Students in the US often study hard in the library, throughout the weekdays and attend parties and enjoy their free-time during the weekends. They seem to manage their time wisely. Before I came to Mississippi, I lacked skills to concentrate on one thing at a time. Once I began to study in the library everyday; I improved my study habits and became better at focusing and completing tasks I was working on.

Students come from all parts of the world to study at the University of Mississippi. This is an excellent place to learn



With friends at the University of Mississippi

not only about American culture, but also, diversified cultures of the world. My study abroad experience has allowed me to learn about other countries and given me a broader view of the world. I have even learned a few phrases in Korean and Spanish while communicating with my classmates. This was a true cross-cultural experience.

I often felt frustrated and disappointed, when I knew what I wanted to communicate, but I didn't know how to say it in English. Regardless, I continued to think positive, study consistently at the library, and I made a plan to improve my situation. I thought it was important to problem solve and keep my spirits up to avoid becoming depressed. I made a plan and took step to improve my conversational skills. First, I found a speaking partner and asked her to check my pronunciation a couple of times a week. Secondly, I got involved on campus and partici-



Student Event

pated in various events. Then, I was forced to communicate in English with American students. When a student studies abroad, it is critical for them to be confident and not afraid to try to speak in English.

During my time spent here, I realize that my study abroad experience became a reality because of the tireless efforts and support of my family, teachers and many other people in my life. Living away from Japan has helped me to appreciate their help even more. In my short time here, I am determined to learn and to grow as much as possible. I understand better now, it is me who is responsible for my studies and to be successful, I must take initiative and do the studying and hard work myself. I realize that my time here is precious and I cannot waste even one moment of this opportunity.

Indeed, I have experienced many new things and acquired adequate English skills as an exchange student. However, equally important, this study abroad experience has provided me with an opportunity that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I will continue to work hard to improve my English even more during my remaining time in Mississippi. I now firmly believe this life changing experience has given me the capability and skills necessary to successfully prepare for job hunting and for my future life.

5. Partner University: University of San Carlos, Republic of Philippines

Among the many partner universities of Osaka Gakuin University, lies the University of San Carlos located in the Republic of Philippines.

Founded by the Spanish Jesuits on August 1, 1595, USC is the oldest school in the country. World War II saw the occupation of CSC by Japanese troops. Shortly before it's liberation, in 1944, bombs from US planes fell on San Carlos, narrowly reducing the school to rubble and ultimately leading to its closure. San Carlos became a university in 1948, three years after it reopened.

Four campuses encompass varied levels of educational programs. There are a total of eight colleges (Architecture and Fine Arts, Arts and Sciences, Commerce, Education, Engineering, Law, Nursing and Pharmacy) and twenty-seven other departments. USC is truly a small "international-city". External affairs, international connections and a steady influx of foreign students and visiting professors have made USC a multicultural academic community bonded by the common pursuit for global standards.

USC is located in Cebu City on Cebu Island in the Philippines. Cebu is well known for its beautiful sightseeing locations. It hosts many of the most famous resorts in the country showcasing modern hotels with state of the art facilities. Cebu City is the oldest city in the Philippines and is home to numerous historical buildings and memorial monuments.

English is already one of the official languages in the academic and political circles in the Philippines. Consequently, it is not entirely necessary for all students to travel to the U.S., England or Australia to study English. If you find traveling overseas for exchange might be somewhat of a hardship for you, studying in the Philippines might be a feasible alternative.

In the fall of 2008, OGU welcomed Jose Maria A. Mateo, "Butch," the first exchange student from University of San Carlos. If you would like to learn more facts about the University of San Carlos and the Philippines, please come visit the International Center!



Cebu City view of the ocean



Philippines



Cebu Island



Please see the International Center website for more information.
http://www.osaka-gu.ac.jp/int_exchange/main.html

6. Foreign Student: Jose Maria A. Mateo, "Butch"

Thirty students were welcomed from OGU partner universities in September of 2008. Today, twenty-four of them continue to study in the OGU international exchange program. Butch, a student from the University of San Carlos was interviewed about his impressions of Japan, his life and his home university.

When Butch first arrived in Japan he was surprised to find that it is much cleaner than he had expected. He was amazed at the strict eating etiquette. Even now, he continues to worry that he follows the expected eating etiquette closely as to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. His observations of men sitting on the train were somewhat of a shock for him. In his home country, train seats are given away by males to their elders and especially to women. He found it even more shocking to see men riding as a passenger on the back of a bicycle powered by a woman. Although many men in the Philippines might share the same respect for females as Butch does, it was his mother who trained him as a child to be kind and help women whenever he had the chance. Butch always tries to help the female staff at the International Center carry heavy items or clean the office as needed.

Prior to coming to Japan, Butch studied Japanese for a semester and took a free Japanese lesson offered by the Philippine government for two months. Nonetheless, he could still only speak limited Japanese. Yet now, he can communicate a little more with Japanese people using simple sentences. Butch asserts that people in the Philippines are interested in studying Japanese because it is useful when they look for a job.



Butch with other foreign and OGU students

The University of San Carlos, assertively promotes the internationalization of the campus, but according to Butch, there are currently zero Japanese students attending there. All courses, with the exception of foreign language classes, are instructed in English; hence, there are many foreign students on campus. Additionally, many students and researchers from European countries study with Philippine students in the graduate school. USC is an attractive place to study because Japanese students can of course study English, as well as enjoy the community, the beaches, the mountains and the abundant shopping areas. Butch recommends USC to OGU students because the living costs are low, and the students can stay in the Philippines without any financial hardships.

Butch is majoring in marketing at USC. After graduation, he hopes to become employed with a trading company exporting Philippine products to other parts of the world. His dream is to operate his own company in the future. We hope his dream will come true one day and he will contribute to the friendship between the Philippines and Japan and promote bilateral trading with great success!

7. Additional *International Center* News

1) Host Family Orientation

July 6 (Sat.) 13:30 - 16 :00 p.m.

OGU continues to offer foreign students the opportunity to live with a host family during their stay in Japan. As a result of the dramatic increase in the number of foreign students this year, OGU is in need of additional host families. In order to reach this goal, we need your help.

Requirements:

- 1) home is an hour or less travel time to OGU
- 2) must have a private room
- 3) two meals a day (including holidays)

If you are interested in hosting a student, please attend our Host Family Pre-meeting. We hope you will join us in reaching our goal and thank you for your continued support for the OGU exchange program.

2) International Center Staff Changes:

During April and May there were several staff changes at the International Center. Ms. Rika Kawano and Mr. Kenichiro Yamamichi were transferred to the Admissions office and Ms. Yumi Nakamura was transferred to the Student Affairs Office. We would like to thank each of them for their contribution to the International Center.

Please join us in welcoming Ms. Titis Nitishwari, Ms. Tomomi

Kumai and Mr. Masafumi Shibutani, three new staff members at the International Center.

As we move forward with new beginnings, we will be focusing our efforts on increasing both the number of OGU students studying abroad, as well as foreign students studying Japanese at OGU. We are extremely dedicated to helping both the OGU and foreign students live their dream of becoming an exchange student. Moreover, we wish to help students make the most of their "life changing" experience so they may be successful in their future.

We appreciate your generous support and continued cooperation for the International Center exchange programs!



The International Center Staff

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