



Welcome (back) students!

We hope you had a great summer and your semester is off to a great start for this new academic year of 2018 - 2019. If you are Freshman, you must be excited for the beginning of your college years. You are in just the right place to learn and explore the world of college life. If you are a Sophomore, Junior, Senior, and Super Senior, make this coming year more fruitful with your experience, ambition, and more importantly challenges. The WCU JPN program is here to support you to overcome those challenges and facilitate your academic and social achievement as a mature college student to become ready for the globalized world. In this Vol. 7, WCU current students and graduates are featured. Each of them is studying or studied in the WCU JPN program and created his or her own page here. They tell you their own stories through their own eyes. Like them, the WCU JPN program wants you to be able to weave your own story through studying in WCU and we are here to support you.

We are families. We never stop. We never quit --- Let the adventure begin!



(From left) Ms. Gabrielle Samaha, Mr. Jonathan Ramos, and Mr. Arturo Adame Nava.

The 27th Japanese Speech Contest in Atlanta

Three students participated in **the 27th Annual Japanese Speech Contest in Atlanta on March, 3rd**. This event is co-organized by The Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta, the Japan America Society of Georgia, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Georgia, and the Georgia Association of Teachers of Japanese. It is the wonderful opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of Japanese language and culture. **Mr. Ramos won the fourth place in the category 1**, which is designed for JLPT N5 and N4 level learners.

Congratulations, Mr. Ramos!

WCU JPN Internship Program with Chukyo University

March 12 - 26

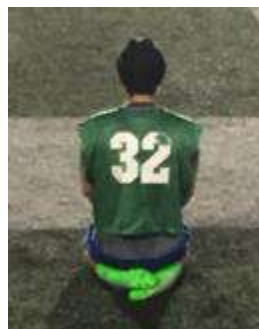
WCU JPN program launched a new two-week internship program in spring 18 in association with **Dr. Moriyama** in Chukyo University, one of our exchange program partners in Japan. Two students: **Ms. Inoue** and **Ms. Itoh** visited us and participated in interdisciplinary opportunities besides the Japanese program to learn how professors strive to facilitate students' learning outcomes: Identify, Plan, Execute, and Evaluate. Thanks to the generous cooperation of the professors: **Dr. Coutour** and **Dr. Fisher** in Spanish, **Dr. Malissen** in French, **Dr. Manning** in communication, **Dr. Rader** in Marketing, **Dr. Tyler** in sports management, and **Dr. Yan** in engineering. Most importantly, thanks to **Motohashi sensei's tireless effort to make the internship a wonderful success!!!**



(From left) Ms. Haduki Inoue (井上葉月) and Ms. Miduki Itoh (伊藤美月) at Dry Falls.

Motohashi sensei's Community Course @ Biltmore

April 4 - May 2



Motohashi sensei is meditating in WCU soccer field like a samurai?! (Maybe)

Community Course @ Biltmore: Introductory Japanese Language and Culture was successfully completed. 12 students were enrolled in the course. They survived HIRAGANA and KATAKANA writing and reading practice and have become to be able to ask the price of things at a shop and buy them in Japanese at the end of the course.



Introductory Japanese Language and Culture

Japanese Calligraphy Workshop @ International Festival

April 12



Diversity & Inclusion portfolio from JPN393: Japanese Calligraphy in spring 18



← ↓ Ohtani sensei, who used to teach Japanese at the University of South Florida and now lives in Sylva with his beloved wife, visited WCU JPN program again to hold his famous calligraphy workshop.

↑ 前進 (Zenshin, Moving forward)

Through his interactive workshop for 5 times (!), more than 40 visitors and students enjoyed practicing Japanese calligraphy. Besides, they enjoyed participating in his stage performance,

前進 (Zenshin, Moving forward)



Thank you so much, Ohtani sensei!!!

---WCU JPN Program

↑ Practicing 愛 (Ai, Love): Lets' move forward with empathy!

Congratulations Graduate! Ms. Kelsy Tai Dean



Photo 1 Tai, Hannah, Emily, Taz

Would you please introduce yourself including your major and minor?

Hello! My name is Kelsy Dean, but I go by Tai. When I transferred to WCU, I decided to major in Japanese and minor in Creative Writing. I was born and raised in High Point, NC. Before coming to Western, I was going to a small private college in Florida; but it turns out I like the mountains more than the beach.

You studied Japanese and Creative Writing. Why did you choose this combination?

I chose to transfer to WCU because it is one of the only schools on the East Coast with a Japanese program. At my previous school, I was majoring in Creative Writing and I didn't want to just drop that upon transferring schools; so, it made sense to make it my minor.



Photo 2 Tai & Sister

Would you please tell us how your study-abroad experience was in Japan?

I have studied abroad twice in Japan. The first time was during the winter and it snowed so much! Japan in the winter is beautiful. My second time in Japan was during the summer. My favorite places in Japan were Tokyo, Nikko, and Kyoto.

Would you please tell us how you are planning to use your Japanese language fluency and cultural responsiveness for your future after graduating from WCU, such as job and/or graduate study?



Photo 4 Moeka & Tai

Would you please tell us how you are planning to use your Japanese language fluency and cultural responsiveness for your future after graduating from WCU, such as job and/or graduate study?

In the fall 2018, I will be starting graduate school at George Washington University. I will be studying Interior Architecture and I hope to be able to work in traditional Japanese styles into my future career and designs.



Photo 3 Tai & Chihiro

Any crucial advice for the students in JPN program?

Japanese sounds difficult and feels difficult when you're starting off; but stick with it and you will learn so much while becoming friends with all kinds of fun and interesting people.

Tell us what you have achieved throughout your study in WCU and Japanese program academically and socially. Also, what would you like to tell the students in WCU in general?



Photo 5 Mom, Dad, & Tai

I feel that I have learned so much thru the language and cultural classes that WCU has offered. The people that I have met are so fascinating and fun to

be around. The most important thing I have learned at WCU is that you have to go out to cultural events to make the most of your time in college.

Congratulations Graduate! Ms. Madison King



Would you please introduce yourself including your major and minor?
Hello everyone! My name is Madison King and I was a **Professional Writing and Japanese Special Studies double major with a minor in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).**

You studied Professional Writing and Japanese, and TESOL. Why did you choose this combination?

Since I was about ten years old, I have wanted to try **teaching English in Japan**. So, when it came to choosing a course of study I knew I had to learn Japanese and learn how to teach English to speakers of other languages. As for **Professional Writing, I believe that writing is the most intimate way to look at language and how it works**. I decided that these studies would make me the happiest and give me a good advantage when it came to learning how to teach Japanese students English.



Would you please tell us how your study-abroad experience was in Japan? How did you spend your time when you were not doing school-related activities there?

My study abroad experience was the best experience of my life so far. While I wasn't studying or going to class, I traveled Japan, went on hikes, went to concerts, and had a great time with friends from all over the world.

Would you please tell us how you are planning to use your Japanese language fluency and cultural responsiveness for your future after graduating from WCU, such as in a job and/or graduate study?

Amazingly enough, **I have already been accepted into the JET program**, where I will become an Assistant Language Teacher to a Japanese English teacher somewhere in Japan (as long as I get my paperwork in on time)! * I believe it was thanks to the Japanese Program at WCU, and especially the encouragements of Ono Sensei, that I was afforded this amazing opportunity, and I can't thank them enough! ***She is placed in Sanuki, Tokushima in Japan now.** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanuki_Province **It is famous for Udon noodles.** https://www.google.com/search?q=sanuki.&client=firefox-b&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjO0dyD7p_dAhUL31MKHU5BCwoQ_AUICygC&biw=1440&bih=736



What is the wildest dream related to your experience about Japanese language, culture, and study-abroad experience in Japan?

Since **my wildest dream of studying and living in Japan has come true**, it would now be to get a picture taken with my favorite member of my favorite Japanese band, so that I could meet him and have evidence that it happened!

Any crucial advice for the students in JPN program?

Study Kanji now. Not later, but now!



As your closing statement, tell us what you have achieved throughout your study in WCU and Japanese program academically and socially. Also, what would you like to tell the students in WCU in general?

Through my time at WCU and with the Japanese program, **I was able to fulfill a lifelong dream, learn a lot of Japanese, and land my dream job right after graduation!** To the students still at WCU, my biggest piece of advice is to **do what you want to do now**. If you want to study abroad, go for it! This is the best time to try new things and do the things you've dreamed of. **Discover what makes you happy!**

President of Mt. Fuji All Stars Japanese Club - Mr. Jonathan Ramos



Would you please introduce yourself including your major and minor?

Hi there, I'm Jonathan Ramos, but my friends call me Capri! **I'm majoring in Mathematics and I just finished my minor in Japanese.** My hometown is located right at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Lenoir, N.C. **I currently work as a Japanese Tutor and will be the President of the Mount. Fuji All-Stars this upcoming year.**

You studied Mathematics and Japanese. Why did you choose this combination? Tell us about your motivation to study Japanese as well.

Honestly, it was because I was good at them and enjoyed learning them. Back in high school, **I got really into listening to Japanese music.*** So much so that I started to look up words and sing along. The singing bit was a terrible mess, let me tell you. ***He participated in the 27th Annual Japanese Speech Contest in Atlanta on March, 3rd and won fourth place in the category 1. His topic was about his encounter to Japanese music.**



Would you please tell us how your study-abroad experience was in Japan? How did you spend your time when you were not doing school-related activities there?

I haven't had the chance to study abroad in Japan yet... However, **I truly want to sometime before I graduate.** In all likelihood, **I'd study in Osaka.** I've heard it's a whole different world there.

Would you please tell us how you are planning to use your Japanese language fluency and cultural responsiveness for your future after graduating from WCU, such as job and/or graduate study?

That's a tough one to answer, since I'll **be** working in something related to math... I suppose indirectly **I'll use it as proof that no matter how abstract or difficult an equation, theorem, or something is, I can tackle it head on and come up on top.**



What is the wildest dream related to your experience about Japanese language, culture, and study-abroad experience in Japan?

Oh boy, it would be **amazing to see any of my favorite bands perform, meet them, and try my best to tell them they inspired me.** Concerts in Japan look like so much fun and it would be a great story to tell later in my life.

Any crucial advice for the students in JPN program?

Something that I have learned over the years is that it pays to be flexible. **There will come times where things aren't going exactly planned and being able to roll with the punches makes things go so much better.** All in all, do your best and leave no regrets.

As your closing statement, tell us what you have achieved throughout your study in WCU and Japanese program academically and socially. Also, what would you like to tell the students in WCU in general?

Somehow, **I won 4th place in my category at the Japanese Speech Contest and was allowed to be the head Japanese tutor.** More importantly though, **I met and befriended some amazing people.** From the bottom of my heart, **I sincerely thank you all for laughs and smiles.**



WCU JPN program wants to appreciate considerate support from faculty, staff, and community members. The first featuring friend of our program is ...



In Wilmington 2017



Shikoku pilgrimage in 2009

Dr. Mark Couture

*Associate Professor in
Spanish*

*Mark has known WCU JPN program
from its birth in 2003!!!!*

Mark sensei, please tell us about you...

I was born and raised in Mancelona, a small town in northern Michigan. I spent most of the 1980s at Michigan State University, studying humanities and Spanish, eventually earning a BA and an MA. In 1989, my wife and I moved to North Carolina. I pursued a PhD. at Duke University while she earned her master's in Public Health at UNC. I have been at Western Carolina University for over 20 years now ... hard to believe. I did my time as Department Head of what was then called Modern Foreign Languages between 2002 and 2007.

It was during my years as DH that the program in Japanese experienced remarkable growth. The system I inherited was that a Japanese teacher would come for a two-year stint. And then another one would come. This was coordinated between our department and International Programs. The first teacher was Keiichiro Taniguchi, whom I remember fondly. The next instructor was Masafumi Takeda. Takeda Sensei was a force of nature. He worked tirelessly to build a program in Japanese: curriculum proposals, grants, podcasts, clubs, trips, study abroad, etc. As department head, I recognized his work ethic and his ambition and I tried to help in any way I could. In the years he was here he went from Japanese instructor to Asian Studies Coordinator to Assistant Professor of Japanese. All the while, enrollments in Japanese classes grew at a dizzying pace. The program went from four courses per year at the 100-200 level to what it is today, a thriving program with a minor, a Special Studies option and robust enrollment at all levels. Japanese at WCU today is the legacy of Takeda Sensei. In 2009, I accompanied Masa and a group of students of Japanese on a trip to Japan. We completed the Shikoku Buddhist pilgrimage - 88 temples over about thirty days - on bicycles! Japan is an amazing country and the experience was unforgettable. (As an aside I might mention that I love seafood, and Japan is a seafood lover's paradise.) I absorbed the cultural practices and came back to the states bowing to everybody.

I am happy to see that the program in Japanese continues to thrive in the capable hands of Coordinator Yumiko Ono, but besides Ono Sensai, I would like to recognize the efforts of former instructor Megumi Otake and current instructor Soichiro Motohashi. WCU's Japanese program has an interesting past, a vibrant present, and a bright future.

Thank you so much, Mark sensei!

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Questions? Contact us!

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