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Overseas training through the International Humanities Education Program minor

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- Principle 9: A commitment to promoting sustainability through education
- Principle 10: A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education

1. Overview of minors

In addition to the major programs Iwate Prefectural University offers in particular faculties and departments, we also offer students two minor programs: the Community Creation Education Program and the International Humanities Education Program. These programs allow students to gain an understanding of the world in which they will apply what they have learned, from a community or international perspective, and to systematically and practically learn the skills they will need in order to tackle the diverse challenges arising throughout the world. Students who satisfy the requirements for completing these programs will earn a Community Creation Specialist or International Humanities Specialist degree. The International Humanities Education Program aims to provide students with the language skills needed to work together with people from different cultural backgrounds in solving issues, and the practical ability to act independently, based on a multifaceted understanding of culture and society grounded on cross-cultural understanding and multicultural coexistence in a world constantly undergoing globalization.

2. Language Training A

During the Language Training A course, students spend three weeks training at Ohio University with the goal of accomplishing three objectives: [1] Learn how English is used in daily life at a university in the United States, and develop the vocabulary required for living on campus, [2] Develop and deepen interest in English as a common language necessary for communicating throughout global society, and [3] Learn firsthand the knowledge and skills required to work with diverse cultural orientations and deepen understanding of multicultural coexistence. Immediately following the Great East Japan Earthquake, we received a request for joint volunteer work, and beginning in 2016 it became possible to dispatch students to affected sites. While staying at Ohio University, participating students can attend classes provided by the Ohio Program of Intensive English, in which they receive instruction from native English-speaking lecturers on the four skills of English language from a diverse set of perspective. In recent years, students have had more opportunities to interact with local students, through participating in “conversation hour” dialogue sessions and Japanese culture classes. Students

from Ohio University visit Iwate in August of each year to participate in the Reconstruction Education Program, and this training course serves as one means of mutual interaction between Japan and the United States.

The following major events are conducted locally:

- Welcome party and farewell party
- Japanese language and culture classes
- Conversation hours with local students
- Attending basketball and ice hockey games
- Elementary school visit (Morrison Elementary School)
- Field trip to a state building (Ohio Statehouse)
- Hiking in a state park (Old Man's Cave)



Participating students on Ohio University campus in 2023

3. International Practice A

The world is now facing a range of serious issues including poverty, conflict, discrimination, and environmental destruction, and all of these are connected with community issues. By understanding the world, we can gain a better understanding of the community. The International Practice course in the International Humanities Education Program allows students to practically study global issues through cross-cultural interaction and fieldwork, both inside and outside Japan. Over a period of 16 days from February 13 to February 28, 2024, 20 participants attended training in the Alsace region, which is located on the border between Germany and France. Historically, the region has been the site of repeated

territorial disputes between nations, and the people have suffered much hardship and sacrifice. Students participating in training engaged in cultural interaction with local students, toured the European Parliament, visited the Centre Européen d'Etudes Japonaises d'Alsace (CEEJA) (deeply connected with Iwate Prefecture), and visited locations such as concentration camps, in order learn about respecting diversity and the meaning of coexistence while gaining valuable experience for their personal growth. After returning home, they reported on what they learned during training at a university festival, in order to spread awareness inside and outside the university. The following major events are conducted locally:

- Touring Notre-Dame Cathedral
- Cultural exchange event with Strasbourg University students
- Touring the European Parliament
- Touring Musée Unterlinden
- Visiting CEEJA
- Visiting the Consulate General of Japan in Strasbourg



Participating students at the entrance of the European Parliament in 2023

4. Training learning and benefits

The following comments were received from participating students upon completing their training in Ohio and Alsace.

<Ohio training>

- I gained so much over these three weeks. I learned new things, gained new perspectives, learned how to take initiative and be assertive, and developed friendships with local students.
- Although I did take English classes there, what was more important was learning how to speak more naturally and gain expertise by talking with many people while living together with the students there.

<Alsace training>

- I saw how important it is to incorporate, develop, and embrace the culture of what was once an enemy nation, and learned the importance of respecting diversity.
- I felt firsthand how our world has developed throughout history, and gained an appreciation for considering and understanding the historical backgrounds of other nations and people.

<Both training programs>

- Training overseas was a great opportunity to change my own values and broaden my horizons. Every aspect of life there was new to me, and I was able to make many friends and form fond memories.
- I learned that we need to try new things, because even making mistakes can be a positive experience. I think that my experience overseas has made it easier for me to express my thoughts and act accordingly.
- The university offers a financial program and the faculty provided me with close support, so I could travel and stay overseas without worry.
- Participating in overseas training is not an easy decision as it isn't free, but I learned so much that I couldn't possibly cover it all. It's hard to put any price on that. It's a great opportunity for any student with the time to devote to it.



Interacting with Ohio University students



A photo of France taken from Kehl, Germany (left side)