

# THE ICLA OBENTO

MAY 2024 | ISSUE:8



## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER: ICLA OBENTO

The iCLA Obento is a newsletter dedicated to highlighting the successes of iCLA's community members, celebrating our unique backgrounds, and learning more about the members of iCLA's community.

We hope you enjoy reading about iCLA's bright students and wonderful faculty members in interviews, news articles, and feature pieces.

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## GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT



### TAKAAKI (JAPAN)

Takaaki, Political Science major, is an iCLA graduate of Fall 2021!

Currently, Takaaki is working for Societe Generale Securities Japan Ltd.

Societe Generale is one of the leading financial services groups in Europe, and its entities in Japan focus on investment banking, global finance and global markets, and asset management.

We asked Takaaki a few questions about his journey since graduating from iCLA and finding his passion and career path working in the financial sector.

#### **Q. Where are you currently employed?**

I work for Societe Generale Securities Japan Ltd

#### **Q: Can you tell me about your job position and your work responsibilities?**

I am in the Back Office for Japanese equity, mainly in charge of settlement of trades. The Back Office settles trades that the Front Office book, and the Back Office makes sure that the trades are settled accordingly.

#### **Q: Tell me about your job experience and how you entered your current field of work.**

My first internship took place at Mitsubishi FUSO Bus and Truck, where I spent several months gaining valuable experience. Initially, I was drawn to roles that required proficiency in both Japanese and English, and my time at FUSO provided me with significant insights. Afterwards, I transitioned to research-oriented positions at an institute, collaborating intermittently with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), while concurrently pursuing a master's degree. This period allowed me to indulge in my passion for conducting research and translating findings into scholarly outputs.



When applying for my current company, I followed the conventional process of looking for open positions and preparing for interviews. In both Japanese and international job markets for recent graduates, specific technical skills aren't always necessary. Thorough preparation together with a clear career vision and high motivation were key factors in securing my position.

**Q: What was your motivation to enter your field of work?**

My fundamental motivation to work in equities stemmed from curiosity about finance and its impact on the world, beyond just the political aspects highlighted in newspaper columns. Recognizing the pivotal role finance plays in the lives of diverse demographics, I became passionate about enhancing my financial literacy to provide access to investment opportunities for people from all walks of life, both locally and internationally. This led me to pursue employment in an investment bank operating on a larger scale, where I believed its influence could make a more profound impact within the market.

**Q: In what ways have your academic experiences in your courses or skills you gained at iCLA been advantageous/applicable in your work?**

The language proficiency and cultural understanding I nurtured at iCLA have been immensely beneficial in my workplace, particularly due to the diverse international composition of our staff. These skills have enabled me to engage more effectively in social interactions within the company, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment.

**Q: Was there anything you were glad you accomplished during your time at iCLA (academic or extracurricular)?**

Making studying a habit was something I am grateful to have accomplished during my time at iCLA. The curriculum and facilities provided me with the conducive environment to focus on my studies daily, which ultimately instilled a long-term commitment to learning. This habit not only enhanced my academic performance but also equipped me with valuable discipline and self-motivation skills that continue to benefit me in my personal and professional endeavours.

**Q: Looking back at your time at iCLA, what was something you enjoyed most as a student?**

It was when I was talking with my friends while walking around the campus. At this department, the dormitories and classrooms are connected, fostering an environment where we often spent most of our days together. I cherish memories of strolling along the paths at night with close friends, sharing stories of the day's events, and embarking on shopping outings together. These experiences remain vivid in my mind, even several years after graduation.

**Q: What is your advice for current iCLA students?**

My advice to current iCLA students is to make studying a regular habit. The supportive environment and facilities at iCLA create a great setup for academic success. By setting aside time each day for your studies, you'll not only do well in your exams but also improve your discipline and time management skills, which will be useful in both your academic and professional life.

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## CLUB SPOTLIGHT: HEMA CLUB

### DANTE (CAPTAIN) & AUBREY (CO-CAPTAIN)

#### Q: What is the HEMA Club?

Dante: HEMA is short for “Historical European Martial Arts”. We do 15th century-ish sword techniques which were used during battles. There are manuscripts left over that we use as the basis for the different moves, positioning, techniques, etcetera. The styles we study are based on manuals of arms, written by Hans Tallhoffer and Fiore de’ Liberi. There are about 60 different forms and strikes and you go off of the drawings to figure out how they work in movement.

It’s mostly for exercise. Some of us enjoy it for the sparring aspect, and it’s a fun community thing because it’s a bit different from other sports.

Aubrey: People get the impression that it’s the “sword fighting club”, but mostly it is practicing the technique over and over until we get them down. And then, when we’re able to do them without messing up, that’s when we finally do get to the sparring, which is some people’s favorite part. For others, the enjoyment comes from the practice and exercise that they get from training or the fact that they get to hold a sword.

#### Q: So there is quite a lot of materials online?

Dante: Oh yeah, you could teach yourself in theory completely through YouTube if you wanted to. There are English-styles, ones from Germany, and other parts of Europe. We just happen to do the Talhoffer and Fiore because they have the most material, and this is the one that has the most official documentation so it’s generally the most popular.

#### Q: What was the motivation of creating the club?

Dante: So, I did an HEMA workshop in the US once. I had so much fun and thought, I would love to do this again. Then I came to iCLA and mentioned it to Professor Darren Ashmore off-handedly. To my surprise, he’s an expert. He suggested making a club, which meant we could get proper equipment, use a good space for it, recruit more people and it can become more established. And I said, “I’m in, let’s do it!” That was Fall of 2022.

#### Q: What does a typical club day at the HEMA Club look like?

Dante: We come in, do our stretching, and then get the swords out of the cabinets. We have club swords for sharing and personal ones.

The beginner group does block forms. They stand in a line and do everything in-sync: moving forward, moving back, and striking together. Then there’s dueling forms which are one-on-one, and you can practice those at your own speed. And we’ll go over forms, new techniques, new strikes, and then correct people to get it right. We goof off a little bit to wind down and then we debrief. Then, everyone goes to the convenience store for protein after exercising.



# CLUB SPOTLIGHT: HEMA CLUB

**Q: How do you judge if someone can proceed to a more advanced level?**

Dante: There's official testing levels that are part of a HEMA association. Basically, you have to memorize enough of the block forms and done accurately for us to give you the OK to move on. Then you learn a routine of dueling forms. We take a recording - you get three tries, and we send off the best one to our parent HEMA association in the UK. Then they mail you a certificate and coin as a congratulations. Once you've done that, you can advance onto new things.

**Q. Where do you get the equipment?**

Dante: It's ordered online. The company also makes proper metal weapons, but for safety reasons and Japanese laws we don't have any. Our's are made out of poly. But they are the correct weight and weight balancing of a real metal weapon. The gloves are from the hardware store because you need ones with knuckle protection.

**Q. What would you say is the benefit to joining the club?**

Aubrey: It really is the community, and it is good exercise. It's low impact too, you're not exactly sprinting around and hurting your knees. It's a lot of resistance with the sword so it's good on the biceps.

**Q. How can one join the club?**

Dante: Come bother one of the captains! We can help you figure out gear and things. Practices are held Thursdays, we have 3rd period and 5th period in the Dojo. We also have a 6th period which is held outside in the sports plaza area. You're totally welcome to attend multiple sessions. If we're outside there can be an infinite number of people, but in the dojo we have to max out at 8 people because of space. We currently have 12 members.

**Q. What are some things that people should prepare before coming to practice?**

Dante: Gloves, eye gear, water. If you're in the dojo, then socks with those sticky things on the bottom. Because these dojo mats are slippery if you have normal socks on. When you're moving fast enough, you'll slip and fall over, which risks injury. We take safety seriously.

**Q. What are the plans in the future for the club?**

Aubrey: We're getting new equipment. Those who are co-captains are going to become captains. We're going to try and keep it running pretty much the same as it is now. I think we have a good thing going aside from improvements like securing a bigger space. The session I usually run, is chock full of people.

I think that if we could, then setting specific sessions for beginners and advanced sessions. That could help.

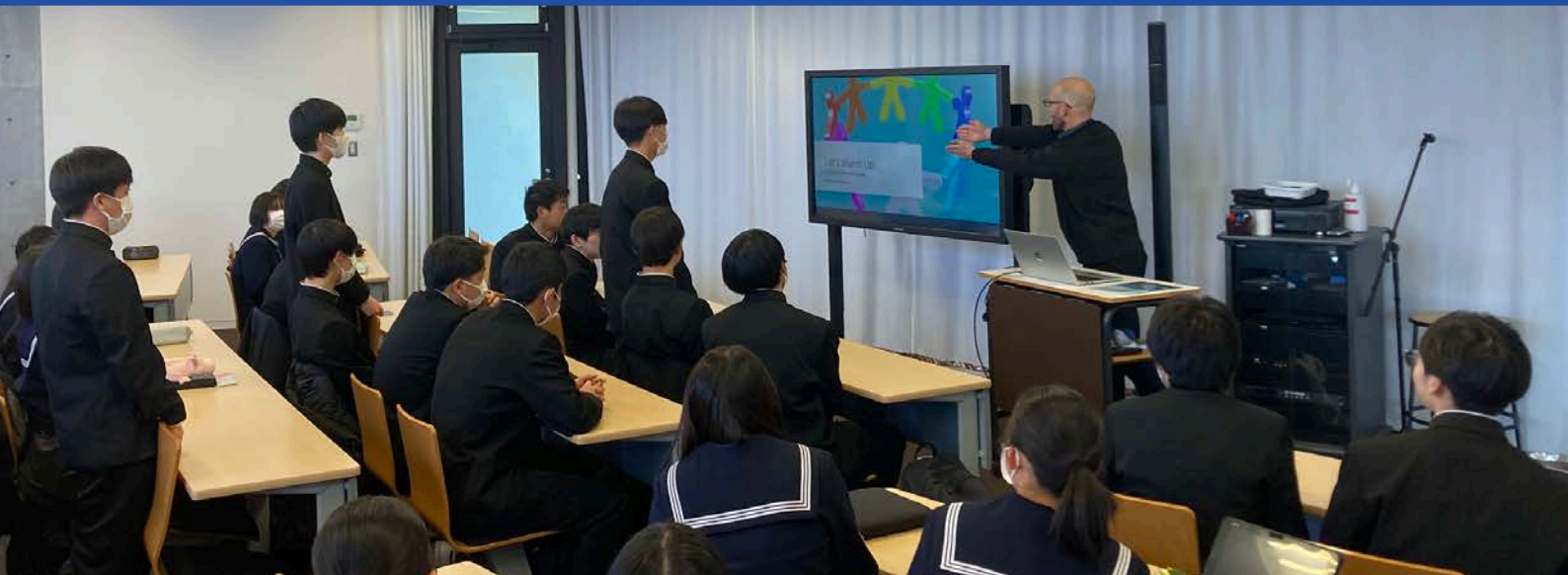


**Q. Finally, please give a message to students who are interested in joining the HEMA Club!**

Aubrey: If you want to swing around a sword, get some good exercise, and make friends I recommend HEMA.

Dante: If you're not sure about joining yet, you can come up to the Dojo or come outside when we're practicing it and come see what it's about.

Aubrey: There's no cost to joining. If you want to buy your own sword you can, but you can use the club's equipment. You only need your own gloves and your own socks. But there's no club entrance fee. You can come in and watch if you want to, for free. If it's not your thing, that's alright. If it is, then welcome!



## iCLA Holds English Camps for High School Students on Campus

In March, iCLA held two English camps for high school students! It was an opportunity for camp participants not only to practice their English skills in an immersion environment and learn how to brainstorm, discuss, and present in English, but also interact with and gain cultural insight from iCLA students. The events emphasized active learning and group work so students could maximize the opportunities to practice English and learn about new cultures.

“Holding English events like these for students is a lot of work but also very rewarding! Sure, I teach the students, but at the same time I learn from them. The activities we run engage everyone present at the event and together, we explore new ideas and grow. It’s refreshing and inspirational.”

– Matthew-sensei, Language Acquisition Center (LAC) Language Learning Advisor, Event Organizer



### Tsuru High School

On March 11th and 12th, 37 high school students from Tsuru High School arrived at iCLA to participate in an English Camp. The theme of the camp was “community”, and the programs encouraged students to examine their own local community and promote togetherness across different nationalities.

The two-day program included activities such as quiz exercises about Yamanashi and the home countries of iCLA students, an examination of how community experiences in Yamanashi can be made to be more inclusive, a project where students worked together to design and present community-building events, and more. Fun ideas like Shogi Oden, Otsuki Sushi Festival, Sports-masho, and many more great ideas were presented.

## WiLLies English Camp

7 high school students from all over Japan visited iCLA over March 30th and 31st to join an iCLA English camp held in collaboration with language school WiLLies English. The program was designed to introduce Japanese universities offering programs fully taught in English.

Prof. Terence Fong gave lectures on psychology, and Prof. Dachen Sheng educated students on economics. Utilizing what they learned in the lectures, participants were challenged to work with iCLA students of different nationalities to adapt Japanese products to be more inclusive of non-Japanese audiences. These “marketing teams” then presented their proposals to their “boss” (Event organizers and the President of WiLLies English) as a bid to win a marketing contract. The winning product was a re-release of popular snack Jagariko, featuring a line of comfort-food flavors known to different cultures.



## iCLA Student Helpers

iCLA student helpers participated in the program not only to share information about their cultures and provide an international perspective for high school students, but also to help to lead groupwork and offer their academic expertise, such as brainstorming and creating presentations in English. This event provided a fun opportunity for iCLA students to engage with the Japanese community outside of the classroom. iCLA students from Bulgaria, Philippines, France, Russia, Cameroon, and Japan assisted in the events.



“During the March 2024 high school English camps at iCLA, I enjoyed collaborating with Japanese high school students, and witnessing their dedication to presenting in English by the end of the camp was quite inspiring. I would highly recommend fellow students to partake in such events for the invaluable cultural exchange they offer.”

– Synthia (Cameroon)



“Collaborating and communicating with Japanese high school students is by far one of the best experiences I had in Japan. The notion of cultural and language exchange opens an understanding of differences in a fun and interactive way. I have been working with these camps for almost 2 years and in every group of students I meet, it is a new adventure. For iCLA students, this is a great way to go out of their comfort zone and participate in these English camps to learn more about Japan from the perspective of these high school students.”

– Paule (Philippines)



“Collaborating with Japanese high school students in the English Camp has been a highly enjoyable experience, allowing me to immerse myself in the rich culture, traditions, and customs of Japan and Yamanashi. I was particularly fascinated by the enthusiasm and dedication of Japanese high school students toward learning English, which brought me great joy.”

– Daniel (Bulgaria)

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## SOCIAL MEDIA FEATURES



iCLA students received a visit from Yamanashi Gakuin Kindergarten students.



Spring is in the air on campus!



Check out our alumni spotlight with Summer, graduate of 2021, and her current work with Cosmos Hotel Management.



iCLA welcomed delegates of O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) to campus.

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