



THE ICCLA OBENTO

JULY 2024 | ISSUE:9



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ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER: ICCLA 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.



iCLA
Obento
Archive



www.icla.ygu.ac.jp/en/icla-obento-archive/

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iCLA's Japanese Language Volunteer Program

iCLA's Japanese Language Volunteer Program is designed to connect students who are eager to help by using their Japanese language skills, with students who are facing language difficulties in their daily lives in Japan. The language support may include things like making a doctor's appointment over the phone or paying a bill at the convenience store. Any student regardless of nationality can become a Japanese language volunteer.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

AZIZA (UZBEKISTAN), JAPANESE LANGUAGE VOLUNTEER

We would like to shine a spotlight on Aziza, 1st year student from Uzbekistan, who was a Japanese language volunteer of Spring Semester 2024! Despite being the only volunteer, Aziza was not deterred by this challenge, and she was committed to helping other students. Impressively, this semester she has kindly helped students with a variety of tasks such as doctor visits, apartment rental procedures, city hall procedures, and arranging utilities.



"I know Japanese now and I can help people do some basic things that I also didn't know how to do when I first came to Japan and was basically in the same situation," explains Aziza about her motivation to sign up as a Japanese Language Volunteer. Before starting her studies at iCLA, she had studied at a Japanese language school in Tokyo.

AZIZA (UZBEKISTAN), JAPANESE LANGUAGE VOLUNTEER

The experience has helped her meet other iCLA students and become more involved in the community, and that is what she has enjoyed the most so far.

“You can meet people, socialize with others, and maybe talk to people you would never talk to in other situations. I met people in iCLA, talked to them, and since that time, we say hi to each other around campus.”

Her language skills have also improved through his experience. She initially found phone calls in Japanese to be especially daunting, but despite any nervousness, she did not hesitate to help others and faced the challenge head on, consequently learning to overcome it through her work as a volunteer. “I called and talked to people a lot,” says Aziza, “My Japanese language abilities grew in this aspect. I feel more confident to call now.”

She has encouraging words for those who are contemplating becoming a volunteer.

“Don’t be afraid! You can help people, and maybe those people really need it. You can do something for others that is not that big a deal for you, but something big for them.”

Aziza has done an incredible job of helping as a volunteer, and many fellow students who were struggling with administrative procedures have received her language support. Her kind contributions to the community will be recognized with a Japanese Language Volunteer certificate for completing a semester of volunteering.

iCLA always welcomes new Japanese language volunteers to join the team.

If you are able to speak Japanese, please consider volunteering! You’ll be helping classmates who are struggling with language and adjusting to life in Japan. It is also an opportunity to grow your resume and your skills, as you’ll be practicing your Japanese in the real world. Students will receive a certificate at the end of the semester, which can be a helpful addition on one’s resume.

To sign up as a Japanese Language Volunteer:

<https://forms.office.com/r/SM6j8DaD8y> or contact: icla.studentaffairs@c2c.ac.jp

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. MING LIU

Dr. Ming Liu is the Program Coordinator for the Global Business and Economics major at iCLA. The Global Business and Economics major has pathways in Finance, International Business, and Economics. Dr. Liu mainly teaches courses in the Finance pathway, with some economics focused courses. The courses Dr. Ming Liu teaches in the 2024 Academic Year are Financial Management, Japanese Economy & Business, Investment, Money, Banking, and Financial Markets, Derivatives, and Economics of Sustainable Development.



He has educational backgrounds in China and the US, and has over 12 years of experience teaching in universities in Japan. Dr. Liu has a PhD in Finance, and he is also a CFA charterholder. Before teaching at iCLA, he has taught graduate courses at the International University of Japan in Niigata and Doshisha University in Kyoto. He has experiences in both industry and academia, and applies his real-world experiences in the financial industry to his teachings in the classroom.

Read our interview with Dr. Ming Liu:

Q: What was the initial spark that made you interested in studying Finance?

My undergraduate degree was in mathematics. At that time, I didn't know what to do for my career. My master's degree was in financial mathematics, and that was an interdisciplinary program. I took courses in the math, statistics, economics, and business departments. That's also the first time I went to America to study as an international student. I remember I took four finance courses and I found that those finance courses were really interesting to me. At that time, I decided I wanted to work in the finance area.

I was very lucky to have good professors as well. I often asked questions to the professors. I was an international student at the time and the textbook was quite expensive, so I didn't purchase it. I remember when I went in to ask questions at the professor's office, the professor realized I didn't have the textbook, so he took a book from his bookshelf and gave it to me. Another professor, every week I would stop in his office to ask questions and sometimes just chat. I really benefited from their teaching. I found the finance courses very interesting and not that difficult because of my mathematics background.

Also, in China at that time, the majority of the schools, except maybe a few top schools, didn't teach the traditional modern finance concept. When I was first introduced to finance concepts, I was really interested in it.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Q: When did you know you wanted to pursue a life career in Finance?

At the time of my master's degree studies, I decided to go into finance, but I was not clear whether I wanted to go into academia or industry. I was actually thinking industry. After my master's degree, I tried to find a job on Wall Street in New York City. Eventually, I found a job with a financial software company near New York City. I worked there for about four years as a programmer, and that experience made me realize that I was more interested in finance than programming. So, I decided to go back to school to study finance. I was not sure whether I could finish my PhD but I wanted to try.

Q. Please tell me about your specific field of research.

My research is mainly on investment, particularly in the areas of international stock markets, behavioral finance, and mutual funds.

Q. What keeps you passionate about your work on a day-to-day basis.

I am interested in new things. I think the interesting thing about finance is that the financial market is driven by information. There's news coming out every day and we have to try to keep updated. Both financial markets and academic research evolve quickly and are very competitive.

Q. What attracted you to teach finance, particularly here in Japan?

When I was a PhD student, I presented my paper at a conference, and one Japanese professor approached me. I sent him my paper after the conference for comments, and one year later, I was in the job market searching for jobs, and he was at International University of Japan. I saw his school's job posting and I remembered him. I applied to IUJ and they gave me an interview.

Q. Is there something that particularly keeps you in Japan?

Life in Japan is very comfortable and convenient. In terms of work, we've got enough freedom to do research and teaching. And it is close to my home country.

Q. How would you describe your class style? Is there anything you emphasize when you're teaching students?

Well, it's basically like a lecture, because there are many terms and concepts that students don't know and we need to introduce them to students. On the other hand, there are many news about the financial market every day. I try my best to combine that concept with real time news.

Just an example, recently, someone tried to assassinate Donald Trump in the U.S., and there was a Chinese stock which increased a lot the next day. The reason is that the name of the Chinese company start with a character that shared the same first character of the Chinese translation of Trump. The company has nothing to do with him and the business of the company has no American subsidiaries. I used that example to tell students how irrational and crazy sometimes the stock market can be. It's totally driven by the behavioral or emotional reasons.

Q. Alright, so do you have any tips for students who want to pursue a career in economics, finance, or business?

One thing I want to mention is that finance, accounting, or business does require people to be a little bit sensitive to numbers. If one stock increased 10%, another stock increased 15%, and someone says, "Oh, there's no difference to me" then he cannot be in this area, that's obvious.

But on the other hand, the required math level is not that high. It doesn't require people to be very good at mathematics and solve complicated equations. So, number one, don't be afraid of the mathematics. If some people fear that finance and economics involve difficult mathematics, it may cause them to lose confidence before they even start learning. Second, it is good practice to try to follow some news. We have business and financial news every day, so try to watch the news, and try to read books too and see if those things are interesting to you. I think interest and passion are very important if you want to pursue this track and career.



Campus Events Altair Tanabata Festival and Summer Gala Held in July!

The iCLA Spring Semester has drawn to a close, concluding with two big events of the iCLA and Yamanashi Gakuin campus!

The 21st Altair Tanabata Festival

The Altair Tanabata Festival held on July 5th celebrated the annual Star Festival in the 21st Century Plaza and Stage 21. The local community gathered together to enjoy festivities of delightful stalls and tasty foods, and the wonderful performances by Yamanashi Gakuin University's students. Foods and drinks such as yakisoba, grilled meats, shaved ice, dango, fruit smoothies, fried chicken, fresh locally grown peaches, and much more were served by local businesses and food trucks. The festival concluded with impressive fireworks display by the 21st Century Plaza.



iCLA students performed on Stage 21 and played beautiful pieces on the guitar, violin, and flute. The iCLA booth featured festival games such as fishing rubber ducks and a ball-throw game, and student volunteers welcomed guests to try their hand and win iCLA stickers and folders. The iCLA student volunteers ran a successful booth that was immensely popular, with many children and their families visiting from the local neighborhood.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Summer Gala 2024

The week after the Altair Tanabata Festival was the Summer Gala 2024. The Gala saw a line-up of stage performances, artistic works, and visual projects from the iCLA community. The theme of this semester's Gala was "Ninjas & Yokai", and the Gala Committee did a superb job at decorating the venue to match the theme. Kappa, ghostly women, paper lantern ghosts, and ninja paraphernalia adorned the venue.



This Gala saw two separate stages for performances. Students could dance and rock out to the band performances on stage in the iCLA Lobby, or relax on the beanbags in the Music Room listening to the acoustic musical performances. The performances included tap dancing, classical, contemporary pop and rock, rap, original musical pieces, and more, totaling about 15 performances on the stages. The Gala Exhibition spanned the first and second floor lobbies of iCLA, with many marvelous visual arts projects in a variety of genres such as sculptures, paintings, sketches, calligraphy, photography, textiles, and more.

The event was a success thanks to the Gala Committee, Dr. Mike Blow, and Dr. Sam Stocker. Committee students worked hard to prepare - buying materials, collecting artwork and putting together the exhibitions, decorating the venue, ensuring the smooth running of the event, and finally, clean up. Students could also enjoy tasty foods prepared by the Gala Committee, like grilled chicken wings, skewers, tacos, and fruit on the menu.



The event saw approximately 250 attendees. As always, the Summer Gala 2024 was a remarkable showcase of the talent and spirit of the iCLA community!

Check out iCLA's social media for more photos/videos of the events:

[Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)



SOCIAL MEDIA FEATURES



Cheer on the YGU alumni and faculty members who will be attending the Paris 2024 Olympics!



iCLA students participated in Yamanashi Gakuin Kindergarten's Tanabata Party.



Tea Ceremony was held in the iCLA tea room under the iEXPerience Program.



In the final iEXPerience Program of Spring Semester 2024, students learned flower arrangement.

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