

Personal Statement

Back in my sophomore year of high school, I did something crazy but amazing. I was in my second year of Japanese, and my sensei came in and announced that we were hosting Japanese students in the winter, after sending students there first. I applied. In January I sat through a thirteen hour flight to spend two weeks in the home of a Japanese student, with little more knowledge than how to say my name and thank you. Those two weeks were some of the best in my life, and they set me on the path to major in Japanese. They solidified my interest in the language and culture, and my desire to hold a job that required it.

I have always loved working with kids, and have played with the idea of becoming a teacher for years. When I was younger I would help run day-care and even tutor younger students how to read. But once I hit high school, I ended up settling on a career in using Japanese rather than working with children. However, one day I had been talking with my Japanese sensei, and she introduced me to someone who had recently come back from Japan teaching English. This was the first time I had really heard of such an option, and I realized I did not need to give up on either of my dreams.

At the end of my time at CSUMB, I finished strong and I believe I gave my best showing. At CSUMB I have learned not only improved language skills, but also improved my abilities to present in front of peers, organize my schedule, and be responsible. These abilities I attribute to the work I had to do in my Japanese classes, because even though it was incredibly difficult at times, I persevered. The Japanese department also has some of the most involved teachers I've ever seen.

During my third year I studied abroad at Okayama University in Japan. I applied to Okayama University because I wanted to further my understanding of not only the Japanese language but of the culture as well. Okayama appealed to me not only in size but in location, as it is near several important historical and cultural locations, such as Hiroshima. During my time in Okayama I felt rapid improvement of not only my theoretical language knowledge, but also of my ability to use what skills and knowledge I had in a real setting. It also taught me a great deal about Japanese society, both in how daily life works and how interpersonal relations work. I was a member of the dance club at Okayama University and it taught me a lot about respect and understanding of the senpai/kohai culture.

As of now, my goals following college involve joining the Brea Sister City organization, and through them, be able to teach English in Japan. I am proud to say I have taken the first steps toward this goal, as not only have I been approved to be next in line to work as both the ALT (assistant language teacher) at a junior high in Hanno, Saitama, but as the next ambassador for the sister city organization as well. I have to wait for a little while for the current person to finish, so I will be using that time to work on student loans and make preparations for my time abroad. This position is for three years, so following that I will either find further work in Japan, probably as an English teacher, or return to the states and find work using Japanese. Whether that will be translation or advisement, or possibly some other field, I am not yet quite sure. I plan to adapt and work with the opportunities available at that time. Overall, I am very grateful for the time I have spent at CSUMB, and plan to take everything I learned into the future.