



Kitami Institute of Technology

International Center Newsletter

Volume 95 September
&
October 2013

Welcome to KIT!

Special feature
(Language program, exchange program)

9 new international students in 2013 Fall Semester

Orientation for international short-term exchange students and research students, fall semester

【Tuesday, October 1, Room A208】

On the first day of the fall semester an orientation was held for all newly arrived international short-term exchange students and research student. At the orientation, Dr Natalie Konomi, Director of the International Center, explained various important procedures and provided information concerning life in Japan, especially in Kitami. The procedures included the first important steps for starting life in Kitami, such as necessary formalities at the City Hall accompanied by a tutor, the establishment of a bank account and the registration at the post office. The orientation included also an introduction of events and activities at KIT, advice on what to do when feeling homesick and other important aspects. The international students were slightly overwhelmed by the detailed garbage separation rules, but they were advised to simply look at the pictures of the pamphlet, if not sure. After this a police officer of the Kitami police station explained what to do in case of facing a crime, traffic regulations especially when riding a bicycle, etc. Japan has the image of being a very safe country, but as you can never know when you might face a crime, we want all our students to be careful.

Welcome party for international students

【Wednesday, October 23, Student Cafeteria】

A welcome party was held for the 9 newly arrived international students. 95 participants joined the welcome party including the Executive Directors and Vice Presidents Prof. Takahashi and Prof. Tamaki, Vice President Prof. Tamura, a large number of international students, their tutors and other Japanese students, staff and faculty. The new international students were asked to give a brief self-introduction, which they all did in Japanese without using any English. Lin Yihui and Lin Peichi, two short-term exchange students from China Medical University, Taiwan, said they were looking forward to making many new friends with people from different countries and learn how to ski. A short-term exchange student from Wuhan University of Science and Technology, China, Yan Jiayue said she will do her best to learn Japanese, but she also would like to learn a lot about Japanese culture and make lots of friends. Short-term exchange students from Korea and graduate students from Mongolia also hoped for a successful and fruitful stay in Japan. We hope that all students with their respective goals in mind will enjoy their student life here in Kitami. The staff and faculty of the International Center will support all students to their very best, so please feel free to come to the International Center anytime.

Language program

(Germany, Canada)

This year again a German language program and an English language program were provided during the summer vacation. Even though the weak Japanese yen made the program a little more expensive than in previous years, many students joined the program. The reports of the students after joining the program proved the importance and meaning of such language programs.



Exchange program (Korea)

Within an exchange program between Gyeongsang National University in Korea and Kitami Institute of Technology (KIT), it was the turn of KIT students, staff and faculty to visit Gyeongsang National University for 9 days.

Special feature on language programs and exchange programs

【Student Comment】

Sunao Tsukawa (First year student; Mechanical, Civil and Environmental Engineering)

I was able to absorb and learn a lot during this 3 weeks program. However, it was not all about learning in classes only, but also seeing and experiencing many things that I could only experience in Germany. As we arrived a little late for the program, we started our German classes with some delay, but we were able to catch up with the rest of the class by studying after school for the first few days. Classes in the morning went for 3 hours, but it always felt much shorter, because they were so interesting. In my free time I enjoyed sightseeing trips in Freiburg and other European countries. In Freiburg we climbed a small mountain in the city, we went shopping, eating out and so on. I tried to communicate with the shop assistants in German or English language. When I was communicating in German or English, I really felt and realized that I was abroad. And I also started to understand that English is a world language and I had to experience the lack of my English skills. Yet, I was glad and happy when I was able to communicate to express what I wanted or felt. By joining this program I truly fell in love with Germany.



German language program in Germany

【Thursday, August 8 -Saturday, August 31@University of Freiburg】

6 students joined Dr. Natalie Konomi, Director of the International Center in this third German Language Program held at the University of Freiburg, Germany. The university was founded in 1457 and is one of the oldest universities in Germany. In 2007 it was selected by the German government to become one out of 9 "Universities of Excellence". The schedule of the students participating in the language program included language classes in the morning as well as optional seminars and lectures in the afternoon. Extracurricular activities included among others visits to the famous Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany, to Strasbourg in the Alsace region of France, to the Rhine falls and Basel in Switzerland, and to the football stadium enjoying a Bundesliga football game. All students learned a lot during this stay and had a wonderful time in Europe.

【Student Comment】

Shintaro Suzuki (Fourth year student; Civil and Environmental Engineering)

I had a wonderful experience through this 1-month English language program in Canada. At first I struggled a lot and also had some troubles. It took me a while to get used to the life in Canada, but after a while I did get used to it and I had a lot of great and wonderful experiences. Now that the program is over it felt really short. Concerning my English skills, I actually think that communication skills themselves were more important than my English level. I felt that English is just a language and that it is only one of many communication tools. I found many other ways to communicate with people, such as gestures and a positive attitude to actively try to communicate. Of course, English is necessary if you want to live or work abroad, though. I hope that I can make use of all the experiences I had in Canada back in Japan, at university and in my future.

English language program in Canada

【Sunday, September 1 - Monday, September 30@Humber College】

As held in previous years the English language program was held at Humber College, Toronto in Canada in summer 2013. Mr. Christopher Bozek, English lecturer at KIT, took 7 students to Canada. Even though the program fee was more expensive than last year because of the weak Japanese yen, many students participated in this program.

In the mornings the students studied English grammar and conversation in classes held at the English language school affiliated to Humber College. In their free time they visited Niagara Falls, went to watch a major league baseball game and visited many other places, enjoying themselves very much.



Exchange program in Korea

【Tuesday, September 10 - Tuesday, September 17

@ Gyeongsang National University】

Every year there is a rotational exchange program between the Department of Engineering of Gyeongsang National University (Korea) and Kitami Institute of Technology. This year it was the turn of KIT students, staff and faculty to visit Gyeongsang National University. Dr. Natalie Konomi, Director of the International Center, Mr. Yoshihiro Shiratori, administrative staff at the International Center and 10 KIT students participated in the program. The program is extremely well structured and organized and all participating students had a great time. It included seminars about Gyeongsang National University, Korean language classes for beginners, Korean culture lectures (e.g. traditional Korean tea ceremony), sightseeing and much more. Some students from Gyeongsang National University also joined this program and became good friends with all KIT students in a rather short time. Kitami Institute of Technology would like to express its deepest appreciation for all the hospitality from Prof. Kim Yeong, Dean of the Department of Engineering, Prof. Koh Jinhwan, Vice Dean and all the other staff at Gyeongsang National University who made this trip unforgettable for all participants.



【Student Comment】

Yuko Kakuchi (Fourth year student; Materials Science and Engineering)

I am very glad that I was able to join this program as it provided me with so much new experiences and broadened my horizon. We learned a little Korean and about traditional Korean tea ceremony. We went to a medicinal herb festival, museums, restored old castles, the harbor, Busan and many other historical as well as modern places. I had never thought that I could have a chance to visit locations of the ancient Korean kingdom 'Kudara' ('Baekje') which I had learned about in history classes at elementary school. I felt the cultural connection between Korea and Japan. After this program, I started to become even more interested in cultures of other countries and I would like to know more about them. I would love to study abroad. I believe Japan is a great country, but that is not enough for me. During these times of globalization it is important to get to experience other cultures and other countries and to get to know and understand people from other countries.

The 7th 'TSUDOI no KAI' Cross-cultural Exchange Festival

【Saturday, October 5@ Kitami Art & Culture Hall】

The 7th Cross-cultural Exchange Festival by 'Tsudoi no Kai', a study group for the training of women in Kitami was held from 14:00 at the Kitami Art & Culture Hall on October 5. Aihebaier Ahemaiti from Xinjiang Uygur Territory, China (Master 2nd year) and Dr. Natalie Konomi, Director of the International Center, from Germany gave short speeches introducing their home countries and explaining cultural differences. Mr. Ahemaiti explained for example the marriage system in his country. He said that couples could not visit each other at their respective homes before the wedding. The man would first have to get information about the woman's family situation which he had to report to his father and ask his permission first. If he gets the permission, the man, or groom-to-be, has to go to the woman's, or bride-to-be's, house with presents such as clothes and propose to her. Dr. Natalie Konomi told the audience that it was her 15th anniversary since she started to live in Japan. She talked about differences between Japan and Germany and said that Japanese diligence and the historical economic development are similar to the German ones. On the contrary, "Omotenashi", typical Japanese service and hospitality, is a very special culture in Japan. She said that she was surprised to see train crews bowing, hot towels and free water service at restaurants etc. when she arrived in Japan for the first time. The audience was very interested in the various speeches and some asked questions during the break. After the speeches, there were a chrysanthemum doll workshop, a tea ceremony workshop and traditional Japanese games workshop. At the end of the festival everyone danced the Kitami-'Bayashi' together, a traditional Kitami dance.



"Okhotsk International Festival 2013" 【Saturday, October 12@ Kitami Hall for Working Youth】

The Okhotsk International Festival 2013 took place on October 12 as one of the largest annual cultural events organized by Kitami city. This festival gives foreigners living in the Okhotsk region and local citizens the chance to get to know each other and learn about each other's culture, promoting a deeper understanding between them. Three of the many groups performing at the event included international students from KIT. Gulibusitan Aierkentai showed a dance from Uygur with songs sung by her husband. Carlos Beitia from Panama and Kim Raehun from Korea sang Japanese and Korean songs. They all made an exciting stage and the audience loved their performances. Many international students visited this event and had the chance to talk with local citizens. The event also included a tea ceremony which was of great interest to all the international students who were able to experience some Japanese culture. As a university with many international students contributing to society such international festivals are of great importance, so that all participants get to know and understand each other.

Information session for study abroad programs and language programs

【Friday, October 11, Room A208】

An information session was held during the lunch break on October 11 introducing study abroad programs, language programs and exchange programs for the winter season 2013-2014. One program is a 10 day trip to Harbin in the first week of January where KIT students participate in the snow statue festival. Another program is the language program in Taiwan from February 22 to March 22. The participating students at the information session received information from Mr. Mamoru Suzuki, Japanese lecturer at the International Center and got the chance to hear students who had participated in the program telling about their experiences in Taiwan. They all were first year students at that time, some of them had already travelled abroad, others had never left Japan. Such international programs make students change their ways of thinking and even promote the ambition of students to study more. And there are more benefits of programs like these, which is why we hope that many students will participate in one of our programs.

【Comment from Hikaru Nakata】

Fairbanks is the second largest city in Alaska with a population of 99,192 people. Alaska is 20 times as large as Hokkaido. Winters are very cold, but summers provide comfortable temperatures. The average temperature in winter was around -20°C, but it sometimes even went down to -40°C. During my stay I could see the Northern Lights, or aurora, even from campus. During last year's Halloween season I was in Fairbanks and it was a lot of fun. I had a great time in Alaska.

Q: What are the differences between US and Japanese universities?

A: First of all, there is so much homework to do and I had to study for much longer hours than in Japan. But, at the same time I was able to make many friends even in other majors and from other departments

Q: How long does the sun shine in winter?

A: It was only for about 3 hours, from 11:00-14:00.

Q: Were there many Japanese students there?

A: There were many foreign students, but there were only 10 Japanese students.

Q: What was your favorite food in Fairbanks?

A: I liked salmon, but the best food was McDonald's.

Q: How about the cost of living in Alaska?

A: It depends on what you buy, but in general it is very similar to Japan.

Q: How is the winter in Alaska?

A: It is calm and not windy.

Q: How do people spend time during holidays in Alaska?

A: Actually many people go to Hawaii.

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International C Hour "Halloween: Trick or Treat!"

【Thursday, October 31@ Meeting Room 2】

This was the first "Trick or Treat!" Halloween event at the International C Hour held at KIT. Many people came to this event in costumes and the Halloween decoration gave the room a special atmosphere. In addition to the Halloween event, Mr. Hikaru Nakata, a third year student, gave a presentation about his study abroad experience in Fairbanks, Alaska. He had studied as an exchange student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a partner university of KIT, for 10 months and just got back to Japan. Even though we had some incoming students from Fairbanks, Mr. Nakata was the first exchange student sent from KIT to study at Fairbanks University and he had lots of stories to tell about his life in Alaska.

Schedule (November - December)

November 5 (Tue): Monday classes

November 9 (Sat): Curling in Tokoro, 2013 Kitami Cultural Exchange Event

November 17 (Sun) - 18 (Mon): Field Trip to Muroran

November 29 (Fri): No classes

December 10 (Tue): Lecture & Presentation on Study Abroad Programs (KIT Lecture Hall)

December 18 (Wed): Friday classes

December 19 (Thu) - January 5

(Sun): Winter Holidays