

Project Abstract

Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC)

Establishing Japanese Cultural Exchanges and Study Abroad Opportunities for Community College Students

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Mt. SAC seeks to accomplish the following goals: (a) establish a sister college association with Nagasaki Junior College to develop interdisciplinary academic exchange programs; (b) expand Japanese exchange activities with J. F. Oberlin University, to the mutual benefit of American and Japanese students; (c) establish a study abroad program in Japan, with the first program offered in the fall of 2024; (d) host Japanese students at Mt. SAC through a two-week spring program, including classroom visitations and social and cultural activities; and (e) implement interdisciplinary outreach that encourages students to pursue Japanese language studies to enhance their career outlook in their desired field.

Virtual exchange activities will include: capstone projects for students enrolled in Advanced Japanese to connect Mt. SAC students with Oberlin students to practice conversational skills via video conferencing and email; facilitation of virtual language events, including conversation cafes and grammar game nights, to allow students to practice their conversational Japanese with native speakers; and virtual pen pal activities.

Mt. SAC will host a cohort of Oberlin students each spring. This two-week program will have a dual purpose. First, Mt. SAC students will have additional opportunities to practice their conversational Japanese with native speakers. Second, Oberlin students, who are attending university to become Japanese language teachers, will gain valuable classroom experience while also gaining exposure to American culture. Additionally, these students will have the opportunity to sit in on classes of interest to them. The college will leverage the resources of its International Student Center to facilitate additional cultural and social activities to engage these Japanese students in American culture.

In collaboration with the Southern California Foothills Consortium, Mt. SAC will develop a semester-long study abroad program to be held in Nagasaki, Japan, in fall 2024. The 12-unit program curriculum will include a Japanese language course, a cultural studies course, an elective course, and an independent study component. Study abroad participants several opportunities to interact with local Japanese students. The American students will live in a campus facility that is shared with Japanese students and participate in various cultural workshops, such as tea ceremonies, martial arts, and calligraphy. The study abroad students will shadow Japanese student partners on campus to observe and experience Japanese campus life. Finally, as part of independent study, the study abroad students will have the option of volunteering in local K-12 schools to assist in the schools' English language classes.

As a community college and federally-designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, Mt. SAC satisfies the criteria for Competitive Preference Priority 1. The project also meets the criteria for Competitive Preference Priority 2 as well as the Invitational Priority.