

Bridging Scholarships Fund Students to Study in Japan

"After a few weeks, Japan started to feel like home. My bows became sturdier, I learned how to pack myself into a train, and my Japanese naturally improved from my many inquiries at police boxes about my whereabouts . . . I was an American living in Japan, and when I returned, I felt like I was part Japanese." (Matthew West, exchange student in Tokyo)

"The challenge of succeeding and thriving in a completely different culture seemed almost insurmountable when I first arrived in Japan. But through a determined effort to study the language and to use it practically in my day-to-day life, I was indeed able to adjust, to make friends, and to gain insight into the culture and its people in a way I never could have imagined." (Leanna Frankland, exchange student in Nagoya)

"When people point to a picture of a Japanese shrine and exclaim, 'Wow! How different the architecture of the roof looks!' I reply: Indeed, but please look at the people under the roof. Those people have clapped their hands, closed their eyes, and lowered their heads to pray. What are they praying for? Most likely, the same things we would." (Kevin Duh, exchange student in Tokyo)

"The only way to recognize and understand the fine distinctions of etiquette and normality within Japanese culture is to participate in daily life in Japan, and my experience allowed me to do that.... Dealing with a different style of decision-making and conflict resolution gave me real examples for comparison, and ultimately made me comfortable with the Japanese way of approaching disagreement and making decisions." (Laura Marschner, exchange student in Osaka)

Since 1999, as part of its effort to encourage and expand study abroad in Japan by American undergraduates, the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ) has administered a program of incentive scholarships to students from any college or university who are attending exchange or other study programs in Japan. The scholarships, which are awarded twice a year, give stipends of \$2,500 to students studying in Japan for a single semester and \$4,000 to those attending full

academic year programs. (Summer programs are not funded.) The recipients so far have included students from a large number of ASIANetwork member institutions:

Alverno College
Beloit College
Berea College
Case Western Reserve University
Earlham College
Elon College
Furman University
Guilford College
Gustavus Adolphus College
Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Kalamazoo College
Luther College
Macalester College
North Central College
Occidental College
Pacific University
Pomona College
Rice University
Skidmore College
St. Olaf College
Transylvania University
Wellesley College
Willamette University
Whitman College

Thirty-five students will be awarded scholarships for study in Japan beginning in spring 2002; the recipients were announced on November 20, 2001. They bring the total number of students who have received Bridging Scholarships to 180.

Funding for the scholarships is provided by American businesses and private foundations with an interest in Japan and in improving US-Japan relations. Contributors to the Fall 2001 scholarships included Teradyne, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, IMCA, Lockheed Martin, Merrill Lynch, Shinsei Bank, Northwest Airlines, Weyerhaeuser, Philip Morris, the Freeman Foundation, and the Starr Foundation. Several of the contributing companies have supplemented their contributions with offers of internships for scholarship recipients.

Applications for Bridging Scholarships from students who will be studying in Japan beginning in Fall 2002 will be accepted beginning in January; the deadline for receipt of applications is April 3, 2002. For details about the scholarships and for downloadable application forms, please visit the ATJ web site at <http://www.colorado.edu/ealld/atj>. Bridging Project director Susan Schmidt will be glad to answer any questions about the scholarships or about study abroad in Japan; she is also able to help faculty members promote study abroad on their campuses or to set up programs in Japan. She can be reached by mail at Campus Box 279, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309-0279, by phone at 303-492-5487, or by e-mail at atj@colorado.edu.