

KENGURO

Quarterly Newsletter vol.23

Headlines

Featured !!

Student Exchange with
South Korea's Hanbat
National University
for the First Time in 3 Years!



The sakura around our Faculty
bloomed early this year!

Featured

Student Exchange with Hanbat National University for the First Time in 3 Years!

As Covid-19 related border restrictions have been significantly relaxed, our student exchange program with South Korea's Hanbat National University (HBNU) has finally resumed after a 3 year suspension. From January 4th to 8th, 10 undergraduate/graduate students and 7 faculty members from HBNU visited our school through the exchange program, and from January 29th to February 5th, 8 of our undergraduate/graduate students and 4 faculty members visited HBNU to further deepen the relationship. Through various events such as joint PBL (problem-based learning) activities by mixed Japanese and South Korean teams, laboratory tours, visits to cultural facilities, and cultural experiences, students from both universities were able to participate in a fulfilling exchange.

Resuming Exchange from Back in September, 2019

The exchange program's main event was the joint PBL, in which students from both HBNU and our school formed mixed Japanese and South Korean teams to work the following goals proposed by the HBNU side: ① "How to overcome the problems of self-driving cars?" ② "What will be next after smartphone?" ③ "Safe Smart City with Information & Communication Technology," and ④ "Space garbage collection technology in the manner of eco-friendly approaches."

Over at Iwate University, after a short lecture by the faculty members of both universities and the introduction of PBL goals by the HBNU students, the participants were divided into four teams, after which they conducted PBL activities. Despite the limited schedule of less than just a single day, they were able to complete discussions and present their interim reports. During the Q&A session, faculty members from both universities gave stringent feedback, and each team continued discussions in preparation for giving their final PBL presentations over at HBNU. After PBL activities, they held a ceremony to conclude the program in our school, and toured research labs. On the last day, they visited Chusonji Temple at Hiraizumi, as well as the Sekino-ichi Sake Brewery in Ichinoseki. The HBNU students and faculty members also got the chance to enjoy some time at Tsunagi Onsen's open-air baths before heading home.

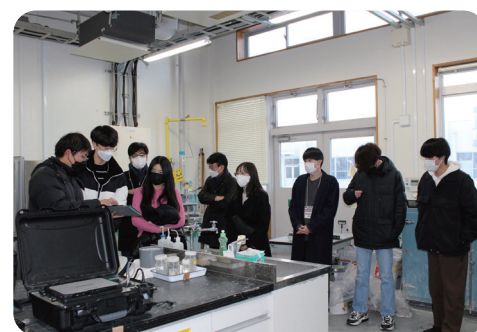
Three weeks after the program at our school ended, our students visited Hanbat National University (HBNU) in Daejeon, and after two days of intensive PBL activities, they gave their final presentations. The presentations were evaluated by faculty members, and the winning team was awarded with a certificate and prize.

(Right) Students getting along right from the start of joint PBL activities at Iwate University



(Left) PBL interim results presentations, delivered in English in front of students and faculty from both universities

(Right) HBNU students at labs in Civil and Environmental Engineering field (students divided into four groups to visit Chemistry, Materials, Electronic Engineering, and Civil and Environmental Engineering labs)



(Above) At Hiraizumi's Chusonji Temple, on a great day with almost no snow on the ground



(Left) At Sekino-ichi Brewery in Ichinoseki, where HBNU students were able to get a feel for Iwate's sake brewing industry through the Iwate Kura Beer factory tour and sake tasting

One of the program's main highlights was having students visit and experience cutting-edge research at HBNU. During the program's last two days, students stayed at research labs related to their fields and were able to participate in internships. Through mutual introductions and discussions of research and experiments, they were able to get a feel for the ways of thinking towards research in South Korea. After the program concluded, they moved to Seoul to prepare for their return to Japan. Everyone had an enjoyable time in Seoul, and visited the National Museum of Korea, as well as did some shopping at the cultural hub of Hongdae, before their trip back.



(Left) Cultural visit to the sandy beach near the Janghang Skywalk in Seocheon (about 70km southwest of HBNU), followed by a tour of the nearby National Institute of Ecology



(Above) Group photo after the joint PBL presentations at HBNU



(Right) Students listening attentively as their Japanese language guide gives a detailed tour of the National Museum of Korea in Seoul

Student Comments

Sakoto Matsuo, Materials Science and Engineering M2:



I learned a lot through this exchange program, and was able to be more proactive, take initiative, and improve my English ability. I lacked confidence in English before participating, but the students at HBNU gave me a warm welcome and let me join in without any hesitation. Even if I don't have confidence in English, I felt that thinking about how to communicate and convey my thoughts by listening to everyone's words and ways of speaking, and being active in my own communication is necessary to improve my skills. This is something that I wouldn't have understood without experiencing it firsthand, so it was an extremely valuable experience. Also, seeing the HBNU students' proactive attitudes during our PBL activities, and conducting experiments at the lab, made me want to apply that kind of approach to my own research. I will cherish the connections that we made during this program, and I hope to continue studying English so I can talk more when we meet again.

Lee SeoJin, Materials Science and Engineering B4:



I had the great opportunity to participate in a collaborative capstone program with Iwate Univ. I was able to learn a lot from everyone and had a great experience reflecting on my life's direction. As well as capstone activities, we could tour laboratories. Japanese students introduced their research in English, and we were able to see fascinating research being conducted there. Also, in Japan, we had the opportunity to visit unique local tourist destinations, such as a sake and beer brewery and a temple. We were able to taste various kinds of beer and sake and observe the process of making them at there. Iwate prefecture had great air and water quality. I was particularly impressed and moved when I visited the open-air hot springs, and the food was also delicious. I think, it was definitely great experience to interact between Japanese student and Korean students. I'm glad to be friends with everyone.

Kota Nishizawa, Chemistry M1:



I made unforgettable memories during the 8 days we spent in South Korea. It was my first time going overseas, and being able to see a different culture so vividly made me feel like I was immersed in my own book, making every day enjoyable. Although I was a bit nervous about whether or not I could communicate in English, I found that word order and grammar were not as important as the willingness to convey your thoughts and making the effort to do so. As I became accustomed to conversing, I was able to express more complex ideas and mental concepts in my own words, and I felt like the usage of my English language study since junior high had finally come to fruition. By engaging in active communication during my stay, I was able to immerse myself in South Korean culture and ended up really enjoying it. With this newfound enthusiasm, I hope to continue experiencing various cultures from around the world.

Lee JeeSoo, Information & Communication Engineering B4:



Before the program started, I thought a lot about whether to participate or not. There were also useless concerns, such as, "Wouldn't it be better for students who can participate in this program more faithfully?" rather than being active? However, I decided to participate in the program because I thought it would be a valuable experience for me to experience other cultures before entering graduate school. During the Iwate-Capston design program, students from both countries learned about each other's culture and backgrounds and worked together to solve problems. As a result, even though we were given a short time, we successfully carried out the task. The ability to see the world from a wide perspective has been developed by experiencing Japanese culture, people, and food. It was a good time to build various experiences and friendships. You probably won't forget this moment. I am willing to recommend this program to other students.

Message from the Editor

With such nice days lately, it's soon time for the ishiwarizakura (rock-splitting cherry tree) to come into full bloom. Today's newsletter brought you some information on our student exchange program with Hanbat National University, which took place in January and February. This was our first face-to-face exchange in over three years, and we could definitely sense the students' great enthusiasm. We are also very grateful that we have managed to create a situation where faculty and staff can also engage in these types of exchanges. As we approach the end of the academic year, we'd like to wish all our graduating students the best of luck, and express our gratitude to everyone for supporting Kenguro.

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