

A request from the University of Tokyo (U Tokyo) to the Faculty to co-organise a summer exchange in Hong Kong for its students has blossomed into an experiential learning opportunity for HKU students, too, and deepened the Faculty's engagement with the community.

The HKU-U Tokyo Joint Summer Programme brings together students from different disciplines to focus on a specific theme relating to Japanese business in Hong Kong. In 2016 their theme was the production, distribution and consumption of food – a topic of particular relevance because Japan exports more agricultural and marine products to Hong Kong than to any other territory or country in the world (although many of these products are re-exported rather than consumed locally).

The HKU and U Tokyo students lived together at Shun Hing College during the two-week course in August and spent their days visiting and meeting with senior figures of such companies as Japan Airlines, Yakult, Nissan Infiniti, city'super, Ajisen Ramen, and Nippon Wealth Bank.

They learned how seafood brought to market at 5am in Japan is ready for consumption in Hong Kong restaurants by 5pm the same day, how Yakult has become so ubiquitous in Hong Kong that some people are unaware of its Japanese origins, and how Ajisen Ramen is a bigger phenomenon in China and Hong Kong than in Japan.

"They talked to people dealing with localisation and globalisation at the same time," said Dr Yoshiko Nakano of the Department of Japanese Studies in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, who co-organised the programme with Professor Shigeto Sonoda of U Tokyo. "It's good for both Japanese and HKU students that they are exposed to that sort of adaptability while they are young."

The students were required to produce group presentations on Japanese business in Hong Kong and the topics were wide ranging. One group looked at the gender differences in customers at Yoshinoya restaurants, which specialise in beef rice bowls and are popular with working-class men in Japan, but appeal to families and university students in Hong Kong.

Another group looked at how to boost Hong Kong tourism to provincial Japan by improving WiFi and photo opportunities because Hong Kong tourists like to post frequent photos of their travels on social media.

Other presentations looked at the variety of ways Japanese soy sauces are used in Hong Kong restaurants, the use of the name "Hokkaido" on products here, and the reasons why Japanese ramen

appeal to Hong Kong people.

This was the third time HKU and U Tokyo have organised a summer exchange and the intake included students from disciplines as diverse as aerospace engineering, biomedical sciences and Japanese Studies. The main requirement was that participants were proficient in Japanese and English. HKU students had the option of doing extra written work so they could earn six credits for the course.

"The Japanese Consul-General also met with the students and took questions from them. It is a very rare opportunity for university students to get the chance to do this and to meet with business leaders," Dr Nakano said. "The Faculty is benefiting, too, because this is a good way to interact with the business community and communicate with students from different disciplines."

The HKU-U Tokyo Joint Summer Programme 2016 was supported by the Shun Hing College Endowment Fund. The Programme will be held for the fourth time from August 1 to 12, 2017.



Ambassador Kuninori Matsuda (front, centre), Professor Shigeto Sonoda (front, left) and Dr Yoshiko Nakano (front, right) with the students who joined the 2016 programme

HKU TEAM COMPETING IN TELEVISED CULTURAL DEBATE COMPETITION

An HKU team captained by Arts undergraduate student Mr Chong Shing Hei are among the finalists in the cultural debate competition, "The World Listens to Me". The team, which also includes Mr Huang Guanyu and Mr Lim Kam Ho, both undergraduate students from the Faculty of Business and Economics, are competing against 17 other university teams from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Macau and Taiwan in the final stage of the competition in Beijing. The team is coached by Mr Hayson Liu from the School of Chinese.

Over two hundred institutions and 1,100 students took part in the preliminary rounds of the competition, which is co-organized by China Central Television (CCTV) and Taiwan's CTi TV. The programme will be broadcast on CCTV 4 and CTi TV from November 2016 to February 2017 and is expected to reach millions of viewers in 198 countries.

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