

Mississippi Valley State University Japan Initiatives Bridging Mississippi and Japan through Campus and Community Internationalization

Project Executive Summary

Mississippi Valley State University proposes taking a holistic approach to involving students, faculty, staff and administrators across campus to increase Japanese language, culture and study abroad capacity building. This year-long multipronged Japan awareness and study abroad capacity building plan involves a). Building Study Abroad Awareness among students and their parents, b). Faculty and Staff Engagement and training, c) Curriculum internationalization d) Strengthening administrative and institutional support, and e) community outreach. This approach, which involves breaking down academic silos to get buy-in to integrate Japan awareness and Study Abroad into the curriculum, is consonant with MVSU's vision of "One Goal. One Team. One Valley" and will be achieved through the following activities. These activities involve adding Japanese language and cultural initiatives to the Office of International Program's year-long campus and community internationalization initiatives such as:

1. Building Japan and Study Abroad Awareness among Students
 - a. Japan Study Abroad and Intern Abroad
 - i. Promote Japan Study Abroad and Japan Intern/Work Programs
 - ii. Japan Study Abroad and Intern/Work Scholarships
 - iii. Study Abroad Fair (Add Japan Study Abroad and Intern Abroad Opportunities)
 - iv. Study Abroad Symposium (Add a Japan Academic Faculty Exchange session)
 - b. Print and Social Media Campaign (Japan Cultural Awareness)
 - c. FREE Passport Drive
 - d. Global Lecture Series (One Japan - US relation session)
 - e. Café Cultural and Delicious Destinations (Japan theme minimum one each per semester)
 - f. Study Abroad Photo and Video Contests (After Japan Study Abroad program)
2. Faculty and Staff Engagement and Training
 - a. Fulbright Programs
 - i. Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants
 - ii. Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence
 - iii. US Fulbright Scholarship
 - iv. Fulbright specialist Program
 - b. Study Abroad Lunch-n-Learn Workshops (Introduce Japan Study Abroad Initiatives)
 - c. New Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs (Building Japan Study Abroad Program)
 - d. Global Engagement Seed Grant Competition (Incentive to build Japan Study Abroad program)
 - e. Curriculum internationalization
 - i. MVSU and Japan Academic Institutions Collaborations
 - ii. COIL Program
 - f. Grants and Funding to support Japan initiatives
3. Administrative and Institutional Support
 - a. Fulbright Award Support (Support MVSU faculty interested to submit Japan Fulbright Application)
 - b. Globally focused Promotion and Tenure standards (Faculty Participation in Campus Internationalization)
4. Community Outreach and Involvement
 - a. Child Development Centers
 - b. Area K-12 Schools
 - c. Promote Japan awareness among other HBCUs
 - d. Japan Expat community
 - e. Explore Sister City Program

The intended results of implementation of this project are a year-round study abroad marketing campaign; increased awareness of Japan study abroad benefits and offerings among students, one new faculty-led Japan study abroad program, adding Japanese themed events to campus internationalization activities, faculty training and engagement to collaborate with Japanese Academic and Research institutions; globally focused criteria into promotion; and tenure standards to encourage faculty participation in study abroad initiatives; and strengthen community and HBCU awareness on Japan, culture and Japanese language.

Program Description:

Statement of Need: Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) is an HBCU located in the rural Mississippi Delta town of Itta Bena, MS. Many of the students who attend MVSU are first generation low-income and moderate-income African American students, who have not left their home towns, not to mention travelled or studied abroad. Their first priority is to complete their degree in a timely fashion, while they overcome the challenges of adjusting to university life due to lack of college readiness and familial support. Further Japanese language and culture is not being taught in any of the local schools in Mississippi Delta.

MVSU recognize these shortcomings and that the World is changing at a rapid pace in terms of technological advances, population and diversity, and geopolitical landscapes that challenge the US leadership, world order and vision. At MVSU we are committed train our students, the next generation leaders for work and life in the global world, to be innovative problem solvers with strong work ethics, effective communication skills and to demonstrate leadership with conviction, social courage and intercultural sensitivity so they can innovate and adapt to new challenges and excel anywhere in the world. Study Abroad provides a structured and safe environment for exposure to global perspectives, to explore cross-cultural communication, challenges and stereotypes, gain foreign language proficiency, improve self-awareness, and develop emotional and cultural intelligence among students. MVSU, in order to develop worldview, openness, curiosity toward other cultures and to provide a uniquely immersive international experience for our students and faculty, is making the strengthening and establishment of a robust and sustainable study abroad programs a top priority. **The country of Japan, Japanese language and culture are one of the priority areas in our next five-year campus internationalization plan.**

Statistics indicate that just around 39 students from MVSU studied abroad in a 10-year period (2009 to 2019) that is an average less than 4 students per year. Office of International Programs (OIP) will collaborate with academic departments and other student support services departments across campus to strengthen Study Abroad programs at MVSU. OIP has found that some of the biggest obstacles in getting more students to study abroad are:

- Student's apprehension to study and travel abroad
- Lack of awareness of the significance of study abroad among students and their parents
- Limited funding opportunities for students to support study abroad
- Limited support and training for faculty to build faculty-led study abroad programs
- Limited resources (personnel and tools) to expand study abroad programs

MVSU will explore both internal and external funding to aid the Office of International Programs to innovatively promote Japanese language and culture awareness among MVSU and local community through campus and community internationalization efforts at MVSU and Mississippi Delta region.

Sustainability Plan

After the project ends, the intended outcomes of the proposed capacity building plans and activities of MVSU-JOI collaboration will result in increased campus-wide awareness of the benefits of Japan study abroad programs, implementation of Japan study abroad offerings and exchange programs, stronger study abroad program support for students, increased faculty involvement in Japan study abroad initiatives and curricular enhancement from the global perspective, and will be actual and permanent changes MVSU campus-wide. In addition, the institutional support,

funding and creating policies and procedures to encourage globally focused faculty will significantly contribute to support and sustain Japanese study abroad, language and cultural initiatives.

Project Management Plan and Key Staff

Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah, Executive Director of International Relations and Assistant to Provost at MVSU will serve as the Principal Investigator for the MVSU Japan initiatives project. His fifteen plus years of experience in developing student outreach programs and collaboratively building academic and research collaborations, and study abroad programs will benefit the MVSU Japan initiative project. Dr. Shivakumaraiah will work with MVSU leadership, Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden, Provost/Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs in coordinating the Japan initiative projects. Dr. Golden was a Fulbright Lecturer/Researcher at The Academy for Public Administration under the President of Azerbaijan Republic. Dr. Stromile Golden will ensure that all requirements of the project are met within the specified timeline. She also previously served as the Director of International Program and Special Assistant to the President at Mississippi Valley State University in Itta Bena, and as Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs and the Director of the Delta Research and Cultural Institute. From 2003-2005 she served as Project Director for the Mississippi Consortium for International Development's Higher Education and Development Project for Iraq. She also has extensive experience in international collaborative research and directed programs in Liberia, Mauritania, and Azerbaijan. In addition, the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Business and Finance will ensure checks and balances are in place and project is implemented.

Contact Information



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