

Laura Lee

My name is Laura Lee, and I graduated in Spring 2015 with a double major in Japanese Studies and International Studies-Linguistics. Since graduating from UCSD, I have worked at the Yamaguchi Prefectural Government office in Japan as a Coordinator for International Relations through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program and at a non-profit in Little Tokyo helping older adults in the Japanese American and Japanese community. My current post is at the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles as a Program Coordinator. Outside of work, I regularly engage with Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai as their liaison to Japan and attend local Japanese English language exchange meet ups.

I chose to major in Japanese Studies because I have always had a deep interest in Japanese culture and wanted to further my understanding of the country beyond what I had seen through pop culture. Not only that, but it had been one of my goals since high school to experience living and working in Japan as well. Through the Japanese Studies program, I was able to not only improve my Japanese language skills but also learn about the various facets of the country from experts in the field. The most enjoyable aspect of the program would be going to classes I genuinely was interested in and meeting people through the classes. I was able to connect with students who shared a mutual interest in Japan and excellent teachers who are invested in the success of their students and have helped guide me to where I am today.

The Japanese Studies program expanded my knowledge of Japan and provided me with valuable resources for my future career path. Whether it be the professional language I used while working in Japan or topics such as the influence of Japanese soft power in the U.S. I spoke about with colleagues, the material I learned through the Japanese Studies program have continued to help me connect with others in a professional and casual setting. In addition to deepening my understanding of the country, working in Japan has given me the opportunity to meet with people from around the world, learn about their culture, and in turn learn more about myself and my home country. I have no doubt that the Japanese Studies program at UCSD will help as a stepping stone to become a global citizen and a bridge between Japan and your home country.