

Kobe College Corporation  
Japan Education Exchange

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Kobe College Corporation  
Japan Education Exchange

Mission

*To inspire positive relationships among Kobe College, Japan, and the United States by providing distinctive educational opportunities.*

Vision

*Provide premier programs and services to enhance the participation of American and Japanese women and men in our global society. Further, to continue our historical association with Kobe Jogakuin through mutual cooperation, recognizing a common interest in education and cross-cultural pursuits to empower faculty and student participation in a global society.*



Kobe College Corporation  
Japan Education Exchange  
Annual Report  
April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

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**Message from the Chancellor of Kobe College**  
**Dr. Ken Ii**

On the KCC-JEE Annual Meeting 2024, I would like to extend my greetings from Kobe College. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your continuous support over the past 100 years, and we will pray for God's blessing on activities of KCC-JEE, Dr. Ohigashi and all the KCC-JEE members.

In the Junior and Senior high schools of KC, we have made efforts to improve the learning environment for students. Without changing the total number of students, we have reduced the number of students per class and created more space in classrooms. We have strengthened the system for students' mental health. Teachers have a lot of work to do, but we have reduced some of their duties so that they can focus on teaching.

After three consecutive years of declining enrollment, the College has resumed its pre-pandemic recruitment style in the post-pandemic phase. We have continued to restructure our departments, adding new courses to the English Department, Global Studies, Psychology, and Music, and we are now able to welcome 95% of our capacity in spring 2024. In spring 2025, the Department of Environmental and Bio-Science will have an architecture course, which will mark a new start. This year, the College has also been ranked number one among women's universities and colleges in the Kansai region in the fields of education and employment in a survey of high school teachers conducted by "Daigaku Tsushin."

Next year will mark the 150th anniversary of Kobe College's foundation. From May to July this year, an exhibition was held looking back on Kobe College's history and looking ahead to the future, which attracted many visitors. As part of this exhibition, a new campus grand design was presented, which attracted a lot of attention. The first construction work to be carried out is the development of the western area of the campus and the construction of Psychology Laboratory building on the site of the demolished Science Building Annex. It is hoped that a new face will be created on the western area of the campus, different from the main gate. We hope that this 150th anniversary commemoration project will send a positive message to students, faculty, staff, alumnae, KCC-JEE members and other people involved.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Ken Ii  
Chancellor & President of the Board of Trustees

## **Message from the President**

### **Dr. Yuki Ohigashi**

We are very grateful for your continued investment in the mission of Kobe College Corporation - Japan Education Exchange (KCC-JEE) to foster positive relationships between Kobe College, Japan, and the United States through unique educational opportunities. Your support, including donations, volunteer time, professional services, being host families, and ideas for the organization, all contribute to KCC- JEE's quality programs.

We hope this year's annual meeting program will inform you of the impact you are making through these various kinds of support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to let you know that our logo and website have been updated. If you have not done so recently, please visit our website (<https://www.kccjee.org/>). It is our hope that this website will help many people to learn about our organization and its programs.

The fiscal year 2024 (FY2024) for KCC-JEE was an adjustment because we moved out of our office in Northfield. The materials, such as books and archival materials, were all moved to a storage unit. After contacting various organizations and individuals, we found "homes" for many of the books and archival materials. Most of our archival materials have been scanned and digitized.

We also dealt with the logistics of how to have a physical address in Illinois, while having an employee outside of Illinois. I am happy to report that KCC-JEE is still registered in Illinois and all of our operations in FY2024 went smoothly, thanks to those who worked on the necessary paperwork.

As mentioned earlier, we found homes for many of the books and our archival materials that we had in our office. They will be donated to the University of Chicago and be available for the public to enjoy.

The University of Chicago is excited to store our archival materials, especially given that KCC's second president, Shailer Mathews, KCC President from 1925 to 1941, was one of the leading scholars at their Divinity School. (<https://tinyurl.com/bddbjb8x>) We are still working on the details but will communicate to you how you might be able to access them.

Some other books will be donated to Marnie Jorenby, an Honorary Board Member of KCC-JEE, who has a library on their farm. We are grateful that through these organizations, our materials will be used by many and our mission will be carried out even in such a meaningful way.

You will find more details of what happened to KCC-JEE in FY2024 through the rest of this annual report. If you are interested in other news, please visit our website and go to the News and Events page for our newsletter.

Again, thank you so much for your generous support. We invite you to continue your partnership with us. If you would like to learn more about how to get involved, please let us know by contacting our office ([office@kccjee.org](mailto:office@kccjee.org)).

Dr. Yuki Ohigashi  
President, KCC-JEE

**Vice President of Finance & Treasurer**  
**Ken Tornheim**

KCC-JEE's financial position increased during the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, with an increase in its net assets of approximately \$324,000. As shown in the summarized financial results on page 5, the Organization had an overall investment gain for the year of approximately \$635,000. The Organization ended the fiscal year with a net asset balance of approximately \$4.6 million. The Organization's investment portfolio had a strong performance for the fiscal year after recovering from significant losses in the prior fiscal year due to a downturn in the stock market indexes that occurred during calendar year 2022. The Organization's investment portfolio has stabilized in value since then. The Organization remains reliant on strong stock market results in order to generate an increase in its net assets while maintaining its program at the current level. Although the Organization's investment portfolio is diversified to protect the overall value from significant volatility in the markets, the Finance Committee will continue to monitor the performance of the investment portfolio. The Organization remains in a healthy financial position in order to continue its programs without interruption.

The Organization once again satisfied its 5% distribution rule as a private non-operating foundation whereby it must distribute 5% of the value of the net investment assets annually in the form of program and certain eligible administrative expenses.

The Organization received total contributions of approximately \$16,000 for the year. This includes approximately \$7,300 from KC graduates living in North America. We are most grateful for the generosity and support, which is essential for KCC-JEE to continue its programs and carry out its mission. Our most sincere "Thank you" to each and every supporter of the Organization.

The Organization's investment portfolio is managed by the investment management firm of William Blair. William Blair, founded in 1935 and based in Chicago, is a global investment banking and asset management firm. The Finance Committee has periodic meetings with the William Blair team as part of the ongoing monitoring of the investment portfolio.

To ensure future sustainability of the Organization, we remain committed to vigilant fiscal responsibility in both our spending on programs and administrative expenses while at the same time recognize that future investment gains are not guaranteed. We as a Board will continue to exercise prudent investment policies with the intent, if possible, to produce long-term investment gains and have sufficient liquidity to appropriate funds for programs and other expenses.

**KOBE COLLEGE CORPORATION-JAPAN EDUCATION EXCHANGE**  
**SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL RESULTS**

	Years ended March 31,			
	2024	2023	2022	2021
Revenue:				
Investment income (loss)	\$ 634,647	\$ (314,104)	\$ 131,649	\$ 1,276,353
Contributions	15,771	14,887	17,039	24,334
Total revenue	650,418	(299,217)	148,688	1,300,687
Expenses:				
Programs	256,680	193,040	233,897	230,990
Management & general	66,874	75,866	57,390	57,678
Private Foundation taxes	2,500	5,079	1,571	14,122
Total expenses	326,054	273,985	292,858	302,790
Increase (decrease) in net assets	324,364	(573,202)	(144,170)	997,897
Net assets:				
Beginning of fiscal year	4,272,973	4,846,175	4,990,345	3,992,448
End of fiscal year	\$ 4,597,337	\$ 4,272,973	\$ 4,846,175	\$ 4,990,345



**Vice President of Programs**  
**Cindi SturtzSreetharan**

The KCC-JEE Programs have had an excellent year of fulfilling our mission to provide high quality, life-changing programs to many people. Our Programs are running smoothly and back to a more typical (pre-pandemic) pace. We are happy to report our undertakings for the last year.

You can read the details of each Program below, but in summary: The Bryant Drake Guest Professorship Program bid farewell Dr Mei-Jung Yang in March 2024 where she was teaching faculty of dance in Department of Music. We were delighted that the 2020 Essay Contest winner was able to go to Japan in summer of 2024 and undertake her award! The Essay Contest Program selected a winner in February for 2024 and that awardee also studied in Japan this summer. The Gottschalk Teachers Program continues to thrive sending English teachers to KCHS to collaborate in high quality women's education. The 2023-2024 Graduate Fellowship was awarded to Mr. John Ostermiller. A PhD Candidate from the University of Nevada, Reno, his project, "Between Piety and Popularity: Cultural Code-Switching and Muslim Migrant Communities in Japan," is ongoing in Shizuoka Japan.

As always, we continue to be grateful for the wonderful relationship we have with Kobe College which allows us to collaborate closely in fostering deep and meaningful programs between Japan and the United States.

**Bryant Drake Guest Professorship Program Report**  
**Submitted by Cindi SturtzSreetharan**

Dr Mei-Jung Yang finished her Bryant Drake Guest Professorship position in the Department of Music. We will be working closely with Kobe College to facilitate the next guest professor in the coming year.

**High School Essay Contest Program Report**  
**Submitted by Angie Gaspar**

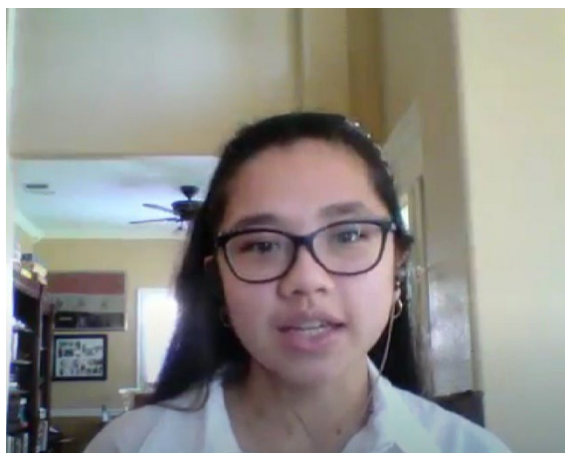
Sedona "Rain" Smith from Vancouver, Washington was the 2024 KCC-JEE High School Essay Contest winner. She had the was able to travel to Japan and spend three weeks in July with a homestay family while studying at the Kyoto Institute of Culture and Language. Jaden Martinez, the 2020 winner from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was finally able travel to Japan as well, after having to postpone the past few years due to the pandemic.

Sedona and Jaden created short videos about their time in Japan which will be presented at the KCC-JEE 2024 Annual Meeting. To learn more about their experience, we will also be updating the KCC-JEE website in the coming weeks with photographs and their reflections on their time in Japan.

This year we also welcomed a new essay contest committee member, Brant Dykehouse, who some of you may remember as one of our KCC-JEE employees between 2002 and 2007 here he worked while in graduate school. He is now a psychotherapist and intercultural trainer and also volunteers at orientations for new participants on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program. We are thrilled to have his expertise on the committee.

As we prepare for the 2025 Essay Contest, we would like to thank all of our supporters who help fund these valuable programs for youth at KCC-JEE. Some of our former essay contest winners have gone on to study Japanese in college, move to Japan after college, stay in contact with their homestay families, and use Japanese in their workplace. Having an international experience at a young age often transforms their lives as they become global citizens.

We will be posting the 2025 contest prompt and application in early October on the KCC-JEE website. We ask that our members please encourage any high school students they know who may be studying Japanese and will be 16 years of age by July 1, 2025, to apply.



*2020 Essay Contest winner Jaden Martinez*



*2024 Essay Contest winner Sedona Smith*

### **Gottschalk Teacher Program Report Submitted by Elizabeth Hartung-Cole**

The Gottschalk Teacher (GT) committee recruits, screens, and recommends high-quality English-speaking teachers for full-time teaching positions at Kobe College Junior and Senior High School (KCHS). The GTs also actively work with students in extracurricular events including English Clubs, local/national speech contests, Cultural Festival, and school trips. These efforts greatly contribute to school's well-earned national reputation for excellence, especially in English.

The 2023 GT summer recruitment for one teacher to begin in April 2024 received a record of 91 applications. The committee worked arduously screening documents, conducting interviews, and evaluating demonstration lessons from the finalists (done virtually). In October, we were pleased to learn that Kobe College offered the contract to Mr. Paul Ross Rodriguez, the highly recommended candidate, who accepted the offer.



*Mr. Paul Rodriguez*

Mr. Rodriguez graduated from Elon University, has a Massachusetts Secondary Teaching Credential, and has been teaching in Takamatsu since 2015. He greatly appreciated the generous support from the other GTs and the KCHS English Department as he and his wife prepared to move to Nishinomiya.

Ms. Jocelyn Newman, a GT who began teaching at KCHS in April 2022, was invited and agreed to extend her two-year contract for another year. In addition to her other duties, she contributed heavily to the High School English Department's efforts to prepare two S1 (10th grade) students to successfully pass the rigorous requirements for participating in the United World College, a non-profit educational organization established for the purpose of cross-cultural understanding.

Both Ms. Ebony Givens and Ms. Stephanie Hoelker, upon reflecting on their first year as GTs at KCHS, commented about their "privilege of coaching girls for their speech and debate contests" and the pleasure of accompanying students on the school trips. They greatly admire the students' dedication to performing award-winning work and value being able to learn about the girls' interests through the process.

The Gottschalk Teacher Program deeply values the on-going support we receive in several ways from former teachers, students, Rockford College, committee members, the KCC-JEE office administration, designated donations, and all others who help this cross-cultural educational endeavor. We hope to be able to fund this program for many years to come with your generous assistance.

### **Graduate Program Committee Report Submitted by Liv Coleman**

The Graduate Fellowship Program is a nationally distinctive fellowship program awarding one fellowship valued at \$30,000 per year for doctoral dissertation research in Japan. Applicants are selected through a competitive application process. Graduate Fellows may select Kobe College as a research affiliation site and several fellows have done so. All Graduate Fellows make a research presentation at Kobe College during their time in Japan. Graduate Fellows make contributions to the US-Japan relationship and intercultural understanding not only through their intellectual research contributions, but also through their career development into college and university educators about Japan, bringing their specialized knowledge of Japan to generations of students and the public audiences around their universities.

The Graduate Fellowship Program operates within the allocated budget. For transparency and efficiency purposes, the program publicizes due dates for applications, advertises the program widely, and communicates the names and project titles of fellowship winners. We also receive a mid-year report from the fellowship winner each year to hear about their research progress in Japan. We ask that Graduate Fellows who publish research based on their work funded by this fellowship include a statement mentioning our support in their publication.

The Graduate Fellowship Program facilitates research in Japanese Studies that in many cases simply may not otherwise be possible, given the relatively small number of opportunities available for doctoral students to apply for funds supporting international travel and research abroad. This kind of financial support for doctoral research in Japan launches careers in Japanese Studies that last lifetimes and offers funds for which there are no ready substitutes. The knowledge gained, new scholarship generated, and professional networks built are the very backbone on which US-Japan relations are built at the level of civil society. Graduate Fellows frequently report that KCC-JEE Graduate Fellowship support is career-making and life-affirming.

The Graduate Fellowship Program's fundraising is part of the overall fundraising program of the KCC-Japan Education Exchange. The program is also open to earmarked contributions from those who want to ensure its future. To ensure the sustained quality of our program and make sure it works as smoothly as possible, the program seeks feedback from Graduate Fellowship recipients through their mid-year progress reports to the organization and by open email communication with fellows throughout the year about how the travel arrangements and research experience are going. Fellows are often invited back to KCC-JEE events to give presentations on their research and chat about their experiences as well.

### **Current Graduate Fellowship Recipients**

Our current 2023-2024 Graduate Fellow is Mr. John Ostermiller, a Ph.D. candidate in the Anthropology Department at the University of Nevada-Reno. His project is titled, "Between Piety and Popularity: Cultural Code-Switching and Muslim Migrant Communities in Japan," and he is affiliated with Shizuoka University. He is investigating how a diverse community of Muslim migrants in Shizuoka, Japan work, worship, and thrive in Japanese society.



*2023-2024 Graduate Fellow  
John Ostermiller*

We were pleased to award the 2024-2025 Graduate Fellowship to Ms. Elena Paulsen, a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department at the University of Minnesota. Her project is titled, "Shojo Modernity: Queer Girlhood and Tuberculosis in Early Twentieth Century Japan," and she will be affiliated with Kobe College starting this late summer.

**Vice President of Administration**  
**Tami Mizuno**

1. KCC-JEE The 103<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2023

We celebrated the 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting by Zoom on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with attendees from both the US and Japan. We appreciate the support from the whole KCC-JEE family and long relationship of over 100 years.

2. Office Administrator

Ms. Kanae Takenaka completed her ninth year as the KCC-JEE office administrator this past July 25, 2024. She has been coordinating the various programs, the IT Network support, and the smooth communication between Kobe College in Japan and KCC-JEE in US, as well as being responsible for other duties. KCC-JEE greatly appreciates Kanae's excellent work performance.

3. Office Lease End

KCC-JEE ended the Illinois office lease on June 30, 2023.

Now, we use a virtual office address.

We maintain the storage space near Chicago Airport. If anyone needs to access KCC's archives, please contact the KCC office.

Our new mailing address is:

5 Revere Drive, Suite 200-#0024, Northbrook, IL 60062

4. Insurance Coverage/ Commercial Package

KCC-JEE is covered by the California workers' compensation insurance policies.

The term is: May 08, 2024 – May 08, 2025

TKM    August 13, 2024

**KCC-JEE Annual Donation Report for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024)**  
**Vice President of Development**  
**Chiaki Nakajima**

Dear KCC-JEE Members,

Thank you for your generous support during FY2024 (April 2023–March 2024)!

Your contributions have made a significant impact on our mission to promote educational and cross-cultural opportunities between Japan and America. This year, we received a total of **\$15,771** in donations.

**Impact Highlights:**

- **New Website:** We dedicated much time updating our website to strengthen our relationship with alumni, KCCJEE members, and program participants. Explore our fresh look at <https://www.kccjee.org/>.
- **Gottschalk Teacher Program:** Mr. Paul Ross Rodriguez was selected as the Gottschalk Teacher at Kobe College High School to begin his role in April 2024.
- **Essay Contest:** Three winners from the 2021-2023 contests (Josephine Kwok, Payten Shimizu, and Eilis Frances Brannigan) traveled to Japan and spent a month honing their Japanese language skills. Sedona Rain Smith won the 2024 Essay Contest.
- **KCC-JEE Graduate Fellowship:** We awarded our annual Fellowship to John Ostermiller, a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at the University of Nevada-Reno. He traveled to Japan to conduct his research project at Shizuoka University on Muslim migrant communities in Japan.

*For more details, please refer to the updates from the Vice President of Programs in this report.*

**Donor Highlights:**

- The FY2024 donation amount exceeded FY2023 donation amount (\$15,771 vs. \$14,987).
- 48% of the donations were designated for specific programs, including the Gottschalk Teacher Program and the Bryant Drake Guest Professorship Program, which received significant contributions.
- Our largest donor group was the Kobe College alumni, contributing 46% of the total donations.

**Looking Ahead:** As we plan for FY2025, our goal is to increase our donations to **\$17,000**. We would love your continued support to reach this goal and further our mission. You can contribute through the following methods:

1. **Give online:** Visit <https://www.kccjee.org/support>
2. **Send a check** to Kobe College Corporation Japan Education Exchange, 5 Revere Drive, Suite 200-#0024, Northbrook, IL 60062.

We encourage you to designate your gift to specific programs if you wish.

### **Questions?**

Please don't hesitate to contact us at [office@kccjee.org](mailto:office@kccjee.org). We're happy to discuss how your donations make a difference.

Thank you again for your generosity and commitment to KCC-JEE. We look forward to your continued support!

## FY2024 Donor List

### Diamond \$1,000 -

Audie	Bock	Yasuko	Sanborn	
Eric	Fulcomer	<b>Ken</b>	<b>Tormheim</b>	(BD)
Edward	Grant	Julia	Vassar Samson	
Etsuko	Morris			

### Gold \$500 - \$999

Fusako	Aochi	Nobuko	Wedick	
Lynn	Cohee	N Cal Alumnae Assoc.		
Makiko	Taya			

### Silver \$101 - \$499

Staci	Ambrose	<b>Chiaki</b>	<b>Nakajima</b>	(BD)
<b>Liv</b>	<b>Coleman</b>	(BD)	Mayumi	Naramura
Reiko	deYau	Dick	Niemiec	
Sue	Doffing	Mari	Noda	
<b>Angie</b>	<b>Gaspar</b>	(BD)	<b>Yuki</b>	<b>Ohigashi</b>
<b>Elizabeth</b>	<b>Hartung-Cole</b>	(BD)	Irene	Osuga
Reiko	Horai	Miki	Radack	
Terumi	Joki	Yoko	Sakata	
Kyoko	Kimura	Midori	Sato	
Manami	Kobayashi	Victor	Strandberg	
<b>Toyoko</b>	<b>Kodama</b>	(BD)	<b>Cindi</b>	<b>SturtzSreetharan</b>
Takako	Koplin	<b>Go</b>	<b>Sugiura</b>	(BD)
Sachiko	Matsumoto	David	Therkelsen	
<b>Abbi</b>	<b>Mayland</b>	(BD)	<b>Roberta</b>	<b>Wollons</b>
<b>Tami</b>	<b>Mizuno</b>	(BD)	Michiko	Yamaguchi

### Bronze - \$100

<b>Maria</b>	<b>Diemer</b>	(BD)	Kyoko	Sagawa
Carol	Edmonds		Makiko	Sato
Yumiko	Fujino		Miho	Wofford
Mutsuki	Moteki		Yuriko	Yanagisawa
Elizabeth	Pexton		Noriko	Yoneji

(BD) KCC-JEE Board Members 2023-2024



# **OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

## **2023-2024**

### **OFFICERS**

**Dr. Yuki Ohigashi (2013-)** President  
**Ken Tornheim (2012-)** Vice President, Finance & Treasurer  
**Tami Mizuno (2014-)** Vice President, Administration & Secretary  
**Dr. Cindi SturtzSreetharan (2003-2008, 2012-)** Vice President, Programs  
**Chiaki Nakajima (2021-)** Vice President, Development

### **DIRECTORS**

**Dr. Liv Coleman (2019-)**  
**Maria Diemer (2021-)**  
**Angela Gaspar (2006-)**  
**Elizabeth Hartung-Cole (2018-)**  
**Toyoko Kodama (2019-)**  
**Abbi Mayland (2019-)**  
**Go Sugiura (2007-)**  
**Dr. Roberta Wollons (1997-)**

### **HONORARY MEMBERS**

**Sue Doffing**  
**Masaru Funai**  
**Natsuko Furuya**  
**Dr. Pat Gottschalk**  
**Dr. Marnie Jorenby**  
**Marjorie Kinsey**  
**Dave Therkelsen**  
**Jeanne Sokolowski**  
**Fumiyo Young**  
**Nancy Waichler**



# Kobe College Corporation Japan Education Exchange

[www.kccjee.org](http://www.kccjee.org)



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