



Exchange of Lectures with Oversea Universities – *Teaching Trips Abroad Grant*

ACTIVITY REPORT

Name of the Faculty Member	Norikazu Tawara	
Status	Assistant Professor	
Dept. Affiliation	Global Business Program	
Trip Duration	From: March 20, 2016	To: March 27, 2016
Institutions visited / Country	1) Ursinus College, United States	



Notes: Zacharias Ursinus founded the school in 1869.

Activity Summary:

My activities at Ursinus College, one of the U.S. liberal arts colleges, in periods of March 22 through 25 in 2016 fall in the following three categories: (1) giving lectures; (2) auditing class taught by faculty members; and (3) meeting a group of faculties and students over lunch and dinner. Ursinus College was founded by Zacharias Ursinus in 1869. Being located in the beautiful suburb of Philadelphia, it is known as its excellence in liberal arts education. Being twice as large as AIU, students, staff and faculty members are working closely together.

1. Giving lectures

Dr. Andy Economopoulos, chair of Business and Economics department, kindly invited me to his class of research seminars targeted to senior students. The class is joint with other applied economics classes taught by two professors. I had an opportunity to deliver a lecture on research methods in economics that are useful to college students. Using various measures of the Japanese economy, in particular, the labor markets, I explained some features of the Japanese labor markets and explained how to compute some useful relevant measures using spreadsheets. Students all appear to find my talk interesting and I have received interesting questions from five or six students.



Notes: I am giving a lecture on research methods and the Japanese economy.



Dr. Matt Mizenko, professor of Asian studies, has invited me to his class on the Japanese culture. About twenty students have attended, including two AIU exchange students. I gave a somewhat short talk on how the Japanese culture, as I see it, has evolved over the past few decades. I did this by comparing behavior and mindset of our generations and those of the current AIU students'. Cross-generation differences in the mindset lie in that, for example, our generation experiences so-called bubble economy during the late 1980s during their youth, while the current AIU students have not. All of the AIU students' lives is in during the stagnation periods of the Japanese economy. Interestingly, some form of optimism are shared by our generation, one does not see any sense of optimism in the current students. Some students in my lecture have raised the views that my description may not be correct outside Japan. I find this so interesting.



Notes: I am giving a talk on the Japanese culture.

2. Auditing class

During my stay at Ursinus, I have had chances to observe four classes taught by the Ursinus faculty members. The first class is on introductory econometrics. The class consists of the first 30 minute lecture and the class activities in the rest of the 45-minute. During the first lecture part, the instructor continued to quick questions to students. In the second half of the in-class activities, each student works on some empirical exercises in the textbook using SAS.

The second class I observed is what one might call a *very unusual* class on research methods targeted to sophomore students. Main parts of the course are ten exercises where students work on reading articles, figures and data, writing, creating figures and tables, etc. All of the instructions are so precise and detailed rubric for grading students' work is also present. To my eyes, the courses appear so demanding and time-consuming.

The third class I sat is on introductory microeconomics. The instructor does not use the slides. Instead, he uses the whiteboard and students take notes and are forced to think deeply in class. His structure of the class is pretty perfect and so clear. He also takes videos of his class, which would be used later when students need to review the class. I find his method pretty effective.

The fourth class I have observed is on international relations. The topic of the class I observed is terrorism, so timely one day after the tragic events happened in Belgium. The first part is in the form of lectures, followed by group discussions. The class style appears so common in many courses in AIU.



3. Meeting with faculties and students

On the first day, I talked with Dr. Andy Economopoulos and other faculty members over lunch. I explained my purpose of visiting Ursinus. Andy explained the overall picture of Ursinus and his Business and Economics department. Ursinus is a teaching-oriented institution as AIU is, but recently some reasonable degree of emphasis is also put on research both by faculty and students. I asked how important research is in liberal arts education. Andy and other faculty members said that teaching motivated through research is more and more important. Ursinus seeks “liberal arts plus” education. Students have to take initiatives and be motivated. To do so, faculty members need to demonstrate research, not just textbook teaching.

On the second day, I had greetings and exchanged views with President Brock Bromberg and other members. I was asked to explain my planned talk. President explained to me some features of Ursinus education. We exchanged views on both challenges and promises of some form of teaching in AIU and other Japanese universities.

4. Summary

Through four-day stay at Ursinus, I have learned and experienced so many things. It is hard, and maybe inappropriate, to generalize, but overall there appear lots of things that both AIU and Ursinus College share in common and differences across the two institutions.



Notes: With Dr. Mizenko, and two AIU students studying at Ursinus



What I have learned and how I want to use the knowledge / skills in my future teaching at AIU:

Through my visit to Ursinus College, I have gained lots of insights and skills potentially useful to teaching of mine and my colleagues at AIU.

First, student in-class activities, as adopted in class of introductory econometrics, research methods, etc. can be pretty useful in my teaching of various courses of economics at AIU. In my previous teaching at AIU, students tend to spend much time on looking at my lecture slides, and less time on engaging active learning.

Second, active note-taking either by standard pencils and notebooks or by use of laptop PCs by students in class would be also useful to my teaching at AIU. At Ursinus, upon admission, all of the students, including short-term exchange students from AIU, are provided for free with a laptop PC to be used until graduation. In almost all of the classes I have observed, all students bring their laptop PC to class and use them for taking notes, doing various class activities, including data exercise, reading exercise, etc.

Third, I am pretty intrigued by what Ursinus College calls 'liberal arts *plus*' education. Some faculty members told me that they are seeking for learning through exercises, learning motivated by research etc. Senior students at Ursinus spend some time on doing research work under the guidance of some faculty members. This sheds some light on discussions on capstone seminars at AIU.

Finally, I have noticed during my stay at Ursinus that faculty members talk to their students outside class in pretty friendly way. They pay reasonable amount of cares to their students both in and outside class.