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Gardner-Webb hosts visiting Japanese students



Photo by Travis Archie

By: Travis Archie

In the fall semester of 2015, **Gardner-Webb welcomed six Japanese students** to come study and experience American culture as part of an English and Engineering program started by Dr. Lorene Pagcaliwagin, associate professor of French and Spanish.

This year, the program participants include, freshman Soraya Shizumi, sophomores Tomoyuki Aoki, Hiroki Yahagi and Keisuke Takiguchi, junior Seitaro Ishikawa and senior Kentaro Nomachi. They will be here Feb. 15 until March 1.

A large part of what makes the program so successful is the experience it provides to the students who participate. During their time at Gardner-Webb, the visiting students travel surrounding areas, in order to study American culture on a personal level.

So far, the students have been to Baldor Electric Motors in Kings Mountain, the McGuire Nuclear Plant Energy Explorium in Charlotte, the BMW plant in Gaffney, SC and the historical district of Charleston, SC.

One reoccurring comment about America has been the love of American food. Pizza, hamburgers and “potato-totos,” were among the most outstanding. “Charleston was nice and cool, and I enjoyed the BBQ tacos,” said Hiroki. Sweet tea, however, was not a crowd favorite.

The program has also arranged for the students to meet the former Mayor of Shelby, Ted Alexander.

The visiting students also said they liked the Gardner-Webb atmosphere. “I have enjoyed the game center in Tucker and touring Gardner Webb,” said Aoki.

Gardner-Webb’s Japanese Club has also gotten a chance to bond with the visitors. “We really don’t get the opportunity to interact with people from Japan, so it’s very fun,” said Japanese Club member, Nicole Roland. “[The Japanese Club] focuses on helping the students with their English and cultural learning.”

With one more week in America, the group will be visiting The NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte, NC, the Facebook Data Station in Forest City and a weekend trip to Atlanta, GA before attending their Farewell Party on March 1 from 4- 5 p.m. in Tucker.