On Friday, September 21, 2018, the East Asia Institute hosted an information session on the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies (KUFS) study abroad program. The information session was split into two parts. The first presentation was led by Ms. Yoko Kawaguchi, Manager for the Office of Latin American Affairs at KUFS, who explained the course selection process and accommodations foreign students would encounter in Japan. The second half of the presentation was held in a Q&A format where students could ask a panel comprised of Prof. Toshiki Kumagai, Vice President for the Division of International Affairs who was joined by two UTSA students who had recently participated in the study abroad program at KUFS.

Kawaguchi started her presentation by showing photos of the university and explaining what students could expect from attending. “Kyoto University of Foreign Studies has 158 partner universities in thirty-five countries.”, said Kawaguchi. She explained that there were two faculty divisions: The Faculty of Global Engagement which contains the Department of Global Studies, where all courses are taught in English, and the Department of Global Tourism, which is taught in Japanese; the other faculty, the Faculty of Foreign Studies, contains languages studies from all over the world that include Japanese, British & American English, Spanish, French, German, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese and Italian studies.

Under these aforementioned fields of studies, the international students can elect to take various courses enveloped in Japanese culture. The courses include Composition of Kanji and Grammar, Japanese for Proficiency Tests and Certificates, and Traditional Japanese Culture, (Noh, Tea Ceremony, Flower Arrangement, Calligraphy and Kimono). The student can also take classes in Japanese History, Literature, Politics and Economy. All elective courses are also taught in English to emphasize better understanding of the Japanese culture.

After Kawaguchi’s presentation, Kumagai led a Q&A session with two UTSA students Vincent Reyes and Mary Toland who experienced firsthand what the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies had to offer. In addition, both participants had plenty to say about their stay in Japan, commenting on the importance of cultural immersion, ease of transportation and the overall safety of the country as a whole. They gave examples of what life was like in Japan from an international student’s perspective.

“Soon after I arrived at KUFS last year, I immediately applied to extend my stay from six months to one year as I just fell in love with the University, said Toland. “I made progress in the Japanese language at the speed that I could not ever imagine. Not only I learned more about Japan and its language and culture, I also learned about myself!”

At the end of the session, Kumagai encouraged those in attendance to apply for the opportunity to have a life-changing experience by taking the initiative to study abroad in Japan. For more information, please visit the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies website at: https://www.kufs.ac.jp/en/