For immediate release

The East Asia Institute (EAI) will host Kumamoto day from 2:00-5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 23rd, 2015. This is also sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan in Houston, San Antonio City’s International Relation Office and Japan-America Society of San Antonio. This event will be held on the ground floor of the Main Building at UTSA’s main campus. Performances will be held in MB 0.104. The event is free admission (activity fees may apply) and open to the public.

During the event, there will be dance performances, activity booths, information booths, fundraising, crafts and food.

Kumamon (picture on left), the famous black bear from Kumamoto prefecture, Japan, will come to perform at the event. Kumamon is the official mascot, created in 2010 to draw in tourists, for the prefecture after the Kyushu Shinkansen (bullet train) line opened.

Kumamon subsequently became nationally popular, and in late 2011, was voted top in a nationwide survey of mascots, collectively known as yuru-chara, garnering over 280,000 votes. Following his success in the contest, Kumamoto earned ¥11.8 billion (US$120 million) in merchandising revenue for the first half of 2012, after having only earned ¥2.5 billion (US$26 million) throughout all of 2011.

Kumamoto, with its rich cultural heritage and economic strength, became San Antonio’s Sister City in 1987 and has provided many great benefits to San Antonio including the authentic Japanese Garden, otherwise known as “Kumamoto En,” built in 1989 at the San Antonio Botanical Garden.

For more information regarding the event, please contact the East Asia Institute at 210.458.4943, eai@utsa.edu, or see the EAI’s homepage at http://www.utsa.edu/eai.

The UTSA East Asia Institute’s mission is to promote appreciation and understanding of East Asian societies and cultures both on campus and in the community through research, outreach, networking, education, student/faculty exchange, and business development and cooperation. The East Asia Institute organizes seminars, workshops, lectures, conferences, film festivals, visual art exhibitions as well as bringing in performing art groups from China, Japan, Korea, and other Asian nations. It also encourages faculty research collaborations both within UTSA and with participating East Asian university researchers.