

The small Okinawan noodle shop was open, so we hoped. Three students and I had just spent hours walking around the beautiful and expansive Okinawa Peace Memorial Park, dedicated to those lost in the great World War II battle of 1945. We had hiked

down steep limestone stairs to swim in the clear waters of the Pacific, slowed our pace around the thousands of names of the dead commemorated in the memorial walls, and in the balmy summer heat, worked up a ferocious appetite in the process. Our emotions were swirling, surrounded as we were by lush subtropical beauty and the memories of war, but our stomachs reminded us of more immediate needs. That's when the noodle shop appeared.



California State University
MONTEREY BAY
Department of World Languages
and Cultures

The owner (who was also the cook and server) was napping when we walked in. Roused, he made his way to the kitchen and soon brought back steaming bowls of Okinawan soba noodles (*sokisoba*) and cold bottles of jasmine tea (*sanpincha*). Though only about \$3 a bowl, the students unanimously declared that it was the best meal of our entire research trip. Supported by the [Tyler Center for Global Studies](#), our students were fully-funded on the two-week research adventure and we had traveled throughout Tokyo before heading to Okinawa. We'd had some delicious food on our trip, to be sure, but I understood their sentiment. We all know that food and memorable experiences are often intertwined, simultaneously nourishing the body and the soul. Such are the joys and unplanned moments of studying languages, cultures, and traveling the world.

Welcome, bienvenido, ようこそ, benvenuti, to the Department of World Languages and Cultures! Our department offers a [B.A. in Japanese Language and Culture](#), a [B.A. in Spanish Language and Hispanic Cultures](#) as well as [minors](#) in Japanese and Spanish. We also offer popular classes in Italian and American Sign Language.

Global events often give us reminders as to why studying languages and cultures is not just essential to succeed in a competitive job market, but for navigating conflict and working towards a more peaceful future. Our students learn to see the world through other eyes and, in doing so, better understand their own communities.

Research shows that people who study languages go into a wide array of jobs. Many students find their ways into government, management, and education. The highest income earners tend to go into the legal field. While your future career is important, we also know that our students, like our faculty, are driven by an adventurous spirit to see the world and develop meaningful relationships with people of different cultures. Our students often study abroad and return to campus completely changed and energized for their next chapters. For me personally, one of the highlights of my job is getting to listen to students excitedly recount their study abroad adventures.

Please explore our [website](#) and learn more about our outstanding faculty and staff, the exciting events offered by our department, and how our alumni are thriving here and around the world.

For the last six years, Professor Shigeko Sekine has served as the chair of the department and has helped to grow our faculty and increase the variety of courses offered. We are a more robust department thanks to her leadership. These are big shoes to fill for any new department chair and I am grateful for her service to our department.

Feel free to reach out to our department with any questions. And grab your passport!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dustin Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dustin Wright, Ph.D.

Chair, Department of World Languages and Cultures
Associate Professor of Japanese Culture and Language