

My name is Chuck Crooks, and I was a CJS student from Bowling Green State University (Ohio) for the 2003-2004 academic year.

I have always wanted to do a big return trip to Japan, so of course visiting Nanzan had to be a part of my journey. I had the pleasure of returning to campus to see some of the changes that have occurred in the last 20 years. I also got to reunite with one of my former and favorite Japanese professors, Okada-sensei.

I have forever treasured my time at Nanzan, especially the people I met in the CJS program. I was lucky to have the experience of a home stay for one semester and lived in the dorms for the other. From living in the Yamazato Koryukaikan Dorm, I got to experience daily life with Japanese, Chinese, Thai, and American students. We often spent a lot of time together, and got to experience each other's cultures from cooking parties, going to karaoke, and doing movie nights as a group. We also studied together often, helping each other with our homework.

The CJS academic program was invaluable to my Japanese skills, giving me the strongest foundation in Japanese out of any course I have taken. I also loved the culture classes like Shodo that gave a deeper insight to the native culture. The language classes gave myself and two American friends the confidence to travel to Hokkaido over winter break using only the normal trains. It was a journey we still talk about to this day!

In America (Bellingham, WA) I currently own and operate a small business, Bellingham Ghost Tours. At one point I returned to school to become a Japanese high school teacher in the US. While not teaching right now, it is a path I want to return to after I brush up on my Japanese. I will certainly be using many of my old books and study materials that I have retained from my time at Nanzan to help my studies once more.

To this day I am forever grateful for the entire year I spent at Nanzan University. Thank you so much, and congratulations to the CJS program on their 50th anniversary!