Haw May Ann

Faculty of Education，2nd year

Up until the moment I took my first step into the Washington Dulles International Airport, I would never have guessed that in the first half of September 2023, I would find myself exploring the streets of Washington D.C. and San Francisco, much less joining tours of huge corporations like the World Bank, NASA and Google, and even speaking with the many exceptional people affiliated with these places. Thanks to the Kingfisher Global Leadership Program, I was given this opportunity of a lifetime – to immerse myself in the U.S. atmosphere and culture, and make friends and connections I would never have met otherwise. Without a doubt, I learnt much from this experience, and this report will attempt to put my discoveries and reflections from it into words.

Meeting many people in high positions, I came to better understand leadership. Firstly, despite how "far away" I felt leadership to be – something that such remarkable, important people have – I realised how it is actually quite similar to our everyday, personal lives. For example, leaders need to be able to deal with "people problems" as well: To make friends with someone, we may need to take the initiative to walk up to them and strike up a conversation, introduce ourselves in an interesting, or at least an agreeable way that they would not find us too weird, and possibly introduce them to our existing friend group. To ask for a favour from a friend, we may have to convince them with a promise that we would repay their kindness in the future, or offer them something they like in return, be it some food, or that one item they have always wanted. To resolve conflicts – a family member giving the cold shoulder; a friend being quieter in the group than usual –, we may need to have *the talk*, in private or via text, hopefully come to terms with one another though clarifying and apologies if needed, and sometimes there are cases when the best option is to let them go. Leadership is – though possibly an oversimplification – the same, except that it happens in the context of the working world. In the professional world, "making friends" is likened to networking, where, similarly, one must take the first step to get to know someone (and get them to know oneself) through the sometimes awkward first small talk or email. In selling an idea to someone or requesting their help or resources, we must be able to negotiate with them: Why should they help us; what's in it for them? And lastly, there is definitely also the need to deal with conflicts

between coworkers at the workplace – determining the source of the conflict and communicating it to one another, and finding the best solution, all in an amicable manner.

Our leadership style can, then, be likened to our personalities – just as each of us have our unique ways of behaving and responding to situations, so do we have our own ways of leading. Aside from some essential skills that are needed in dealing with common situations, including those mentioned above – communication, negotiation, flexibility, resilience –, there is no one "correct" style or type of leadership. I realised this from observing the diverse characters and personalities of the many leaders we met – some are more serious or formal, while others are more charismatic and outspoken. Nonetheless, they are all amazing leaders in their own special ways; the difference that lies between them is, for example, their way of "making friends", "asking for favours" and "resolving conflicts" as mentioned above. Coming to realise this was reassuring to me, as I was stuck in the mindset that I had to put up a certain farce when "acting as a leader", which I was afraid might not be compatible with my actual personality or self. At the same time, it made me more confident in my potential as a leader, because I know that I can be true to myself – without lying to myself or anyone else – and still be as fine of a leader as I can be.

Aside from clarifying my doubts regarding leadership, I was also able to gain some insights regarding what I should do with my future career, and the possible perspectives I can take towards it in the first place. As a second-year undergraduate student, I would say my route options are still rather broad, though it is nearing the time when I have to choose what I want to specialise in. To me, who finds trouble even in choosing between green tea or *houjicha*, falafel or sandwich, making this sort of important, life-changing decision is a nightmare. There are just too many things to consider – in the first place, on what criteria should I base my decision? The route that will most benefit society? The easiest, most pain-free route? Career stability? Money? Happiness? What even *is* happiness? Even if someone were to use the magic phrase, "Just do whatever you want!", the reality is that the same thing has run in my head countless times that I don't even know what I want anymore. However, seeing so many of our speakers so fired up because they simply love and believe in what they do, I came to understand that being interested in what one is pursuing is an important factor for high, long-term motivation. I recall Koji Tanabe, Founder and CEO of iPeace Inc., humorously commenting that "even when he sleeps, he dreams of his work". It also reassured

me to know that our passions and career can indeed coexist, after having been exposed to the idea that we should keep them separate because we would inevitably come to hate what we do for a living.

In addition, the program taught me the importance of being willing to take risks. Of course, this is far from the first time that I've considered the possibility of simply following my interests in navigating my career path. However, I am often brought back down to earth by thoughts, such as: "But what if it's less likely for you to succeed?" or "But what if I'm not suited for or talented enough for this path?" In my home country, Malaysia, and Singapore where I spent four years of my secondary education, it is typical for adults to advocate the "safe path" of entering the science stream in school – which I did –, going to university and, within the shortest time and cost possible, becoming an engineer or lawyer, if not a doctor. On the other hand, children and youths are often discouraged from pursuing careers that are believed to be less profitable, such as history, education, and God forbid, the arts and music. Surrounded by the narrative that I "won't be able to find a job" or "earn enough to survive" if I were to do the things I like – since I happen to love drawing and painting, writing poetry, and making music – I had more or less given up on the notion of pursuing a career in these fields.

This is where risk-taking comes in, an idea that many of the speakers we met promoted, and obviously embraced, considering their roles in startup companies and the very fact that quite a number of the speakers are Japanese citizens who moved to the States. During our visit to UC Berkeley, the words of Toshie Baba, of International Student Services, still ring in my mind: "If you don't even try, you won't even be able to fail!" It does make sense, I suppose, that if there were something worth taking risks or going out of our comfort zone for in our career, it would be our passions and interests; something we wholeheartedly stand for and are willing to sacrifice a "stable life" for. Moreover, in stark contrast to the aforementioned "safe path" mindset, several people, including Zak Murase, Managing Director of Pacific Sky Partners, as well as Kathleen Buhle, Founder of The House at 1229, introduced an interesting perspective that is new to me: that the comfort of a stable career and a decent pay from working at big companies can easily lead to us becoming "overly comfortable", such that we tend to end up staying there for long periods of time doing the same thing, which, is said to limit personal growth. Instead, they encouraged trying

new things, whether within the same company or in a whole different environment altogether – which, of course, entails taking risks because it could mean sacrificing a better salary or a more secure, more familiar working environment.

Having said that, I couldn't help but feel some degree of skepticism towards this somewhat lofty idea of a career driven by "personal growth". Put in the context of the still developing Southeast Asia where I hail from, as well as Singapore which only recently graduated from that status within the past 50 years or so, few would be able to truly connect with this idea of "personal growth", and others would see this as a death sentence. To put it bluntly, "personal growth", which can be taken as "self-actualisation" if we were to draw upon Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is something only people who already have all their other basic needs for food and shelter fulfilled – in other words, privileged, wealthy people – can think about. Indeed, who has the time to fuss about my value as an individual and the meaning of life, if I must think about whether I'll have food on the table for my family the next day, whether I'll be able to afford rent for the next month? Having a stable but stagnant career working at a large corporation, while perceived by some of the speakers as being less than ideal, would be a dream for many of my fellow Malaysian and Southeast Asian friends, and possibly even myself. Therefore, while I may sometimes disagree with the "safe path" mindset, it is evident from the tug inside my heart when I attempted to internalise the "personal growth" mindset, that I do not discredit the former completely. Nevertheless, having been exposed to this perspective was truly thought-provoking to me, as someone interested in comparative education, as it can be perceived as a way through which the culture and values of a nation can manifest.

Lastly, another of the main takeaways I had from the program is a better understanding of entrepreneurship, a field that fuels and thrives on the "characteristically American" willingness to take risks. Given the opportunity to visit Silicon Valley, the birthplace of technological giants Intel and Google – both of which we visited, in addition to various other startups and incubators –, I was immersed head-first into the world of entrepreneurship. It was a territory I was unfamiliar with, then being my first time hearing the words "startup" and "incubator" themselves, not to mention other fancy terms like "venture capital", "angel investor", "social entrepreneurship" and so on. Truth be told, for the longest time, I used to be quite strongly

against the fields of business and entrepreneurship, because I had the impression they are ultimately focused on profit-making, which I saw as a rather self-centered motivation. However, I came to realise that the entrepreneurship world certainly does have the potential to positively impact society, namely via social entrepreneurship or social impact businesses. For example, the startups we visited in San Francisco were established with the vision to find and provide solutions to actual, real-world problems faced by society via scientific research: iPeace, Inc. aims to find cures to medical ailments using iPSC cells; Eat Just aims to engineer and market cultivated meat and eggs to reduce our environmental impact while maximising the health benefits we get from these foods. Even besides such high-tech, high-expertise startups, we also came across simpler, more "mundane" businesses that also have the capability to make a difference in society. Take, for instance, Falafel Inc, one of the food caterers that provided us lunch: they offer healthy, meat-free food at low prices, and uses its profits to provide meals for refugees around the world. This experience convinced me that, after all, to be able to help those who are in need or to contribute to a cause, the resources and thus money required to do so has to come from somewhere – in this sense, the profit-seeking nature of companies would be justifiable.

Furthermore, I came to realise the advantages of startups or small-scale businesses in addressing society's needs. Compared to larger institutions, which may have access to a greater capital and more resources, may also consequently take more time and bureaucracy to make decisions, while smaller businesses with a smaller team can make changes more freely, in order to adapt to the needs of their target group. On a more personal note, it was quite reassuring for a "jack of all trades, master of none" like me to know that in working for startups, a wide skill set is preferred – and is more or less a must –, over a highly but narrowly specialised one, since everything about the business – ranging from the venue that will house the activities and meetings, up to settling the paperwork and taxes – needs to be done by the limited number of team members during the startup's early stages. Gaining these insights made me rethink the possibility of working for or even starting my own business to be able to more directly tackle social issues that I feel strongly about.

On the whole, having acquired more intel on how the professional world works as an ecosystem, as well as a taste of how it feels to be in various parts of that ecosystem, though I am still uncertain of my future path, I now feel more confident in navigating my career and life in general. Also, I now feel all the more motivated to continue giving my best in my studies, and at the same time try more new things and experiences, in the hopes that it will bring me closer to discovering my next chapter of life, just as the Kingfisher Global Leadership Program had.

Finally, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Kyodai Collaborative and the Kyoto University staff who made this wonderful program possible, and allowed me to be a part of it. My special thanks to Danielle Reed, the Program Manager, who put in much care and effort in arranging the program schedule and liaising with the speakers and was herself an inspirational figure and leader to all of the participants, always ensuring our wellbeing and reminding us to be open-minded but critical throughout the program. With regards to how I should think about my future career, Danielle's message to us – that though we should have a vision in our life, we should also remember to be flexible and resilient to failures or disappointments, because we cannot control the external circumstances that occur – greatly resonated with me. Not to forget my fellow participants who contributed to making the experience a uniquely great one: I am very grateful to have had the chance to meet and share these unforgettable two weeks with my fellow Kingfisher participants, and hope to see you all again – whether as "friends" or "network" – in the future!

Ayaka Ishige
Faculty of Law, 4th year

Introduction

Kingfisher Global Leadership Program is quite unique in that it consists of visits to a variety of organizations in the U.S. (Washington D.C. and San Francisco), whereas typical overseas programs offered by Kyoto University have their focus on academic learning coordinated with other universities abroad. In this sense, it is highly practical, rather than academic. As a 4th year undergrad who is preparing for the master's application and has started to think about the future pathway, I expected from this program to gain insights on how to construct my future career. More specifically, my main goal of this program was to gain ideas on how I can contribute to the social issues (economic gaps, labor exploitation, migration issues… to name a few) through my career. This essay is to write about personal gains from the program as well as my future career plans.

Gains from the Program

Throughout the program, I and other members visited various organizations – ranging from startups, incubators to renowned big corporations such as Google, and even to public institutions such as World Bank and Japanese Embassy. Getting to know the characteristics and roles of different types of organizations was a great opportunity to think about what type of career is suited for me to achieve my vision. Interestingly, staffs from different organizations had different views on their career, who made me realize there is no single answer on which career type is the best. More specifically, those from startups often stressed that you cannot learn

anything in big corporations because they have too comfortable working environment to develop yourself. On the other hands, those from big corporations pointed out their comfortable working environment, good salary, stability of their work etc. The comparison between those two types of organizations was helpful to consider my career in the future.

Despite those differences between organizations, there are some common points raised up by those from many different organizations. Those points are meaningful for me to know what I should do for my personal development, wherever I will work in the future. I picked most important two points which are explained below.

First, the skill of articulation was mentioned in some organizations from different fields. Especially for startups and entrepreneurs, without articulating their vision and passion to their investors and customers, their business will be never successful. Just arguing "my products are wonderful so you should buy one!" is meaningless; they need to clarify why their vision is relevant. In fact, conversations with Kingfisher students' members made me realize I lack the skill of articulation. During the four years of my bachelor's, I expanded my interests to many fields among social sciences. However, since I have shared topics of social sciences mostly with like-minded people, I haven't faced the situation where I need to holistically explain my view to others. During Kingfisher program, I talked with those from other fields about social topics, and for the first time I faced the situation where I needed to holistically explain my view to make myself understood…and realized I am so bad at articulation! No doubt, the skill of articulation is the one I want to strengthen – through communicating with those

from other fields as well as studying through articles and books.

Second, networking was highlighted in many organizations. Not only was it directly mentioned in some organizations, but also did it construct the career stories of some people we met. For instance, Ando-san from IMF mentioned his contact with a professor in Kyoto University who is close to Colombia University helped him to be accepted to the university for the PhD program. Also, I was impressed by Dr. Kuno's extensive network; when I asked for her advice on my career, she introduced me some people and organizations which are relevant to my interests. Seeing those people, now I am more motivated to making more contacts with people in relevant fields for my career in the future.

Regarding the networking, some people we met – such as Fukuzawa-san from MBC Bio Labs - mentioned that location matters to build up your network. According to him, you should pick your career location where you can get lots of opportunities to meet with relevant people for your career. In fact, before joining this program, one of my professors also mentioned the importance of location when I choose the university for the master's program. After the program I understand more about the matter of location, which makes me think about where I want to work in the future.

Towards My Future

In this final section, I would like to write on my current vision for my future. Currently I am preparing for the application for masters' programs in Europe (France, Germany, Finland etc.). During my master's, I plan to study sustainable business; that is, how business can contribute to sustainability issues

(environmental as well as social issues). For instance, abandoning labor exploitation as well as deforestation in the supply chain is one of the things businesses should do, and I want to figure out how business can tackle on such an issue while generating profit. Indeed, sustainability is the key for the current business due to increasing awareness among consumers and investors. After the graduation from the master's, I aim to be a sustainability consultant in a big consulting firm. I believe joining a big corporation as the first career will help me understand the ecosystem of the business society and also the skillset which would be useful in my next careers. I plan to change my career after working in a consulting firm for several years, but I don't yet have clear ideas on my second career. On one hand, I am interested in entrepreneurship – through which I want to tackle on social issues and make society more humane. On the other hand, I am interested in joining some international organization such as a UN branch or World Bank. The merit of joining one of those international organizations is that my work will have impact on the larger society – as Otsuka-san from IFC mentioned.

Although my career vision is not clear yet, the Kingfisher program gave me insights on what I should take into account when I decide my career, and how I should prepare. Finally, I am more than thankful for those who coordinated this program – Danielle, Dr. Kuno, Yamamoto-san – and Kyodai staffs who traveled together with us – Hamasaki-san, Kubo-san, and Chiboshi-san – and all the people we met in the U.S., and lastly, all the students' members who helped and inspired each other during the program. Now I am sure that this program will leverage my future!

Duncan Huang
Faulty of Economics, 1st year

Introduction

The Kingfisher Global Leadership Program seamlessly combines focus and diversity, offering an immersive two-week experience. During the program, I had the invaluable opportunity to experience both the West and East Coast, visiting a wide array of companies and startups, and learning from individuals with diverse backgrounds.

Despite the program's emphasis on global leadership, another key concept we also discussed is, from my perspective, development, which encompasses both personal and company development. Throughout Kingfisher, I obtained a profound insight into the two facets of development. I also had the opportunity to perceive how working for companies in various stages contributes to personal growth and how an exceptional leader or group can catalyse the prosperity of a company.

I attended this program to address two questions: What kind of career do I want to pursue, and how can I achieve the goal? Acknowledging the broad and complex nature of these questions, I did not anticipate reaching definitive answers within two weeks. However, after the program, I felt that I was significantly closer to my answer than I had initially expected. This is primarily because the program provided me with a wealth of resources to contemplate the nuance of US working and studying ecosystem and to clear doubts regarding my future career path.

Career Paths

I had the privilege to engage with alumni from international institutions, successful entrepreneurs, local professors, startup founders, and also professionals from unicorn companies and major corporations such as Google or Intel. These conversations left me with three significant impressions.

Firstly, passion, dedication, and networking are indispensable in professional life. While there might be other unexpected factors that could impact oneself, but constant pursuit of excellence and hard work is what defines the paths of our esteemed speakers. To achieve so, it is crucial to be passionate, or at the very least, recognize and appreciate the value of what you are doing. To maximize the result, networking is important; it allows you to connect with new people and explore diverse opportunities. Some of the other insightful tips are given by Mr. Naoki Matsumura of Intel and Dr. Masaki Terabe from NIH. They emphasized on the importance of knowledge, experience, articulation, and the uniqueness of one's contribution.

The second impression is that there is no predefined carrier trajectory, everyone can and will tailor their own journey. Some of the most unforgettable individuals are Dr. Devang Thakor and Takashi Saito, J.D., who both shifted their careers to attorneys before a decade of being scientists. These transitions underscore the limitless possibilities. Additionally, they also mentioned that their experience makes them better at their current job. Mr Nicholas Szechenyi from CSIS also described his career path as complicated but added that his experience in a Japanese media company and the theatre had contributed to his current position. These encounters imply that there is boundless potential and that the near future might not be as immediate as it seems. Embracing the challenge and striding toward the new direction is entirely feasible.

My third impression is that I underestimated the influence of one's environment. One of my favourite speakers, Mr. Zak Murase, delved deep into the difference between the US and Japan, as well as the distinction between big corporations and start-ups. He emphasized that staying in a big company for too long will make one feel too comfortable, causing one to eventually numb and unwilling to new challenges, thereby hindering growth. Conversely, professionals at Google or Intel admitted it can be comfortable working in large-scale institutions. However, despite the prolonged process of creating significant impacts, they also found excitement that they could shift roles and find new challenges without leaving the organization. The conglomerate nature of those corporations, such as having multiple programs, numerous teams, and global offices, allows a seamless internal transition.

Diversity

Kingfisher program is diverse in three dimensions. Firstly, we are blessed to have speakers from all fields and backgrounds. Secondly, we can observe the spark of cultural disparities between the West and East coasts. Lastly, the ten participants all possessed some extremely different experiences that enriched our conversations.

Throughout the intensive two weeks, I learned from individuals about their unique paths to their current positions. Despite shared traits of persistence or dedication, each person has different viewpoints on identical questions. Getting to know 20 to 30 people, and delving deep into their viewpoints on various topics, was an unparalleled experience.

The ecosystem between the capital and Palo Alto is very less alike, as the east side focused a lot on social justice and the west side concentrated on creating social impact. Washington is the centre of power, politics and intelligence, hence, the relationships are woven into a web of stability, fostering negotiations and compromise. Conversely, San Francisco leveraged connections to fuel creativity, demonstrating collaboration's power.

Additionally, learning among participants is also a great part of the program. Each of us is from different countries, faculties, and educational levels, which makes the conversation always intriguing. I am also constantly inspired by their diligence and their intelligence, which continuously motivates me to work harder. Trying to hit the gym every day is also a part of the memory that I will not forget.

In conclusion, the revealed diversity during this program showcases myriad ways of living life. It broadened my horizons and encouraged me to dream bigger and aim higher, embracing the multitude of possibilities life has to offer.

Conclusion

The Kingfisher Program is a fascinating journey, far surpassing my initial expectations. I was exposed to many new concepts and opportunities, shaping my perspectives in ways I had never anticipated. I can now navigate myself better through the unknown with confidence, as I now possess a clearer understanding of the skills I need to acquire and the numerous options available to me. This transformation would not have been possible without the comprehensive and focused approach of the Kingfisher Program.

In closing, I must thank Dr. Kuno and Dr. Ueno for their unwavering support of the program, and also to Danielle for organizing the entire schedule. The impact of this experience will undoubtedly resonate with me as I embark on my future endeavours.

Nguyen Xuan Ung
Faculty of Science, 3rd year

My Kingfisher Experience

Before coming onto the Kingfisher program, I did not know what it was about. I only had the vague idea that I would be visiting NASA for free and exposing myself to an environment that I would not usually be in. Having experienced the program, I still wouldn't say that I now fully understand what the program was about. Was it a very spread-out networking event? Was it back-to-back discussion sessions? Or was it a free food program? (Yes, most of our meals were paid for). It is hard to concisely describe what the Kingfisher Global Leadership Program is, but here is my partial answer to that question.

In physics, a quick partial answer to a problem is usually called a zeroth order approximation. To a zeroth order approximation, the Kingfisher program was a program that offered the participants a diverse set of perspectives on various different topics. The trip consisted of a one-week stay in Washington DC and another week in San Francisco. During the program, we got to go to well-known organizations or companies like the World Bank, NASA, or Google. We also got to know the startup culture both in DC – through the Halcyon Incubator – and in San Francisco – through meeting people who were doing startups. Not only did I get the chance to listen to and talk with many people with different careers and backgrounds, I also got the opportunity to learn from the other nine amazing Kingfisher participants that I was traveling with – all with entirely different academic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the different perspectives were not just coming from talking to people, it also came from just visiting the different organizations and companies and feeling the atmosphere there. By being exposed to a range of different views, I was able to take away many lessons that I think are important and will try to incorporate into my life after the program.

One of the things that really resonated with me during the program was dealing with failure or the fear of failure. Our first speaker and also our program coordinator, Danielle Reed, mentioned perfectionism during her introduction. She said that it was a problem that a lot of students struggle with as failure is often frowned upon when you are a student. Borrowing words from the program's founder – Dr. Sachiko Kuno – Danielle told us that sometimes it is fine just

to accomplish 60% to 70% of something rather than 100%. Throughout the program, I slowly began to realize that the need to be perfect at everything that I do was something detrimental. I was too afraid to take risks. This was unlike any or most of the people that we met. About 90% of startups are bound to fail, yet people still try to build them. That is because by taking risks, the founders believe that they will have a chance to make a huge positive impact on society. To put it in a different way, if you try, you may fail; but if you don't try, you will never succeed. During our stay in San Francisco, we got to meet Koji Tanabe – the CEO of I Peace. He talked about how he was fighting everyday as a CEO to keep the company alive. As a startup, getting investment is something very crucial and Koji told us about how he would try everything in his ability to secure the investments and funding that the company needs. Personally, this whole business seemed very risky but Koji said, jokingly, "You won't die!". Despite being said with tongue in cheek, those words really stuck with me. For the last two years of my studies, I really tried to focus on my classes and tried to get the best grades possible; I essentially did not do anything else. I was scared of trying something new because I didn't want to fail. I was taking the minimal risk approach to life. But after the program, I learned that in order to grow, I should not be staying within my comfort zone for as long as I please. I should be willing to fail and then learn from those failures. After the program, I decided to take a more active approach to things; while I still try to do the things that I usually do, I am trying to be on the lookout for what opportunities I can get. The cliche that failure is the mother of success often gets repeated, but the program really made that clear and intuitive for me.

On a related note to perfectionism, I also felt that rather than being perfect I should try to be "flexible". When thinking about your career, there are so many unknowns. That was why I was scared of taking risks, as there were too many things that were out of control. But that way of thinking is not helpful, as it makes no sense to be worried about something that you cannot control. Instead of striving for perfection, one should instead be "flexible" – always being on one's feet and dealing with whatever obstacle that comes at one's way. At the end of the two-week trip, all of the participants had to give their thoughts on the program in a 5-minute presentation. During that session, a fellow Kingfisher participant made an extremely excellent point about leadership and "flexibility" so I will just steal her words and put it here. She said that there was no one perfect leader; different people have different traits and that makes them different leaders, but they can still all be good leaders. Before the program, I had always thought

that being a leader was being someone with very specific traits. But after meeting many people in leadership positions with a wide variety of personalities, it became very clear to me that leadership comes in many shapes and forms. This also serves as a metaphor for how to think about one's career as well. I have always thought that to become a physicist, my current dream job, I needed to do certain things and if I don't succeed in doing those things then I will not become a physicist. That is just irrational – there is no one perfect physicist.

On our first day at Evermay, we met Ando-san, a Kingfisher alumnus. He told us that one thing the program would help us realize is that things which seemed far away from us might actually be much closer than we think. In his case, he thought that studying abroad was something out of reach for him but the Kingfisher program changed his mind on that. In the end, after finishing his bachelor's degree and master's degree at Kyoto University, he went on to do his graduate studies at Columbia University. The Kingfisher program can also provide perspectives to you in this sense. I have always thought of NASA as some mythical place that does magical things. After my visit there, while I still think that NASA is an awesome place that is always pushing the boundaries of human knowledge – I was lucky enough to see the making of the Nancy Grace Roman space telescope in action – but it now seems not so far removed from the laboratory in my physics classes. The laboratory that I went to has vacuum pumps too, albeit roughly ten to twenty times smaller compared to the ones in NASA. In broader terms, the Kingfisher program reveals the many opportunities that are out there which you could take.

The Kingfisher program was truly a one-of-a-kind experience. It provided a plethora of different ideas and perspectives that I will be continuing to digest in the future. Following how most textbooks are written, I will leave it as an exercise for future Kingfisher participants to figure out the first order approximation to what the Kingfisher program is about.

Shunsuke Saita

Faculty of Engineering, 2nd year

What I learned in this program

In this program, I went abroad for the first time. On the first day of the program in a restaurant in Washington D.C., I experienced my first culture shock. After being seated at the restaurant, the waiter came over and asked, "What would you like to drink?" I thought "What do they have?" This is because in Japanese restaurants, you choose what you want to drink from the menu. Of course, I'm sure there was a menu at that restaurant, but having to think for myself what I wanted and tell the waiter was a first-time experience for me. What this means is that in Japan, we choose the optimal option from predetermined choices for the future, whereas in America, the focus is first on what you want to do, and if it's possible, you just go ahead and do it. Specifically, the Japanese way of thinking is to be given options 1, 2, 3 and choose the optimal one from those, you can get what you want if it's close to one of the options 1, 2, 3, and if not, you think of your second choice and choose from 1, 2, 3 again. The American way of thinking seems to be to consider what you want most, and if it's within options 1, 2, 3, you can get it, repeating this process. Also, I was surprised that in America, customization is possible if there is a request. For example, when I had lunch at Google, I asked for a double patty on my hamburger, and they happily made it double. I think the reason this happens is that America focuses on what I want to do, in other words, what my passion is. By the way, "What is your passion?" was a phrase repeatedly used by employees at the World Bank. So I thought about what my passion is. I thought of rugby, which I play, and wanting to improve at rugby, but I remembered that I want to go abroad and experience countries other than

Japan. Due to the COVID pandemic, the rugby club activities I loved so much were suspended, leaving me with nothing to do, so I somehow started self-studying English. For about two years after that, I had no opportunity to go abroad, but thanks to my passion I was able to keep studying. Also, hearing from people active in Washington and San Francisco in this program made me want to go abroad again. But passion alone is not enough, acting is important. One phrase I heard repeatedly in this program is "Just do it." Entrepreneurs active in startups especially used this phrase repeatedly. Therefore, I want to "JUST DO IT", so I decided to boldly email the person in charge of studying abroad at UC Berkeley that I met during this program. To give the result first, I got rejected, but I was able to experience taking action. However, when I emailed a professor of the same course at Kyoto University, he kindly agreed to have a Zoom meeting to discuss studying abroad, so I strongly felt through experience that taking action is important.

Next, I will describe the three goals I wanted to achieve in this program. They are:

① Building connections

② Confirming if I can study abroad in the future.

③Becoming able to confidently speak English in front of people.

First, about building connections, in this program I was able to meet and actually talk to people active in various fields in America, receive business cards, and exchange contact details. However, building connections doesn't just mean doing these things. I think I was able to build deep connections with other participants from Kyoto University active in various fields through this program. The participants in this program were students of different grades, departments, and nationalities. I spent a lot of time with a male participant who I shared a hotel room with, and except for me they were all from Asian countries other than Japan. To be honest, it was my first experience sharing a room with

people other than Japanese, and I was very worried about cultural differences and such. However, as the days went by, we got closer and closer, and I was able to make irreplaceable friends that I think I will stay connected with from now on. Next, about studying abroad, I came to strongly want to go get a PhD in America someday. This is because many people active in America have PhDs, and a PhD is also necessary for my future career, which I will discuss later. One particularly impressive thing I heard was that "In America, undergrad and master's students are customers, so they pay tuition, but PhD students are employees, so they get paid." I want to work even harder in my remaining undergraduate studies so that I can be hired as a PhD student in America. Finally, becoming able to speak English in front of people - before participating in this program, I thought it was embarrassing to speak English. This was because I couldn't speak English fluently like a native speaker, so I thought people around me would make fun of me. In order to somehow become able to speak English with confidence even in front of people, I decided to do a short comedy parodying the famous Japanese comedian Jason's "Why Japanese people?" for the final presentation. The reason I decided to do comedy is that doing comedy in front of people is embarrassing even in Japanese, so by doing it in English, normal presentations would seem less embarrassing than comedy, allowing me to do normal presentations with confidence. Therefore, after arriving in America, I looked for lots of little "Why American people?" examples and presented them together at the end. It got some decent laughs, so I'll share a few. One was the gaps in toilet stall doors. There was a small gap between the doors just barely big enough that you could make eye contact with someone outside, which was a little embarrassing at first. Another was the large number of cars parked on the streets. Because of all the street parking, the roads got congested and traffic jams happened quickly.

Future careers based on this program.

Next, I will discuss my future career that I thought about in this program. After graduating from junior high school, I went not to a regular high school but to a national institute of technology (Kosen). At national institute of technology, you have to write a graduation thesis, and I researched the shape of blades for small wind turbines. I did present at an academic conference. While there are issues like lack of verification of the validity of my research and the scale being too small, I didn't have any impact on the wind turbine industry after my presentation. I think this is because research at schools is too disconnected from research in industry. Therefore, in the future I want to establish an incubator that invests in research born in universities and bring them to industrial scale. I first learned of the existence of incubators, companies that support startups in their early stages before establishment, when I visited incubators like Halcyon. I also came to want to establish startup companies and the like that make use of research from universities. To do that, I think I need to advance to a PhD program in America and hone my expertise. The reason for America is that a professor at Stanford recommended that if I want to start a business after graduating, it's better to get a PhD in America. Also, I think through a PhD I can get the vertical line part of the "T". Here, the horizontal line of the "T" represents broad shallow knowledge, while the vertical line represents narrow deep knowledge. However, to run a business, broad deep knowledge is most desirable. That's something one person can't accomplish alone. Therefore, by the time I finish my PhD, I want to make connections with classmates active in other fields within mechanical engineering and connect many "T"s to form a collective broad deep knowledge. Also, by gaining expertise in my field through a PhD program, I think I can become well-versed

in mechanical engineering and able to discuss technologies with engineers, and gain the ability to discern whether a technology is worth investing in. However, to be honest, I don't have much confidence that I can start a company like that or get a PhD. I also think luck plays a big role in these things. Therefore, I think now I need to diligently focus on my studies. But I believe the chance will come someday, so I want to be ready not to miss it when it does.

Habib Al-Aziz

Master of Molecular Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, 1st year

Introduction

The world currently is full of uncertainties. We have to grow and develop ourselves constantly in order to prevail and thrive in this society. The World Economic Forum (WEF) identified critical skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication. Unfortunately, most people cannot get hands-on experience in these skills, so they only learn the theory.

The Kingfisher Global Leadership Program (KGLP) provides you with all the theoretical knowledge you need and teaches you how to implement those skills effectively. This program is a two-week immersive leadership program that held by Kyodai Collaborative, a non-profit Kyoto University alumni's organization, cooperating with Kyoto University. The first week of the program was held in Washington D.C. We visited world-renowned organizations/institutes such as CSIS, the World Bank Group (IFC and IBRD), NASA, and NIH. We also visited some non-profit organizations such as S&R Evermay, Halcyon Incubator, and The House at 1229. In Washington D.C., I learned mainly about how to be an impactful person through community development and entrepreneurship. Next, we traveled to San Francisco area (Berkeley, Silicon Valley, etc.) in the second week, and visited Google, Stanford University, and MBC Bio Labs. The vibe and narratives in California are very contrast with D.C. in a good way. In San Francisco, most of the guest speakers talked about risk-taking entrepreneurship and limitless innovation for business.

Through the Kingfisher program, I can learn those skills and acquire hands-on experience, which I am implementing these lessons to my community since I am the president of the Indonesian Moslem Community in Kyoto. I also learned how to be agile, since the program only gave two weeks of learning and we had to internalize what we have learned effectively.

Future Career Plan

Since my sophomore year as an undergraduate student, I have already had my mission statement for life. I want to use technology to make the world a better place and help less fortunate people as an engineer and researcher. With this mission statement, I set my future career aspirations. They are a professor in chemical engineering and engineering consultant as these professions allow me to explore technology development, including technology

commercialization so that many people will benefit from our research. Also, I want to explore more topics about gas purification (CO_2 capture and hydrogen purification) using MOF-membranes and catalytic membrane that spark my research interest to gain more in-depth insight into membrane technology application.

As a first-year international Master's student in Japan, I have three options for my near future, which are doing normal job hunting (就職活動), joining early-stage venture created by my sensei, or going to PhD directly. This program made me think more deeply about my future career journey, what I really want in my life, and values that I want to create and share with my surroundings. This could happen because every guest speaker gave their own career journey, and what they have learned through their journey. So, we can excel and be the best version of our life by absorbing others' values and experience.

After various surveys, thinking, and considering about my next step, I think I am going to take a risk to join an early-stage startup in carbon capture. The reason is I am still young and do not have any dependents yet. This allows me to take more risk and challenge myself to give my best and push myself to the limit. One thing I firmly believe is, "If something does not challenge you, it will not change you." And most of the time, startup environment is challenging (limited resources, fast-paced) which I find it good for me. However, I will take a PhD after I acquire some experience as a professional in Japan. PhD is a way to move to a new country/place in my opinion and I have not explored Japan as a professional.

Finally, I aspire to create my business that focuses on environmental conservation issues (CO_2 emission, water scarcity, hydrogen energy) and give a feasible solution through the intellectual property introduced by my team. I hope in the future the CO_2 emission is not considered as waste but as valuable material.

What I learned

Comfort zone is dangerous

One of the speakers in California area, Zak Murase, shared one of his biggest regrets in life. He stated that too long in a big corporate environment, Sony, did not make him grow as a professional because the environment was too comfort and he could not challenge his self to be the best version of his self. So, he stated that he should left Sony earlier and start his own business. "If something does not challenge you, it will not change you."

Be the best at something you excel at and really like

Dr. Masaki Terabe, and Dr. Sachiko Kuno told us that to be successful in any fields you should be the only one/the best in your field. For example, Dr. Kuno and her partner, Dr. Ueno, invented Rescula® eye drops, the first bioactive lipid ever used to treat glaucoma in Japan. This invention led the career success of Dr. Kuno and shaped her until what she becomes now. I learned that other than risk-taking in a business, technical skills/mastery of our products/things is a decisive factor in one's success in life. We have to be confident that we are the best in our field, but keep humble and learning throughout the way.

Take the risk, but ALWAYS ANALYZE the WORST case

Dr. Kuno shared about her career journey and things to consider when we want to jump to the professional world. One thing that always resonates in my mind is taking high risk, but always analyzing worst cases. When we want to take a big leap in our life, we have to think the worst outcome possible. So, when the worst really happens, we will not get shocked by it. Another thing that aligns with this idea is high reward always comes with high risk. This law cannot be broken whatsoever.

Finally, this program helped me develop a sense of purpose and a clear vision for my future. By reflecting on my own values, strengths, and passions, and exploring my goals and priorities, I gained a deeper understanding of who am I and what I want to achieve thus giving significant boost to my career aspiration. Furthermore, with 9 other participants, we can make a robust supporting system to reach our future goals.

Ai Kitano

Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, 1ˢᵗ year

Introduction

I spent a week each in Washington D.C. and San Francisco with nine other participants in this program. We met a lot of "global leaders" in various fields and talked with them. Through this experience, I realized how narrow my perspective was and I gained a precious opportunity to think about my future career and the notion of "global leader". Also, one of the biggest things which I learned through this program is diversity. The participants consisted of various faculty affiliations (economics, education, agriculture, science, law, engineering, biology, integrated human studies), ages (from 18 to 24), and nationalities (from five different countries), so by talking and exchanging opinions with them, I got a new perspective and I strongly realized that from now on I must not think of things only from the perspective of Japan or that of my area of expertise. In this report, I would like to explain my personal goals for this program and what I learned from this program.

My personal goal for this program

I participated this program mainly because I wanted to learn the skills which required for leaders and think what to do in order to realize my future goal. When I was a high school student, I was class president for three years. I tried to make the class better, but there were many things that went wrong, including conflicts with my classmates. Through my own experience, I believe that a leader is not someone who leads others, but someone who listens to and reflects the views of those around them. However, I found it very difficult to put this idea into practice. That is why I applied this

program and tried to meet those who are global leaders and think deeply about how they do it and whether my idea is right.

Risk Taking

In this program, I realized the difference of the way of thinking about risk taking between the U.S. and Japan. In Japan, people don't like to take a risk and the failure tend to be seen as the end. However, in the U.S., most people we met in this program have an idea of high risk-high reward. I know that is why so many start-up companies are there and innovation is progressing. I used to think that risk taking isn't a good choice because I was afraid of failure, but some people we met told us how important and meaningful it is to go out of my comfort zone. In Women's Start-Up Lab, the speaker said that staying in one's comfort zone for too long is a waste of one's talents and makes one's life boring, and risk taking can change things. In IPeace, Tanabe san told us that failure or rejection is a good opportunity to ask for new idea or feedback and to build a new connection. These ways of thinking were new for me, and it broadened my horizons, and I felt I want to be bold to take a risk in order to do what I really want to do and to change the world. Moreover, Dr. Kuno told us that we should analyze the worst case and prepare several plans when taking a risk. I felt this advice was very useful in my life. It was not until I was exposed to these cultural differences that I was able to adopt a new way of thinking. As I am interested in the big issue of environmental problems and want to contribute to solving them, sometimes it may be necessary for me to take risk and try something new. In these situations, I am convinced that the ideas and advice I learned in the U.S. will be very important. Without forgetting these things, I would like to become a person who can change the world.

My future career path

Before this program, I thought I should be a member of UNEP in order to solve the environmental problems only because I believed that the larger the institution, the greater its impact on society. However, through this program, I thought I should know more about a greater number of companies and institutions and what they do and what they set as their goals. I didn't know that the World Bank contribute to solving various issues and even a science person can work there. I didn't know even small companies or start-ups can change things. I strongly felt that I should broaden my knowledge and this program was a good opportunity for me to think deeply about my future career. At Evermay, I asked Dr. Kuno whether she thought I would be better able to contribute more to the issue either by joining a large institution such as UNEP or becoming a researcher. However, she told me that I should not decide my career now. Things don't work out the way I decide, she said, so I should be mindful of what exactly want to do and look for the "right place", where I can make that happen. Therefore, I decided to continue to think greedily about what I really want to do and where is the "right place" for me.

Global Leadership

In this program, we had the great opportunity to meet and hear from leaders in various fields, and what I felt in common in their attitude was strong confidence, determination and the humility behind them. As Dr. Kuno said, I learned that without confidence, I cannot do what I believe I can make social impact, and without determination, I cannot take high risk. However, what I felt most strongly was humility.

They think that when they want to achieve a goal, it is impossible to do only by themselves, and they put an emphasis on networking with others and asking for help. Also, most of them told us not to hesitate to ask, and to seek advice from other people. I think these attitudes are difficult without humility. Also, I learned that a lot of skills are needed for global leaders by talking to them. For example, language skills, skills of communication, that of dealing with stress or pressure, managing people, and looking at things from a various perspective, not limited to one's own area of expertise. Thinking of these skills was one of my goals of this program, so I'm glad to learn them a lot.

Conclusion

This program was my first time going abroad. I experienced a lot of cultural differences and I realized how big the world is. I learned a lot of things as I mentioned above, and I am so glad to know all the wonderful participants. It was a great honor to participate in the program, and I would like to express the gratitude to everyone involved in this program.

Miyuki Hata

Graduate School of Agriculture, 2nd year

Introduction

I appreciate joining the 2-week Kingfisher Global Leadership Program this year. It broadens my horizons in every single field. I met outstanding people who have successful careers in the US and learned how they got their present position. The discussion with them had a large influence on my career direction. I also redefine "Global Leadership" for me. I'm going to share three main takeaways from this program.

●Career Path Mindset

Firstly, I was surprised at the fascinating career paths of each speaker because they are different from Japanese ones. In Japan, people tend to be safe and have moderate career advancement. On the other hand, most successful people in the US always try to promote themselves and make money. One of the most memorable words for me was from people in The House at 1229, a community of women with different backgrounds and experiences who share the same core beliefs. They change their jobs based on their current interests or future visions. When I asked them how did they realized when to change their jobs, they said, "When I find no more growth on that, or I can't enjoy that sincerely." I was convinced immediately that the Japanese working environment was usually too comfortable and that I didn't have enough skillsets to be globally competitive. In addition, it looks fascinating for me to change jobs and work abroad for the long term, which I didn't think about before this program.

The second one is "T-shaped knowledge" from the World Bank Group(WBG).

They placed this knowledge as crucial to keep working at WBG. On one hand, they have to have their core skills. On the other hand, they also have to be open to social issues as an international development organization. T-shaped knowledge is also informative because I am supposed to be a reliable employee if I have it. I will work in an IT company that supplies digital healthcare products globally. I need to co-work with people from another division and push the same project forward. In this case, we should fully utilize my professional skills based on understanding other divisions' perspectives or ideas to maximize team productivity. Furthermore, many conversations and negotiations will lead to networking with people, which will give me other chances to promote my career experience.

●**The ways to find my lifelong mission**

Each presentation and discussion encouraged me to rethink my future career and lifelong mission. I have already decided on my first career. However, I don't have a concrete purpose for my career and my life. That's why I struggled to answer the question immediately, "What do you want to be and what do you want to know?". Then, I made up my mind to keep asking myself What I was eager to contribute from that moment. Then, I noticed that the healthcare industry is one of the most worthwhile fields for me through discussions with excellent participants and outstanding presenters and thinking about myself again. For example, I discussed the difference between the US healthcare system and the Japanese one with one of my roommates from America. The problem differs from country to country. Through such discussions, I became keen to dedicate myself to helping tech-exchange cultures overcome each country's healthcare problem. I also realized that I must improve my language skills and be open-minded to social trends

and issues to contribute to the healthcare industry globally. I want to spend the rest of my student life thinking about what I can do to help me in the future.

●**My updated definition of "Global Leadership"**

There are 3 main factors for me to describe global leaders.

Don't miss any chance and challenge, and have your core values.

People in the US, especially most entrepreneurs, aren't afraid of taking risks. They always seek chances to skyrocket their career if there is a possibility of failure. I knew for the first time that there is an elevator pitch culture in America, a brief way of introducing yourself, getting across a key point, and making connections. One of the entrepreneurs we met did have an elevator pitch and received investment. I was impressed that he was strong enough to keep himself and sell his business in a short time even when he had a possibility of going bankrupt.

Have a strong strategy, and make at least plans B, C, and D.

This word is from Dr. Sachiko Kuno. When she started her career as an entrepreneur, she decided to prepare at least three more plans to achieve her goal. She understood that it was hard to make her company do well because about half of the companies are afraid of disappearing within 3 years.

I used to think it was one of the most difficult things because I'm naturally optimistic. I tend to foster my project with my feelings or my perspective. To overcome my optimism, I try to think about unseen tasks or problems I might deal with. I also asked my co-members to give some feedback to improve my current plans. I would like to keep improving it.

Management skill

It is also one thing I've strongly wanted to enhance. When I was a leader of a club team at university, I made a big mistake because I put myself too hard. I still didn't have a practical solution to it. before participating in KGLP. Then, I got great advice from a project manager at Google. She said, "You'd be better off letting somebody complete tasks which you don't need to do definitely." They can maximize their productivity of projects if managers oversee a process and allocate every task appropriately. I think it helps me understand what I should put priority on and what kind of tasks each member is truly good at. In addition to that, it will lead to solid team building because each team member has a sense of belonging. Furthermore, I had mindful tips to let others do the work from her, which I already use for my ongoing projects.

Conclusion

One of the most important themes of KGLP is "Networking". These eye-opening experiences remind me how it is essential in various situations, including career connection, understanding the diversity of cultures and values, and people themselves. Especially, I'm glad to meet all the participants and Danielle, our program director. We discussed many topics with them. It was undoubtedly interesting because I rarely had such chances in Japan. Talking about Danielle, she took care of us all the time. She saved me many times when I was in a hard time. I also respect each student's background and academic interests. I hope we keep in touch with and share each career path in the future.

YANG, Jau-Rung

Faculty of Integrated Human Studies, 3rd year

Introduction

Born in Taiwan, a nation that has been denied its independence and precluded from participating in many international discourses, I became strongly aware of the unbalanced power relations in the international society. This awareness has driven me to question the status quo. Consequently, I realized that there are many problems embedded in our societies and someone must do something to make a change. I have always wanted to be the one. This is the reason why I chose to major in law and study human rights issues in Kyoto University as an undergraduate.

In my daily life, I have paid huge attention to minority issues, gender disparity, poverty, and immigration. From various literature, I have constructed my own "image" of the US before the Kingfisher journey—It is one of the oldest democracies in the world. Also, it is not only technological but also political hegemony that has a say in almost all the important international affairs. On the other hand, the nation has been struggling with social and historical problems, such as racism, sexism, immigration issues, and high incarceration rate. In other words, my perception of the US was that: it is a country that represents both the brightest aspect—cutting-edged technologies and innovative ideas—and the darkest side—disparity, discrimination, and injustice—of human society in the 21st century.

The Questions

Despite having strong conviction that I am destined to eliminate inequality and empower the underprivileged ("what" I want to do), I have been struggling with "how" to equip myself in order to achieve the goal. The reason why I chose to study law is that I believe it is a useful weapon in the battle against injustice. That is, I have already

figured out that I wanted to become a human rights lawyer in the future yet still have no idea "how" I can achieve that. With this question in mind, before embarking on our trip, I set up several more questions and hoped that through our journey, I could explore the answers or hints to them: What kind of human rights lawyer do I want to become—what is my role in the society? How should I design my career path in order to accomplish my goal? What skills do I need along the way of pursuing justice? What should I do after the graduation? Should I pursue JD in the States?

Besides, Kingfisher also provides me with the opportunity to verify whether my perception of the US is true or not. If it is true, how do people reconcile such a contraction within a society? Why do people allow the lingering poverty and discrimination while applaud the advance of technology?

The Answers

From 1st to 16th of September, we visited various institutions, met with people from diverse backgrounds, and exchanged ideas actively in the US. It was an eye-opening, memorable, and meaningful experience for me. In NASA, the most advanced and innovative technologies are put into practice to probe the mysteries of the universe. In World Bank, people talk energetically about their vision of eliminating poverty. In Silicon Valley, people strive for innovation and excellence. I was astonished by every encounter in the trip. Their stories were truly energizing and made me believe that there were no impossible and what I should do is to believe in myself and "just do it." However, at the same time, I witnessed the homeless struggling on the street of San Francisco and suffering severely from drug problems. This huge gap—which to a certain extent verifies my previous perception on the nation—of the US society invited to contemplate on the following questions: are the amazing technologies and innovation we have seen throughout the trip available to wide population? Are these successful and

intriguing stories accessible to everyone? Is it possible for people to have equal opportunity to success as the speakers or all the participants have? In my opinion, these questions are essential to think about when it comes to my ideal role in society and future career.

Kingfisher provided me with the opportunity to contemplate on these questions. Along the trip, I discovered a key word that should always be referred to if we try to bridge the huge gap between technology/innovation and poverty/minority. That word is "accessibility." Dr. Kuno, the co-founder of Kyoto Collaborative, had the vision of making medicine accessible to wider population, and she accomplished it with her group. Startup incubators we visited such as Halcyon and MBC biolab provide resources which make it easier for entrepreneurs to achieve their business goals. Through their effort, more successes become possible, and the improvement of technology is encouraged and realized.

Without accessibility, technology/innovation is merely a magnificent castle in the desert where only few people—those who have glamorous equipment— can arrive and enjoy the beauty of it. Our visit to Intel actually reminds me of the invention and progress of the internet, which best illustrates how important accessibility is when we talk about technologies and innovation. The Internet is created by several prominent scientists (Vinton Cerf and Bob Kahn) but what I want to share with you here is the historic decision made by Tim Berners-Lee, who invented World Wide Web, the information system that enables information sharing over the internet through user-friendly ways meant to appeal to users beyond IT specialists. In 1991, Berners-Lee opened the first searching engine in the world to the public. This is the web system we currently use to attain information in our daily life. With this amazing invention, he could have licensed patent. And if he did so, it is said that he would possibly be richer than Bill-Gates now. But he did not choose to obtain a patent for his invention because

back at the time, he believed—and he still believes now— the values of wide accessibility. And over the decades, with great advance in technologies, it is proved that his choice has contributed hugely to human society. This is why innovation should always be considered with the notion of accessibility.

Bryan Stevenson, the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, once said, "I believe that many of you understand that the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice. That we cannot be full evolved human beings until we care about human rights and basic dignity. That all of our survival is tied to the survival of everyone. That our visions of technology and design and entertainment and creativity have to be married with visions of humanity, compassion and justice." As Bryan mentioned, while the technology progress, we should always bear in mind that technology and innovation would only be meaningful when it is combined with the vision of humanity, compassion, and justice, all of these cannot be accomplished without good accessibility.

This notion of "accessibility" is really a vital hint for me. As a student who is studying law and human rights, I would like to make legal service more accessible to all people, no matter in Taiwan, Japan, the States, or anywhere else on the earth. This is the general answer I got from Kingfisher program. Although it is yet vague and I still have a lot to figure out, my goal become somewhat clearer than before.

In addition to the general picture of my future, through Kingfisher program, I became determined to pursue JD in the US after graduation. In the World Bank, "T-shape skillset" is repeatedly mentioned. It means that one should have not only general and extensive knowledge as well as communicational/interpersonal skills, but also deep understanding about certain profession. This strikes me because I always feel that I love to read extensively but without going too deep in certain field. The US law schools, in this sense, provides systematic curricula for students to dive into the world of legal

knowledge. Thanks to the Kingfisher, I have made up my mind and it's time for me to get prepared for the next stage of my life!

Lina Koseki
Graduate School of Biostudies, 1st Year Doctoral Candidate

Introspection and personal growth

During the two weeks of the Kingfisher Global Leadership Program, I experienced a profound transformation. I had the opportunity to immerse myself in a diverse and dynamic community, comprised of individuals from various backgrounds, ages, fields of study, and cultural origins. This rich tapestry of perspectives enabled me to engage in introspective exploration and engage in spirited late-night discussions on a wide range of topics, including social, economic, and political issues, with my fellow program participants. In addition to meeting a group of people who had similar goals and who aspired to one day become global leaders, we were all able to navigate through many discussions with successful entrepreneurs, scientists, innovators, social activists, and others who had unique life experiences to discover the definition for each of us what it meant to be a leader. Because of our different backgrounds, the program was designed to accommodate each of our passions and career paths. This allowed for otherwise out-of-reach connections to professionals from different sectors of industry and it opened my eyes to the world. This fostered my understanding that degrees and fields of study can be quite fluid if you apply yourself to your passions. Prior to this trip, I was quite naïve as to what people do in Think Tanks and non-profit organizations, as well as the underpinnings of government-funded institutional work allowing me to broaden my horizons and explore careers that I would not have known otherwise.

Our journey began in Washington, D.C., the epicenter of policymaking and the implementation of both domestic and international changes. To learn how this happens, one of our stops was the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), where we met Nick Szechenyi, an expert on US-Japan relations and foreign policy. Here, we discussed what kind of research goes on in non-partisan institutions. In a polarized, two-party political system in the U.S., I did not think that getting anywhere close to "non-partisan" was possible, however, this organization was set out to be non-partisan with the funders being from both government and non-governmental organizations, domestic and abroad, and public and private sectors to pursue to understand a problem from an "objective, fact-based, analytic work" (CSIS website) which differs from lobbyists who are typically moved by a set agenda. I was impressed to see that CSIS is a completely independent organization. This seems

redundant but here's an example: if a foreign government funds and agrees to a CSIS report, the outcome may be published no matter the outcome—whether it is favorable or not to the funders. Hence, despite CSIS being a US-based organization, they are separate from US government agendas and interests, and for that matter all other governments. Visiting this organization made me slightly more optimistic as a citizen of the world we live in as there are groups trying to help the world understand politics and policies, globally.

Another non-profit that inspired me was an incubator known as Halcyon House, one of many organizations founded by Dr. Sachiko Kuno, a researcher, drug developer, entrepreneur, mentor, and dog lover. We met the staff at Halcyon to understand how the positive feedback loop of successful business "incubatees" later feed into the newer cohort of entrepreneur-aspiring creators. Now, Halcyon helps create an ecosystem for people in similar fields to come together to potentially collaborate and peer learn concepts for a successful business focusing on themes broken down into health, climate, and equity technologies. This made me appreciate and become aware of the changes in modern capitalism in that to create a viable business, there needs to be a strong social impact by considering the triple bottom line which encapsulates the social, economic, and environmental frameworks.

As a basic researcher in cancer biology, this got me thinking about the current state of the pharmaceutical business and how my findings could potentially translate towards social impact. Biology researchers are making progress in discovering new mechanisms of a process or better understanding diseases and its approaches to creating solutions for them; however, often, the change comes from one of many jargon-filled publications that are not readily understood by the community at large. So, hearing the people at Halcyon describing the necessity of accelerating the impact drive of future business struck me. How can I create a bridge between novel innovation in the lab to help our community at large?

Another location we visited was the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where we met with a brain cancer researcher, Dr. Masaki Terabe. Here, I learned one way to bridge basic biology research to patient care. The US government's funding of the NIH through grants and project funding enables research that many businesses deem too financially risky, such as rare disease research. The NIH's unique position allows them to advance specific disease and mechanistic trials rapidly. I saw the potential for my next step as a researcher, as this collaboration between Ph.D. researchers and medical doctors could facilitate translational research.

Finally, I wanted to make one other shout out to a biotech startup lab that specializes in manufacturing clinical grade iPSCs (induced-pluripotent stem cells), iPeace, based in Palo Alto. Here, we met with Dr. Koji Tanabe, who turned his expertise in iPSC research into a business of the future: a personal cell banking system so that patients can turn to their own cells for if they ever encounter disease. After learning about what they do—developing original libraries of cell lines with iPSC technologies, I've observed that successful healthcare professionals are not one-hit wonders, and quite analogous to designing cookware. The key is in creating the magical pot that can cook not only pasta, but a whole array of unique dishes; in other words, for disruptive innovation for drug and therapeutic development in the words of Dr. Kuno, products need an original building block that that can be versatile for different applications (diseases). I was also exposed to the start-up culture and enthusiasm that people had in building up a functional laboratory to culture human iPS cells in a once-minimal, barren garage to now a rising business based with global clientele. I have seen the real-life example of the common saying if there's a will there's a way.

In returning to Kyoto, I now recognize the importance of staying informed about social changes and market trends. This awareness is crucial for identifying the next disruptive innovation and having the courage to take bold risks. The words of Dr. Masaki Terabe, "You don't need to be the number one; be the only one" remind me that leadership is multifaceted and ever evolving. It is up to each of us to define what it means to be a leader. My journey of personal growth continues, and I look forward to connecting with those who share my aspirations.