I was born in Japan and lived there for seven years. I lived in an American naval base, but my mother was Japanese, and I would visit family in the Tokyo area. I was very familiar with Japanese culture, and when I moved away, I was the expert on Japan at school. The simple questions like what did you guys eat etc. I could answer, but as everyone I knew got older, the questions like is racism a big issue in Japan? Why is the birth rate so low? Do Japanese people act like people do in anime? I could give answers, but I knew those answers weren't backed by experience. Memories from childhood and personal research could answer these questions, but not being able to back my answers with personal experiences was nerve wracking. It was at this time as well that my Japanese speaking ability was getting worse and worse, and there was a humongous gap between what I could communicate in Japanese and what I could communicate in English. This started to become a big issue for myself, and when I came to CSUMB I resolved to improve my Japanese and become maximise my knowledge of Japanese people and culture.

Having studied abroad I feel as if I answered most of these questions, and that my Japanese is at the level that I want it. I'm currently aiming to pursue my passion in film. I love Japan and living there, and I'm pursuing my Japanese major for getting by in Japan if I decide I want to live there.

I have learned that despite some cultural differences, Japanese people and American people, and people all around the world, are much more similar than they are different. There are still many small aspects of Japanese culture that I still have yet to learn about, and it is my goal to learn as many of these as possible.