



Summer 6-13-2006

IWU Student to Spend Junior Year Abroad in Japan

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Recommended Citation

Boelter, Leslie, "IWU Student to Spend Junior Year Abroad in Japan" (2006). *News and Events*. 3368.

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IWU Student to Spend
Junior Year Abroad in Japan
June 13, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -
Blooming cherry blossoms,
Mount Fuji, raw fish, very
little space - all things one
might think of when
dreaming of Japan, that
small archipelago just off
the coast of Korea. For
Sikiru Tijani, an Illinois
Wesleyan University junior



Junior Sikiru Tijani displays one of his works of art. Tijani also has an interest in Japanese anime.

international business and Japanese studies double major from Flossmoor, Ill., Japan is more than that - it is the flavor the Japanese put into their cartoon drawings called anime. "The whole fantasy realm," as he puts it, is what initially captured his interest in the country back in eighth grade-and now he plans to spend his junior year abroad on the island.

Tijani has also received thousands of dollars in scholarship money to study abroad. He received a \$4,000 Bridging scholarship as well as being nominated for another scholarship by the school he will attend, Keio University, located in Tokyo.

Tijani grew up familiar with crossing continents, having a family that extends across oceans: his parents grew up in Africa, in the country of Ghana, emigrating to America in the late 1960's, and Tijani still has family in Africa who he has visited since birth. It was in Africa that he discovered his love for Japan, when he started drawing anime on a family trip.

Since entering IWU, Tijani has studied the Japanese language and country as much as possible. Last summer, he was able to take advantage of the Technos International College program, which sponsors qualifying students in a two-week program in Japan after their first or second year in college.

This coming year in Japan, Tijani will have classes six times a week in the Japanese language, the components of which are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. He will also take classes in Japanese business and comparative literature to fulfill prerequisites for Illinois Wesleyan.

After much preparation and anticipation, Tijani holds an excited sway over his coming trip: "When I learned I would have this opportunity, I told myself that I wouldn't limit myself to any experiences. Not to be so hasty, saying no, no, no - that's not what I'm used to; but [instead] just get involved, grasp new things, and just go for it."