Dustyn Uchiyama

My experience at Jikei University was absolutely amazing and culturally enriching. It had always been my dream to go to Japan, being a Japanese-American, and immerse myself in their society. I had the privilege of also learning about Japanese healthcare and meeting some of the most genuine and kind preceptors and administrative staff. During my rotation at Jikei University, I was able to observe the anesthesiologists’ practice in the operating room and contrast their anesthetic plan to those that I was more familiar with in the United States. I was also able to rotate with the Pain Management service and get a glimpse of the cultural aspects of pain and pain management. The ability to study at Jikei University granted me an amazing opportunity to learn about a different healthcare system, appreciate the cultural aspects of healthcare, and obtain a broader perspective of medicine. The experience at Jikei University is just as much medicine as it is culture. I learned that healthcare, although complex, still relies on the foundation of compassion, empathy, kindness, and respect to deliver effective care, regardless of the language or cultural setting. My experience both in and outside of the operating room allowed me to have a truly immersive experience in Japanese culture, something I will hold very dearly for my entire life.
In addition to the hospital rotation, I also had the pleasure of attending International Café where I could meet other international students and learn about their experiences in their home country. This gave me the opportunity to learn about multiple cultures and countries and gain a deeper appreciation for each student's background. This platform allowed me to make new friends and bond with my peers outside of the hospital. We would all meet up to grab dinner or go sightseeing on the weekends which made this experience all the more entertaining. Although we worked hard and tended to our responsibilities during the rotation, there was still ample time to explore Japan. I was able to venture all over Tokyo as well as outside of Tokyo and as far as Osaka and Kyoto.

To me, the opportunity to study at Jikei University was as much about learning Japanese culture as it was learning about myself and the home of my ancestors. It was a priceless experience, one that I will forever cherish and I am so lucky to have made lifelong friends along the way.