

## Co-Presidents' Letter

More than nine decades have passed since Kobe College Corporation came into being. Today's Kobe College Corporation-Japan Education Exchange (KCC-JEE) immensely values its long and productive relationship with the college. While the past few years have presented us with daunting economic challenges, the Board of Directors has worked hard to protect what we value. Our programs—the heart of our mission—continue to benefit students, faculty, companies and host families that support interns, and colleges and universities on both sides of the Pacific.

In March, 2011, Professor Owen Montague completed his term as Bryant Drake Guest Professor and returned to Canada. He received exceptionally high praise from faculty and student colleagues in the Music Department. We look forward to the next Drake Professorship, likely in the area of environmental science or policy. Our 2011 Essay Contest winner, Casey Farrington, returned recently from her homestay and language school experience in Kyoto and supplied us with a moving account of how much it all meant to her. Four new Gottschalk teachers, including board member Marnie Jorenby, will be heading to Kobe College High School in 2012. We are very proud of all of our programs—and hopeful that we can soon find sufficient funding to restore the Graduate Fellowship program, which is currently in suspension.

A special note is in order about board member Tak Ishida. He is this year's recipient of the Mondale Award, presented by the Japan America Society of Minnesota. Given his many years of service to JASM and to supporting Japan-America relations generally, this award is richly deserved. Congratulations, Tak!

At September's KCC-JEE Annual Meeting, it was wonderful to see friends old and new. This year's meeting, in conjunction with the Board of Directors quarterly meeting, was held just outside Minneapolis. We heard about the very cordial and informative meeting that a delegation from the board had, a short time earlier, with former Vice President and Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale. The program portion of the meeting included presentations by Kobe College Chancellor Koichi Mori, Honorary Consul General of Japan at Minneapolis Mirja P. Hanson, Executive Director of the Japan American Society of Minnesota Ben van Leirop, and representatives of Carleton College, Rockford College, Augsburg College, St. Catherine University, and the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities. KCC-JEE Past President Sue Doffing, with help from her husband Bob, organized a raffle to raise funds for our essay contest. The lucky winners were rewarded with everything from Minnesota Twins paraphernalia to a one-week stay at a holiday resort. The annual meeting reaffirmed our enduring, deeply valued relationships with our many supporters, collaborators, and friends in the Twin Cities region.

Beyond our routine business, the quarterly board meeting was used to launch a strategic planning initiative. As short-term co-presidents of KCC-JEE, we feel that this is a timely, much needed project that will ensure a productive year for us. Board

members are now hard at work preparing a series of reports—and our work will carry on for the next several months, with the expectation that a series of recommendations will be adopted when the board meets in Chicago in March.

We are deeply indebted to all our board members, friends, and supporters. Without your dedication, hard work, creative thinking, warmth, and congeniality we could not have come through these trying economic times as we have. We are very optimistic about our future—and very much look forward to many more productive and rewarding KC-KCC-JEE joint endeavors.

Robert J. Mason

David J. Therkelsen

Co-Presidents, Kobe-College Corporation-Japan Education Exchange