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**Sasakawa Nursing Fellow**

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**Progress Report**

## **1. Purpose and Overview**

I am writing to report on my academic progress at Johns Hopkins University. I am currently a first-year Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) student in the Department of Health, Behavior and Society at the Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland. Previously, I worked as a nurse in Japan, where I witnessed significant health disparities among patients. These experiences inspired me to pursue further studies to address health disparities through the lens of health communication. As a result, I enrolled in the MSPH program in Health Education and Health Communication at this distinguished institution.

My program consists of one year of intensive coursework followed by a year dedicated to a field placement and the completion of a capstone project. This year, I am taking courses focused on health communication and implementation science to deepen my knowledge in these areas. In the coming year, I will engage in a six-month field placement and complete a capstone project, through which I will gain hands-on research training and practical experience.

## **2. Academic experiences**

Having also completed a Master of Public Health in Japan, I was very excited to explore the differences in public health education and priorities between Japan and the United States. In the U.S., I have attended numerous lectures and seminars on topics such as racial and gender equity, harm reduction, gun violence, and substance use—including drugs and cannabis. These topics seem particularly distinctive within the U.S. context, as they are not often prioritized in Japan. To actively participate in class discussions, I find it necessary to spend significant time researching the foundational background of these issues. Although it was quite challenging to discuss with other classmates in English, I was able to gain valuable perspectives on these important issues from professors and classmates. Previously, I had not explored academic papers related to these issues. However, after hearing different perspectives during class, my interest was sparked, and I began reading more on these topics.

I am also taking a fascinating class that offers hands-on experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating a health communication campaign within a school setting. In this course, student groups conduct formative research, design a campaign aimed at changing health behaviors among school-aged students, and evaluate the campaign using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Johns Hopkins University provides access to professional survey tools, enabling students to conduct surveys and analyze the data. I truly appreciate the opportunity to benefit from such a valuable system and support.

Furthermore, the supportive environment for students at Johns Hopkins University is outstanding. Opportunities for research and teaching assistantships are frequently shared through student mailing lists. Students can also easily reach out to professors to inquire about potential involvement in research projects, creating an excellent environment for networking and

academic growth. I contacted several professors via email, and most of them responded and kindly arranged Zoom meetings to explore potential opportunities. Through a career fair, I also connected with a researcher at the NIH, who generously took the time to discuss my research with me. I am truly grateful for an environment where I can easily connect with professionals on a global scale. Although securing a position can be competitive and challenging, I believe this supportive atmosphere empowers students to take initiative and thrive.

### **3. Living Aspect**

Studying abroad at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore has provided me with valuable opportunities to expand my academic network. The university brings together students from around the world with diverse and impressive backgrounds. I enjoy spending time with classmates outside of class—whether it's exploring jazz bars in Baltimore or attending conferences in Washington, D.C. Additionally, I've become involved in the Japanese student community, which has offered a meaningful way to connect and share experiences beyond the School of Public Health. My husband, who is currently attending an English language school at another university, has also helped broaden my social network beyond my academic program. Together, we are doing our best to make the most of this opportunity.

### **4. Acknowledgement**

I am deeply grateful to the Sasakawa Health Foundation for their generous scholarship, which has made this invaluable experience at Johns Hopkins University possible. With their continued support, I have been able to devote myself fully to my studies. I am especially thankful that the foundation made it possible for me to study abroad with my husband. His presence and support have given me emotional strength and a sense of fulfillment throughout this journey. I am committed to working even harder to contribute to improving health outcomes both in Japan and globally by integrating my academic knowledge and nursing expertise after graduation.