

iCLA Obento

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**NEWSLETTER
TOPICS**

**GRADUATE
INTERVIEW:
AHMED**

**DIVERSITY
DAY AT
JUTOKU
FESTIVAL**



The iCLA Obento is a newsletter dedicated to highlighting the successes of iCLA's community members, celebrating our unique backgrounds, and learning more about the members of iCLA's community. We hope you enjoy reading about iCLA's bright students and wonderful faculty members in interviews, news articles, and feature pieces.

iCLA OBENTO ARCHIVE



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Graduate Interview: Ahmed



Courtesy of Ahmed

Ahmed is a Political Science major and iCLA graduate of Fall 2025. After graduating from iCLA, Ahmed established his own company, Fleet X, in the automobile export industry. We asked Ahmed about his motivation to start his own company and how his time at iCLA has benefitted him as an entrepreneur.

What was your major at iCLA, and why did you choose it?

My major was Political Science. I came from a science background, but politics and international relations always fascinated me. My curiosity led me to explore, and then the courses offered at iCLA were interesting and thought-provoking, leading me to listen to my heart and break the norms of my background. I decided to major in Political Science to understand the logical reasoning behind how the decisions made at high political offices affect us all.

Please tell me about the company you started.

The name of the company is Fleet X. It is an overseas trading company specializing in Japanese cars. The company has made contracts with various companies in the UK, Kenya, South Africa, and Pakistan to date.

What is the motivation behind starting your own company, and how did you make the company into reality?

The motivation grew on its own, as I wanted freedom from relying on any entity to decide my finances and schedule. Making it into reality was a long process. Since my 2nd year at iCLA, I had been interning and working as a part-time employee in small-scale used car export companies during my holidays. Understanding the business, operations, hurdles, networking, and having many mentors who struggled for decades in this business were the key elements in the formation of Fleet X.

Were there any courses, professors, or experiences that inspired you to pursue entrepreneurship? Especially entrepreneurship in Japan?

Every Professor played a vital role in my journey. I took courses like International Business, which helped me understand banking and ways to approach businesses overseas.

In Professor Rosario Laratta's class, I learned about how small towns in Japan operate using machizukuri, and he helped me understand how to deal with issues which can impact you. Professor Koji Haraguchi helped me a lot on how to debate, how to present, and how to keep striving to become better. He always pointed things out to help me improve and keep me on my toes.

Every day was an experience for me in iCLA. Interacting with everyone here made my communication skills, my analytical thought process, and my understanding of the world better. I learned how each individual is different and similar at the same time.

What lessons or skills you gained at iCLA have been valuable in running your own business?

The communication skills! You meet people from so many different countries, whether it is students, professors, or administration. You have to talk to everyone, and the classes were designed in such a way that you have to interact with your classmates, which always boosts your confidence and reflects your potential. You understand the power of diplomacy, which is really important if you have a business. If you are dealing overseas, you already have an idea about a country and their culture because your unit mate or classmate is from that country, which is the perfect ice breaker.

The classes were designed in such a way that you become self-disciplined, which is also another major requirement to be an entrepreneur. There are days when you are upset or down, but it keeps you going, which also helps in running a business.



Was there anything you are glad you accomplished during your time at iCLA (academic or extracurricular)?

I did not excel academically or even in extracurricular activities, but I had probably the best time of my life at iCLA. I lived in probably one of the most beautiful towns in the world. Going for adventures with friends, meeting new people, eating their food, and understanding a new culture and language prepares you for the real world.

What was the most difficult challenge you experienced when starting your own company, and how did you overcome it?

Japan requires you to have a certain amount of funds to start a company. I had to discuss deals with clients overseas and convince them to pay a certain amount in advance, using the communication skills I learned at iCLA. In the end, I was able to raise around 60 million yen in four to five months with the help of my family and clients.

Also, the documentation was brutal. I had to obtain many documents, hire a lawyer, and rent a place for an office. I just kept going, and I did not have time to think. My mind was always occupied with understanding and learning the business.

What is next for your company and for you personally?

I have started this company now, and my goal is to expand it to different countries with the help of my friends who were here with me at iCLA. I hope to work with more companies and build a strong team, creating a place that's owned by everyone who's part of it. More than anything, I hope to make myself, and everyone who helped shape me, feel proud. I dream of traveling to different countries, visiting my friends, and working along the way. I aim to give my family the best life possible and to become someone reliable. Starting my own business has shown me the path to achieving that.



Courtesy of Ahmed

What is your advice for other iCLA students to prepare for an entrepreneurial path?

Make your decision now and start networking in the industry you want to get involved in. Be honest in what you do and try your best. The results may not be good in the beginning, but only for now, because your hard work will pay off. Sleep as much as you can because once you embark on this entrepreneurial path, there is less sleep and all you can do is move forward.



Diversity Day 2025

Diversity Day took place over two days, October 25 and 26, as part of Yamanashi Gakuin University's annual Jutoku Festival! iCLA Students from 10 different countries came together to showcase their cultures through creative booths. This year's participating country booths included Indonesia, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, The Philippines, USA, and Uzbekistan.

Diversity Day 2025

This event marked a special milestone as the first event to be held in the newly-built Turquoise Blue cafeteria, which opened in early September. The event saw over 1000 visitors eager to talk to students and experience world cultures. This is the most visitors to date for Diversity Day.

Each booth did a fantastic job of showcasing their cultures. Students worked together to design unique spaces and organize cultural experiences for visitors. Activities included trivia quizzes, games, arts and crafts, and tastings of traditional food, all crafted with passion and teamwork.

Guests could test their knowledge of Slovak history and geography and earn a certificate, learn to write their name in Thai, paint Uzbek ornaments found in traditional clothing and ceramics, or compete in a US-themed quiz for a chance to win a “Green Card” and other prizes.

Guests sampled authentic flavors from around the world with foods like Filipino Ube Kalamay, Indonesian Indomie, Russian Waffles, Sushki, and Pryanik, Sri Lankan Roti with Lunu Miris, Kazakh Bauyrsak/Kyrgyz Boorsok, among many others.



For those who enjoy art, the “Work in Progress” gallery booth also displayed sketches and concept art by iCLA students, previewing pieces for the upcoming “Almost Home” Art Exhibition happening from December 8 - 14 at Gallery 1045. The exhibition is held through the Yamanashi Gakuin University Student Challenge Program, a university initiative which funds selected innovative student projects that contribute to the university and local community. The proposals of two iCLA students were selected this year to receive funding.

Guests could collect stamps from any of the booths for the Diversity Day stamp rally, and receive a small prize.

Moreover, the venue was made even more lively with musical performances in various languages by iCLA students, organized by Professor Mike Blow, and a collaborative mural project by Professor Sam Stocker inviting guests to add their artistic touches to a shared canvas.

The event’s success was made possible by the wonderful student volunteers of the Hara Seminar from the Faculty of Business Administration, and from iCLA, who assisted with event operations and language support. Their enthusiastic promotion by handing out pamphlets, warmly welcoming guests, and spreading the word across campus helped make Diversity Day a great success.

Diversity Day 2025

iCLA has over 55 nationalities among its student community, and the event truly embodied the diversity and global environment that defines iCLA. The collective efforts of students, faculty, and staff turned weeks of preparation into two unforgettable days of cross-cultural exchange and celebration.

A big thank you to everyone. Your hard work and enthusiasm have made Diversity Day 2025 a great success!



Diversity Day 2025





SOCIAL MEDIA FEATURES



Check out this reel about stores near campus by Floor Assistants!



Students visited Nirasaki Kogyo High School for a Wadaiko Workshop



Check out this Student Ambassador post!



Mt Fuji had its first snow of the season after a long summer.

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