



TC Spotlight

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I always want to learn more, do more, be more.

- **born in South Korea, adopted to the US, grew up in Pittsburgh, from Chicago**
- **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (B.A.), Beijing University and Fudan University for study abroad, Columbia University (M.A.), Temple University (Ph.D candidate)**
- **currently a professor at the University of Nagano**

Tell us about yourself and your work recently. Many opportunities I've had since graduating from TC have arisen due to my TC network. I've had the privilege of working with TC alumni, which is fantastic because we have a shared background of teaching practices and similar teaching philosophies. I also served as President of Tokyo JALT, in part due to my TC connections. The new President, Matthew Kocourek, is also a TC alumn. And I have the great fortune of counting many TC alumni as friends, both in Japan and globally.

After Teachers College, I adjuncted for several different universities in Tokyo. I wanted to continue my education, but Columbia University didn't offer a Ph.D in Japan. I investigated several options, including moving back to the US, and decided to enroll in the first Ph.D cohort at Temple University. Since then, it's been a wild ride.

When I became a full-time assistant professor in Tokyo, I wondered if this would be my life: jumping from institution to institution, from contract to contract. I was also worn out by the commute and my frenetic schedule in Tokyo. While at TC, I had also worked a full-time job, led a 1000-member restaurant club, co-founded an arts magazine, and hosted monthly events. However, I was approached by my Temple senpai about whether I would be interested in a tenure-track faculty position. Of course, I was very interested! He gave me the details, and I applied and interviewed and received an offer, which brings me to my current life..



...in Nagano! I work for a brand-new university in Nagano city, which is 80 minutes by shinkansen from Tokyo station. The University of Nagano (長野県立大学) aims to cultivate and retain talent in the prefecture, and to further develop the surrounding communities. The food, wine (yes, wine!), nihonshu, and nature here is wonderful; I highly recommend a visit, if not a farm stay and winery tour. In fact, my very first visitor when I moved to Nagano was Steven Taro Suzuki, a TC classmate.

The best part of my job, however, is building a brand new university culture, program, and curricula from the ground up. I have been able to use my education and experience to weigh in on matters, make decisions, and propose and execute initiatives in a way that I never could have done in an already established university. As one of my ideas, I started a Global Language Table which encourages the use of foreign languages at the university, and brings in special guests for themed language tables during lunch time. If you are ever in the area, I would like to cordially invite you to join us!

I really enjoyed my days as a busy TC student, and I am still enjoying my life now as a TC alumna.

What drew you to TC? First, because I am American, I was interested in an American graduate degree. Teachers College and Columbia University have excellent reputations. Also, I had read John Dewey in college and have always loved to pursue knowledge. Finally, my uncle attended Columbia University, and his place was the first place I went to when I first arrived in the US. I have pictures of my young self at his apartment in New York.

What did you learn at TC that ensured you would never be the same again? How to engage learners, how to encourage people to participate, how to not give boring presentations or lectures

What motivates you? I always want to learn more, do more, be more. I am very curious and want to make the most of life.

What would you do if you could take a one-year sabbatical? I am very interested in how people learn and teach when their primary life roles are not student and educator. When I first got my scuba diving licenses, I was curious about how the instructors had learned to teach the classes and skills. So I would want to spend a year living at, working at, and writing about the education that happens in scuba diving centers around the world.



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