Teaching was my childhood dream, and sharing what I love with others is my passion. Throughout my first year as a JOI coordinator hosted by Ferrum College, I focused the most on teaching the beauty and energy of Soranbushi. It is a Japanese fishermen's dance based on a traditional folksong from the northern island of Hokkaido. My experience with Soranbushi paved the way to join the Japan Outreach Initiative. When I was a college student in Connecticut, I worked part time for a community outreach program, where I taught this dance to local school children. That was when I truly found my dream and passion: teaching.

So far as a JOI coordinator, with significant support from Franklin County Public Schools, I have taught Soranbushi to more than 40 groups of participants of all ages. The dance can be a real workout. At the beginning of Soranbushi sessions, I normally demonstrate the dance with great intensity. Most of the time, the audience thinks it is almost impossible to learn the dance in a single workshop. Once I break it down, however, participants realize the simplicity of the dance, saying, "It's easy!" That is the moment when I feel the joy of sharing what I love.
Ferrum College Hosts Japan Outreach Initiative

Located in the middle of Blue Ridge Mountains, Ferrum College is by far the most beautiful and adventurous place I have ever lived. As an independent staff member at Ferrum College, I organize various Japan-related activities and events across academic courses and departments. In September, I arranged a field trip for students to the Japanese woodblock print exhibition at the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, Virginia. In collaboration with the Embassy of Japan in Washington D.C., I was able to host Japanese Movie Night in April.

As a long-term, sustainable JOI project, I have established the Ferrum College Japan Society, a student organization for anyone on campus who is interested in Japanese culture. More than 40 people have registered so far, and we have gathered for a sushi-making workshop, Japanese dance sessions, language lessons, and the *Ghibli* night to name a few. During the summer, I taught a hands-on Japanese culture class, “Japan: Anime, Sushi, and Samurai!” for two weeks to students ages 9-13 during the Ferrum College Summer Enrichment Camp.

**Guest Lectures Given at Ferrum College**

- Business Philosophy and Manners in Japan (For BUS 308: Business Communications)
- Japanese Noh Drama and Theatrical Masks (For ENG 201: World Literature I)
- Ecotourism and Wildlife in Japan (For ECT 165: World Ecotourism Destinations and Cultures)
- Food Exchange between the U.S. and Japan (For Inquiring Minds evening discussion series)
Representing Japan at Regional International Festivals

This year, thanks to a lot of help from many other individuals, I was able to set up a Japan Booth at three local international fairs of different scales: International Day at Franklin County Public Library in Rocky Mount, Virginia in November, at the Ferrum College International Fair in April, and at the Local Colors Festival in Roanoke, Virginia in May.

Not only did I have the opportunity to introduce Japanese culture to a large number of people, I was also able to make professional connections with different organizations by getting involved in these festivals. I have met librarians who later gave me opportunities for summer library programs. Getting to know local Japanese citizens linked my program to the Roanoke branch of a Japanese corporation. This was something that I never imagined I would see a chance to do in this particular community, and in the second year of my work here, I would like to start more joint programs with these organizations.

**Supervisor’s comments:** “Ferrum College values Taiki’s work in the Franklin County Schools and his continued efforts to bring Japan to life for Ferrum students through presentations, extracurricular offerings, and Japan Society activities. Taiki’s charismatic teaching persona wins over his audiences, who come from a range of ages and backgrounds. He is to be commended for the sheer volume of presentations that he has contributed this year and we look forward to working with him to further develop his ideas for sustaining this programming for the long-term. Taiki is bringing Japan to life throughout the Roanoke Valley through the relationships he is building. These will be very beneficial to the college as we continue our efforts to build programming and curricular offerings that support student understanding of globalization. Taiki has also been helpful in generating interest in our exchange agreement with Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, something that we hope to continue working on in year 2.”