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Link to original story: <https://www.uwsuper.edu/about/news/from-japan-to-superior-ikkis-hockey-journey/>

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D09hFBWugjA>

**From Japan to Superior: Ikki’s hockey journey**

Story by UW-Superior

Sometimes arriving at your destination takes a roundabout path. For University of Wisconsin-Superior freshman student Ikki Kogawa, it was a lengthy trip to arrive on campus this fall.

The first leg of Kogawa’s journey was significant as he left his home in Japan to play high school hockey in Canada, followed by junior hockey in Janesville, Wisconsin, for the Jets. It was his stop in southern Wisconsin that led to his arrival at UW-Superior.

“This spring I got a call from Coach [Rich [McKenna]](https://uwsyellowjackets.com/sports/mens-ice-hockey/roster/coaches/rich-mckenna/1017), UW-Superior head [men’s hockey](https://uwsyellowjackets.com/sports/mens-ice-hockey) coach, saying I could visit,” said Kogawa.

His first and only trip to UW-Superior was all it took for Kogawa, and he soon applied for the fall semester.

“We are very excited to see what Ikki can accomplish in his time here with us,” said McKenna. “He comes from a great family, has high character and a strong work ethic. He is a very mature person and left home at a young age to pursue his dreams of playing hockey at the highest level. I believe Ikki will be a major part in our team success, and we are lucky to have him here.”

At UW-Superior, international students like Kogawa receive ample personalized support to ease their transition, which begins as soon as they apply.

“When we receive an [international application](https://www.uwsuper.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/international/), we provide a checklist for the student with country-level specific requirements that they need to submit for documentation,” said [Kali Kelleher](https://www.uwsuper.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/kelleher-kali/?_rt=MXwxfGtlbGxlaGVyfDE3Mjc5NjcwNjM&_rt_nonce=956829839e), international admissions and recruitment coordinator at UW-Superior. “We also support students by doing an internal credential evaluation of their documentation, which isn’t done at every school.”

That step alone can save students hundreds of dollars.

Upon being accepted to UW-Superior, international students like Kogawa begin receiving information to prepare for their arrival.

“We send a pre-arrival document that they can share with their parents that talks about life in Superior and what it’s like to be on campus,” said Kelleher.

Members of the [admissions department](https://www.uwsuper.edu/admissions/) even meet international students at the airport and provide transportation back to campus. When they arrive, they are met by current international students who volunteer to be Orientation Week Leaders (OWLs). The OWLs help them move in, show them around campus and help them get acquainted with campus and other students.

“During orientation week, the [Office of Intercultural Student Success](https://www.uwsuper.edu/student-life/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/office-of-intercultural-student-success/) supports students with culturally aware content,” said Kelleher. “It includes various topics that are important, not only to academics, but their ability to work, with relationships and some social cues and other expectations – along with games and other opportunities to get to know one another.”

The Office of Intercultural Student Success assists students with a variety of topics, such as coping with homesickness, understanding cultural differences, getting connected to academic offices, learning about taxes, F1 student visa regulations, employment and what’s needed for them to get a job on campus and career opportunities once they finish their program.

Even with the extensive support system in place at UW-Superior, Kogawa’s path to Superior took a more meaningful route. Flying to the United States from Japan for the start of the fall semester, he landed in Chicago and traveled by car to Janesville where he reconnected with his host family. Together they then made the six-hour drive north to Superior, reconnecting on his past achievements and helping him look forward to the future ones.

With more than 50 program offerings, select online and graduate programs at UW-Superior, students have great opportunities to find their ideal area of study. This is another factor that brought Kogawa to Northwestern Wisconsin.

“I think I want to study business, but I haven’t really decided any specific major yet,” he said. “But this is where I can find what I want to learn.”

Settling into UW-Superior, Kogawa is enjoying his first weeks on campus.

“Coach Rich helped me out with all the process for registration for hockey and housing,” said Kogawa. “But I also asked a lot of questions to the other guys on the team on how the school is. Everyone helps me.”

 “It’s awesome being on campus,” he said. “I see a lot of people and my teammates whenever I’m walking around campus. It’s a wonderful place.”