

**Meet Yu Aoki, an international student from Niigata, Japan who is pursuing his second master's degree.**



**Could you describe your background for us?**

I am from Niigata city in Niigata prefecture, which is known for heavy snowfall, the most popular rice in Japan and high-quality Japanese liquor. I studied in an International Relations master's degree program at Nihon University in Mishima city, Shizuoka prefecture. Mount Fuji is in Shizuoka prefecture, so I enjoyed seeing it every day when the weather was fine. This is my second time in America; the first was for sightseeing and to attend my brother's commencement ceremony in Boston.

**What brought you to the Josef Korbel School?**

I do have something embarrassing to say, but I will dare to say it. I know some international students, especially Asians, really care about the rankings and reputations of graduate schools

in the United States. Even though the Josef Korbel School recently ranked well in a certain list, it may still not be well known to international students and they sometimes might be hesitant to choose the Josef Korbel School for that reason. But ignoring this school is not a very good choice for them to make. To be honest, I was accepted by other schools as famous as the Josef Korbel School and I really wavered among my options. I am now very confident, however, that my choice was the best that I had at that time. When I was admitted by the Josef Korbel School, I was offered a good scholarship, which really influenced my decision. The Josef Korbel School's faculty is great and the program is very flexible and student friendly, in addition to our firm connections with alumni. I am now very proud of the Josef Korbel School.

**You've gone back and forth between the International Studies degree and the International Security one – what have you finally decided?**

I initially thought an internship in the International Security program would be useful for my career - - I want to get my Ph.D. in Political Science. I changed my mind, however, because I found that my interest in political science is more oriented to theory rather than to practice.

**What is the international student community like at the Josef Korbel School? How do you like Denver so far?**

I actually know very little about the international student community at the Josef Korbel School, but Denver is great! I really enjoyed cycling and hiking in the summer and snowboarding in the winter. To be honest, before I came to Denver, I seriously did not do any sports in Japan. But great Denver made me realize the pleasure of outdoor sports, such as cycling and hiking.

**How is being an international student influencing your Josef Korbel School experience?**

Being an international student makes keeping up with my classes pretty challenging, but I am also very sure that the two years here at the Josef Korbel School will be an indispensable foundation for my academic career, so it's worth it.

**What's the thing you miss most about Japan?**

Definitely the food!

- - *Nirvana Bhatia, master's candidate International Human Rights,  
Josef Korbel School of International Studies*