Dear Sukumar and Anne Nagendran,

I am writing to extend my sincerest gratitude for your generosity and the scholarship that has been awarded to me. As you are aware, the cost of medical school has grown substantially, making it more difficult to participate in experiential opportunities such as international travel. Your donation has helped me achieve a dream I have had for many years, traveling abroad as an exchange student. As I have just completed my program, I would like to share with you the experiences I have had and what I have learned so that you may understand the impact you have had on my development as a physician.

I am very fortunate and grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in an exchange program with Kobe University School of Medicine in Kobe, Japan. For one week, I shadowed the physicians of the emergency department alongside residents on rotation and attended critical care lectures alongside medical students. I am sincerely appreciative of the physicians and residents who took care to translate the content of these discussions for me so that I could participate.

The content of these classes is of vital importance for my development as a physician, no matter the specialty I ultimately choose. I learned many critical care skills in this week that are relevant to any student, resident, or physician who will at some point care for patients under emergency circumstances.

Beyond the medical knowledge and skills I obtained during my brief international rotation, I also gained valuable cultural experiences and insights. It was fascinating to realize that, despite the differences in culture, language, and geographical location, the medicine practiced in Japan is in many ways similar to that of the United States. This was both a testament to the universality of medicine and a nod to the extent to which scientific advances are shared across the globe.

Thanks to the physicians and residents at Kobe University, I was able to spend much time appreciating the culture of Japan. I made many friends and memories which I will always cherish. Highlights include attending the Summer Festival in Osaka, enjoying lunch at the oldest food market in Kobe, hiking to a viewpoint of the city, and sharing a traditional Japanese dinner with everyone in the department.

Though it was a short trip, I will never forget this incredible experience! Therefore, I would like to again express my appreciation to you for helping make this trip possible. I promise to carry what I have learned with me into my career and to pay my success forward to a future student as you have done for me.

Best regards,

Casey Kozak

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Class of 2026