

Kawabata Seminar (4<sup>th</sup> Student Interview, K.M.)

Title: "Make Your Chosen Path the Right One"

**Why did you choose Kawabata Seminar?**

I was a member of a badminton club, and at that time, I devoted 80% of my time at university to the club, so I did not have a lot of motivation to do seminar activities. Therefore, I was looking for a seminar that did not conflict with my club schedule. As the club activities were on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I checked out Kawabata Seminar because the seminar was on Tuesday (both main and sub seminars were completed in a day).

**Hm, that's interesting!**

I think there are people who are looking for a seminar which allows them to balance what they have been doing, rather than just studying like crazy. I think Kawabata Seminar is a good fit for those people!

**I think that there were other seminars that were held on days that did not conflict with your club schedule, but what made you choose Kawabata Seminar?**

Considering the schedule of the badminton club, I was looking for seminars that were active on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The truth is, I was originally not interested in economics and rather, I wanted to go to a different department in another university, so I've never thought that economics is interesting...Instead of studying in a classroom or a theoretical way, I wanted to study in a practical way. In that sense, Kawabata Seminar, which specializes in economic geography and urban development, interested me as it gave me the opportunity to use GIS (Geographic Information System) software to do realistic and concrete research, such as the optimal location of companies and congestion rates. I then decided to attend open seminars and information sessions, and my interest in the seminar grew.

**What was the transition from the first information session up to the entrance exam?**

At the first seminar information session, I visited various seminar booths, but by the second seminar information session in October, I felt that I want to go to practice as much as possible, participate in events, and avoid joining seminars that would be a burden on me, especially since it was the time when the board members of the club would change and as a person with a position, I had a lot of motivation. As a result, I decided to visit seminars that are held only on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as two other seminars at the second seminar information session.

**Is there anything during the seminar events that left a lasting impression on you?**

At Kawabata Seminar's open seminar, we actually spent two hours using GIS software to decide where we would build a new hamburger store in Minato Ward. I was able to actually use and touch the software and see what kind of things could be done. In addition, I realized that I could analyze by using real life locations instead of just sitting in the classroom, which was something I wanted to do in a seminar. Many people around me also said that their interest in the seminar grew after attending the open seminar. Now, it has become an annual tradition to do the exact same thing (hamburger store) in the open seminar.

### **What is the atmosphere of the seminar?**

One of my senpais who was in Kawabata Seminar said that the professor is kind and that many of the seminar students are rounded and kind. When I actually joined the seminar, I found that the community I belonged to was completely different and I met many people I had never met before, but many of them were very calm and sincere. I am glad that I was able to study with these people for two years.

Furthermore, Professor Kawabata is very kind. Although she is a woman, she is like a mother to us, and I think that is making such a nice atmosphere. I think that even after we leave, the warm atmosphere of the Kawabata Seminar will continue as long as the professor is around.

### **Did you know Professor Kawabata before the seminar information session held by professors?**

In the spring term of my sophomore year, I took a class called “Economics and the Environment” and Professor Kawabata was in charge for the first half of the semester. She was cute and kind at that time, so I was a little interested in the seminar.

### **What was the best part of being in a seminar?**

I think it was great to have a new community. As I put a lot of effort in clubs and did not commit myself to part-time jobs that much, my main focus during my college life was to foster close relationships with those who were in the club. Before joining a seminar, there were times when I faced difficulties because I did not have the time to move on when I had a bad time at the club. However, I had long and loose talks with the students in the seminar, so even when I had some ups and downs because of what was happening in the club, the seminar community helped me a lot to overcome the difficulty. I did not talk about hard topics like economics, but the time we spent together was precious, and I think it was a good time.

### **Looking back on your student life, what was the seminar like?**

If I were to add on, I enjoyed the process of job hunting, but I think it would have been very difficult if I had been on my own.

The people in the club loved badminton and they were not serious about job hunting, but all of my friends in the seminar were more interested in studies and economics, so we talked about job hunting for finance, management, and developer (since we were in an urban development seminar). When we talked about job hunting, I thought there was a lot I could learn from the seminar students. They supported me emotionally during the process, and we were able to exchange information, so I think we had a very good relationship.

### **How did you prepare for the entrance exam?**

In order to get in Kawabata Seminar, I had to submit an ES, take a written test, and take an interview.

As it was my first time writing a proper ES, I asked a senpai (two years above me) who was about to graduate and a senpai from Kawabata Seminar who I mentioned earlier to review and correct my ES three or four times. I think I was able to brush up and polish my ES before submitting it (Laugh).

The written exam was a set of microeconomics and statistics, and I started studying for it around the end of February, which I think is pretty late. As I did not know anything at first, I started using a textbook that explains the basics so that anyone (even an idiot) can understand. As I had the entrance exam on March 12<sup>th</sup>, I studied for about 10 hours a day like a student preparing for an entrance exam to get into university.

**I see! You concentrated a lot in such a short period of time.**

Yes, I really wanted to join the seminar.

**Did you think about what you would do if you were not accepted during Date A registration period?**

Actually, I am the type of person who doesn't really think about that kind of thing (Laugh). I felt that there was enough time to think about it after the first seminar exam period. I thought it would be better to think about what I could do to get accepted than to think about failing at this moment. I started studying very late because of my club schedule, and I had never done an interview before, so I had no idea what I would be asked, but I think it was very good that I focused on getting accepted and doing what I could do.

If you really know which seminar you want to go to, there is no need to compare yourself with others in terms of the acceptance rates and so on. Even if you fail, I think it would be best to do what you can do at that time.

**I think there are some sophomores who are worried about the high acceptance rate, but it would be great if they could attend the seminar information session in order to find a seminar they really want to join (Laugh).**

Even if the acceptance rate is 25%, all you have to do is find three idiots (laughs), and if you're smart enough, I think it's all good!

**Do you have any message for sophomores who are not sure which seminar to join?**

I was not interested in economics, and I did not have any strong aspirations, but there was a seminar I was attracted to and I wanted to join, so I studied hard. I am glad to have joined the seminar and studied with other members for two years, so I guess it was fate after all.

It's okay if the seminar you chose is the one that really caught your attention, or if it's the one you decided after researching and analyzing. If that is the seminar you ended up taking as a result, then I think it's the right choice, so I hope you trust your feelings and intuition!

**I know that you had to make many choices in your university, department, clubs, seminars, etc. Could you tell us your decision-making process?**

I had originally applied to a non-economic department in a national university and was going to join the badminton team there, but I couldn't get in. Things didn't start out well, but in the end, I am glad to think that it was fate.

The fact I got in Keio is also some kind of fate and because of that, I've met a lot of people. I am very glad that I chose and joined a circle based on my intuition. In this way, I think that joining

Kawabata Seminar and the Faculty of Economics were things which I had no choice but to choose at each stage of my life or were based on my instinct, but I think it was more important to think about what I could do moving forward so that I would not regret my choice.

**Last but not least, what do you think is the strength of Kawabata Seminar?**

① The content is very practical.

I think it is interesting for those who think that economics does not come to mind or those who find the mandatory classes too academic and uninteresting!

② Good professors, good people.

The professor is kind and cheerful, which makes a calm atmosphere in a positive sense as an entire seminar. There are some students, like me, who put lots of time and effort into club activities and consider the seminar as a sub activity, while others are highly motivated and eager to study. Even so, we continue our research together while respecting each other's pace and they pull me along when I was busy...it is a seminar consisting of kind people. I think the most important person is the professor, or rather the people!

We look forward to seeing you at Kawabata Seminar!

**Sidenote:**

This is our fourth student interview. We were very happy to hear that some of you told us that you were reading these student interviews at the KEIZEMI booth during the second information session.

As the title of the article says, the ability to “make your chosen path the right one” will be important when making choices during your university life and in the future. Initially, this student was not able to take the path he wanted to take when entering university, but he has made it his own in the environment he has immersed in. Even if all of you enter the seminar of your choice, it is important that you make that choice as the right path. It would be best if you can prepare well for the test and be confident on the day of the exam so that you can enter the seminar of your choice. There are still a few days left until the exam, so do what you can now to prepare. I wish you all the best in your entrance exams.