

## **Local Students Excel at the 2019 High School Japanese Speech Contest**

PITTSBURGH, PA – The Japan-America Society of Pennsylvania (JASP) and the University of Pittsburgh’s Asian Studies Center jointly hosted the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual High School Japanese Speech Contest on **Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>** at the William Pitt Union on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh.

This year 52 students from Western PA competed in this daylong competition. Japanese language students of all levels and students who are involved in Japan-related cultural activities participated in one of four speech levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced and advanced plus) or the poster contest. Participating schools were Pittsburgh Milliones University Preparatory High School, Norwin High School, Pittsburgh Allderdice High School, Pittsburgh Obama Academy, Shaler Area High School and Upper St. Clair High School.

Austin Keller from Norwin High School won the grand prize in the Advanced Plus level. The present for him was an electronic Japanese-English dictionary donated by the Consulate General of Japan in New York. First place in the Advanced level was Nathan Hayward from Shaler Area High School. First place in the Intermediate category went to Marty Bryant from Upper St. Clair High School. The first place in the Beginner level went to Caroline Knizner from Upper St. Clair High School. Finally, Michaela Kauffelt and Della Wagner tied for first place in the Poster competition session. Both are from Upper St. Clair High School.

University of Pittsburgh East Asian Language & Literature faculty once again participated as judges; Sachiko Howard, Noriko Kowalchuck, and Junzo Oshimo were part of the judging team, and Stephen Luft led a one-hour workshop for the language teachers on “Japanese Language Learning with Talkabroad: Connecting students with native speakers.” Seven Pitt students also participated, assisting with the activities tables. Journalist Sally Wiggin and Consul Tomofumi Horiki from the Consulate General of Japan, NY served as special guests for the Awards Ceremony.

This event is made possible through the generous support of the Elliott Group, Perryman Company, Temple University Japan Campus, Japan Foundation Los Angeles, the Japanese Consulate General of New York, University of Pittsburgh Asian Studies Center, the Japan Iron & Steel Federation and Mitsubishi Endowments at the University of Pittsburgh, and all participating schools, students and volunteers.