

Closing Remarks

The first UAW meeting was held five years ago with the participation of fifteen universities. In the planning stages of the first meeting, every member of the preparation team was concerned about whether we could get enough participants, and whether we could continue to hold the meeting in subsequent years. The idea behind the UAW was to offer a forum for university administrators to share their views and ideas. We are very fortunate that the UAW was well supported by experienced staff members from the participating universities, and Kyoto University was able to successfully hold the meeting annually for five years. Twenty-two universities participated in this, the 5th UAW meeting.

For the last five years we have chosen themes relating to the practical operations of university international offices. This year we chose two topics. The first was “Challenges for the Global Circulation of Students” and the second was “International Networking of International Administration Officers.” These two topics are very relevant to the participants, who are in charge of international operations at their respective institutions.

Our guest speaker, Dr. Gay Michiko Satsuma of the University of Hawaii spoke about student exchange. Dr. Satsuma shed some light on the tendency of universities to try to compete on the international stage by increasing their number of partner universities and their number of international students. She showed us the necessity of reconsidering such tendencies, and returning to the basic question of why we send students overseas.

In the following sessions, nineteen speakers gave us their ideas on the workshop’s topics. I was very impressed by the many questions, answers and comments given during the sessions. Why were we able to have so many interesting discussions? The answer is because we all experience similar problems in our daily operations, and we need answers to these questions.

Can we predict what will happen in international higher education during the next five years? Probably not with any degree of accuracy. The world in which we live is changing so rapidly, and we have to remain very flexible. However, we also need to have a clear vision. I believe that the UAW has contributed to forming such a vision among us.

During my presentation, I explained that Kyoto University cannot hold this workshop next year because of budgetary constraints. However, many participants supported my proposal to continue the meeting in another form. One idea is to rotate the venue each year. In a few months we will start to work on proposals for the new UAW, and we hope that we will be able to see you again sometime soon.

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