

Concluding Remarks

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The internationalization of higher education is progressing rapidly all over the world and we are an integral part of it. The cooperation among us is therefore becoming increasingly important. I am quite sure that all the attendees of the fourth UAW meeting this February were aware of this.

For this year's meeting we prepared three sub-topics under one main heading. The main heading was "Building International Partnerships: In quest of a more creative exchange students," and the three sub-topics were 1. The role of the International Office; 2. Developing a Variety of Programs for Accommodating More Students; and 3. Risk Management in International Exchange. These three topics covered matters which many international administrators in universities must regularly deal with in their daily operations.

We invited two guest speakers to the workshop. The first was Professor Akira Ninomiya of Hiroshima University and the second speaker was Mr. Markus Laitinen of the University of Helsinki.

Professor Ninomiya's speech was entitled "Desirable Internationalization of University Education". He began his speech with the question of how and how far can we pursue the internationalization of universities. This seems to be an odd question, because we live in the world where everyone talks about the pursuit of internationalization. However, according to Prof. Ninomiya, there is no automatic agreement in any given university whether the university should be internationalized at all and how it will be internationalized. Each university should provide its own answers to these questions. Once a university decides upon their aims, they can start to establish their internationalization strategies. Prof. Ninomiya introduced the efforts of Hiroshima University to create innovative and effective student exchange programs. He focused particularly on their Joint Seminar Program and Double Degree Program of INU of "Global Citizenship and Peace". He touched upon the difficulties which university administrators may face in developing international programs, and concluded his

speech by emphasizing the importance of functional organizations, as well as trust and cooperation in and among such organizations.

The title of Mr. Laitinen's speech was "An International University without an International Office". The title itself seemed very mysterious before we listened to his speech. Later, however, we understood the meaning of the title and were informed of what is going on in international affairs in one of the most prominent universities in Europe. He began his speech with several questions related to the definition of international affairs. Is international affairs related to something that takes place in English? Is it something to do with moving people across borders? And so on. Then Mr. Laitinen gave us a key to the mysterious title. The International Office in the University of Helsinki evolved from dealing with correspondence and protocol in the late 1980's and there have been five re-organizations of the International Office since then. Since 2003 there is no one International Office, but the Office of International Affairs is a network/matrix organization within the central administration. Internationalization is no longer restricted to one section, but each section of the central office is in charge of internationalization. Internationalization is part of the everyday operations of all staff and it is embedded in all strategic documents. The Office of International Affairs has its own budget and meetings, although the members of the office are distributed in various sections of the central office. Mr. Laitinen referred to this idea as "Mainstreamed Internationalization". With the help of the university's advanced IT system, this structure has worked well, although he said that this is not a model which could be applied in every institution.

After these two intriguing speeches, we moved to the sessions where each participating university presented their ideas. I cannot introduce each speaker here, but all the presentations are detailed in this book.

The first session concerned "The Role of the International Office". Many presenters spoke about the different functions the international office plays in their universities. They are creating platforms for joint research, international curriculum development, care of international students, admission and information services, publicity, and international relations, including academic agreements. The speakers also outlined their institution's organizational structures. Some of them are very centralized and others are much more decentralized, depending on their history and their characteristics. They also discussed financial aspects, such as contracts with governments and corporations, as well as staff training and rotation. Although each participant knew her or his organization well, many of us didn't know how other

institutions operate.

The second session focused on “Creating Attractive Student Exchange Programs”. The first question raised was about the targets of such programs. When we talk about a student exchange program, it is necessary to identify the target of the program. Is the target undergraduate or graduate students? Is it domestic students or international students? Depending on the target, our job will be very different. Then many speakers spoke about their unique programs. Summer programs, service learning, internship programs, exchange programs, dual degree programs and joint degree programs were discussed. The very new idea of “Student to Student Programs” was proposed. This concept entails that students are no longer the simple recipients of a service, but that they participate in the creation of new programs. Several problems related to student exchange were also mentioned in the discussions. These included credit transfers, the language of education, and funding.

The third session was about “Risk Management”. In this session, three speakers talked about their experience of assisting students with risks. International students face unique risks which domestic students would not usually have. These risks can be caused by different factors such as the loneliness and stress that can be experienced when living in a different culture. The presentations emphasized that it is vital that we understand the risks involved. Some research results relating to risk management were also presented.

After the intensive discussions of the two days, we once again felt a strong solidarity among the participants who are striving to develop the international exchange undertakings within higher education in Asia. We agreed upon the necessity to establish a forum where all participating institutions could discuss the issues freely and creatively.

In this spirit, I look forward to meeting again in Kyoto next year!