

Further Promotion of Internationalization of Education at National Universities

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Education and Research Committee
The Japan Association of National Universities

1 Introduction

Amid rapid globalization in society and the business world, national universities have a responsibility towards society to produce individuals who can play an active role internationally. This is also an important mission that universities must fulfill to enable their students to demonstrate their abilities fully in a globalized world in the future.

In “Enhancing the Functions of National Universities—Pledge to the People—,” released in June 2011, the Japan Association of National Universities (JANU) announced that it would work to enhance the national universities’ function of “promoting active international exchange and contribution to the international community.” To this end, the JANU will actively promote the internationalization of national universities by encouraging each national university to enhance its unique strengths and characteristics and promote various activities for internationalization.

2 Environment surrounding universities and internationalization efforts undertaken by national universities

Since the incorporation of national universities in Japan, the environment surrounding universities has changed significantly and various policies for the internationalization of universities have been developed.

- (1) Initiatives for internationalization undertaken in recent years
 - ① Amidst a social trend toward internationalization, the “300,000 International Students Plan (July 2008)” was formulated as a national policy to enhance the international competitiveness of higher education in Japan.
 - ② “Strategy for Developing Global Human Resources (June 2012),” “Execution Plan for University Reform (June 2012),” and “Japan Revitalization Strategy (July 2012)” were formulated.
- (2) Development and implementation of strategies for the internationalization of universities
 - ① Many universities have developed their own internationalization strategies, and established organizations for executing those strategies (Internationalization Strategy Headquarters, etc.).
 - ② Many universities have established facilities dedicated to international exchange (International Center, International Student Center, etc.).
 - ③ The number of staff members in charge of international exchange has increased.
 - ④ Overseas offices for shared use by Japanese universities have been established to provide one-stop support services such as providing information on Japanese universities and recruiting foreign students to study in Japan.

3 Current status of internationalization of education at national universities

The main characteristics of the current status of internationalization of Japanese national universities are as follows.

- (1) In total, over 8,000 international exchange agreements have been signed between Japanese national universities and overseas institutions.
- (2) National universities have a combined total of 298 overseas bases.
- (3) Graduate schools actively accept international students. The graduate schools of 69 universities (about 80% of national universities) have adopted autumn admission.

- (4) Many universities (about 70% of national universities) have credit transfer arrangements with overseas universities.
- (5) Cooperative programs with overseas universities are being introduced, including double degree programs (26 universities in fiscal 2009).
- (6) Many universities (about 80% of national universities) offer international summer school and language training programs.

4 Targets for internationalization of education at national universities

In order for Japan to fulfill important roles as a member of the international society, it is essential to promote human resources development through systematic sending of Japanese students abroad and active acceptance of foreign researchers and students. It is also essential to develop human resources who meet the needs of international organizations, etc. and to support the development of educational and research infrastructure in developing countries and develop human resources who play a leading role in such infrastructure development.

In addition to understanding and working to enhancing the current status of internationalization described in section 3 above, all the national universities in Japan will strive to achieve the below-listed numerical targets for internationalization by making effective use of various inter-university cooperation programs.

<Targets>

- ① Increase the percentage of international students accepted at the undergraduate and graduate levels combined to 10% by 2020.
- ② Increase the percentage of Japanese students studying abroad at the undergraduate and graduate levels combined to 5% by 2020.
- ③ Double the ratio of foreign faculty members by 2020.
- ④ Double the number of courses taught in English both at the undergraduate and graduate levels by 2020.
- ⑤ Double the number of universities that set numerical targets related to internationalization by 2020.

[Reference]

[Current status of the items for which targets have been set]

- ① Percentage of international students accepted: About 5.8% (as of May 1, from the 2012 JANU Survey)
- ② Percentage of students studying abroad: About 2.2% (FY2011 results, from the 2012 JANU Survey)
- ③ Ratio of foreign teachers (full-time): About 3.2% (as of May 1, from the 2012 MEXT School Basic Survey)
- ④ Number of courses taught in English: 11,839 (as of May 1, from the 2012 JANU Survey)
- ⑤ Number of universities that set numerical targets related to internationalization (as of May 1, from the 2012 JANU Survey)
 - Universities setting a numerical target for the number of international students accepted: 45 out of 86 universities
 - Universities setting a numerical target for the number of students studying abroad: 37 out of 86 universities
 - Universities setting a numerical target for the number of foreign teachers: 28 out of 86 universities

[Numerical targets for initiatives in recent years]

The “300,000 International Students Plan (July 2008)”

- Targets to be achieved by 2020: Accept 300,000 talented international students, and promote international exchange of 300,000 Japanese students, etc.

“Global Human Resources Development Strategy (June 2012)”

- Aim to ensure that about 10% of people in the same age group (i.e. about 110,000 people) have an experience of studying or living abroad for more than one year by the first half of their twenties.

5 Items on which each national university should work

Below are examples of efforts that each national university can undertake to achieve its targets.

- [1] Develop its own internationalization strategies (Action Plan, etc.) that fit its characteristics, size, etc.
- [2] Establish an education system of which it can be proud internationally.
 - ① Promote qualitative conversion of bachelor’s degree education (Increasing/securing quality study time, etc.).
 - ② Develop a system for guaranteeing world standard quality (Certification of accredited education programs by field, participation in international assessments of learning outcomes such as AHEL, etc.).
 - ③ Conduct Japanese culture classes in English and promote mutual understanding of different cultures.
 - ④ Promote networking among universities through inter-university partnerships, consortiums, etc.
 - ⑤ Establish educational programs in cooperation with elementary and secondary education.
- [3] Set up and upgrade organizations for executing internationalization strategies.
 - ① Place faculty with specialized knowledge and language skills on long-term assignment and centralize liaison office functions.
 - ② Develop an effective system of cooperation between the organization responsible for internationalization and the departments.
 - ③ Make active use of overseas bases through inter-university cooperation programs.

- [4] Improve the environment for accepting international students.
 - ① Develop accommodation for international students.
 - ② Improve scholarship and tuition reduction/exemption programs.
 - ③ Make admission time more flexible.
 - ④ Develop and promote programs that enable students to obtain academic degrees by taking only courses taught in English.
 - ⑤ Enhance Japanese education.
- [5] Eliminate obstacles to Japanese students' study abroad.
 - ① Enhance scholarship programs.
 - ② Establish a system that enables study abroad students to avoid repeating a year.
 - ③ Develop various study abroad programs.
 - ④ Provide support for employment.
 - ⑤ Improve credit transfer systems and clarify the standards for conferral of degrees.
- [6] International contribution
 - ① Develop human resources with specialized knowledge who can contribute to global society.
 - ② Further promote international joint research projects.
 - ③ Develop human resources (administrators, teachers, etc.) and improve education and research capabilities in developing countries.

6 What the JANU expects of the government, etc.

In order for each national university to promote internationalization to develop globally competitive human resources, support from governmental organizations (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, etc.) is essential. The following support is expected from the government and other parties.

- (1) Expand financial support for creating an environment conducive to internationalization.
 - ① Expand facilities improvement subsidies for developing dormitories for international students.
 - ② Expand scholarships for international students accepted and students studying abroad.
 - ③ Expand financial support for faculty participating in overseas training.
- (2) Make the systems, etc. more flexible to promote internationalization.
 - ① Make public qualifications test methods, etc. more flexible.
 - ② Make the recruiting time more flexible (public agencies, private enterprises, etc.).
 - ③ Make the education system (term during which classes are conducted, etc.) more flexible.
 - ④ Establish joint degree programs.

7 Activities to be undertaken by the JANU

Toward strengthening internationalization of education at national universities, the JANU will implement the activities (1) to (6) below.

- (1) Call on the national government to provide financial support make the system more flexible to promote internationalization.
- (2) Appeal to the business world (companies, etc.) to provide support for the internationalization of national universities.
- (3) Create a collection of internationalization measures (understanding of current status and consideration of possible system reforms).
- (4) Find overseas companies accepting interns and those providing liaison services, establish a framework for internships and seek cooperation for operation of

internships.

(5) Conduct seminars on internationalization.

(6) Hold conferences with university presidents from various countries.