

Fundamental Views concerning the National University Reforms

**—Independent and Autonomous Efforts toward the
Functional Enhancement of National Universities—**

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The Japan Association of National Universities

According to the University Reform Action Plan released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in June 2012, MEXT will formulate "University Vision," "Fundamental Policies for National University Reforms," "National University Reform Plan," etc. in the years to come in order to promote national university reforms.

In response to these developments, the Japan Association of National Universities (JANU) decided to conduct reviews necessary for maintaining the independence of national universities and autonomously and strategically promoting national universities' functional enhancement that is being required by society. To that end, JANU set up four sub-working groups under the working group of the Committee on Enhancement of the Functions of National Universities. By doing so, we have developed a mechanism that ensures efficient, substantial, and in-depth discussions and have strenuously conducted review activities.

Fundamental Views concerning the National University Reforms—Independent and Autonomous Efforts toward the Functional Enhancement of National Universities is JANU's latest report. We hope the government will pay due attention to this report and make the best use of it in efforts to formulate national university reform policies.

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(Introduction)

(1) Fundamental Views concerning the National University Reforms

Each national university shares such common functions as education, research, and regional and international contribution, which should not exist as categorized ones. All national universities must address common challenges if they are to upgrade and enhance each of the above-mentioned functions. And yet, in the face of such domestic challenges as rapidly declining birthrates and ageing population as well as such worldwide issues as globalization, it is also true that there are different challenges facing individual universities, depending on their sizes or the characteristics of the local communities in which they operate.

However, we should not attempt to address such challenges through an approach or method that classifies the challenges based on the sizes or organizational forms of universities, assigns different functions to different universities, and perpetuates such assignment. This kind of shortsighted view that advocates the division of roles among universities will only lead to the shrinking of the entire body of national universities, resulting in loss of the diversity currently enjoyed by national universities.

JANU adheres to the position of regarding these challenges as common issues facing the entire body of national universities and addressing them by improving the organic collaborative system among the national universities. Diversity of national universities cannot be achieved by developing diverse forms of university organizations or assigning different functions to different universities. It should rather be achieved by diversity in the characteristics that universities express when they adapt their missions to changes of the times, refine their missions ahead of the times, make autonomous decisions about the functions that need improvement, and draw up and implement specific measures for enhancing relevant functions.

(2) History of JANU Activities

JANU has believed that it is of foremost importance to further enhance functions developed by each university, while organically gathering all the strengths accumulated by the entire body of national universities. Based on this understanding, JANU has thus far released two reports, namely *The Future Direction of National Universities—Voluntary Action Guidelines* in March 2008 and *Enhancing the Functions of National Universities—Pledge to the People* in June 2011.

The Guidelines aims to help national universities draw up voluntary action plans for enhancing their functions, while at the same time comprising a “declaration of action” that encourages national universities to live up to expectations from all levels of Japanese society. *Pledge to the People* is the national universities’ commitment to common objectives, namely (1) enhancing national universities’ functions as national and regional centers to ensure the recovery of society and the construction of a sustainable society in Japan in the wake of the unprecedented devastation caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the serious disaster that hit Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, (2) gathering national universities’ strengths so that they can function as an “organic system for intellectual collaboration,” and (3) responding to the people’s needs and expectations in all possible situations, thereby fulfilling their social responsibilities.

As shown below, *Pledge to the People* cites four common functions to be strongly enhanced, five measures to be taken for the enhancement of these functions, and five roles to be played by the government for the achievement of such functional enhancement.

○ Four Functions to Be Enhanced

Function 1 : Providing excellent education and developing persons of distinguished talent

Function 2 : Energetic promotion of scientific research

Function 3 : Contribution as a center of regional promotion

Function 4 : Promotion of active international exchange and contribution to the international community

○ Five Measures for Functional Enhancement

Measure 1 : Clarification of characteristics and distinctive features and implementation of ongoing reforms

Measure 2 : Establishment of an internal quality assurance system for education, research, and other activities and improvement of the quality of such activities

Measure 3 : Ensuring strict self-evaluations and active disclosure of university information and fulfillment of the responsibility to explain to stakeholders

Measure 4 : Facilitation of cooperation with education and research institutions in Japan and abroad

Measure 5 : Making university operation more efficient and advanced, and acquiring diverse funds and using them effectively

○ Five Roles to Be Played by the Government to Achieve Functional Enhancement

Role 1 : Upgrading of national universities to lead intellectual innovation in Japan

Role 2 : Guaranteeing access to higher education

Role 3 : Improvement of various environments to encourage functional enhancement

Role 4 : Improvement of evaluation systems

Role 5 : Stabilizing the financial foundation and reviewing financial systems

(3) Notes on the Latest Review

In the latest review session, we decided to base our discussions on the above-mentioned points and carefully gather and organize various opinions from JANU member universities. To that end, we agreed to set up four sub-working groups under the working group of the Committee on Enhancement of the Functions of National Universities, thereby establishing a review system that would ensure in-depth discussions.

These sub-working groups have focused their discussions on the issues of increasing importance or urgency in the face of recent changes in social situations, while adhering to the ideals and directions upheld in *The Guidelines* and *Pledge to the People*. However, we excluded functions relating to international exchange and contribution from the agenda of the latest review session because the JANU Education and Research Committee have been discussing such functions since the spring of 2012. Instead, we added the hospital function of universities to the topics of discussions because it takes on unique importance as healthcare needs become more diverse and sophisticated with the rapid ageing of the population. The functions discussed, therefore, were (1) Educational Function, (2) Research Function, (3) University Hospital Function, and (4) Function as Regional Centers. During the discussions, we also identified challenges by organizational characteristics, namely university, single-department college, and graduate university.

The reason why we paid attention to organizational characteristics is that, since there could be various ways of building and upgrading an organic collaborative system among national universities, it is important for national universities of different forms to deeply understand each other's organizational characteristics. It is also believed that mutually complementary cooperation among different types of universities would also help facilitate their functional enhancement.

Meanwhile, we also need to give due consideration to such external conditions of the local communities in which national universities are located as demographic composition, change of industrial structure, and future trend toward the decentralization of national government power to the local authorities. In that context, the challenges identified and organized during the latest review session are only tentative and need further scrutiny

in the years ahead.

Further, we decided not to make any specific mention of any individual department or discipline in this report.

Based on the above understandings, we will describe some of the viewpoints that we would like MEXT to note or reconfirm in the process of formulating “University Vision” and “Fundamental Policies for National University Reforms.”

As a “sequel” to *The Guidelines* and *Pledge to the People*, this report discusses the fundamental views that we have come up with on our own initiative in regard to the national university reforms. It is our hope that this report will help advance our efforts toward the formulation of specific policies in close cooperation and collaboration with MEXT in the years to come.

1. Overview

- MEXT is committed to strongly promoting university and higher education reforms by formulating “University Vision” and “Fundamental Policies for National University Reforms.” In that process, we believe it necessary to reconfirm the significance of universities, particularly national universities. As a major agent in the university reforms, we should discuss and proceed to, on our own initiative and by considering society’s needs, why universities’ activities have public nature or roles and how we should redefine universities’ public roles and functions in today’s rapidly changing society.

■ What Is the Significance of National Universities?

— Reconfirmation of the Public Roles of National Universities

(1) Growing Importance of National Universities

- In the years to come, Japan will face such domestic problems as rapidly declining birthrates and ageing population as well as such international challenges as the accelerating trend of globalization. These challenges are expected to bring about enormous change to our conventional socio-economic structure, posing various intricate and complex problems to our future generations. Besides, there is no question that global environmental destruction, global warming, and other issues that need to be addressed on a worldwide level will become increasingly urgent. It is also necessary, particularly in Japan, to be constantly on the alert for such extensive natural disasters as earthquakes.
- Rapidly declining birthrates and ageing population may cripple social security system, and changes in the nation’s disease patterns and an increase of “marginal villages” in intermediate and mountainous areas may result in the weakening or even disappearance of local communities. Moreover, it is not hard to imagine that the advancing globalization of economy will not only drastically change our country’s industrial and employment structures, but also make people’s mindset more borderless and further accelerate the mobility of people seeking better job opportunities across national boundaries.
- Despite all these challenges, however, Japan must continue sustainable development as an advanced, high-quality and affluent society that embraces multiculturalism, while maintaining a fair and flexible system of mutual cooperation. To that end, we need to develop individuals with highly specialized knowledge and skills who have lofty ideals and strict ethics, skills to communicate with various people regardless of their cultural backgrounds, generations, or social statuses, and abilities to solve problems from both global and local (hereafter called “*glocal*”) perspectives. It is also of foremost importance to advance scientific studies that will lay the foundation for various innovations. Higher education institutions have a leading role to play in addressing such challenges that could substantially affect our country’s future. In this context, national

universities, among other higher education institutions, are expected to play a particularly significant part, in view of their public roles described in the following.

(2) Reconfirmation of the Public Roles of National Universities

- In the process of building modern states, universities have been expanding and propagating the body of knowledge developed by mankind and making it a source of social wealth, thereby functioning as a driving force for social progress. In Japan, too, this process took place in the Meiji era and thereafter, where former imperial universities led and worked with various other types of higher technical colleges to help develop our nation into a modern state. After that, throughout the period before and after World War II, national universities were founded one after another by integrating various higher education institutions located in each region, leading higher education and scientific research and contributing to social development in our country. Today, as Japan is experiencing a tremendous crisis in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, national universities are expected more strongly than ever to fulfill their public role of ensuring sustainable development of both Japan and the entire human society, through education, scientific research, industrial promotion, the promotion of culture, art, and sports, medical activities, and regional and international contribution. Because of this public nature of national universities, the national government guarantees equal opportunity in higher education by founding and maintaining national universities.
- Education and research at universities have brought about the development of science and technology through the production of human resources and advancement of research, thereby bringing great benefits to society. Because of these benefits to society and ever-growing expectations for the increase of such benefits, universities are regarded as being of “public nature” and recognized as entities whose expenditures should be partially funded by the government, though recipients of higher education are also required to assume part of the financial burden. National universities, among other types of universities, have received substantial benefits from investments made by their founder, namely the national government.
- Meanwhile, the society that has been supposed to be the recipient of the benefits of higher education has changed into a “knowledge-based society.” Also, people’s values have been diversifying due to the maturing of economy and advancement of globalization. All these developments have made it necessary to review and discuss anew why public investments are necessary for higher education institutions, particularly national universities, what their present statuses are, and how they should develop in the future, by taking into consideration Japan’s national strategy as well.
- Rapidly declining birthrates, ageing population, and population decrease will lead to the reduction of working population. Savings and investments will also decrease as a result of the ageing of population. Capital accumulation will slow down. All these developments are expected to have an enormous effect on the Japanese economy. If Japan is to maintain its position as a highly industrialized country and develop a sustainable and mature society in the globalizing world, it is necessary to encourage more women and senior citizens to join the labor market. At the same time, we need to create new industries through technological innovations, and enhance productivity and add more value to our products by increasing efficiency. To achieve these goals, it is essential to provide higher education in a way that develops individuals with highly specialized knowledge and skills (particularly global human resources and female human resources) and continue basic scientific research in a steady, consistent manner. In this sense, education is a practice that produces no quick results, but greatly affects the future of a country and that is expected to bring about greater social benefits than the amount of money invested. Education is also vital if

a country is to maintain and increase its international competitiveness. That is why we are convinced that education deserves public investment of the scale commensurate with the national power of each state.

(3) Significance of National Universities

- National universities have a certain level of diversity because they have different historical backgrounds and processes of foundation and development, as well as characteristics associated with their sizes and geographical locations. However, they are evenly located across the country to ensure equal opportunities for higher education and have such common missions as maintaining and passing on to future generations high-quality education and research in a wide range of disciplines and developing human resources who can support the development of our country both at the national and regional levels.
While situations surrounding national universities today are extremely challenging, MEXT and national universities themselves should renew their recognition of the national universities as an important social sector that plays a vital and central part in delivering what is expected of education in Japan. Specifically, education in Japan is expected to hand down to future generations the traditions of our society, cultural affluence, as well as the unparalleled fairness and strong intellectual curiosity that characterize Japanese people.
- National universities are entrusted by the people to play vital roles that will greatly affect the future of our country. Responding to such entrustment from the people in an appropriate manner justifies the existence and public roles of the national universities. In that context, national universities, both at individual and collective levels, must recognize their potentials, carry out consistent reforms of their management and other aspects and autonomously fulfill their public functions and roles in ways that accord with the trend of the times, while constantly enhancing the benefits that education and research bring about to society.

2. Fundamental Understandings about the Functions and Roles to Be Enhanced

- When studying national universities' functions and roles to be enhanced in the years ahead, it is necessary to have detailed discussions not only on the entire body of national universities but also on the characteristics (in terms of functions and forms of organization) of each national university. To that end, we identified four functions of national universities. We also classified national universities into three categories by form of organization, namely the "university" that comprises undergraduate (or other types of organization designed to build the foundation for education and research) and graduate schools, the "single-department college," and the "graduate university" that does not have an undergraduate-level organization. In the following, we organized the functions and roles to be defined more clearly for each of the above three forms of organizations. These processes are not intended to assign any particular characteristics to any individual national university or limit the roles of each university. Rather, these categories simply represent ideal types intended to help all parties concerned share common understandings.
- Through their education and research, all national universities have developed competent human resources and made regional and international contributions. In the wake of the recent major earthquake and tsunami disaster, national universities have made and are still making all-out, concerted efforts to support the disaster-hit areas. Based on these functions, this report organizes matters that need more clarification, in addition to specific issues discussed in *Pledge to the People*.

■ Educational Function

Since the Meiji era, national universities have played a leading role in modernizing Japan. National universities have also provided highly advanced specialized education, taught various liberal arts courses, and offered interdisciplinary programs integrating the humanities and sciences, thereby producing *glocal* and innovative individuals who have knowledge and skills in science and technology as well as in social and cultural fields. In *Pledge to the People*, JANU stated its policy to provide excellent education, and in so doing (1) develop individuals who can lead local communities, (2) develop individuals who play an active role in the international community, (3) provide education that emphasizes the acquisition of culture and an international perspective, (4) develop individuals of distinguished talent with high ethical standards and an awareness of their duties who will play an active role in their areas of expertise such as health care, law, education, and art, (5) develop individuals with a doctor's degree who will play an active role in diverse fields. In the years to come, we believe it necessary for national universities to further enhance their significance by strengthening these human resource development functions. We describe in the following the abilities and qualities of human resources that national universities should develop with greater emphasis.

(1) Train global leaders who can play significant roles in the international arena.

- Develop abilities to apply highly specialized knowledge and skills to actual problem-solving.
- Develop sophisticated communication skills that ensure intercultural and interdisciplinary understanding.

(2) Train individuals who can be top leaders in various fields of society.

(3) Train researchers who can lead next-generation academic pursuits.

Specifically, undergraduate education should set such specific goals as developing knowledge, skills, and creative thinking by combining a broad range of liberal arts courses and basic specialized courses. By achieving these goals, undergraduate education must produce decent and independent citizens, namely individuals with fundamental abilities and attitude required of fully-fledged members of society.

National universities should also upgrade their master's programs and aim for the completion of high-quality specialized education. At the same time, their master's programs should be designed to encourage working adult students to further their education, thereby producing more people with a master's degree.

Doctor's programs should conduct advanced research activities, thereby producing individuals who can lead efforts to accumulate knowledge in diverse fields and address various domestic and international issues, as holders of the highest academic degree with cutting-edge specialized knowledge.

■ Research Function

By making the most of the research results they have consistently accumulated in the next-generation frontier areas and various cutting-edge fields of science, national universities should promote unique and diverse basic research projects, as well as cross-sectional, interdisciplinary studies that encompass both humanities and sciences, and continue communicating their research results worldwide. By strengthening these functions, national universities should further enhance their significance. Specific steps may include:

(1) Implement various scientific research activities.

(2) Promote cutting-edge scientific research activities.

(3) Promote research activities oriented toward problem-solving.

(4) Create innovations.

By taking these steps, national universities should define their future roles and functions more clearly.

However, a nation's research and development capabilities should be developed not by any particular university, but by a broad range of institutions with diverse characteristics. In this sense, each university, regardless of its size or location, should fulfill its role by making the most of its characteristics.

■ University Hospital Function

University hospitals play a vital role as central medical institutions that provide advanced medicine and emergency medicine, develop leading-edge medicine, and contribute to community healthcare. In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, national university hospitals throughout the country have dispatched doctors and other medical professionals to the disaster-hit areas and vigorously provided and are still providing various medical support activities.

Meanwhile, a growing regional difference in the number of doctors has resulted in the uneven distribution of doctors among different departments of university hospitals and other medical institutions and serious shortages of doctors in some departments. Under these circumstances, university hospitals play such various roles and functions as:

- (1) Develop diverse medical professionals who lead team medicine and provide clinical training
- (2) Develop and provide highly advanced, cutting-edge medicine
- (3) Function as a central medical institution providing highly advanced medical care in each local community

In the years ahead, we can easily predict that declining birthrates and aging population will change the nation's disease patterns and increase the importance of preventive medicine and public health. Against that background, university hospitals must pioneer new fields of medicine, hire medical and nursing care professionals who graduated from higher education institutions, train general physicians and doctors specializing in specified diseases, and develop medical professionals who can appropriately respond to the change of society. University hospitals need to define these roles and functions more clearly.

■ Function as Regional Centers

The target areas and contents of services to be provided by national universities and the functions they should fulfill vary depending on their fields of specialization, locations, and other environmental factors. In general, however, national universities develop human resources required by society, and function as regional centers committed to developing knowledge and culture, supporting health and industrial promotion, and training teachers through their education, research, and regional contribution. By engaging in these activities, national universities fulfill responsibilities at their own initiative to ensure the vitalization and sustainable development of the local communities in which they operate. At the same time, national universities also have the role of linking local communities to the world by introducing the local communities in which they are located and by attracting information from the world.

In other words, national universities are expected to function as local think tanks, while at the same time acting as local opinion leaders that drive the development of the local communities from a global perspective.

Furthermore, in regions where several universities are located, there are many cases in which national, public, and private universities address local issues by cooperating with each other in ways that allow different categories of universities to make the most of their respective advantages. Coordinating such inter-university cooperation is another important role of national universities.

In the future, with more national government power being shifted to the local authorities and more autonomy being enjoyed by local communities, geographical locations and local characteristics will be

of greater importance. Against that backdrop, national universities should define their diverse roles and functions even more clearly by emphasizing the above vital factors.

■ Universities

Comprising many departments of diverse disciplines, universities can contribute to society through such functions as comprehensive education and research, regional and international contribution, and more. Individual universities have the potential to make use of these unique advantages of the university.

Making the best use of their diverse human resources and mutually complementary, inter-university networks of cooperation, universities provide comprehensive liberal arts education and conduct interdisciplinary research activities that combine the humanities and science. In the years to come, universities are hoped to further enhance their advantages through such steps as the restructuring of education and research organizations.

■ Single-department Colleges

The significance and advantage of single-department colleges lie in the fact that they collectively cover many fields of specialization and that each of them can conduct education and research and develop highly skilled human resources in its field of specialization in an efficient and flexible way. In this sense, single-department colleges ensure diversity in two ways—diversity required of Japan's higher education system and diversity in its capabilities to respond to various regional and global needs.

In terms of research, each single-department college engages in its unique research activities in line with its mission. In that process, many colleges have produced researchers who lead their fields of specialization, thereby functioning as research hubs unique to Japan and enhancing our country's overall research capabilities and potentials.

■ Graduate Universities

The major advantage of graduate universities is that, since they have no undergraduate schools, they can restructure their organization flexibly to produce highly skilled individuals immediately adaptable to the needs of society and develop education and research systems oriented toward addressing new challenges.

Furthermore, because they attract students from various universities and disciplines, graduate universities have the greater potential of developing talented individuals who can pioneer new academic fields.

In view of their characteristics and goals, we should further enhance graduate universities as one of the pillars of the Japanese university education system.

3. Conclusion—What Is Expected of the Government

- As a source of a broad range of human resources and multi-faceted wisdom, national universities have been playing the leadership role in efforts toward continuous intellectual innovation. National universities have been able to play such a role because they, as a collective entity, have enjoyed a certain level of diversity in terms of functions, forms of organization, and locations. Currently, national universities are

making voluntary efforts toward making various arrangements for organic collaboration among themselves, which we believe will help further enhance the potentials of national universities associated with their diversity. Also, as demonstrated by their responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, national universities, together with the highly skilled individuals and advanced knowledge they produce, are essential both for the country and local communities in various respects, including Japan's crisis management.

- At the same time, since national, public, and private universities are currently play overlapping roles, it is necessary to reorganize the roles that each category of universities is expected to play. For example, there is a growing need for a greater number of individuals with high expertise and versatile abilities who can address various challenges associated with the rapid progress of the globalization of society such as intensifying competition for innovation and other global issues. To respond to such needs, one possible approach that the national universities should take is to shift their emphasis further toward graduate education. This approach, however, will involve thorough discussions on specific future mechanisms to address such challenges as graduate school quality assurance, enrollment limit control, and treatment of individuals with doctoral degrees. At the same time, we should be fully aware of the substantial roles that national universities have so far played in undergraduate education and liberal arts education and the fact that national universities are expected to continue producing well-rounded, competent individuals who can lead the global community.

- JANU is committed to playing a central role in efforts toward the enhancement of the functions of the entire body of higher education institutions in Japan, including national, public, and private universities. To that end, we will meet the expectations of the nation and our stakeholders in cooperation with national universities, by collecting information on the universities and providing opinions based on analysis of such information. Through this and other measures, we encourage national universities to enhance their functions and disclose information on their progress with self-reforms. Meanwhile, we will continue discussions on issues that need examination from medium- and long-term perspectives. These issues include (1) increase of the flexibility of systems related to resource allocation and medium-term goal-setting, evaluations of national university corporations and those for university accreditation, inter-university cooperation and collaboration, such treatment as personnel administration and salary and wages, budget execution, asset management, and so forth, (2) improvement and reforms of selection systems for admission, and (3) measures to actively utilize individuals with a doctoral degree in society. With respect to these issues, we will step up our efforts to propose the government to review the existing systems and their operation.

- Finally, we would like emphasize again that national universities are determined to step up efforts to develop outstanding individuals who are highly educated, have advanced knowledge and skills in their respective areas of specialization, and therefore can lead social reforms. National universities are also committed to promoting further advancement of scientific research. What follows are some of the roles that we expect the government to play in implementing the national university reforms.

■ Roles of the Government in the National University Reforms

- We generally agree to the measures described in the University Reform Action Plan that concern (1) restructuring of the functions of universities in the rapidly changing society and (2) upgrading and strengthening of university governance systems to restructure the functions of universities. It should also be noted, however, that national universities are diverse in terms of locations and functions and that they have utilized their respective characteristics to act as regional centers while conducting global-level research activities.

When restructuring the functions of universities, we should be fully aware of these points and refrain from simplifying discussions by thoughtlessly allocating specific roles to specific universities or dividing universities into several categories.

- While it is true that the national university reforms should be promoted with speed and force, they should not be carried out in a rough and sloppy way. Rather, the national university reforms must be carried out on the basis of close cooperation between MEXT, which is responsible for the functional enhancement of national universities as a whole and the vitalization of each discipline, and the national universities, each of which is expected to enhance its functions in a voluntary and strategic manner. Through such efforts, we should further enhance the functions of national universities and actively disclose results of such efforts to society, thereby further strengthening the positive interactive relationship between society and national universities based on mutual confidence and support. Using the allegory of the wind and the sun, the national government's sunshine policy will accelerate the national university reforms. From this perspective, the government roles described below should be defined more clearly.

Role 1: Upgrading of National Universities to Lead Intellectual Innovation in Japan

Since their foundation, as national organizations, national universities have supported innovation at the national and regional levels and taken on the responsibility of systematically developing diverse talented individuals who can contribute to Japan's sustainable development. Japan must overcome its current difficulties, reconstruct itself and maintain its security, reinvigorate local communities, and ensure its continuous, stable and systematic development. In order to ensure that national universities help achieve these goals, the government should support national universities' efforts to enhance their functions in all respects with all its resources, as they are the source of human resources and wisdom and play a central role in bringing continuous intellectual innovation.

When reviewing the scale of higher education institutions including undergraduate schools or graduate schools, the government should pay close attention to the significance and role of national universities which, as centers for developing outstanding human resources and creating knowledge, have been playing an essential part in supporting the sustainable development of the country and local communities.

Role 2: Respect for Diversity Arising from the Historical Background and Autonomy of Each National University

Each national university has its distinctive characteristics associated with its history and tradition, as well as the disciplines in which it has advantage over other universities, its size, and the functions that it particularly emphasizes. Making the best use of such characteristics, national universities have responded to the needs of local communities and society, while playing the roles that they are expected to play at the international level. Support from the local community that each national university has enjoyed since its foundation is also noteworthy.

When redefining national universities' missions or formulating policies relating to the national university

reforms, the government should pay the utmost respect for each university's unique features and characteristics and consider that each university takes initiative in drawing up its future vision and other plans.

Role 3: Guaranteeing Access to Higher Education

In view of the current economic situation and widening social disparity, national universities must continue to play a major role in providing equal opportunities in education. To that end, the government should not raise the standard tuition fees for national universities that are paid by students and should adhere to its current policy of setting uniform tuition fees for all undergraduate and graduate schools and areas of study. The government should also provide scholarships that need no repayment or non-interest-bearing student loans to a wider range of students who have financial difficulties, or grant them total or partial fee exemption. It is also necessary to establish new systems and environments and upgrade the existing ones even further to guarantee students with disabilities, those from overseas, etc. access to barrier-free education.

Role 4: Improvement of Various Environments to Encourage Functional Enhancement

It is important to create a necessary environment to help national universities actively enhance their functions such as voluntary cooperation, joint operation, and joint facility use among different universities, while paying attention to their sizes, disciplines they emphasize, and their locations. Examples include providing institutional support of the kind that is not bound by numerical targets regarding the number of universities involved or by the types of universities, such as flexible operation of systems to promote cooperation; reforming relevant systems so that resources made available through increased efficiency can be used to enhance the quality of education and invest in education and research as a reward for improvement efforts, rather than to reduce budgets; creating environments that make it easier for presidents to provide leadership in maintaining and improving the education and research environment and achieving qualitative change of university governance (securing a discretionary budget for the office of university president from government subsidies for operating expenses and from project funds, permitting the spending of subsidies or project funds on a multi-year basis under certain conditions, etc.); creating environments, including tax reforms, to facilitate the introduction of external funding. It is also necessary to enhance flexibility and promote the standardization of rules concerning the use of competitive research funds.

With regard to the Revised Labor Contract Law which came into force in April, 2013, it is necessary to study ways to appropriately ensure a certain extent of flexibility in the employment of researchers, so that the revision will not adversely affect national universities' efforts toward further promoting their education and research.

Role 5: Improvement of Evaluation Systems

While university evaluation systems are important for national universities to fulfill their accountability and improve their education, research, and operation, their too detailed, uniform goals and evaluation methods pose several problems. One of the problems is that setting goals and making evaluations becomes an end itself, hindering the education and research activities of national universities and preventing the results of evaluation from being effectively used to improve university operation. Furthermore, the actual condition of national universities is not fully conveyed to the nation.

It is important to put in place evaluation systems that will truly help develop the individuality of each university and enhance its functions, taking into consideration the significance and purposes of each

existing evaluation system as well as the unique characteristics of education and research conducted by universities, which are a different type of entity from independent administrative agencies. It is also necessary to review the current goal-setting and evaluation methods, including their relationships with evaluation systems for university accreditation, through discussions and cooperation with evaluation bodies and other organizations, so as to make evaluation results more visible to the nation, including university personnel.

Role 6: Stabilizing the Financial Foundation and Reviewing Financial Systems

- Being maintained by investments from public finances and therefore not totally dependent on payments from consumers or their families alone, national universities have been able to promote cutting-edge and innovative basic sciences, applied sciences, and research and development, hire a large number of distinguished faculty members who provide undergraduate and graduate education, cooperate with industry and local communities, and promote regional medicine. National universities have conducted these activities in an integrated manner and in so doing have played a principal role in Japan's higher education system.
- In the meantime, since the late 1990s in particular, OECD countries have taken such active measures as an increase of public investments in higher education. In Japan, however, there have been discussions which do not give justice to the role of national universities as a core agent that ensures the public nature of our higher education. As a result, the fundamental operating budget appropriated for national universities has been cut down sharply (down by 99.2 billion yen from FY2004 on an initial budget basis, resulting in the accumulated budget reduction of 470.6 billion yen in 8 years), along with other administrative budgets. This has not only caused the deterioration of the quality and international competitiveness of Japanese higher education, but has also led to the soaring of education cost borne by households. Some even argue that this situation is further accelerating the decline of birth rates in our country.
- In recent years, large-scale competitive research funds available for public application set time limits. This has resulted in the unstable employment of postdoctoral researchers and posed a serious problem to many universities as to how to secure internal resources for funding the research projects that have passed their expiration dates. To cope with these problems, universities strive to obtain external funds and exert efforts toward selection and concentration of research themes. And yet, due to the continuous reduction of their fundamental operating budget, universities are becoming less and less able to maintain their overall research functions.
- Meanwhile, since individuals engaged in education, research, and medical care services carried out by national universities are the assets of the universities, each university is making voluntary efforts to cope with the government's moves to reduce overall university personnel costs and, more recently, to decrease salaries for university staff, and other measures that result in the lowering of Faculty and staff treatment standards. Still, these government measures could prompt many national university faculty members to leave their posts and could make those who have decided to stay less eager or able to advance university reforms.
- In order to proactively evaluate and continuously support national universities' initiatives for voluntarily enhancing their functions based on their redefined missions, JANU desires to ask the government yet again to adopt a powerful policy that truly underpins universities' efforts toward functional enhancement.

Examples include securing stable financial resources, including subsidies for national universities' operating expenses, in a continuous and stable manner from a long-term perspective; expanding scholarship programs and tuition exemption measures for students; upgrading facilities and equipment that provide infrastructures for education and research activities; making well-balanced public investments in basic administrative funds and competitive research funds; restore the treatment standards for national university faculty members; and introducing discretionary budgets that university presidents can appropriate for their universities' systemic reform projects (World Premier International Research Center Initiative [WPI], Program for Leading Graduate Schools, etc.).

Moreover, in order to make education and research at national universities as well as their contribution to society even more advanced and effective, it is necessary to overhaul the financial systems of national universities. Examples include improving methods of allocating subsidies for supporting the operation of national university corporations in ways that appreciate universities' efforts to carry out reforms rather than placing too much emphasis on the results of their efforts; allowing national universities to flexibly execute their budgets such as a personnel budget; and strengthening the management foundation of university hospitals.

(References) Challenges to Be Addressed by National Universities for Each Function

○ Based on the “Conceptual Image of the Contents of the University Vision,” we have prepared exhibits describing challenges that national universities and the government should respectively address for the enhancement of the functions of national universities.

1. Enhancement of Educational Function	Exhibit 1
2. Enhancement of Research Function	Exhibit 2
3. Enhancement of University Hospital Function	Exhibit 3
4. Enhancement of Function as Regional Centers	Exhibit 4
5. Direction of Problem-solving Measures for Each Form of National Universities	Exhibit 5
■ Universities	
■ Single-department Colleges	
■ Graduate Universities	

1. Enhancement of Educational Function

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Carry out continuous university-wide improvement of educational system and environment based on redefined missions.
- ② Under the leadership of presidents, develop comprehensive educational programs that transcend the boundaries between different undergraduate and graduate schools.
 - Place importance on liberal arts education and share integrated, systematic curricula that transcend the boundaries between existing disciplines.
- ③ Carry out a qualitative change of education into one designed to develop the creativity that ensures societal changes.
 - Change class format into interactive lessons that encourage students' voluntary and independent learning.
- ④ Train global human resources
 - Substantially increase the number of Japanese students dispatched to overseas universities and the number of International students admitted to Japanese universities (future ambassadors for Japan).
 - Create a "global campus" on which outstanding students and faculty members both from Japan and abroad gather and make friends with each other.
 - Increase classes given in English while at the same time promoting understanding about the Japanese culture.
- ⑤ Admit students who have the motivations, abilities, and aptitudes that are in line with each university's admission policy.
(Introduce various means of selection, such as referring to students' achievement records up until their graduation from high school to identify and admit individuals with unique talents.)

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Draw up measures for promoting education based on a long-term vision.
- ② Assist in securing faculty members necessary for implementing consistent and carefully-crafted educational programs.
- ③ Help create an environment that encourages students' active learning
- ④ Provide financial assistance to students through tuition exemption and scholarship programs.
- ⑤ Help create a secure and comfortable learning environment for International students (scholarships and dormitories).

2. Enhancement of Research Function

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Carry out continuous university-wide improvement of research system and environment based on redefined missions.
- ② Help outstanding researchers devote more time to research activities and produce results more quickly in the competitive environment.
 - Develop a system in which research technical staff and URAs (University Research Administrators) can provide research assistance and various other experts can play roles in such activities as intellectual asset management and utilization, and appropriately evaluate such staffers, experts, and their activities.
 - Standardize and simplify rules.
- ③ Develop a research environment for young researchers.
 - Develop a mechanism and an environment that help young researchers gain independence early in their careers.
 - Encourage the efficient use of research funds through creative approaches.
- ④ Improvement of employment statuses of young and mid-career researchers who tend to be hired on a short-term basis.
- ⑤ Develop an environment that facilitates active promotion of female researchers to more senior positions.

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Draw up measures for promoting research based on a long-term vision.
- ② Increase investments in research and development and maintain balance between top-down and bottom-up types of projects.
- ③ Properly maintain and manage university facilities and equipment and seek new ways to secure financial resources for their maintenance and improvement.
- ④ Provide more research funds that support each faculty member's research activities (e.g. Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research).
- ⑤ Based on a university's vision and other statements, allocate resources in a well-focused, strategic manner.
 - Develop research universities commensurate with the scale of the nation.
 - Support and strengthen research institutions producing excellent results.
- ⑥ Concentrate funding in the development of knowledge bases.
- ⑦ Appropriate project budgets in a way that ensures smooth systemic reforms.
 - Effective extension of research results requires budget appropriation and project operating cost management that take into account relevant time-lines.
- ⑧ Increase flexibility and standardize rules in the appropriation of competitive funds.
- ⑨ Draw up measures to improve the social status of individuals with doctoral degrees.

3. Enhancement of University Hospital Function

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Develop indicators concerning the quality of medical care and disclose to society.
 - Clarify standards and definitions of medical care.
- ② Develop a new system for providing community medical care through the introduction of enhanced medical ICT.
 - Train general physicians and other medical professionals and enhance university hospitals' function to dispatch doctors to local communities.
- ③ Reorganize existing departments or create new departments in a way that corresponds with new fields of medicine, and promote team medicine.
 - Build a medical care system that encompasses new fields of medicine. Develop and continuously review a system of practicing team medicine, thereby lowering barriers between professions, fields of specialization, and departments.
- ④ Develop global human resources and promote international exchange of hospital personnel.
 - Promote overseas research and training.
 - Invite medical professionals from overseas.
- ⑤ Develop a system to support reemployment or return to work after a period of leave or career break.
 - Provide support and retraining when medical professionals return to work.

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Ensure the quality of medical care provided by board-certified doctors, secure an appropriate number of board-certified doctors for each field of specialization, and review the medical fee schedule based on the number of board-certified doctors in each such field.
 - Manage the board certification system in a way that reflects the number of doctors required by each field of specialization.
- ② Develop a system for providing community medical care.
 - Standardize and share medical information.
 - Develop a system to train "general physicians" and clarify their status in terms of remuneration for their services.
- ③ Develop medium- and long-term plans for training medical professionals and financial plans that support them.
 - Enhance systems for career path creation and training, and promote personnel exchange.
- ④ Develop an environment where doctors have less burden of on duty and more time for research.
 - Increase the number of nurses and other professionals and expand the scope of their responsibilities.
 - Establish an incentive system designed to motivate doctors to engage in research.
- ⑤ Provide financial support for the improvement and enhancement of environments for medical training and research as well as for medical practice.
 - Allocate a sufficient number of professors to facilitate clinical training and basic medical research, and secure research funds on a consistent basis, and address the problem of ageing facilities and equipment.
- ⑥ Develop a suitable environment and carry out systemic reforms to allow foreign doctors to practice medicine in Japan.
 - Introduce exceptional deregulatory measures that allow foreign doctors to acquire medical care skills through on-site training.
- ⑦ Appropriately evaluate advanced medical care and acute care services in the medical fee schedule.
 - Secure financial resources for maintaining the functions of advanced treatment hospitals.

4. Enhancement of Function as Regional Centers

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Enhance regional coordination functions that each university has or that are achieved through inter-university cooperation, take initiative in supporting regional development, and review the scope of activities and division of roles concerning support for regional development.
- ② Based on the strong confidence that national universities enjoy in the local communities in which they operate, make commitment to solving problems that may arise between government, local people, and industry.
- ③ Discuss specific measures to enhance the systematical inter-organizational cooperation to solve the social problems.

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Develop places of employment for local human resources, thereby encouraging graduates to stay in the local communities in which their universities are located.
- ② Promote universities as the Center of Communities (COC) and local- or regional-level inter-university cooperation to secure research funds.

5. Directions of Problem-solving Measures Corresponding with National Universities of Different Forms

■ Universities

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Strengthen presidents' governance to make the most of the functions as universities.
- ② Under the leadership of presidents, promote university-wide efforts toward strengthening research capabilities.
- ③ Inter-departmental allocation of resources.
- ④ Enhance the capabilities of humanities and social sciences researchers to work and communicate internationally (contribution to the creation of new business models and commencement of overseas operations from a new perspective).

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Create an environment that makes it easier for presidents to provide leadership.
 - Secure funds that universities can use flexibly for the maintenance and improvement of education and research environments and for the qualitative change of university governance (secure part of a project budget as a discretionary budget for the office of university president on a multi-year basis).

■ Single-department Colleges

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Strengthen governance in ways that make the most of the advantages of single-department colleges.
 - Being fairly small in scale and basically limited to one discipline, single-department colleges are better able to manage their organizations in a quick and responsive manner.
- ② Take measures to train individuals with more practical, highly specialized skills.
- ③ Take measures to build research hubs with more enhanced functions.
- ④ Enhance the function of single-department colleges as (national and regional) hubs for training individuals with practical, highly specialized skills through cooperation among national, public, and private universities as well as among industry, academia, and government.
- ⑤ Promote research projects unique to each college.
- ⑥ Provide many opportunities of practical, hands-on learning both inside and outside the country.

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Carefully allocate resources to colleges in a way that suits the characteristics and features of each college.
- ② Recognize the importance of there being colleges of diverse forms.

■ Graduate Universities

[Steps to be taken by universities]

- ① Operate universities and strengthen governance by making the most of the strengths of graduate universities.
- ② Develop a system to provide leading-edge graduate education to students with diverse backgrounds.
- ③ Build strong research hubs.

[Steps to be taken by the national government]

- ① Implement policies to further promote the mobility of students at the time of advancing to graduate school.
- ② Raise awareness about the importance of graduate university as a form of academic institution.