

3-5 MEXT's Support Programs for Internationalization of Japanese Universities with a Focus on Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities

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I would like to take this opportunity to talk about recent financial support programs for international education and research provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology (hereafter called 'MEXT'). Since 2002, MEXT has introduced a series of competitive funds. As you can see in this PowerPoint presentation, the following seven programs (1. Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities, 2. University Education Internationalization Promotion Programs, 3. Support for Advanced Student Exchange Pilot Project Support Program, 4. Initiatives for Attractive Education in Graduate Schools, 5. Support Program for Contemporary Educational Needs, 6. Support Program for Distinctive University Education, and 7. The 21st Century COE (Center of Excellence) Program) are major support projects for international education and research. The process for receiving such support is as follows: firstly, universities apply for such programs, secondly, the MEXT conducts screening, and then finally, selected universities receive the support. The first program, Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities, is that which Mr. Kiyoura, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science(hereafter called 'JSPS'), mentioned in his presentation. The second program is positioned as 'Support for Educational Reform of Universities' in a major way and includes three subsidiary promotion programs for, namely 'Faculty and Staff Development on Advanced Educational and Research Practices Abroad', 'Strategic International Cooperation with Universities Abroad, and 'Universities' Long-term Study Abroad Programs'. Unfortunately, the third program, Support for Advanced Student Exchange Pilot Project Support Program, was terminated. Regarding the rest of the programs, from the fourth program onwards; Initiatives for Attractive Education in Graduate Schools, Support Program for Contemporary Educational Needs, Support Program for Distinctive University Education, and The 21st Century COE Program, although these programs are not necessarily focused on international education and research, a closer look at the efforts and activities of the selected universities for the programs shows a significant proportion of them are involved in international education or research. Therefore, I have decided to include those programs here. Through a series of the MEXT's support programs for institutions, it can be said that the MEXT has been promoting internationalization of universities under competitive circumstances.

Next, since I am a research advisor for the project of Strategic Fund for Establishing

International Headquarters in Universities, I would like to explain about the outline of this new project. As Professor Yonezawa mentioned in his earlier presentation, there are still only a few cases of Japanese universities promoting internationalization based on their own international strategies and university-wide approach. In that respect, the significance and expectations of this project are both quite high. The twenty universities were selected for this program based on their provisional plans and strategies for internationalization. These institutions are expected to promote the development of international education and research as well as implement self-evaluation on their international activities. The international strategies of the aforementioned twenty pilot universities are to be revealed at the public symposium, held in Shinjuku, Tokyo on January 30, 2006 while also will be posted on the web sites of both the Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities under the JSPS and of each selected university. The main objective of this project is for each selected university to establish an (university-wide) international headquarters under the leadership of the president, as well as creating strategies for international education and research, and then establishing and reinforcing the required support system in order to implement international activities based on these strategies. Therefore, this is a unique approach for the support programs for international education and research at large compared with traditional MEXT's support programs for certain international activities for education and research. Including its logistic aspects particularly, this program is designed to strengthen the organizational support systems for the international education and research of universities. In addition, JSPS, which was commissioned by MEXT, also plays a role in analyzing the efforts and activities of the aforementioned twenty selected universities, in extracting the good practices among those data, and then in widely disseminating them to universities nationwide. This can also be cited as a model development for the strategy for the internationalization of universities.

The JSPS's viewpoints of the analysis are as indicated in the following slides. The first indicates the organizational structure and governance. Here, it shows specific standpoints, including the roles and tasks of the international headquarters within universities, whether or not there is better coordination between the international headquarters and not only faculties but also administrative offices, and whether better cooperation between faculty members and administrative staff is organized.

The second one is the cycle of PDCA (plan-do-check-action) for the international activities, which is most deeply linked to the theme of the today's symposium. First of all, each university needs to recognize the present state of its internationalization. In order to do so, universities can take a variety of approaches, for examples, inviting

overseas experts for the assessment of international activities and conducting surveys on faculty members, staff, and students. Based on the recognition of the current situation, an institution authorizes its action plans through the process of creating a mission and master plan, and then defining the goals from short- to long-term. During this process, it is also very important that an institution well shares its mission and goals with the members of the campus community in a cross-sectional manner. Subsequently, the university should periodically evaluate to what extent its action plans have been actually achieved (including self-study and external evaluation).

The third one concerns the acquisition of external funds. In Japanese universities, it has been said for many years that international education and exchange would not be successful in contributing to institutions' finance as it costs too much. However, recently, particularly in the field of international cooperation, governmental agencies such as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have begun to provide projects to promote the organizational participation of universities and these new projects are attractive for institutions in terms of the infusion of external funds. In addition, some universities have begun to acquire projects offered by foreign governments, including the EUJ (European Union Institute in Japan) and the China's Confucius Institute. Furthermore, in regard to the international education programs, such as the acceptance of international students, some universities have attempted to develop new programs, on the basis of financially self-sustainable and business (income generating) approach.

The formulation of and participation in the international consortia of universities indicated in the fourth viewpoint is related to 'competition and cooperation', which is often mentioned in the context of the globalization of higher education. Forward-looking and prestigious universities compete against each other on their activities of education and research beyond national borders as well as constructing cooperative frameworks by developing an international network. In Japan, the number of universities actively participating in international university consortia has also increased while some universities assume a leading role by launching their own international consortia. With the objective of promoting and effectively expanding international student exchange programs, some universities have begun to participate in international consortia for student exchange based in Europe and North America.

The fifth point is concerned with training and acquiring administrative staff, which is the most important in terms of reinforcing the logistical aspects of international activities. This covers a wide range of issues including staff development, the active recruitment of experienced staff from the business world, and hiring staff as specialists

for managing international activities. Furthermore, it covers how the career paths of these specialists for international activities should be treated, and how the aforementioned new approaches should be harmonized with the Japanese traditional personnel system or whether the fundamental reform of the personnel system is required to adapt universities to the globalized higher education in the 21st century.

The sixth standpoint is the so-called ‘internationalization at home’.

It is pointed out that, looking over the entire campus, internationalization has indeed made progress in international-related faculties and offices. However, sections involving general educational affairs, student services, library, and computer related facilities still remain unchanged. And these unchanged sections are not user-friendly for international students and researchers. Needless to say, the front offices, which are responsible for student, research, and educational affairs, must also promote internationalization and it is expected that the international headquarters should undertake the leading role of internationalization at home. In addition, from the viewpoint of effective support for international researchers and students including their families, there is the need for a shift from the individual (one-to-one) support by faculty members of the host departments to organizational one by the university-wide one-stop service.

The seventh point of view is study abroad for Japanese students. After achieving the Plan to Accept 100,000 International Students, a policy to encourage Japanese students to study abroad has been promoted under the MEXT’s initiative for international student exchange. In terms of the number and diversity of study abroad programs, national universities lag behind private ones. Thus, particularly national universities are expected to develop the study abroad programs rapidly as well as to expand them quantitatively and qualitatively.

Finally, the eighth one is the development of overseas bases. Recently, it seems that setting up overseas bases of universities has become trend as they are increasingly found worldwide. However, the actual activities and functions of those overseas bases remain undefined in many cases. In addition, some overseas bases have encountered difficulty in implementing educational and research activities as they desired in an unhindered manner, due to the strict regulations of the country in which the bases have been established. It is necessary to assess whether it could work as a hub of organic linkages between partner universities abroad and home institution, in terms of the international deployment of the institution’s research and education under its own mission. Furthermore, the efforts being made by individual universities going abroad to establish bases separately in the same region raise a question from the viewpoint of efficiency, such as the effective utilization of limited resources and the presence of

Japanese universities as a whole. In this regard, there can be much to learn from the overseas branches of the Netherlands' Nuffic and the British Council.

Based on the aforementioned analytical viewpoints, it is expected that as many good practices as possible and a range of model cases would be generated from the twenty pilot universities selected for the Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities in relation to the international deployment of university, causing a spillover effect on universities nationwide.

As shown in the next slide, fifteen of the twenty pilot universities are national, with the remainder comprising one local public university and three private universities, as well as one inter-university research institute. At present, more than half of the pilot universities have already created their newly authorized master plans of international strategies, while most of the pilot universities have also established their international strategy headquarters (appellations vary depending on the university). From my perspective, most of the twenty pilot universities provide a detailed description of internationalization from every research aspect, because they tend to be predominantly research-oriented universities. However, concerning education, relatively little mention is made. Some universities say that a strong sense of autonomy of each faculty still exists in regard to educational activities. Therefore, even the newly established international headquarters under the leadership of the president hesitates to gain the initiative for international education. Examining such an existing obstacle, it seems very difficult to realize the university-wide implementation of new international education programs at comprehensive and research-oriented universities even if the international headquarters within these institutions have unique and innovative ideas for international education programs. Especially at the national universities, despite their corporatization in 2003 and the subsequent emphasis on the leadership of the university president, the top management still has the problem of an inability to implement a new and university-wide project without obtaining the approval of all the faculty meetings. In that respect, at private universities, as international education programs are linked to both the management policy and marketing strategies, innovative study abroad programs as well as faculties and departments including their curricula, which feature international dimension, have been enthusiastically developed because of the strong support of the corporate (management) side. In order to not only acquire highly qualified students including international students but also provide students with better career opportunities, the recognition of the vital nature of international education programs is well shared with both the corporate (management) side and the faculty side at private institutions. Most importantly, there is a significant difference between private and national universities in terms of the driving force for the organizational

approach to the internationalization of education, in that the major (traditional) national universities prioritize research above all other matters. I sincerely hope that this project will provide a spark for the pilot universities to promote overall institutional reform, including the aspects of education, research and management, from the dimension of ‘internationalization’.

The project of International Strategy Headquarters in Universities was launched in fiscal year 2005 and its funding lasts for a period of the following five years. It means the project provides the pilot universities with seed money for the headquarters of international programs. After the funding period of five years, each university is required to maintain and administrate their international headquarters in a self-sustainable manner.

Regarding the evaluation aspect, the interim evaluation in the third year, followed by the final post-project evaluation (after the funding term), will be respectively conducted by the MEXT. Although the specific methods or procedures of the evaluation remain undisclosed, the final aspect involving implementing across-the-board evaluation with standardized measures and criteria is not considered. Because the twenty pilot universities differ considerably from each other in terms of scale, conformation, and the conditions of location. Each university has its own unique international strategies that have been developed under its individual characteristics and features. Based on these international strategies, the selected institutions carry out the international activities of education and research in a planned manner (according to their action plans). Therefore, it is naturally difficult to set uniform standards for evaluation. Each university first should evaluate to what extent its activities and efforts have accomplished the goals the institution set in the first year (the degree of attainment should be evaluated by itself according to its own goals). In addition, the selected universities are expected to develop evaluation systems and the related methodology, procedures, and techniques. Some universities describe specific evaluation methods including self-evaluation, peer review, external evaluation, benchmarking, and questionnaire and interview surveys in their international strategies. I hope that this research project could work with twenty pilot universities to evaluate their international activities and efforts in some way in future.