Conference for University Leaders – Roundtable Session

Theme 1: "Undergraduate Education"

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Moderators:

Prof. Lawrence J. LAU, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (China)

Prof. Katsuichi Uchida, Vice President, Waseda University (Japan)

Introduction

【Prof. Katsuichi Uchida, Vice President, Waseda University (Japan)】:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Katsuichi Uchida, Vice President of Waseda University, and President Lawrence Lau, of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and I'll be the moderator of this session. The main theme of this conference for the university leader is the new university initiatives in the age of globalization. And the topic of this roundtable session concentrate on undergraduate education. We’d like to start this session immediately. The purpose of this session is to discuss contemporary issues, and future prospects of undergraduate education in the age of globalization. We are very fortunate that we have five distinguished speakers from five prominent universities, representing Asia, Europe, North America, and Japan. And we ask them to present by alphabetical order of the name of the universities. We have about two hours for presentation and discussion. So each presenter is asked to speak for about ten minutes. We do not receive questions immediately after the presentation; instead, we’d like to ask comments from other presidents, after the end of the five presentations. Discussion will continue for about an hour.

We’d like to ask the participants to exchange ideas frankly regarding undergraduate education, such
as problems now being faced in each university, and new initiatives in your universities. And also, when you speak through the microphone please put on this button, then the microphone will work. So first, we would like to ask President Hatta Eiji, of Doshisha University. Please.
Speaker 1

Prof. Eiji Hatta, President, Doshisha University (Japan):

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this occasion. This “World Conference for University Leaders” has come about thanks to the efforts of Waseda University, which is this year celebrating its 125th anniversary. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my warmest thanks and congratulations to everyone at Waseda University.

I don’t mean to be boastful as far as age is concerned, but Doshisha University, of which I have the privilege to be president, was actually founded seven years earlier than Waseda University. I feel very proud that we, along with Waseda University, have contributed so extensively to the development of private university education in modern Japan. Today I would like to express my opinions concerning the “Undergraduate Education,” focusing particularly on the educational ideals and the recent efforts being made by Doshisha University.

Doshisha University was founded in Kyoto in 1875 by Joseph Hardy Neesima, who studied at Amherst College in the United States and became the first Japanese to obtain a degree at a foreign university. As I expect you can imagine from the record of its founder, education at Doshisha University is rooted in the traditions of the liberal arts, and character-building education—a concept whose essence lies in teaching students to possess a good conscience—is the spirit under which the university was founded. The university currently has nine faculties and eleven graduate schools. It has grown to become a multiversity with 25,000 students in both the undergraduate and graduate divisions.

There is clearly a risk that the tradition of liberal arts education aimed at developing students’ characters may prove incompatible with the development of a multiversity in a society based on increasingly specialized forms of knowledge. As the person with ultimate responsibility for this comprehensive university with its long tradition, I feel that the most worthwhile aspect of my job is to find ways of realizing highly distinctive undergraduate education that is capable of responding to modern needs while at the same time never losing sight of the starting point for education itself, which is the fostering of truly human qualities.

As a university rooted in the traditions of the liberal arts education, Doshisha University holds out three main educational ideals, namely Christian principles, liberalism and internationalism. We have set up a variety of organizations throughout the university with the aim of developing these three
educational ideals effectively within modern society. My aim as president of the university is to demonstrate leadership with a view to promoting educational ideals common to the whole university that overstep differences between individual faculties.

To begin with, I believe that Christian principles lies at the roots of every aspect of education at Doshisha University, which was founded in the spirit of fostering the nation’s conscience. The university has set up a Center for Christian Culture, and “Doshisha Courses” intended to convey the spirit under which the university was founded are implemented in the form of universal liberal arts education throughout the university. Our ultimate aim as educators is to lead our students towards the spirit of Christian principles while transcending ethnic and social differences to foster individuals with a true conscience who are able to contribute toward the realization of a peaceful, global society.

We believe that creating linkage between career education and liberal arts education is an effective way in which to promote the educational ideal of liberalism, which is closely bound up with the spirit of Christian principles. It is fortunate that an educational programme entitled “Career-Supporting Liberal Education” has been developed this year jointly by the Center for General and Liberal Education and the Career Center and has been selected as a case of “Gendai GP” (Contemporary Good Practice) by MEXT. With the methodological base provided by study of the problem discovery type, our “Project Courses” taking account of regional cooperation have also been nominated as an example of “Gendai GP”, and we are thus greatly encouraged by the fact that the reforms we have been making at our university in connection with liberal arts education have met with such a positive response from outside the university. Considerable concern has been expressed over the gradual weakening of social awareness among young people, as symbolized by the NEET (“Not in Education, Employment or Training”) problem affecting the young, but I believe that it is our responsibility as educators to deal with such practical issues in a forthright manner.

As regards internationalism, another of our educational ideals, we are striving to improve the content of our international liberal arts courses through cooperation between the International Center, which is in charge of international exchange activities, and the Center for General and Liberal Education. These activities are centered on the Institute for Language and Culture, which is responsible for foreign language education throughout the university. Foreign language education at universities is difficult to position within the overall context of university education; if improvement in linguistic skills alone is held out as the object of education, the difference between such education and the education in linguistic skills provided by language schools will tend to become obscured. The real purpose of improving our international liberal arts courses is to get every student and teacher to think about the basic issue of what exactly the true internationalism that university education should
While thus striving to improve the general and liberal education that we provide throughout the university, Doshisha University is also working toward promoting distinctive forms of education in each faculty and assuring the highest levels of quality. We set up a Center for Faculty Development in 2004 and have been actively promoting Faculty Development (FD). Within this context we have been directing our efforts especially toward First-Year Education and what we refer to as Institutional Research, or IR for short. In Japan, where the rate of senior high school pupils going on to university is in excess of 50 percent, First-Year Education enabling new university entrants to accustom themselves smoothly to university education is indispensable from the two perspectives of establishing links and making a changeover to a new environment.

In order to measure the effect of First-Year Education it is necessary to examine in a comprehensive manner not only the degree of satisfaction felt by students but also other matters such as how well students are getting into the habit of studying. Applying the methods of institutional research implemented widely at universities in the United States, our Center for Faculty Development has performed a “Campus Life Questionnaire Survey,” the results of which are being used to examine educational activities in each faculty. This is because we consider it indispensable to “know your students well in order to let them learn well.” I feel confident that this approach inherits the approach of the founder of our university, who looked on the individual personality of each student in a spirit of love.

This educational policy is being implemented smoothly in every faculty since it has fortunately met with a favorable reception throughout the university. In the Faculty of Commerce in particular, use of First-Year Education and IR has made it possible to organize a revolutionary new curriculum based on the concept of “happy encounters,” resulting in nomination as this year’s most noteworthy GP activity. Next year Doshisha University will be establishing a Faculty of Life and Medical Sciences and a Faculty of Health & Sports Science with the aim of achieving further development as a multiversity. I feel very hopeful that the forward-looking undergraduate education being provided by the Faculty of Commerce will serve as a model for undergraduate education at Doshisha University in the future.

In order to achieve outstanding undergraduate education, we at Doshisha University believe the most important thing is not just to guard against losing sight of the starting point for education in the sense of fostering human resources but also constantly to offer a sensitive response to developments in contemporary society. While constantly bearing this in mind, as the president of Doshisha University,
I intend to exert leadership in this direction in the future. Thank you for your attention.
Speaker 2
Prof. Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, President Emeritus and University Professor of Public Service, George Washington University (U.S.A):

Thank you, thank you very much. Undergraduate education in the United States, where there are 4000 institutions, is as varied as the food preferences of individuals, and indeed nations. The broad range of undergraduate education, after graduation from secondary school, encompasses technical training, 2-year institutions that offer associate degrees and trades in technical fields, and the disciplines and the liberal arts, and technical institutions that are devoted solely to the study of engineering; there are other institutions that are devoted to exclusively to the classics, and some, I think it's fair to say, which have almost no requirements at all. What binds these 4000 institutions together is a tradition and an associate’s degree cannot be earned in less than two years, and that a baccalaureate degree must require four years of study or class time. This despite the fact that for most part, our physical infrastructure is unused for undergraduate instruction about one-third of the year, excluding some study which attracts a few of the students.

I believe that American universities need to find ways to utilize our facilities year round, for all twelve months that are in our calendar, thereby cutting the costs and perhaps even the tuition prices, and increasing the retention of what has been taught and learned. The same, by the way, is true for professional education. Medical degrees require four years, law students require three years; this is true in the United States, not necessarily in other countries, and I see no evidence that the physicians from other countries, where perhaps they have only studied for three years, are any worse than the physicians in the United States who have studied for four. In other words, I think the time we take for degrees is arbitrary. In other nations we find a diversity of curricular models for the undergraduate education, as well as for professional training, and the length of time it takes to get degrees varies as well.

Professors, I think in the United States and perhaps throughout the world, search for the divine curriculum – the perfect curriculum, the curriculum invented perhaps by God. The one set of courses, the one set of readings that are sufficient to furnish the minds of educated men and women. Were there one, were there any such curriculum, it surely should have been discovered decades, if not centuries ago, and modified presumably, as necessary, as new knowledge was discovered. Some have tried another approach, defining a set of mental abilities and skills that should characterize an educated person. And this, this too proposes and supposes an ideal exists, and awaits, and only
awaits discovery. In fact, many curricula furnish the mind well by preparing it for encounters with the yet unknown. A great philosopher wrote in the 16th century that “through seas of knowledge we our course advance, discovering yet new worlds of ignorance.” Undergraduate education at its best is the seaman’s guide through the vast ocean of new scientific discoveries, new theories based on research in the social sciences, and additions to the canons of literature, and music and drama. Indeed, all of the arts. Because this philosopher was right, we can try an alternative approach to defining a successful undergraduate education. For the most part, undergraduate education is measured in the numbers of courses taken. This is an input measure. There’s no proof that schools that have, for example, four courses per semester are inferior to institutions that require five courses a semester. But there is evidence that learning decays if it is not exercised regularly. Thus, our national penchant for not requiring attendance all year long is perverse. It dates of course, to early agrarian, American traditions, when students had to go home, to the farm to help harvest the crops. There are not very many of our students who are obliged to go home to help their families bring in the crops in 2007. And yet, we do not use the universities May, June, July and August.

In addition to making a more effective use of our physical plant, and retarding the pace of tuition increases, if we drove our universities for the twelve months that the calendar provides, we would enhance learning. We must find ways to ensure that we graduate students who have the knowledge and the skills required for personal success, in whatever occupation or profession they may choose, and the steady improvement of civil society and our nation and the planet. To do so, we ought to focus on learning outcomes in every class and laboratory and internship, in every major and minor. We need to assess a student’s ability to communicate orally, and in writing. Students need to demonstrate quantitative reasoning skills, and we need to abandon our reliance on 50-minute teaching hours, and counting credits and courses. We can do this cooperatively. Imagine for a moment that learning outcomes were defined in part by some international basis. The easiest example would be for faculty from one institution to assess the learning of students from another institution. Thus physics majors would be expected to possess certain knowledge, and to demonstrate and agreed-upon set of skills, no matter which institution they attended. And the determination would be made by physicists. This does not propose a national curriculum in physics. What such a scheme does require among physicists is agreement on learning outcomes. So too for philosophy, or sociology, or artist theory, and on and on. And I have no doubt that outcomes can be assessed and that various educational models to assure required competencies. There is no need for a nationally standardized test. Lots of tests can measure similar achievements; what I propose could be begun by institutions agreeing to pair with each other. My institution and perhaps Bogazici in Istanbul. Once agreement is reached on what knowledge and skills could be demonstrated, if we examine your students, you examine ours.
I’m not under the illusion that either of the proposals I have put before you – these innovations are a little bit radical in America; year round undergraduate education, or a shift from measuring inputs to assessing outcomes – would be easy to achieve. But I think that both would prove valuable to proponents of higher education, and to students, and to the creation of a wiser, more tolerant, more educated and civil society. Something I believe we all would agree is devoutly to be wished for. And I thank you for your attention, and I thank Waseda for their hospitality.
Speaker 3
Prof. Baocheng Ji, President, Renmin University of China (China):

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this occasion. I would like to talk about taking on challenges and striving to raise the quality of undergraduate education.

Our university places particular importance on the quality of undergraduate education. This is because undergraduate education is the basis of higher education and its quality levels are representative of the levels of higher education throughout the country. An important point as far as my country is concerned is that the quality of higher education is facing severe challenges. These challenges can be seen from two angles, the first being promotion of economic globalization through innovation in the field of science and technology and the second being the dramatic transformations occurring in the Chinese economy itself.

These two changes and developments have brought about major changes as regards demand for higher education which have in turn brought about changes in the classification of human abilities, changes in the structure of knowledge, and changes in perspective towards human resources and ways of thinking. Changes such as these seem to me to constitute a severe challenge to higher education.

For seven consecutive years beginning in 1998 China recruited more and more students into its universities. The scale of higher education expanded dramatically and we have been undergoing a transformation from the previous style of management-based higher education to a new type of higher education for the masses. The university entrance rate rose from 9.8% in 1998 to more than 26% in 2006, while the number of university students enrolled at Chinese universities increased from 1.7 million in 1998 to 25 million in 2006. These enormous changes have highlighted the problems faced by higher education in China. This is why the Chinese government and Chinese universities now consider raising quality to be a matter of the utmost priority at the present time in connection with the development of higher education.

Renmin University is facing up to these challenges and attempting to raise the standards of higher education through action mainly on three fronts.

Firstly, we are trying to change attitudes to education and to improve and strengthen education by
making it possible for students to grow in a well-rounded manner. The enormous influence exerted by the revolution in science and technology on the creation of wealth and the massive power released by the market economy through people’s aspiration to profit have spurred on economic development, but at the same time this has been accompanied by a trend towards the commoditization of education and utilitarianism whereby people aspire to no more than immediate profit and gratification. Education in China is beset by three “excesses,” namely an excess of specialization, an excess of weak education in the humanities, and an excess of utilitarianism. Diffusion of scholarship and knowledge is regarded as very important from the standpoint of overall human growth, and there is a tendency to place too little importance on the fostering of character and moral qualities. From the angle of diffusing scholarship and knowledge, there is also a tendency to value knowledge in the field of science and technology at the expense of knowledge in the humanities. Excesses and imbalance in this regard has a negative influence on overall human development and is out of kilter with traditional Chinese educational ideals, which are concerned primarily with holistic human growth. We place particular importance on the educational philosophy of Confucius, whose maxims on the subject of education include one to the effect that people should strive to follow the Way, should rely on virtue, should trust in benevolence, and should seek edification in the arts, and another to the effect that a person equipped with knowledge and culture is someone who is not like a tool that can only be used for a single purpose but is someone with wide-ranging abilities and accomplishments. It is in this regard that we are doing all we can to strengthen education in the liberal arts. As well as strengthening the curriculum in the humanities, we are placing increasing emphasis on readings and lectures in the canonical classics of East and West. We hope that our students will be able to communicate and enter into a dialogue with great figures in history. Such a focus will hopefully prevent any further advance in the trends towards specialization, abstruseness, complexity and utilitarianism, and it will also help us to realize the two following missions. Through vertical transmission, students are able to learn about the structure and theory of their history and culture and can thus become Chinese citizens in the best sense with a full awareness of the historical and cultural context within which they live. Then, through comparison on the horizontal level, they can study and reach an understanding of the cultures of other people all over the world, thus reducing the potential for conflict and acquiring the capacity to become true citizens of the world.

Secondly, we are constantly attempting to improve our system of lectures. Renmin University places importance on providing our students with training and education in basic theory, basic knowledge and basic skills. These three basics pervade every aspect of our system of practical and research lectures. Our university has three lecture formats. One involves compulsory subjects that every student is expected to attend. These subjects center on liberal arts education and are aimed at
first-year and second-year students. Another involves a wide range of specialized educational subjects. These include technical subjects, compulsory specialized subjects, and elective specialized subjects according to particular specializations. The third format involves the students’ own autonomous study subjects and practical subjects. These subjects are extremely wide in scope and their main purpose is to encourage autonomy, positive attitudes and creativity on the part of students with regard to their studies.

The third policy we have adopted is to give undergraduate education more of an international flavor by getting students to look out into the world and to strengthen international cooperation. Renmin University is deepening international cooperation and international exchange by raising awareness on the part of lecturers and of students and through the careful selection of teaching materials. We have succeeded thereby in greatly strengthening the international outlook and orientation of our students.

This is the basic approach being adopted by Renmin University. Thank you very much for your attention.
Speaker 4  

Prof. Kiyofumi Kawaguchi, President, The Ritsumeikan Trust, Ritsumeikan University (Japan):

May I begin by offering my congratulations to Waseda University on the 125th anniversary of its foundation. I would also like to say how grateful I am for having been given this opportunity to speak at today’s extremely important event. This is a conspicuous honor both for myself and for Ritsumeikan University.

Like Doshisha University, on behalf of which we have just heard from President Hatta, Ritsumeikan University is located in Kyoto. As well as being Japan’s ancient capital, Kyoto is home to many universities. My own university has 35,000 students in ten faculties and fifteen research departments, although this number rises to more than 40,000 students and pupils if one includes those enrolled at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University and our affiliated senior high school. It is a private university founded some 108 years ago, making it slightly younger that Waseda University and Doshisha University.

As has been discussed in China recently, the question of the nature and the purpose of undergraduate education at universities with which we are concerned here today would seem to me to be defined largely in terms of the rate of advancement to further education and the university system. In this sense I believe that Japan is standing at a double turning point.

On the institutional level Japan’s modern university system was originally modeled on the German system. As in the so-called “Berlin Humboldt” model, the idea has been that research and training of experts should be conducted by university faculties at the undergraduate level. Following the end of the Second World War, introduction of the American educational system has resulted in education with a dual character being continued down to the present day.

The main feature of the German model in terms of the issues that we are facing today at Japanese universities is that professors have come to think of themselves as researchers and they thus show little interest in education. We are now at a time when this educational problem needs to be confronted. This is because, as I previously stated, a half of all senior high school pupils are now going on to college or university, and we are thus clearly in an age of universal higher education. The purpose of university education is neither to educate an elite nor to train ordinary specialists; education now needs to be available to one and all.
Japanese university education thus stands at a major turning point. I referred just now to the American model, but one major difference between Japan and the United States as regards university education is the fact that a system of graduate schools has yet to be fully established in Japan. This has resulted in problems of considerable importance which I would like to address later.

Another important point is that Waseda University, Doshisha University and Ritsumeikan University are private institutions. Despite the fact that 75 percent of all university students in Japan study at private universities, the current situation is that private universities play almost no part in Japanese higher educational policy. Public expenditure on higher education in Japan is extremely low. It is even lower than in China. Moreover, there are ten times as many private universities as national universities. We consider this to be a double structural contradiction, and I hope it will be understood that we are responsible for the education of three out of four Japanese students.

We need to consider then what the aims of Japanese undergraduate education are, at a stage when education has become universal in character but when graduate schools have yet to be fully established. It would seem to me that the principal aim should be to provide education for the general public as symbolized by the term “liberal arts education” which we have been discussing since this morning.

But I wish to suggest that this should not be considered as the be-all and end-all of university education. As I just mentioned, because of the lack of graduate school facilities, almost all students gain employment after completing their first degrees. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has recently expressed the opinion that one of the responsibilities of universities should be to teach students the basic abilities that will enable them to get on in society. In whatever terms this may be expressed, we need to be aware that it is our duty to equip our students with the ability to go out into the wide world, to follow an occupation of some kind, and to work efficiently and effectively.

We have thus determined our own goals at Ritsumeikan University and have been attempting to make reforms of various kinds in connection with liberal arts education. We created a Ritsumeikan Charter last year in order to give concrete shape to the ideal image of the students that we need to educate. We use the term “global citizen” to symbolize the image of the citizen in an age of globalization. At the same time, one of the goals that we held out in this context was the education of students with abilities tailored to the needs of society, as I mentioned earlier.

We have to consider how we are going to achieve these goals. As I have already mentioned,
Ritsumeikan University has 35,000 students. One of the features of such a large university is its diversity. We engage in the education of a very wide range of students with varying levels of scholastic ability, varying personalities and varying sensibilities. I feel sure that we provide an environment in which new creativity, originality and ability can blossom.

One often hears it said that in Japan universities can be classified in terms of academic ability, but this doesn’t necessarily apply to an all-round university such as Ritsumeikan. Ensuring that we have a student body of varying scholastic ability and differing values is something of great importance for us. But having such a varied student body means that providing education is extremely difficult. The same question was discussed just now in connection with China, and we face the same problem of being expected to ensure that high standards are maintained upon graduation with such a varied range of students.

Japan’s Central Educational Council has recently been engaged in a debate in connection with holding an examination of scholastic ability upon graduation, using the new term gakushiryoku (‘graduate ability’). There has also been talk on the international level of carrying out an international test of scholastic ability in the OECD. As we heard about earlier, an international comparison of scholastic ability known as PISA is available at the elementary and intermediate educational levels is currently available, but meetings of experts have now begun with the idea of implementing a similar comparison on the higher educational level.

Guaranteeing the quality of education is no doubt an issue not restricted to Japan but one of worldwide significance. Gathering together students with varying scholastic abilities and then deciding how to ensure that qualitative levels are maintained is an extremely important issue for us. But the problem that confronts us is that we are having to do this in a highly impoverished environment.

We are making efforts along various lines in which the features of the system at Ritsumeikan University are in evidence. For example, we have created a seminar system that provides the opportunity for discussions among small groups of students from the moment they enter the university until they graduate.

Also, so that they can demonstrate their abilities to the full upon graduation, each student is expected to produce a proper graduation dissertation or engage in dissertation research. Although this does not apply to everybody, efforts are being made to increase the volume of such activities.
Another feature of our approach at Ritsumeikan University is to encourage students to teach other students in a process that we refer to as “peer education.” Graduate students may become involved in a teaching capacity in undergraduate education, but under our system senior undergraduates may teach their juniors or provide them with advice in various forms.

As Professor Hatta mentioned in his remarks earlier, formation of links with society in a variety of ways is also important. For instance, we may dispatch students to companies to serve internships. Or we may encourage them to play a role in society by getting them to take part in various local communities and engage in helping to solve the various problems facing these communities. We also try to educate our students by getting them to collaborate with companies, NGOs, government agencies and public bodies.

Extracurricular activities have a very important role to play at Japanese private universities. Very large numbers of students engage on their own initiative in sporting and cultural activities outside the normal educational curriculum. We do everything we can to encourage such activities in the belief that they play an important part in the education of our students.

By means of these activities we hope to give each student his or her own objectives and to ensure that each student strives to achieve an awareness on an individual level of how he or she can grow as a human being. For example, we have begun the partial introduction of personal records, digital where possible, and we intend eventually to make this system universally applicable. These student records will be used to see how the educational system is functioning and to encourage education in the context of Plan-Do-See-Action (PDCA) cycle with specific targets at each stage.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, we aim to adopt a structured approach rather than handling individual subjects in an isolated and unconnected manner, and we have begun to use the term “curriculum map” recently in this connection. We are currently working on how to achieve this structural approach within the curriculum.

By adopting this approach in the context of higher education which is becoming increasingly accessible to the general public, we are striving at present to produce students with basic abilities in terms of civic education and who can serve as responsible members of society. Thank you very much for your attention.
Speaker 5
Prof. Malcolm Grant, Provost and President, University College London (U.K.):

Well thank you very much Chairman, and my thanks, as everybody has expressed them, to Waseda University for this glorious celebration of its first 125 years. I’m astonished by how closely the themes that I was about to pursue have been covered by other members of the panel, and how closely our universities are converging in the way in which we think about undergraduate education. But I’d like to preface my comments with a story.

My university, UCL, was founded in 1826, as the third university in England. To distinguish itself from Oxford and Cambridge, to be the first university to admit students irrespective of their race, or their religion, or their beliefs, or their social class, and ultimately also to be the first university in England to accept women on equal terms as men. In 1863, a small group of five young students left Japan at a time when travel abroad was forbidden, and came to study in London, at University College London. They were a remarkable group of students, because one of them – Hirobumi Ito – became the first Prime Minister of Meiji Japan, a contemporary of Shigenobu Okuma, who was the founder of Waseda University. Ito became Foreign Minister, and Prime Minister then for four occasions between 1884 and 1901. But he was but one of five of the early students at UCL; the second was Bunta Inoue, who became Foreign Minister of Japan; Endo Kensuke, who became the founder of the Japanese Mint; Masaru Inoue became the founder President of the Japanese Board of Railways; and Yozo Yamao became the Minister of Industries and the founder of Japan’s first Institute of Technology. There is nothing new about students traveling abroad and having a profound impact on the country from which they came. Two years later, in 1865, a group of sixteen further students came from the Satsuma Clan, with similar, immensely powerful impacts upon their country when they returned to Japan. I shall mention only one of them here, which is Yoshinari Hatakeyama, who became the first head of Keisai College, which eventually became Tokyo University.

So, I claim for UCL a minor part in the internationalization of education which has had so profound an impact upon Japan. But this afternoon, I wanted to develop that theme, and to try to understand how, under the conditions of modern higher education, we continue to produce graduates who can make so profound an impression on the world. One of them, more recently in 1968, was Prime Minister Koizumi, who came to UCL having completed his undergraduate degree at Keio University, and took Masters studies with us. But in Britain in the 21st century, we are faced with a tradition of undergraduate education that doesn’t fit well with what the world requires. It’s a tradition which is dependent upon a very significant investment in high school education, which produces entrants to
our universities, who tend to be narrowly focused in their intellectual achievements. They will have majored in either science or in arts and humanities, perhaps making a choice between those alternatives at so young an age as fifteen or sixteen, because that is what their school system requires. It enables us to produce very able graduates in highly specialized areas, a high proportion of whom will proceed to Masters and eventually to PhD study. At UCL today, we have 20,000 students, of whom 60% are undergraduate, and 40% are postgraduate. Our overseas entry to UCL now is over 33% of students, who come from outside the UK, and indeed, for most of them, from outside the EU.

So we are experimenting with ways of generating a new approach to undergraduate education that will develop the very themes that my colleagues have been discussing already this afternoon, most notably an approach to global citizenship. This includes an approach towards a more liberal arts program which will introduce a required program of learning, that allows nobody any longer to profess ignorance of science, or equally, abysmally, to profess ignorance of the arts and humanities.

I’m going to talk briefly about the four building blocks that we are using within UCL: the education for global citizenship, new volunteering arrangements for students, for studying abroad, and for developing key skills. For global citizenship, we have set apart a program of trying to ensure that all our students are developed beyond those basic intensive, single discipline programs that have been a feature of our history, because we want to develop critical and creative thinking beyond individual disciplines, and we want to develop this on the back of a wholly new approach to the organization of research, which reflected those discussions that we had in the plenary session this morning. There are major research challenges that face the globe, which can never be addressed by single disciplines acting independently from each other, and blind to the lessons that emerge from each of them. We want students who are ambitious but ethical, we want students that are highly employable, we want students who are willing to take on leadership roles, anywhere in the world. We’re also very interested in developing skills of the entrepreneur. Students need to understand, as so many universities historically have not, how the private market works, as well as how public education operates. And we want students who are able to recognize and value cultural differences. We have approaching 38% of ethnic minority student diversity at UCL, which is a remarkable figure, but quite neatly reflects that across London as a whole. UCL is a subset of the London society within which it is located.

And so we want to – and I have to say, this is quite controversial, within the institution – to develop a program which shapes students’ social and personal development as well as encouraging their intellectual growth. Our historical model concentrates totally on the last part of that proposition, we
want to restore the balance, to focus also on the first. We want to re-assert the dominance of our interest in education, whilst at the same time recognizing that the great majority of our faculty respect themselves primarily as researchers, and not as undergraduate teachers. We capitalize on our position in the middle of London, and we want to create an educational environment that embodies all of these principles.

So what does it mean in practice? We’ve been pushing very hard to develop a global citizenship program that majors on extra-curricular activity, that provides incentives through scholarships and other rewards for commitment, a series of leadership lectures sponsored by me as President and the development of extensive promotional materials. We’re working with departments to try to develop their departmental teaching strategies to embrace this broader agenda, and to give global citizenship themes discipline-specific focus. And we are also working with non-governmental organizations outside the institution. A critical part of this is the second building block, which is about volunteering – and particularly engaging students in the roles of tutors and mentors. One of our most controversial proposals at the moment – I’d have to say, it’s doing something again that we last did in 1830 – is to found a secondary school, which will allow us to develop students from less privileged backgrounds in their secondary education, and prepare them for access to a highly competitive international research university, such as ours. That proposal will involve our students as mentors for the school students, and working with them in laboratories and in classrooms and in libraries. We have a voluntary services unit, which gets our students out of the campus and into the community. We use our student union clubs and societies to achieve the same ends, and we develop strong departmental links, how to take students out into the London world beyond the Bloomsbury campus.

Our targets at the moment are modest, and rightly so; we anticipate that we will have 2,000 students – 10% of our population – in 3 years’ time actively engaged in volunteering. You will understand that as President I would love to see that figure double, but I’m realistic. This is a slow culture change, and depends upon students getting caught up in the enthusiasm of what the institution wants to do. I could see last night Waseda University’s students caught up in the enthusiasm of what Waseda does. Anglo-Saxon students take a little longer, sometimes, to develop such enthusiasm.

And then studying abroad. We are currently, I believe, the UK university with the greatest number of students who study abroad. We have a 3% growth year-on-year; we have a hundred degree programs, which require students to study abroad, and there are many optional opportunities on other programs. We enjoy formal links with 260 institutions including this one. Finally, key skills – what do we want students to go out into the world with? Not just an ability to work well in their own disciplines, but to have skills, such as presentational skills, and above all of team-working, of being able to work
with other human beings. That’s the nature of the modern workplace: it’s no longer an individual striving on their own in a laboratory or in a library. So we work hard with students on developing skills, on providing web-based resources, (departments are working on this), and also we have a portfolio to support students in acquiring skills and supporting CV preparation. So it’s a package, a package of change in a cultural environment that’s not attuned to rapid change.

I should like to conclude by expressing my interest that so many of these ideas are reflected in the other presentations we’ve had this afternoon. And by quoting to you the UCL haiku, which is engraved in Japanese and in English, in a memorial on our campus. It reads “when distant minds come together, cherries blossom.” Thank you.
Discussion

【Prof. Katsuichi Uchida】:

Thank you very much. We have listened to five presentations, and although it is not up to me to summarize them at all, I would suggest that the essential message that they contain is the same. The basic underlying premise is that there has been a change in the fundamental nature of university education. Whereas in the past the purpose of the university was to educate an elite, at the present time the purpose is to educate the masses. The basic model followed by the five universities about which we have just heard assumes that the purpose of university education is to foster global citizens.

Two points in particular occur to me in this regard. The first is the emphasis on liberal arts education and the other involves the question of quality control in terms of ensuring quality when students graduate. The most important point in this connection is that the university model has changed under the influence of changes in the ideals of society and of universities, and we need to consider how to deal with this model in the future.

For instance, the Japanese concept of university education has moved from the German Humboldt model to a concept based on the American model. But it has been pointed out that this change is inadequate by itself. Furthermore, the purpose of university education has hitherto been considered to be the transmission of knowledge with the aim of fostering individuals capable of putting this knowledge into practice, but the situation at present is that the purpose is now seen to be the character development of students and the fostering of individuals who can make a positive contribution to society. In other words we have entered an era when universities are being expected to contribute to personal and social development.

The overall environment surrounding universities, the ideals held out by universities, and the models to which universities aspire are undergoing a process of change, and the problem we have to confront in this connection is that of how each university should respond in practical terms to these changes. It is the manner of response that is now being called into question.

I would be most grateful therefore if the presidents of the five universities from whom we have just heard would offer their comments and questions. The gentlemen are seated in alphabetical order, but I do not wish to impose any sequential order on them and I would like to ask anyone wishing to express an opinion to do so as he wishes. The microphone can be turned on by pressing the red knob,
Thank you very much. The moderator Dr. Uchida just mentioned the idea of the university is changing very rapidly. I agree with that, but as Dr. Hatta of Doshisha University mentioned at the beginning of his presentation, in this session, the founder’s idea to establish university is very important element for undergraduate education. My question to Dr. Hatta is, you have any sort of freshman’s compulsory course on studying your founder Dr. Niijima, who is a very eminent educator for the first generation of Japan, at the end of the last century. All students coming to Doshisha should study some sort of unchanging idea of university education at Doshisha, were accepted, or you have as one of the university, very unique university in Japan as a secular university, you have a Divinity School, originally it was a Christian Divinity School, but I’ve heard it’s expanding its idea to so-called “universal divinity school” – I don’t know what it means, but I have heard it’s a very unique program you’re having, so you have some sort of special education for the founder? My university Keisen, we have a woman founder of our university because our university is a women’s university, and we have just had Michiko Kawai, the founder’s name, Michiko Kawai Week last week, and we had a kind of chapel hour every day, I mean, during one week. Doshisha has some sort of Niijima spirit continuously alive or are you – how can I say? – are you becoming a much more secular university, I don’t know? This is my question to Dr. Hatta, the Doshisha President.

Thank you very much for your question. Doshisha University takes in around 5,500 new students every year. We want these new students to take one subject, not as an obligatory subject but as one freely chosen, in the liberal arts category, and to this end we have set up what we refer to as “Doshisha Courses.” Taking these subjects contributes to the units required for graduation. I was hoping that around a half of all new students would take these subjects, but I have been disappointed to see that only 600 students, or 12 or 13 percent of the new student intake, are in fact taking them.

I would hope that students who graduate from Doshisha University have an awareness of the feelings that inspired the founder of the university and that the university was founded on the basis of a unique approach, but it is proving difficult to convey this awareness. This may well be one of the ill effects of a situation in which more than 50 percent of senior high school pupils go on to
university, but the situation is that students want to get into a particular university rather than wanting to study something specific at a specific private university. It’s a pity that thereafter they only possess a sporadic realization that Doshisha University was founded by Joseph Hardy Neesima.

Forty years ago, when I was a university student, religious studies were compulsory at Doshisha University. The system was such that a student could not graduate without attending courses primarily in Christianity. It was a pity that the rise of the student movement during the 1960s resulted in the collapse of this requirement. In this sense, it’s difficult to get first-year students to take up these subjects, but their course of studies lasts four years and so quite a lot students take up a subject just before they are due to graduate. This means that, by the time they graduate, they should have some idea at least of what Doshisha University and the Niijima spirit are all about.

【Dr. Emerlinda Ramos Roman, President, University of the Philippines】:

I’m Emerlinda Roman, from the University of the Philippines. In the Philippines our undergraduate programs on average take about four years to finish. Two years are devoted to liberal arts, the purpose of which is to develop in the students the capacity for continuing education, or the capacity for lifelong learning, and then the next two years are devoted to specialization. The problem however in the Philippines is that we have the shortcomings of high school education, are passed on to the first two years so they eat up on the liberal arts component of a college education. So I think about half of the first semester is spent taking remedial courses, so it eats up on the liberal arts component. Then the last two years are devoted to specialization, and this is where they get trained in specific fields, but can you really train them to be experts in two years? So it’s a problem, it’s a tug-of-war, how much time do you spend for liberal arts, and how much time do you spend for the specialization? What do we really want? Do we want educated students through the liberal arts program, or do we want trained students through the specialization program? That is the dilemma that we are facing, and that’s why we more and more are thinking about devoting more time to liberal arts so that the students will develop the capacity for lifelong learning. For after all, when they look for jobs, and this is why I think employers complain, because they’re not employable, but you know, if they are capable of continuing self-education they will learn that on the job, they will learn what they do on the job they did not all learn in college. You learn on the job, and the reason why you are able to learn is because of your liberal arts background. So that is the dilemma – should the training part be taken over by graduate education. This is a comment, and maybe others might want to react.
Thank you very much. In every country there are people who think that the purpose of university education is to foster cultured people who have received an education in the liberal arts and those who think that its main function should be to train people in specialized knowledge, and the question is how to obtain a balance between these two approaches. How to resolve this contradiction seems to me to be an extremely difficult problem.

I was wondering if anyone would like to comment on the remarks made by the President of the University of the Philippines.

May I ask a question? There’s a premise in your question that liberal arts education prepares one for continuing learning. How do we know that’s true?

Well, the things that you learn in the liberal arts, the classics, the readings you know, this opens wide your perspective, and therefore you are able to adjust, to adapt better. In this day and age, with the developments in information, and in the sciences, it’s easy to say that knowledge becomes obsolete very quickly, so you have to have that skill to continue to learn, on your own. As I said, you don’t learn everything in college, but you must have that skill and that ability to learn after you leave college, and that is the skill that we would like to develop in the students in the liberal arts component of the program.

I understand, but how do we know it’s true? I understand the ambition, and I concur completely; I’ve just never been clear in my own mind – maybe it’s the result of my liberal arts background, that the liberal arts background actually prepares you for lifelong learning, it’s an assumption we’ve always made, I’ve always made, and so I share it with you. But as you were asking the question, it crossed
my mind to wonder, how do we know whether it works or not? What test do we have, empirically, to demonstrate whether the liberal arts education actually achieves our ambition for it?

【Prof. Hiroshi Komiyama, The University of Tokyo, (Japan)】:

Looking at this question from a slightly different angle, I received a liberal arts education more than forty years ago. Already at that stage I wanted to know what was going on at the cutting edge and I was constantly concerned about when I was at last going to be able to move on. I currently teach the basics in connection with a variety of liberal arts, but, as far as basics are concerned, this was a time when, for example, a field such as bioscience was yet to appear. The genome was discovered fifty-one years ago and so, when I was a student, there was as yet no such thing as bioscience. Information science was also virtually non-existent. Even quantum mechanics was nothing like as prevalent as it is today. This gives some indication of the extent to which the basics have increased. Then there are the humanities and the social sciences that also need to be taken into consideration.

For this reason it seems to me that the linear model that expects young people to begin with liberal arts and then move on to a specialization no longer holds water. This means that what we should be doing at universities is considering how the liberal arts can be linked in real time with the cutting edge of knowledge. This is what I mean by the structuring of knowledge. On the conceptual level this is likely to mean that there is a need for information and communication technology support, and the problem we must face is that of whether we can cope with this task.

What I mean by this is that students who first attend liberal arts courses don’t always understand the content and they may find these course uninspiring. But by archiving the lectures, it will be possible for students to listen to the lectures at any time with no more than a click of a button. The precondition in the future will be lifelong learning, and I feel that we need to think about how best to achieve a balance between lifelong learning and specialization.

【Unidentified Speaker】:

I feel that what Professor Komiyama has just said is absolutely correct. For example, in my own field of bioethics, there are ethical problems involved in genetic engineering, as the professor pointed out. Since ethical issues are also philosophical issues, I try not to separate philosophy and ethics and I therefore incorporate into my own lectures study of the liberal arts in areas at the
forefront of cutting-edge science and technology such as artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization and analysis of the human genome.

In this sense I feel very strongly that there is a need for the structured education referred to by Professor Komiyama in the context of liberal arts. I therefore feel that the very question of whether the liberal arts are or are not of use is erroneous.

【Prof. Richard A. Detweiler, President, Great Lakes Colleges Association (U.S.A.)】:

I’m Rick Detweiler, from the Great Lakes Colleges Association. I have a question about the term, and it’s a very ignorant question, the term “liberal arts” and it’s two legs to the question, and it comes from my experience in the States. One is that liberal arts in English suggests a political indoctrination, that is liberalism, which is not really what the root of the word was, but it’s the way it’s often times interpreted. And second, in English “liberal arts” carries no inherent meaning. That is “what is the liberal arts?” is often times a topic of confusion as well as discussion among educators. When I hear translation I hear the word “the liberal arts,” I sometimes hear the word “liberal arts” as a person is speaking in Japanese or Chinese, but I’m wondering for our colleagues whose languages are not English, do you use the word “liberal arts”? Is there a word you use that carries inherent meaning? And how do you describe what the liberal arts is about in a way that actually makes students and/or their parents think it has some value?

【Prof. Masako Iino, President, Tsuda College (Japan)】:

If I might make an observation in this connection, the university where I work is a small university for women with less than 3,000 students and we are strong advocates of the liberal arts. We think of the liberal arts as liberating the mind. It means “It has to liberate yourself”.

In the sense that they open up the mind, we do not make a division between specialized education and the liberal arts whereby, having studied the liberal arts, students go on to pursue specialized studies; we include specialized education within the liberal arts. In other words, we use the term liberal arts in a very broad sense since the liberal arts are all about equipping students with basic human abilities and enabling them to be of use to society.

I’ve been thinking though about how the term should best be defined without as yet coming up with
Can I raise a completely different issue, which I don’t think has been touched on by any of the speakers so far. We’ve heard a lot about what we want students to do, what we want to do to students, but we haven’t really talked very much about the students themselves. And I think all of us face one very significant problem in the era of mass education, which is how, in these very large, dynamic, thrusting universities, we make sure that the student does not lose his or her individuality, and I think this is a real struggle, and the example I’m going to use, which may surprise you, because I recently spent some time there, is Harvard. Now Harvard’s not represented here, but if you talk to the undergraduates at Harvard, which isn’t essentially really an undergraduate university, Harvard has a real problem on its hands with, as it were, the issue of student identity, and the loss of individuality, and the treatment of the student as a package, and as a process, and not an individual. And I urge all of us to think in our universities, how we, as it were, preserve that contact with the individual and the personality and we encourage students in finding their individuality. We have to remember that in the age of mass education, a lot of the students we’re educating are not actually going to use their qualifications in their professions. They’re going to drift off in different directions and it is the, as it were, entry into adulthood for these students which in many respects is more important than the day-to-day process of teaching them, and I think we have to bear that in mind in a discussion like this. Thank you.

Could I offer a parallel comment? Chris Henshall, from the University of York. I was reflecting that most of what we’ve heard so far, in this session, has been very interesting, but focused on what we do, rather than how we do it, and I think in a way, it’s perhaps putting it in other way what Sir Richard has just said. I was thinking in terms of the kind of environment that we create in our universities, the kind of community that we create, the inclusiveness of that, both obviously from an international point of view, but also from the way in which the society of the university functions. These I think are ways of developing people, possibly more important ways of developing people, than the actual content of the curriculum, so how it is taught, how we develop our students, as much as what it is we try to teach them.
【Prof. Katsuichi Uchida】:

Thank you. Because of the importance of deciding how the subject needs to be taught in practice, it would seem to me that we need to consider how the curriculum should be put together and how to raise the abilities of the lecturers who teach the subject. Does anyone have any questions or comments to make in this connection?

【Prof. Lawrence J. Lau, President, The Chinese University of Hong Kong】:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am the moderator, and I shouldn’t speak, but since no one is speaking, I will. I think there are two points. Throughout this session many people have talked about the fact that the paradigm of teaching – this lecture course idea – needs to be changed, and I think I agree with that. One of the things that I think is either happening, or will happen, is that we are shifting to a different system. Because of the Internet, the lectures – you know, Econ 1, whatever – will be readily available on the web, and we will have the best teachers, like Paul Samuelson, teaching Econ 1. He’s actually still very active, even at 90. But anyway, that’s the idea. There would be a star system for all the large lectures, especially the introductory courses, and people can download them at any time, and so we really have to think about how we add value, at the undergraduate education level. It will not be through the lectures, and that is really why we need to go back, I think, to small classes, seminars—it is really through these classes that we can encourage and develop what is called “creative and critical thinking.” Not by lectures, but by basically going back to seminars and small classes, and perhaps requiring a senior thesis. There are very few universities that require a graduate thesis now, but some do, and I think that’s great, and I think we should bring it back slowly. And that really relates also to this idea of how you train people to know how to continue lifetime learning. I mean they really need to develop the capacity of how to find things, where to learn, and how to discriminate. And I think undergraduate research is really a major training vehicle through which we can nurture these qualities. I mean without doing undergraduate research you can’t acquire these capabilities. I agree with Prof. Trachtenberg--it’s an ideal but unless you really do something to implement it you can’t get there. But liberal arts education provides the platform for doing it. I think that’s why it is very important.

The other idea that I have is actually, again I am sort of looking ahead, I think the days when the first degree, the undergraduate degree, is the last degree, will be over. I think probably for China it is still too early, because people are still looking at their first degree, but for the developed countries, it is
not the first degree. So in some sense professional training need not happen, need not take place, in the undergraduate degree and that is again something that we need to think through. And I think it is happening in the developed countries, not yet in China, but perhaps it is also happening in Japan, that is, the undergraduate degree is no longer the terminal degree, but there is likely to be a second degree; and if that’s the case, the whole curriculum needs re-thinking. This hasn’t happened yet, but I think it’s bound to happen. Thank you very much.

【Unidentified Speaker】:

I think we’re all chewing on some very large questions that have been asked, very thought-provoking questions. My question’s actually considerably narrower but not unrelated. As you observed Malcolm Grant, one of the things that students are looking for increasingly are things like internships, and I’m wondering what sorts of reactions you get at your universities when internships are introduced, reallocating students’ time among the faculty, and when you run into opposition, how you’ll respond to that response.

【Prof. Malcolm Grant, Provost and President, University College London (U.K.)】:

Let me respond briefly. Yes, you do run into opposition from faculty, because faculty are in charge – not the President, the faculty are in charge of the institution, and what we have to do I think is to find ways in which the internships carry credit and they are taken by the faculty as seriously as any other part of the program. One of the difficulties with cramming too much in is that faculty regard that as second order activity, and first order activity is still the teaching and learning. How we deal with it? Well, I think we deal with it by ensuring that it’s only taken into departmental degree programs with the full consent of the faculty, and that they’re behind it. Where that’s the case, we’ve tended to find that’s quite straightforward. More straightforward, I would say, in areas where we’re talking about professional-oriented programs, so that everybody can see that a period in a law firm, or a period in some architect’s office or wherever it is feeds in directly to the program, as opposed to being some sort of irrelevant add-on.

【Prof. Kiyofumi Kawaguchi】:

Please forgive me for bringing up a new topic but there is a matter that hasn’t been raised so far
I think we must touch upon. I refer to the concern shared by most private universities in Japan as regards the motivation of students to study. We can cope with students who know exactly which profession they wish to follow and are intent on acquiring the necessary skills. In the past in Japan, and probably to a large extent in China today, there was a common awareness among the general public that a university education would offer a passport to affluence, and students would work hard so that they could be well off. They dreamed of being able to lead comfortable lives after graduation. But young people in Japan today no longer have such aspirations.

The big problem therefore is that of how to provide today’s students with the motivation to study. Since we obviously can’t just throw up our hands in despair, we are dealing with this problem in various ways. Of course there are plenty of students who know precisely what sort of occupations they wish to follow and what they want to do in the future, and we try to present these students after they have graduated as role models. The peer education and extracurricular activities to which I referred earlier are also intended to play a positive role in this connection.

I would be most interested to hear from the representatives of any other universities about how they are dealing with the question of raising the motivation of their students.

【Prof. Eiji Hatta】:

At Doshisha University we’ve come to realize that there’s no point, in my own Faculty of Economics for example, in an economist expounding on economic theory or in a lecturer in philosophy teaching philosophic theory to students in their first year. What we’ve done therefore is, conversely, to get members of the local community to come along to the university and have them talk to groups of twenty or so students about the local problems that face them.

Around sixty people visited Doshisha University in this context last year and we offered sixty courses. The proprietress of a Gion teahouse came along to give a talk about the problems facing the Gion district of Kyoto, and talks like these are attended by first-year students. The students thus become aware of the various problems being faced by people out in the wide world, and this is what I referred to in my presentation as “project subjects.” These are the things that we want students to know about.

We thus get going not with difficult theoretical question but with discussion of problems confronting society at large and local communities, and we get the students to think about how these problems
brought forward by ordinary people can be solved. This is very effective way of providing students with motivation and it seems to me also that it is an effective way of suggesting to students in the Faculty of Economics the standpoint from which they should be pursuing their studies for the ensuing four years. Students thus become aware in the course of their first year of education that the educational potential of the community or of society is superior to that possessed by university staff.

【Unidentified Speaker】:

To bring up a rather different matter, the number of students wishing to study the sciences, and in particular engineering, at Japanese universities is decreasing. What sort of new educational programs are being adopted in other countries to deal with problems of this nature? Are students wishing to pursue specific fields decreasing? I would like to hear from anyone who has had any experience of this.

【Prof. Katsuichi Uchida】:

There is a problem in Japan that more and more students are moving away from the sciences, in particular engineering and the physical sciences, and I was wondering if this situation applies in other countries as well. If it does, perhaps someone could explain to us how it is being dealt with.

【Prof. Chris Henshall】:

Chris Henshall from York. There have been some similar trends in the United Kingdom and I believe also in a number of other countries. The government in the United Kingdom has introduced various initiatives which universities have been taking part in, but one of the main focuses has been on the school curriculum, and the concern that students are not gaining a proper understanding of the excitement and interest and challenge of these subjects, at school, possibly because the teaching at school is done by people who are not up to date, or indeed in some cases, do not have degree qualifications themselves in these subjects. One of the initiatives in the United Kingdom is the setting up of a national science learning center which we’re proud to host on the York campus, and this provides continuing professional development for all secondary school teachers of science, including mathematics, who come for refresher courses, and interestingly, with help from the Welcome Trust, a very high quality building was put up on the campus, and some of the teachers
who come for these courses comment that one of the most uplifting things that they experience in the course is entering, for the first time in many years in their professional life, a high quality building that communicates to them that someone cares about what they’re doing, and wants to help them do it better. So part of the diagnosis in our country is that there is a lack of motivation and skill in the secondary school system, to engage and really motivate students to get interested in these subjects, and then pursue them. And there is some indication that the trend is now turning the corner in the United Kingdom, and application rates for some of the sciences are actually on the way back up.

【Unidentified Speaker】:

The education provided at a university should of course be different from the professional training that a student receives at a technical college. This is why, at the present time, when the number of applicants to Japanese universities is less than the number of available places, we need to reassess the situation from the basics. I imagine many countries have undergone a similar experience. The question of the purpose of education, including liberal arts education, is increasingly being seen in utilitarian terms.

I believe that education is a kind of encounter: an encounter with new knowledge, an encounter with people. What one encounters in this process has an influence on one’s whole life. The fact that liberal arts education has still not really put down firm roots in Japan is connected with the fact that Japanese people have tended to be preoccupied with whether what they learn is going to be of any practical value, and this is of course connected with the ongoing obsession with qualifications.

In other words, “liberal arts” is a term that has to be expressed in English in the Japanese language, and because it has hitherto taken the form of “general education,” some of the most important elements of real education that can be experienced only through liberal arts education have gone missing from the education of most students, and liberal arts education in the real sense of the term has not been practiced at all in Japan, with the exception of ICU. In this sense I feel that the question of whether education is or is not of any practical use is problematic.

Unless Japanese private universities in particular place great importance on the principles upon which they were founded, they will end up providing education no different from that provided at any other university. In the past every university attempted to emulate the University of Tokyo, which was regarded as the pinnacle of the Japanese university system. This applied even to Waseda University. However, each university needs to maintain its own distinctive character.
In this sense, the present situation seems to me to be one in which we are groping in the dark to discover how university education, and undergraduate education in particular, should ideally be, while learning from the experience of other countries such as Britain, the United States, Germany and France. I believe we need to consider matters in the long term and that a utilitarian approach is therefore not appropriate.

【Unidentified Speaker】:

I was always wondering if I may speak something from the second tier, but there’s no one else but me representing Keio University, Tokyo. I was pretty interested in the earlier point about the true meaning, the possible different meanings in which the words “liberal arts” are used in English and Japanese. I personally respond to that question that we are increasingly using the word “liberal arts education” instead of Japanese translation of that, and that is kyouyou kyouiku. Kyouyou kyouiku is exactly the same as the Philippine University system. The Japanese university system, the new system after 1945, it is 4-year undergraduate courses, 2-year kyouyou kyouiku, which might be introduced into liberal arts education, and third and fourth year, two years of a specialized training or education. Originally that two years were almost anonymous with liberal arts education in American sense of the term, because it was directly introduced by American higher education system after ’45. But after long years, the word kyouyou kyouiku originally synonymous with American liberal arts, tended to sound less respectable, in the sense that it got increasing sense of introductory courses for more advanced and higher level of education. So the word kyouyou kyouiku now very strongly sounds less specialized, less advanced, and introductory courses, and professors specialized in teaching liberal arts courses in the first two years themselves tended to look down upon themselves as less respectable group of professors, in comparison with more advanced course professors. Now we are increasingly critical of this trend, and the words “liberal arts” without no translation, is increasingly being used by public media and university people, and that liberal arts education means not just introductory part of higher education, but the base knowledge, foundational knowledge of higher education. As President Komiyama mentioned, the frontier of knowledge is constantly expanding, more and more increasingly, but one might argue that the base knowledge of human intellect, intellectual science, remains unchanged, through the ages, no matter how the frontier expands, no matter how cutting edge the particular branches of sciences are competing for. So we Japanese university people are now increasingly aware of the retrieving the original meaning of American liberal arts education.
【Prof. Katsuichi Uchida】:

Liberal arts education has hitherto been defined in Japan as general education, which is contrasted with the specialized education that students receive in their third and fourth years at university. How to approach liberal arts education has been in the past and will continue to be in the future an extremely difficult problem as far as Japan is concerned.

【Dr. Dwita Sutjiningsih Marsudiantoro, Director for Academic Development, Universitas Indonesia (Indonesia)】:

Thank you. Dwita from Universitas Indonesia. Starting from the year 2000, our university has designed and implemented an adaptation of maybe a kind of liberal arts, but actually this is a restructuring of the common courses, so we have formally about nine courses to state ideology and citizenship, and then languages – Bahasa, Indonesian and also English, and religion, and basic natural and social sciences, and also art and sport. So we blend in one course, so more or less “basic education for higher learning.” And we make a kind of research or maybe experiment for about five years, so starting with three faculties among twelve faculties, so at last we conduct this class for around 4000 students every year. So about parallel class of 125 classes and there are graduate students that makes research on the effect of this kind of learning, and it was positive impact on their character because besides the content itself, actually the objective is also to develop the soft skill of the student, so maybe a kind what have also in Philippines, so we try to shape the character in self-learning and also what maybe so-called “student-centered learning” rather than teacher-centered learning. And our difficulty is still how this kind of courses can be, what is, in the professional courses, it’s still there are many professors reluctant to change their way of teaching, there’s still, maybe because they’re already comfortable just to give lecture rather than to make the students learn by themselves, and to build their knowledge by themselves. But the university leaders will try so hard that this kind of teaching/learning style will be developed further for the professional courses also. Thank you.