

FOREWORD

In 2005 and 2006, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to exchange views with university presidents and foreign government officials on three occasions: at the Japan-Sweden President Meeting, Japan-China President Meeting and Japan-France Symposium on Higher Education. I was greatly impressed to learn that in all countries the issue of university internationalization is recognized as a matter of some urgency, and that this recognition is accompanied by active engagement in the cause of internationalization by both universities themselves and government officials.

There have been some noticeable developments in areas of academic research and higher education in Europe, supported by the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process. In February 2007, I had the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion at the conference to launch the European Research Council (ERC). ERC is an independent funding agency that provides competitive research funds to top quality researchers in universities throughout Europe, with the aim of enhancing the international competitiveness of Europe in the area of academic research. Evaluation of ERC applications is based on the the single criterion of academic merit, and funds are awarded on a competitive basis, irrespective of the applicants' nationalities. Thus, the establishment of the ERC is widely expected to lead to fierce competition among universities in Europe for top quality researchers. University presidents throughout Europe will no longer be able to remain indifferent to candidates who have been successful in obtaining ERC funding, as the funding allocations will effectively be an indication of how the top researchers are distributed around different universities. Furthermore, as the competition for human resources intensifies, people in Europe are turning their attention to top-level human resources in China and other Asian regions more than ever before.

In this age of worldwide competition for "knowledge", it would appear that the issue of international strategy for universities, institutions which are central to the creation of "knowledge", is now recognized as an extremely important theme. This recognition has in turn led to much earnest discussion as well as the development of a diverse range of policies in countries overseas.

The need for internationalization of Japanese universities has been discussed for some years now. Developments in the international environment in which Japan must operate, however, are progressing more rapidly in this respect. I am of the belief that Japan's universities need to initiate more dynamic change if they are to keep abreast of global trends.

The Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities is a project that provides assistance to 20 pilot institutions selected by an evaluation group under Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Each pilot institution is furnished support in its endeavors to develop an "International Strategy Headquarters",

overarching all its different departments and tailored to its own distinctive institutional characteristics. The Headquarters will formulate international strategy for the institution as a whole and enhance systems and structures to carry out organized international activities. The project also aims to conduct wide-ranging analysis of activities at these 20 pilot institutions and to apply the results of this analysis to development of leading models of international expansion strategy in universities. In other words, it could be said that this program aims to create innovative models for university reform based on the principles and practices of internationalization.

The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) extracts examples of good practice from the 20 pilot institutions, based on comprehensive analysis of their activities. It combines these with the results of surveys on internationalization in overseas universities to develop models for promoting university internationalization. These models are disseminated both among the 20 pilot institutions and throughout the higher education community in Japan.

We have now reached the end of the second year of this five-year project, and this interim report represents a compilation of activities pursued under the project and models developed to date. In the course of preparing this report, the University International Strategy Council engaged in vigorous discussion and provided valuable advice regarding its content. I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Tsutomu Kimura, President for the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) who chaired the Council, and to all other eminent Council members.

In April 2006, JSPS established the “JSPS Project Team for Supporting University Internationalization”, headed by the JSPS President. Through this Team, JSPS continues to support the activities for internationalization in Japanese universities, with initiatives including training on international operations for administrative staff at national universities and other institutes and provision of support for internationalization through JSPS overseas offices. As we work to develop these efforts further, I ask for your continued understanding and cooperation.

Finally, I would be pleased if this report could provide some help for universities in Japan seeking to expand their international activities in a strategic and institutionally organized manner.

April 2007

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Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

JSPS Project Team for Supporting University Internationalization