

Top Global University Project (Type B) Akita International University

1. Outline

【 Name of project 】

Japan's World-Class Liberal Arts University

【 Future vision of the university planned in TGU project 】

AIU will evolve from a domestic institution to a world-class liberal arts college over the next 10 years. AIU aims to establish a liberal arts education model that is commensurate with the world standard and to represent Japan on a global scale. Through four new initiatives; (1) Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education, (2) Enrichment of world-standard curriculums, (3) Facilitation of English education reform in Japan, and (4) Global benchmarking, AIU also aims to foster persons that are successful on a global scale but are based in Japan.

【 Summary of Project 】

Since its foundation in 2004, AIU has been taking innovative measures such as offering all classes in English, making one-year study abroad mandatory, and requiring all 1st-year students to live on campus. In addition, AIU will undertake four new projects to promote improvement of the environment to strive further to become a world-class liberal arts college.

(1) Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education

- Introduce subject-based housing groups to transform student dormitories from “living dormitories” into “learning dormitories” and internalize active learning by the students.

(2) Enrichment of world-standard curriculums

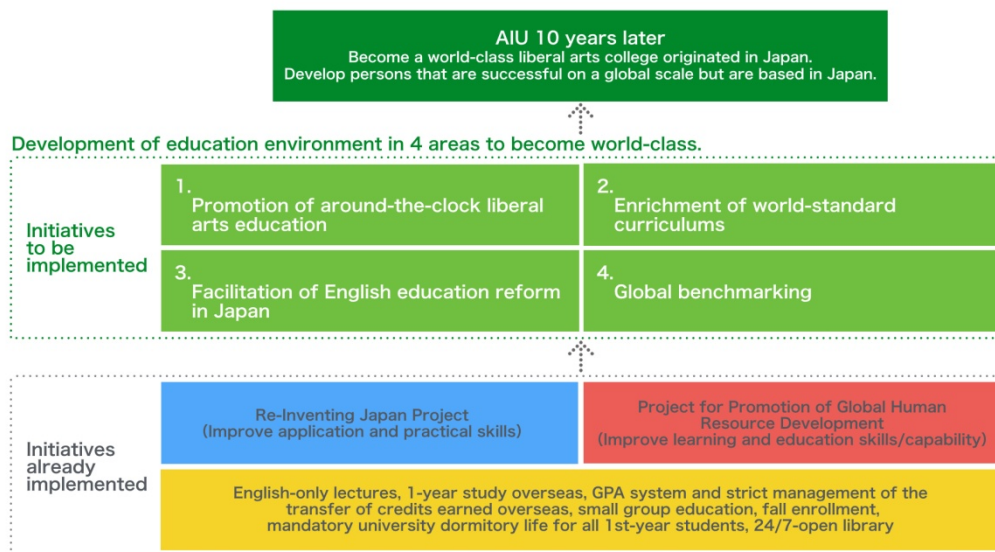
- Make the curriculum more on par with the world standard by expanding Japan studies courses offered at AIU, introducing flipped classrooms, promoting partners' programs and internationally collaborative PBL programs.

(3) Facilitation of English education reform in Japan

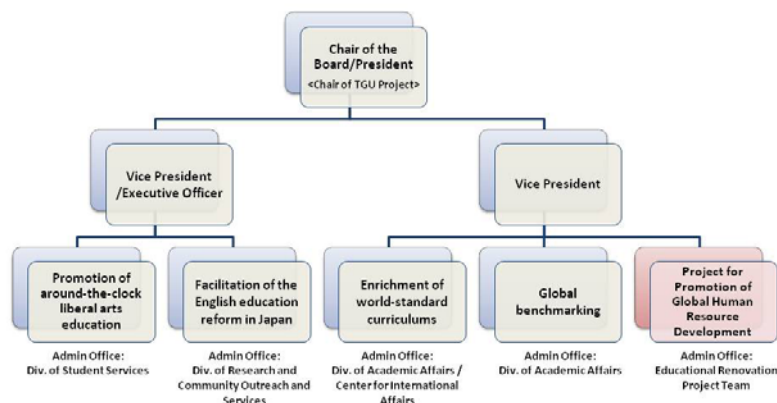
- Use the empirical knowledge accumulated by AIU to give back to society.

(4) Global benchmarking

- Compare AIU's initiatives with those of other top liberal arts colleges around the world and examine the differences in an objective manner.



【 Management Structure for TGU Project 】



【Summary of the 10-year plan】

○ Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education

In AY2014, AIU recruited students who wanted to move into the subject-based houses; educational programs at the houses will start from AY2015. New students will be recruited every semester, and possible program modifications based on the result of surveys and evaluation to improve the operation of the houses will be examined each semester. By AY2020, student led autonomous operation of the houses will be encouraged and activities with students who are living in similar subject-based houses at other universities will be held. In AY2023, AIU will create a database of the subject-based house project from the past 10 years and write the report.

○ Enrichment of world-standard curriculums

In AY2014, AIU recruited Japan studies faculty and IT staff from across the world to prepare for the establishment of the Japan Studies Center and ICT Learning Studio in AY2015. In AY2016, flipped-classroom style MOOCs will be introduced, partners' programs with partner universities will be promoted and internationally collaborative PBL programs will be offered. AIU will prepare an interim report in AY2017, and start modifying the curriculums and courses in line with the world standard from AY2018, and will examine the results of the modification of the curriculum and courses and revise the academic affairs system in AY2023.

○ Facilitation of English education reform in Japan

AIU will begin offering English Village (study sessions for elementary, junior high school and high school students) regularly in AY2014 and Teachers' Seminar (training sessions for elementary, junior high school and high school teachers) in AY2015.

○ Global benchmarking

In AY2014, AIU launched a joint working group to conduct comparative surveys and create a survey plan with the U.S. universities with which it will be conducting global benchmarking. Preliminary surveys and on-site surveys will be conducted in AY2015, results analyzed, the interim report on the results prepared and presented at faculty development sessions and workshops. Additional benchmarking partner schools will be sought in AY2018, with another interim report prepared by AY2020 and analyzed in AY2021. The final report on the global benchmarking and symposium will be prepared in AY2023.

【Featured initiatives (Internationalization, University reform, Education reform)】

Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education

- Shift student dormitories from "living dormitories" into "learning dormitories" by introducing subject-based "houses" to expand students' learning space from the university classrooms into the living space in the student dormitories. In each house, international and Japanese students live together and work on common subjects as a team to promote liberal arts education that will enable students to acquire essential skills and competencies to become effective global persons (e.g., habituated active learning through the discovery of the joy and importance of learning, collaborative work skills, leadership, self-discipline and manners).

Enrichment of world-standard curriculums

- AIU requires all students to study abroad in their 3rd year and invites the same number of international students from overseas partner schools in their place. To continue the exchange program, AIU will introduce four new initiatives to create the curriculums that meet world standards and are compatible at a global level.
 - ① Expansion and improvement of Japan studies courses offered at AIU
 - ② Raising the level of courses taught at AIU to the world standard and transmitting lectures to the rest of Japan and the world through MOOCs and the introduction of flipped classrooms
 - ③ Promotion of internationally collaborative PBL programs with partner universities in ASEAN countries
 - ④ Promotion of partners' programs (co-developed Japan studies programs with partner universities)

Facilitation of English education reform in Japan

- Improve the quality of English education offered at elementary and secondary schools and promote the development of global human resources by sharing AIU's knowledge on practical English learning/teaching methods it has accumulated over the years with the students and teachers of elementary and secondary schools in Akita Prefecture and beyond. Offer primarily student-led English Village for elementary and secondary school students, and offer Teachers' Seminar by AIU faculty members as recurrent education for elementary and junior high school teachers.

Global benchmarking

- Conduct global benchmarking and participate in the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) in order to examine whether the actual level of the international liberal arts education being provided by AIU clearly meets the world standard.

2. FY2014 Progress

■ Common indicators and targets

Internationalization

- **Increase the number of study-abroad partner schools to 200, in 50 countries/regions.**

AIU has 174 partner institutions in 46 countries/regions as of May 15, 2015.

- **Expand AIU's own scholarship program to support students' study abroad.**

"Scholarship for Study Abroad" is available for students whose cumulative GPA is 3.80 or above at the time of application for study abroad. Also, "AIU-Asahi Kasei Corporation Scholarship" is available for one-year study abroad.

- **Increase the ratio of the students whose English proficiency test score at graduation is at least 900 on the TOEIC (or equivalent) to 75%**

64 AIU students among 165 who graduated in AY2014 obtained a score of 900 or higher on the TOEIC or equivalent. (The ratio is 38.8%.)

- **Strengthen the linkage between the academic affairs system and the educational quality assurance system.**

During the global benchmarking in AY2015, AIU will compare itself to other universities in terms of the course code system and its meaning, syllabus, course contents, quality and quantity of assignments, level of difficulty, targeted level of achievement, and the method of examining the consistency between the course codes and the level of the courses, etc. Also, AIU will compare data on grade distribution, student performance evaluation policies, ways to use the GPA system, etc., with top liberal arts colleges in the U.S.

- **Increase collaborative learning opportunities between international and Japanese students in campus housing**

Japanese and international students live together in subject-based Japanese arts and culture house. The house provides a collaborative and active learning environment so that the students can work on developing activities at the house as a group.



(Subject-based house meeting on April 4, 2015)

University reform

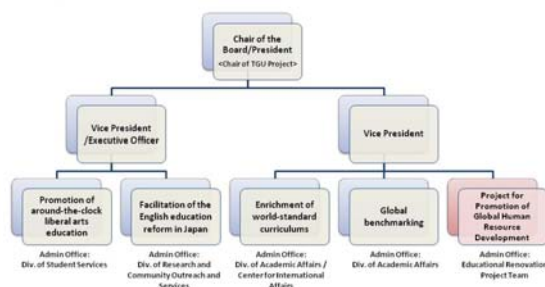
- **Reform the performance evaluation system based on improvement points identified during global benchmarking.**

The working group continues to analyze the performance management system of U.S. liberal arts colleges in order to introduce and leverage globally compatible performance evaluation systems.

- **Strengthen the bottom-up framework by which the members of the AIU community may propose university policies in addition to the top-down decision making process.**

Under the leadership of the president, designated faculty members coordinate each program and designated administration teams support the program for AIU's TGU project.

【Management Structure for TGU Project】



Education reform

- **In conjunction with AIU's unique initiative (around-the-clock liberal arts education), develop a culture of active learning to carry out university reform in which students can also participate.**

The subject-based house provides active learning environment for students to actively propose and enact their own ideas.

- **Proactively use external examinations including the International Baccalaureate.**

Out of 16 types of entrance exams given by AIU, eleven recognize external examinations (TOEFL iBT, TOEFL PBT, TOEIC, STEP, UNATE, Cambridge ESOL) as one of the application requirements, and five recognize the International Baccalaureate. Since AY2014, AIU has changed the names of the "AO/High School Study Abroad Student Exam I and II" to the "AO/IB/High School Study Abroad Student Exam I and II," respectively, by adding "IB" to each. Through the name change, AIU is actively publicizing the International Baccalaureate to the high school students, teachers and staffs.

- **In view of further diversification of student needs, develop flexible academic paths in collaboration with other universities.**

The global benchmarking working group continues to gather information from U.S. liberal arts colleges concerning academic paths and analyze and compare them for improvements as needed.

■ University's self-developed indicators and targets

○ Education program that embodies high internationality and mobility

1. Enhancement of the faculty's internationally applicable education ability
 - The ratio of full-time faculty members that have taught courses overseas (Goal: 75%): 12.3% (AY2014 result)
2. Diversification of overseas experiences
 - The ratio of students that have traveled abroad for study and other activities multiple times (Goal: 50%): 7.9% (AY 2014 alumni)
3. Quality of learning by international students
 - The ratio of international students' satisfaction with the quality of teaching at AIU (Goal of "satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied": 75%): 60.5% (AY2014)



〈Second Study-Abroad by Japan-US International Collaboration Project in AY2014 at University of California-Berkeley〉

○ Highly autonomous and active learning, participation in social activities

1. Promotion of academic extracurricular activities
 - The ratio of students residing in subject-based houses (Goal: 75%): 3.6% (full-time students for AY2015 Spring Semester)
2. Improvement of students' autonomous research and survey skills
 - Quality of graduation seminar theses (Goal: a top liberal arts college): Evaluate the quality of graduation seminar theses written by AIU students starting from AY2015.
3. Promotion of service learning
 - The ratio of students participating in the English Village (Goal: 10% for full-time students, 25% for international students): 2.8% (full-time students for AY2014), 5.6% (international students for AY2014)



〈English Village on January 5, 2015 at AIU〉

○ Governance and work environment that support sustainable development of AIU

1. High-quality decision-making process
 - AIU will gauge the extent to which it has been able to institute effective governance system where the various stakeholders of the university, including student representatives, can get involved in a proper manner to improve and enrich the education AIU provides through international benchmarking.
2. Research-teaching balance for the faculty
 - The ratio of faculty members taking sabbaticals (Goal: 100%): 5.5% (result of 7 years from AY2009 to 2014)
3. Strengthening staff's job performance capability
 - The ratio of staff members that have received training overseas (Goal: 50%): 14.6% (AY2014 result)

■ Featured initiatives based on the characteristics of the university

○ Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education by further integrating learning and living.

Recruited and selected students for three subject-based houses (Japan House: 20 students including 11 international students, Graduate Track House: 13 students, and Public Policy House: 8 students), and started discussing activities for AY2015.

○ Enrichment of world-standard curriculums. Coordinate with partner universities to offer curriculums that are more equivalent to and mutually complementary with each other.

The working group visited overseas universities in preparation for introducing flipped classroom using MOOCs and other ICT. Also, Japanese Language Program faculty visited partner universities in the U.S. in preparation for partners' program introduction.

○ Lead development of English education being offered at the elementary and secondary schools in Japan through English Village and Teachers' Seminar activities.

Offered English Village programs six times in AY2014, totaling 233 student participants. As part of the program, AIU's graduate, undergraduate and international students were trained as teaching assistants (TA) and about 18 TA participants attended each session. Also prepared for the Teachers' Seminar program in AY2015.

○ Assurance of globally competitive quality of the curriculums offered by AIU through global benchmarking.

The working group visited overseas universities to gather information and began discussions on collaborative benchmarking to start comparative evaluation from AY2015.

■ Free description

○ AIU's TGU Commemorative Talk Event "Japan's World-Class Liberal Arts University"

AIU held a Commemorative Talk Event on January 30, 2015, to introduce its TGU initiatives to faculty and staff members of other universities as well as people from business enterprises.

Also, AIU announced the TGU project to students' guardians at the parents meetings and to AIU students, faculty and staff members at workshops and Faculty Development sessions on campus to share the initiatives extensively.



〈AIU's TGU Commemorative Talk Event on January 30, 2015 at Palace Hotel Tokyo〉

3. FY2015 Progress

■ Common indicators and targets

Internationalization

- **Increase the number of study-abroad partner schools to 200, in 50 countries/regions.**

AIU has 177 partner institutions in 46 countries/regions as of April 25, 2016.

- **Expand AIU's own scholarship program to support study abroad.**

"Scholarship for Study Abroad" is available for students whose cumulative GPA is 3.80 or above at the time of application for study abroad. In addition, "the AIU-Asahi Kasei Corporation Scholarship" was given to one selected student for one-year study abroad.

- **Increase the ratio of the students whose English proficiency test score at graduation is at least 900 on the TOEIC (or equivalent) to 75%**

AIU has been offering free TOEIC®IP test for students who completed their study abroad. 87 students among 186 who graduated in AY2015 obtained a score of 900 or higher on the TOEIC or equivalent. (The ratio is 46.8% and the average score is 890.)

- **Strengthen linkage between academic affairs system and educational quality assurance system.**

The Course Evaluation Sheet was modified to extract international students' evaluation for the purpose of verifying students' satisfaction. In addition, AIU faculty visited various U.S. universities that use CLA+ test for global benchmarking.

- **Increase collaborative learning opportunities between international and Japanese students in campus housing.**

Subject-based houses began in Spring semester AY2015. Students in the Japanese Art and Culture House (20 including 11 international students in Spring and 16 including 12 international students in Fall) lived together, and organized meetings, study sessions and events by themselves.]]]]



Japanese Art and Culture House Meeting
(September 2, 2015)

University reform

- **Reform the performance evaluation system based on improvement points identified during global benchmarking.**

The AIU working group visited various U.S. universities (Dickinson College, The College of William & Mary and Georgetown University) to improve global benchmarking. AIU will seek for the performance evaluation system referring to features of AIU and foreign practices.

- **Strengthen the bottom-up framework by which members of the AIU community may propose university policies in addition to the top-down decision making process.**

Under the leadership of the president, designated faculty members coordinate each project and young faculty members that are involved in the working groups.



Global Benchmarking at the College of
William and Mary (January 18-20, 2016)

Education reform

- **In addition to AIU's unique initiative (around-the-clock liberal arts education), develop a culture of active learning and carry out university reform in which students can also participate.**

The subject-based house provides active learning environment for students to actively propose and enact their own ideas. In addition, English Village and Teachers' Seminar programs provides opportunities for students to conduct classes by themselves.



English Village (July 18, 2015)

- **Proactively use external examinations including the International Baccalaureate.**

Out of 16 types of entrance exams offered by AIU, eleven recognize external examinations (TOEFL iBT, TOEFL PBT, TOEIC, STEP, UNATE, Cambridge ESOL) as one of the application requirements, and five recognize the International Baccalaureate. Since AY2014, AIU has changed the names of the "AO/High School Study Abroad Student Exam I and II" to the "AO/IB/High School Study Abroad Student Exam I and II," respectively, by adding "IB" to each. Through the name change, AIU is actively publicizing the International Baccalaureate to the high school students, teachers and staffs.

- **In view of further diversification of student needs, develop flexible academic paths in collaboration with other universities.**

The global benchmarking working group gathered information from U.S. liberal arts colleges and discussed about the improvement for world-standard curriculum. The working group will ask AIU students for their opinions regarding world-standard curriculum.

■ University's own indicators and targets

○ Education program that embodies high internationality and mobility

1. Enhancement of the faculty's internationally applicable education ability
 - The ratio of full-time faculty members that have taught courses overseas (Goal: 75%): 10.8% (AY2015 result)
2. Diversification of overseas experiences
 - The ratio of students that have traveled abroad for study and other activities multiple times (Goal: 50%): 9.6% (AY 2015 alumni)
3. Quality of learning by international students
 - The ratio of international students' satisfaction with the quality of teaching at AIU (Goal of "satisfied " or "somewhat satisfied": 75%): 45.6% (AY2015)



Internship at Japan Society of Northern California
(June 6 - December 10, 2015)

○ Highly autonomous and active learning, participation in social activities

1. Promotion of academic extracurricular activities
 - The ratio of students residing in subject-based houses (Goal: 75%): 5.5% (full-time students for AY2015)
2. Improvement of students' autonomous research and survey skills
 - Quality of graduation seminar theses (Goal: a top liberal arts college): Visited three U.S. universities for the global benchmarking, and studied for thesis or graduation projects.
3. Promotion of service learning
 - The ratio of students participating in the English Village (Goal: 10% for full-time students, 25% for international students): 5.7% (full-time students for AY2015), 10.6% (international students for AY2015)

○ Governance and work environment that support sustainable development of AIU

1. High-quality decision-making process
 - AIU will gauge the extent to which it has been able to institute effective governance system where the various stakeholders of the university, including student representatives, can get involved in a proper manner to improve and enrich the education AIU provides through global benchmarking.
2. Research-teaching balance for the faculty
 - The ratio of faculty members taking sabbaticals (Goal: 100%): 10.8% (result of 7 years from AY2009 to 2015)
3. Strengthening staff's job performance capability
 - The ratio of staff members that have received training overseas (Goal: 50%): 13.6% (AY2015 result)



MOOCs Training at the University of Colorado – Boulder (February 16-23, 2016)

■ Featured initiatives based on the characteristics of the university

○ Promotion of around-the-clock liberal arts education by further integrating learning and living.

Started operating three subject-based houses (Japanese Art and Culture House, Graduate Track House and Public Policy House). The students organized the meetings and study sessions by themselves, and presented their study result at the end of each semester.

○ Enrichment of world-standard curriculums. Coordinate with partner universities to offer curriculums that are more equivalent to and mutually complementary with each other.

Enhanced Japan Study courses by hiring new faculty members through worldwide recruitment, and started using on-line teaching materials by MIT in a class as a test use of flipped classroom using MOOCs. Offered Partners' Program with the Australian National University and recruited other universities for AY2016. Prepared for international collaborative PBL programs for AY2016, and started to use TOEFL iBT test for the globalization of study environment.

○ Lead development of English education being offered at the elementary and secondary schools in Japan through English Village and Teachers' Seminar activities.

Offered English Village programs eleven times in AY2015, totaling 384 student participants. AIU's graduate, undergraduate and international students were trained as teaching assistants (TA) and about 18 TA participants attended each session. Offered Teachers' Seminar programs seven times in AY2015, totaling 190 teacher participants.

○ Assurance of globally competitive quality of the curriculums offered by AIU through global benchmarking.

The working group visited the U.S. universities to gather information for global benchmarking. In addition, AIU faculty visited several U.S. universities that use CLA+ test and searched for the practices of the evaluation system for students' learning.

■ Free description

○ AIU Partners' Program

Offered Partners' Program (JPL472: Japanese Language and Cultural Immersion Program: Advanced) with the Australian National University (ANU) between January 4 and February 12, 2016. Seven ANU students who participated in the program studied about Akita and Japanese expression, experienced home stay and joined local winter festival. Through those activities, students acquired Japanese proficiency and deepened better understanding of Japanese culture.



Preparation of Winter Festival (February 6, 2016)