

Panel Discussion (2)

Contributions of university evaluation to society

《Panelists》

Tateo Shimizu Editorial Writer, The Asahi Shimbun

Roger K. Abrahamsen Professor of UMB, Chair of NOKUT's Board, Norway

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《Moderator》

Akihiko Kawaguchi Vice-President, NIAD-UE

Kato: We will now begin Panel Discussion 2. The moderator is the Vice-President of NIAD-UE, Dr. Akihiko Kawaguchi.

I will also introduce the panelists. We have invited two individuals from Japan's higher education sphere to participate, and one representative from the five Nordic countries. I will introduce each one starting from the right side of the stage.

Tateo Shimizu, Editorial Writer from the Asahi Shimbun.

Roger K. Abrahamsen, Professor of UMB and Chair of the Board of NOKUT in Norway.

Fumio Isoda, Deputy Director-General of the Higher Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

This panel is joined by two representatives from the Nordic countries who also made presentations this morning.

Mr. Staffan Wahlén.

Ms. Solrun Jensdóttir.

I will now hand over the microphone to the moderator, Vice-President Kawaguchi. Thank you.

Kawaguchi: I would now like to commence the proceedings of this second afternoon session.

I begin with an apology and a request from the organizers. So far today, the presentations have been delivered so zealously that we have almost run out of time, and have been unable to accept questions from the floor. I'm sure your stress levels are on the increase, but I assure you that we will encourage many questions from the floor at the end of this session. Your cooperation would be appreciated.

Now let us move into the substance of this session.

The objective of this session relates to a theme that has been raised consistently

throughout today's proceedings: namely, what is the aim of evaluation? It is said that the primary aim is improvement in the universities evaluated, and the secondary aim is to develop accountability.

Prof. Kudo commented that evaluation should be used extensively as a tool for universities to persuade or obtain approval from the general public. In international circles, it is said that the results of evaluation—information on how a university is assessed by a third party—are equally or even more important than information disseminated by the university itself.

Therefore, the principal reason for scheduling this second panel discussion relates to publication of the results of evaluation. We certainly disclose the results of university evaluations undertaken by our organization. But how is this information communicated to wider society? Mr. Shimizu may be one to point out that in fact, there has been a failure to disseminate the information properly. This is one point I would like the panel to discuss. I personally do not think that results have been communicated properly. I hope today's discussion provides an initial attempt to address the issue of how better to communicate the results of university evaluation, and how to make those results understandable to the general public.

“What Kind of University Evaluation Does Society Want?”

Tateo Shimizu (Editorial Writer, The Asahi Shimbun)

Kawaguchi: First, we will hear from a panelist who works in a sector outside higher education, Mr. Tateo Shimizu, Editorial Writer for the Asahi Shimbun. Time is limited, so I would ask you to refer to the materials in front of you for details of Mr. Shimizu's career. Thank you.

Shimizu: Thank you for your introduction. My name is Shimizu and I am Editorial Writer for the Asahi Shimbun. I do have one other official title, that of chief editor of the publication called *Daigaku Ranking* (University Rankings). I have worked on this book on a voluntary basis for the past fourteen years. The theme of this discussion is how to communicate university evaluation to wider society. This obviously requires us to consider what kind of university evaluation society requires, and what society wants to get out of university evaluation. My presentation will focus on these issues.

Firstly, I would like to look back on what kind of society Japan was when we first started to publish our university rankings.

The book was first launched by the Asahi Shimbun in 1994. Since then, we have published it every year, renewing data each time. 1994 was three years after the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (then known as Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture) decided to relax the standards for the establishment of universities, and request all universities to commence self-assessment and produce a self-assessment report. This deregulation or relaxation of the standards for the establishment of universities brought the term “university evaluation” into wider use in Japan.

The relaxation of the standards for the establishment of universities provided greater freedom for universities in terms of faculty and departmental organization, and gave them room to explore new curricular structures. It enabled universities to develop their individuality. As a result, we saw the emergence of many new interdisciplinary faculties, transcending the traditional discipline-based framework. Faculties of liberal education, which had until then provided liberal education to new enrollees, were abolished in favor of programs that offered professional education from an earlier starting point. This was also the period in which graduate universities began to appear. In other words, this period marked the beginning of an era in which universities would pursue their own individual directions.

In addition, the 18-year-old—university entrance age—population had reached a peak in 1992, and it was already well known that the population would decline from that point. There is no more certain predictor of future trends than population projections. The era of “universities choosing students” was nearing an end. It would be replaced by an era of “students choosing universities.” Higher education practitioners throughout Japan were beginning to prepare themselves for these realities.

Naturally, these developments provided universities with a new incentive to communicate information on their educational and research activities to as many prospective students as possible. Normally, university evaluation should attract the attention of the general public, as a means of comprehending the changes universities are undergoing and as a tool to communicate the individual characteristics of each university. Unfortunately, however, the self-assessment reports hardly saw the light of

day outside the universities that produced them.

Why did this happen? I think it could be attributed to the following facts.

Firstly, these evaluations were conducted primarily for faculty, staff, and other members of the university organizations being evaluated. Secondly, the method employed was one of defining missions and objectives for each university and then assessing whether or not they had been achieved: a qualitative, or even absolute, evaluation. The third fact is that the missions and objectives were set by the universities themselves. As a result, they lacked objectivity. For these three reasons, the self-assessment reports at all universities ended up being little more than praise for one's own wares. It was difficult to ascertain any difference between universities. Thus, the reports failed to attract the interest of wider society.

Universities are of course part of wider society, but for universities themselves, society exists outside their doorsteps. Among the various stakeholders in this "society," prospective students and the corporate sector are particularly important. Students have to choose which university they will enroll in. Companies have to employ university graduates. They also have to choose partners for research. In any event, such stakeholders must choose a handful of suitable universities from among the 744 institutions that exist across the country. Thus, they need university evaluation.

Prospective students, companies, and other stakeholders require universities to be evaluated in a manner that is, if possible, quantitative and enables direct comparisons to be made. Put another way, the type of university evaluation demanded by wider society is quantitative and comparative evaluation.

Have universities communicated the results of this kind of evaluation? Have they been disseminated by public bodies responsible for educational administration? No, they have not. So mass media organizations such as ours have stepped in to fill the gap. In 1992, before we started our publication, the economic magazine *Diamond Weekly* started publishing a "human resource output ranking" based on surveys of corporate officers responsible for recruitment of new employees. Two years later, our organization produced the first edition of the university rankings for prospective university students.

Such rankings all take the form of commercial publications. They are published with

the aim of generating profits. I do not think it is true, however, that the pursuit of profit has been the sole purpose of publication. The data that forms the basis of our rankings is provided by a variety of bodies including universities themselves, government organizations, companies, and senior high schools. It is my belief that all these organizations provide data because they appreciate the social value of the rankings we produce.

The fact that our university rankings have been judged useful in social terms is what has enabled us to continue producing them. This refutes suggestions that ours is just a commercial publication produced with the aim of making money. I'm trying to show you that our publication has been recognized to have a certain degree of social utility.

In contrast to our university rankings, why has systematic university evaluation such as the certified evaluation and accreditation—which is the theme of today's symposium—not been absorbed into wider society?

I believe that one explanation is that the universities that have undergone such evaluation and accreditation have been reluctant to communicate to wider society the fact that they have received certification.

University evaluation in Japan has progressed from the initial system “self-assessment reports” through an external evaluation system focused on third party peer review, to the current systematized approach of certified evaluation and accreditation. As I said earlier, however, in spite of these developments, university evaluation has not captured the attention of the public, nor are stakeholders making use of the results of evaluation. I have also pointed out that the principal reason for this is that universities have not taken active steps to promote the fact that they have undergone certified evaluation and accreditation.

I would like to give you an example of this fact, taken from Rikkyo University. Rikkyo underwent certified evaluation and accreditation in 2004. The report produced as a result of this evaluation is a huge document of around 650 pages. I found it to be a detailed and thorough report. Owing to its size, it has been published on CD-ROM.

However, the fact that Rikkyo has received such certification does not even get a mention in any of the brochures produced by the university for recruitment of

prospective students, despite the fact that such students are the primary target for dissemination of information about the university.

The reason for this omission lies in the fact that the actual results of the evaluation—facts such as that “the quality of education and research at the university is assured,” and that “the university is conducting research and education of a level suitable to its designation as a university”—are, for a university with the prestige and tradition of Rikkyo, matters of course that do not require any special mention. For society outside the university, for example for high schools students or companies, the results are no big news. Thus the university doesn’t promote them, and neither do newspapers or television report it in any significant way.

I have heard that in the U.S., universities that are unable to gain accreditation are subject to extremely serious penalties, including disqualification of their students from eligibility for scholarships, and in some states, suspension of the right to grant academic degrees. Under such conditions, whether a university gains accreditation or not is a matter of considerable concern to students. In Japan, however, certified evaluation and accreditation is not conducted in such a harsh manner. I think this provides another explanation for the low degree of public recognition of the results of evaluation.

I would like to reverse the question and ask: what kind of universities will capture the attention of the public when they are evaluated? The answer is the exact opposite of top-class, traditional institutions. For instance, up until 1991, very strict standards were applied to the establishment of new universities. These standards were relaxed to some extent after 1991, and even further later on. Thus, universities established post-1991 should attract more public attention when they undergo certified evaluation and accreditation. In recent years, private companies have been permitted to establish universities in certain designated zones. Permission for establishment has been granted according to standards regarding university assets and other matters that are far more lenient than those previously applied to new universities. Some of these developments have been subjected to criticism in the National Diet. Wouldn’t certified evaluation and accreditation have attracted more attention if these kinds of universities were made the subjects of it first? Since the certified evaluation and accreditation system started, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation, the Japan University Accreditation Association, and other organizations have been publishing results of many evaluations. Most have generated only small articles in the press. There

was only one occasion when these evaluation results made headlines. This was when the Japan University Accreditation Association announced that it had suspended accreditation for two institutions it evaluated in 2005. This was the equivalent of issuing a yellow card in a soccer game. That's why it received so much media coverage.

With this in mind, as I said earlier, evaluators should give priority to newly-established universities or those that are under-enrolled and experiencing financial difficulties, even if means delaying the evaluation process for traditional prestigious universities. I believe that such an approach would help university evaluations gain wider exposure.

Earlier on I suggested that the existing forms of university evaluation, including certified evaluation and accreditation, do not reflect the needs of stakeholders. However, our ranking system also has many limitations. After 14 years of producing these rankings, I, more than anyone else, am aware of these limitations.

Firstly, performance in research fields can be quantified in various ways. The amount of grant-in-aid for scientific research, the number of papers published, and citations are some of the many quantitative indicators that can be used. However, there are virtually no sources of data that can quantify educational quality. We have hunted high and low, but our search has been fruitless. About all we can come up with is data relating to the physical educational environment. In essence, educational quality is manifested in individual students. The form it takes is dependent on the individual in question, and very difficult to process statistically. Therefore, rankings cannot adequately assess the quality of education.

The second limitation is that it is not easy to check the reliability of data. A prime example can be found in the term "job placement rate." Figures are available on rates of job placement for graduates in Japan. The prolonged economic downturn has meant that great importance is placed on these figures by students and parents. However, the definition of job placement rate differs from university to university. It should express the percentage of graduating students who have secured a job as a proportion of those who have sought one, but there is no set definition of either of these concepts. As a result you end up comparing things that are not suitable for comparison, and for this reason we do not use this slipshod measure. However, there is an abundance of rankings that do use it.

Thirdly, there are many cases where universities will not provide proper data. For instance, outcomes of entrance examinations provide probably the most important basic form of data for prospective students, and we ask universities to provide it through figures such as numbers of students taking general entrance examinations, numbers of applicants, numbers of students actually accepted, numbers of students actually enrolled, and numbers of students accepted and enrolled through recommendation systems. However, 150 out of the 700 universities treat some or all of these figures as confidential. Even for something as basic as data on entrance exams, it is not easy to gather figures that are complete and reliable.

It is my view that these limitations and problems mean that rankings should never form the mainstream of university evaluation. The cornerstone for evaluation should be a public evaluation system such as certified evaluation and accreditation that, founded on a relationship of trust between the evaluation institution and the university, requires all forms of data to be provided and subjects them to a full analysis. The fact that the results of this kind of evaluation are currently not communicated to wider society is, frankly, a waste.

I would really like to see the bodies responsible for evaluation work together with universities to find ways to communicate the outcomes of public evaluation such as certified evaluation.

That concludes my talk. Thank you.

Kawaguchi: Thank you.

If I may just add one point: as you know, our organization implemented a program of trial evaluation from the year 2000. As part of our review of this program, we conducted a questionnaire survey, the results of which revealed a point related to that raised just now by Mr. Shimizu. Respondents stated repeatedly that although their university was disseminating information about evaluations, it wasn't getting through to the public. I got the impression that universities were pursuing this without any analysis of what kinds of information should be disseminated to which stakeholders, or exactly what was required of them. It was an interesting point to note.

But if I start talking we'll run out of time, so let's move on to the next speaker.

“Contribution of University Evaluation to Society: University Evaluation in Norway”

Roger K. Abrahamsen (Professor, UMB; Chair, NOKUT's Board, Norway)

Kawaguchi: We now welcome Prof. Roger Abrahamsen, who has come from Norway. Prof. Abrahamsen holds posts both at a university and at an organization that conducts evaluation. We hope to hear his comments from this dual perspective. Prof. Abrahamsen, please go ahead.

(Slide1)

Roger Abrahamsen: Mr. President, Your Excellency, dear colleagues, also for me it's an honor and a privilege to participate in this very interesting symposium today and to visit your nice country. I will take you through my presentation in a slightly reduced model compared to what you have in your documents.

I was asked by the organizers, and I quote, “to focus on the goal of university evaluation in the Nordic,” and I prefer then to refer to Norway. I was also asked, “How should the government, universities and quality assurance institution satisfy with the accountability of university evaluation.” The third question was raised like this: “How should universities utilize the result of the evaluation for improvement?”

(Slide2, 3)

I would like to take you very briefly again into the evaluation and assessment carried out by NOKUT, which I represent here. Which is on the screen, has been mentioned to you earlier today, so I don't need to go through each individual point here.

(Slide4)

So I take you to the next slide because this slide says something about the more general consideration concerning the evaluations and assessment carried out by our agency. And it's very important to underline that all evaluations are carried out by external committees or expert panels established by NOKUT. And I would underline that all the reports from these committees are public and we have to publish them and we think that the society would like to read them.

The reports are comprehensive and present basic information about the higher education institution. And it's also right to say that these reports are a kind of thorough evaluation, which is spelled out in the recommendations, as well as more formal conclusions. And then the reports are very important tools for the institutions' further work with quality development. They have told us clearly that that's the case. And the educational institutions normally express great satisfaction with the reports and often

underline their practical usefulness in their own work. We have the understanding that the institutions pay considerable attention to the recommendations.

(Slide5)

A few words about the quality audit it's very important to remember or to understand that the educational institutions are required by law to have satisfactory internal quality assurance systems and that's the platform for all other kind of assessment or evaluations. And the quality assurance system will be assessed by NOKUT in periods of a maximum of six years. It's a very important point to underline that higher education institutions themselves carry the responsibility for the quality of their own educational provision. They have to carry out a robust internal quality assurance, and this is in their own interest. We have to convince them that this is in their own interest. If they can realize that, the institution has a good possibility to develop an institutional quality culture. I think the society should be aware of the fact that a number of Norwegian institutions have developed what we can call a quality culture because of these evaluations.

(Slide6)

The next point I would like to draw your attention to is that the educational institutions have the freedom to design their own quality assurance system within a given frame of reference. We consider this freedom as important. The concept of freedom for the institution to design their own quality assurance system is supposed to foster a sense of ownership and broad participation among the institutions' staff and students. We strongly believe in this, but we still don't know if we can have this so to say bottom-up reaction. But the ownership and broad participation is considered important, and I think this is a pillar in the development of the quality required also by the society.

(Slide7)

The next point is that the quality audit cannot directly lead to the loss of certification but it could reveal indications of poor quality, and NOKUT may follow up these indications by carrying out revision of certification. And it's probably right to underline that the link between institutional quality audits and revisions of certification can be considered as the central pillar in the Norwegian system.

(Slide8)

The quality audits are important for the educational institutions, for the students and for the society because the quality assurance system should be used as a two-fold institution to pay continuous attention to the improvement of the educational system and the educational provisions. The feedback to the student about actions for improvements is crucial. If we don't show the student that we do an improvement, then

we are in a bad situation. But I would like to conclude concerning the effect of the quality audits by saying that the fact that the institutions have established and are able to operate a reliable quality system may be crucial for the trust and reliability expressed from the society to the Norwegian institutions for higher education.

(Slide9)

So a few words about what we call the institutional certification. It's right to say that certification of institutions is an instrument which makes it possible to change institutional category. My colleague, Tove Blytt Holmen, expressed this to you earlier today. NOKUT carries out institutional certification based on applications to change category. The aim of this system is to achieve academic expansion. It is a political will in Norway that an institution can apply to be placed in a higher category of institution. If, for instance, a university college would like to get the status of a university, there is a need to increase the institution's academic competence and quality. And this may have a very important effect in the society because this may create the political will to allocate additional resources at the governmental level. It may mobilize particular support from the regional or local politicians, society and industry. And it may increase the regional competence platform and again create regional innovation and new professional activities in the region.

(Slide10, 11)

We also have what we call the initial accreditation of programs and courses, and in this context accreditation of programs of study is an instrument to secure the standard of new programs. And I feel very strongly that the society should be aware of the fact that we have such a certification of programs. Certification is carried out by NOKUT when an institution applies for the accreditation of a new course or program that the institution status doesn't allow it to provide automatically. And the reason behind this system has been explained to you this morning.

(Slide12)

So I take you further to the importance for the society when it comes to initial accreditation of programs because in order to achieve governmental support, or a governmental-supported student loan, a study program has to be accredited. Accreditation of new programs is an important prerequisite in the Bologna process signed by the Norwegian government. And a very clear goal set by the Norwegian government is that certification may be considered as an important tool to achieve the national, political and institutional goal, namely, to secure that the quality of higher Norwegian education is at a high international level. Accreditation of new programs establishes in that way an increased confidence to the institutions from the society.

(Slide13, 14)

We also have the revision of certification or re-certification if you like. This re-certification is related to programs and institutions. Based on different indications, NOKUT may conduct an evaluation of an institution or a program of study with a view to do revision for a previously-granted certification. The revision may be triggered by indications from the institutional audit, which I mentioned earlier, of the quality assurance system or by other indications of inferior quality.

So what is the importance of this re-certification for the society and for the institutions? Well the reports from the expert panels contain recommendations of how the institutions could develop the quality beyond the minimum level. The experience shows that institutions follow up the experts' recommendations—that's important—and we consider certification as a strong instrument for obtaining the goal of continuous improvement of higher education, which again is a very strong goal for the parliament and expressed in the parliament. The decision to revoke the accreditation of a program or institution will obviously create a considerable set of activities in order to retain the quality necessary for accreditation. So this is a quality-driving force in what we could call the quality wheel.

(Slide15, 16)

We also do evaluation of significance to assessment of the quality of higher education, and we can decide to do that and we can also be asked by the ministry or the ministry may instruct us to carry out such evaluations. We consider these evaluations as an important source of information for the ministry and for the educational institutions and even for the society in their decision-making and allocation of resources for improvement of higher education. And these assessments may indicate to NOKUT if a revision of accreditation of a program or an institution is necessary or relevant.

(Slide17, 18)

If you look into the Norwegian system it can be concluded that it is what we could call an integrated system, a balance between internal and external quality assurance with a focus on the institutions' responsibility for the quality on their provisions. And this balance, combined with confidence in the institutions, make the system resource-effective. We consider that as important.

So besides getting more out of the existing system by improving processes and procedures and following up other challenges, the following steps could be taken: systematize the accreditation instruments more, so we will look further into criteria and

procedures; and we will give higher priority to work with the examination of the effects of the different instruments on the aims and objectives, and; we will also achieve more knowledge on the effectiveness of the different methods used and how to reduce the cost in quality work without reducing the quality.

(Slide19)

So my main conclusions, which are rather general. The various types of evaluations of the quality assurance system in higher education create an increased focus on quality development in higher education which in general is important for the society. It's important for the country. It's important for the students and of course for the educational institutions. And a comprehensive quality assurance system and the evaluation tools used create increased confidence between the society and the institutions. It creates a better contact between the society and the institutions and a better contact between the industry and the institutions. And both the society and the industry may have the opportunity to influence the curriculum and the educational program if they like. It will also create a better platform for decision-making, for allocation of resources, both at the institutional and governmental level, a better platform for other political decisions and an increased possibility for internationalization within higher education which is a prerequisite for further development.

So I will end this introduction by saying that the lack of an appropriate national quality assurance system in higher education will result in a loss of confidence in the modern society, among students and among politicians. Thank you.

“Existing Situation of University Evaluation in Japan”

Fumio Isoda (Deputy Director-General, Higher Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT))

Kawaguchi: Up to this point we have heard from two individuals: Mr. Shimizu from the perspective of wider society, and now Prof. Abrahamsen representing both a university and an evaluation body. Now Mr. Isoda of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will make some comments. Then we will move to discussion. Thank you.

Isoda: I was told I have 15 minutes to speak, and at this stage in the proceedings I don't

think it's really useful for someone from the national educational administration to talk about the certified evaluation and accreditation system. Instead, I will try my best to make some comments on the points already made.

First there is the issue, raised by Mr. Shimizu, of why university representatives don't provide the wider community with more information about their activities. Universities would point to the fact that in the era of high economic growth in Japan, despite the increasing prosperity of the nation, the amount of public funds directed to universities was fairly low. As you know, public funding allocations to higher education institutions in Japan are quite meager compared to Europe.

For this reason, in the past there was little expectation that universities would disseminate information about their internal activities. Students, one of the stakeholder groups mentioned earlier, were most concerned with the deviation-value scores, which indicated how selective the entrance exams were at different universities. Their motivation did not come from, for example, a desire to take Prof. (Kazuo) Akagi's classes at Kyoto University or to learn about decentralization of administrative power from Prof. (Naohiko) Jinno at the University of Tokyo. Instead, they were just interested in choosing the university with the highest scores.

Companies also relied on these entrance scores to indicate the potential capabilities of future employees, and sometimes recruited students on the basis of which university they had attended. So in the past, universities gave students an opportunity to raise their skills through academic pursuits, but also provided an environment for personal development and formation of a broader outlook on life and work.

This situation was combined with the low levels of public funding in comparison to other countries to generate a blithe attitude towards evaluation among universities. From the early 1970s, however, universities were subjected to severe public condemnation in the wake of revelations that some of them had enrolled excessive numbers of students. This prompted the national government to impose more stringent quantitative restrictions on universities in a new plan for higher education. This plan required universities to take steps to rectify their over-enrollment problems, as well as imposing basic constraints on university expansion, and particularly controls on growth in major urban areas. In return for these new constraints, the government instituted a system of subsidies for private universities.

The next major turning point was reached, I believe, at the time of the Nakasone cabinet. This was an era when not only Japan but also the Regan administration in the U.S. and the Thatcher government in the UK were all promoting neoliberalist policies of structural reform.

In Japan, this political current was reflected in more relaxed regulatory structures, increased elasticity and flexibility, and eventually, as mentioned earlier, the dawning of the era of evaluation in 1991.

At this point, in return for relaxation of restrictions, a new system of self-assessment was introduced. As has been pointed out, however, this system required members of the university organization to evaluate their own efforts to improve education and research quality. This meant that evaluation centered on qualitative issues and that its main concern was not to produce reports that could be read through with ease or enable comparison between universities.

Another more recent development is the shift from an *ex ante* to an *ex post* model for supervision of private university activities. The traditional relationship between the national government and private universities was one of advance regulation combined with government subsidies—a convoy system, as it were, to protect universities from the vagaries of the market. In order to reform or even revolutionize universities, policies have now been developed to allow the entry of new players into the university sector, most typically private corporations. This shift is one of the major currents of neoliberalism in recent years.

The new system was instituted by the 2004 revision to the standards for the establishment of universities. The magnitude of this revision can be seen in the fact that now, applications for establishment are judged strictly by reference to pre-set criteria: if an application accords with the standards, the Ministry is compelled to approve it. In addition, despite the dramatic decrease in the 18-year-old population discussed earlier, in 2004 the enrollment capacity of private universities in this country actually increased by over 6,000. For the private university sector, we have now entered an era of uncertainty in which universities face the specter of bankruptcy. Private universities are struggling to find ways to protect their students and preserve long-standing traditions and progress achieved in educational and research fields, at the same time as confronting the successive emergence of new players in the sector.

One further point is that now that we've reached this stage, I think it can be said that it is no longer possible for universities to operate in isolation from the wider community. One reason is that as was explained earlier, the decrease in the population of 18-year-olds means that from the 2007 academic year, all students who wish to enroll in university will be able to gain a place. The balance between supply and demand has been reversed completely. I agree with the observation that universities must now do all they can to promote their education and research activities to prospective students.

I understand that this issue does not relate simply to evaluation, but requires a paradigm shift for universities. As you know, debate on higher education administration in our country focused for many years on the issue of how to get more students accepted into higher education institutions and how to educate them effectively. The principal issues were those of how to ensure that selection for university entrance was conducted fairly, how to alleviate the intense competition in the selection process, and how to ensure senior high school students attained an appropriate academic level in preparation for university study. As forces of supply and demand are reversed, however, we now need to reassess the system for university entrance in its entirety, and also achieve a wide-ranging shift in focus for educational content.

In other words, there must be a fundamental change to the framework that was predicated on a competitive system of university entrance and the assumption that getting into university is inherently difficult. I believe that evaluation is a major issue in this respect.

I also want to comment further on the point that the general public has not displayed much interest in the actual content of education provided by universities up until now. I realize that in the past, universities have collaborated with industry in certain ways such as developing close relationships between specific researchers and research institutes at specific companies or working jointly on specific projects, and that such collaborations have been the subject of some evaluation. However, I am not talking about evaluation of such individual relationships between researchers and research bodies. Universities are assuming greater importance in wider society. For example, a very large amount of funds is injected into universities through competitive funding schemes established in recent years, and one out of every two 18 year olds now enrolls in university. This means, I believe, that the community will no longer tolerate universities operating as isolated entities.

The labor market is a case in point. Traditionally, companies have recruited students on the basis of potential shown at the time of enrollment in university: their performance on exams for admission to university from high school. Upon induction into the company, new recruits would be provided with extensive training to equip them with the qualities and abilities required by that company. At most companies, this employment system is now undergoing change, with new emphasis placed on recruiting personnel with top-level abilities who are of immediate use in company activities. Many companies are choosing to recruit students with Master's degrees, or even PhDs, in preference to those with undergraduate degrees only. In order to address changes in corporate capacity to nurture human resources, or shall we say to respond to rapidly changing conditions, there is a growing expectation that the university sector should take more responsibility for human resource development.

In addition, although it is probably a transient phenomenon, in the period after Japan's economic bubble burst, many companies have closed their central research units and have come to rely instead on universities to meet their basic research functions. I believe that this led to the acceptance in wider society of the research function of universities as organizations.

We are aware of a need at this time for the university sector to communicate to the community, and to students, the results of a thorough process of self-evaluation and monitoring. Addressing the question of how this is to be labeled or graded has, in the postwar era, been a major responsibility of the Japan University Accreditation Association. Basically, we think that the most appropriate system is one in which a university association undertakes mutual evaluation and accreditation of member organizations, and in which a variety of intermediary organizations or functions help to promote communication between universities and wider society. One of our greatest hopes is that players from a variety of sectors, including the mass media, will help to promote the development of these processes of exchange.

There is one final point I would like to make. I have already said that the decline in the 18-year-old population is resulting in fundamental changes to the quality of evaluation, particularly to how it is presented to the community and above all to prospective students. One other factor, however, is globalization, which is also one of the explanations for changes in the corporate sector I discussed earlier. As is clear from the discourse in forums such as UNESCO and the OECD, the trends to globalization and

the international cross-border movement of people, goods, and intellectual property are making the issue of international quality assurance in the higher education sector a major concern.

We believe that in relation to international quality assurance, our Ministry must fulfill its responsibility to global higher education by working to improve the evaluation system, so we can communicate to the world an assurance of the quality of our higher education institutions. Thank you.

Kawaguchi: Thank you very much. Now we would welcome comments from our two Nordic panelists.

Wahlén: Just a brief intervention. I'd like to make a brief comment on Mr. Shimizu's inspired talk in favor of ranking. As Mr. Isoda said, we all know that universities are accountable to society and stakeholders generally for their provision and their results. The question is, who are really the stakeholders? Who wants to know what? I think this is an important question. And in this light, I'm afraid, sometimes rankings, as least as I've seen them, may become too simplistic, they over-simplify and over-state simple figures, which taken together may be significant, but do not necessarily correspond to what individual students and other stakeholders think is important for them.

It's true that a lot of information is needed, and a lot of it is indeed available. In Sweden, as in several other countries, there are databases with input concerning most aspects of higher education, providing figures number of students, number of new students, their progression, their number of years of study, graduation rates. Results of evaluations are also included. But figures with regard to employment are not available, unlike what is the case in, for example, the UK. Through our evaluations, we encourage universities to conduct such investigations themselves, because it is, after all their responsibility to do them and to make the results publicly available.

So for ranking purposes, what are the data we need, and how reliable are the ranking lists? Do they actually include such information as students, prospective students, employers and other stakeholders need to make informed choices.

Shimizu: I think Mr. Wahlén's point is well made. I am of the same opinion myself. In Europe, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* produces world higher education

rankings, but the results are unaccompanied by any explanation about the sources of the data or of the rationale behind the weightings accorded to each indicator.

You also said that rankings are too simplistic. Given that universities' scale and faculty structures vary widely, trying to transpose university information into a single figure for ranking purposes is a task which, I believe, is impossible.

We produce rankings according to 72 different indicators, but we do not produce an overall ranking. We think it is impossible to combine all the indicators. At a conference attended by parties involved in university evaluation, held by UNESCO in Berlin earlier this year, the Berlin Declaration was adopted. This declaration stated the principle that all published data must be substantiated, and that evaluators have a responsibility to explain weighting methods and other equations used. I believe that this principle should also be followed by all those involved in the production of rankings. This declaration will help change rankings for the better.

Kawaguchi: Thank you very much. Go ahead.

Isoda: I would like to make one related point. At present there is a lot of debate over who our stakeholders actually are. In the past, when confronted with the concept of stakeholders, we university people tended to use the excuse that we were contributing to the intellectual wealth of humanity as a whole, or to the development of the state or society in general, or to the improvement of the general citizenry. We must come to terms with the fact that we have not made enough effort to reflect on the actual quality of education or research at our universities.

One simple example comes from a private university in the Kansai region. This is a foreign language studies university, and its current account is well and truly in the black. It has also been able to move to a new campus location in a short time and very efficiently. However, because this is a private university, its mission precludes it from covering all academic fields.

In contrast, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies maintains programs in foreign language and regional studies representing a significant proportion of the world's regions. This has enabled it in recent years to provide cooperative educational support in Afghanistan and to facilitate academic assistance and human resource provision in a

variety of contexts for relations between Japan and other countries, including in Iraq. I always think that in such situations it is extremely difficult to evaluate the ways in which universities are contributing to the development of students, the corporate sector, and other elements of society, or to take a broader perspective, what role they play in the development of Japan, or of our citizens, or even of the human race as a whole, and in the long-term enhancement of knowledge for humankind. This is my current concern.

I believe that the market principles of neoliberalism do not provide a full solution to this issue. We need to consider ways in which we can build this issue in to our evaluation practices.

Kawaguchi: Thank you very much.

Sólrún Jensdóttir: Just a few words. Firstly, I must say that I was very inspired by Mr. Shimizu's presentation because when one looks at the heading of this panel discussion, contributions of university evaluation to society, the main point in evaluations of higher education for society is pretty obvious from my point of view at least.

The contribution of evaluation is to make both students, who are the main stakeholders I would say, and also industry and businesses aware of what quality they are getting from the supplier, which is the university, and therefore it's very important to give information to these stakeholders about the quality of the institutions. And as has been said here by many, the publication of evaluation reports is very necessary, as well as general information about the university institutions.

In Iceland we are so few and small that it's very easy for us, i.e. for the Ministry, to say to universities, if we are to give them contracts for financing, they have to fulfill several criteria and one is to have a good information system towards society. But as we were talking about the press and media, unfortunately, the media doesn't seem to be very interested in good reviews. But if they are bad, then everything breaks loose and you have this large heading for several days. This one is terrible, I mean, I never heard anything so bad as this. But fortunately, the institutions, even those who get bad reviews, get the opportunity to improve themselves, and we in the Ministry follow and try to help them because, as has also been said here often today, one of the main objectives of evaluation and quality assurance is to give the institutions the impetus to develop and improve. That's all for the moment I think.

Kawaguchi: I'm sure everybody would like to reply to some of these points, but please allow me to press on.

We have just heard about stakeholders and the information provided to them. Over a period of two years I visited all the Nordic countries and was introduced to the methods of evaluation employed in those countries.

One point of major difference from university evaluation in Japan was that representatives of the student body participate in the evaluation process. In Japan, there would be endless debate over whether Japanese university students should be entrusted with such responsibility. But the involvement of students is something we will have to think about in the context of issues such as how to communicate evaluation results to prospective student stakeholders.

There is another point, one that our organization often emphasizes when conducting evaluations, and that was reflected in the opinions of this morning's speakers. The point is that evaluation is a joint operation based on a relationship of tension between the evaluating body and the university being evaluated. That's what we need to achieve. As pointed out by Dr. Kajiyama earlier, the Nordic countries are one cycle ahead of Japan in terms of creating this relationship. I think we have just managed to take our first unsteady steps, but there is a history going back ten years, or at least more than five years, in the Nordic countries. It became clear to me that they have probably just got to the end of the first round or cycle, and are now reviewing their progress and possible directions for future years. This is the reason why we came up with the idea of holding this symposium as a source of ideas for university evaluation practices in Japan.

Earlier on—I think it came up at the end of the first panel discussion too—there were some comments made to the effect that evaluating bodies have also worked to reflect the views of universities in making improvements to their activities. I would like to invite anyone from the floor who has a short comment—perhaps it will be difficult to keep it short—to make in this regard, particularly from a university perspective. I'm sure many of you would like to say something, so please use this opportunity to make your opinions heard. We would welcome questions about challenges faced by Nordic countries and how they dealt with them, or any other general points. Would someone like to volunteer?

Question 1: Before I ask my question I would like to say that I listened to the representatives of the Nordic countries with a strong sense of respect and a certain degree of envy. This is because the Nordic countries are both part of Europe and at the same time have developed an organic and integrated approach to evaluation among themselves. I was deeply impressed by this. I just wanted to say that at the outset.

My question relates to the work of Mr. Shimizu who we heard from in the afternoon session. It was one of the major themes of this session—the issue of rankings. If I am not mistaken, during the morning session the point was made two or three times that the Nordic countries do not use rankings or league tables.

This can be contrasted to the situation in the neighboring United Kingdom. Mr. Shimizu also touched on the point that in the UK, rankings are published prominently in the press. I would like you to comment further on the reasons for this difference in the use of rankings.

I realize that rankings vary depending on whether they are quantitative or qualitative, and that the ease or difficulty with which they can be produced depends on factors such as whether they evaluate research or education. I would be grateful if you could talk about these points with reference to the Nordic countries.

Wahlén: You're referring, I think, to the difference between the Nordic countries and the UK. It's a striking phenomenon that rankings are most often or nearly always made and published by the press, i.e. newspapers or magazines. Some of them are good, such as the ones you mentioned, *The Times higher education supplement* and so on; Some of them are not so good. I think one of the reasons why rankings are not looked upon so favourably in the Nordic countries is that we are after all small communities, and there isn't enough interest on the part of the general public, so that publication of league tables would increase circulation. Rankings of Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish and Icelandic universities would not arouse sufficient interest.

Abrahamsen: Yes, I think you are right. It has something to do with the size of the countries. In Norway, when we started the evaluation as we have talked about today, there was a saying from the sector that they were afraid that the evaluations should be used as a kind of point of departure for ranking for the future. And we had then to convince them that that was not the reason why we introduced all the evaluations.

There are a number of arguments put on the table because in a small country, like Norway, there are quite few fully-fledged universities, and if you look upon these universities they are different in the way that they are specialized in certain areas. It means that the University of Bergen may be better than the University of Oslo in one particular field and that's the only place probably in Norway where this field is taught or given attention. So in a small country there is a tendency to greater specialization within certain subjects. So ranking is not very meaningful for that reason.

The other thing we know is that the Norwegian student seems not to look too much into that kind of quality. They will ask, where is this university located geographically in the country. That's one of the main reasons for the choice of university.

Another reason could be the social way of life for the students, and it was mentioned here the job opportunity, we have no information that there are better job opportunities if you go to this university or that university. We have more information about job opportunities regarding the subject you have studied. So in a small country we have to fulfill all of the requirements by higher education seen together and it's an open choice by the students, so ranking doesn't mean too much for the students and probably not for the society. Thank you.

Shimizu: May I make one brief comment?

I was deeply moved by one comment made by Dr. Kajiyama from Kyushu University in an earlier session today. He made the very important point that we must pay attention not only to the structures for input into the evaluation process, but also to the results or outcomes. Rankings are all about results. Number of papers, number of citations, amount of research grants-in-aid, amount of subsidies—they're all outcomes, all results.

Having listened to the comments just made, I can see that certainly the countries are small and have a limited number of universities. But I think that it's still possible and meaningful to evaluate results, even in the Nordic countries. So whether rankings are necessary is not merely a matter of size or geographical conditions—it is whether or not we focus on outcomes. I think this is an important standpoint for evaluators.

Kawaguchi: Thank you very much.

Wahlén: Just a brief comment. I agree very much that we should pay attention to outcome; that is essential. But I noticed that when you gave examples, you referred to the world of research, using things like citation indices and so on. The huge Chinese league table of 500 universities refers almost exclusively to research outcomes. This is not without complications in the way that it has an impact on the way research projects are carried out and published, but it is feasible and has a certain credibility. When it comes to teaching and learning, variables are more difficult and complex.

Kawaguchi: Allow me to move on to the next topic. I would like to ask all speakers to provide their name and the organization to which they are affiliated before they make their comment. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Now, I would like to invite questions and comments preferably on issues other than rankings. Yes, the person in the back, please go ahead.

Question 2: Thank you for an extremely valuable discussion today.

If I understand correctly, at the end of his presentation Mr. Shimizu made comments about the limitations of rankings and how he hoped that universities and evaluating organizations publish evaluation reports produced on the basis of a trust relationship. In the Nordic countries, I'm sure it's taken for granted that the 'yes' and 'no' of accreditation should be made public, but what about recommendations for improvement and points that were evaluated positively—the actual substance of the evaluation? To what extent are these matters disclosed? My knowledge of the Japanese situation is also lacking, so I would like you to explain how far disclosure goes in Japan, too.

Wahlén: In Sweden, and generally in the Nordic countries, everything is public. Self-evaluations are also public, and, in fact any kinds of results found by quality assurance agencies or the universities themselves are available to the public.

Kawaguchi: Prof. Kimura, would you make a comment about the situation in Japan?

Kimura: Well in the case of Japan, or rather the case of our organization, we disclose the self-assessment report produced by the university, any formal objection to the result filed by the university as well as our response to it, the final results of the evaluation—everything is made public.

Kawaguchi: So your answer is that everything is open.

Kimura: Of course we tell the universities in advance that they need to agree to the fact that the entire evaluation process will be made public.

Abrahamsen: Everything is public, but for instance the regulation for NOKUT, our agency, says that we should not only in a passive way make it public, we should have an active attitude to get the report published so we should pay attention to the publication activity as well. Thank you.

Kawaguchi: The person up the back. Go ahead.

Question 3: Education in the Nordic countries is held in high regard and is famous throughout the world. But as far as university evaluation and accreditation is concerned, from the global viewpoint, do practices in the Nordic countries have a good reputation? What are your distinctive features? Having listened to the presentations today, I could not see any particular difference between the practices employed in Europe, the Nordic countries, and Denmark. Why has the focus of this symposium been placed on the Nordic countries? I would appreciate it if you could talk about what distinguishes your systems of evaluation, or what underlying features make your systems strong.

Kawaguchi: Just one initial point. The certified evaluation and accreditation in Japan does not accord precisely with the evaluation used in Nordic countries in terms of content. With this in mind, are there any comments?

Abrahamsen: I feel we have to start it all over again in a way. We have been invited to present some of the main efforts from each and every country concerning evaluations. And you have seen that some of the presentations have a model that is more or less similar and at the same time given explanations why there are differences. But Dr. Thune's first presentation today was opening with the European perspective and that was because we should be able to see the Nordic activities in the EU perspective. So I don't think I'm in the position to comment on this in another way than saying just this. Thank you.

Isoda: I would like to share with you briefly what we in the bureaucracy feel.

Until recently, models for public administration in Japan had consistently been drawn from the U.S. or the UK. This trend was noticeable in higher education policy too. As has been pointed out, however, even in the case of university evaluation, there are many limits to the neoliberalist reforms carried out under Thatcher or by the Regan administration in the U.S. There is an awareness that we must shift our focus and try to learn from countries other than the U.S. and the UK. In the EU in particular, we see that a variety of countries with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds have worked to develop a common, interchangeable system of evaluation. I believe that there are points from which we can learn even if there are many areas of similarity with the UK. If there are points of difference, we can examine why they are different—whether it has to do with the size of the country in question, or perhaps the taxation system, or other social structures. I appreciate your candid opinion, and would like to make the doubts you expressed part of our own learning process.

Kawaguchi: Thank you very much.

Are there any other questions? Yes, go ahead.

Question 4: On several occasions during today's presentations, mention was made of the fact that Nordic universities have realized a high degree of student participation in decision-making processes as well as evaluation. By what means do you select the student representatives involved in these processes? I would like the parties currently on stage to elaborate on the actual ways in which students are chosen.

Jensdóttir: Thank you. Speaking for Iceland we do have several student unions and these student unions nominate students to sit on the board of the universities.

Kawaguchi: How does it work in Sweden and Norway?

Wahlén: In Sweden it works in the same way. Students are nominated by the student unions to sit on various kinds of boards and committees within the universities. Belonging to a student union in Sweden is compulsory in Sweden. This has been discussed and debated, and the students unions and the National Union of Students have a large mandate.

Kawaguchi: How about Norway?

Abrahamsen: Basically we have the same way of doing this, but when a student has been participating in an evaluation, the students also go into a pool of recognized students which can be used again and again, as long as they are students. Sooner or later they have to leave the pool because they are no longer students, hopefully. So we get some very good experience with the best students, of their approach and how they function in the groups. Thank you.

Thune: Well, not really Denmark, more Europe. The issue of student participation, which is part of the European standards, is actually a consequence of the fact which I mentioned in my presentation and which is that the standards had to be agreed upon by the European partners, including the very strong political student organizations. But it is almost a stone, so to speak, around the leg of the European standards because it is exceedingly difficult to convince some of the European agencies that they should have in their expert panels representatives of the student unions if these have very political platforms.

So these agencies argue that you cannot have a panel of experts going into a university with three or four eminent experts within each their academic field and then there is also a student representative whose main objective may be to advance the student political platform in more general national terms. So it is a difficult situation for those who, like me, do believe that it is important that students have a role. The student organizations themselves have made this issue more complicated by insisting in some countries that students should be nominated by the political student unions. They are not serving their cause very well by taking that stand. Thank you.

Tuomi: In Finland, the administration of universities the mechanism is similar with Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and we have, also like in Norway, a pool of student representatives for evaluation groups, but mainly we start with asking student unions make a proposal for student members.

Kawaguchi: Are there any other questions?

Question 5: I was particularly interested in what Dr. Tuomi from Finland had to say. It was about the need not just to evaluate accordance with the minimum requirements for accreditation, but also to conduct evaluation with a view to strengthen and provide support to universities. In other words, Dr. Tuomi talked about the practice of

evaluation through proposing ways to strengthen the universities.

My main point of interest is whether or not this will become the dominant approach in Nordic countries in the future. If we tried it in Japan we would soon be criticized for trying to control universities. But I found it very impressive that an evaluating body promotes the notion of developing proposals that provide positive support and assistance to universities. I would like to ask if this is the direction that will be taken in Nordic countries from now on.

Tuomi: I would ask my Nordic colleagues to answer this because I don't have anything to say after this comment from the floor.

Wahlén: At the moment we don't have such commendable procedures but we will actually be introducing them in our next cycle of evaluations, partly following the example of Finland. Norway, too, has a similar program of awarding excellence in higher education institutions. So I'll hand over to Roger.

Abrahamsen: Well, this is also a little bit difficult question but we, in Norway, established the awarding of center of excellence to different universities, but that's basically decided because of excellent research activities. These centers of excellence are research centers, but of course when they are centers of excellence of research in a certain area that has to influence the educational program related to the same area. So good results in the research area should increase the quality of the related education.

Jensdóttir: Yes, thank you. In Iceland we are still developing our quality assurance system, I'm sure that, we will also take our cue from Finland and proceed in this way because it is very important to make the universities cooperate with us. So we'll try to emulate Finland even though we don't go as far yet.

Kawaguchi: Dr. Thune, do you have any comments?

Thune: Well, it's another very complicated issue. The British tried to solve it in the nineties by having five different levels going from Excellent down to Not Acceptable. That was an attempt to give the universities the possibility to achieve a result which marked their level above a minimum standard, and we did more or less the same in Denmark.

The problem is that as you move into a system of accreditation, as many European countries are doing at the moment, you run into exactly the problem which they have been having in the U.S. for so many years, and one of the reasons you can go to elite universities such as Harvard, Yale and the Stanford and you can look for a while before you can find any indication that they were ever accredited because they couldn't care less. What does it mean for an elite university such as Harvard to find that in an accreditation process the same minimum standards apply to Harvard and to what Harvard could perceive as inferior universities? Certainly that is not a very relevant situation from the Harvard perspective.

And that to my mind is the main issue and problem with accreditation that compliance with minimum standards is not very motivational for the better universities.

Either you accredit against standards and give a yes or no as to whether a university or program meets these standards at a minimum level, or you have to use all the methodologies such as evaluation or audit. In my mind you cannot really save accreditation from this basic problem. You have to take that as one of your criteria for choosing in the national system what weight and what priority you will give accreditation.

Accreditation is in principle primarily accountability-oriented and based on minimum criteria. Therefore quality universities and quality programs may lose their motivation once they realize that their excellence or potential excellence does not become evident in an accreditation process. So I guess this may be a general international experience in that respect.

Kawaguchi: I think most of our questions have been from university people. I know there are people here today from other institutions, for example from colleges of technology, and from bodies that conduct evaluations. Are there any questions from non-university parties? We would really like to hear from you. Please go ahead.

Question 6: This has been a very interesting symposium, and I think it will be very useful in our efforts to reform our education systems.

I would like to ask one thing about experiences in the Nordic countries. How are your evaluation and accreditation assessed by the corporate sector? From our point of view it

seems that in Japan, companies do not necessarily show much appreciation for certified evaluation and accreditation. I would like to hear your experiences and the state of affairs in your countries.

Abrahamsen: I'm not quite sure if you have a long experience concerning the company's appreciation of evaluation, but let me guess. Within a few years, when the industry gets more information, they learn to know that we are doing this kind of evaluation, they will probably look very tightly into the evaluations, and this again will create, as I tried to underline in my presentation, a better communication between the industry and the university. And if the industry is smart, they may pay attention to good sides and weak sides of the report and possibly support the university to carry on in a good way. For instance, they may have something to say about the study curriculum in certain areas, and that should be welcomed by the university, that the industry, the society gives them some kind of feedback of how to proceed in the area, and support quality development within certain areas. Thank you.

Wahlén: The Board of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has at least two representatives of business and industry. And the Chair of the board is and industry person. Through him we are also able to recruit high-ranking members of our expert panels, who take part in evaluations of programs and previously also in our audits. They will most certainly also be included in the coming quality audits.

The interest shown by the Chairman of the board is very keen and he serves as a sort of catalyst, as a person who can actually share his knowledge of the university world with his friends in some of the large Nordic companies. So that's one answer to the question.

Kawaguchi: We have run out of time, but I will take just one more question from anyone who has something that they simply must ask before leaving today.

Question 7: Just one straightforward question.

In Japan, there is an extremely deep-rooted "beneficiary pays" principle in relation to tuition fees. The beneficiaries would be the students themselves or their families in Japan's case. Does this beneficiary pays concept exist at all in Nordic countries? If not, what is your attitude towards tuition fees? This is the one point I would like you to answer.

Wahlén: Well, there are no tuition fees in the Nordic countries at all so that all higher education, except in some private colleges perhaps, is free.

Jensdóttir: Thank you. No, I just wanted to say that in Iceland we do have three private universities and they are free to take tuition fees and they do. But on the other hand, we do have a student loan fund and the students can get a loan to pay their tuition fees which they do not have to repay until several years after they graduate, and then in relation to their salaries.

Kawaguchi: Are there any other comments?

We have run a little over time, but thank you for all your comments, including your questions relating to this morning's proceedings. I would like to express my gratitude to you all on behalf of the organizers.

I will now declare this session closed and pass the baton over to the MC.

Kato: Panelists, Vice-President Kawaguchi, thank you very much.