

Panel Discussion (1)

Impact of university evaluation on educational quality

《Panelists》

- Tisato Kajiyama** President, Kyushu University
Vice-President, The Japan Association of National Universities
*Slides [English] : P. 180~187
- Norikazu Kudo** Vice-President, Keio University
*Slides [English] : P. 188~200
- Junko Kawamura** Executive Director, Institute of National Colleges of Technology
*Slides [English] : P. 201~211
- Christian Thune** Executive Director, EVA, Denmark
- Ossi Tuomi** Secretary General, FINHEEC, Finland
- Tove Blytt Holmen** Deputy Director General, NOKUT, Norway

《Moderator》

- Seiji Kimura** Director, Department of Research for University Evaluation, NIAD-UE

Kato: We would now like to start the afternoon session.

This session will consist of two panel discussions. The first one will focus on “Impact of university evaluation on educational quality.” The second one is on “Contributions of university evaluation to society.”

I would like to ask the moderator and panelists for the first panel discussion to come forward now.

Allow me to introduce the moderator and panelists for this first discussion. The moderator is Prof. Seiji Kimura, the Director of the Department of Research for University Evaluation at NIAD-UE.

Next, the panelists. We have invited three individuals representing higher education in Japan. These three panelists will be invited to speak first.

On the right side of the stage, Ms. Junko Kawamura, Executive Director of the Institute of National Colleges of Technology.

Next to her, Prof. Norikazu Kudo, Vice-President of Keio University.

And Dr. Tisato Kajiyama, the President of Kyushu University and Vice-President of the Japan Association of National Universities.

They are joined by three panelists who made presentations in the morning representing the five Nordic countries: Dr. Christian Thune;

Dr. Ossi Tuomi;

And Ms. Tove Blytt Holmen.

These six individuals will make up the panel for this discussion.

We were not able to spare time for questions and answers after the presentation by Dr. Thune this morning, so immediately after the presentations for this panel discussion we are going to take time for questions.

One request to those asking questions. There is a microphone installed at your tables—just one for every three attendees. You will find a green on and off switch on the microphone. Please turn it on before speaking, and off again after you have finished. And before making your comment, please identify yourself and the organization that you belong to.

Now I would like to hand over the microphone to the moderator, Prof. Kimura, please.

Kimura: Please allow me to remain seated. My name is Kimura and I am the Director of the Department of Research for University Evaluation.

In the morning session, our speakers explained how the five Nordic countries perceive the need for university evaluation and under what framework it has been developed. We heard how university evaluation bodies in those countries have established themselves and taken a leading role in developing awareness of the need for evaluation—a kind of success story for university evaluation bodies.

The first panel discussion this afternoon is going to address the issue of how university evaluation bodies have become accepted on, as it were, the other side of the hill. University evaluation is supported in a variety of ways now, including by the national government, but we want to look at how it has been received by universities themselves. This will give us a more complete picture of both sides of the hill. In the morning session we focused our attention on evaluation bodies in the Nordic countries, but in this first panel discussion we are going to examine some Japanese examples. Our panelists will discuss how the evaluation process is viewed by universities and other higher education institutions themselves, and how they are working to respond to evaluation. This will include some concrete case studies from each of the institutions represented.

“Impact of University Evaluation on Educational and Research Quality”

Tisato Kajiyama (President, Kyushu University; Vice-President, The Japan Association of National Universities)

Kimura: First I would like to invite Dr. Kajiyama to make his presentation.

(Slide1)

Kajiyama: My name is Kajiyama, from Kyushu University. I also serve as

Vice-President of the Japan Association of National Universities. Today I will talk from the standpoint of these two organizations, on the topic of what universities are doing to apply the results of evaluation to improve the quality of their educational and research activities.

Before going into the PowerPoint slides that you have printed out in front of you, I would like briefly to review the historical development of university evaluation in Japan. This part of my presentation is not covered in the PowerPoint visuals.

As you know, in April 2004 national universities were transformed into corporations, with each one developing its own mid-term goal and plan. The first mid-term plan spans a six year period, and we are already in the third year. So 2010 will be the final year of this period. But we will also undergo a mid-term evaluation one and a half years prior to that, in September 2008.

The national university corporation evaluation will be conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. And we know that the first period for evaluation will end in 2010. However, we national university corporations are not yet to receive a full explanation of how this evaluation will actually be conducted, and how the results are to be applied to the subsequent period—naturally the results must be utilized in some way.

Having listened to the presentations by our Nordic colleagues this morning, I got the impression that Japan is at least five years behind the Nordic countries in terms of developing official structures for evaluation. In the Nordic countries the first phase is already over and they are moving into the stage of applying the results to enhancement initiatives. I think their situation is different from ours.

We are, however, working to develop our mid-term goal and plan and to enhance quality through evaluation. We could not survive if we did not do so. Furthermore, we are all fully aware that we must do so in order to fulfil our obligations to students, the community, and all stakeholders of our universities.

Apart from the national university corporation evaluation, we must also undergo the certified evaluation and accreditation. Naturally, this means assurance of the quality of our educational and other activities. This concept of quality assurance has been raised

repeatedly in today's proceedings. I'm not familiar with the details, but I got the impression that the Nordic countries are able to conduct quality assurance and evaluation more or less in parallel with each other. In the case of Japan, they are not necessarily part of the same platform, but this evaluation and accreditation is certainly a very important form for us.

It involves evaluation by third-party evaluation institutions, one of which is the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation. This evaluation and accreditation will be conducted once in seven years. Professional graduate schools will undergo it once in five years.

Thus we are still only half way through the first phase of the process, so my presentation will be about university evaluation at the embryonic stage. It will be very valuable for us to consider how we can apply the kind of things our Nordic colleagues talked about this morning.

(Slide2)

I plan to cover three points in my presentation.

Firstly, how we approach university evaluation as national university corporations. Next I will refer to specific examples from Kyushu University. Finally, I will talk about ways to enhance education and research quality through evaluation. These are the three issues that I would like to address today.

(Slide3)

In regards to how we approach the issue of evaluation at national university corporations, the first point is that we are facing new issues in a newly competitive environment. As the slide states, the knowledge-based society has brought an expanded role for universities and required them to respond to a greater diversity of social needs. Higher demands are being placed on universities to contribute to the development of human resources and the advancement of science and technology.

The second point is that higher education has entered the universal stage. Japan is experiencing a dramatic decline in its 18-year-old population. At the same time, around 50 percent of this population is now enrolling in universities or junior colleges, meaning that we have reached the stage of universal participation in university education.

There is also growing public demand for efficient management of university finances.

This is one of the new challenges for universities in a competitive environment. In other words, in this time of strained national financial reserves, budgetary and personnel cuts are being experienced even in national university corporations. There is strong pressure for universities to be managed more efficiently.

These three points emerge as the major new issues for universities in this increasingly competitive environment.

(Slide4)

Now, the question is how to respond to these new demands. First, there is the challenge of differentiating university functions. As stated by the Central Council for Education in its council report "A Vision for the Future of Higher Education in Japan", universities are required to become more unique and diverse.

Secondly, it is vital to create frameworks for quality assurance of higher education and also to develop international validity. With growing numbers of Japanese personnel active on the international scene, it is particularly important for our universities to ensure that the standards of qualifications provided in our name are valid in international terms.

Thirdly, we have to transform our organizational and financial structures to achieve efficient and stable management. In other words, we must come up with an organizational approach that makes best use of limited human resources and financial reserves in the fulfillment of our responsibilities as universities.

(Slide5)

Now we will look at evaluation in the context of the processes of structural reform, through which our institutions are being transformed into national university corporations.

The first issue is the formulation of a mid-term plan, and its evaluation. We also have to consider how to use the evaluation to revitalize our organization and achieve an upward spiral effect.

We are also expected to introduce private sector-style management techniques into our organizations. University presidents must exercise leadership in managing the university.

Thirdly, we must promote individualization according to principles of market mechanism. In other words, national university corporations are expected to develop educational and research hubs through procurement of competitive external funding.

(Slide6)

The following are some conclusions for this first part of my presentation, which has focused on evaluation for national university corporations. The first conclusion is that we must conduct self-evaluation/self-study to enable us to gain an appreciation of our distinguishing features and problem areas. Secondly, we must apply the national university corporation evaluation and the certified evaluation and accreditation as means to improve our operations. Finally, we must revitalize our universities and cultivate their individuality.

In summary, in order to gain understanding and support from the community, we must increase our accountability and institute a process of continuous improvement to address various issues our universities face.

(Slide7)

We now turn to the second part of my presentation. I would like to introduce a few concrete examples of how Kyushu University is engaging with the issues of university evaluation.

Kyushu University is seeking to transform attitudes within our organization. One aim is to use evaluation as a means for faculty and staff members to recognize and reaffirm the vision and objectives of education and research at our organization. This is not an easy task, but if it is not dealt with, it will not be possible to achieve reform.

The next task is to create structures for quality enhancement and ongoing improvement in order to realize our vision and objectives. This is not an issue for Kyushu University alone, but for all national university corporations. We approach the evaluation process with an awareness of these two points I have just mentioned.

(Slide8)

Now, some practical examples of how Kyushu University is addressing the certified evaluation and accreditation.

Our university is aiming to establish a culture of reform founded on evaluation. The central focus is on our Education and Research Charters, together with our mid-term goal and plan. Another core element is provided by the “4+2+4 Kyushu University

Action Plans”. These Charters and Plans are a distinguishing feature of Kyushu University’s approach, and I will talk about them in a moment. These are the main pillars through which we try to achieve improvement.

(Slide9)

In regards to the “4+2+4 Kyushu University Action Plans”, the first “4” refers to the four fields of university activity—education, research, social contribution, and international cooperation. I think these would be the same for any university.

What is likely to be different for each university is the “2” in our 4+2+4 plans. This refers to the conceptions of the university’s future direction. For us, one of these is the development of new “creative” sciences. The other is an emphasis on Asia and the enhancement of relations with Asia, something which has been developed in consideration of our geographical location and historical background.

These two future conceptions of developing new “creative” sciences and enhancing relations with Asia form the vector along which our faculty members align their actions as they engage in the four fields of activity. Support is provided by the last “4” in our scheme. This entails supporting human resources, servicing facilities, supporting budget, and expanding time for education and research.

These so-called 4+2+4 Action Plans may not be of much substance, but the point is that they are written out and distributed to all faculty and administrative staff members, particularly faculty. I believe it is very important that activities are carried out in alignment with this vector.

(Slide10)

Here is another more specific example. Implementation of the 4+2+4 Action Plans is supported through two means: organizational support and support for individual faculty members. On this slide I have listed forms of organizational support—new strategic centers that we have been working to establish since incorporation.

We have chosen five areas in which to establish educational and research centers for Kyushu University with particular potential for high-level activity in five or ten years’ time. These are the Kyushu University Asia Center, the System LSI Research Center, the Center for Future Chemistry, the Bio-Architecture Center, and the Digital Medicine Initiative. These centers will operate in the fields of humanities, information, chemistry, agriculture, and medicine, respectively. We will create new academic hubs by providing

active support to these centers.

(Slide11)

Another way we are working to implement the 4+2+4 Action Plans is through support for individual faculty members. We must nurture individuals who have the potential in five or ten years' time to become leaders in their field in Japan, or at least at Kyushu University.

We select some of these individuals from among leaders of 21st Century COE programs. These are determined automatically. We also choose individuals with established status as leaders in their field worldwide or within Japan. They are chosen with little regard for age. These selections are made as a way of maintaining our current activities.

Other important selection categories are what I have called "junior" and "women faculty." For juniors, we select individuals with a maximum age of 45, and nurture them as researchers who can become actively involved in the research centers that Kyushu University establishes in the future. Naturally, we also work to cultivate leading female researchers.

In this way, we are spelling out our research activities in a clear manner in order to facilitate proper evaluation. It is important that we prepare our organization in advance for the evaluation process.

(Slide12)

Research is obviously important for universities, but properly speaking, education is even more important. Universities need to present the public with new systems for education. In regards to this, I would like to introduce one of our distinctive educational systems.

This is the 21st Century Program, an attempt at a new model for education. This Program was established to foster new human resources to meet the needs of the 21st century. It may be a little difficult to comprehend, but we aim to cultivate highly qualified generalists. Put more simply, we want students to take active roles throughout the world, as international civil servants. If not civil servants, then other roles in international fields. That's what we are aiming for.

This Program employs a very distinctive method of selecting students for admission. There is no need for applicants to take the National Center Test for University

Admissions or any other specific exams. Instead, they are required to attend lectures by three university faculty members and write reports on them. They must express their own opinions clearly. Applicants' high school grades are also assessed in this first examination round. In the second round, applicants must participate in a debate and write an essay. We select students on the basis of their performance in these examinations.

Students selected for admission are not affiliated with any particular department. They must choose their own majors before proceeding to fourth year. Thus the students create the curriculum themselves. As a result, provision of guidance is a major task. Individual guidance is provided by tutors almost to the point of excess.

In order to prepare them to operate in the international arena in the future, students are required to undergo intensive general education and language training. Lecturers from outside the university present unique classes on various discrete issues. We hope to use this approach as a representative means to reform the education system at Kyushu University. Student numbers in this Program are not large, but we hope to build on experience to expand it into the future.

The first batch of students in the Program graduated earlier this year, and we plan to conduct follow-up surveys. The majority of students have enrolled in graduate programs, but several of them left the university upon completion of the undergraduate program. We hope that tracking the progress of these applicants will help us develop a more unique education system in the future.

(Slide13)

This is the seventh and final example from Kyushu University. It is about various initiatives for improving our organization.

We are evaluated every six years on the basis of our mid-term goal and plan. In addition, our university conducts a self-assessment every five years, and modifies our organizational structure every ten years. This process has been enshrined in university regulations.

When I became president, the first thing I noticed was that none of the university's departments had a clear conception of future direction. As I said earlier, if the vectors of our activities are not aligned to some extent with the middle "2" of future conceptions in

our 4+2+4 Action Plans, we will not make progress. It is imperative for our university to develop as a single organizational unit rather than an aggregate of different interests. Discussions are under way for the deans of each department to develop clearer concepts for the future. We are investigating various tools to facilitate this, such as requiring the deans to make a balanced scorecard.

Thirdly, we have established an Institute of Higher Education to guide the process of educational reform. I don't know how other universities handle it, but at Kyushu University we have tended to leave matters relating to education up to each individual department until now. It is important that the university as a whole is made responsible for coordinating these matters. The establishment of the Institute of Higher Education has created a system that requires the university to take responsibility for education.

We are implementing a system of faculty and staff evaluation to enhance the quality of our personnel.

We have also set up an Office for Information of University Evaluation to conduct data collection and analysis of university activities. We need to support a decision-making processes in each department and information obtained through evaluation activities, because this will provide further material to facilitate improvement. The office was established to coordinate this process.

(Slide14)

I would like to wrap up my presentation by discussing how we can make university evaluation contribute to enhancements in the quality of education and research.

I have listed three principles that I consider important in the context of university evaluation. The first is to turn the results of evaluation into genuine improvements. This means making sure that the process does not end with evaluation alone. We actually need to put this into practice of course, but it is important to regard evaluation as a means to improvement.

Next is to allow the experience of evaluation to inform a university-wide outlook on future ideals and operational objectives that is carried over into action. This must be pursued scrupulously.

Lastly, to employ outside perspectives in evaluation to gain the understanding and cooperation of the social community. This should provide the basis for the ultimate process of reforming the university.

These are fairly vague concepts without much substantive content on the ground, but they are approaches that I believe national university corporations must take at this halfway point in the first stage of the evaluation process.

(Slide15)

I have included this table by way of reference. One of the aims of today's proceedings is to learn from the successes that Nordic countries have experienced in their university evaluation initiatives. Obviously they are well ahead of us, as they are preparing to enter the next phase after completion of the first round of evaluation. It is very important to learn from their experiences, but it is also clear that evaluation is not in itself sufficient to bring about change in universities.

Reform cannot be achieved without sufficient support in terms of finance and personnel. This table shows public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in the 30 OECD countries for the year 2003. The countries shaded in blue are all Nordic countries. Public expenditure in Japan is 3.7 percent, almost the lowest of any country. The fact that public expenditure is low does not mean that total spending on education is low. What it means is that individual households are required to bear a very large burden.

Learning from Nordic successes, which is the theme of today's symposium, we should increase public spending on education to the same level as that of the Nordic countries. I will conclude my presentation with this point. Thank you for your kind attention.

Kimura: Thank you very much Dr. Kajiyama. Your last comments really struck home, even though they weren't directed at our particular organization. As you know, Kyushu University is one of Japan's largest national universities. Dr. Kajiyama's presentation provided some insights into how the university is pursuing structural reform and, in particular, how it has clarified educational and research objectives under the mid-term plan that it has formulated as part of the evaluation process.

It was pointed out that financial reserves are a precondition to making best use of the evaluation process—maybe this is something that our organization should have

highlighted. We may ask to borrow your table at some stage later today.

**“Some Remarks on the University Evaluation from a Viewpoint of Private Universities”
Norikazu Kudo (Vice-President, Keio University)**

Kimura: We have set aside time later on to take questions on all presentations. For the moment, let us continue with the program and ask Prof. Norikazu Kudo, Vice-President of Keio University to come forward. He will be providing a private university perspective on the evaluation agenda.

(Slide1)

Kudo: My name is Kudo. Dr. Kajiyama has just provided us with some very heartening comments. In the course of my presentation I will demonstrate how private universities are grappling with the problem of finance under conditions which are far more acute than those faced by national universities.

As you have heard, I am now a Vice-President at Keio University. I have taught for many years in Keio’s Faculty of Business and Commerce, and continue to do so; this may explain why my presentation has a certain businesslike orientation. I would like to talk about how private universities perceive this issue of evaluation, and how Keio in particular is working to address it. Last year, we applied for accreditation from the Japan University Accreditation Association, and received the results of their evaluation in March this year. My talk will be informed by this direct experience of evaluation.

(Slide2)

As Dr. Kajiyama has explained, the chronology of university evaluation in Japan can be explained in terms of a shift from ex ante regulation to ex post checks, a shift that began with the deregulation of the standards for the establishment of universities in 1991, and is today manifested in a variety of structures for evaluation.

As it happens, I also chair the Evaluation Committee of the Japan Association of Private Colleges and Universities. This position enables me to discuss evaluation issues with individuals from a wide range of universities.

One theme I often come across is that of “evaluation fatigue.” Everything requires evaluation these days. Universities have been subjected to external evaluation since 1991, and now there is the certified evaluation and accreditation, started in 2004. In

addition, over 20 percent of public expenditure on higher education is now provided in the form of so-called competitive funding. To obtain such funding requires universities to submit to further forms of evaluation. Some individuals tell me that they are tired of all this evaluation.

At the Evaluation Committee I mentioned earlier, we are currently discussing ways to engage with these evaluation trends in a more positive and forward-looking manner. Our belief is that rather than submitting passively to evaluation, universities should take a more proactive stance to it.

(Slide3)

Before getting into the details of this issue, I would like to take up one theme of Dr. Kajiyama's presentation and reflect a little on the situation of private universities. I believe there are some members of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology present here today. I don't intend to paint this as the major issue for today's discussion, but in Japan, we have a peculiar system of distinguishing universities on the basis of how they are funded. There are the governmental (state) institutions, also called national universities. The funding basis for these institutions is governmental. Then there are those funded by municipal governments. And there are those operated privately. This is how universities are distinguished. I have no inherent objection to the idea of drawing distinctions between different institutions, but I would like to suggest that there are more functional methods of classification employed in other countries.

Overseas, universities are often classified according to their functions, for example into those which supply human resources at a nationwide level, those which operate regionally, those specializing in the liberal arts, research-oriented universities, etcetera. For some reason, the prevailing approach in Japan is to pigeonhole universities based on how they are funded—state, municipal, or private, and now, those established by NPOs and private companies as well. I understand this to be a uniquely Japanese approach.

(Slide4)

Employing this method of classification, this year's School Basic Survey reports that, 568 of the 744 undergraduate universities in Japan—76 percent of the total—are so-called private universities, and that enrollments at such universities account for 74 percent of all university students in this country.

(Slide5)

However, we are absolutely convinced that even though these are “private” universities, they make a variety of important contributions to wider society through the individuals they educate and the research they produce. As such, they have an aspect of external economy.

Thus, we see private universities as those that engage in private activity within the public sphere.

(Slide6)

Because these institutions are private, finance is inevitably a problem. As Dr. Kajiyama explained earlier, government (state) subsidies account for only 10 percent of revenue in private universities. Other than this, university activity must be financed through other sources of funds. These sources include tuition fees, revenue from a variety of other activities—including, in the case of Keio, a medical service—as well as donations and management of assets.

The bottom line is that we cannot survive without support from the public. We can only continue our activities as long as we continue to solicit and receive public support.

We are faced with a dilemma in this regard. In order to obtain the approval of wider society, we must give the public what it wants—that’s the surest way to garner support. As universities, however, it is not sufficient for us simply to follow in the wake of social trends. We have a mission to sustain and develop academic knowledge, or more broadly, to contribute to the advancement of civilization as a whole.

Sometimes, pursuit of this mission comes into conflict with the demands of society. Finding a balance between these two demands, while at the same time continuing to receive public approval, can pose major problems.

So, the question is how to gain the necessary support in such a situation. I would like to examine how evaluation can be related to this issue.

(Slide7)

Before that, allow me to talk briefly about Keio University. As it says on the slide, Keio is a private university. The next few slides provide an introduction to Keio, which I invite you to peruse for yourselves in detail later. For now, let me just point out that we pride ourselves on the fact that Keio is the oldest modern educational institution in Japan—we will be celebrating our 150th anniversary in 2008.

Keio encompasses a range of educational systems, from primary school through to post-graduate level. Our library boasts one of the best and most distinctive collections in Japan.

Our university developed out of a strong sense of awareness of the need to cultivate modern individuals, albeit defined in a Western sense, to match the process of modernization our country was experiencing.

(Slide8)

We have seven different campuses, nine undergraduate faculties, and eleven graduate schools. As mentioned earlier we have primary, junior high, and senior high schools, as well as overseas offices in the United States, United Kingdom, and South Korea.

(Slide9)

These are our student numbers. It says that our staff numbers are over 3,000, but this would exceed 5,000 if our hospital staff were included. The student numbers are shown on the slide.

(Slide10)

This shows data on enrollments and degrees conferred. I won't dwell on these figures.

(Slide11)

As I said, as a private institution, finances are central to our survival. If we can't secure sufficient fiscal resources, we can't run our operations. Thus, we have to maintain cash flow. We also receive credit ratings. In particular, we need to compete internationally, and for this reason we have obtained a rating from Standard & Poor's.

(Slide12)

Other details such as budget and scale are provided here. Around 70 percent of our budget of 120 billion yen is provided by income in tuition fees and from the hospital's medical-related activities, which account for around 37 percent and 34 percent, respectively. A further 20 percent comes from donations, income from various forms of asset management, and the like. The remaining 10 percent is in the form of subsidies from the national government.

(Slide13)

In order to avoid being too lengthy, I will now move away from the focus on Keio and talk in broader terms. Put simply, private universities today are faced with an extremely competitive environment, in both international and domestic terms. In the business parlance with which I am most familiar, there is an incredible degree of competition in the higher education market.

The market for higher education in Asia is particularly cutthroat. In OECD nations, including the Nordic countries, the higher education market is already entering the saturation phase. At present, demand for higher education is growing most rapidly in Asia, led by China. The question is how to address this growing demand.

The universities of the U.S. and Europe are already rushing in to grab a share of this East Asian market for higher education, pursuing many initiatives for recruiting students. In particular, universities in the U.S., UK, and Australia have moved to capitalize on their advantage in English, the emerging international language, to develop a high degree of competitiveness. No matter how hard we try, we can never compete on a level playing field with those who have been using English since birth. Armed with the weapon of English, the universities of the U.S., UK and Australia are taking the East Asian market by storm.

In this situation, while it is important for Japanese universities to develop their English language capabilities, the most fundamental question is how to identify uniquely Japanese elements that can add value to our educational offerings.

(Slide14)

Turning to the domestic market, we see that there are 744 universities, and that national universities have embarked on a variety of new initiatives since incorporation. Private universities must find ways to prevail in this keenly competitive domestic marketplace. In other words, they must find means to enhance their competitive strength, or alternatively find new markets in which to operate. It is vital that they decide which areas they will compete in, and how they can maximize their strengths.

(Slide15)

We cannot compete with national universities on price. Private university tuition fee levels are totally different from those of our national counterparts. We have no choice but to charge high fees in order to survive. Thus, rather than price competition, we must find ways to compete on quality.

It is imperative that we initiate a cyclic pattern of quality-based competition, attracting capable students, producing excellent research output and thereby attracting more research funding, which can be ploughed back into educational initiatives, thus yielding quality improvements and placing us on a growth trajectory.

(Slide16)

In order to survive as a player in this environment of intense competition, it is first necessary to ensure you are qualified to participate. There are many ways with which to ensure participation, but one is through quality assurance.

I have many opportunities to talk about this issue of quality assurance at gatherings of private university representatives. I always make it clear that variety is of the essence for private institutions. Some say that evaluation is not compatible with variety, but I disagree. Even if it is the lifeblood of private universities, variety means nothing if it cannot be measured by standards that enable comparison. Universities must not use diversity or variety as an excuse for low standards.

Thus it is necessary to develop comparative standards. Then it must be decided how to evaluate universities against these standards. This issue of quality assurance is of paramount importance.

I have also highlighted the issue of transparency—the need to take active steps to make information publicly available. We are obliged to be accountable to our stakeholders. This includes prospective students and their families, the businesses that employ our graduates, and a variety of other parties. It even includes Japan’s taxpayers, because we do receive some degree of support from public funds, albeit small. We need to be able to produce information of the kind that is provided for the market as a matter of course by listed companies in their financial statements. I tell universities that such transparency is a prerequisite for successful engagement with the market.

(Slide17)

At the same time—and this relates to my earlier point about positive engagement with the evaluation process—it is imperative for private universities to convince the wider community of the value of their activities. Evaluation provides a unique chance to win the community over. It is an opportunity for us to demonstrate our characteristic strengths.

As shown in point number two on the slide, I also believe that evaluation should be understood as the starting point for the processes of reform and change that will be vital to survival and growth in the market.

(Slide18)

There are four stages to the evaluation process. The first is internal inspection and evaluation—beginning with internal inspection and then externally-verified evaluation.

My own experiences have shown me that a comprehensive internal inspection and evaluation is an excellent way to identify the problems that your organization is facing. Before we started this, people in our organization often didn't know what those in the department next door were doing—now they have a clearer picture of how the organization works.

External evaluation involves commissioning an external committee to evaluate the organization's activities and provide an objective assessment. Certified evaluation and accreditation entails a public commitment to a process of reform.

(Slide19)

I would like to talk in very simple terms about Keio's experiences.

It is often assumed that Keio has been engaged in internal inspection and evaluation for a number of years. In truth, however, it was as recently as 2003 that we first established an organization-wide framework for this evaluation. This does not mean that we had been totally inactive until then, just that our efforts had been fragmented. In some ways, our initiatives were highly progressive compared with other Japanese universities.

For example, we have had an external evaluation body for our Business School ever since it opened in the 1970s. Operating a school of business requires us to develop connections with the business sector, so we recruited committee members from this sector. Furthermore, our Business School was the first in Japan to apply for accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business in the United States and the first to be accredited by this Association, in 2000.

Our Faculty of Science and Technology has received accreditation from JABEE, an organization that accredits programs in engineering education. I understand that another panelist will be talking more about this kind of accreditation later. We also actively apply for funding from a variety of external sources, are currently pursuing 12 initiatives under the 21st Century COE Program, as well as over ten programs funded under the "Good Practice" initiative.

(Slide20)

Thus, various parts of our organization have been exposed to external evaluation, but in 2003, we decided to take an organization-wide approach. In 2004 we conducted a variety of internal activities as well as being evaluated by an external committee. In 2005, we

applied for accreditation not by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation, but through the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), an organization of which we had been a member for many years. JUAA has issued its evaluation report, and we are now working to institute feedback from this report.

(Slide21)

The report consisted of 98 separate statements and 34 articles of advice providing suggestions on ways in which we could improve. However, the report did not reveal any specific areas of deficit requiring reform.

(Slide22)

We are taking the results very seriously, and reviewing ways in which we can implement the suggestions. Some require effort on the part of individual faculties, but must also be pursued by the organization as a whole. There are some things that can only be achieved through organization-wide effort.

For example, there is the issue of teaching evaluation. Each faculty and graduate school has its own separate system for evaluating teaching practices, sometimes on a voluntary basis. The university as a whole has not developed a comprehensive system of class evaluation. Nine of the 34 suggestions from JUAA were addressed to this issue, so we are working to deal with it now.

Our Shonan Fujisawa Campus (SFC) has provided a benchmark for class evaluation and faculty development in Japan since its establishment in 1990. We are now exploring ways to apply SFC's experiences to Keio University as a whole.

In 2008, we will celebrate the 150th year of Keio's founding. We view this not just as an anniversary, but as an occasion to embark on a ten year program of structural reform. We are now developing a range of initiatives for this ten year period with the aim of bringing the quality of our education and research up to world standard.

(Slide23)

The major problem we are facing in this regard is something that Dr. Kajiyama alluded to earlier: development into a multi-versity as opposed to a university. Clark Kerr of the University of California called this the "multi-versity syndrome"—the challenge of finding a balance between autonomy for different elements of the organization and the need to pursue unified efforts.

Another point relates to one of our university's distinguishing features: our fundamental idea or spirit of "independence and self-respect," which has been upheld since the time of our founder, Yukichi Fukuzawa. The message behind this founding spirit is that the process of refining one's character can yield very positive results, but it is also apt to lead in the direction of self-indulgence and self-centeredness. The point is that one must strive for balance.

Perhaps my term "brand university" is too extravagant, but Keio does have a certain degree of brand prestige, and a tendency to rest on its laurels as a result. We don't have a sufficient sense of crisis. We know we must change the way we do things, but it is difficult to bring about this sort of change.

(Slide24)

We are endeavoring to negotiate change through a variety of methods, but for universities it is difficult to force new initiatives from the top downward. So our approach is to send out the same steady message over and over again, and to approach negotiations with a degree of patience. Eventually, different elements will adjust their orientation and come to work together in the desired direction. Dr. Kajiyama talked about the need to develop a vectorial pattern—that's what we're trying to achieve at Keio.

As someone with responsibility for managing the university as a whole, I am working to reform our management practices and utilize our merits to become a model university that will be a leader in the 21st century.

(Slide25)

Turning to the future of private universities, we can see that university evaluation, particularly the features of quality assurance and transparency, are vital to continued existence as a market player. Evaluation can provide a forum for highlighting the *raison d'être* of private universities, and a starting point for reform that will help ensure survival and growth in the market. Private universities must rely on their own abilities to survive, and thus should approach reform not defensively, but in a constructive manner. This is what we are trying to achieve right now.

I apologize for being so long-winded. This concludes my presentation.

Kimura: Thank you very much, Prof. Kudo.

You mentioned that university evaluation is often regarded as a significant burden or imposition. I've heard this sentiment often enough myself. Thank you for introducing Keio University's approach, which is to adopt a positive attitude to evaluation and use it as a springboard for development.

I found your presentation inspiring and encouraging.

“Application of the Result of Evaluation to Colleges of Technology”

Junko Kawamura (Executive Director, Institute of National Colleges of Technology)

Kimura: Next, we will be hearing from Ms. Junko Kawamura, executive director of the Institute of National Colleges of Technology.

(Slide1)

Kawamura: My name is Kawamura, and I am Executive Director of the Institute of National Colleges of Technology. I am honored to be able to speak to you today at this Japan-Nordic Symposium.

Yesterday, I actually conducted a self-assessment of my presentation materials, and made a few minor changes. As a result, the slides I use contain some information that is different from the printed materials in front of you. Please forgive me—evaluation can sometimes cause confusion!

I am going to talk about colleges of technology, usually referred to in Japanese by the abbreviation *kosen*. These are higher education institutions with a slightly different setup to universities.

(Slide2)

First, I will introduce the principal features of colleges of technology. Then I will explain how these institutions utilize evaluation.

(Slide3)

The first colleges of technology were established in the 1960s, in response to strong demand from the industrial sector. At the time, Japan had just entered an era of high economic growth, and was experiencing a shortage of engineers who could be deployed as leaders in production sites and members of technical development teams. Great expectations were placed on these colleges of technology as a new form of higher education institution charged with the training of engineers.

Colleges of technology offer a five-year integrated program of practical training in technical areas for students who have completed junior high school. Currently, there are 55 national colleges, six operated by prefectural or municipal governments, and three by private organizations. Like national universities, the national colleges became incorporated bodies in 2004. However, the colleges were not incorporated on an individual basis, but rather one agency—the Institute of National Colleges of Technology—was established to oversee the operation of all 55 national colleges.

To date, a total of around 300,000 students have graduated from colleges of technology. Graduates work mainly in the industrial sector, as engineers, researchers, managers, and so on.

That's a brief outline. I would like to go into a little more detail now.

(Slide4)

This is a diagram of the education system in Japan from junior high school onward. Around 98 percent of junior high school graduates go on to enroll in senior high schools. The red section represents colleges of technology. Currently, around 1.2 million students graduate from junior high school each year, and 10,000 of these go on to colleges of technology. That's less than 1 percent of the total cohort. However, those who do choose our colleges have quite high levels of academic achievement and an interest in studying science and technology.

(Slide5)

After five years of study, students earn a Title of Associate. Around 15 percent go on to enroll in advanced courses, while around 30 percent transfer into other universities and 55 percent seek jobs upon graduation from the five-year program. The proportion of students who continue studying after the five-year program is now very high compared to when colleges of technology were first established 40 years ago.

(Slide6)

I said that college of technology students account for less than 1 percent of their age cohort. However, our graduates make up 12 to 13 percent of all engineers in Japan. In terms of promoting science and technology in this country, it is clear that our colleges have a very important role to play. Our institutions aim to foster creative individuals with practical skills in technical areas.

(Slide7, 8)

Here is the departmental structure of a typical college of technology, consisting of mechanical, information, electrical/electronic, civil, and material engineering

departments. Each department has 40 students at each year level. The two-year advanced program straddles these different departments. Upon completion of the advanced program and an application procedure, students can be awarded a bachelor's degree.

In the first year at a college of technology, students start studying math and physics in earnest, along with basic education subjects. They also take their first specialized subjects, which form the basis for manufacturing skills. In the second year, students begin to take more specialized subjects. This includes participation in an internship program for all students at national colleges.

(Slide9)

This is a scene from a lab class in mechanical engineering. All colleges have practical workshops, and students in senior years have the opportunity to operate machinery that is actually used in industry.

(Slide10)

This is an actual scene from a fundamental engineering class. Faculty members have actually worked in areas such as design and drafting for private companies. They imbue class content with on-ground experiences and approaches.

(Slide11)

This is another scene from a fundamental engineering class.

(Slide12)

This is a chemical science lab session.

(Slide13)

This is a scene from the annual robot contest. Competitions are held between robots designed and constructed by students themselves. One of last year's events was a hurdles race. Students apply their knowledge and expertise in fields such as control and mechanical engineering to create their own robots for competition. The national tournament is even broadcast on television.

(Slide14)

This is a college dormitory.

The distinguishing feature of colleges of technology lies in the provision of engineering education for students from the age of 15, taking advantage of that age group's capacity for flexible thinking. Backed with a solid grasp of fundamentals, our students are provided with a curriculum that emphasizes experimental work.

(Slide15)

Now we turn to the question of how evaluation is practiced in colleges of technology. Our organizations are evaluated in three principal ways. A close analysis would reveal other forms of evaluation too, but the following are the three major forms of organizational evaluation.

This is what evaluation signifies for colleges of technology. First I have listed the institutional certified evaluation conducted by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation. The aim of this form of evaluation is assurance and improvement in the soundness of educational structures and the quality of educational practices.

Next is evaluation of educational programs by the organization known as JABEE. This assures and improves the quality of engineering education in specialized areas.

Thirdly, there is evaluation of the Institute of National Colleges of Technology, the parent organization of the 55 National Colleges of Technology. In order for our Institute to be evaluated positively, we must utilize the advantages that come from management of all 55 Colleges under the one agency.

(Slide16)

I would like to analyze this situation a little more closely.

Firstly, Institutional certified evaluation. Self-assessment conducted by each college as part of the evaluation process can expose issues such as whether faculty staffing is in accordance with the criteria set by law. In this way, evaluation provides the opportunity for reassessment, at an institution-wide level, of the basic systems through which everyday practices are conducted and the objectives that underlie these practices.

Furthermore, third-party evaluation can provide an objective assessment of a college's strengths and weaknesses, which can then be applied to development of plans for reform.

Another point is that we plan for all 55 national colleges to undergo institutional certified evaluation in the first three years of operation of this evaluation system—it started in 2005 for colleges of technology too. All colleges have the same apprehensions about the new system, but I would like you to know that we are endeavoring to approach it in a bold and aggressive manner, undaunted by the potential difficulties.

(Slide17)

40 out of the 55 national colleges of technology are accredited by JABEE, or more correctly, they operate programs in engineering education that have received JABEE accreditation. Many more national colleges of technology will undergo examination by JABEE from this year onward. Last year, JABEE acceded to the Washington Accord. This Accord, to which ten bodies responsible for accrediting engineering education programs in the U.S., the UK, and elsewhere have acceded, recognizes the substantial equivalency of programs accredited by these bodies. It covers engineering programs at undergraduate degree level.

(Slide18)

How have colleges of technology been changed by JABEE accreditation? Firstly, accreditation has aroused the interest of students. Those who complete accredited programs can gain exemption from the first-round examination leading to the national qualification of “professional engineer.” Colleges report that the potential for study in their programs to lead to a high-level public qualification has not only provided new motivation to current students, but has even contributed to an increase in the academic quality of enrollees.

JABEE emphasizes practical aspects too, such as the requirement that all students completing the programs must have gained basic communicative proficiency in a foreign language. Colleges undergoing JABEE assessment have instituted new elements into their educational programs to meet these requirements. We believe that enhancing educational outcomes will benefit our students by providing them with more post-graduation choices.

Thirdly, in the field of engineering education—the primary focus for colleges of technology—we undergo assessment and quality assurance according to exactly the same standards as those applied to universities. This is an extremely important point, as it enables us to prove to both domestic and international stakeholders that although we have a shorter history than other institutions of higher education, we are of equal or superior status in terms of quality.

Some colleges have also found that JABEE’s accession to the Washington Accord has facilitated exchange between their faculty and students and higher education institutions in other countries.

(Slide19)

Since last year, the Institute of National Colleges of Technology undergoes an annual evaluation based on the previous year's outcomes. We collect and analyze data from our 55 colleges, which, together with information on the activities of the headquarters of the Institute itself, forms the basis of a report submitted to Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Evaluation Committee.

This process highlights cases of good practice that can be shared among all colleges. It provides insights into how best to divide responsibilities between our Institute and the individual colleges.

Activities to increase enrollment numbers, for example, can be divided into tasks for which Institute HQ is responsible, such as production of common-use promotional materials and liaison with bodies at a national level, and those best pursued by individual colleges, for example promotional activities at the local level.

In addition, positive evaluations of the Institute itself can be presented to the public as the sum of the wholehearted efforts of individual colleges in pursuing their goals—proof that colleges of technology are working hard.

(Slide20)

As my presentation to this point has demonstrated, colleges of technology are responding to the challenges of evaluation in a positive manner, employing evaluation as a means to enhance educational quality and strengthen public awareness of their activities.

I explained earlier how colleges of technology provide students with a solid education, and send graduates out into the world with concrete abilities. However, owing to the fact that colleges of technology are far outnumbered by universities and junior colleges, we are burdened with the problem of low profile. As well as improving the quality of the education we offer and revitalizing our educational programs, we hope to use evaluation as a means for conveying with confidence our own worth to a larger audience.

(Slide21)

Nevertheless, we do face some challenges. Evaluation requires the preparation of a large amount of corroborative material. Some forms of data are required by all the different types of evaluation I mentioned earlier. If our Institute can develop a database of basic figures, information on educational content, reports on distinctive activities and the like, this will facilitate sharing of information between individual colleges, enabling

them to gain a better idea of their own position in comparison to other colleges.

I believe that the issue is not just one of how to produce materials for purposes of evaluation, but also of how to use evaluation as a tool for exploring directions for reform in each individual college.

In addition, in order to make evaluation meaningful, it is imperative that a relationship of trust is developed between the evaluators and those being evaluated. As well as working to link evaluation with quality enhancement, we aim to foster personnel to engage in the actual task of evaluation. The challenge for our organization from now on is to raise the consciousness of faculty and staff in colleges of technology and produce individuals who can implement the evaluation process as peers.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Kimura: Thank you very much for your presentation.

I should have mentioned at the start that although the existence of colleges of technology is fairly widely known, their actual state of affairs is far from being well understood by the general public. These colleges have launched into the external evaluation process enthusiastically, and are working hard to improve their courses. Just recently we heard that their educational programs were assessed very highly by an international body, and Ms. Kawamura provided some insights into this experience.

Discussion

Kimura: Now we move into a general discussion.

This morning, Dr. Thune asked if anyone had questions about his keynote address. We didn't have time for questions then, but fortunately Dr. Thune is here on the stage again now, so we would welcome anyone who wishes to ask for clarification on any points from his presentation this morning. Are there any questions?

As there are no questions forthcoming, we will now move into a more general discussion. We have just heard from representatives of Japan's university community about how

their institutions are responding to evaluation, and how they are utilizing it; they have provided us with the evaluatees' perspective. I would welcome questions from Dr. Thune or any of the other three panelists. Before that, however, allow me to make one request.

Two or three of the presenters in the morning session commented that it is no easy task to ascertain the actual effects of evaluation. When asking questions I would like you, either before or after the answers, to make some comment on how your universities have changed since evaluation. I realize that immediate results may be dubious, but it would be informative, for example, to hear experiences of reform or restructuring as a result of evaluation, or how a university's stance as a whole has changed, how the faculty has reacted. Not only positive reactions but negative ones too—whether there have been any complaints or criticism directed at evaluation.

Also, if there have been any such reactions, how the institution responsible for evaluation has responded to them. So if you have a question for Dr. Kajiyama or any of the other panelists, I would request you to accompany it with a comment on these matters.

Christian Thune: Interesting presentations. Good to get into the sort of ground level of what we are talking about, how universities handle the challenges of quality in their placement in higher education, including a very competitive market situation for at least one of the universities. I think there was one issue, which was in that sense going through all three presentations. The issue is how quality assurance and evaluation are perceived from the perspective of individual teachers and staff of the universities. I could term this as the problem or the relationship between the horizontal and the vertical dimension.

And to take the vertical first, I think probably most evident in Prof. Kajiyama's presentation, the distinction between the perspectives on quality assurance seen from the level of a strong management versus the perspective seen from the ground level of individuals, including heads of departments. Is there really a linkage between top and bottom of a university in the perceptions of quality and quality processes?

My point would be that this is probably a slightly underrated problem in quality assurance and in the relationship between universities and external agencies. Quite a

number of universities have now moved to the level where top management is not only strong, but fairly much in command of the basics of quality assurance and of creating good relationships with external agencies. The question is to that extent this culture at the top level of universities does really pervade true to, sorry the term, the “lower ends” of the university? My hypothesis would be that this is not only a European problem, but potentially also a Japanese problem. So the next question is what instruments can be applied to solve it and make sure that quality assurance processes are not only top-down in the universities but also have a bottom-up perspective?

This issue is linked to what I would call the horizontal problem, which I think was also very prominent in all three presentations, probably most eloquently put by Prof. Kudo when he introduced the excellent term multi-versity. What do we do in a situation where, as Prof. Kudo put it, we have on the one hand the leadership and on the other hand we have the department heads and the staff? Do they perceive their university as a whole or do they perceive themselves primarily as a very partial element of the whole of the university? My hypothesis would be that at the ground of level of many universities the perception is we are in our department or in our program and the totality of the university is a rather distant phenomenon mentioned by the president in speeches and formal statements. But if the broad and comprehensive quality of a university is not a reality for those in the departments, then we have a motivation problem.

So to quote Prof. Kudo again, he spoke about “evaluation fatigue”. And true enough at the level of departments and programs many speak today of getting tired of a flood of evaluations. I think this reflects again the fact that at the level of programs and departments it’s not really perceived and understood and appreciated why evaluations and external quality assurance seem to hit the university from different angles and with different perspectives. This leads to my question to the colleges of technology, how do you handle the fact that you have these three different perspectives of external evaluation, which I guess must presuppose some kind of translation problem to your staff to your departments? Or to put it another way, do staff department heads, programme leaders, perceive a linkage between what are the results of NIAD-UE evaluations at the level of the total institutions and the program reviews of JABEE? Or is it left to you and your top management colleagues to give the complete picture?

This is a part of what I consider some of the very basic problems in getting what Prof.

Kawamura called a reliable relationship between evaluator and institutions. I think you, like most others today, at the end of your presentation were rather pressed for time so you didn't get around to the answer. What are the instruments available to create that reliable relationship, which I think is another very pertinent question?

I have some further comments but I think I will let this be my first contribution to the discussions. Thank you.

Kimura: Can you think of any examples relating to my question earlier regarding how universities have changed as a result of evaluation, or how their programs have been improved? Any concrete examples of improvement, from an evaluator's perspective.

Thune: Well, it's the question which my colleagues and I in the quality assurance field have always found difficult. Universities are changing to the better these days, but to isolate precisely the effect of external evaluations may be difficult. However, there is to my mind little doubt that there are many cases from Europe and from Denmark where strong quality assurance has really transformed or reformed a university. Here I very much take the point actually made by all the three presenters that in external quality assurance there is a double goal—one to assure and demonstrate the quality to the public and in the market, and secondly, to act as a catalyst for reform of the university. Both goals are important even if my focus in what I'm saying today is very much on the improvement angle.

Anyhow my point would be that a strong committed university management is absolutely crucial, and there is in Europe and Denmark a generation shift these years where most of the universities have fairly new leadership which to a surprising extent accept external evaluation as this catalyst for reform and for a steering instrument in their universities, and that's where we have an effect. But as I said in my first remarks, we do have the problem that motivated and inspired university leadership is the necessary condition for reform that the rest of the university has to follow on before we achieve real reform, real follow-up on evaluation.

So my answer to your question is, another way of making my point, that, yes, we have universities where remarkable follow-up has taken place but basically it has been part of a top-down process where I would very much like a bottom-up process to be visible as well.

Kimura: Thank you. Now, Dr. Tuomi, could I ask you to respond to the same question?

Tuomi: To the question how universities change, I think that all over the world there is restructuring of universities going on, and for example in Finland there is now discussion about merging polytechnics, merging perhaps some polytechnics with some universities, universities with universities. This is on the discussion level now but it's on the table and I'm sure that something perhaps not so radical but for the efficiency of higher education there will be changes in the institutional structure .

But what it comes to quality assurance, I also picked up the headlines from the slide, a flood of evaluations and institutions getting tired of evaluations. From the quality assurance agency point of view, I'm sure that we understand this. I think it's always important to try to find the balance because evaluation, it's not a value itself, because we are here for improving the activities and operations of universities, so I'm sure that we are, in quality assurance agencies, very well aware of this attitude in universities and try to make evaluations of quality assurance operations as light as possible.

We could see evaluations as an application of sustainable development and efforts are made to minimize the workload of universities. This is the point from the agencies' side. I think that the main purpose for our activities is to introduce new blood for institutions. Control and evaluation or accountability, they are not values in themselves. Thank you.

Holmen: I will tell a story about when I left the university from being a director of studies eight years ago, and my colleagues at the university then, they asked me with a great deal of surprise why I dared to leave this university and enter work at a quality assurance agency because that couldn't have a future in any way. People in the researchers were themselves the best to do the quality assurance of their own work; how could we at the bureaucracy imagine that we could do such things? That was the skepticism. Another thing they said was the money spent on the national accreditation agency could best be spent at the university to develop the quality. That was eight years ago.

However, at the same time, the private institutions in Norway, they were in favor of this agency because they looked into a future with probably a better, a greater autonomy if they pass the quality thresholds and got that approval.

Also the students were very positive. They were in favor of such an external quality assurance agency because they have always something bad to tell about their teachers. And those two were at the moment very strong actors for establishing the agency, in spite of the resistance in the other sector, the state-owned.

Another saying was that, please don't over-flood us with too many and too-detailed criteria; don't come here and tell us what good quality is. And that's one of our first lessons because in the beginning NOKUT suggested a lot of very detailed criteria and we got a storm from the institutions against us, and we listened to them. From 33 criteria on what is a good quality assurance system, we reduced it to ten. And suddenly the university saw that, we are not on each side of something; we are really working together for quality. They became more receptive through this process.

Still, we have to show that quality pays and it doesn't in financing of the institutions; money doesn't follow this. But still, the universities now feel that it is really stimulating. It pays in a way to have other people looking into your business, especially when the other experts tell you that you're really performing good, and we publish that report and we get more and more awareness and others are looking into that report and they take on the good suggestions that are there. Therefore, we have more and more motivated universities. It also pays, as I said, in autonomy, increased autonomy.

I will also say when I heard this that it is hard to make a top-down approach in a mandatory way. The management of the universities is very fond of NOKUT because it gives them an extra power to say, NOKUT has told us to do, the national agency and their standards and criteria, they say that we have to do this and that, and it gives them extra strength to do something the management didn't really dare to put forward, and in that respect also the quality assurance institution as well.

But we can see educational quality has improved. I would say that. I would say it because we had that response from the institutions themselves. They say, we haven't done actually research work on it, but we register all the recommendations or all the sayings, reactions we get from the institutions, and they say they work in a more systematic way, and that makes them more efficient. They say that by documenting better today than they did before, it also makes them more able to do proper resource allocation internally. And it says that all the good advice that the expert committee gives, they listen to them and they use them and they develop their work.

So when we started we thought that maybe a national agency could be loved, but now we have changed our minds: we want to be respected. We see that we can't be loved but we will be respected and we feel we have that respect from the institutions because we do something that they feel is useful, namely, contribute to the enhancement of the educational quality.

Kimura: Thank you. Actually, I came to my current position after working at a university, so some of your comments struck a chord with me.

Do you have any particular questions for the three Japanese presenters, or anything else you would like further clarification on? Dr. Kajiyama.

Kajiyama: If you would permit, I would like to ask a question.

It relates to quality assurance, and in particular assurance of educational quality. I would venture to say that from a student's point of view, educational institutions yield a significant output, in terms of physical quantity, systems, and organization. I think that the concept of quality assurance should include outcomes as one measure of quality. I think it's possible to evaluate inputs such as how and why education is conducted in a variety of settings within the university. But I would also like to know if you are considering ways to evaluate how useful that education proves to be once students graduate and begin to participate in wider society. I would be interested to hear your thoughts on this.

Kimura: Thank you very much. Who would like to respond to this? Dr. Thune? Ms. Holmen?

Thune: This is a very pertinent question. You must have been traveling in the United States because that's the sort of serious reflection they're beginning to have in their 100-year-old accreditation system, that they do not really focus on results but on input and processes.

Obviously, a focus on results can be a very difficult issue to take up but I think all agencies have to face the need to go into a mature phase where they do have results-based elements in their processes. In my view the way forward is taken now by a number of European agencies, including the Danish, with a combination of audit-like

reviews at the university level and then program reviews which are very much focused on results.

And as we heard from Prof. Kawamura, the Washington Accord is basically very much a results-qualification-oriented exercise which of course makes it very interesting to the engineering profession. So that may be the way in which we are moving, but in methodological terms and in the demands to the experts responsible for reviews we are moving one step up in seriousness I would say. So your point is a very good one.

Kajiyama: Thank you very much.

Kimura: We would also like to invite questions from the floor, but we are running out of time. We will conclude this first panel session for now, but time is being set aside after the end of the second panel session, so please keep your questions until then. Thank you everyone.

Kato: Thank you very much to all the panelists and to Prof. Kimura.

Before we proceed to the next panel discussion, we will have a ten minute break. Coffee is available in the reception hall on the second level. I'm sorry that time is so short, but please make the most of this brief opportunity to relax.

Panel Discussion 2 will commence at 3:00 p.m. I would appreciate it if you could return to your seats by that time. Please leave your simultaneous interpretation receivers at your seats. Thank you.