

Thursday, June 17, 2010

Open Seminar: Japan-Europe Quality Assurance Seminar  
“Aiming to Promote High-quality International Collaborations”  
– Panel Discussion –

Government-level Efforts for  
Quality Assurance in International Collaboration concerning Education in Japan  
(Resume)

Akira Ninomiya, Panelist  
Director (and Specially Appointed Professor)  
Hiroshima Study Center  
Open University of Japan

- Background on promoting inter-university exchange and collaboration on international education.
  - Globalizing world (society) / labor market and internationalization / international expansion at university level
    - ◇ Advancement of the Bologna Process in the EU
    - ◇ Expansion of “Trade in Higher Education Services” (WTO) and protection of students
      - Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education and information portals developed by international organizations
  - Maturity of international student (student transfer) market and international competitiveness
    - ◇ Asian Gateway Strategy Initiative (Asian Erasmus Program)
    - ◇ “Plan for 300,000 International Students” and an increase in mobility (accommodation, scholarship, etc.)
    - ◇ Promotion of short-term student exchange programs and university-to-university agreements (more active credit transfers)
    - ◇ “Global 30” project (for establishing core universities for internationalization) (13 universities to be selected)
  - Asian regional cooperation and strengthened inter-university exchange
    - ◇ Prime Minister Hatoyama’s Initiative
      - October 10, 2009: An initiative proposed by the Prime Minister at the

second Japan-China-Korea Summit (which includes establishment of an expert meeting for quality-assured exchange among universities, and the holding of an international conference)

- October 24, 2009: The 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Summit
- October 25, 2009: Chairman's Statement for the East Asia Summit (ASEAN, Japan, China, Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand)
- December 30, 2009: Cabinet decision on "New Growth Strategy (Basic Policies)"
  - "Cultivate people who can become active on the world stage (and are ready to meet the challenges of the future)".
  - Actively invite students from overseas (stimulating demand for education).

◇ Holding the first Japan-China-Korea Committee for Promoting Exchange and Cooperation among Universities (expert committee) (on April 16, 2010)

- "CAMPUS Asia" launched
  - Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students
- Two working groups are to be established
  - Working Group on Quality Assurance
  - Working Group on University Exchange Programs

◇ FY2010 new program, "Training project to develop high-level professionals through interaction between universities in Japan, China and Korea" (a total budget of 500 million yen (≒449 million EUR\*) over five years, at five locations, 100 million yen for each fiscal year) ([i] Growth areas, such as environment / energy and health, [ii] industry-university cooperation / internship, and [iii] international collaboration among universities)

(\* As of May 29th, 2010)

- "Quality-assured inter-university exchange"
- Efforts by the Subdivision on Universities, Central Council for Education (Working Group on the Promotion of Universities Globalization)
- Essential points of the 'Draft Guidelines for Building Organized and Continuous Cooperation Including Double and Joint Degree Programs between Universities in Japan and Universities in Foreign Countries'
  - Aim of the guidelines: "Checkpoints for reference" for establishing programs (with

quality assurance)

- Effects of international collaboration in education
  - ◇ Students can acquire several degrees from universities in a shorter period and with less cost, and student mobility will be enhanced.
  - ◇ Universities can improve their educational programs and their ways of teaching, and can promote university exchange to foster human resources with international perspective by receiving talented international students and dispatching talented local students.
- Definitions
  - ◇ *Gakuiki*: the Japanese term for a Diploma
  - ◇ Double degree program: A program in which universities discuss the curriculum offered by each university and the process of credit transfer, with the result that each university will confer a degree.
  - ◇ Joint degree program: A program in which universities jointly organize a single curriculum using credit transfers, resulting in each university conferring a degree. (According to Japanese laws and regulations, they are not allowed to jointly confer a single degree.)
  - ◇ Certificate: A document other than a diploma that is given by a single university or jointly by more than one university.

Reference: Definition of a joint degree in Europe: A single diploma that is issued by two or more institutions offering an integrated (or jointly organized) study program and that is “valid” by itself (signed by all participating institutions).

- Principle
  - ◇ There are no “universally agreed-on definitions” for terms (such as “double degree”, “joint degree”, and “dual degree”) in Japan or overseas.
  - ◇ These guidelines are intended to provide general definitions on related terms and checkpoints for reference, in cases a degree from a foreign institution is issued in addition to a degree from a university in Japan, which should be in accordance with laws and regulations in Japan. Therefore, the guidelines make “no changes in Japanese laws and regulations in Japan, nor do they have any effect on related laws and regulations in foreign countries.”
- Major checkpoints for reference
  - ◇ Issues to be examined at the outset
    - Confirm that the partner universities are allowed to function as

universities under the quality assurance framework.

- Clarify basic policies for the building of international collaboration in education.
- ✧ Agreements/confirmation on joint implementation
  - Make agreements in writing on basic policy and other necessary arrangements.
  - Establish the practice of periodically holding official meetings with partner universities (to discuss important issues).
  - Specify university offices in charge of coordination.
- ✧ Discussion of curriculum organization
  - Mutually confirm credit systems and focus on keeping credits worthwhile
  - Establish a credit transfer framework (the existing international framework may be applied).
  - Offer attractive programs, courses and classes (including those taught in English).
  - Clarify the competency that should be achieved for completion, and undertake strict grading policies (visualizing curriculums, and ensuring the transparency and objectivity of the policies).
  - Provide an appropriate system of supervision by professors.
- ✧ Graduation approval
  - Fully discuss how examination of theses should be conducted.
  - Special considerations required in the case of joint degree programs:
    - The curriculum is jointly organized.
    - Discussion of how evaluations for approving graduation should be conducted.
    - Issue diplomas and introduce certificates.
    - Supplement the diplomas with documents that state the outline of the program and the competency acquired through to completion (portfolio, etc.).
- ✧ Student support
  - Determining who is appropriate for the program (e.g., is it intended for new students or currently-enrolled students?)

- Sufficient consideration of the enrollment status of students (studying abroad, leave of absence, etc.)
  - Development of systems for consultation and support of student life
  - Relief of the costs borne by students for travelling between campuses
  - Support for seeking employment
  - Responsibility of the university in case of termination of a program
- ✧ Information publication (not only to students but also wider society)
- Examples of international collaboration in education, including double and joint degree programs
  - European model
  - Japanese model
- Challenges concerning the promotion of quality-assured international collaboration in education among universities
  - Seek new ways of promoting quality-assured international collaboration in education by making better use of cultural diversity in Asia.
    - ✧ Exchange and discuss experiences in different countries concerning the quality assurance of higher education.
    - ✧ Understand the comparability and transferability of higher education courses among different countries.
      - Implement an appropriate credit transfer scheme.
      - Seek the introduction of a new system of issuance for diplomas that suits future involvement in joint degree programs.
    - ✧ Promote discussion on what skills should be fostered in Asian inter-university exchange programs and the development of joint activities/collaboration among universities.
    - ✧ Facilitate active information publication.
    - ✧ Facilitate discussion between Asia and Europe.
  - Promote proactive evaluation and acceptance of human resources from the Asian labor market.