

Strategic Internationalization of Hiroshima University

T. Muta

Hiroshima University, 1-3-2 Kagamiyama Higashi-Hiroshima 739-8511, Japan

INTRODUCTION

I am happy to congratulate Faculty of Dentistry in Hiroshima University on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. I am very honored to be here to give a talk on the strategy in the internationalization of Hiroshima University.

It is well recognized that university reforms are now going on almost everywhere in the world. This phenomenon is an outcome of the globalization of higher education and the world-wide competitive society which emerged after the end of the cold world war period. Now that competitiveness in higher education is growing rapidly at an international level, it is important for us, Hiroshima University, to present clearly our internationalization strategy. With regard to the internationalization strategy, it is necessary to show what is our fundamental policy, what are priority items to be carried out and how we organize our system for the internationalization of Hiroshima University.

Fundamental policy for the internationalization of Hiroshima University

In January 2003, we established a long-term vision for Hiroshima University in which we presented, as our future perspective, the slogan of "a top-level comprehensive research university that is distinguished throughout the world" and at the same time we drew up the road map to achieve this future perspective. The internationalization strategy is one of the most important parts of this road map.

At Hiroshima University we have considered exchange in research and education with foreign universities as one of the important parts of our activities and we continue to maintain this stance. This stance has been highly recognized within Japan and in an evaluation conducted in 2003-2004 by an official assessment organization, the international activities of Hiroshima University were awarded a top ranking.

The number of foreign students is growing every year and has now reached about 800. The number of foreign researchers is also growing rapidly. International conferences and symposia organized by Hiroshima University have been held actively in the Hiroshima area and the exchange of researchers and professors is becoming more and more extensive. The number of inter-university agreements for cooperation between Hiroshima University and foreign universities now amount to nearly 130. Perhaps due to the increase in these cooperation agreements, courtesy visits by presidents, vice-presidents and study groups to and from these foreign universities

have become more frequent. In recent years, the topics of university management and university reform are the main issues discussed by university presidents.

In establishing the future internationalization strategy of Hiroshima University, it is considered indispensable that the international activities of Hiroshima University be reviewed by external experts. For this purpose, we established the Internationalization Strategy Working Group and invited as a reviewer Mr. Robert Goddard who was serving as the Assistant Secretary General for International Relations for the Council of Australian University Presidents. As a result, the Working Group published a report entitled "Internationalization of Hiroshima University in March 2003. In this report, the internationalization objectives of Hiroshima University are presented, along with 15 specific strategies for achieving these objectives. The 15 strategies include establishing a numerical target for internationalization, establishing the Hiroshima University brand, international standardization, nurturing internationally oriented individuals, the International Network of Universities and establishing centers in foreign countries to facilitate the internationalization strategy. We consider the strategies indicated in this report to be the essential part of our perspectives for internationalization. This year(2005) we established the Internationalization-strategy Headquarters in Hiroshima University supported by the Monbusho(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) where our strategy is succeeded.

Items with high priority in the internationalization of Hiroshima University

Although quantitative enlargement, such as the increase in the number of foreign students through the extension of international activities, is basically welcome, such quantitative enlargement must be accompanied by qualitative improvement. In order to promote qualitative improvement we need a well-organized support system for international activities and we have established an international department managed by the Vice-President for International Affairs. The Vice-President also acts as a head of the Internationalization-strategy Headquarters.

Hiroshima University has joined the International Network of Universities (INU) and is a member of the Board of Directors. INU promotes cooperation among affiliated universities through such things as student and staff exchanges and distance learning through the internet. The international cooperation of Hiroshima University with foreign universities based on inter-university agreements is expanding more and more. We

believe that it has become important to exchange ideas on university management and to promote cooperation between universities and industrial enterprises on an international scale.

In connection with this, it is appropriate to mention here that Professor Liu Limin, who is a vice-president of Capital Normal University in Beijing, China, is appointed as an advisor to Hiroshima University and Professor Bruce Johnstone, former president and currently a professor of the State University of New York, is appointed as a member of the Administrative Council of Hiroshima University. They are helping our University by giving advice on university management and international activities. Mr. Hisashi Owada, a judge of the International Court of Justice, is appointed as an academic adviser of Hiroshima University. He helps us by providing useful advice on international problems and holds lectures and forums at Hiroshima University every year.

Another important issue is to establish centers or branches of our University in foreign countries to facilitate the internationalization strategy. By establishing such centers we are able to promote research collaboration in many fields, to stimulate student exchanges and to cooperate on university management. Based on this idea, we established on October 25, 2002 the Hiroshima University Beijing Research Center at Capital Normal University. The Beijing Research Center supports research cooperation between Hiroshima University and Capital Normal University and furthermore serves as a strategic point in China for priority research on environmental policy undertaken by the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation at Hiroshima University. It is also used for interviews for candidate students from China and will be used as a Japanese language school for

prospective students. We would like to establish centers like the Beijing Research Center in other places in China and in other countries.

Our foreign students come from more than 60 countries and amount to about 800. We are also promoting active acceptance of foreign students on short-term student exchange programs. Up to now, we have several thousand foreign student graduates. There is currently no specific alumni association for foreign students, but in 2002 alumni in Korea created the first alumni association overseas. It is desirable to have such alumni association in many more countries.

Advanced research collaboration and scientific exchanges have been performed actively and will be continued all the more in the future. These research activities are taking place with Western countries as well as Asian countries. I hope that research worthy of Nobel prizes will emerge out of such research collaboration. Through the activities of the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation and the Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, cooperation in education has been performed in the South-East Asia and Africa. This cooperation is useful to develop school education in developing countries and is a unique activity that is recognized as a priority program in Japan by Monbusho (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I am sure to say that, in order to promote the internationalization strategy of Hiroshima University, Faculty of Dentistry is playing a crucial role. I expect the future of Faculty of Dentistry to be very prosperous.