

2015 Soka University Educational Vision

**Get Global, Be Bold**

The new challenge of becoming a top global university

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## Get Global, Be Bold

### The new challenge of becoming a top global university

In the 44 years of Soka University's existence, last year was a noteworthy one. Taking in the results of difficult examinations such as the national bar examination, the civil service examination, teacher employment examinations, and employment in private companies our students produced remarkable achievements. Furthermore, students produced great results in sports, as represented by the university's first ever participation in the Tokyo-Hakone collegiate ekiden road relay (Hakone Ekiden). In addition, the university was accredited under the university evaluation and accreditation system and was also accepted into the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Acceleration Program for University Education Rebuilding (hereinafter AP) and the Top Global University Project (hereinafter TGU). The education offered at Soka University received high evaluations from society. Looking back, last year was a year in which the university was blessed with brilliant achievements. However, none of these achievements were obtained through the efforts made within the last year alone; rather, I believe they were the result of continuous efforts, made over many years. In this sense, I would like to express gratitude from the bottom of my heart for the efforts made by my predecessors and the endless cooperation of faculty, staff, and students toward the development of Soka University.

Regarding the outlook for this year, I have three visions that I would like to share with all of you, the constituent members of Soka University.

- 1) To become the ideal university in ten years, as set forth in the TGU (long-term vision)
- 2) To respond appropriately to changes to the high school/university articulation as described in the report by the Central Council for Education in December 2014 (med-term vision)
- 3) To improve educational capability under the initiatives of the AP (short-term vision)

Regarding the long-term vision, in order to foster individuals who can contribute to global society in this new era, it is necessary to prepare a plan to ensure the achievement of various targets that have been set, and steadily execute that plan. The targets set in the TGU represent the development of the various strategies indicated in the Soka University Grand Design Initiative, which was announced in 2010. With the university having been selected as one of the TGU project universities and the changes in social conditions over the past five years, I would like to suggest that this year we review the initiatives for the final five years of the Soka Grand Design Initiative, which was formulated with an eye toward 2020, and present them specifically as a concept which may be called as "Soka University Grand Design Initiative Ver. 1.5." Similar to when the current Grand Design Initiative was formulated for the ten years from the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we will make effort to gather opinions from students, faculty, and staff of all generations.

Regarding the report by the Central Council for Education, the concrete image of the high school/university articulation focusing on the university entrance examination will be presented as a

trial within the next three years. As a result, we don't need to take immediate action at this point. However, the university began a review of its admission system last year, and I believe we need to work on this issue on an ongoing basis. Moreover, I would like to start considering the student support that is necessary for the university to receive diverse students from within and outside Japan.

Regarding the initiatives of the AP, we are aiming to improve our ability to educate by deepening active learning and making learning outcomes visible. In order to substantialize the humanistic education of Soka University, it is important to take initiatives to deepen active learning. This year, the Faculty of Business Administration will take the role of a pioneer faculty. The initiatives will be mainly implemented here during this year and then sequentially expanded to other faculties from next year. When this project ends in 2018, it will be time for many faculties to revise their curricula. At this time, we will work to formulate new curricula that reflects the outcomes obtained in the AP.

The university's theme under the TGU project is "Global Initiative for Humanistic Education—Fostering Global Citizens for Building Peace and Sustainable Prosperity—." Although this is a far-reaching concept, the university is eager to take on the new challenge of becoming a top global university, as indicated by the slogan of "Get Global, Be Bold." If the faculty, staff, and students work together to achieve the targets set in the TGU, I firmly believe a doorway will open to a bright future for Soka University.

## **1. Educational strategies**

### **(1) Realizing to learn in depth through active learning**

Taking the AP, for which the university was selected in the second half of last year, as an opportunity, Soka University will spread and roll out the improvement of classes university-wide to encourage students to learn more in depth. The project will be executed by the AP Project Promotion Committee and the pioneer Faculty of Business Administration. By providing the knowledge and experience gained to other faculties, we will accelerate the pace of the reforms.

We already have a student assistant (SA) system, and we will work to expand and utilize this system—which significantly contributes to mutual evaluations between students—while paying particular attention to the growth of those students who serve as student assistants.

### **(2) Visualizing learning outcomes**

Since 2013, the university has been working to measure learning outcomes—mainly in the common subjects. This year will be the final working year on this initiative, and we expect that we will be able to attain a certain level of useful knowledge. In addition, the university has already developed the "learning portfolio" as a tool for making learning outcomes visible. Some instructors and students are already utilizing this tool, but we will encourage its further utilization.

### **(3) Enhancing syllabi that encourage proactive learning**

A syllabus is created for all of the courses, which indicates the goals of the course, learning method, evaluation criteria, etc. However, we intend to add an innovation to the syllabus in

order to further motivate students to study proactively: Are students aware of the goals of the course at all times during classes? Have the evaluation criteria been set in such a way as to promote proactive and motivated learning by the students? In particular, is there anything that can be done to enable the performance evaluation to reflect the growth process of students through the course? I would like to request many instructors to work on this challenge.

**(4) Consistent development of the Department of Science and Engineering for Sustainable Innovation in the Faculty of Science and Engineering and the Faculty of International Liberal Arts**

With the establishment of the Department of Science and Engineering for Sustainable Innovation, the Faculty of Engineering will be renamed the Faculty of Science and Engineering when we welcome this year's freshmen. I expect the education will be steadily provided in line with the principles of the newly developed curriculum. Also, the Faculty of International Liberal Arts will welcome back the first batch, which they have been studying abroad from last year and a full range of classes will be offered on campus. Similarly, I expect the consistent development of this faculty as well.

**(5) Revising the curriculum of the Faculty of Letters**

The current curriculum of the Faculty of Letters was implemented four years ago, and it is now due for a full review and examination. I strongly hope the curriculum will be examined with a focus on the perspective of learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired.

**2. Intensification of faculty's research and educational activities**

**(1) Obtaining competitive research grants**

Thanks to various support measures aimed at obtaining competitive research grants, the number of projects selected under the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research and the amount of money granted have steadily increased. This can be attributed to the provision of seminars and consultation in relation to applying for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research.

Furthermore, this year, the university is planning to expand the support and have external lecturers, etc. to provide effective seminars in order to have more instructors that can obtain grants, with the goal of increasing the amount of grants received per year to more than 100 million yen. In addition, the university will hold briefings and research support seminars targeting instructors who have been selected under the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research in order to provide further extensive research support. A system to provide information about open applications for competitive research grants has been completed, and the path for obtaining grants is now clearer than ever. Based on the research grants, research in each field will be further advanced.

**(2) Preventing misconduct in research activities**

Based on the Guidelines for Responding to Misconduct in Research issued by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in August of last year, the university established the Regulations for Preventing Misconduct in Research Activities at Soka

University this past March. This year, in order to prevent misconduct from occurring and to promote fair research activities, the university will implement “ethics education in research” and will work to spread and establish research ethics and improve the ethics of researchers. From now on, in order to enable independent research activities by young researchers, the university will improve the research environment, including the allocation of mentors who will provide appropriate assistance and advice.

**(3) Presenting research results globally**

As globalization progresses, the formats for the presentation of research results are changing significantly. In line with these changes, the university will transition to e-publishing of research results starting from this year. In particular, the bulletins issued by each faculty and other documents will be published as e-books, and research results will be publicly announced widely around the world. Through these initiatives, the university will work to expand its network with the researchers around the world.

**(4) Introducing a comprehensive faculty performance assessment system**

We are embarking on a full-scale roll-out of a comprehensive faculty performance assessment system to more objectively and fairly evaluate the instructor’s individual education, research, and social activities. By assessing the efforts of each instructor and making those assessments visible, we aim to further energize these activities.

**3. Enhancement of student support**

**(1) Enhancing the scholarships**

Last year, the university worked to enhance its scholarship programs through efforts such as establishing the Makiguchi Memorial Education Fund Scholarship for Exchange Students of the Faculty of International Liberal Arts in line with the opening of the Faculty of International Liberal Arts, as well as establishing the Soka University Lawyers Scholarship (Hosokai Scholarship) for the students of Faculty of Law.

From the current recipient limit of 40 students, the number of recipients of the Makiguchi Memorial Education Fund Scholarship for Undergraduate Students will be significantly expanded to 120 students this year, with a plan to further expand this number to 350 students in 2018. Hereafter, more effective scholarships will be studied with the aim of enhancing student support.

Also, it has now been four years since the introduction of the Soyu Scholarship (benefit-type). As the first students to receive scholarships under this scholarship graduated from the university in March of this year, we plan to validate the outcome of the program and comprehensively examine our ongoing benefit-type scholarships.

**(2) Enhancing the student dormitories**

Last year, we opened a men’s and women’s “International Students Dormitory” where exchange students, Preparatory Japanese Language Program students, and Japanese students

can live together. Through cultural exchanges, the university has aimed to foster individuals who can succeed in the global community. This year, with the aim of creating a true international student dormitory, the ratio of foreign students living in the dormitory will be increased to 20%. In addition, construction of a new international dormitory is planned, with the aim of opening the new facility to students in April 2017. Further, each dormitory will utilize the dormitory advisor system led by faculty and staff, and will work to further improve the lifestyle and learning support provided to students.

**(3) Announcing the 2014 Extracurricular Activities Guidelines and ensuring the compliance with the Guidelines**

Last year, the Extracurricular Activities Study Committee comprising faculty, staff, and student representatives was established under the All-Campus Conference. The committee conducted studies with the objective of fostering true global individuals and properly ensuring career paths for students, formulating the 2014 Extracurricular Activity Guidelines.

This year, we will review the issues of career paths after graduating and extracurricular activities, and will work to ensure each club and organization specifically complies with these guidelines.

**(4) Enhancing student life**

The university promoted the “Smoke-free Campus,” which was implemented in April 2013, and established the Smoke-free Campus Promotion Office comprising faculty, staff, and student representatives. From this time forward, we will examine various issues related to the smoke-free campus, including the response to students who do not adhere to the smoke-free campus rules. According to the smoking-related questionnaire conducted by the Health Center from 2009, the ratio of smokers among all students has fallen from 8.9% to 5.6%, and we intend to further promote student health.

Since 2012, meal gatherings attended by the Soka University President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees have been held for first-year students who live in apartments or at home with family members. These events have been beneficial and are highly regarded for strengthening cooperation among students themselves and with faculty and staff. The event will be held again this year.

Also, the number of users of the shuttle bus service between Shinjuku Station and the university campus, which started in 2012, has risen. As the shuttle bus is helping to improve student services and increase convenience for commuting students, the university will continue this service this year.

The 100 yen breakfast, which started in the fall semester of last year, helps students to establish regular meals by providing a healthy breakfast. The university will listen to requests from students and will continue to provide the service this year.

**4. TGU related initiatives**

Soka University has been selected as one of 42 universities across the country under the

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development. Moreover, the university was also selected last year as one of 37 universities under the TGU Project. Soka University has undertaken the mission and responsibility of leading the globalization of Japan's higher education. The university's theme under the TGU project is "Global Initiative for Humanistic Education—Fostering Global Citizens for Building Peace and Sustainable Prosperity—."

Now is the time for the university—which has designated "Be the highest seat of learning for humanistic education" as one of its founding principles—to promote various specific concepts in order to realize the principle. Based on our international exchanges with 155 universities in 48 countries and regions (as of April 1, 2015), we intend to further promote our educational programs aimed at fostering "creative global citizens."

### **(1) Global Mobility**

By expanding our program of accepting exchange students and sending students abroad, we will advance the globalization of the campus. In particular, because we have set a numerical target of accepting 600 exchange students next year (including short-term programs), this year we will work to enhance the environment for accepting such students and actively publicize our efforts. For example, we will advance the establishment of a pre-arrival admission system, provide tuition fee reductions and exemptions, set up benefit-type scholarships, and prepare the university so that students from countries with different economic conditions can study at Soka University with peace of mind.

In addition, with regard to sending students abroad from Soka University, I would like to encourage students to actively take on the challenge, by increasing the number of study abroad programs through which students can obtain credits and by expanding our financial support measures.

### **(2) Global Learning**

The university will proceed with the globalization of the educational programs offered by its faculties with the aim of fostering creative global citizens. The Faculty of International Liberal Arts, through which students can graduate by taking only courses taught in English, was opened last year. Similarly, the Faculty of Economics will launch the SUCCEED (Soka University Courses for Comprehensive Economic Education) program this year. In the future, the number of courses taught in English in each faculty and in the School for Excellence in Educational Development will be increased. Through these efforts, the university aims to achieve a diverse campus where both Japanese and foreign students can learn together in the same classroom and debate from various sets of values.

### **(3) Global Administration**

The university will promote the globalization of its operations and decision making processes. As university that leads globalization, Soka University will work to globalize its faculty and staff. The university has formulated plans to establish a university administrative organization that meets

the requirements for this process of globalization, including hiring foreign faculty and staff, and increasing the ratio of women faculty and staff. In addition, the university will continue to offer Faculty Development training for teaching classes in English, as well as holding meetings and preparing documents in English.

#### **(4) Global Core**

The Global Core Center, which opens next year, will promote research and exchange projects under the theme of “Fostering Global Citizens for Building Peace and Sustainable Prosperity.” Thus, the university’s Global Education Promotion Center will this year conduct preparations with the aim of realizing these concepts. In addition, the university plans to start research activities and research exchanges relating to “peace,” “development,” “environment,” and “human rights,” with the aim of opening a Master’s Program, named tentatively Graduate School of Peace Research and World Citizenship Education in 2018.

### **5. Initiatives in relation to distance learning**

Looking toward the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, the Distance Learning Division has been working on various initiatives since last year based on the university’s founding principles. Media classes using DVDs have started as part of the schooling, and about 80% of students have indicated an improvement in the effectiveness of their learning.

In the classes Humanistic Education and Soka Education, students learn about the founding principles of Soka University. In order to establish a better learning environment for students and enable non-degree students to take these classes, this year the university will offer an e-schooling (real-time) course delivered via teleconferencing in Sapporo, in addition to Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka.

Further, in regard to the “Report Preparation Lecture” that is currently held nationwide for learning support (in 30 venues last year), the university plans to increase the number of venues around the metropolitan areas so that it can provide further enhanced learning support to more students. At the same time, the university will also permit students not officially enrolled in regular courses to take the “Introduction to Self-directed Learning” (schooling course) to learn study skills for distance learning courses on a free-audit basis in order to create an environment easy to learn for anybody.



