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立命館アジア太平洋大学

Talk between  
PresidentsSynergies  
by Two of  
the Top  
Global  
Universities

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### Expectations and responsibilities for the two universities selected for the Top Global University Project from the same educational institution

**Yoshida:** More than two years have passed since we were selected for the Top Global University Project, and we have entered the stage of implementing our

programs. I am increasingly aware of our responsibility to explore the future paths of our universities while addressing a very wide range of relevant issues and to create new perspectives for Ritsumeikan University and the Ritsumeikan Academy. The fact that two universities of the same educational institution were selected for this project means we have been given exceptional responsibilities as well as

expectations.

**Korenaga:** I entirely agree with you. Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) was established in 2000 as a global university without equal in Japan. Accordingly, the Top Global University Project offers us the opportunity to prove our value.

**Yoshida:** As the number of foreign visitors to Japan increases, we are becoming

increasingly connected with the world wherever we are in Japan. With more opportunities to meet people from different cultures on a daily basis, we must produce human resources who can communicate smoothly with people of different cultural backgrounds and talk and work with anyone with confidence and ease. At the same time, universities as research institutions have a public mission to tackle global issues.

**Korenaga:** I think it is the Japanese mentality that is a major obstacle to the globalization of Japanese society. Although Japanese companies have been expanding overseas since the early Meiji period, Japanese people have been unable to develop a global mentality for more than 100 years. Recognizing this problem, the Japanese government has stepped up its internationalization efforts in recent years. At APU, we uphold the principles of “freedom, peace and humanity,” “international mutual understanding,” and “the future shape of the Asia Pacific region” in our basic ideals. Ultimately, I think a global mindset means the ability to understand others we meet and care about.

**Yoshida:** APU has nurtured a global mindset in students by providing education that embodies the spirit of the basic ideals. An aspiration towards peace is the basis of both universities.

**Korenaga:** Given the uncertainties prevailing in today’s society, it is imperative to develop human resources with the ability to lead tough negotiations backed by a broad range of knowledge. Recently, I visited Ritsumeikan Uji Senior High School, a Super Global High School designated by the national government, where I was impressed to see real educational efforts being made to train future global leaders. I believe that great synergies will be generated by reinforcing collaboration across the entire Ritsumeikan Academy, including ensuring smooth transition from high school to

university, in conducting educational and research activities.

**Yoshida:** Our universities have a culture of holding in-depth discussions on all educational and research issues related to APU and the rest of the Ritsumeikan Academy. It is crucial to share information to produce significant synergies.

**Korenaga:** There are various opportunities for student exchanges between our two universities, and there is a system for admitting students of high schools affiliated to Ritsumeikan University and APU.

**Yoshida:** Ritsumeikan University is a comprehensive university consisting of 14 undergraduate schools and 20 graduate schools, while APU is an international university where 50% of the entire student body are international students from 84 countries and regions around the world. Thus, the two universities have respective characteristics and strengths. I believe we can increase synergies by complementing each other’s academic structures and educational contents and facilitating interactions between us.

**Korenaga:** Enhancing the skills and abilities of both academic and administrative staff is crucial for the internationalization of universities. One thing that greatly impressed me when I moved to Ritsumeikan from a national university was that it gives its administrative staff the chance to study at foreign graduate schools. I believe that APU, as an international university, is among the best in Japan in terms of the linguistic proficiency and other international competencies of its administrative staff.

**Yoshida:** The Ritsumeikan Academy is a borderless organization between academic and administrative staff, backed by its long tradition of “academic and administrative collaboration.” Developing human resources is one of the important roles of universities, which requires, among other things, academic and administrative staff to work in close cooperation. This

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long-standing tradition is our valuable asset that we must preserve into the future.

### Promoting innovative educational programs in close cooperation with Asian universities

**Korenaga:** At APU, we are promoting the internationalization process by setting the goals of “Four 100s” namely, 100% accommodation of first-year students in the international education dormitory; (2) 100% implementation of multicultural collaborative peer learning; (3) 100% Japanese students going abroad during their university years; and (4) 100 countries and regions represented in the international student body. In addition, we are striving to build deeper relationships with alumni as our educational partners in various ways. To be specific, we will invite graduates of APU who are internationally active to give lectures at APU and ask them to support APU students overseas. We will make the most of our global networks of more than 13,000 alumni and our overseas branch offices located in 21 countries and regions around the world.

**Yoshida:** Ritsumeikan University, too, has been internationalizing in various ways. Especially noteworthy is the inauguration of the DUT-RU International School of Information Science and Engineering, a department established jointly by the College of Information Science and Engineering of Ritsumeikan University and the School of Software Technology of Dalian University of Technology. This is Japan’s first university department opened jointly with a foreign university. Under this arrangement, 40 students enrolled in Dalian University of Technology, China will be accepted at the College of Information Science and Engineering of Ritsumeikan University from the third year. I am pleased to note that a great many Chinese students



have applied for studying at the College of Information Science and Engineering due to the cutting-edge research projects underway here. Currently, we are also negotiating with The Australian National University (ANU) to conduct joint educational and research activities. By fostering partnerships with leading universities around the world, we will accelerate the globalization process.

**Korenaga:** Ritsumeikan University offers another very innovative program – the Campus Asia Program operated jointly by three universities, namely the College of Letters of Ritsumeikan University, Dongseo University in Korea, and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in

China.

**Yoshida:** Yes. In this program, 20 students from each of the three universities study issues relevant to East Asia from the perspective of humanities at joint campuses in the three countries. Students travel around all three countries and in doing so, improve their language skills and gain a deeper understanding of foreign cultures. The environment where students of different backgrounds learn together helps them naturally improve their communication skills. At the completion ceremony of the Campus Asia Pilot Program, the participating students demonstrated dramatic improvement in English, Chinese and Korean proficiency, and I was greatly



impressed to see that the students made such improvement in just four years. In Europe, it is common practice for students to go abroad and study at two or more universities. I hope the Campus Asia Program will become a role model for this learning style in Asia.

**Korenaga:** As I said earlier, APU puts emphasis on multicultural collaborative peer learning as one of the goals of our “Four 100s.” At APU, even the smallest class has international students from at least two countries and regions. We will fully implement the principle of mixing students in classes, for example, by placing students in multinational groups when grouping them and also by increasing the involvement of upper-year students as teaching assistants in classes. One important thing is an attitude of mutual respect, without which we cannot achieve anything meaningful by mixing students. Perhaps I am too optimistic, but I think through such learning, we can help students develop better cross-cultural understanding and eventually become ready to help resolve conflicts and other global threats.

**Carrying out educational reforms not only in the classroom but also in a variety of learning environments**

**Yoshida:** The proportion of international students in the student body of Ritsumeikan University is lower than that of

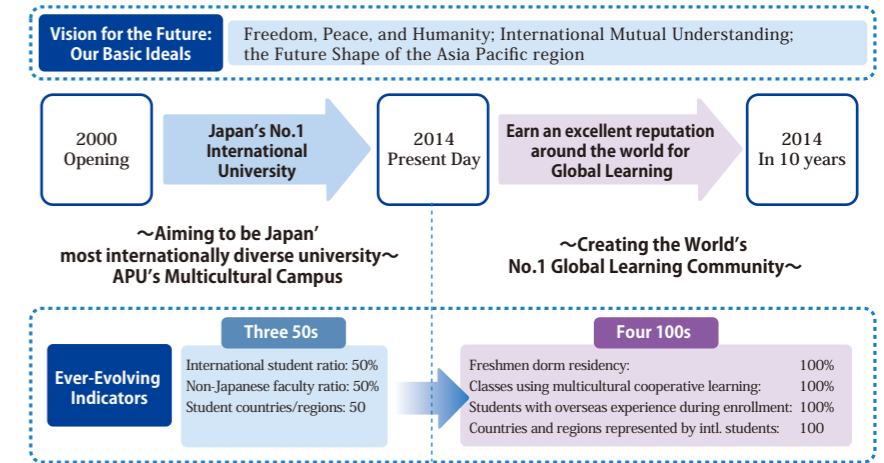


APU, so we have to increase the number of international students. However, it is not enough just to increase the number: we should provide venues for interactions between international and Japanese students. Given the importance of creating an environment and opportunities for Japanese and international students to study together, I focus on the idea of “Commons” or common learning space, which means creating venues of interactions in various places outside classrooms. Our Osaka Ibaraki Campus, which opened in 2015, has Commons in various locations where students can be found talking with each other or studying.

**Korenaga:** APU has a student dormitory called AP House where about 1,000 students from around the world live together. This is a very important place for APU, because students can learn about the values and lifestyles of different countries first-hand in daily life.

**Yoshida:** We should recognize the role of a student dormitory as a venue for learning, in addition to an accommodation facility for international students. There are learning opportunities not only in the classroom but also in many other places. When I visited the AP House, I realized that we can learn much from the AP House. There are things that can be understood only through the experience of living with people of different backgrounds, and such understanding is essential for the ability to act globally.

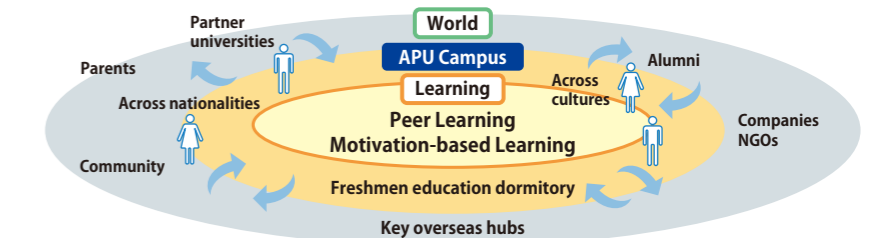
**Conceptual diagram: Overview of APU's initiatives**



**Conceptual diagram: Overview of Ritsumeikan University's initiatives**



**Global Learning: Towards New Horizons in University Education**



**Korenaga:** As shown in our concept sheet submitted for the Top Global University Project, it is important to carry out educational reforms with recognition that opportunities for learning are available everywhere. This indicates the necessity of assuring the quality of learning. In August 2016, APU was granted an internationally recognized accreditation of AACSB\*. This is a great milestone for us, because being AACSB\*-accredited means the quality of learning at APU is internationally endorsed. This accreditation was granted to the business education provided at our College of International Management and Graduate School of Management as one unit. APU is the first university in Japan to be awarded this accreditation for the joint undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered in English. When

I talk about the Top Global University Project in meetings with presidents of APU's foreign partner universities, they typically show great interest, suggesting that our initiatives as a Top Global University are drawing a lot of attention internationally.

**Yoshida:** The selection for the Top Global University Project is a valuable opportunity to renew our awareness of the level of our educational and research programs in the global context and reconsider to what extent these programs are internationally compatible. I believe that by enhancing our education and research as part of the process of internationalization to better meet the demands of society, we can contribute to the further development of our two universities and also the Ritsumeikan Academy at large.

\*AACSB: The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which is an accrediting agency for business schools, headquartered in the U.S.A.