

Academy Report 2019

Memorandum of the AY 2019 Plenary Council of the University

This Memorandum is a compilation of the discussions that took place at the first open session of the AY 2019 Plenary Council of the University on Wednesday, October 2, and other matters discussed during AY 2019 before and after that session. It comprises three chapters: Chapter I, Significance and of the AY 2019 Plenary Council of the University and Progress of Discussions; Chapter II, Major Discussion Points tabled by the Parties; and Chapter III, University Initiatives in AY 2020 and Beyond (Confirmed Matters).



Chapter I. Significance of the AY 2019 Plenary Council and Progress of Discussions

Overview of the Plenary Council

The Plenary Council of the University (hereafter, simply the “Plenary Council”) is an organ established in order for all members of the Ritsumeikan University (“RU”) learning community—undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, administrative staff, and the university authorities—to discuss and engage actively in improvements

and reforms to various conditions of education, research, and campus life. Sessions of the Plenary Council are conducted in line with the principle of self-government by all constituents of the university, and are attended by representatives of the four primary components of the university: the Student Union as the self-governing body for

undergraduate students, the Graduate Student Council as the self-governing body for graduate students, the Faculty/Staff Union, and the university authorities (the Executive Board of Trustees, of which College Deans are members). The Ritsumeikan Co-operative, which provides support for campus life, participates as an observer.

Significance of the AY 2019 Plenary Council and Progress of Discussions

1) Significance of the AY 2019 Plenary Council

The discussions that took place in the AY 2018 Plenary Council provided the basis for holding another Plenary Council in AY 2019. At the AY 2018 Plenary Council, proposals for tuition fees were made only for AY 2019 entrants in the case of undergraduate students, and only up to AY 2020 in the case of graduate students. The AY 2018 Plenary Council therefore confirmed that a further Plenary Council would be held in AY 2019 to determine undergraduate fees for AY 2020 and beyond, and to consider the question of whether or not to unify the graduate tuition fee policy cycle with that of undergraduate students, together with related policies on graduate tuition fees.

2) Progress of discussions

At the AY 2019 Plenary Council, the university authorities (hereafter simply “the university”) provided the other parties with a report on the status

of initiatives in education and student support pursuant to the R2020 latter phase plan, and tabled a draft Learning Innovation plan for education and student support in AY 2019 and thereafter, formulated with a view to the next ten years (AY 2021 to 2030).

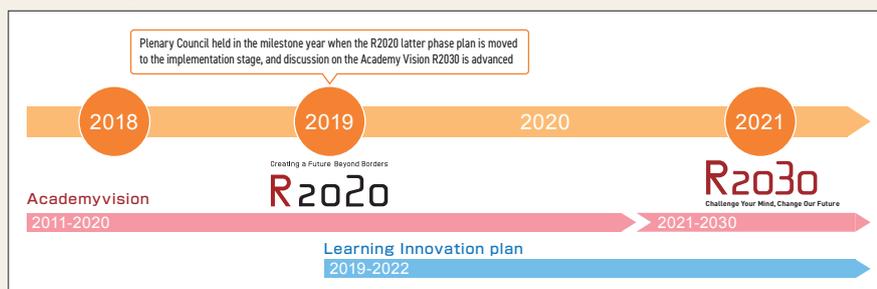
In March 2019 the university and Student Union began holding discussion meetings in preparation for the AY 2019 Plenary Council. The university released a special issue of Ritsumeikan Style titled “Toward the AY 2019 Plenary Council” in June 2019 (hereafter the “RS 2019 Special Issue”), which reported on progress toward enhancement of curricular and extracurricular learning, improvement of campus environments, and enrichment of graduate school education for the first half of the Learning Innovation policy period (AY 2019-2020) and pursuant to the AY 2018 Memorandum of the Plenary Council. Along with reporting on the status of discussions on demonstrating learning

outcomes, supporting learning and campus life, study abroad and international exchange, and other themes for the first half of the Learning Innovation policy period (AY 2019-2020), the university also proposed to undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff members a policy for tuition and fees in AY 2020 and 2021. For undergraduate students in particular, materials were distributed and explanations conducted in small-group classes in all undergraduate colleges, and feedback was gathered from these classes.

Through June 2019 and thereafter, representatives of the university, the Student Union, the Graduate Student Council, and the Faculty/Staff Union held two Plenary Council Representatives’ Meetings. There were also three administrative consultations, nine discussion forums on various topics with the Student Union, and five with the Graduate Student Council, before the first full Plenary Council open session was held on Wednesday, October 1, 2019. Discussions continued subsequently, with one Representatives’ Meeting, three administrative consultations, seven discussion forums with the Student Union, and one discussion forum with the Graduate Student Council.

In addition to this progress in discussions, AY 2019 is situated as the year in which the R2020 latter phase plan is moved to the implementation phase, while discussions are also advanced on the plan for the academy and university from AY 2021 onward, toward realization of the R2030 academy vision for 2030: Challenge Your Mind, Change Our Future.

Positioning of the AY 2019 Plenary Council of the University



Access the website below to view the results of the Ritsumeikan University Student Union’s 2019 university-wide questionnaire survey of students.



Access the website below (learning support site) for more details of the Learning and Growth Survey referred to in this Memorandum.



Access the website below for more information on Ritsumeikan’s approach to financial management.



Chapter II. Major Discussion Points tabled by the Parties

1. Major Discussion Points tabled by the Student Union

Building on the discussions that had taken place up to AY 2018, the Student Union sought to ensure that negotiations in the AY 2019 Plenary Council Discussions were informed by the actual conditions facing students. To do so, it ascertained those conditions and the needs of students through a questionnaire survey for newly-enrolling students (hereafter the “New Student

Survey”) conducted jointly with the undergraduate colleges, and the 2019 university-wide student questionnaire survey (hereafter the “Student Union Survey”) conducted independently by the Student Union for all undergraduate students of the university. At the first open session of the Plenary Council, the Student Union presented the topics that demanded priority attention based

on the voices of students themselves, and called for discussions of the following three topics to be prioritized: 1 educational policies, 2 campus life improvements, 3 the Academy’s future design (including issues related to tuition fees). The specific issues raised by the Student Union are outlined below.

1 Academic policies

(i) Course registration

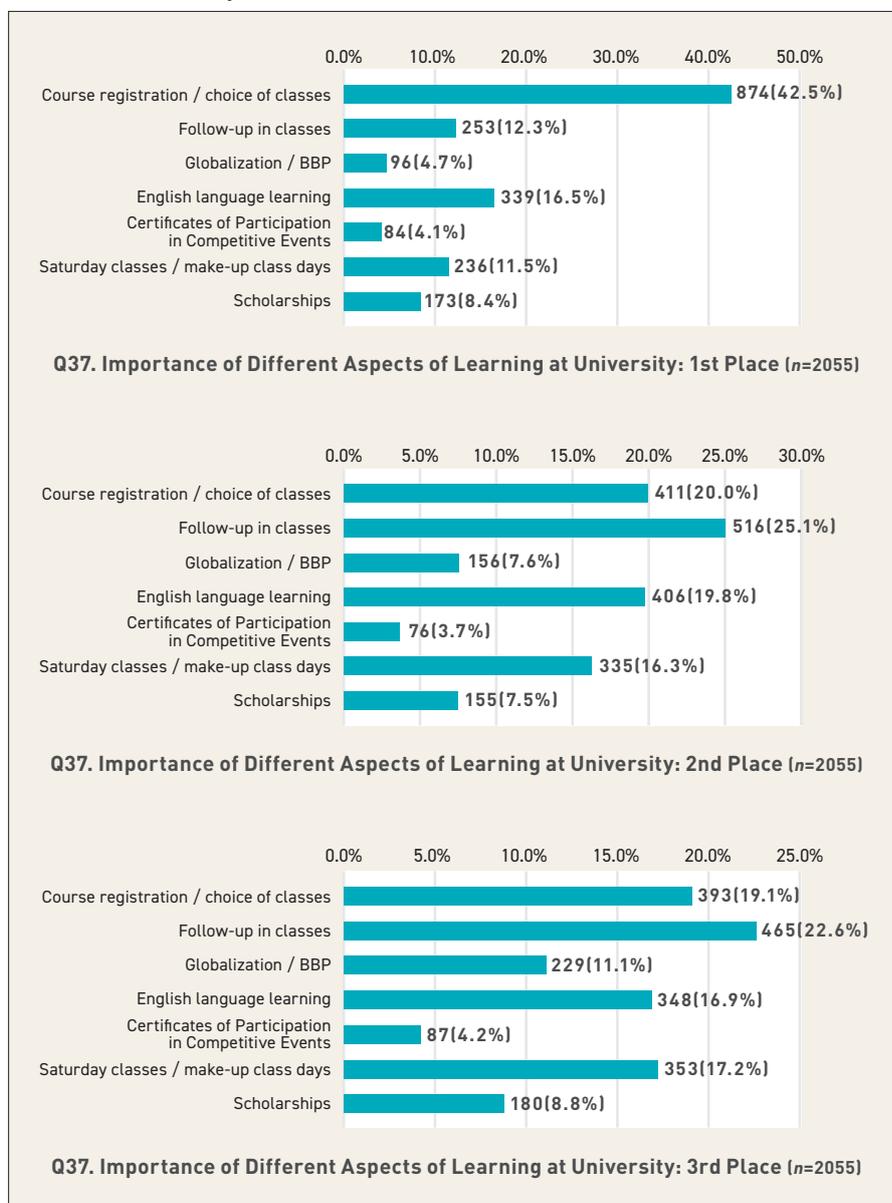
The Student Union asserted the following points regarding course registration, which is a key procedure for students to pursue fulfilling studies at university. The syllabus is understood to be an important element of learning at university, but the Student Union’s survey results reveal a pattern in the way students use the syllabus: the majority of students check the information on grade evaluation, but few of them check the learning objectives of the class, which should be an important reference point for selecting classes. The Student Union pointed to a lack of clarity regarding the key syllabus items which students need to check, and suggested that the syllabus was not easy for students to use when selecting their classes. The Student Union also argued that to ensure effective use of the syllabus, students also need to be able to refer easily to the results of past class questionnaires. Moreover, it suggested that in regard to the course registration period, students would find it easier to select classes if the initial registration period fell after they had attended their first class, and asked the university to clarify its position on the current registration period, which does not allow this.

(ii) Class follow-up

In regard to class preparation/revision and follow-up for students who miss class, the Student Union suggested that there is scope to encourage class instructors to make greater use of functions such as distribution of class materials on manaba+R, the e-learning tool that supports class operation. It asked the university to produce a concrete plan for improvement and quantitative targets.

In regard to class follow-up, the Student Union also referred to its questionnaire results to show that operational problems relating to the use of Certificates of Participation in Competitive Events have been carried over from AY 2018, such as the refusal of some class instructors to accept these certificates. Students participating in extracurricular activities submit these certificates to their instructors when they need to be absent from class for matches, competitions and the like. The Student Union suggested that the continued ex-

Student Union Survey Q37

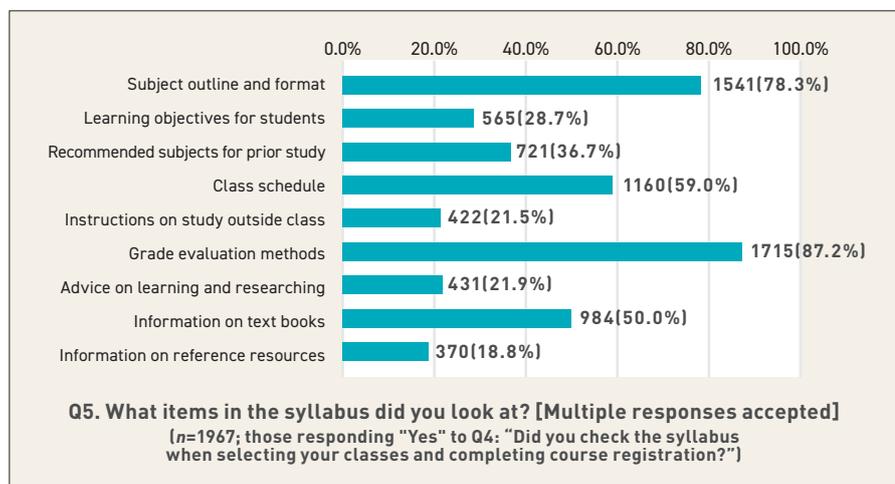


Ritsumeikan University Student Union, Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire, 2019, p.16

istence of this problem may relate to insufficient understanding, on the part of both instructors and students, of the aims and significance of the

certificate system.

Student Union Survey Q5



Ritsumeikan University Student Union, *Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire*, 2019, p.4

(iii) Learning in English

As the globalization of society progresses rapidly, it is increasingly important for students to study a foreign language (English) at university and acquire English language proficiency. The Learning and Growth Survey conducted by the university, however, found that many students had a low self-evaluation of the proficiency they gained through English language classes at university. The Student Union suggested that this is a major problem. Moreover, in contrast to the finding from the university's survey that a growing number of current students are attaining the B1 level of the CEFR^{*1}, and international measure of foreign language proficiency, the Student Union revealed

that its own survey had found that only around 30 percent of students had a sense of growth in relation to their English language proficiency. On this basis the Student Union suggested that the level of English proficiency attained at university is not reaching the standards that students aspire to.

With a view to improving this situation, the Student Union pointed out that students themselves are unable to grasp how the university's various initiatives relating to English language learning, including curricular classes, language learning content provided by Beyond Borders Plaza^{*2} (hereafter "BBP"), and study abroad, relate to one another.

It suggested that in order to rectify this situation, each organ of the university should work

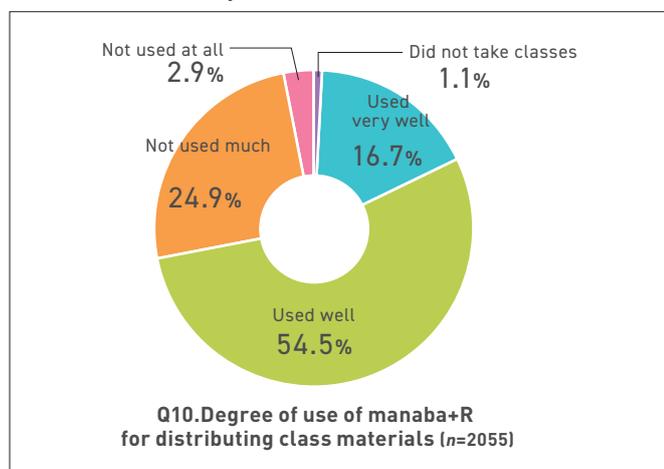
together to deliver systems for raising language proficiency through a combination of elements such as language subjects, liberal arts subjects, and study abroad, and develop programs that contribute to student growth. It also suggested that within the issue of English language proficiency there are some elements that are common throughout the university and others that are more closely related to the features of each individual undergraduate college, and demanded that each college engage its students in formats such as five-way discussion forums.

(iv) First-year education

The Student Union called for the university to share and confirm progress on the activities of Orientation Conductors in accordance with the Memorandum on Orientation Conductor Activities and Framework for Orientation Conductor Activities and Support confirmed at the AY 2018 Plenary Council. The Student Union also pointed out, based on the New Student Survey conducted jointly by the Student Union and the university in AY 2019, that there is a tendency for new students to be overloaded with information on course registration, scholarships, extracurricular activities and other topics, which is all provided in the same orientation period immediately after entrance.

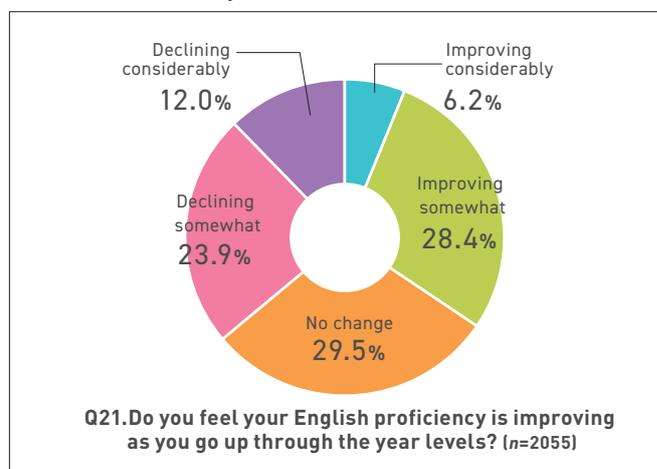
On this basis the Student Union made the following demands in relation to the provision of support for new students in future: 1) that Orientation Conductor groups be provided with information on the activities, know-how, and challenges faced by other peer support groups both within and outside the university, and information on the support that individual Colleges are providing directly to their new students; 2) that in light of the support environment for new stu-

Student Union Survey Q10



Ritsumeikan University Student Union, *Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire*, 2019, p.6

Student Union Survey Q21



Ritsumeikan University Student Union, *Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire*, 2019, p.9

*1 An international standard of language proficiency formulated by the Council of Europe and in use officially in Europe and elsewhere since 2001.

*2 Commons operated jointly by the Divisions of Academic Affairs and International Affairs. Operates on-campus international exchange and plans events to foster multicultural co-living and study abroad motivation and provide international students with wide-ranging support. Also functions as a center for supporting foreign language self-study.

dents, the role of Orientation Conductor groups be discussed and confirmed with the university once again; and 3) that the Colleges and Orientation Conductor groups work to develop closer collaborative relationships.

2 Improving the campus environment and student life

(i) Dining environments

Based on the fact that 98% of students in the Student Union survey responded that they had a sense of overcrowding in cafeterias, the Student Union called for the university to pursue the temporary alleviation of lunchtime crowding as its highest priority. It proposed that for this purpose, the university should analyze the levels of crowding on each campus, consider ways to eliminate the root causes of the crowding, including major renovations, and introduce cashless payment systems for the convenience of students. It also called for concrete discussions of topics in line with the conditions on each campus, including securing dining spaces on the Kinugasa Campus other than the cafeterias, expansion of Lunch Streets using mobile vendors and the like, invit-

ing external business to establish convenience stores, fast food outlets, cafes and other services on Biwako-Kusatsu Campus (hereafter “BKC”), and securing dining spaces on the Osaka Ibaraki Campus (hereafter “OIC”).

(ii) Air conditioning

The Student Union referred to the increasing risks of heat exhaustion and other conditions during the summer months, even indoors, owing to recent changes in the external environment. It called for the following measures in relation to air conditioning: (1) making class instructors thoroughly aware of how to operate air conditioning facilities and make inquiries about them, so classroom temperatures can be managed appropriately; (2) managing classroom temperatures appropriately in line with classroom size and number of students (addressing the problem of uneven temperatures in large classrooms); (3) managing temperatures appropriately and installing air conditioning in concourses, corridors, and non-classroom shared areas that are increasingly used as learning spaces and commons (including extracurricular activity facilities); and (4) implementing usage surveys designed to clarify and rationalize the differing rules for use of air conditioning across buildings managed by different departments, and providing concrete

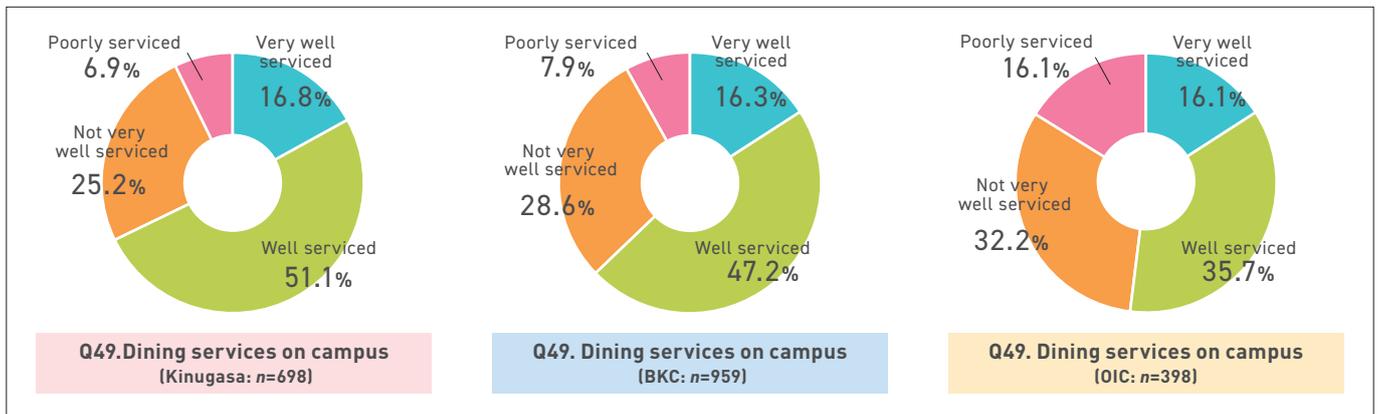
measures for improvement, including schedules therefor. Moreover, the Student Union suggested that because conditions relating to air conditioning management differ from campus to campus, specific improvements be discussed through ongoing campus-level discussion forums.

(iii) Smoke-free campus

As a result of amendments to the Health Promotion Act, the practical approach to smoke-free campus policy has changed from one of across-the-board prohibition to one of prohibition on smoking on university premises except in designated outdoor smoking areas. The Student

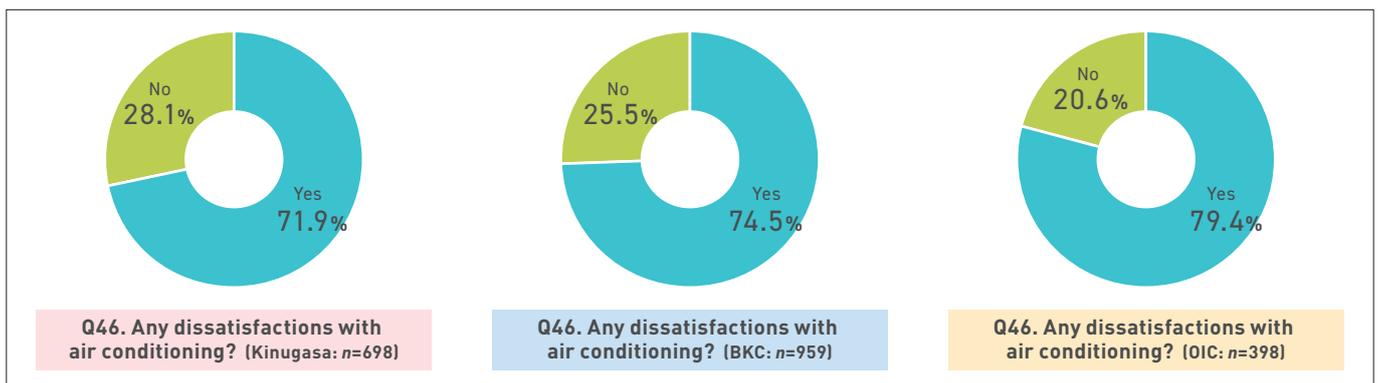


Student Union Survey Q49



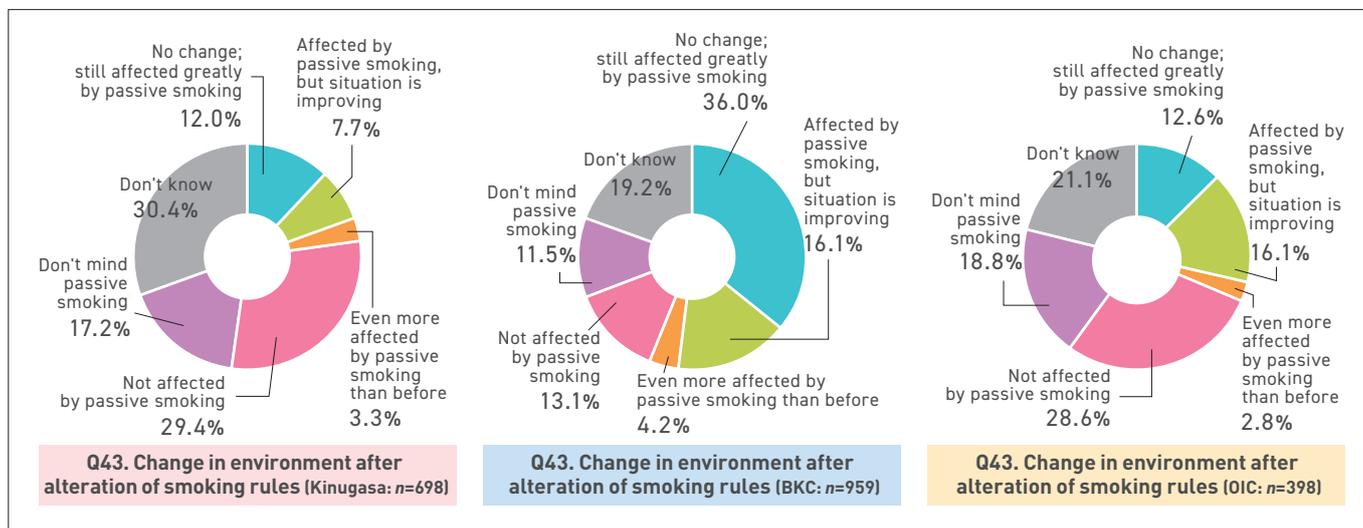
Ritsumeikan University Student Union, Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire, 2019, p.24

Student Union Survey Q46



Ritsumeikan University Student Union, Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire, 2019, p.22

Student Union Survey Q43



Ritsumeikan University Student Union, *Report on Results of the 2019 University-Wide Student Questionnaire*, 2019, p.19

Union expressed its approval of the university's initiatives in this regard as a response attuned to the existence of a number of smoking students on each campus. The Student Union went on, however, to highlight its survey findings that show 40% of students have experienced unwelcome passive smoking on campus, and called for more thoroughgoing measures to prevent passive smoking, provision of information on smoking risks to ensure that no new students take up smoking, and further support to help current smokers to quit.

(iv) Ongoing discussion points in regard to improvement of campus life and environments

Together with the above points that were discussed at the first open session of the Plenary Council, the Student Union called for improvements and ongoing discussion of the points be-



low at the discussion meetings that followed the open session.

- 1) Implement a survey of usage patterns and student needs in relation to air conditioning facilities in the OIC Arena, expansion of extracurricular activity facilities at OIC, and operation of off-campus sporting facilities (Hiragino, boathouse, etc.), and continue to discuss ways of improving facilities for extracurricular activities.
- 2) Implement a survey of usage patterns for shuttle buses, including whether there are times of day in which usage is concentrated and crowding occurs, solicit feedback from clubs that are active across multiple campuses, and pursue ongoing discussions toward improvement of shuttle bus operations.
- 3) Consider the possibility of extending counter hours for users of university facilities, in light of the discrepancy between existing counter opening hours and the times at which extracurricular activities are conducted, which prevents such activities from receiving full support. In addition, consider enabling classroom bookings to be made online, as a means of promoting activities across different campuses.
- 4) Enhance functions for the provision of information relating to extracurricular activities, and consider procuring methods (bulletin boards, digital signage, etc.) for dissemination of information to ensure that information from the university is communicated effectively.
- 5) Ensure that students are fully aware of the different scholarship programs and their aims, as there is a concern that some students may not fully understand the programs because they cannot access the necessary information.
- 6) Conduct a survey of student usage patterns



and pursue ongoing discussions toward alleviation of crowding (increase of service provision) on bus routes used for commuting to campus, installation/relocation of bicycle parking areas, and rules for commuting by bicycle, and pursue ongoing discussions on these issues including the need for improvements.

- 7) Share the progress of the university's work on developing gender and sexuality consultation and support services as confirmed at last year's Plenary Council, as part of building an environment attuned to diversity and inclusion³.

3 Future development of the Academy

The Student Union expressed the view that student fees and financial management policies should be discussed in conjunction with the future development of the Academy, including issues relating to academic affairs and student life. It proposed the following discussion points in this regard.

³ Initiatives pursued by the Academy to promote support for sexual minorities, students with disabilities and the like, in accordance with the Ritsumeikan Charter and with the aim "to become an Academy that generates a multitude of connections while working with others and seeking to understand and respect individual points of view as premised on the range of diversity in society, including diversity among individuals, organizations, regions, countries, religions, customs, cultures, and generations" (quote from the R2030 Academy Vision).

(i) Undergraduate tuition policy

The Student Union declared that it was opposed to the university’s proposals for tuition fees in AY 2020 and 2021. While it did express some understanding of the aim of maintaining current financial (revenue) scale rather than seeking an increase in revenue, it suggested that improvements to academic affairs and campus life had not been presented adequately to compensate for the real increase in tuition levels, and demanded the university provide an explanation that was convincing to students and those responsible for paying their tuition.

Looking ahead to the AY 2021 Plenary Council, the Student Union called for the university to: (1) pursue adequate measures to improve transparency, including disclosure and provision of information on the Academy’s finances, to inform discussion of tuition fees for AY 2022 and beyond; (2) provide workshops, discussion forums,



and other opportunities to learn about financial management based on the information disclosed; (3) pursue concrete initiatives to reduce reliance on tuition revenue in the context of medium- and long-term planning for the period up to 2030 (donations, asset management, etc.).

(ii) Rendering student growth more visible

The Student Union expressed the view that rendering student growth visible helps students gain a more tangible sense of how they are growing as individuals through their curricular classes and extracurricular activities at university. It also expressed the view that boosting the visibility of the processes by which students grow after entering university also helps to convey the university’s appeal. On this basis the Student Union suggested that in addition to surveys of growth in curricular classes such as class questionnaires and learning and growth surveys, concrete steps should be taken to render student growth in extracurricular activities more visible, systems developed to accumulate data on overall student growth through campus life, and measures formulated for the use of such data in learning advisory services for students and the provision of support for progressive learning.

(iii) Creating exciting campuses

The Student Union expressed its agreement with Chancellor Nakatani’s message for the future of the Academy regarding “making our campuses exciting places to be,” and stated its willingness to engage with this theme proactive-

ly. It highlighted the importance of creating up-to-date, learner-friendly environments that ignite students’ intellectual curiosity, and called for the following approaches informed by feedback from students in the Student Union Survey: (1) use the latest technologies to present information on issues such as crowding in parking areas and cafeterias and wait times for buses, as a first step toward the enhancement of campus environments; (2) promote the use of ICT devices in class and a Bring Your Own Device (hereafter “BYOD”) policy in which students bring their own devices to campus for learning and research; (3) develop environments in which students’ intellectual curiosity is ignited through encounters with cutting-edge research conducted at the university.

(iv) Visibility and communication of the Academy’s policies

The Student Union asserted that academic policies, financial policies, and a range of other information about the university is not adequately made known to students, and that this was one reason why students are unable to gain a sense of improvement in their academic pursuits and campus life, which leads to many problems. The Student Union asserted that it was essential for students to have a tangible feeling that the university has changed and continues to change, and called for the university to pursue initiatives that will lead to students gaining such a feeling, as well as disseminating information thereon so that it reaches students.

2. Major Discussion Points tabled by the Graduate Student Council

The Graduate Student Council tabled the following four discussion points: 1 globalization; 2 facilities and infrastructure; 3 graduate student career paths; 4 graduate school tuition fees. Details are as follows.

1 Globalization

The Graduate Student Council raised the issue of the globalization of the university. Specifically, in the context of proactive pursuit of globalization, it asked for the university’s views on matters including how to address problems arising from differences in cultural and social backgrounds and the treatment of languages other than English in support programs for foreign language study. The Council called for action on the following four points specifically.

(i) Improve services for international students at on-campus service counters by taking mea-

sures to prevent misunderstandings resulting from communication in Japanese, which is not the native language of international students.

(ii) Relax the entry conditions for International House, to assist short-term international students accompanied by partners to secure housing (the barriers to obtaining a low-cost housing lease agreement are high in Japan).

(iii) Clarify the university’s position on extending the opening hours of libraries and other research facilities on campus as international student numbers grow, as part of improving research infrastructure to the standard expected by international students (24-hour access to facilities, etc.).

(iv) Offer foreign language classes or e-learning courses to graduate students wishing to study languages other than English.



2 Facilities and infrastructure

The Graduate Student Council called for the university to clarify the status of development of research commons for graduate students and to explain its position on the differences in functions

and conditions in research facilities across the different campuses, including the establishment of the Kyuronkan on the Kinugasa Campus and the OIC Research Commons. It offered the following two examples.

(i) Alleviating seating shortage in joint research rooms in Kinugasa and OIC

The Council asserted the importance of securing research space that can be used on an individual basis by graduate students in the hu-



manities and social sciences, and called on the university to do more to alleviate the shortage of seats in joint research rooms.

(ii) Print station functions on the Suzaku Campus

The Council noted that on the Suzaku Campus, there are currently no printing facilities that can be used by graduate students based on other campuses, or indeed by faculty or administrative staff members. It asked for the university's approach to resolving these limitations on use of printing facilities.

3 Graduate student career paths

The Graduate Student Council expressed its positive evaluation of the enhancement of career path support systems such as the Starting Researcher and Doctoral Dissertation Publication Subsidy programs, and its wish for these programs to be maintained reliably into the future. It

also requested that the spring semester application period for the Doctoral Dissertation Publication Subsidy Program be revised and the procedures for payment of the subsidy be improved (so that funds can be paid directly from the university to the publisher, rather than via the recipient). It also called for an opportunity to discuss the programs and their operation with the university, and for graduate students not seeking to pursue an academic career to be provided with the same level of support as is offered to undergraduate students.

4 Graduate school tuition and fees

The Graduate Student Council expressed its positive evaluation of the decision to maintain graduate school tuition at the current level for AY 2021, and called for this level to be continued in AY 2022 and beyond, as well as for continuation and further enhancement of the career path development programs.

3. Major Discussion Points tabled by the Faculty/Staff Union

In regard to tuition and fee policy for students, the Faculty/Staff Union asserted that the failure to clearly state the actual amount of fee increases in the RS 2019 Special Issue was insincere, and that the university had not demonstrated adequate awareness of the burden of tuition, provided an explanation of the importance and effects of current academic policies and conditions that are to be continued, or of its initiatives

to lower dependence on tuition and fees, such as donations policy. It expressed the view that "in light of the conditions facing students, including diminishing support from households, increased casual work, and the impact of the raised consumption tax rate, any increase in tuition will place a further burden on students and their parents, and must be given cautious consideration. The present proposal entails a real increase in

the burden of tuition, and there is a fundamental problem in advancing it separately from discussions of academic affairs and support for campus life." In relation to future Plenary Council discussions, the Union called for tuition levels to be discussed in meetings with each participant, at Plenary Council Representatives' Meetings, and at other forums prior to public announcement.

4. Position of the Ritsumeikan Co-op (Observer)

The Co-op stated its view that Plenary Council discussions should be informed by the declining trend in household support, growing reliance on casual work income, and other actual conditions

facing students as revealed in the campus life surveys conducted by the Co-op. It stated its intention to participate in the discussions from a standpoint of support for its members, which in-

clude undergraduate and graduate students and faculty/staff members.



Chapter III. University Initiatives in AY 2020 and Beyond (Confirmed Matters)

This chapter sets out the specific initiatives to be undertaken by the university in AY 2020 and thereafter in light of the AY 2019 Plenary Council

discussions. Some of these initiatives form part of the Co-Creation Policy for education and student support (first phase 2019-2020; second

phase 2021-2022), but the focus of this chapter is on the matters confirmed through discussion with the parties to the AY 2019 Plenary Council.

1. Enhancement of Curricular and Extracurricular Learning

Under the R2020 plan, the university has been working to construct the Ritsumeikan Model of Learning to achieve the goal of nurturing “just and ethical global citizens” as stated in the Ritsumeikan Charter. The Ritsumeikan University Student Development Goals were established to give concrete shape to this vision, and initiatives have been implemented to support learning and growth across the entire spectrum of campus life, encompassing both curricular and extracurricular realms.

The idea of gaining an actual sense of learning has become a key theme in discussions of academic affairs at this Plenary Council. This sense becomes the source of energy to tackle new challenges and set new goals. The university will place even greater emphasis on enabling each and every student to lead a fulfilling campus life based on a solid sense that they are learning. The university will do its utmost in collaboration with undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff to create opportunities for students to feel the enjoyment of learning and the outcomes thereof, not only in the formal curriculum but in BBP, libraries, media centers, and also off-campus, including outside Japan and in online spaces. In the course of this work the university will not limit its focus to the results of learning, but also attend to the highly individual processes by which diverse undergraduate and graduate students grow and learn together. Collaboration across different divisions of the university will be strengthened to ensure a sense of consistency from the time of entrance through to graduation/completion, rather than having individual subjects and programs appearing uncoordinated. Below are the university’s specific initiatives in regard to enhancement of curricular and extracurricular learning based on Plenary Council discussions.

1 Revision of course registration and syllabus content

The university and Student Union confirmed that the syllabus is of the utmost importance for students selecting subjects, as it presents information such as class outlines, teaching methods, and methods of grade evaluation. Based on the findings of the Student Union Survey, the university has embarked on improvements to the content of the AY 2020 syllabus, as well as amendments to the information on course registration in the AY 2020 academic handbook. The following improvements have been made to the syllabus: (i) inclusion of links from individual subjects to curriculum maps, course codes, and other features so that

students understand where each subject is positioned in the syllabus; (ii) inclusion of information on class formats and feedback methods under class outline and teaching methods; (iii) inclusion of concrete information on content and volume of class preparation and revision as part of directions for out-of-class study; (iv) inclusion of specific breakdown of the number of homework tasks, ongoing class performance and the like in the section on grade evaluation; (v) inclusion of information on frequency and methods of use of textbooks outside class. In the academic handbook, more detailed explanations will be provided on matters such as the approach to course registration, how to read the syllabus, the importance of learning objectives, and how to check results of pass class evaluation questionnaires.

2 Promotion of BYOD and the use of ICT in class, including manaba+R

The Student Union suggested that classes may not be making full use of manaba+R, the university’s ICT-based learning management system. The university has already been calling on class instructors to make active use of manaba+R, but in response to the Plenary Council discussions, also confirmed that it will encourage use especially of the Content (teaching materials) function that enables instructors to distribute summaries and other handouts through manaba+R and promote active out-of-class study including revision, follow-up in cases of class absence, and class preparation using summaries distributed in advance.

Numerical targets have been set for the usage rate of the Content function in manaba+R: the target is to raise the usage rate across all subjects from the current 34% to at least 40% by AY 2020, and to at least 50% by AY 2022 (targets for different class sizes are at least 75% by AY 2020 and at least 80% by AY 2022 for classes of more than 50 students, and at least 33% by AY 2020 and at least 44% by AY 2022 for classes of 50 or less). To achieve these targets the university will pursue a number of initiatives including utilization of user guides, provision of user support by TAs, requests for colleges with low usage rates to hold user information workshops, and provision of information and support for part-time instructors and class coordinators.

The Student Union also made proposals in relation to the introduction of new ICT to classes, extending beyond the use of manaba+R teaching materials functions. The university has recently conducted surveys of progressive uses of ICT in other universities and senior high schools, includ-

ing flipped classes and writing support, and is now considering adopting measures that would be educationally beneficial as part of the Co-Creation Policy period (from AY 2019 to 2022). As regards the promotion of BYOD, the university will work on developing trial environments and verifying educational effects during the Co-Creation Policy period, with a view to university-wide discussion of effectiveness of BYOD in educational terms and the facilities required for it.

3 Improvement of methods for disseminating information on academic policies and learning outcomes

In the course of the above discussions on improvement of course registration environment and active use of manaba+R, the Student Union pointed out that students were not necessarily aware of (able to see) the variety of initiatives that the university is pursuing. There was a discussion on what could be done to share and cultivate broad-ranging understanding among student of the characteristics of Ritsumeikan’s education, including the Ritsumeikan Charter, and content that demonstrates the processes and outcomes of learning, such as the *Learning and Growth Reports* published online since AY 2019.

For *Learning and Growth Reports* to be published in AY 2020 and beyond, and in the revised edition of *Pathways to the Future* planned for AY 2021, efforts will be made wherever possible to express these matters in readable, comprehensible terms. Continued consideration will be given to more appropriate methods for informing students, including the use of social networking services. In regard to learning in individual undergraduate colleges, college websites, five-way discussion forums and the like will be used to provide explanations of the content and outcomes of initiatives using the educational strengthening budgets allocated for the purposes of enhancing the quality of undergraduate education.

4 Foreign language education and globalization

In the area of foreign language education and globalization, through initiatives including the Top Global University project, Ritsumeikan University has recorded achievements such as becoming the university with the highest number of Japanese students undertaking study abroad. Results of the Learning and Growth Survey suggest that

the next challenge is to ensure that each student graduates with an actual sense of achievement in their foreign language learning. Moreover, the Student Union Survey reveals that the aspiration to acquire foreign language proficiency and international outlook is shared by most students, but that there is great diversity in terms of what students expect to gain from foreign language learning and multicultural experiences.

Discussions of this topic confirmed that in evaluating learning outcomes, there is a need to strengthen analysis from the student perspective with a focus on the processes and tangible experiences of learning. It was also confirmed that BBP should have the status of a venue for all students, regardless of degree of proficiency or intentions regarding study abroad, to practice communication in foreign languages and self-directed foreign language learning in the course of their regular campus life, and to enhance their sense of growth. From now on BBP will work in collaboration with curricular language classes to develop diverse initiatives appropriate for this status. Some initiatives are already underway, such as the introduction of a BBP Mileage program to encourage self-directed study. Preparations are being made for new programs targeting a wider range of students in the next academic year.



BEYOND BORDERS PLAZA in Kinugasa Campus

5 Enhancing Orientation Conductor support for new students

In AY 2019 the university has been providing support for newly-enrolled students in collaboration with the Student Union (including first-year student divisions of university-wide self-organizing associations, student associations and Orientation Conductor groups in each undergraduate college) in accordance with the Framework for Orientation Conductor Activities and Support confirmed at the AY 2018 Plenary Council. Based on these AY 2019 activities, the following two points have been identified jointly by the university and Student Union as challenges for new student support in AY 2020.

- (i) Promote ongoing communication for the purpose of collaboration between colleges and Orientation Conductor groups, through periodical discussions and other forums (including the sharing of policies for implementation of first-year small-group classes in and information on support provided to new students in each college, and the sharing and provision of advice on Orientation Conductor activities)
- (ii) Further enhance training to improve Orientation Conductors' support skills, and hold such training at an earlier stage

Steps have already been taken toward addressing these issues. For example, training for Orientation Conductors and executive officers in support for new students enrolling in AY 2019 was held in the period from mid-December 2018 to February 2019; for AY 2020 new students, the training has not only been enhanced, but is also being conducted incrementally beginning in early December 2019. These kinds of initiatives

to improve support for new students will be pursued on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Student Union (including first-year student divisions of university-wide self-organizing associations, student associations and Orientation Conductor groups in each college). Moreover, to address the tendency to information overload in orientations for new students, the university will continue to discuss with the Student Union ways to coordinate and clarify the roles of Orientation Conductors in supporting new students, including information provision.

6 Informing faculty of the significance and purposes of the Certificates of Participation in Competitive Events

The need to make the system of Certificates of Participation in Competitive Events known to faculty members has been re-affirmed in forums including the Academic Affairs Committee and Student Affairs Conference, and full-time faculty members have been made fully aware of the system through Faculty Council meetings. Part-time instructors who do not form part of the Faculty Council have been provided with a written explanation of the system. However, the university takes seriously the finding from the Student Union Survey that some instructors are still refusing to accept the Certificates, and will continue its efforts to effectively convey information both to full-time faculty members and to part-time instructors who do not form part of the Faculty Council. The university is also developing consultation points for students who have not had their Certificates accepted, and systems for dealing with such cases in line with their specific circumstances.

2. Improvement of Campus Environments and Academy Development

1 Improvement of dining environments

The university takes seriously the Student Union Survey finding that 98% of students feel that campus cafeterias are overcrowded. So far in AY 2019, the university has established an eating space in the Wakebayashi International Plaza, begun planning renovation of the BKC Union Square cafeteria with a view to opening in April 2021, and pursued other ongoing initiatives to alleviate lunchtime crowding temporarily. Going forward, other projects – such as the full-scale renovation of the BKC C-cube, including commercial restaurant tenancies (scheduled to open September 2020), and the establishment of food and beverage tenancies on the first floor of the Wakebayashi Memorial Center – will take shape, and the university will continue to improve the

availability of seating, eating spaces, and menu options. Students are also being involved in the planning of these initiatives through workshops and the like. The university is also looking into other projects based on student needs and usage patterns, including the hosting of convenience stores and cafes on BKC, and procurement of lunch spaces in classrooms and establishment of a mobile vendor lunch street on the Kinugasa Campus. Cashless payment facilities are already starting to be introduced in the OIC and BKC



Wakebayashi International Plaza

Lunch Streets in AY 2019, and the university will continue to encourage other vendors to adopt them.

2 Air conditioning

The university appreciates that the issues related to air conditioning raised by the Student Union are important from the standpoint of safety and security. The university will ascertain whether or not it is possible to address these issues using the existing air conditioning facilities, given that the issues are related to the changes in heat environment (climate) such as the recent extreme heat in summer. In regard to air conditioning in shared spaces other than classrooms, to date the university has treated areas such as corridors as spaces with no or partial (indirect) air condition-

ing, but the university will now pursue improvements to the heat environment in such areas, taking into account the fact that they are being used widely as commons and activity spaces.

The university will implement measures necessary for air conditioning in the Meigakukan on the Kinugasa Campus before the summer of 2020, after confirming functionality and surveying the heat environment. For the OIC Concourse, verification will be conducted referring to the heat index values (WBGT⁴) recorded during AY 2019. The necessary improvements will be made on the basis of this verification, with a view to the summer of 2020.

The university will also use various meetings and other forums to make faculty members aware of how to operate air conditioning facilities in classrooms. Moreover, to cater for both faculty members and students, notices explaining how to make enquiries regarding air conditioning will be installed progressively in classrooms beginning in the fall semester of AY 2019.

3 Smoke-free campus

The university has been implementing measures to prevent passive smoking including the incremental establishment of new quit-smoking support areas that satisfy the requirements of designated outdoor smoking areas under recent statutory amendments, as well as establishing regulations concerning passive smoking prevention, including a prohibition on smoking on campus for faculty/staff. The university also appreciates the seriousness of the Student Union Survey's finding that 40% of students are victims of unwanted passive smoking. It is exploring further initiatives including installing and relocating smoke removal devices in the designated smoking area on the west side of the Igakukan on the Kinugasa Campus, installing panic open⁵ functions on the external stairs of the BKC Co-Learning House I, where smoking is common, and reducing the current two designated smoking areas on OIC to just one. The university will also pursue further efforts to promote the prohibition on smoking on campus for faculty/staff members in accordance with the Ritsumeikan Academic Passive Smoking Prevention Regulations established in June 2019. In addition, in AY 2019 the university began collaborating with the Student Union to provide health education to new students in an effort to stop more students taking up smoking, and this effort will be expanded in the future.

Participants in the Plenary Council had divergent views on the direction of smoke-free campus policies. However, the university appreciates that smoke-free campuses are essential in order to

improve student life and enrich the campus environment, and believes that the university and each participant, faculty/staff members and students must all work together on this issue. The university will increase its efforts toward preventing passive smoking and creating smoke-free campuses.

4 Developing environments where students can encounter cutting-edge research

In the RS 2019 Special Issue, Chancellor Nakatani called for discussion on how to make the university and its campuses "exciting": providing students with regular experience of cutting-edge research and other opportunities that spark their intellectual curiosity, and developing a higher-quality, global education and research environment that motivates students to discover and tackle new challenges. As part of this work, the university has begun collaborating with private companies on the testing of the latest robot technology in transportation and cleaning. Students will become involved in the university's work to create new forms of value in which humans and robots work together. In addition, April 2019 saw the establishment of the Ritsumeikan SDGs Promotion Headquarters, which will be used to disseminate information on and provide support for the education and research activities of university students, affiliated school students and faculty/staff members toward achieving the SDGs⁶.

In the course of Plenary Council discussions, however, it was also pointed out that information on initiatives such as these are not reaching students adequately. The university will pursue ongoing discussions with students on ways of exposing more students to cutting-edge research findings, raising their intellectual curiosity, and enabling them to tackle the challenges facing society.

5 Other improvements in the quality of campus environments

Below are the other initiatives to be pursued in relation to the improvement of campus environments called for by the Student Union and other parties. These initiatives will be improved through the ongoing discussions that take place in campus discussion forums and other formats.

(i) Development of extracurricular activity facilities

The Student Union called for spaces on OIC to be secured for use in activities and exchange among large numbers of students, but it was con-

firmed because as these needs can be met using the existing facilities, the university will take further steps to disseminate information and make students aware of how facilities can be used.

From the standpoint of supporting learning through curricular and extracurricular activities, to date the university has furnished assistance for extracurricular activities in a variety of forms, including the provision and loaning of facilities and equipment, scholarship and subsidy programs, and appointment of advisors and deputy heads. However, the number of students joining and taking part in existing clubs and circles has been declining in recent years, and in AY 2018, the proportion of students participating in extracurricular and self-motivated student groups, which are the existing clubs and circles, stood at 61.4% (source: Student Information System). Meanwhile, results from the AY 2019 New Student Survey and Student Union Survey show that around 70-80% of students are participating in some kind of activities outside the formal curriculum, whether on or off campus. These findings suggest that students view extracurricular activities not only in terms of the conventional club and circle activities, but as opportunities for learning across a wide range of fields including internships, volunteering, and other off-campus pursuits. In future discussions, the university needs to share student information with the Student Union and, based on students' views and activity patterns, and consider the appropriate forms of support and infrastructure development for the university to provide.

(ii) Expanding student services, creating a smart Academy, making campus conditions (crowding, etc.) more visible

In regard to the extension and expansion of facilities usage services requested by the Student Union, the university understands that making it possible for students to apply for use of classrooms and facilities regardless of service point opening hours would help to invigorate existing activities and promote the pursuit of extracurricular activities across different campuses. The university accepts the spirit of this proposal and, while it will not alter the opening hours of facilities usage service points, it will work to improve the extracurricular activity environment for students by introducing an online usage application system that will allow users to apply and check usage status anytime, anywhere. Details of this online system will be formulated with a view to rollout before the end of the AY 2020 academic year.

The university will also consider developing measures in response to the calls for digital signage and greater use of online tools as a way of enhancing the dissemination of information related to extracurricular activities.

With a view to developing more pleasant campus environments, the university will work to

⁴ A measure of the interaction between the human body, ambient air, and heat (heat balance), incorporating three factors with great impact on heat balance in the human body: (1) humidity, (2) sunlight, radiation and other aspects of the surrounding heat environment, and (3) temperature.

⁵ "Panic open" generally refers to the mechanism that enables automatic doors, electric locks and the like to remain open to secure evacuation routes during emergencies, but here it refers to the installation of emergency covers on the thumb-turn knobs of doors leading outside which can be broken to enable doors to be opened and secure escape routes at times of emergency.

⁶ In 2015, a landmark year in the development agenda, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit was held from September 25-27 at the UN Headquarters in New York. Attended by leaders of more than 150 UN member countries, the summit produced the document titled Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda included a declaration and a series of goals as an action plan for humans, the earth, and prosperity. Positioned as the successors of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), these goals comprised 17 broad goals and 169 specific targets, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Source: United Nations, "About the Sustainable Development Goals" (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> viewed January 8, 2020)

make the conditions of crowding in cafeterias, bicycle parking areas, bus stops, and other places on campus more visible to students. It will begin conducting trials in this area during AY 2020 in collaboration with companies possessing the latest technology and experience in IoT.

(iii) Improving inter-campus shuttle bus services

The university operates shuttle bus services to promote self-directed learning across different colleges and campuses. The overall occupancy rate of these services is around 25%. However, student usage is concentrated in certain times and routes, which is the cause of the overcrowding identified by the Student Union. The university will begin addressing this problem by distributing to student users a “crowding map” that clearly identifies times that shuttle buses are crowded and times when they are not. The university has already made improvements to bus operating schedules in response to student feedback, but when finalizing schedules for AY 2020 it will work in collaboration with the Student Union to ensure the schedules are aligned with students’ extra-curricular activity patterns.

(iv) Commuting to campus

As part of its efforts to make enhance learning opportunities, the university has made improve-

ments to the commuting arrangements for each campus in collaboration with local government authorities and transport providers. In preparation for AY 2020, the university is engaged in ongoing negotiations with these authorities and providers regarding increases in service provision, with a view to alleviating the crowding in bus services to the Kinugasa Campus at peak commuting times. These negotiations are expected to reach a conclusion around February 2020.

Moreover, at BKC, the university collaborated with the Student Union to conduct trials in December 2019 to ascertain the appropriate locations for on-campus bicycle parking. Improvements will be considered based on the results of these trials.

(v) Scholarships

The university operates scholarship programs in order to guarantee equality of educational opportunity to the greatest extent possible as a private institution, and to promote diverse learning and growth across curricular and extracurricular realms. Since AY 2012 the university has operated these programs a dual framework of growth support scholarships and financial aid scholarships. The university is currently assessing the outcomes and issues in relation to this framework and looking at developing the next phase of scholarship programs for AY 2021 and beyond. A re-configuration of financial aid scholarships is already underway, in response to the new system

of national government higher education financial aid commencing in April 2020.

The above framework has furnished support for many students through a diverse range of scholarship programs, but the Student Union has suggested that the programs are difficult for students to understand. In the course of the current review of scholarship programs the university will work to design a more comprehensible system as well as disseminating information on the scholarships website and manaba+R, implementing guidance sessions for new students, and continuing to offer program-specific information at appropriate times.

(vi) Developing an environment sensitive to diversity and inclusion

Since AY 2011 the university has gradually been developing an inclusive approach to student support. The development of support and consultation services on gender and sexuality was discussed at the AY 2018 Plenary Council, and discussions on this topic have been advanced mainly by the Division of Student Affairs. During AY 2020 a draft basic policy on gender and sexuality support will be produced and the development of support guidelines discussed. Moreover, the university will draft and seek to implement during AY 2020 a qualitative survey to clarify the actual conditions facing students, as a precursor to the provision of support.

3. Academic Enhancement of the Graduate Schools

1 Globalization

As is the case in undergraduate programs, the internationalization of education in the graduate schools serves to raise students’ appreciation of other cultures, and enables them to achieve new kinds of learning and awareness through interaction with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. In both official procedures and assistance at service counters, comprehensible explanations will be provided for international students whose native language is not Japanese. The university will also strengthen the sharing of information with individual graduate schools and associated divisions in regard to various administrative procedures relating to international students. In response to the calls for 24-hour operation of libraries and other university facilities and relaxation of residence restrictions in international dormitories, present limitations in terms of both environment and facilities will make it difficult to devise a solution in the short term. Nonetheless it is essential to be aware of international standards, and the university will continue to seek improvements in areas that are considerably sub-standard. As regards foreign language education, the focus is usually on English, but the ac-

quisition of languages other than English by Japanese graduate students is also important, and sometimes essential, for research. The Divisions of Academic Affairs and International Affairs will begin by working, in cooperation with the Graduate Student Council, to ascertain the wishes and needs of graduate students and exploring possibilities for making use of BBP and the university’s other foreign language education.

2 Facilities and infrastructure

The university is already well aware of the problems of seating shortage and aging facilities in joint research rooms. When developing facilities and infrastructure, the university will take into account the characteristics of each campus, disciplinary differences in education and research styles, and the preferences of graduate students. To do so it will conduct discussions in appropriate forums such as future development discussion committees that formulate campus-specific infrastructure plans, and progressively advance feasible initiatives to the implementation stage. One concrete measure in the immediate future will be to secure new space on OIC for joint research rooms, which are expected

to be in shortage by April 2020. The differences in user functions for printing services and other facilities are a product of taking into account the wishes of graduate students themselves at the time that usage rules were formulated, but the university will look in to revising these rules if graduate students now prefer to adopt a uniform university-wide approach.

3 Support for job-hunting and career path development

The current suite of career path development support programs has been operated subject to periodical reviews of usage patterns and outcomes and a number of partial changes to improve usability for students and make more effective use of budgetary funds. As a whole, graduate students evaluate the programs highly, but they have also made a number of requests for improvement. The university will institute improvements to the operation of doctoral dissertation publication subsidies in line with students’ requests. The programs as a whole were designed to be operated on a five-year cycle, so the university will work to conduct an overall review in the medium term, from AY 2021 onwards, taking into account discussions with the Graduate

Student Council and the results of various questionnaire surveys.

Support for job-hunting by students completing Master's programs is conducted by the Ca-

reer Center in the same way as for undergraduate students, and will be continued in this way while aiming to achieve further enhancements. Going forward, the Career Center will also work with

the Division of Academic Affairs to consider how to support job-hunting by students completing Doctoral programs.

4. Tuition Fee Proposals and Preparations for the AY 2021 Plenary Council

1 Tuition fee discussions at the AY 2019 Plenary Council

In the course of formulating its policy on tuition fees for the future, the university has continued to consider how best to tackle the three issues on which discussion was carried over from AY 2018 (responding to the tightening of enrollment quotas, responding to reform of various social systems, and the Co-Creation Policy [promotion of learning innovation]). However, the university is not yet in a position to finalize specific policies and financial allocations, and discussion of fundamental issues is set to continue into the future. In light of this situation, the university proposed to maintain standard tuition for the period up to and including AY 2021 at the current level and also to preserve the current tuition calculation method, as well as to maintain the current tuition policy for the graduate schools. It also proposed to lower the admission fee, and to compensate for the revenue shortfall resulting from this lowering, to eliminate, in principle, the special reduction that currently applies to tuition for students in the spring semester of first year.

In response, the Student Union asserted that the discussion of academic affairs and campus life did not adequately reflect the fact that the university's proposed changes would result in a real increase in tuition and fee costs for students, and stated that the university had not provided a convincing explanation to all students. Moreover, the Faculty/Staff Union declared that the university needed to offer an explanation from the standpoint of students, parents, and other parties responsible for paying the fees, and that it would be difficult to provide a convincing account of the proposed changes without sincerely engaging with the realities faced by these parties and allowing them to gain a sense of benefit from the changes.

When formulating its tuition fee proposal the university engaged in rigorous discussion of matters including the financial circumstances of students and parents, and the challenges presented by changing conditions. However, in the wider context of private educational institutions' inevitable reliance on tuition fees for the bulk of their revenue, the university ultimately decided that there is no choice but to maintain current revenue levels even if this means asking students to accept an increase in tuition fees. The university explained

that this decision is based on the conclusion that it is important to pursue continued academic enhancement and development in response to various issues going forward while safeguarding the academic and financial conditions that exist currently. On this basis the university proposed to resume discussion of tuition fee policy for AY 2022 and beyond at the Plenary Council in AY 2021, and the Plenary Council confirmed this proposal.

2 Future Plenary Council plans

As confirmed by the AY 2018 Plenary Council, at the Plenary Council to be held in AY 2021, proposals will be tabled for tuition fee policy for the four years beginning in AY 2022 (i.e., AY 2022-2025; the plan is to conduct a review midway through this period, the details of which are to be determined at a later date), based on the R2030 mid-term plan and basic financial management plans formulated in line with R2030.

The Plenary Council confirmed that in preparation for the AY 2021 Plenary Council, the university will continue to work toward revenue strengthening and cost minimization to reduce its reliance on tuition fee income, and manage finances in a way that acknowledges the burden of tuition as called for by the Student Union. It further confirmed that the university will pursue initiatives to improve the quality of education and campus life in a way that approaches academic and financial management policies as mutually complementary, and endeavor to make learning outcomes, student growth and financial management more visible, with a view to fostering more informed acceptance of the tuition burden.

In AY 2019, the Student Union and university

exchanged opinions regarding how to make financial management more visible. In preparation for the AY 2021 Plenary Council, the parties will pursue further discussions during AY 2020 and explore strategies for information disclosure that will deepen students' understanding of the financial affairs of the Academy.

These activities of the Plenary Council serve as important opportunities for the university to communicate with students, faculty and staff and work toward improving the university and the Ritsumeikan Academy as a whole. The Plenary Council confirmed that one important question to ask when evaluating these improvements is whether or not students gain an actual sense of growth. The discussion of how best to render this growth visible could be seen as one of the distinguishing features of the AY 2019 Plenary Council. In preparation for the next Plenary Council, Representatives' Meetings will be held during AY 2020 and discussions continued among all parties.



January 29, 2020
Chancellor, The Ritsumeikan Trust
Chair, Central Standing Committee,
Ritsumeikan University Student Union
President, Ritsumeikan University Graduate
Student Council
Executive Committee Chair, Ritsumeikan
University Faculty and Staff Union
Executive Director, Ritsumeikan Cooperative (observer)

*7 The current tuition revision formula (which will apply to entrants in the 2020 and 2021 academic years) is as follows:

Tuition for the new academic year = base tuition x (1 + rise in consumer price index)

- * "Base tuition" = annual tuition for AY 2018 entrants, excluding the special reduction for new students.
- * "Rise in consumer price index" = fractional increase in consumer price index (national combined) in immediately preceding academic year as against the average in AY 2015. Not to be applied if rise is less than 0.01 points.
- * In the event that the tuition for the new academic year calculated using the formula is lower than the previous year's tuition, an amount equal to the previous year's tuition will be used.
- * Tuition for the new academic year calculated as above will be halved (and rounded to the nearest 100 yen) to determine the per-semester tuition to be applied to enrollees in the said year.
- * Base tuition for the Graduate School of Business Administration will be credit-based tuition (tuition per credit x 23 credits) + fixed tuition (spring semester + fall semester). The per-credit tuition amount will be 48,000 yen, with any increase in tuition pursuant to the formula added to the fixed tuition amount.