

# Academy Report 2018

## Memorandum of the Plenary Council of the University



Ritsumeikan Style **SPECIAL ISSUE**

### I. Significance and Course of Discussions in the AY 2018 Plenary Council of the University

#### 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 and staff, and the university authorities (the Executive Board of Trustees, of which College Deans are members)—to discuss and engage actively in improvements and reforms to various conditions of education, research, and student 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 Executive Board of Trustees). The Ritsumeikan Co-operative, which provides support for student life, participates as an observer.

The previous Plenary Council was held in the 2016 academic year (“AY 2016”). 2016 was the starting year of the R2020 latter phase plan, a basic plan for the following five years of RU’s operation. The AY2016 Plenary Council was conducted in association with discussion of this plan, and the matters

confirmed therein were compiled in the Memorandum of the AY 2016 Plenary Council of the University. It was also confirmed that an open session of the Plenary Council would be held in 2018, where the university authorities would make a proposal on tuition fees to apply from AY 2019 onward. This open session was held on October 3, 2018, following three Plenary Council Representatives’ Meetings and a total of 32 discussion meetings and other forums.

This Memorandum documents the course of discussions and outcome of deliberations among participants since the AY 2016 Plenary Council, and the topics and concrete initiatives agreed through subsequent discussion.

#### Significance of the 2018 Plenary Council

In AY 2018, in light of the fact that little more than one year had elapsed since the previous Plenary Council, discussions focused on issues currently being addressed, new issues emerging in relation to students, and issues tabled by the various members of the Plenary Council. With a view to further advancement of the initiatives in educational improvement and student support undertaken thus far and formation of a basis for planning the

next ten years of development (2021-2030), the university has recently been exploring the theme of “Learning Innovation that co-creates [collaboratively develops] extension, interconnection, and change in learning.” Initiatives to be pursued under this theme for education and student support in AY 2019 and beyond were also presented and discussed with Plenary Council participants.

In this way, the AY 2018 Plenary

Council has facilitated wide-ranging discussions among undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty/staff members with a view to the R2020 latter phase plan already in progress and the next decade beginning in AY 2021. The Plenary Council has a significant role to play in giving concrete shape to directions and plans for development of the university and its campuses.



# Chapter II. Major Discussion Points tabled by Participants

This chapter sets out the major discussion points presented by each participant in the course of the AY 2018 Plenary Council discussions.

## Major Discussion Points tabled by the Student Union

1

From the standpoint that discussions with the university (Executive Board of Trustees) need to prioritize matters which the majority of students consider in need of improvement, the Student Union conducted its own questionnaire survey of all students (hereafter called the “Student Union survey”) to guide its formulation of discussion points for the AY 2018 Plenary Council. Drawing on the findings of the Student Union survey, the Student Union proposed **1** learning at university (curricular and extracurricular), and **2** campus environments as discussion points. It also put forward observations and arguments from a student perspective on **3** the education and student support policies for AY 2019 and thereafter proposed by the university. Moreover, it proposed discussion on **4** tuition fee proposals and the holding of Plenary Council sessions. Details are as follows.

### 1 Learning at university (curricular and extracurricular)

Firstly, drawing on the results of the Student Union survey and from the standpoint of guaranteeing a safe, secure learning environment, the Student Union called for a review of the standards for determining class cancellation measures in natural disasters and other emergency situations. In connection with these class cancellation measures, the Student Union also demanded that consideration be given to ensuring students’ right to learn, through the provision of appropriate follow-up such as instructors providing students with guidance on out-of-class study in order to compensate for unavoidable absences from class owing to natural disasters and the like.

Secondly, the Student Union demanded that



in light of the relatively low number of hours of out-of-class study by students at RU, teaching practices be pursued in a way that kindles students’ intellectual curiosity and heightens their interest. It also observed that when implementing teaching methods, it is important to create a working environment in which all faculty members can devote themselves to education and research. The Student Union presented these arguments as demands for “educational quality enhancement,” and called for the adoption of objective evaluation standards to verify educational quality enhancement as well as student satisfaction and sense of growth.

Thirdly, after both the Student Union and university re-affirmed their understanding that both curricular and extracurricular fields were important and educationally significant for student growth, the Student Union pointed out that Certificates of Participation in Competitive Events (a system which is used to make allowances for unavoidable class absence in owing to extracurricular activities) are sometimes not accepted by faculty members, and demanded that this situation be rectified.

Fourthly, in regard to facilities used for extracurricular activities, the Student Union called for greater transparency in processes and contact points for repairs and refurbishments to enable the safe and secure pursuit of such activities. It also requested further discussion toward the establishment of essential new facilities.

### 2 Campus environments

In regard to development of campus environments, the Student Union requested that the matters confirmed in the Memorandum of the AY 2016 Plenary Council be given more concrete shape, and that the university continue to furnish opportunities for discussion that reflect the diverse opinions for students at the stage of formulating campus development. The Student Union also called for discussion of the following three points which had high levels of interest among students in the Student Union survey.

- (i) Discussion of improvements in user amenity and turnover rates in cafeterias, and diversification of dining environments other than cafeterias.
- (ii) Further discussion of the four concrete initiatives proposed by the university in relation to smoking on campus – (1) educate and inform all members of the Academy regarding the harm caused to health and society by smoking, (2) protect non-smokers from the health hazards of passive smoking, (3) inform and educate to ensure that nobody takes up smoking, and (4) support smokers’ efforts to quit – and the use of campus-wide no-smoking policy as a means to achieve these goals.
- (iii) Discussion of the possibility of extending facility access hours in competition periods, in association with the flexible use of air-conditioning facilities and provision of indepen-

dent training environments.

The Student Union asserted that initiatives for campus-wide no-smoking are an especially important issue connected with the current student profile. It pointed to the finding of the Student Union survey that large numbers of students feel that they are affected by the hazards passive smoking, highlighting the inadequacy of no-smoking initiatives taken by the university to date, and pointing out that there is little prospect of eliminating such hazards simply by continuing the present initiatives. Moreover, the Student Union suggested that one approach to overcoming this problem of passive smoking may be to establish dedicated smoking facilities on campus.

### 3 Education and students support policies for AY 2019 and thereafter

In regard to the education and student support policies presented by the university, the Student Union expressed opinions on nine points, as follows.

- (i) While it is important that the new learning and portfolio functions of manaba+R that are currently under consideration be utilized effectively for student support, there is concern over whether this may impede the diverse and free-ranging activities of students.
- (ii) The Orientation Conductors organizations under the umbrella of the Student Union have played roles in various developments over many years, but in terms of the enhancement of first-year education for newly enrolling students, problems have also emerged. The Student Union requests that a working group be established jointly by the Student Union and university to pursue further discussion of the future activities of Orientation Conductors.
- (iii) In regard to improvements in the general education curriculum, the Student Union would like subjects to be established in areas such as those associated with daily living issues, and areas attuned to the fourth industrial revolution, which is a social transformation of the industrial structure fueled by technological innovations such as IoT and AI.
- (iv) The Student Union calls for further advancement of diversity and inclusion policies, with a view to welcoming students and alumni of diverse backgrounds, including LGBT and those facing economic hardship.
- (v) The Student Union calls for disclosure of specific information concerning operation of programs that expand students’ fields of learning, such as community engagement and experience abroad.
- (vi) The Student Union calls for the provision of a systematic curriculum, including Japanese language subjects, for students undertaking educational programs in an English language medium.
- (vii) The Student Union asks the university to promote pro-active use of Beyond Borders Plaza (BBP).

(viii) While the number of inbound international students is increasing, the university does not have adequate provision for such students to gather information on issues such as studies and housing and seek advice on concerns in their daily lives. The Student Union calls for the establishment of a system of international student support coordinator to provide consultation across language barriers.

(ix) The Student Union demands expansion of the range of subjects offered to students undertaking educational programs in an English language medium.

#### 4 Tuition fee proposals and the holding of Plenary Council sessions

The Student Union responded positively to the decision to keep tuition fees for AY 2019 enrollees the same as current levels. In regard to the university's proposal to secure budgetary resources essential for education and student support projects in 2019 and beyond by revising lines in the current strategic budget, the Student Union expressed concern that this approach may lead to a diminishment of quality in education and the environments that support it, and also pointed out the need to utilize leftover budget funds effectively. The Student Council also asserted that approaches to tuition fee proposals and the holding of Plenary Council sessions are interrelated themes, and that if the Plenary Council is to be held with a view primarily to sustainable advancement of the Ritsumeikan Academy and enhancement of its education and research, a preparation period of at least two years is essential. On this basis, the Student Council demanded that at the AY 2019 Plenary Council, the university should table proposals for tuition fees for new enrollees across multiple years. It also called for continued dialogue on the question of how best to conduct forums for discussion of tuition fee proposals.

#### Major Discussion Points tabled by the Graduate Student Council

2

The Graduate Student Council tabled four discussion points: 1 increasing diversity of graduate students, 2 graduate student career paths, 3 development of environments such as commons, and 4 tuition fee proposals for AY 2019 and 2020. Details are as follows.

#### 1 Increasing diversity of graduate students

The Graduate Student Council raised the themes of "diversification through globalization" and "diversification including working and ma-

ture-age students." It called for provision Japanese and English dual-language services to cater for the increasing number of international graduate students. Moreover, it pointed out that there were challenges in catering for international students who required support not only within campus but in their daily lives. To date such support has been provided on a voluntary basis by Japanese graduate students, but the issues have come to light recently as a result of reversal of the ratio of Japanese to international graduate students. It also pointed out the problems of housing for graduate students enrolling from overseas and bringing their partners with them.

The Graduate Student Council has also been calling for the establishment of childcare facilities as part of the enhancement of learning environments for working and mature-age students. It commended the AY 2018 establishment of childcare facilities on campus, and expressed a desire to collaborate in their operation.

#### 2 Graduate student career paths

The following three points were raised.

- (i) The Graduate Student Council observed that the Teaching Assistant (TA) system is an important part of the university's education and research activities, as well as functioning as a form of financial support for graduate students, and called for the scope of TA work to be extended (to include such things as undergraduate student advisory and thesis supervision assistance).
- (ii) In regard to scholarships and career path support programs, the Graduate Student Council called for the establishment of subsidy and support programs to boost graduate students' motivation for research, the expansion of programs such as subsidies for doctoral students to attend academic conferences, and the extension of financial aid for graduate students enrolled in excess of the standard completion period. Furthermore, it called for graduate students' opinions to be taken into account when planning these new programs and altering existing ones, and for the operation of new programs to be fixed for multiple years after launch.
- (iii) As ongoing concerns, the Graduate Student Council called for the expansion of postdoctoral fellow (PD) posts for those completing doctoral degrees, and improvement in the research environment for PDs, pointing to issues such as the inadequate provision of desks and other facilities.

#### 3 Development of environments such as commons

The Graduate Student Council identified the issue of inadequate seating compared to the number of graduate school students at Kinugasa and Osaka Ibaraki Campuses, where

Research Commons are located. It demanded opportunities for diverse graduate students to be involved in discussions concerning new developments and changes in the Research Commons and other elements of the research environment for graduate students.

#### 4 Tuition fee proposals for AY 2019 and 2020

The Graduate Student Council evaluated the university's proposal concerning tuition fees for AY 2019 and 2020 positively, and requested that the current tuition fee levels be maintained in AY 2021 and thereafter. In regard to the Plenary Council itself, while the Graduate Student Council welcomed the progress on resolving graduate student-related issues through the ongoing discussions since AY 2016, it also called for the Plenary Council to be held once every few years, as a certain time is required in order to evaluate the matters confirmed at each Council.

#### Main Issues tabled by the Faculty/Staff Union

3

The Faculty/Staff Union expressed its intention to participate in Plenary Council discussions from the position of supporting undergraduate and graduate students, consistent with the historical development of the Plenary Council. In relation to the issues in educational quality improvement raised by the Student Union, the Faculty/Staff Union pointed out that the current working environment for university faculty members did not afford sufficient time for research activity, and that class instructors were being employed on a fixed term basis in order to enable stable provision of a fulfilling academic environment. Moreover, it demanded full disclosure of financial information in order to pursue discussion of Academy finances based on the discussion of academic affairs.

#### Main Issues tabled by the Ritsumeikan Co-operative (observer status)

4

The Ritsumeikan Co-operative (observer) expressed its intention to participate in the Plenary Council from the position of supporting its membership of undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty/staff members, informed by the historical progress of the Plenary Council and the Co-operative's understanding of student conditions.

# Chapter III. University Initiatives in AY 2019 and Beyond (Confirmed Matters)

This chapter sets out the specific initiatives to be undertaken by the university in AY 2019 and thereafter, in light of the discussions of the AY 2018 Plenary Council.

## Enhancement of Curricular and Extracurricular Learning

1

The Plenary Council engaged in discussion and negotiation toward the enhancement of learning in curricular and extracurricular spheres, informed by the discussion points tabled by the Student Union and the issues raised by the Student Union concerning the university's proposed policies for education and student support in AY 2019 and thereafter. It was confirmed that the challenge of rendering the quality of curricular and extracurricular learning more visible and achieving improvements was a crucial theme directly connected to the "qualitative enhancement of education" proposed in the R2020 first and second phase plans, and that discussion of this issue would continue in the lead-up to the AY 2019 Plenary Council.

### 1 Class cancellation measures in emergency situations

Documents titled Operational Arrangements for Class Cancellations, and Future Challenges, Applying for Special Arrangements for Classes Unavoidably Missed Due to Natural Disasters and Applying for Special Arrangements for Classes Unavoidably Missed Due to Natural Disasters have been approved by the Academic Affairs Committee and made available for all faculty members on the educational support website from October 25, 2018. These clearly state the basic policy of giving utmost priority to protecting life and physical safety. While retaining make-up classes as the basic approach, steps have been taken to ensure that class cancellation measures do not impede the attainment of learning goals by students. Moves already in place include making decisions on cancellation on the previous day. The gist of the Operational Agreement, which sets out detailed policies for each type of events, is made known to students through the Academic Handbook and other means. Going forward, discussions will be held toward amendment of the Ritsumeikan University Regulations on Curricular Classes in line with actual results. The Division of Academic Affairs Division will cooperate with the Office of Public Relations, Division of General Planning and Development, Division of General Affairs, and other organs on effective ways to communicate measures to students.

### 2 Improving educational quality

In order to stimulate students' motivation for

curricular learning, it is essential to raise the quality of education, by developing classes that cultivate students' interest and improving the time they spend on studies outside class. Class questionnaires and learning and growth surveys suggest some increase in motivation for self-directed study and active engagement in class, and an improved sense of growth overall, but the Plenary Council confirmed that further consideration must be given to how to verify these effects and share the results with students. The university accepts students' suggestions on the need for further improvements in teaching, and is implementing organized faculty development (FD) activities to expand the range of active learning classes, promote the use of ICT, and encourage careful explanation of the significance and positioning of each individual subject. The university will strengthen its efforts to comprehend students' realities, undertake multi-faceted verification of the extent to which academic reforms contribute to student' growth and satisfaction, and work to create classes that promote self-directed learning.

### 3 Expansion of portfolio functions

The existing manaba+R system already allows students to review their learning history. The aim of expanding portfolio functions is not to restrict the free activities of students, but to make use of students' learning history and other accumulated data in the provision of student support and career development support. Expanded portfolio functions will enable authorized faculty members to view students' records and provide appropriate individualized learning advice. However, these records are a form of personal information and therefore pose some challenges in terms of rights to control student information. It will be necessary to develop systems to prevent unauthorized use. The Plenary Council confirmed that when implementing expansion of portfolio functions in practice, careful consideration will be given to matters such as the scope of faculty members given access rights and limitations on the range of information that is viewable.

### 4 Enhancement of Orientation Conductor activities in first-year education

Discussions in regard to enhancing the activities of Orientation Conductors in first-year education were pursued in a working group involving the Student Union and university, which was established in response to a request from the Student Union. These discussions led to the codification of such matters as significance and purposes in a document titled Memorandum on Orientation Conductor Activities. Moreover it was confirmed that a Framework for Orientation Conductor Activities and Support would be used as the basis for Orientation Conductors to advance activities mobilizing the characteristic

features of each college, and for the university and its colleges to develop concrete support measures. These are confirmed as matters of agreement between the Student Union and university, and further details are provided at the end of this Memorandum.

### 5 Reforming general education

Discussion forums were held with the Student Union to exchange opinions on the 2020 general education reforms currently being developed. The university is conscious of the importance of addressing new fields of industry and daily life. The university considers it important that general education covers subject matter that is not only thematic, but also universal in nature, and it confirmed with the Student Union that thematic content would be developed in classes such as general education seminars.

The 2020 general education reforms seek to render learning progress in general education more visible through the introduction of curriculum maps, clarification of the objectives of general education within the curriculum of each college, and the labelling of subjects as "introductory," "developmental," and "advanced." Through active learning, problem based learning (PBL) and interactive classes, the university will consider ways to promote developments in teaching that enable students to learn in a self-directed manner, and share these through FD. It will endeavor to incorporate and improve coverage of state-of-the-art fields and fields connected with everyday life through development of new subjects and subject design in the general education reforms. It will also consider the implementation of questionnaires in general education seminars and the like in order to ascertain the themes students wish to study.

### 6 Enhancing extracurricular and self-directed activities

The university and Student Union are of the same opinion regarding the need for the university, as part of its efforts to achieve the educational objectives set forth in the Ritsumeikan Charter, to position extracurricular and self-directed activities as opportunities for student growth, and not simply to expect results from them, but also to furnish support that includes the process of working collaboratively with others toward the attainment of a goal. This agreement is premised on achieving a balance between curricular and extracurricular pursuits.

From this standpoint, the university will advance further initiatives to ensure that all faculty members are fully aware of the objectives and operation of the Certificate of Participation in Competitive Events – the system to cater for unavoidable absences from class owing to participation in matches and competitions – as a way of responding to students' motivation for independent and self-motivated learning. In the



event that a student is absent from class, the basic principle is that the student should do his or her utmost to follow up on the missed class (obtain class materials, etc.), enlisting the support of other members of the class or club as required. When requested by the student, the class instructor should, to the extent considered necessary, provide the student with guidance and support in forms such as: (i) provision of materials, (ii) confirmation of the matters covered in class and explanation of key points, (iii) instruction on self-study requirements before the next class, and (iv) notification of other important matters.

In addition, when developing facilities and equipment related to extracurricular activities, priority will be placed on guaranteeing safety and security. The Division of Student Affairs (Office for Student Affairs and Office for Athletes and Sports Services) will be the one-stop contact for students when issues arise in relation to such facilities and equipment. This will provide the basis for the provision of support for enhancement of activities and the development of activity environments.

## Advancement of International Student Support and Other Forms of Internationalization, Inclusive Student Support, and Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives 2

### 1 International student support and other forms of internationalization

In the fall semester 2018, a total of more than 3,200 international students (including short-term students) were studying at RU. This represents around 10% of the total student population across the university. The proportion is as high as 20% in some colleges, and the number of graduate schools with high international student ratios is also growing. These students include some 200 short-term study abroad students per year. The Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting therefore engaged in discussion on enhancement and strengthening of academic and living support for international students.

International student support activities at the International Centers and Offices of International Affairs on the three campuses begin in January and February with information sessions and pre-departure orientations for successful applicants in South Korea, and continue through information sessions on various administrative procedures and scholarship programs, support for making friends on campus, and guidance sessions for students residing in dormitories (including emergency drills). Moreover, the offices coordinate with orientation sessions held at college and graduate school level, and provide support for the initial stages of university life in collabora-

tion with the peer support activities undertaken by international student support groups.

International students are supported in their studies by assistance with understanding the curriculum and other forms of learning support at the early stages, and in their everyday lives by assistance in dealing with accidents and incidents and introductions to counselling services. For international student support matters beyond the scope of mutual assistance among students themselves, in addition to the services within the university, introductions are provided to public authorities, NPOs, and volunteer organizations.

As the volume of consultations increases, it will be necessary to first to achieve an understanding of the essential nature of the problems specific to international students and their causes, and make appropriate connections with consultation points that can resolve those problems (specialized consultation points for education and research, healthcare, counselling and the like; services for the growth area of international student job placement support, etc.). As part of developing a university-wide structure for international student support and enhance support provision through one-stop service points addressing a wide variety of international student needs, a system of International Student Support Coordinators has been instituted from AY 2019.

Expanding and strengthening curricular subjects taught in an English-language medium is another important challenge, and the Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting also confirmed the need for Japanese language learning support for international students.

In addition, opportunities are provided for on-campus international exchange through the BBPs established on the three campuses, and for language acquisition through the Center for Language Education. Through cross-cultural exchange subsidies and other programs, the university is promoting the use of the BBPs as a base for a more vibrant range of activities and exchanges by Japanese students, degree-seeking international students, short-term international students, and the various student organizations that support them. Community engagement activities and overseas experience are also important motivations for student learning, and the university will continue to support them.

### 2 Promoting inclusive student support and initiatives in diversity and inclusion

RU has recently been developing inclusive student support structures. Among the initiatives pursued in this regard are the AY 2011 establishment of the Special Needs Support Office (which supports not only students with developmental problems but also those with anxieties and concerns), the AY 2015 transfer of the Health Center to the Division of Student Affairs, the AY 2016 transfer of the Disabled Students Support Office to the Division of Student



Affairs and its amalgamation with the Special Needs Support Office, and the AY 2017 launch of the Student Success Program (SSP). Adding to these achievements, the university will pursue further initiatives as follows, taking into account the changing social climate and the advancement of diversity and inclusion, which was also called for in the AY 2018 Plenary Council discussions.

#### (1) Strengthening support for students' independence and growth centered on the first year of enrollment

The enhancement of first-year education was a major point of discussion in the AY 2018 Plenary Council. First-year education refers to a comprehensive program of education offered across curricular and co-curricular realms, and including not only learning at university but also adjustment to student life. Supporting a smooth transition from high school to learning and life at university is a major challenge, and in order to meet it the university will expand the SSP and enhance support systems for student facing hardship and those seeking a more enriched student life. It will also bolster support for training and reflection for the Orientation Conductors who provide support for first-year students and promote their activities with an understanding of first-year issues and the diversity of the student body, as well as supporting the growth of Orientation Conductors themselves.

#### (2) Building consultation and support structures for diverse students

The development of consultation and support structures in the area of gender and sexuality is an issue which needs to be tackled in an organized manner, and the university is aware of the calls for initiatives to extend beyond individual consultation and include awareness-raising among all members of the RU community, students and faculty/staff members included. Structures to address this challenge will be developed within the Office of Student Affairs.

In regard to support for students with disabilities, the 2016 enactment of the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities has led to greater understanding and awareness in society, and the Disability Resource Center is providing support to a growing number of students. There is also a need for consultation services in English, and the Disability Resource Center's systems will be strengthened in order to address such needs.

### (3) Expansion of financial aid scholarships

The current system of scholarships and subsidies has been operating since AY 2017. Financial aid scholarships to the value of all or one half of second semester (fall semester in AY 2018) tuition fees have been disbursed to all applicants from households with annual salary income of 3.29 million yen or less. While the overall budget for this scholarship program is one of the highest in Japan, there are calls for even further expansion of aid for students in financial hardship. The university will therefore take whatever steps possible to raise scholarship reciprocity rate among students from households with salary income of 4 million yen or less. Specifically, there are several types of scholarships related to this category of financial aid, and it is anticipated that through flexible allocation within the overall budget framework, it will be possible to raise the number of recipients. In AY 2019, therefore, efforts will be made to boost the reciprocity rate by improving operational methods.

The approach to be taken in AY 2020 and beyond will be formulated in the first half of AY 2019, taking into account developments in the national government's current discussion of programs to reduce the cost burden for students in higher education.

### Qualitative Improvement in Campus Environments

3

#### 1 Development of campus environments

The university is currently working to improve the quality of campus environments in line with the R2020 latter phase plan. The Plenary Council confirms that future campus development activities will uphold the principle that "the Executive Board of Trustees shall pro-actively introduce a variety of methods for the central Student Union and a variety of other students to participate and engage in the processes of university and campus development" (Memorandum of the AY 2016 Plenary Council of the University) and take into account comments and opinions of numerous students. Specific opportunities that will be continued into the future include the campus-level discussion meetings held since AY 2015, and the thematic discussion meetings held since AY 2017 on topics requested by students.

#### 2 Improvement of dining environments

The university will continue to take into account student feedback and work with the Ritsumeikan Co-operative to improve the turnover rate in cafeterias and make classrooms available at lunch times. Discussion meetings

on Kinugasa Campus raised the problem of lunchtime overcrowding in the western area of campus as a result of the renovation of Seishinkan (from September 2019). As was done during the Zonshinkan renovation, a program of "lunch classrooms" in the Yoyokan will be established and made widely known to students. This will be a temporary measure associated with the Seishinkan renovation. On BKC, initiatives are being planned to diversify the dining environment, and discussions are being held with students in the course of developing these plans. On OIC, there are plans to include dining services and a 200-seat space on the first floor of the Yasuhiro Wakebayashi International Exchange Center (tentative name) scheduled for completion in September 2019.

Dining environments are a day-to-day concern for students and attract strong interest. With this in mind, the university will continue to hold campus discussion meetings and pursue initiatives in collaboration with the Ritsumeikan Co-operative.

#### 3 Campus no-smoking policy

As pointed out by the Student Union, there have been some inadequacies in campus-wide no-smoking initiatives. The university takes seriously the findings that large numbers of students are victims of passive smoking on campus, and will make further efforts to eliminate passive smoking entirely. The priority in AY 2019 will be on initiatives to improve quit smoking areas and to eradicate smoking outside these areas, including possibilities for their relocation. There was also harsh criticism of smoking on campus by faculty and staff members, and further steps will be taken to ensure such smoking is eliminated entirely. The Student Union and university had different opinions on the approach to campus-wide non-smoking policy in the AY 2018 Plenary Council, and this will be a topic of continued discussion going forward.

#### 4 Exploring possibilities for extension of facility opening hours in examination periods

Issues relating to the use of campus facilities are being considered in campus discussion meetings in conjunction with ascertaining specific needs and student conditions.

Discussion has focused especially on calls for extended opening hours in examination periods, with specific demands and conditions raised at each campus discussion meeting. Informed by these discussions, the university will take the following steps. On Kinugasa Campus, the university confirmed with the Student Union that there is a need to ascertain the occupancy of common spaces on campus at different times of day during the exam period and the lead-up thereto. These conditions will be surveyed in the AY 2018 fall semester exam period

and measures instituted accordingly. On BKC and OIC, the university accepts the Student Union's assertion that there is an acute shortage of self-study space for students during exam period, and will be making some classrooms and other facilities available for student use on a trial basis in the AY 2018 fall semester exam period.

### Enhancement of Graduate School Education

4

#### 1 The TA System

The TA system has played a notable role in education and research activity at RU to date, and the Plenary Council discussed a possible expansion of the scope of TA duties.

The TA system contributes to graduate students' career development by providing them with teaching experience, as well as financial support. It is also an important initiative from the standpoint of peer support, and efforts are being made to give many graduate students the opportunity to experience work as a TA. The university is looking at ways to expand opportunities for TA activities along existing lines, including announcement of TA recruitment periods on the website, open calls for general education TAs on manaba+R, and placement of TAs in undergraduate subjects with close academic and research connections. As part of these efforts, forums such as graduate school admission guidance sessions will be used to provide careful explanation of TA opportunities and help students in stand-alone graduate schools find TA opportunities in undergraduate classes connected with their areas of specialization.

#### 2 Enhancement of career path support programs

The Plenary Council's discussions focused on four points: establishment of subsidy and support programs linked to research motivation and expansion and improvement of conditions for post-doctoral positions, expansion of existing programs such as subsidies for conference attendance in doctoral programs, financial aid for students enrolled in excess of the standard completion period, and, when making alterations to programs, discussing them with graduate students and operating the programs on a fixed basis for multiple years.

The Plenary Council confirmed that existing initiatives funded under the Fourth-Phase Career Path Development Support Program (2016-2020) and the graduate school enhancement policies identified as priorities in the R2020 latter phase plan (academic conference scholarships, research activity promotion grants, basic skills

enhancement support, doctoral dissertation publication subsidies, English-language academic article submission support, etc.) would be implemented consistently, mainly through the Graduate School Career Path Development Office. Starting Researcher and Starting Assistant Professor (formerly Specially-Appointed Researcher and Specially-Appointed Assistant Professor) systems are to be established, and post-doctoral positions expanded. Advancement of students to stand-alone graduate schools not affiliated with an undergraduate college and from one college/graduate school to another (diagonal advancement) is also considered important from the standpoint of graduate student career paths, and the university will offer more opportunities for students to access information on advancement within the university.

The Graduate School Career Path Development Office will continue to implement these programs, reviewing them at the end of each academic year and making minor operational adjustments with the aim of increasing their effectiveness and usability for graduate students, and utilizing budgetary resources more effectively. Specifically, through effective reutilization of budgets not fully expended, restrictions on academic conference scholarships will be loosened, a new program will be established to subsidize the costs of taking English language proficiency tests, and doctoral dissertation publication subsidies and Research Assistant (RA) programs will be expanded. When making adjustments to the operation of these programs, the university will look at ways of providing opportunities for discussion with graduate students in addition to the Plenary Council itself. Each of the programs has been designed with a five-year span in mind, and reviews of programs as a whole with a medium-term perspective will be conducted following discussions in the Graduate School Reform Promotion Committee and ensuring that graduate schools keep their students informed of developments. In regard to the request for financial support for graduate students enrolled in excess of the standard completion period, the university is currently aware of this issue and will work to strengthen support enabling students to complete within the standard period.

### 3 Research environment (Research Commons, etc.)

Discussion focused on the inadequate seating in Research Commons on the Kinugasa and Osaka Ibaraki Campus in comparison with the numbers of graduate students on these campuses, the need to incorporate graduate students' opinions when developing the Research Commons and other parts of the research environment, and the etiquette among visitors inspecting the Research Commons.

The university is aware of the insufficient space in Research Commons. In light of the limited space available, rather than thinking me-

chanically about seat numbers, the university is conducting reviews and improvements with a view to the ideal Research Commons environment for each campus, taking into account disciplinary differences in styles of education and research. On the Osaka Ibaraki Campus, classrooms have been deployed as joint research spaces on a provisional basis. The Plenary Council confirmed that graduate students would be consulted fully when initiatives such as these are planned. Thoroughgoing steps will be taken to ensure that visitors and their guides properly understand the purposes of the Research Commons and observe appropriate etiquette when visiting them.

### Tuition Proposals and the AY 2019 Plenary Council

5

#### 1 Tuition discussions at the AY 2018 Plenary Council

In preparing this round of tuition policy proposals, the Executive Board of Trustees repeatedly discussed how best to respond to changes in social conditions such as the tightening of enrollment quota management and the government's work style reforms, as well as education and student support policies for AY 2019 and thereafter. These changes affect student fees, personnel expenses, and other factors fundamental to revenue and expenditure, and present huge challenges to address within current the financial structure of private higher education, especially when there is no prospect of correction of either the international disparity in public expenditure levels or the gap between government expenditure on national and private institutions. Addressing these challenges specifically is expected to lead to a situation in which the university cannot maintain a balance between revenue and expenditure. Such a balance is one of the financial management performance indicators under the R2020 latter phase plan, and also has an impact on the university's public reputation.

Based on awareness of these medium-term challenges, and taking into account the burden of tuition on students and the major impact that the above challenges will have on university management and financial affairs, the university (Executive Board of Trustees) decided that there was a need for further discussion and consideration of specific response initiatives and the financial measures associated with them. In light of both this need and the aim of meeting enrollment quotas in the graduate school, which is an important academic challenge connected with tuition fee policy for graduate students, the university proposed to maintain (make no change to) the current tuition policies for both undergraduate and graduate students. This proposal only covers enrollees in AY 2019, so it was further proposed, and confirmed by the Plenary

Council, that tuition for undergraduate students in AY 2020 and thereafter will be discussed at a separate Plenary Council to be held in AY 2019.

#### 2 Toward the AY 2019 Plenary Council

The Plenary Council confirmed that at the next Plenary Council in AY 2019, proposals will be made for tuition policies for the subsequent two years: AY 2020 and 2021. This takes into account the fact that these years mark the transition from R2020 to R2030, and enable alignment of tuition policies with medium-term plans. The Plenary Council also confirmed that these new policies would be made known to students in an Academy Report to be released around June 2019. It also announced that tuition policies for AY 2022 and thereafter, which will reflect the medium-term R2030 plan that starts in AY 2021 and the basic financial management policy based thereon, will cover the four-year period from AY 2022 to 2026, will be proposed in AY 2021 and discussed at a Plenary Council at that time. Furthermore, it announced the intention of conducting an interim review in this four-year period, with the contents of this review to be subject to further consideration going forward.

The Plenary Council also confirmed that the AY 2019 Plenary Council will continue the discussion of issues that remain outstanding from the AY 2018 Council, including the Student Union's calls for rendering qualitative improvements in learning (curricular and extracurricular) more visible, and issues relating to campus environments, such as campus-wide no-smoking policies.

As a proposal for tuition levels applying up to AY 2020 enrollees was tabled at the current Plenary Council, the question of whether or not to align graduate student tuition policy proposals with those for undergraduate students (for example, by extending the current graduate student tuition policy for a further year) will be given further consideration in the lead-up to the AY 2019 Plenary Council, in conjunction with other graduate school policies (scholarships, development of faculty personnel organization).



■ January 30, 2019

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)



## Memorandum on Orientation Conductor Activities

(January 30, 2019)

### Preamble

The origins of Orientation Conductor activities can be traced back to the support activities for new students, including guidance on finding housing and hints for student life, initiated autonomously by the Student Union (Student Council) in the 1960s, and followed by self-directed class activity support provided before and after basic seminar classes. With a view to offering further support for the self-directed initiatives of the Student Union (Student Council), the AY 1991 Plenary Council confirmed that the university would establish and provide assistance for Orientation Conductor activities as a formal system of support for new students. These activities were to offer support across three areas: student life, learning, and self-government. Orientation Conductor activities could be said to form the basis of the peer support activities which today involve around 10% of all Ritsumeikan University undergraduate students and are one of the university's distinguishing features.

As society changes, academic activity becomes more sophisticated (including the establishment of new undergraduate colleges), and the student body becomes more diverse, Orientation Conductor activities have diversified in line with the characteristics of each college. At the same time a range of problems have emerged, both major and minor. In response to these recent developments, the Student Union and university authorities decided to hold discussions on approaches to first-year education support and Orientation Conductor activities as part of the Plenary Council of the University held in the 2018 academic year. In the course of these discussions, it was confirmed that first-year education is a "comprehensive educational program across curricular and extracurricular

realms, cultivating study skills, study motivation, and self-awareness as a university student, with the aim of achieving a smooth transition to university education and student life prior to specialist education" (Japanese Association of First-Year Experience at Universities and Colleges, 2018), and that the university is expected to provide a variety of learning and other experiences to first-year students, spanning both curricular and extra-curricular realms and including adjustment to university student life.

Based on these discussions, the Student Union and university hereby confirm the following basic principles as preconditions to the conduct of first-year education support and Orientation Conductor activities.

### Confirmation of Basic Principles of Orientation Conductor Activities

(1) Orientation Conductor activities are a form of peer support activity contributing to first-year education support at Ritsumeikan University and designed to aid first-year students' transition to university student life and self-governing activities, as well as to support their adjustment to learning at university in line with the conditions of their college of enrollment.

(2) Orientation Conductor activities are conducted autonomously by organizations positioned under college-level Student Councils, but as they contribute to first-year students' learning and growth, colleges afford them benefits such as provision of time and venues. It is therefore essential for the university/colleges to discuss and confirm the objectives and content of Orientation Conductor activities with the Student Union and Orientation Conductor organizations periodically in forums such as five-

way discussion meetings. Moreover, these discussions are to include confirmation of the scope of Orientation Conductor activities, including whether or not they are to be involved in curricular education, and activities are to be undertaken in line with this confirmation.

(3) Orientation Conductor organizations in each college are expected to establish their own rules as self-governing activity groups, formulate activity policies and plans each academic year, and be managed to enable proper pursuit of activities in line with objectives. Moreover, the students participating in these organizations are expected to develop knowledge and attitudes appropriate to peer supporters.

(4) The university is expected to place importance not only on the learning and growth of first-year students, but also on the learning and growth of Orientation Conductors themselves, who are current students of the colleges in which they pursue their activities, and to support their self-directed learning and growth. For this purpose the university shall provide training and assistance for Orientation Conductors.

(5) In order for Orientation Conductor organizations to achieve their goal of supporting first-year students and to pursue their activities appropriately, such organizations shall conduct themselves in an autonomous and self-directed manner, pursuant to the framework in the Addendum to this document. This framework is not intended as a manual designed to standardize Orientation Conductor activities, but rather as a basis for Orientation Conductor organizations to autonomously improve the quality of their activities, and as a fundamental framework for support, evaluation and verification by the university and its colleges.

## Framework for Orientation Conductor Activities and Support

(January 30, 2019)

### (1) Establishment and review of rules

Orientation Conductor organizations in each college shall, as self-governing activity bodies, establish and review their own rules as required.

Rules shall set forth matters including: (i) organization name; (ii) purposes; (iii) organization structure; (iv) joining, withdrawing, and suspending membership; (v) executive officers; (vi) decision-making organs (meetings); (vii) management (activity policies/plans).

### (2) Production of activity policies/plans

Orientation Conductor organizations in each college shall prescribe the goals and objectives of their own activities. In order to share these with members and college authorities, they shall also produce activity policies and activity plans.

Activity policies/plans shall include the following content, taking into account the Memorandum on Orientation Conductor Activities and the organization's own rules.

- (i) Activity goals (Goals / Issues relating to first-year students (student profile))
- (ii) Activity content and specific objectives (Content of activities and objectives for each one / Objectives for Orientation Conductors themselves)
- (iii) Activity plans (Recruitment plan / Training plan / First-year student support plan)
- (iv) Activity rules
- (v) Reflection and self-assessment

### (3) Discussion between Orientation Conductor organizations and colleges

Colleges and Orientation Conductor organizations (organization heads and other members of the executive) shall hold meetings periodically to discuss and confirm activity policies and plans, share progress and challenges in relation to activities, engage in reflection and self-assessment, and improve and enhance activities.

### (4) Discussion between the Division of Student Affairs and Orientation Conductor organizations

The Division of Student Affairs and Orientation Con-

ductor organizations (organization heads and other members of the executive) shall hold meetings around once a month on each campus to discuss activity policies and plans, share progress and challenges in relation to activities, provide an opportunity for reflection and self-assessment, and mutually improve and enhance the activities of Orientation Conductor groups.

### (5) Information provision by the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs

Each academic year the Division of Student Affairs and Division of Academic Affairs shall provide colleges and college Orientation Conductor organizations with reference materials on the status of first-year educational support and orientation conductor activities, and the results of questionnaire surveys of Orientation Conductors and first-year students.

Information on activities of high quality shall also be shared as examples of good practice.

### (6) Support for Orientation Conductor activities by the Student Union

The Student Union shall support Orientation Conductor activities including those set out in (1), (2), and (9), and attend the meetings in (4).

### (7) Support for Orientation Conductor activities by the university/colleges

The university and its colleges shall, in line with the individual conditions of each college, determine whether or not to furnish support for Orientation Conductor activities in forms such as provision of time (class discussion meetings, sub-seminars, etc.), venues (classrooms, Seminar House, etc.), and activity subsidies (Learning Community Subsidy for First-year Education Support Activities).

The Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs shall furnish training programs for the acquisition of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required of peer supporters, as well as training on issues such as providing support for student life and managing an organization, at appropriate times pursuant to requests from college Orientation Conductor organizations.

Colleges shall conduct training and guidance on course registration methods and other topics within the scope of the activities that each college supports, pursuant to requests from Orientation Conductor organizations and taking into account Orientation Conductor plans and activity details.

### (8) Activity cycle

The activity cycle shown below shall be followed with the aim of securing adequate preparation and training time. The activity cycle for Orientation Conductor activities for fall enrollees shall be coordinated separately.

Up to October: Formation of Orientation Conductor organizations (executives)

From October: Recruitment of Orientation Conductors (organization members)

From February: Preparation for first-year student support

From April: Provision of first-year student support

From July: Reflection and self-assessment of activities (also fall semester activities in some colleges)

### (9) Reflection and self-assessment

On the basis that self-directed and autonomous reflection on activities contributes to learning and growth of both organizations and individuals, Orientation Conductor organizations in each college shall at the end of their activities conduct reflection and self-assessment, and compile the results thereof in reports.

### (10) Information-sharing

Orientation Conductor organizations, colleges, and the Division of Student Affairs, shall engage in close mutual communication, reporting, and consultation on Orientation Conductor activities. Especially in the event of trouble, they shall report and share information promptly and discuss approaches to achieving a solution.

### (11) Amendment

Amendments to this framework shall be made on the basis of agreement between the university and the Student Union, following discussion by the Student Affairs Conference.