

Progress of Discussions in the AY2015 Plenary Council

In the Plenary Council for the 2015 academic year (AY2015), the council's constituent members—the Student Union, Graduate Student Council, Faculty/Staff Union, and university management (Executive Board of Trustees), together with the Ritsumeikan Co-operative as an observer—have examined the status of improvements and reforms in academic affairs and student support since the 2011 Plenary Council, and pursued a series of discussions on the shape of the university in 2020 and beyond, the Ritsumeikan Academy's future plan (R2020 latter phase plan), and issues in areas such as academic affairs, internationalization, scholarships, student life, and campus infrastructure development. The progress of these discussions is summarized in the Outline of Major AY2015 Plenary Council Discussions, below.

The original Plenary Council schedule required the Executive Board of Trustees to formulate tuition and financial management policies for the R2020 latter phase plan in light of discussions surrounding R2020 and the Plenary Council's deliberations on priorities for student support in the areas of academic affairs and student life. These policies were to be tabled in an open session of the Plenary Council in December 2015. However, the university considered it necessary to engage in more careful discussion of the R2020 latter phase plan and tuition and financial management policies, and therefore resolved to extend the planning process until mid-March and release proposals for the Academy's future and tuition and financial management policies at that stage. For this reason, the Plenary Council open session originally scheduled for December was postponed, and an expanded Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting was instead held with the Chancellor in attendance. At this meeting, representatives of Plenary Council constituents such as the Student Union and Graduate Student Council made requests for the university to keep in mind the significance of Ritsumeikan's system for reflecting students' opinions in university development, to pursue their future planning with a sense of responsibility for developing academic affairs in a manner that contributes to student learning, research and growth and takes into account the weight of tuition, and to continue to engage in sincere dialogue responsive to the demands of students. University management is keenly aware of its responsibility for the Plenary Council's postponement as result of delays in the Executive Board of Trustees' deliberations, and is committed to pursue its planning based on discussions with other constituents of the Plenary Council.

At the Second Expanded Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting held on December 16, discussions focused on the following matters: (1) diversification of the university as a whole, learning in multicultural environments, and development of human resources to take active roles internationally; (2) learning quality enhancement; (3) learning in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular settings; (4) development of safe, secure and comfortable campus environments; (5) policy on scholarships and subsidies; (6) globalization challenges in the graduate schools; (7) the fourth phase of the graduate school career path formation support system; (8) development of commons (see the attached document: Summary of Proceedings of the Second Expanded Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting for AY 2015).

The university will present proposals for financial management for the R2020 latter phase,

including tuition policy for AY2017 and beyond, by the end of the current academic year, and, taking into account the outcomes of the Second Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting, will engage in careful discussion with students and other Plenary Council constituents with a view to improving academic affairs and student life at Ritsumeikan University. The university hopes that all students will participate actively in discussions as they continue into the 2016 academic year.

Outline of Major AY2015 Plenary Council Discussions

Date	Proceedings
May 21 (Thu)	Administrative negotiations
May 25 (Mon)	Financial Affairs Division discussion meeting (Student Union, Graduate Student Council)
June 18 (Thu)	First Joint Discussion Meeting (Student Union): Issues relating to internationalization
June 24 (Wed)	Explanatory meeting for Graduate Student Council on AY2016 tuition
June 26 (Fri)	Explanatory meeting for Student Union on <i>Ritsumeikan Style (RS)</i> academy bulletin special edition
July 3 (Fri)	Joint Discussion Meeting (Student Union): Issues relating to academic affairs, student life, campus development, and financial management (tuition/scholarships)
July 13 (Mon)	OIC Campus Discussion Meeting
July 20 (Mon)	Administrative negotiations
July 23 (Thu)	Financial Affairs Division discussion meeting (Graduate Student Council)
July 31 (Fri)	First Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting
September 15 (Tue)	Kinugasa Campus Discussion Meeting
September 25 (Fri)	Explanatory meeting on RU2020 Latter Phase Plan and scholarships policy for AY2017 and beyond
October 9 (Fri)	Third Joint Discussion Meeting (Student Union): Issues relating to R2020 Latter Phase Plan, scholarship programs for AY2017 and beyond, etc.
October 13 (Tue)	BKC Campus Discussion Meeting
October 29 (Thu)	Administrative negotiations with Student Union
November 9 (Mon)	Fourth Joint Discussion Meeting (Graduate Student Council): Issues relating to the graduate school
November 19 (Thu)	Administrative negotiations
November 26 (Thu)	Explanatory meeting on development of Kinugasa and BKC campuses (Student Union and Graduate Student Council)
December 8 (Tue)	Expanded administrative negotiations
December 10 (Thu)	Administrative negotiations
December 16 (Wed)	Second Expanded Plenary Council Representatives' Meeting
January 20 (Wed)	Administrative negotiations

Glossary of key terms

■Plenary Council

Based on the principle of self-government by all constituents, Ritsumeikan University has a four-party consultative body known as the Plenary Council, comprising the Executive Board of Trustees, Student Union, Graduate Student Council and Faculty/Staff Union (with the Ritsumeikan Co-Operative participating with observer status). The Plenary Council discusses various matters relating to university management, including academic improvements and provision of support for student life, tuition and financial management of the Ritsumeikan Academy, project planning for the Academy, and other matters that are considered necessary. In AY2011, the Plenary Council held an open session at which all members of the four constituent parties could attend, and confirmed in writing the policies for academic affairs, student life, tuition and financial management over the subsequent four years. In addition to the full Plenary Council sessions, several representatives from each of the four parties meet several times a year for discussions at Representatives' Meetings and Expanded Representatives' Meetings.

■Administrative negotiations

Administrative negotiations are held among the four parties (Student Union, Graduate Student Council, Executive Board of Trustees, Faculty/Staff Union) in order to co-ordinate points for discussion in advance of Plenary Council meetings.

■Division Discussion Meeting / Joint Discussion Meeting

Division Discussion Meetings involve discussing concrete demands with a specific division, and exchanging opinions regarding day-to-day improvements. (Examples include the Financial Affairs Division Discussion Meeting that deals with tuition, the Student Affairs Division Discussion Meeting that deals with student life, and the Academic Affairs Division Discussion Meeting that deals with academic matters.)

In AY2015, a total of four Joint Discussion Meetings involving several divisions of the university were also held, in response to the tabling of demands and discussion items in areas such as internationalization and future plans for the university that extended across the whole spectrum of academic affairs and student life.

■Campus Discussion Meeting

Campus Discussion Meetings are attended by students and relevant university divisions associated with each campus, and involve substantive exchange of opinions on issues and demands specific to the campus in question.