

**USJI Week Seminar 1: New Directions of US-Japan Higher Education  
Cooperation in the Globalizing World: In the aftermath of the Great East  
Japan Earthquake**

Thursday, September 8, 2011

4:00pm-5:30pm

Ambassador Room, The Embassy Row Hotel

Organized by the U.S.-Japan Research Institute

**Welcome Remarks**

**Professor Katsuichi Uchida**, *President, USJI/ Vice President, Waseda University*

Prof. Uchida opened the session by welcoming the audience and introducing the U.S.-Japan Research Institute as well as USJI Week. He then introduced Dr. Kazuo Kuroda who is the moderator and presenter for the seminar, and handed the floor to him.

**Moderator & Presenter**

**Dr. Kazuo Kuroda**, *Professor, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University/Dean, Center for International Education, Waseda University*

Dr. Kuroda thanked Dr. Uchida for his remarks, and started by introducing the three commentators for the seminar. He then briefly spoke about the Seminar's background, explaining that its purpose is to commemorate the long standing collaboration on higher education between the United States and Japan and to serve as a policy recommendation to the two governments on this particular subject.

The first policy recommendation that Dr. Kuroda makes is collaboration in higher education for global issues. He cited US cooperation with Japan after the recent earthquake as a recent example of strong collaboration between the two countries, and expressed his gratefulness to the US as well as other countries in their kind assistance. He notes that such events highlight the importance of global partnerships, as well as the need to further establish organizations and policies that strengthen bilateral relations and international cooperation.

Dr. Kuroda argues that higher education plays an important role in international cooperation for global issues. In pursuing higher education collaboration, countries can cooperatively generate new knowledge and human capacity to solve global problems as well as increase the quality and quantity of the research on such issues. He recommends that more funding should be put into improving the connection between scholars and research organizations to sustain and increase joint research and education efforts.

Dr. Kuroda proposes that this can be done through establishing national bilateral policies, funding relevant organizations, and setting institutional commitments. He believes this would facilitate the development of higher education collaboration in addressing global issues.

The second part of Dr. Kuroda's recommendation is in regards to the Asian regional framework of higher education. He observed that intraregional cooperation in higher education within Asia has been enhanced in recent years, as can be seen through the increasing student mobility within the area. Dr. Kuroda mentions the Southeast Asian Ministers' of Education Organization, ASEAN + 3 Higher Education Policy Dialogue, and the Collective Action for the Mobility Program of University Students (CAMPUS Asia) as proof of ongoing inter-governmental effort in promoting cooperation in the region.

Dr. Kuroda explains that in a survey he recently conducted at 300 leading universities in Asia, North America was identified as the most active and important partner for Northeast Asian Universities. This demonstrates the need for North America to be included in further dialogue with Asia. He recommends that North America and Asia, facilitated by Japan, should establish parallel policies to re-link cooperation in higher education between the two regions.

Thirdly, Dr. Kuroda points out the fact that there is rapidly increasing academic mobility globally. He then laments that, despite this global trend as well as a long history of academic exchange between the US and Japan, there has not been a strong commitment between the two nations to promote education exchange in the past decade. The number of Japanese students in the US has dropped in this period, even falling behind countries with lower total population such as South Korea and Taiwan. The number of US students studying in Japan may have increased steadily, but it is still not significant.

Dr. Kuroda makes his final recommendation, suggesting that there needs to be a renewed commitment in promoting US-Japan mutual academic exchange. He supports systematic reforms and changes for this purpose, something just as if not even more so important than securing funding and resources. He concludes by summarizing his recommendations, and passes the floor to Dr. Shiraishi.

### **Commentators**

**Dr. Saya Shiraishi**, *Professor, The University of Tokyo*

Dr. Shiraishi begins by thanking Dr. Kuroda, explaining that she will provide comments for his presentation. She first expresses her thanks on behalf of the Japanese people for the help and assistance of so many people in the world during the great Japan earthquake. This event had shaken Japanese self-confidence in being a good student of western modernity and a good teacher to the Asian community greatly. She observes that, however, this presents an opportunity for Japan to review this position.

Dr. Shiraishi explains that there might have previously hierarchical view towards the world learning system, where top universities that stood at the top would disseminate knowledge to universities in lower tiers. She believes that it is time for us to discard this old perception, and

makes note of Dr. Kuroda's point regarding the need to institutionalize the education exchange model.

The current model of student exchange, which Dr. Shiraishi terms the 'MECCA Pilgrimage Model', where students would travel to a central point to obtain higher education then return to their origins and attempt to apply the knowledge they had received. She moves on to discuss the new model, OHENRO Pilgrimage Model, which involves circulatory student movement between universities. This model allows for more flexibility and diversity for students who wish to seek higher education globally. While some have pointed out the language barriers of such a model, Dr. Shiraishi believes that it could be a good opportunity for increasing cultural exchange through the use of language centers.

Dr. Shiraishi concludes her comments by proposing a CAMPUS Pacific model, which extends on the CAMPUS Asia that Dr. Kuroda had previously mention and would include North American in the equation.

**Dr. N'dri Assie-Lumumba, *Professor, Cornell University***

Dr. Assie-Lumumba expresses her thanks to Dr. Kuroda and the USJI for the opportunity to participate in the event. She explains that her comment on Dr. Kuroda's presentation is that higher education globalization brings circulation and knowledge production, and she will elaborate on this.

Since ancient times higher education has attracted and compelled people to travel far across lands, which shows its essence of globalization. Modern efforts to advance communication technology have also added another dimension to this global essence, according to Dr. Assie-Lumumba. The second dimension that she wishes to speak more on is the issue of higher education convergence at one location in creating and facilitating a global world. The third dimension is that the notion of 'brain drain' or the loss of skilled human capital through large-scale emigration is now being replaced with 'brain circulation' especially thanks to advancements in information technology. Her final point is the critical issues of bilateral frameworks in the context of global cooperation.

Dr. Assie-Lumumba cites examples in programs and meetings that have served to bring together academics and policy makers, showing that there are ways in which this could be used to advance policy development matters. Another example that illustrates the global connecting capacity of higher education is the Africa-Asia University Dialogue Basic Education project, which operates on the idea of self-reliance. Many African and Asian institutions have strengthened partnership through joint researches and the exchange of researchers and students to expand research and knowledge accumulation.

While bilateral frameworks are two way models, countries are often involved in many international and global relations that complicate the situation. Dr. Assie-Lumumba hopes that, in developing a bilateral model for higher education cooperation, Dr. Kuroda could extend his research by framing more consistently it into a global context.

**Dr. James Williams, Associate Professor, George Washington University**

Dr. Williams begins by expressing his gratefulness to at the seminar, and passes his condolences to the people affected by the recent Earthquake in Japan. He notes that this disaster is also a chance for not only Japan, but also other countries such as the US to learn from.

Dr. Williams observes that in spite of the fact that universities are institutions at the center of globalization, the transnational movements of people and ideas, and knowledge-based economic and social development, neither universities or governments nor really the international community are not quite aware of how to maximize this position. He wishes to discuss a few concrete ways in which there could be cooperation on this topic.

Student exchange is the main form academic mobility according to Dr. Williams and is an institutional part of international studies. He laments, from a binational perspective, the drop in Japanese students in the US, and wonders if there are methods with which we could reenergize motivation for students in Japan to come to the US and institutionalize cooperation in higher education. At the same time, from a global perspective, the expansion of destinations for Japanese students studying abroad, especially in Asia, and increases in the numbers of international students studying in Japan are positive indications of increasing internationalness.

Dr. Williams explains that academic exchanges have a number of benefits, including the strengthening of relationships between nations. This is likely a primary reason the US government funds such programs. Academic exchanges assume a number of different forms, including faculty exchange, collaborative research, three and four-way institutional agreements, various sorts of collaborative degree programs, and so forth, most of which we are only beginning to make use. To do requires meeting funding challenges, softening institutional barriers, and expanding our imagination.

For example, he notes that faculty exchange occurs reasonably often, but does not significantly contribute one's academic career. He recommends that faculty exchange should be integrated at an institutional level into the academic career ladder as a way to facilitate further exchange.

Further on this topic, Dr. Williams proposes that a three way model for institutional arrangements and collaboration relationship would benefit the development of universities greatly. While funding for this might be difficult to secure in such times, he believes that it could be achieved with strategic thinking. He concludes that many opportunities exist, what we truly need is a strategic vision to connect these ideas.

## Questions and Comments

### **Question:**

- Might underdeveloped institutional frameworks and a lack of sustainable jobs in Africa explain why there is a brain drain situation in the region? There is also a similar brain drain in Japan for women. In regards to the increasing number of students from Japan to Asia, what are the purposes of their studies and how can you evaluate the outcome or quality of their studies?
- The speakers elaborated on international cooperation systems for increasing educational cooperation between the US and Japan, but would other domestic reforms such as shifting the shuukatsu period or providing incentives to students to not be hikkikomori also assist with this?
- To Dr. Kuroda, what are the most difficult challenges for institutions to pursue your recommendations and would you have any strategies or ideas to help achieve your goals?
- If any of the speakers might be aware, what are the reasons that might have caused this decline in Japanese students coming into the US?
- For exchange students studying in Japan, there are many administrative difficulties such as being barred from certain classes or in aligning schedules due to the differences in semesters between the US and Japan. This might not be a question that could be answered immediately, but what more can be done at the institutional level to make studying abroad more attractive for the two countries?

### **Comments:**

Dr. Williams: There are a number of mechanisms and such in place, but there are also many gaps and untapped opportunities for developing relationships among universities. He wonders if there might not be space for organizations such as USJI to further promote this, such as low cost ways of facilitating cooperation between institutions. Not all barriers are expensive or require much funding, and there might be inexpensive opportunities that to launch creative initiatives. Perhaps we should devote some systematic thinking about the current and possible opportunities.

Dr. Assie-Lumumba: There are many Africans living abroad who are willing to give up vacation time and are more than eager to volunteer in Africa. They would all like to dispel the negative images about Africa. The question is how you prepare to receive such returnees who would like to contribute to the region. For brain drain of women in Japan, this is something that Japanese society must work on together to overcome. E-Learning is an area of great interest, but you can never replace face-to-face education. However, the technology is there and we can utilize it supplement the academic system.

Dr. Shiraishi: Japanese universities, especially Todai which sits at the top of the Japanese academic system, must finally and completely internationalize itself to promote students into going overseas. In regards of the women brain drain, Dr. Shiraishi believes that it is not a pressing matter. While it may be brain drain at a national level, it is also an opportunity at an individual level.

Dr. Kuroda: He notes that the increasing tendency for Japanese students to study in Asia instead of going to the US is something that he must look further into. One explanation for the decline might indeed be an inward looking tendency, thanks to an increasing educational quality in Japan. Dr. Kuroda believes that there are many issues in higher education that must be tackled from the standpoint of a globalizing world. This is also the path to improving cooperation between the United States and Japan.