

Universities are usually very careful when launching new admission pathways that may attract a student population they never previously accepted. College admissions play an important role in Japan, as the culture dictates that colleges have the responsibility to take good care of students and ensure that they complete their studies in four years. Indeed, the college attrition rate is low in Japan—just 2.65% according to a 2012 government survey. To ensure that they are able to fulfill this social compact, universities select students with great sensitivity and care.

Although universities may open a special IB admissions track, there is increasing concern as to whether IB students can fit in the Japanese college education context. This has become a major motivation in the government's push to reexamine teaching and learning approaches in secondary and tertiary education, using IB as a tool to promote change.

#### MOVING FORWARD

The government has been a key driver for educational reform in Japan, attempting to bring about a variety of changes in Japanese secondary and tertiary education via various projects. The IB 200 Schools Project has brought many challenges to the current Japanese educational culture. However, depending on how those challenges are dealt with, they could turn into opportunities for Japan to transform.

IBDP is known as a program for college readiness. There have been many discussions on how students can be prepared for college education, but only rarely have educators discussed how colleges could be made ready for students. The student population is becoming more diverse; as they enter college, these students bring with them different expectations of teaching and learning. It is time for colleges to consider how their educational patterns should be changed in response to the changing student population.

Though this article has focused on IB students in particular, the argument could easily be applied to the overall college student population. By attempting to better meet the needs of IBDP students, universities could enhance the satisfaction of not only international students but also Japanese students, improving the educational experience and outcomes of all. ■

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## Japan: World-Class Universities for Social Innovation *Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You...*

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A new world-class university policy was introduced in Japan in 2017. The government selected six out of 86 national universities to be Designated National Universities, all with long research traditions—this list includes the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Tohoku University, the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Nagoya University, and Osaka University. These chosen institutions have been given a “distinguished” legal status, different from all other national universities that already experience significant advantages in national government funding—they are quite distinct from the 90 local public universities and 604 private universities in Japan. Designated National Universities are expected to be competitive with leading universities worldwide. What then can the national government do for them and what are these selected universities expected to do?

#### NOT THE FIRST ATTEMPT

This is not the first attempt at creating world-class universities in Japan. In fact, Japan is recognized for having been actively engaged in world-class university policy through a series of governmental projects and excellence initiatives: for example, 21st Century Centers of Excellence (2002–2009), Global Centers of Excellence (2007–2014), Global 30 (2009–2015), and Top Global Universities (2014 onward).

In contrast with emerging institutions in neighboring China, Singapore, and South Korea, Japan's flagship universities have gradually slipped down in the rankings over the last two decades. Two reasons are always highlighted: the slow pace of internationalization of universities and society as a whole and the shortage of financial investment. While the two first Centers of Excellence projects mentioned above were funded by direct investment to research clusters, impact was not significant, partly because the basic infrastructure of science and technology at Japanese universities had already been established before the launch of these projects, namely, in the 1990s after the economic

culmination of the country. From 2007, the World Premier International Research Centre Initiatives targeted only a few research institutes with much more concentrated investments. It is still too early to measure the exact impact of these initiatives on research and universities and on the country as a whole.

The Global 30 project ultimately supported 13 universities because of policy changes after the financial crisis of 2008. The Top Global University project now supports 13 universities in their efforts to be globally competitive, and another 24 universities as leading examples of internationalization. These projects are not funding research excellence but are enhancing the internationalization of universities through key performance indicators such as employing international researchers and enhancing the English language proficiency of students and staff.

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When the Top Global University project was launched in 2014, the government declared that the policy's goal was to propel 10 Japanese universities among the top 100 in world rankings. Indeed, the profiles of flagship universities in Japan, for example in terms of the proportion of international students and staff, appeared low in global university rankings, and remain poor even now. The slow internationalization of Japanese universities largely reflects the slow internationalization of the whole education system and of the labor market within this country.

**AT THE CORE OF NATIONAL INNOVATION POLICY**

The Japanese government is now trying to use research universities as a key driver of national economic development and promotes an integrated economic and financial policy linked with industrial innovation. Top research universities are now attracting attention not only from the ministry of education, culture, science, and technology, but also from cabinet office departments such as the Council for Science, Technology, and Innovation and the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy.

Compared with previous excellence initiatives and internationalization schemes, the selection of Designated National Universities focuses much more on an institution's capacity to set a vision and plan and implement changes

that will enable it to achieve world-leading status. Applicant universities were asked to present a self-assessment of their strengths and weaknesses; of their achievement of goals based on benchmarks within good practice and performance measurement; of their strategies to implement leading research and human resource development; and of their contributions to the economy and to society by addressing global and national challenges. The guidelines stipulated that the universities cover topics such as human resource acquisition and development, improvements to research capacity and university governance, strengthening financial foundations, international collaboration, and links to the wider society.

**...ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY**

Takeshi Sasaki, chair of the Designated National University project review committee, has expressed concern about the vulnerable financial foundation of even top research universities in Japan. His wish is to see public support expanded and assistance from society significantly increased, in particular through donations from the business community and individuals, with backing from the government.

However, in reality, the new "designated" status does not automatically guarantee drastic financial advantages. The amount of public funding directly linked to the scheme constitutes only a small portion of the universities' running costs, at around 0.2 percent of their annual income. Rather, the government expects the selected universities to engage more actively in income generation from nongovernmental sources, for instance from philanthropic donations and university–industry cooperation. The underlying message is that developing management capacity within universities is the only sustainable pathway for them to achieve world-class status, and that institutions are required to contribute directly to the development of the national knowledge economy. Here, the government's message to the universities seems to be, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," as stated by US President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural address. In that respect, the proposal and implementation of this particular scheme has stimulated a systemic discussion about how a university can establish, and contribute to, a virtuous circle between its development and its socioeconomic impact.

In contrast to the officially expressed vision, cabinet level support for the policy appears to strengthen governmental intervention in university governance and management—adding contribution to economic development through industry relations and innovation to education and research as a core function of a university. This new challenge for aspiring world-class universities—the expectation of generating their own income—appears to be a risk-taking

policy, in light of the uncertainty surrounding the complex mechanism linking long-term knowledge activities at the universities and industrial commercialization. Of particular note: the Japanese business environment is largely under the dominance of global enterprises typically based in the United States. It is becoming apparent that universities will have to struggle and fight to gain their financial autonomy and, ultimately, define their new identity. ■

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## The Recent Crisis in South African Universities

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In 2015–2016, South African universities experienced the most intense and violent student protests in a century of higher education. Most analysts attribute the widespread campus protests to two factors: the alienating cultures of historically white universities, associated with the movement labelled #RhodesMustFall (#RMF); and the discriminatory cost of higher education, which gave rise to a movement known as #FeesMustFall (#FMF).

The #RMF protests started in March 2015 at South Africa's premier institution of higher education, the University of Cape Town (UCT), when undergraduate student Chumani Maxwele set off a wave of protest by throwing human excrement on a statue of the nineteenth-century British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes—a statue that paid tribute to a man who came to embody the dreams, aspirations, and superiority complex of imperial Britain, leading to the colonial dispossession and oppression of Africans. Rhodes was a British imperialist who acquired vast mineral wealth and created the colony of Rhodesia. It was the same Rhodes who provided funding for the creation of UCT as well as Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape. After the #RMF protesters succeeded in having the statue of Rhodes removed from campus, the movement's demands expanded further to the transformation of institutional symbolism (such as artworks), the hiring of more black professors, and what was called “the decolonization of curriculum.”

The #FMF revolt against high tuition fees started in October 2015 at another major research institution, the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg. Students protested against the growing costs of tuition, which limited access to higher education and left graduates with considerable debt. The students eventually “won” their case as the besieged, corrupt, and populist President of South Africa unexpectedly declared—against the advice of two official commissions—that higher education would be free for poor students.

### THE COSTS OF THE STUDENT REVOLT

These two streams of “fallist” protests (Rhodes and fees) merged into a powerful student movement that gave a sense of urgency to the transformation of the seven historically white universities and to the opening up of access to higher education for poor students, especially in the eight historically black universities. But the protests came at a huge cost to South African institutions. Fires raged across campuses as buildings were set alight, including libraries, computer centers, student residences, and administration buildings. Estimates of the damage run from R 800 million to R 2 billion (\$55 million to \$137 million). Weeks of lecturing time were lost at several universities, leading to emergency arrangements for teaching and tight security for examinations. Staff and students were traumatized by the intensity of the protests, which included constant disruptions of classes and much physical intimidation, as well as by the actions of the police and security forces called in to contain the disturbances.

There were many personal tragedies. A petrol bomb was lobbed through the window of a vice-chancellor's office. A tragic suicide of a leading medical scientist grabbed national attention. This professor was also the first black dean of his faculty of health sciences and his death was attributed by his family to the personal trauma he suffered at the hands of protesting students, who occupied his office and insulted him. At another university, a worker died as a result of an asthma attack after students discharged a fire extinguisher in an enclosed space. A policeman and security guard were trapped inside a booth when it was set alight by students. At UCT, one security guard was severely beaten with an iron rod, and another's skull was fractured when a protester dropped a brick on his head from four floors above.

At the major universities, international contracts and much-needed revenue were lost as students from universities abroad cancelled their study visits to South African campuses. Leading academics, including vice-chancellors, went into retirement or took jobs at universities abroad. And relationships among academics; between academics