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Proposals for the Internationalization of Kyushu University

from

SHARE-Q International Advisory Group (SIAG)

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1. About SIAG

SIAG is an advisory group consisting of international faculty members at Kyushu University, appointed by SHARE-Q (the Strategic Hub Area for top-global Research Education – Kyushu University). SIAG aims to discuss and formulate recommendations on all matters relating to life and work as an employee of Kyushu University, particularly with a view to promoting the internationalization of the University.

SIAG focuses on two types of activities:

- a) The organization of Faculty Development sessions in English (FDE)
Every academic year, SIAG endeavors to organize at least three FDEs on topics relevant to international faculty members at Kyushu University; the FDEs are open to all faculty members and administrative staff, for networking and exchange of information.

- b) The formulation of Proposals for the Internationalization of Kyushu University
Every two years, SIAG prepares a memo with Proposals, to be submitted to the University Leadership. Previous Proposals were presented in March 2017 and September 2019. This is the third set of Proposals.

2. Contributors

SIAG Board Members

Name	Title	Faculty
Johan Lauwereyns	Chair, Vice President, Professor	Arts and Science
Junhai Guo	Professor	International Student Center
Andrew Hall	Associate Professor	Social and Cultural Studies
Ellen Van Goethem	Associate Professor	Humanities
Xiaoyan Li	Associate Professor	School of Interdisciplinary Science and Innovation

SIAG Associate Board Members

Name	Title	Faculty
Douglas Drummond	Professor	Agriculture
Hemanta Hazarika	Professor	Engineering
Jose M. M. Caaveiro	Professor	Pharmaceutical Sciences
Natalie Konomi	Professor	Global Strategies Office
Huixin Liu	Associate Professor	Science
Andrew Spring	Associate Professor	Engineering Sciences
Vishwajit Sur Chowdhury	Associate Professor	Arts and Science
Osama Eljamal	Associate Professor	Engineering Sciences
Caleb Carter	Lecturer	Humanities

3. Bullet Points

- COMMUNICATION: More effort needs to be made across the University toward bilingual communication, particularly for administrative matters, making all relevant information, documents, and forms immediately accessible in English.
- DIVERSITY IN HIRING: The University leadership must provide real incentives for faculties to hire more international faculty members and effectively boost diversity at all levels, particularly in senior positions.
- RETENTION: Strategic efforts should be devoted toward retention of international faculty members at Kyushu University by providing an inclusive, supportive working environment that maximizes the academic performance, with clear pathways to promotion.
- REPRESENTATION: To accelerate the internationalization of the University, it is essential to have representation of international faculty members and administrative staff at all levels of management, decision-making and administration.

4. The Current Proposals

On bilingual communication.

Significant progress has been made in bilingual (Japanese-English) communication, in emails, web pages, and official documents and forms, powered by automatic translation tools (e.g., DeepL). However, the progress is uneven and unsystematic, without any university-wide policy. We propose that the effort toward bilingual communication be boosted clearly via university-wide policy, to ensure that all relevant information, documents, and forms are available immediately also in English. This should be done in all Faculties, Graduate Schools, Schools and administrative offices. Specific initiatives toward this goal (which can be implemented at short notice) would be:

1. Create a systematic policy of immediate bilingual communication for email, forms, guidelines; also make the communication in Japanese clear and concise.
2. Ensure that all online systems (e.g., ASK) are made bilingual.
3. Appoint or hire a contact person in each administrative section responsible for communication in English.
4. Share good practices through interdepartmental cooperation; follow the example of the School of Interdisciplinary Science and Innovation.
5. Consider incentives for Japanese faculty members and administrative staff to work more in English.

On diversity in hiring.

From 2011 to 2015 Kyushu University achieved significant growth in diversity, with 50-100% increase in international and female faculty members. However, since then, the growth has slowed, almost stagnated, falling below national averages. At the same time, the University's world rankings have started sliding down, hinting that the two trends may be connected. We propose that the University leadership should invest strongly in providing real incentives for faculties to hire more international faculty members and effectively boost diversity at all levels, particularly in senior positions. Specifically, we propose the following initiatives (which can be implemented relatively soon, dependent on executive decision-making):

1. Allocate new Personnel Points strategically to faculties to increase diversity, especially where there is a lack of international faculty members.
2. Strategically hire or promote international faculty members to senior positions (tenured Full Professor, tenured Associate Professor). Good examples exist (e.g., the Faculty of Agriculture), but the policy implementation is uneven across the University.
3. Set minimum requirements for diversity in Personal Points of faculties, to be reached in a medium-term time frame.
4. Provide clear contracts and pathways to promotion.
5. Apply an appropriate definition of diversity: female and/or international (i.e., non-Japanese at birth).

On retention of international faculty members.

The stagnation with respect to diversity may partially be due to a lack of retention of international faculty members. Some faculties have seen little or no growth, or even negative growth, with international faculty members leaving for better opportunities elsewhere. Such brain drain suggests that international faculty members are unable to reach their maximum academic potential at Kyushu University. To redress this situation, we propose that strategic efforts should be devoted toward providing international faculty members with an inclusive, supportive work environment that maximizes the academic performance, with clear pathways to promotion. Specific initiatives that can be organized in a relatively short time frame include:

1. Create an induction training or package for new international faculty members, familiarizing them with the systems and environment at Kyushu University.
2. Provide clear guidance on expectations and measures of good performance, with a step-by-step pathway to promotion.
3. Organize a university-wide sabbatical system, with proper support, so that all faculty members can benefit from regular Research and Study Leave. Note that “sabbatical” means full focus on research (not vacation, but exemption from teaching and administrative duties). The current approaches in different faculties are uneven and often very limited. A strong top-down policy is needed to create a proper rotation system, so that each faculty member can have their turn to fully focus on research.
4. Consider intramural funding, specifically targeting new collaborations between international and Japanese faculty members at Kyushu University.
5. Hire permanent staff (Japanese or international) who can provide proper administrative support for the internationalization of Kyushu University. Good English proficiency should be an absolute must for permanent administrative staff.

On diversity in representation.

To fully realize the internationalization of the University, this vision must be integrated in every single action by every Faculty, Graduate School, School, and administrative office. This can only be achieved by having consistent representation of international faculty members and administrative staff at all levels of management, decision-making, and administration. In a room with only Japanese faculty members or administrative staff, it may be easy to forget about internationalization. However, if there is an international faculty member there, the internationalization will naturally be given due consideration. Thus, our proposal in this respect is to systematically improve the representation of international faculty members, step-by-step, in all aspects of how the University operates:

1. Appoint (more) international faculty members to senior and leadership positions.
2. Include international faculty members in all committees, working groups, etc.
3. Set a university-wide policy for monitoring and incentivization, to ensure that all faculties provide an integrative environment for international faculty members, involving them fairly and respectfully in all the aspects of decision-making.