

Policies Regarding International Strategies of the University of Aizu

Preface

Globalization has been included as a very important component in the spirit of the establishment of the University of Aizu, and the University has implemented several measures for globalization since its establishment, such as maintaining a high percentage of international faculty through invitation of faculty for positions at the University via open international invitation of applications. The University has built an international environment through the use of English and Japanese on campus as commonly used languages and preparation of a system for reception of international faculty members through placement of foreign faculty etc. advisors and establishment of the Lounge for International Exchange and Informal Discussion. As a result, the University has been able to maintain a high percentage of international faculty and visiting faculty members from over ten countries worldwide, who have contributed to achievement of stable international research exchange activities. The University was accepted for a project subsidy from the “Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities” from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in FY 2005, and established the Center for Strategy of International Programs. The University has conducted exchanges with other universities overseas through acceptance of international students to the University of Aizu Graduate School and various exchange activities by the University’s Undergraduate School. International students, visiting professors, and full-time faculty formerly with the University are also active in various locations all over the world, and are considered a great asset of the University.

Nowadays, the importance of the roles of international strategies regarding issues such as changes in the social environment in Japan and in the Aizu region pertaining to globalization and the circumstances of IT industry are more important than ever. These roles must be considered within the context of central policies made based upon the University’s main missions regarding education, research, and contribution to the local community. The University has been accepted for reception of subsidies in the national subsidy programs, the “Support Program for Advancement of Graduate School Education” and the “Career Development Program for Students from Asia”, which are contributed by advancement of international activities. In order to further advance the University’s level in research and education and to contribute to realization of fostering of human resources viable in international society, the foundation for the University’s international activity will be based on the “Policies Regarding International Strategies of the University of Aizu”. In specific terms, strategies for international programs will be organized, and four main fields for the University as a whole regarding international exchange will be designated as central policies to be followed when implementing important measures based on the University’s international strategies. By increasing awareness of these policies in faculty, administrative staff, and other relevant individuals, proactive activity can be conducted from the perspective of the University as a whole, and through strengthening of the University’s international exchange activities, the idea of “local to global, global to local” will be achieved.

Fundamental Principle

In order to promote the founding mission of the University of Aizu, “to advance knowledge for humanity,” the University will encourage international exchange in both research and education and realize the idea of “local to global, global to local” through contributions to international and local society. These contributions will be made by fostering excellent human resources and conducting creative research at the University as an international base for education and research.

Objectives

1. To realize high level research and education at the University of Aizu by promoting international exchange which facilitates and complements the research and education conducted at the University.
2. To foster human resources who are viable in international society and who have local roles while holding global perspectives, and to contribute to local communities through international exchange activities.

International Strategies

The University of Aizu will promote the following four basic international strategies: International collaboration in research and education; Fostering of international human resources; Development of collaborative activities corresponding to regional characteristics; Preparation of implementation systems regarding strategy for international programs.

1. International Collaboration in research and education

Collaboration with universities overseas will have objectives to achieve synergy and to complement current research and education conducted the University of Aizu through exchange activities, taking into consideration the characteristics of the region, culture, and industry, while taking advantage of a special characteristic in that the University has an environment where English is used as a working language.

1.1 Research Exchange

Regarding research exchange activities, the University will promote exchange that facilitate synergetic or complementary effects regarding integration of disciplines and cross fields related to computer science and engineering. The University will seek to expand its activities regarding conclusion of exchange agreements pertaining to research and education with top-class universities with expertise in relevant fields, starting with computer science and engineering. Based on these agreements, the University will plan and implement specific projects such as international cooperative research. Mutually beneficial collaboration will be conducted focusing on exchange with various partners in Asian countries and in Russia, where many possibilities and opportunities exist for development and recruitment of capable persons, utilizing the connections and networks that non-Japanese faculty members of the University have in these regions.

1.2 Educational Exchange

Regarding educational exchange, the University will examine various systems and methodologies pertaining to learning support, as well as academic administration, while collaborating with top-class universities regarding their educational programs to facilitate improvement of classes conducted at the University.

The English education program, which has been customized for the engineering program conducted at the University, will be further improved to take the highly advanced IT educational and research environment to an even higher level. To facilitate this process, exchange will be conducted with universities overseas with proven results in undergraduate education, with the United States as the main region of focus. The University will improve the quality of the English education and specialized IT education that it provides to students through adoption of the best practices of the educational programs that it studies through these overseas exchanges, to foster and graduate human resources with global perspectives who will contribute to local communities.

2. Fostering of International Human Resources

The University will promote international exchange of students in order to nurture global human resources with highly specialized skills. As strategies for exchange, general exchanges will be conducted to provide students with opportunities to experience other cultural environments, and for specific educational achievements, exchanges will involve acquisition of credits and/or degrees from partner universities overseas, in addition to student exchange programs and reception of research advice from faculty members from overseas universities. Of the universities with which the University has concluded exchange agreements, deeper ties regarding exchange will be sought with those which the University has concluded agreements which include systems for mutual recognition of credits and/or dual degree programs. Taking advantage the University's strengths in the use of English for class instruction and its English education for specific purposes, the University will provide opportunities for excellent students to learn and conduct research overseas, and will also promote acceptance of students dispatched from universities overseas. Improvement of facilities for acceptance of students, as well as preparation of internal systems for scholarships and tuition exemption, etc. will be carried out for implementation of this program.

3. Development of Collaborative Activities Corresponding to Regional Characteristics

In order to contribute to local communities through international exchange activities, exchanges will be developed corresponding to special cultural and industrial characteristics of the location of the partner university. In the Aizu Region, where our University is located, international students will gain exposure to Japanese tradition and culture, and will also learn about regional industries in Japan. Collaboration will be carried out through

measures related to university-industry collaboration such as internships to utilize IT corporations in growing industrial area in Asia.

4. Preparation of Implementation Systems Regarding Strategy for International Programs

A comprehensive, interdisciplinary system structure with advanced functions for international projects will be prepared.

4.1 Center for Strategy of International Programs

The Center for Strategy of International Programs will be an organization under a regent of the Board of Executives, as it will have the flexibility of implementing comprehensive measures regarding international strategies covering the entire University. The Center will organize the University's measures for international strategies (including publicly invited projects), and will establish internal organizational structure which will be capable of carrying out unified planning and adjustment of projects. The Center's major activities will be formulated based on the University's mid-term plans and incorporated into the annual plan, and will be reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis. In addition, the Center will utilize advisory boards comprised of faculty members including those who are in charge of international exchange with specific regions, and develop international strategies taking into consideration university-wide discussions regarding the evaluation and future direction of implementation measures.

4.2 Support System for People from Overseas

The support system for faculty members, researchers and students from overseas will be strengthened to ensure that they can smoothly carry out their educational and research activities, etc. at the University in the same manner as their Japanese colleagues, in other words, promotion of "daily globalization of research and educational environments". This will be carried out by increasing the number of support staff for internationals, including those who will assist in procedures for application to various research subsidies, those who will provide support in ordinary daily concerns, and those who will teach Japanese language classes, etc.

4.3 Support Regarding International Conferences, etc.

Support will be carried out for operation and planning of international academic conferences, symposiums, and lectures on the globalization of universities, etc. to be held at the University which help facilitate international collaboration between universities through fostering of human resources and contribution to local communities between universities, in order to further promote international exchange activity.

4.4 Exchange using network of international faculty members and students

Taking advantage of the University's strength in global personal networks held by faculty members and students, who have come to Aizu from over ten countries worldwide,

preparation of infrastructure for transmission of information will be carried out. As several students and researchers with prior experience at our campus now occupy important positions in their home countries, especially in Asian countries, the University will utilize these inherent human networks to systematically conduct international activities based on the Center's strategies, and triggered by individual faculty members. The University of Aizu International Alumni Association will be established, functioning as a complementary base for flow of information regarding computer science and IT between the Association and the University.

4.5 Fostering of Faculty Members and Administrative Personnel Devoted to International Projects

Training and employment of personnel devoted to international projects for exchange of students and researchers will be promoted to carry out fortification of the support structure for international exchange, by creating an organization which integrates the work of foreign faculty, etc. consultants. As about 40% of the University's faculty members are from other countries, and since English and Japanese are both used as working languages, the University already has a highly internationalized environment, compared to other universities in Japan. A guide which will be a collection of the experience and knowledge accumulated from this environment will be created to facilitate improvement of skills in faculty members and administrative staff, measures for international exchange, and effective use of these resources internally and externally.

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