

9. Social Cooperation and Contribution

(1) Description of Current Conditions

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (1): Has the university indicated a policy on social cooperation and contribution with the aim of appropriately sharing its education and research achievements with society?

Evaluation Points

- Appropriate indication of policy on social contribution and cooperation in accordance with the mission and purpose of the university and the goals of the colleges and graduate schools

In accordance with its basic nature as a university established through a large-scale public-private cooperation with Oita Prefecture and Beppu City, APU has pursued “cooperation with the region” as one of its fundamental objectives from before its official launch. In June 1999, we published “Proposals from APU,” a basic set of guidelines for regional contribution activities that was widely distributed to local residents of Beppu City and other interested parties within Oita Prefecture. These guidelines set forth the following three pillars:

- [1] Develop human resources who will be the future leaders of the international community as an institution charged with cultivating human resources for the Asia Pacific era;
- [2] Develop a town that shines globally in academia, culture, tourism and industry;
- [3] Develop networks that let the university and its students connect Beppu and Oita to the world.

In our 20th year, we discussed APU's roles and responsibilities for contributing to the world and the local community the next 10 years and incorporated these into the APU2030 Vision (Ref. 1-9).

Excerpt from the APU2030 Vision

In our global society of many different cultures and values, conflict and friction are bound to occur. APU strives to cultivate global citizens who will build a peaceful world by understanding and accepting cultural and historical differences. Fostering graduates with these abilities is at the core of APU's ideals of Freedom, Peace, and Humanity; International Mutual Understanding; and the Future Shape of the Asia Pacific Region.

APU Graduates will pursue freedom and peace with a deep respect for human dignity. By acting for the sake of both individuals and society, they can change the world.

Individuals who can change the world:

- Cooperate and overcome conflict through dialog for the benefit of society.
- Tolerate cultural differences and unfamiliar challenges.
- Create new values incorporating diverse perspectives and ideas.
- Envision their own goals and continue to grow as lifelong learners.

To cultivate such individuals, APU will:

- Further utilize its preeminently multicultural campus to immerse students in a Global Learning Community that provides them with opportunities to grow.
- Create a new Global Learning standard by pursuing internationally compatible education and research.
- Strengthen ties with its invaluable stakeholders, from the local community to alumni around the world, working together to design the University and its educational programs.

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (2): Is the university engaging in initiatives related to social cooperation and contribution in accordance with its policy on social cooperation and contribution? In addition, is the university appropriately sharing its education and research achievements with society?

Evaluation Points

- Appropriate systems to cooperate with off-campus organizations
- Promotion of education and research activities through initiatives related to social cooperation and contribution
- Participation in regional and international exchange projects

■ International cooperation and contribution

Since our inception, we have emphasized international cooperation by way of contribution activities and partnerships. One such effort that enables us to give our research outcomes back to society are the commissioned international cooperation projects operated in accordance with the cooperative agreement we signed with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2010.

As for technical cooperation, we accept between seven and 10 JICA-commissioned training projects (by country and topic) every year. Since we began accepting trainees in AY2006 up through the end of the 2017 academic year, we have implemented 65 training sessions for a total of 793 short-term trainees from 78 countries (Ref. 3-11). Oita Prefecture is the origin of the One Village One Product Movement (an initiative to promote regional revitalization by encouraging each municipality to develop its own specialty products) and Onpaku (short for 'onsen exposition'; a city-wide, multi-venue showcase of experiences and services). As such, we cooperate with local companies and organizations to design and implement training sessions where trainees from different countries and regions can learn first-hand about how to develop regional development methods. These efforts have been well received.

However, factors such as the retirement of faculty who supervised JICA training and a review of JICA training programs led us for the time being, to suspend the acceptance of new training programs in AY2017. From AY2018, we have examined new avenues (not limited to JICA) to develop training programs that allow us to contribute internationally (Ref. 9-1).

■ Regional contribution

Commissioned by Oita City, APU has offered several lecture series mainly geared toward the general public, which have been held every year since AY2006. Specifically, the Asia Pacific Innovation Management Center (AP-IMAC), an RCAPS-affiliated research center that primarily comprises College of International Management faculty members, offered lectures entitled "Introduction to the Management of Technology (MOT)" between AY2006–AY2015, and the APU Center for NEXT Generation Business and Industrial Creation (APU-NEXT) offered lectures based on the theme of "The World's Leading Companies -Learning from the Cases of Global Niche Top Companies-" from AY2016 (Ref. 9-2). AP-IMAC was also commissioned by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science to use its research results to teach local high school students as part of the Hirameki-Tokimeki Science project (Ref. 9-3).

From AY2014 to AY2016, APU conducted a project commissioned by Oita Prefecture entitled "International Students Broadcast the Appeal of Oita Overseas" (Ref. 9-4). The project aimed to raise the profile of Oita prefecture overseas by creating promotional videos geared toward Asian countries. The production was led by APU and its students, who received technical assistance from Television Oita System Co., Ltd. (based on mutual cooperation agreement concluded in 2015) (Ref. 9-5). This initiative disseminated the brand and reputation of Oita Prefecture to residents in the prefecture and across various countries, and contributed to an improvement in APU students' planning skills, execution capabilities, and employability.

In addition, following the joint production of a community-driven movie that was screened at the Okinawa International Movie Festival, APU concluded a cooperation agreement with Yoshimoto Kogyo, Co., Ltd. (an entertainment conglomerate with operations in Japan and overseas) in 2016, with the aim of jointly cultivating human resources who can contribute to regional society and developing regional communities (Ref. 9-6).

■ Partnerships with industry and researchers in Japan and around the world

Based on our mission to cultivate global leaders who can contribute to creating the future of the Asia Pacific region, we have developed a network of leaders and advisors in academia as well as in the political and business realms. The backbone of this network is the Advisory Committee (AC). In 1996, four years before the university opened, 75 leading figures from the political, business, government and academic spheres were appointed as committee members. As of April 1, 2017, the AC now counts 275 members. The Committee contributes to the improvement and advancement of APU's academic affairs in myriad ways (Ref. 9-7).

APU has collaborated with AC member companies in the form of initiatives such as lectures and seminars geared toward enhancing and expanding APU's academic programs, and job placement. In

addition, AC member embassies in various countries provide assistance by responding to the questions of new/current enrollees to provide reassurance related to new/ongoing enrollment, and by offering school expense subsidies. We have also established a group of Academic Advisors who support our education and research. This group of 50 renowned Japanese and foreign researchers and scholars gives special lectures and seminars.

The Asia Pacific Conference (AP Conference) held annually at APU attracted some 500 participants in AY2016, making it the largest domestic academic conference in the humanities and social sciences field conducted in English. As the conference attracts Japanese and overseas researchers, it provides excellent opportunities for APU faculty to broaden their networks and has also led to joint research papers (Ref. 9-8).

■ Partnerships with the local community

In light of the fact that APU was founded with tremendous support from Oita Prefecture, Beppu City and the local residents, we actively engage in cooperation and exchange with the local community. To date, we have entered into agreements with all 19 municipalities in Oita Prefecture. In response to calls from other prefectures driven by an uptrend in overseas visitors to Japan, we have also concluded friendship agreements with a total of 22 cities, towns, and villages including Iida City in Nagano Prefecture, Kesennuma City in Miyagi Prefecture, and Fukuoka City in Fukuoka Prefecture. In this way, APU is actively implementing exchange projects (Ref. 9-9; Ref.9-10; Ref.9-11).

In addition to dispatching students to various events and projects organized in cooperation with Oita Prefecture municipalities, we mainly dispatch students to international exchange projects (discussed below) and accept high school or younger students in programs held at our campus. In terms of cooperation with municipalities outside of Oita Prefecture, we have continued to participate in a yearly field study initiative in Iida City, Nagano Prefecture, for over 10 years. In this initiative, over 10 APU students are sent to Iida City to conduct field research and offer policy recommendations. We also conduct other unique initiatives such as sending students to intern at several companies in Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, thus providing opportunities to learn about the current state of recovery in disaster-affected areas and gain the ability to make proposals based on work experience.

As part of the preparations for Oita Prefecture's International ONSEN Summit in May 2018, APU was commissioned by the prefecture to conduct a project comparing hot spring sites around the world in AY2017. APS Associate Professor KUBO Takayuki led the project, conducting comparative research on Oita Prefecture, which is known as the "Onsen (hot spring) Prefecture," and other well-known hot spring sites in the world (Ref. 9-12).

■ Corporate partnerships

Since AY2010, APU has offered the Global Competency Enhancement Program (GCEP), which consists of short-term (two to four month) training programs and short-term customized programs for global companies (Ref. 9-13). GCEP was designed to respond to the demands of companies that want to cultivate human resources who can adapt to the globalizing business environment. It provides participants with language proficiency and the ability to understand and adapt to multiple cultures and negotiate across cultures by participating in discussions with students from many different countries, taking lectures from our talented faculty, and living in our international education dormitory. Between AY2011 and April 2017, we accepted 190 employees from 35 companies. In addition, we conducted a series of Chinese language lectures with Sanwa Shurui Co., Ltd. in 2016, and accepted one trainee (Ref. 9-14).

In AY2013, we began offering a new program for the foreign employees of Japanese companies called the Japanese Language Educational Program (J-LEP) (Ref. 9-13). The aim of J-LEP is to improve the Japanese proficiency of employees at foreign branches of Japanese companies and strengthen their ability to respond to Japanese corporate customers. Between AY2011 and AY2017, we accepted 31 employees from the Asian branches of the Bank of Tokyo- Mitsubishi UFJ.

The Research Center for Muslim Affairs (RCMA) held five RCMA Special Lectures in Oita City and other locations from AY2015, and it received high praise from local business managers and others for introducing halal and other initiatives. In addition, Fundokin Shoyu Co. Ltd, Oita Prefecture's leading manufacturer of soy sauce and miso products, concluded an agreement with Inspire Corporation in AY2017 to work on joint development of halal soy sauce, with RCMA acting in a supporting role (Ref.9-15).

■ International exchange projects

In AY2017, APU conducted 67 regional exchange projects, with a cumulative total of 407 participating students with 260 actual participants. The number of projects and participating students represented a modest decline from previous years mainly due to impact from natural disasters. However, we received 18 applications for new exchange, and we sometimes conduct multiple exchange projects per year with cities, town, or villages such as Hiji Town, Kitsuki City, and Saiki City (Ref. 7-7).

Assessment/Evaluation Parameter (3): Does the university periodically conduct assessments to determine the appropriateness of social cooperation and social contribution? In addition, has the university conducted initiatives to improve or enhance social cooperation and social contribution based on assessment findings?

Evaluation Points

- Assessment based on appropriate grounds (materials, information)
- Improvement and enhancement based on assessment findings

APU pursues agreements deemed meaningful to regional communities and to its students with municipalities and companies after it has determined the merits and demerits of such agreements based on an examination of the status of initiatives undertaken to date, and of the anticipated benefits for APU and the relevant municipality.

In GCEP, APU determines the effectiveness of its training by measuring growth in participants' ability to function in English and understand/adapt to cultural diversity through tests such as TOEIC and International Development Inventory (IDI: measures speed of development of intercultural competence). GCEP participants have exhibited excellent growth in TOEIC (Speaking & Writing) and TOEIC (Reading & Listening), according to the TOEIC Executive Secretariat. Until AY2016, we used IDI to assess participants through scores for growth in intercultural competence and behavioral adaptability with the aim of measuring their ability to understand/adapt to cultural diversity before and after the training.

Exchange projects between students and local communities are reviewed in the Student Office Staff Meeting and Student Affairs Committee, and details of such projects are published in the Student Activities Guide (Ref. 7-7).

(2) Strengths and distinctive features

- Education and research activities and university administration based on a keen awareness of cooperation and collaboration with the local community, the global community and industry

Even before the university officially opened, we were keen to network with the local and international communities and industry. We accordingly concluded cooperation agreements with regional municipalities and companies in Oita Prefecture and elsewhere, thus engaging in a wide range of social cooperation and contribution projects.

- Using our unique features to offer programs for companies

GCEP takes advantage of APU's unique features, including its dual language education system and multicultural campus, to help Japanese companies faced with the challenge of global human resources development.

- Regional exchange

Because international students make up half of our student body, a major feature of APU's social cooperation and regional exchange is that related activities are mostly conducted from a perspective that is informed by international exchange. The demands of society and local communities placed on

APU also to a large extent reflect expectations of international exchange, and we have managed to make substantial contributions in this area.

(3) Problem areas

GCEP has received positive feedback from participating companies, not only in the form of high satisfaction among participants, but also reports that participants have changed their behavior after the program, have become role models for others, or have performed well during overseas assignments. Although program participants have been satisfied, we have also received opinions requesting more opportunities for discussions with students from multiple nationalities and an improvement in the system to register for classes offered in English. In response, we will review our organization with an eye toward stable future operation of GCEP.

We have at times noticed a divergence between the goals of the university (foster learning and growth among students) and those of the local community (revitalization of community). To avoid such cases, we need further discussion on a format of exchange that contributes to both goals.

(4) Summary

- Education and research activities and university administration based on a keen awareness of cooperation and collaboration with the local community, the global community and industry

Keeping in mind our basic ideals, we will review the effectiveness of existing cooperation and collaboration projects and programs as we strive to respond to the rapidly changing demands from partners within and outside Japan.

- Using our unique features to offer programs for companies

Given our regional location, programs for companies are educationally significant in that they provide our students with opportunities to interact with actively working businesspersons. We also promote exchange between undergraduate students, graduate students, and employees dispatched from companies in non-curricular activities such as language classes, AP House, or career planning.

- Regional exchange

Since its inception, APU has focused on cooperation and exchange with local communities and society at large. By taking advantage of the unique characteristics of APU (and specifically, its ability to offer international exchange as a form of regional cooperation), we intend to further step up cooperation and exchange activities going forward.