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Academic Advising In the Graduate School: Issues and Measures

Mental Health Issues in Graduate Student Advising

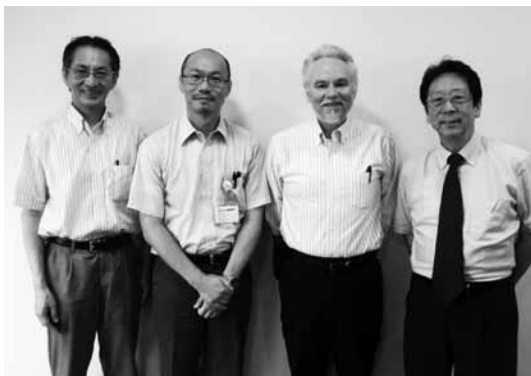
The previous issue of the FD Newsletter issued in May 2014 reported issues concerning advising in the Graduate School. To further discuss the issues and measures, discussions were held on the subjects of “How to advise students who are not very good at handling anxiety,” “How to give appropriate advice to students from various cultural backgrounds,” and “What advising methods in conjunction with counseling techniques give our students the best of ICU.” The Dean of the Graduate School, Professor Sasaki, chaired the discussion. ICU faculty with considerable experience in teaching and research participated, including two Professors by Special Appointment¹: Professors Wilson and Onishi. The Director of the Counseling Center, Mr. Terashima, who has helped both faculty and students here, also joined the discussion.

Participants

Chair: Professor Teruyoshi Sasaki (Dean, Graduate School)
Professor Richard Wilson (Professor by Special Appointment)
Professor Naoki Onishi (Professor by Special Appointment)
Mr. Yoshihiko Terashima (Director, Counseling Center)

September 9, 2014

Conference Room 201, Kiyoshi Togasaki Memorial Dialogue House



From left: Prof. Sasaki, Mr. Terashima,
Prof. Wilson and Prof. Onishi

¹ “Professors by special appointment” or *Tokunin kyōju* are full-time educational staff engaged in education and research who, after retiring as members of ICU’s full-time educational staff (due to reaching mandatory retirement age), are rehired in order to maintain and improve education and research at ICU.

Do graduate school students seem to have a harder time handling their anxiety these days?

Sasaki: Let's start our discussion with tips for advising students who are overly anxious. Do you feel graduate students are having more problems in this regard?

Wilson: On the whole, I don't think so. It's case by case. Some students have mental health issues, some do not.

Onishi: I agree. ICU encourages uniqueness, so there are students who are unique, and they come up with interesting things they want to do. This is where they concentrate their energy. But some worry whether their research will succeed and also whether they will land a position where they can make a living, which makes them very anxious.

Terashima: The proportion of graduate students who visit the Counseling Center is not very large. I wouldn't say this is good or bad. But it may be true that more undergraduate students have poor coping skills for stress. This may be partly due to the decreasing 18-year old population, making it easier for those who were not initially aspiring to further their education in college to study at university. This may be happening at ICU, too. Some undergraduate students move on to graduate school because they cannot land jobs. These

students may feel more insecure than the others.

It is most important to observe each student

Onishi: I find that I'm more lenient with students, probably because I'm getting older. Some years back, I would have said "I hope you realize you're in college." But now it's more like, "Well, that's OK. I know you're busy with your club activities."

Sasaki: That's interesting. You must have your own way of boosting student performance.

Wilson: I have read in blogs of U.S. faculty teaching graduate students that the worst advisor is one who is nice to advisees. In other words, gentleness will not help students climb up the tenure track or compete in the job market. As future professionals, many feel grateful for the instruction from strict teachers. But then, as an advisor, you have to be very careful about the fine line between being strict and abusive.

To give effective advice, we really have to observe the student very carefully. When I was young, I made judgments based on my own experience, but that didn't always work. It's most important to let student feel comfortable about talking about his mental health, physical condition and financial circumstances. I learned a lot from my mistakes.

Sasaki: So it's not about being "nice" all the time, but making strict comments without hurting the student's feelings. Isn't observation very important in counseling?

Terashima: Individual counseling deals with a personal and unique situation of a student. For us it's easier because we don't have to consider being fair to all students. You may want to be lenient with some and stricter with others. But this would appear unfair from a bystander's view. Isn't this the difficult part for you?

Onishi: I give advice to students who come to my office, but not to those who don't come. They have every chance to see me, but they don't. So I don't go after them.



Counseling Center

In addition to counseling for students, the Center can respond to any issues involving an ICU student, including consulting with teachers and professors, etc. Every Friday morning, students can also consult with an advisory physician specializing in psychiatry. The Center is open Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Telephone: 0422-33-3499 (in principle, a reservation is required).

Only faculty can scold students

Sasaki: Is there a secret to how you should scold students from the point of view of a counselor?

Terashima: We counselors cannot give students advice about their academic problems, so you can admonish them and we can provide psychological support if it's necessary. There is a limit to what counselors or clerical staff can do for students academically. We would like you to judge from the personality of the student whether strict instruction is necessary. Professor Wilson mentioned that being nice is not always sufficient. I think it is the role of the teachers to say "no" or "that's not enough" in terms of meeting academic expectations. If the student seems depressed as a result, we can help. In most cases, you have enough experience to deal with the situation. But some students may be more difficult. I think we can help in such cases. You can consult us and say you find it hard to deal with a certain student using methods you have used before.

Consideration for graduate school students who feel isolated with very few colleagues in the same field

Wilson: Because of the small classes and the unique system of majors at ICU, our students may feel isolated. We tend to see that in our graduate students. There may be very few students in the same year studying in the same field. This probably applies to 90% of the students. They don't get the chance to discuss their field of study with their classmates. When I was in graduate school, I had about ten classmates studying the same field. They helped me out in various situations including the way to get along with the professors. This may not be the current situation at ICU. We have to be careful when students seem isolated.

Onishi: Those in the dorm have other channels for information and probably feel less isolated. I think the main group that will have trouble in this regard is those who are not from Tokyo and live off campus. They are usually top students back home, so they feel they have to live up to their reputation. A student I knew took the train back



Oak House on ICU Campus

Currently residing in the undergraduate student dormitories are 11 graduate students, while 15 graduate students are living in the "Sibley House" dorm. Graduate students comprise 15.6% of all students living in ICU dormitories (among undergraduate students, 18.9% are dorm residents). Our dorms thus serve as sites of mutual communications among students from different countries and different disciplines (majors). (Figures stated above are from May 1, 2014.)

home to spend New Year's with his family, but returned back to Tokyo, realizing he could not describe what he was doing at the moment and how he expected to succeed, in front of his family and relatives. In a remote location, how that whiz kid turns out is usually the talk of town. This prevents the student from returning home.

Wilson: Some graduate students have not been able to convince their families back home of their desire to study for an advanced degree. These students have a very heavy mental burden.

Onishi: Their interests do not always translate into jobs. This is the dilemma. I specialize in American literature, and I know students with doctorate in this field can be led to a job. But in some fields, this may not be the case.

Sasaki: So what we need to look for are students who are not from Tokyo, coming to graduate school without the parent's approval and are anxious about their job prospects.

Onishi: They tend to be reclusive. They have problems organizing their lives into a regular routine.

Wilson: They tend to spend more time in part-time jobs.

Sasaki: What do we do with them? Some time ago, students studying the same field would say "let's

go out for a meal,” or “did you hand in your report?” This kind of camaraderie does not exist anymore.

Onishi: Some programs have rooms where students gather to exchange tips or meet to go out for meals. This is important. In the Comparative Culture Program, this kind of exchange seems to be working well, so they all know each other. But as Professor Wilson mentioned, they all study different topics so they rarely share research themes.

Different backgrounds activate the university

Sasaki: Shall we go on to how we should consider different cultural backgrounds when we give students advice? Can you share some examples when advising posed difficulties because of different cultural backgrounds?

Onishi: I don't think that's much of a problem. In the future, if Muslim students increase, we may have to secure a place for worship, but I don't think we have problems right now. Instead, we all find it interesting and exciting to share cultural differences. We are the Comparative Culture Program. It's intriguing to see how others react to our culture.

Terashima: Some students complain they cannot acclimatize to the Japanese way of life, or cold winters in Japan. Others feel lonely leaving their family back home and conducting research in another culture. But I don't feel that cultural differences are a serious problem.

Sasaki: At ICU, having varied cultural backgrounds functions in a positive way.

Onishi: Diversity in students invigorates the ICU community.

Linking students and the Counseling Center

Sasaki: Our next topic is how we can provide counseling so students feel gratified they studied at ICU. This goes to the core of what counseling should be. Should faculty have some knowledge about counseling? Can they acquire counseling techniques?

Country / Region	Number
AUSTRALIA	1
CANADA	1
CHINA	8
COLOMBIA	2
EGYPT	1
FRANCE	1
GERMANY	1
GREECE	1
HUNGARY	1
INDIA	1
INDONESIA	1
ITALY	1
JAPAN	85
KOREA	3
LAOS	2
LITHUANIA	2
MEXICO	1
MYANMAR	6
NEPAL	1
PAKISTAN	1
PHILIPPINES	6
RUSSIA	1
RWANDA	1
SINGAPORE	1
SRI LANKA	6
SWEDEN	2
TANZANIA	1
THAILAND	2
UGANDA	1
UK	1
USA	15
VENEZUELA	2
VIETNAM	5
ZIMBABWE	1
TOTAL	166

Number of graduate students by country / region (as of May 2014)

Our 166 graduate students come from 34 countries/regions. Students of differing cultural backgrounds and interests have gathered at ICU.

Onishi: When I was younger, I would say to my students, “Why can't you try harder?” But I realize now that for some, this would have been a heavy burden. I think we should leave mental health support to professionals, and we should concentrate on listening. It's a relief for us to be able to introduce students to the Counseling Center with one phone call.

Sasaki: What do we do when students do not want to seek help at the Counseling Center? Is there good way to solve this problem?

Terashima: The best thing you can do is to tell them

that going to the Counseling Center for help is nothing unusual, everyone goes there. That may ease the student's anxiety, and make him/her feel that it's not such a bad idea to make a visit. In a survey with undergraduate students, 20~25% visited the Counseling Center while they were at ICU. This means one in four to five students. Some come with friends, or know someone who has visited the Center. One way to make sure students come here is to call us in front of them to make an appointment. If the student is severely depressed, it would help if you can come with them on their first visit. Then it's highly likely that they will show up for their next appointment. This makes things move smoothly.

Sasaki: Teachers can make appointments for students at the Counseling Center.

Create a relaxed atmosphere, listen carefully to students and don't expect too much

Wilson: I agree that faculty should not have to be versed in counseling techniques, but they should be able to listen. The worst you can do is to express disinterest: "it's not my problem." It hasn't been easy, but I learned in the last twenty years to listen first and foremost. As faculty, we have to open our ears, open our eyes, and open our heart. We should remember not to project our values into the person.

Onishi: Some do not want to talk, or will not talk. It may also add to our burden if we get involved with their private problems. That may be the point where we turn over the problem to professionals.

Wilson: We're not counselors, but as faculty we have to show "willingness." The effort is important. I think this can break barriers in communication. Sometimes nothing will change while you sit facing the student in your office. It may be an idea to out of the office with the student for a walk outside. A small step may move things to the next stage. You can also say there are professional staffers ready to help.

Sasaki: Professor Wilson's long time experience shows that we have to listen. We can sometimes make changes in the venue of the consultation to break the ice.

Wilson: You have to wait until the window opens. Wait and watch.

Sasaki: Don't expect results too soon.

Wilson: That's right. The difference is that of hope and expectation. Hope is open-ended while, with expectations, you look mostly for certain outcomes.

Sasaki: It may be the same with parents. If they are too strict and expect too much from their child, the child collapses under pressure.

Wilson: In a way expectation is not desirable, and has to do with faculty. We tend to think we know the best way of doing things: "I have been successful. Therefore you (the advisee) should follow my way. Why can't you?" But our way is not always the best for the student.

Onishi: Our teachers linger in the background. Models we use in faculty development are our teachers. That's not always correct. We need to find the most appropriate way for the student.

Sasaki: We use the word *shuhari* (passing through the stages of *shu*, *ha*, and *ri*) when we take lessons in traditional arts like the martial arts. In the first stage, students absorb forms from the master. Then they move out to make innovations, which leads to the third step of creating their own territory. This could be a model for us in providing appropriate advice.

Introducing students to the Counseling Center is not withdrawing but adding support

Sasaki: Thank you for your helpful suggestions. We must listen to students in a relaxed atmosphere. But there is a limit to what we can do, so we need to collaborate with the Counseling Center. I also have felt difficulty in having students seek care at the Center, but I think it is a good idea for professors to make a reservation for the students. It is hard for us to determine whether the student is depressed or not. It would not be good for us to make a subjective judgment about the student being depressed, and act accordingly.

Terashima: The important thing is for the professors to listen to the student. If counseling techniques

will be of benefit, you can learn them, but the basic thing is to listen. If things do not improve, you can suggest to the student, “maybe you need additional help,” or “you may benefit from more professional help, so would you seek additional help at the Counseling Center?” This would guide the student smoothly to us. The student may feel abandoned if you say, “I don’t understand your situation so you should go to the Counseling Center.” You should make clear that visiting the Center means that you are suggesting additional help. That makes our job easier, too. We are aware that you will be able to help the student with your experience. Faculty and counselors differ, so faculty can provide students their academic and general support and we will provide our expertise. It will be beneficial for faculty to be able to be interested in our counseling techniques, but then you will have a dual role as faculty and counselor. My impression is that this should be avoided.

Sasaki: So the counseling from faculty should be that they listen.

Terashima: Yes. By staying with questions that will clarify why the student is in a quagmire, and you may be able to avoid hurting the student’s feelings. If things don’t improve, you can introduce the student to the Center or ICU Clinic. If you don’t understand what is wrong but insist that the student to “do better,” the student probably will not be able to do so. If they feel you have listened to their problems and have introduced them to professional mental health care, that will motivate them to do better. But as Professor Onishi mentioned, there are students who will not talk at all, even if you try to listen. Their answers may be “yes” or “things are normal.” These difficult cases might be better handled in our care, so it might be best to give us a call, including arrangements for appointments.

Strength in unique research but not matching with existing disciplines and society

Sasaki: Any comments to sum up the discussion?

Onishi: Looking back, ICU is very unique and the graduate school even more so. This has its advantages and disadvantages. The idiosyncratic

research in the graduate school is not always accepted by other institutions. This is because most will not fit in the existing framework of academic disciplines. We need to encourage graduate students, especially those seeking a future in academia, to attend academic meetings and publish in academic journals. In this regard, ICU has a good system that guides students in compiling their master’s and doctor’s theses. This is our strength. The other advantage here is that faculty members have a strong bond: they are not interested in hampering their colleagues to succeed. If students understand this, more students will come to ICU. We need to take these strengths and unique features in consideration when we think of solutions.

Better advising through self-criticism

Wilson: In thinking about advising before this discussion, my thoughts naturally led to reflecting on the kind of advisor I am and identifying my weaknesses. For the ICU graduate school to improve, self-criticism by the advisors will be necessary. If we have the opportunity to see what good advising is like, we can improve. The discussion today was very helpful in that regard.

Sasaki: Ten professors will have ten different ways of advising. Self-criticism is important.

Wilson: It’s not like you have to change your advising radically. But if you can tweak it bit by bit in a good direction, we can improve. Just the right words at the right time will really help students.

Passing on the ICU legacy

Terashima: ICU is doing fine. Speaking as an alumnus who has worked at other universities, this kind of opportunity would be unheard of outside ICU: professors gathering for the benefit of students and inviting us counselors into the discussion. Professors are usually more interested in using graduate students as assistants for research. The culture at ICU is that faculty members give equal importance to research and teaching. This tradition makes our job easier. We are deeply grateful to the faculty for working

closely with us and introducing students to the Center.

Onishi: ICU leads a rare existence. And we often appoint faculty from other universities. If newly appointed faculty bring in the system they previously worked with, they find it hard to fit in. Some complain vocally that this is not the system they are used to. There are many universities where the gap between students and faculty is wider and the two do not merge. That is not ICU. The student-faculty relation differs. That is

why we need advising for faculty. That does not happen very often. Newly appointed faculty will go through an orientation session, but this does not always include showing them how ICU is different from other universities. We ought to do something for this. Otherwise we may not be able to pass on our always legacy to those who follow us. I would like to see newcomers accept the advantages of doing it the ICU way.

(English translation provided by the FD office)



Orientation for New Faculty (October 1, 2014)

In orientations of new faculty, staff invited from the Counseling Center, the Academic Planning Center and some others offer learning opportunities regarding advising methods for a variety of different student types. From academic year 2014, a session dedicated to advising was specially added. In this and other ways, support is provided to deepen the understanding of new faculty concerning advising.



A presentation given at the faculty retreat (March 18, 2014)

The Academic Planning Center hosted a presentation on "The Practice of Advising" as part of the faculty retreat; this included a skit reproducing interactions between teachers and students coming on class registration day, which incorporated explanations of advising skills. Repeating these types of "hands-on," practical engagements ensure that the special characteristics of advising at ICU are passed on into the future.

Research Supervision in Each Program

The previous issue of the FD Newsletter reported issues concerning advising in the Graduate School based on the response to the faculty questionnaire and the reports from Program directors. We invited faculty from each Program to discuss the basic academic abilities of graduate students, enthusiasm for research, language problems, advertising merits of the ICU graduate school, e.g. the Five Year Program, placement, cooperation in education and research beyond the Programs and the relationship between students and faculty.

Participants

Chair: Professor Teruyoshi Sasaki (Dean, Graduate School)

Education and Psychology Program:

Senior Associate Professor Mark Langager

Public Policy and Social Research Program:

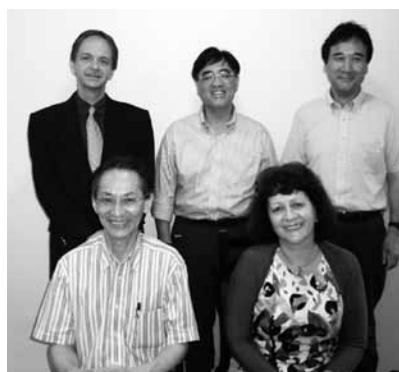
Professor Taisei Kaizoji (Program Director)

Comparative Culture Program:

Professor Tzvetana Kristeva (Program Director)

Natural Science Program:

Professor Kenya Kubo (Program Director)



The first row from left: Prof. Sasaki and Prof. Kristeva. The second row from left, Senior Associate Prof. Langager, Prof. Kaizoji and Prof. Kubo.

September 10, 2014

Conference Room 201, Kiyoshi Togasaki Memorial Dialogue House

Are graduate students' basic academic ability declining?

Sasaki: Let's talk about some of the issues raised in the previous FD Newsletter. Please feel free to bring in a new theme during the discussion.

The first topic is basic academic ability. Do you feel it is declining?

Kubo: We used to have written admission tests. But now we admit students based on interviews. So we cannot ask questions of as broad a scope as we would for written tests. That means students come to us without the intensive studying usually undertaken in preparation for graduate school admission exams. Our students miss the opportunity for intensive study of their chosen field of study, although they have worked hard as undergraduates. So on the whole, their academic ability may be declining a bit.

Sasaki: I see. In the accumulation of effort in the study in science, a few months of intensive study for an exam can make a difference.

Kaizoji: The foreign students tend to vary in academic ability. We have very good students, but some come without the ability to communicate with us.

Sasaki: We have two kinds of students. Isn't it possible to make up for the intensive preparation for the graduate school admission exam?

Kubo: The only way is to study hard after starting their studies in the graduate school. Advisors can give them assignments to catch up.

Sasaki: The Natural Science Program has a system in place to make up for the discrepancy in student ability. But other Programs may not have this. We can also give students assignments as a way to catch up. What about the foreign students or regular students?

Kristeva: I do not feel that the academic ability of students in the Comparative Culture Program is declining. But I am not sure about the future. The undergraduates may lack creativity than those ahead of them. They need not only the ability to study but also creativity and new ideas. An interesting trend in our Program is that alumni come back to pursue their interests in the humanities after they work for a while. These students may be a little rusty in their academic abilities but make it up with their high motivation to study.

A certain level of either English or Japanese is a prerequisite for thorough research

Kristeva: Most of the foreign students in our Program are on government scholarships. So they are top tier students. In the Comparative Culture Program, we don't have students who are lacking in academic ability. One reason for this is that we are truly bilingual. We cannot research a topic unless we are competent in either English or Japanese. It is a complicated problem, but if we stick to the ICU ideal of bilingualism, we may have less of a problem in communication or lack of academic ability.

Professor Kaizoji mentioned communication skills. Even if we give lectures and advice in English, it will be difficult to communicate with students if they do not have an understanding of Japanese. We used to require students with no Japanese language background to study Japanese in the summer before they formally started at ICU. I don't know why, but this requirement has been abolished. Even if the professors do their best, students must have some sort of Japanese language ability to make their research a fulfilling one if they are going to live and study in Japan. Students in the Comparative Culture Program are usually fluent in both English and Japanese, but those who feel they lack Japanese study intensively at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, so I don't think there are problems in communication or advising.

Langager: The problem is not just the student's Japanese language ability. For example, students applying for the Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) will

have been told that they can acquire degrees at ICU without any Japanese if they are competent in English, which is a challenge in itself. That means we have to design a curriculum that requires only English. But it's not just the curriculum. Students serving as TAs (Teaching Assistants) cannot use only English at the support or help desk. I think it is rather contradictory to say only English will be necessary to acquire a degree here if we do not offer assistance in English since students will miss out on the information available only in Japanese.

Kristeva: If we want to be thorough in bilingualism, we will have say a certain level of either English or Japanese is a prerequisite. Recently, Japanese language education has been spreading to Arab and African countries, so we may have students who have Japanese language but no English.

The ability of the students will affect advising

Sasaki: So far our discussion has pointed to the ability of students affecting our advising, as we have deleted the Japanese language requirement and have no clear requirement in English. This also concerns admissions, but the problem is that we have to advise students with various backgrounds.

Langager: When we think about advising, we should start with the admission system. We need to be very conscious of what will happen if applicants will not increase. It will be most important not to



Farewell Symposium for JDS Fellows (June 17, 2014)

As one of approximately 20 participating universities of JDS program by the Japanese government, ICU Graduate School has been accepting and training promising young government officers, practitioners and researchers from China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and other countries.

lower standards in the interest of trying to secure a certain number of applicants.

Kaizoji: Let me add that some students, although lacking in academic ability, are basically highly enthusiastic about their studies. We need to therefore consider what we will be requiring from students and consider programs that will satisfy their needs.

Students need the opportunity to brush up on their linguistic ability before they enter the master's course

Kaizoji: JDS fellows are highly capable. They come from places like Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan, and they seem to have a hard time in their first year at ICU. We sometimes have trouble communicating because of their heavily accented English. The first six months, we often wonder whether they understand what we are saying. But in the second year, things will have improved.

Kristeva: We can offer these students a six-month intensive English or Japanese language course, for example, before they enter the master's course.

Kaizoji: I agree 120%. With JDS, we are competing against universities like Meiji and Ritsumeikan in the field of politics and international relations; and Hitotsubashi and International University of Japan in economics and public policy. As Professor Kristeva suggested, these institutions offer language instruction for JDS students before they leave for Japan. This system also complies with student requests.

Sasaki: Maybe this is not a problem of advising but in the system of the Programs.

Differentiating support for those seeking jobs and those aspiring for a future in research

Sasaki: The next topic will be the discrepancy in enthusiasm for studies among graduate students. Do you feel enthusiasm for their studies is declining among students?

Langager: I think there may be a relation between competence and drive. If students lack the capacity for research, they may feel they cannot move

forward. We should not accept these students in graduate school even if applicants decrease. We need to recognize the difference in potential.

Sasaki: Students lacking the potential to study at the graduate level cannot make progress and soon lose the motivation to study.

Kubo: In the master's course in the Natural Science Program, we have students who aspire to stay in academia and those who do not. In most cases, science majors in the undergraduate course will go on to the master's course. The level of the master's course may be somewhat on a par with the undergraduate instruction some years back, so at this stage there is no need to engrain students with readiness for a future in research. This is also related to the five-year program at ICU. In the job-hunting process, you will increasingly find that you need a master's degree. We need to give out appropriate advice and assignments to those who are aspiring to further their education in the doctorate course, but the others can be given practical assignments that will be useful for their future careers. We need to distinguish between them.

More than 70% of our science majors acquire a master's degree even if they do not choose to do so in the ICU graduate school. A good number will choose to become corporate employees at trading firms or banks, for example.

Suggesting options after graduation in jobs and further education to students

Kaizoji: From my experience, the top students in the undergraduate course usually choose to go on to graduate school, whether at ICU or otherwise. But nowadays, this is not the case. So we should attract students with potential to the 5-year program but then we have to work on an exit strategy, too. For those aspiring to stay in academia, the next step might be to attend graduate schools abroad. But those intending to seek jobs will weigh up the pros and cons of four years in the undergraduate course and the 5-year course. The university needs to clearly show students the options they will have at the exit.

Sasaki: In the Natural Science Program, do you have

support from companies that offer jobs for our students?

Kubo: No. Some faculty members have ties with corporations, but ICU graduates do well on their own in their job hunt. Even so, some students need help during their job search, so that is where we should come in. The first thing we need to understand is that a job search requires long hours: hunting for jobs will take up the time a student would have for research and study.

Sasaki: That's important. We have to advise them on the premise that graduate students may be seeking for jobs.

Kristeva: What Professor Kubo mentioned about the Natural Science Program also applies to some extent to our program. We recommend students to go for higher degrees if we see potential. Whether they aspire to become researchers will affect our suggestions for their research theme in their theses.

Langager: I don't understand why we have to differentiate between those aspiring to become researchers and those who do not. Although we do distinguish between the theoretical and practical

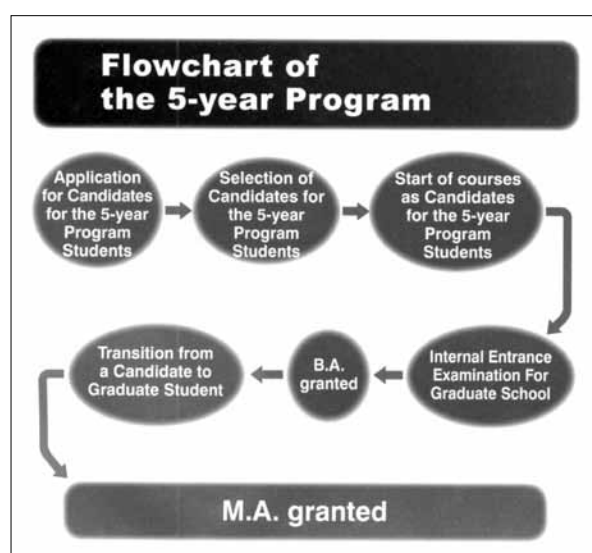
research, graduate school is primarily a place for research. But the preceding discussion seems like we are opting for vocational training.

Kristeva: That's not the case. In the first place we cannot draw a clear line between practical and theoretical research. For example, in the Comparative Culture Program, we must first study theory. What I wanted to say was how far the students want to take their research. Let's say there were two students studying ukiyoe works by Utamaro. One is aspiring to further her education, but the other is seeking a position as a curator after acquiring her master's. I would recommend the first student to focus on an overarching theme for her master's thesis. For the second, I would suggest a topic that can be compiled in two years. Even if they are studying the same subject, the actual theme will differ according to the objective of the research and the student's ability. This is where we need to carefully observe each to give advice. I may be exaggerating a bit, but if I think the student has the possibility of winning the Nobel Prize, it is my responsibility to recommend the doctor's course. If that is not the case, I would suggest for her to study a topic that would be advantageous for her future career. The academic field is vast: there is ample space for myriad researchers with differing objectives and abilities.

Langager: So the discussion is not about sacrificing research for practical training, I see. Then we should admit students who have the potential to conduct empirical research. Unless faculty can expect a certain level in student ability, their research cannot proceed. Faculty should not approach students by trying to meet their every need, but should challenge them to show what they can do.

Spreading word about the advantages of a postgraduate degree

Kaizoji: Touting the 5-year program would be I had a attracting excellent students to our Programs. The other day we were choosing students for a scholarship. One of the candidates was a student in the five-year program, who had already published ten papers. I do hope more students of this caliber will remain at ICU rather than seek advanced



5-year Program

ICU's 5-year combined Bachelor's and Master's degree program is an advanced and intensive program aimed at ICU CLA students who are expected to graduate with a superlative academic record. The program offers such students the opportunity to complete their studies in ICU Graduate School and receive a Master's degree in 5 years.

degrees elsewhere.

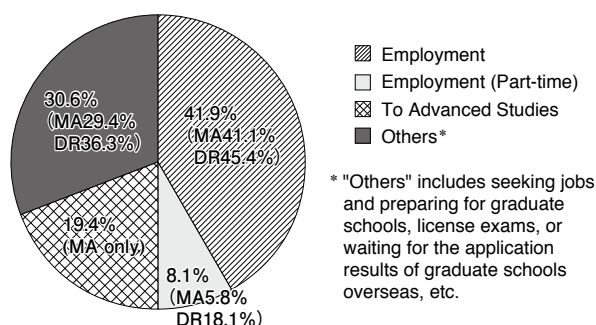
Langager: That is a problem in our Program, too. I had a development education students who decided to hunt for a job rather than carry on her line of research. But I guess that's OK, too.

Kristeva: It's the same in the Comparative Culture Program. The problem of tuition is shaping choices. So we need to advertise the 5-year program to freshmen as soon as they enter ICU. On the other hand, as I mentioned before, some of our students save up for tuitions before they enter graduate school. It is a problem of motivation. For good students to come to us, we need to work on an exit strategy. I think that is especially important in the Public Policy and Social Research Program. The advantages of paying tuition for an advanced degree in lieu of working for a wage must be presented. Ironically, the benefits may be more marked for the Comparative Culture or Natural Science Programs for which the acquired degrees may not lead to high-paid jobs straightaway.

The university needs to support exchange between faculty and students

Sasaki: We talked about students' enthusiasm for study and whether the advice we offer them should include that for the job hunt. The next theme is the relation between students or that between students and faculty. Some faculty members have told me that they need to repeat the same thing every year because senior students do not pass on what they have learned to those behind them. Do you feel that way, too?

Kristeva: In the Comparative Culture Program, students get along very well. But we can improve this for academic exchange. We have a student group that organizes annual presentation meetings. But that does not necessarily lead to collaboration among students. At present we are reviewing the curriculum to fit in the possibility of a joint research project among students. Working in teams is a necessary experience for researchers, a problem specific to graduate school education. I would like to make an additional comment about the advising system in the graduate school. This concerns evaluating the advisor. I think the present



Placement of GS Graduates

62 students graduated in June 2013 and March 2014 (including 11 doctoral graduates)

Among the future paths of graduate students, employment comprises the largest share. In addition to private companies, many graduate students work in educational fields and in public-sector jobs.

system is unfair. We do not get credit for working hard. To improve the quality of advising, we need to bolster the motivation of faculty, too.

Langager: In our Program we have a joint seminar for faculty and students to present their research in an informal manner, although those making presentations about their research tend to get a bit nervous. Since the university does not provide support for such activities, this is volunteer work for us.

Kristeva: That is most impressive. I believe we should know more about the research faculty are engaged in. This is very important. At ICU, because we are all so busy, we tend to know very little about what the others are doing. Since we no longer have separate Divisions, we should work across Programs. For example, in the Comparative Culture Program, we have started offering omnibus courses. Four of us team teach the compulsory Comparative Culture Theory course, with different themes and instructors every year. Why not do this in the graduate school as a whole? The currently offered compulsory school-wide courses are limited to instruction in practical research skills such as writing, computing, and field research, which are not related to the research theme itself. The four Programs in the graduate school can form four teams that will teach important topics in academics or humankind from different perspectives. This will enable us to make the most of our tradition in liberal arts by expanding students' and our perspectives for inspired research.

Kaizoji: Since we have so many different topics in the Public Policy and Social Research Program, it may be difficult to design an omnibus course. I think it is a great idea, so maybe we could do it for certain groups such as the Rotary scholars, for example.

Sasaki: I have heard that faculty cannot expect students to pass information on to those behind them. What is the situation in the Natural Science Program?

Kubo: It depends on the faculty in charge. Seminars with a certain number of students every year will have a good relation between seniors and the juniors. Since most students come to the lab every day, they see each other regularly, most often for meals. There will be less than ten students in the same year, so they all know each other very well. They take the same courses and work on the same assignments. That enables them to form close ties and share information. This has made it easier for faculty. Graduate students help us out a lot during Open Campus Day, for example. We get along very well with our students.



The
Rotary
Foundation



Rotary Peace Fellows went on a Hiroshima
Field Trip (April 6, 2014)

ICU is the only one Rotary Peace Center in Asia. About 20 international students are learning peace studies at ICU every year.

Sasaki: I think faculty members enjoy close ties here, compared to other universities. If we maintain these ties, it will be easier to advise students and it will lead to credit for advising.

Equal work loads and fair evaluation for faculty will be necessary

Sasaki: Let's move on to the problem of the faculty as a group and the system in the graduate school. You want the university to understand that you are sometimes too busy to provide sufficient advising and you would like the administration to make a fair evaluation of your efforts.

Kristeva: The more we do, more students will come to see us. This means more work. If you sit back and relax, not many will come to see you, so you have more time to yourself. I think we need to reconsider the teaching load in the graduate school. The present system is unfair. It discriminates against those who do their best. To improve the quality of the education and interdisciplinary aspect, we need to reconsider the teaching load by adopting the omnibus courses I suggested. We can start from looking at the difference between the instruction required for graduate and undergraduate students. This review will be necessary to improve the level of advising but it may be a problem that should be considered before that. We should aspire to become good researchers ourselves to nurture good researchers. We also need to oversee myriad research themes so we need to constantly expand our knowledge. That is why we need to consider whether you are in charge of a seminar but also how many students you have in your care. In the doctorate course, we need to think not only of advising but also of co-advising. Any evaluation system will have defects but we can analyze different aspects of instruction necessary in graduate school education and give out points for each. If we consider these points when we evaluate teaching load, maybe we can improve the situation.

Sasaki: Fair evaluation, right?

Strengthening the advantages of liberal arts in the graduate school

Sasaki: Any comments to wrap up the discussion?

Kaizoji: I think it is our obligation to offer a curriculum that students will be satisfied with. I'm not talking about continuing to offer courses that students have not taken for years, but courses that provide the foundation in a certain field should be available. If we have to omit those courses from the curriculum it is time to think whether we can continue to offer graduate school education.

Concerning the idea about different faculty taking turns offering courses, since we are all very busy, many would prefer to work in relation to a certain field like peace studies in relation to say the 21st Century COE Program. This would allow us to choose from a broad spectrum of themes that ICU excels in, which would probably be "peace" for us. We can initiate a project for presentations with the graduate students, which would be counted in our achievements. The courses can be offered within the framework of that project. That would be a feasible solution for faculty and bolster their motivation to participate. Evaluation as an achievement would make it easier to ask faculty to cooperate, and maybe we can ask some external scholars to come in if there is a subsidy. The university would need to provide support by appointing a coordinator for this in managing and organizing the project.

Kubo: I want to go back to the problem of whether we are nurturing researchers or not. A good number of ICU graduate students aspire to become science communicators or teachers. Since it is very important to communicate scientific knowledge to society, I personally welcome having science teachers in Japan with master's degrees. So our science majors are more than happy to have the opportunity to take courses in social science and comparative culture.

On the other hand, this means our graduate school may not be suited for future scholars. Many do opt to further education elsewhere: I frankly think that the research environment at present in some cases may be better at other universities. ICU should not concentrate on nurturing scholars but make the most of its strength as a master's course of a liberal arts college.

I would like to cooperate with faculty in other fields to expand my perspective and nurture master's degree students who can contribute to society. We do have a doctor's course in our Program, but only one has earned a doctorate so far. Currently we only have one student in the doctor's course. We have to nurture students in the Program to be able to continue our own research as scientific exploration is mostly collaborative.

Langager: As St. Francis of Assisi said, "Do few things and do them well." We should not try to do everything, but narrow down our tasks and deal with them skillfully. When we advise students, you should learn to work with them. In theoretical or practical research, we analyze data and deduce conclusions based on that analysis. This is what we do best in graduate school. Master's degrees are increasingly required of students, as employers find it important. Perhaps we should focus not so much on whether the student will opt for a future in research, but make sure that in the master's course he/she acquires the necessary practical skills of understanding research, making use of empirical research, and applying research results to practical problems.

Kristeva: One more thing, along with the specialized research on a given topic, it will be important to emphasize an interdisciplinary approach, a distinctive feature of liberal arts education.

(English translation provided by the FD office)

Postscript

Teruyoshi Sasaki

Dean, Graduate School

Table 1 sums up the discussion.

In Discussion Part 1, Counseling Center Director Mr. Terashima joined us to talk about the following topics:

1 The mental, physical and financial situation differs for each student.

We need to work with students individually. But we also need to be careful not to seem unfair, when we treat each student differently.

2 Scolding cannot be avoided

It is easier to say “nice” to whatever students do, but that does not contribute to their improvement. Only faculty can make suggestions for academic problems. Faculty cannot avoid scolding students. Although they may feel depressed after a scolding, faculty and counselors can provide help.

3 Isolated graduate students

Those entering ICU from other universities, students from outside Tokyo or from abroad, those who are working on themes no other student is working on, will have the possibility of feeling isolated, so we need to activate exchange among graduate students.

4 Should faculty have counseling skills?

Faculty should listen, but they do not need to acquire counseling skills. If faculty feel that a student needs counseling, he/she can make a call to the Center in front of the student to share the role of supporter. A professor by special appointment, with his experience, told us that he takes a walk to change the atmosphere, or waits until the student realizes what the problem is. We have a lot to learn from his experience.

5 Not being able to change one’s way of advice

Since we have no opportunity to see how other professors advise their students, we tend to stick to our

own methods. A solution for this would be to provide a mentor for newly appointed faculty. Faculty should exchange information about advising and also engage in self-criticism.

In Discussion Part 2, we talked about the following themes:

1 Declining basic academic ability of graduate students

There were two reasons. One was the abolishment of the written exam for admission to graduate school: students lack basic knowledge in their specialized field. This was a point raised by a professor from the Natural Science Program. A solution for this will be to provide students with assignments after they enter the graduate school. The other was the lack of English ability. This is not a problem of advising, but the system in the Programs: JDS students need to study English before they leave for Japan.

2 Recognize that some master’s students will seek jobs

Graduate school students consist of those seeking a future in academia and those seeking jobs. We need to acknowledge that students need to spend time for their job search.

3 Lack of exchange between students and faculty

The seniors and juniors in the graduate school have less opportunity to know each other. Faculty cannot expect senior students to pass on basic information to those behind them, so the professors must provide new students with the same information every time. By organizing an on-campus presentation meeting, graduate school students can get to know each other and faculty, which would solve some of these problems.

4 Problems of burden on the faculty

The more effort faculty place on teaching, and the more they recommend undergraduate students to acquire advanced degrees, they are busier with no time for themselves. So perhaps we should give credit to faculty who have more students in their care, and consider this factor when deciding the teaching load.

In the course of summing up the discussion in this report, I had the opportunity to review my advising methods. I thank every one of you who participated in the discussion and supported this project.

(English translation provided by the FD office)

Table 1 Advising Within the Graduate School: Issues and Solutions

Issues	Examples of Solutions
【Discussion 1】	
1. Students have different mental, physical and financial situations	• Advice must be handed out case by case (but you need to be fair)
2. You cannot avoid scolding students	• Students do not improve by just saying "nice"
3. Isolated graduate students	• Activate exchange among graduate students
4. Counseling skills necessary for faculty?	• Sharing responsibilities with the Counseling Center
	• Faculty can connect students with the Center (calling for help in addition to support from faculty)
	• Important to listen to graduate students
	• Change the atmosphere by taking a walk etc.
	• Don't expect too much, look for hope (important to wait and watch)
5. Difficulties in changing the advising method	• Faculty need to self-criticize their advising
	• Newly appointed faculty need mentors
【Discussion 2】	
1. Declining basic academic ability in grad students	• Give them assignments after starting out at ICU (if lack of knowledge is due to the absence of a written exam)
	• English program necessary before leaving for Japan (especially for JDS students)
2. Some master's students will seek jobs	• Show understanding that they need to spend time seeking for jobs
3. Lack of exchange between students and faculty	• Enhance opportunities for presentations among faculty and students
4. Problem of faculty workload	• Give more credit to faculty who have more students in their care, and decrease burden of their duties

FD Seminar Report

Implementing a strong mentoring program for new and junior faculty

Lecturer: Professor Heather M. Fitz Gibbon
Dean for Faculty Development
Professor of Sociology
The College of Wooster

Day & Time: May 19, 2014 (Mon.) 16:50-17:50

Place: Meeting Room 206, Administration Building

The College of Wooster is a university with which ICU has relations as part of ICU's "Cultivation of Global Human Resources that Lead the Development of Economic Society." ICU's aim is to encourage students in the natural sciences to study abroad and have students conduct joint senior research projects. This seminar welcomed Professor Heather M. Fitz Gibbon of The College of Wooster, who came to Japan, as the lecturer. Professor Gibbon spoke in the main about the tenure system and a mentoring program for pre-tenure faculty and introduced examples at The College of Wooster.

At The College of Wooster, new faculty renew their two-year contracts three times and are evaluated a total of three times, during the second, fourth, and sixth years. Whether they can get on the tenure track is determined by the result of the evaluations. Two mentors from a non-affiliated department, a senior faculty member and a junior faculty member, are assigned to every new faculty member.

While ICU newly instituted a tenure system in AY2014, The College of Wooster has a track record of operating a tenure system for several decades. However, it became apparent that the two institutions share similar issues and concerns regarding tenure evaluations. Examples include the difficulty of evaluating all of the activities of faculty; the search for an appropriate balance among the evaluation areas (research, education, service); and the difficulty of establishing appropriate evaluation measures. Professor Gibbon admitted that these are difficult

issues and mentioned that it is important to earnestly continue discussions among faculty and give and receive candid feedback. In addition, it seems Professor Gibbon herself, as part of her role as Dean for Faculty Development, attends tenure evaluation committee meetings as an attendant who does not have the right to vote, communicates with both those who evaluate and those who are evaluated from a neutral position, and provides advice.

At the end of the seminar, three important points regarding the tenure system were raised. The first point is to recognize that for a university, faculty members are the most important existences. The second point is to not make the tenure system a system of "survival of the fittest." The third point is that mentor/mentee relationships that cross generations and departments further strengthen the university community.

Ideally, the recently instituted tenure system at ICU would cultivate people in such a manner. Also, it would be wonderful if the tenure system could be developed as a system for fostering a sense of community. This seminar made it possible to have such visions.

Yuki Nishinoh

College of Liberal Arts Group
Academic Affairs Division

(English translation provided by the FD office)

編集後記／ Editor's Note

今号では2件の座談会収録を行いました。いずれの座談会でも終了後に「とても面白かったです」「この話し合い、またやりたいですね」などという言葉が出席者の間で交わされていました。研究や授業の現場から離れて、先生方が教育者として存分に語り合った座談会のひととき。その熱気が誌面を通して伝わればと思います。

学事部 教養学部事務グループ 西 納 由 紀

For this issue of FD newsletter, we held two discussions. Participants said they enjoyed the dialogue with colleague saying, "We would love to have another discussion in the future." I hope you enjoyed reading this issue in feeling the fervor of our faculty as educators.

Yuki Nishinoh

College of Liberal Arts Group
Academic Affairs Division

Published by the Office of Faculty Development

CLA Group, Academic Affairs Division, International Christian University

Administration Building Room 103, 3-10-2 Osawa, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181-8585 Japan

Phone: (0422) 33-3639 Fax: (0422) 33-3788 Email: fd-support@icu.ac.jp
