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❖ Learning supports with assistive technology

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It is said that framework for supporting persons with disabilities in Japan has not been fully established compared to other developed countries. Next month (April 1st of 2016), Act for Elimination Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities will become effective. The law prohibits discriminatory treatment against persons with disabilities and requires private universities to implement reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are defined as appropriate alteration and adjustments in order to ensure opportunities for persons with and without disabilities, yet the specific accommodating measures must be decided on a case-by-case basis. It is important to make a maximum effort to identify supportive actions that all sides can agree on, considering the needs of each person with disabilities and the feasibility of the actions. For this purpose, the university is required to establish a framework so that we can present a variety of supportive measures. Some of the measures can be realized by using new technologies. For example, it may be possible to reduce the burden on students with writing difficulties by taking advantage of the camera function of increasingly popular smartphones, which may provide a significant help for their learning. This short article introduces some examples in which new technologies are effective in the setting of supporting students with disabilities.

【Developmental disorder】

There are fifteen students with developmental disorders who applied for support application in AY2015. The number has been on the rise in recent years. Such

students need various kinds of support, but a common difficulty is for them to absorb a lot of information all at once. For such students, it is quite effective to provide PowerPoint files used in the class on Moodle or video-recorded lectures online. Furthermore, the screen-capturing function available in PowerPoint makes it possible to construct slideshow files with the accompanying lecture speech, which is an easier way to provide the opportunity to review the class than producing a video. In addition to the lecture itself, it is critical for smooth communication with students with developmental disorders to provide various announcements (homework, tests, assignments, deadlines, classroom changes, etc.) using methods other than oral explanation. Given the current situation where there are many students who have some form of communication problem yet do not apply for supportive measure (according to one estimate one out of ten students), Moodle may be an essential communication tool especially in large classes regardless of the presence of eligible students.

【Hearing disorders】

Recently, FM acoustic aid systems or special speakers for persons who are hard of hearing are beginning to be used depending on the degree of the disability. FM acoustic aid systems transmit the voice of a speaker like an FM radio, which is received by hearing aids or cochlear implant. What is different from the ordinary microphone is that the sound is much clearer, which is especially helpful in an environment such as a classroom where there are a variety of sound

sources. On the other hand, special speakers for persons who are hard of hearing support verbal communication by adjusting the range of the sound which is particularly difficult for the particular persons who are hard of hearing (consonant in high frequency range) instead of merely increasing the volume. Automatic text conversion by phonetic recognition software is also becoming gradually popular. However, its accuracy is unfortunately not good enough for use in an educational setting, and it is especially so in an environment like ICU where two languages are commonly used in ordinary classes.

【Mobility impairments】

For students with mobility impairments, note taking is one of the apparent difficulties. In ICU there are students who use a PC or tablet computer for note taking. Other students use the camera of a smartphone to photograph the blackboard or to record the lecture. It

is controversial to allow students who do not have disabilities to use such devices in the classroom. However, there are indeed a certain number of students who have difficulty in note taking yet do not apply for supportive measure. The SNSS office wishes to encourage each faculty to take a flexible approach in such cases.

In recent years the number of students who apply for supportive measure for the entrance exam has also increased. We all must engage in fostering an environment where persons with disabilities can function without constantly being made aware of their disability. Fortunately many faculties at ICU have experience in supporting the students with disabilities. The SNSS would like to ask each faculty member to tell us about any good ideas you have had so we can share the information.

❖ 2015 NACADA International Conference Report

Sayaka Oeda

Academic Planning Center

From June 23 through June 26, 2015, I had the opportunity to take part in the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) International Conference. As an American academic advising association, NACADA usually holds its conferences and seminars in the United States. Since its establishment, the Academic Planning Center has participated continually in NACADA conferences and seminars, both to become acquainted with the latest advising information and to become more highly knowledgeable on advising. In recent years NACADA has aspired to be the premier global community for academic advising, and in 2013 it held its first International Conference outside the United States. The International Conference I attended was the second, held in Melbourne, Australia.

While the NACADA Annual Conference held every autumn in North America is dominated by participants from the U.S. and Canada, I think an important feature of this International Conference was the diversity of its participants. By far the largest group of participants was from Australia, while others came from New Zealand, the Middle East, and East Asia. While there also was a considerable number of participants from North America, staff and faculty from the host institution, the University of Melbourne, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology were a highly visible presence. Nearly 300 representatives of universities were present, and the three Plenary Sessions and the Concurrent Sessions for those interested in the individual topics they addressed featured passionate discussion of various themes related to academic advising.

The three Plenary Sessions are summarized below, together with my own impressions.

1. Plenary Session 1 (Dr. Charlie L Nutt)

NACADA Executive Director Dr. Nutt argued that academic advising plays an important role in student growth, greatly influencing students' retention rates and completion rates, and by extension improving the evaluations that universities receive. He identified as major roles of academic advisors of entering students

“interpreting” the culture of the university, which is a brand new experience for the students, to help them understand it and forging connections with various places to enable the students to act on their own in this new environment. He also noted that an outstanding academic advisor can have a major impact on students' learning as a whole.

I was deeply impressed by his argument that advising is not just a service. Neither is it just an aid that is inessential to university education. Rather, it is the core of university education, and there is a need for the entire university to recognize its importance and implement advising through systematic, university-wide initiatives.

2. Plenary Session 2 (Dr. George D Kuh)

Dr. Kuh from the University of Indiana at Bloomington was a leader in the development of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), an evaluation tool used widely in the U.S. and Canada. It's said that in the U.S. today, university graduates have experience with 10-14 jobs by the time they reach the age of 38 years. To enable them to succeed in such a dramatically changing environment, universities need to impart to students wide-ranging knowledge, interdisciplinary abilities and skills, the ability to integrate the things they have learned, and social responsibility.

He argued that the most important factor in a university is student engagement, and as means of helping to improve student engagement he identified close contact between students and staff and faculty, an environment that encourages active learning, and quick feedback. As the NSSE has shown, high-impact activities increase students' motivation and enable them to spend more time and effort on their studies. Examples of high-impact activities include seminars for first-year students, learning committees, courses focused on writing, service learning, community service, studying abroad, capstone courses, and internships. A learning style in which students take part actively on their own, through learning outside the

classroom, interaction with faculty and people from outside the university, working on projects together with others, and receiving frequent feedback can be a life-changing experience.

Hearing how high-impact activities can increase students' commitment to learning, I was reminded of how a colleague at ICU told how the importance of experiential learning was stressed in various places during visits to NAFSA and partner universities in the U.S. with which ICU has student exchange programs. I understood clearly how practical experience outside the classroom is considered highly important as a means of drawing out students' motivation and encouraging learning at a deeper level.

3. Plenary Session 3 (Dr. Liz Thomas)

According to Dr. Thomas of Edge Hill University in the United Kingdom, the key to students' continued success in their learning is a strong sense of belonging to their own university. A sense of belonging comes from having an identity and confidence that one can succeed in his or her own university, through relationships with other students and meaningful interaction with other students or with staff and faculty. I was interested to learn that male students show a tendency to be reluctant to accept the support provided by the university. They tend to think that things are all right until the situation worsens considerably, to consider university support functions to be last resorts, and to be less likely to think of asking for assistance themselves.

Students who have stable relationships with staff and faculty and have staff and faculty members with whom they can consult regularly on any subject have a strong sense of belonging to the university and are able to devote themselves to their studies by obtaining accurate information and addressing things properly at all times. If academic advisors and peer mentors can serve as anchors firmly connecting the students to the university, then there is a greater possibility that students will be able to continue their studies without dropping out.

But what steps should be taken to achieve this kind of readiness in the university? Staff and faculty at every university already have a full plate with their existing responsibilities. It is easy to imagine that they would be hesitant to accept new responsibilities. Under such conditions, the commitment of the upper layers of the

university is very important. That is, a full commitment by the upper layers can lead staff and faculty to have a strong sense of belonging to their own university, making it possible to demonstrate teamwork across the university.

Hearing about how academic advisors and peer mentors can serve as anchors, it made me feel that it would be nice if my own Academic Planning Center and ICU Brothers and Sisters (IBS) could function as one such anchor. Although the retention rate is not that much of a problem at ICU, any student is liable to experience poor grades for a time or to face difficulties for various reasons. I would like us to be a presence that they can rely on at such times, connecting students firmly to the university. Perhaps academic advisors, the Counseling Center, and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) also could serve as anchors.

Hearing about how staff and faculty have a full plate with their own current responsibilities and are reluctant to accept new responsibilities, it seemed to me that, after all, the situation is similar in every country. The idea that commitment at the top levels of the university is essential to demonstrating teamwork across the university seemed to be in agreement with Dr. Charlie Nutt's argument that advising needs to be a systematic, university-wide effort.

This concludes my summary and thoughts on the three Plenary Sessions.

The Concurrent Sessions covered a wide range of themes such as those related to the theory and methods of advising, peer learning, advising outstanding students and minority students, advising international students, and career-related topics. Below I will describe two of these sessions, on emotional intelligence and employability skills.

1. Book Smarts are Never Enough: Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success

Amy Sannes, Deb Seaburg from Minnesota State University Moorhead

Students who were outstanding in high school may suffer setbacks in university for a variety of reasons, including failure to adjust to the university environment, losing sight of their goals along the way, or succumbing to pressure or stress. Obviously there is another

important factor besides academic ability. That factor is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been described as follows:

- Accurately know yourself in terms of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Establish and maintain effective and healthy relationships
- Get along and work productively with others
- Deal effectively and healthily with the demands and pressures of daily living

(Nelson & Low, 2003)

Advisors need to interact with students in ways that will help develop their emotional intelligence. In this session I was able to learn the points that advisors should use to motivate students in order to develop the three skills strongly associated with emotional intelligence: (i) Drive strength (setting meaningful goals for oneself, motivating oneself and concentrating energy, and achieving these goals), (ii) Time management (managing tasks, using time efficiently in accordance with one's own schedule, and achieving tasks), and (iii) Commitment ethic (reliably completing what one has committed to). Effective questioning and discussion also were mentioned.

In my regular advising duties, I help students to set goals. Since I discuss with them subjects such as the kinds of steps they should take to achieve their goals and how they can secure the time and energy needed, this session was meaningful in that it helped me to understand the concept of emotional intelligence and effective questions. Since emotional intelligence also can be said to be a beneficial ability or skill after graduation, I strongly agreed with the statement, "Advisors themselves need to understand their own emotional intelligence and nurture it throughout their lives."

2. Integrating Employability Skills in Curriculum Design and Tertiary Teaching: The Role of Academic Skills Advisors

Paula Keogh, Barbara Morgan from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Employability skills, a subject that one hears discussed frequently even in Japan, refers to applying

academic skills in a work environment. This session argued consistently for the need for a clear consciousness within the curriculum of communication skills in particular among these employability skills.

At the start of the session, the presenters asked what employability meant. Participants answered (i) Professional communication skills, (ii) Emotional intelligence, (iii) Discipline, (iv) Knowledge and application, and (v) Career development learning. Next, the presenters explained that professional communication skills could be broken down into the precise skills of (i) Oral and visual communication, (ii) Reading and writing in a wide range of genres, (iii) Critical and creative thinking, (iv) Negotiation, (v) Networking, (vi) Working in groups, (vii) Problem solving, and (viii) Research and referencing.

Looking at these, they seemed to me to be similar to the basic skills expected of professionals in Japan (Shakaijin-kiso-ryoku advocated by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry). While it is interesting the way the abilities and skills required on the job are similar despite national and cultural differences, there was a little bit of difference on the subject of emotional intelligence. While as described above emotional intelligence is a very wide-ranging skill of which time management accounts for a relatively large share (the need for students to learn time management came up in various discussions), it seems to me that in Japan the importance of time management and efficiency is not emphasized to such an extent. Furthermore, career development learning can be said to be needed in a highly fluid society with dramatic changes. Japan is no exception, and today it is said that people need to continue learning over their entire lives, but I would have to say it is interesting that this is not included among the three basic skills and the 12 skill elements expected of professionals in Japan.

Lastly, we split into small groups to discuss what school subjects are useful for acquiring professional communication skills. Suggestions included courses involving group work, capstone courses, internships, and scientific lab courses. I noticed that all of the high-impact activities discussed in Plenary Session 2 by Dr. Kuh would help to improve professional communication skills.

Conclusions:

The NACADA conference was distinguished by the fact that most of the participants were currently employed as academic advisors or in related positions. As such, most of the sessions involved discussion of real-world examples. The presenters were close to the participants, enabling two-way communication, and there was lively communication among participants as well. It proved a very meaningful time as we were able to sympathize with each other and exchange new ideas. I was encouraged by the sense that although long distances may separate us, my colleagues around the world are striving everyday to overcome similar challenges. Since academic advising is not a general practice in Japan, it is difficult to exchange knowledge and expertise at similar levels when discussing matters with people from Japanese universities. An important result of my participation in this International Conference was the way it reminded me anew of the

fact that the basic approach of the Academic Advising Center does reflect the essentials of the challenges we face and that our initiatives are moving in the right direction.

One point that should be noted about this International Conference in Melbourne was the large number of participants from the Middle East. (The next International Conference was held in February 2016 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.) On the other hand, besides me there were only two other participants from Japan (one from Soka University and one from Ritsumeikan University). Academic advising covers a wide range of topics, and I think that it is quite beneficial in Japan too. As a member of the only university in Japan that participates in NACADA conferences every year, this conference renewed my commitment to diligently pursue better advising and spread knowledge of advising in higher education in Japan.

❖ 21st FD Forum: Rethinking University Education: The View from Today

Naoko Kitagawa Center for Teaching and Learning
Sayaka Oeda Academic Planning Center

We attended the FD Forum held March 5 and 6 at the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. This Forum had two components: A symposium on the first day and working groups on the second day.

In the symposium on the first day, “Rethinking University Education: The View from Today,” four presenters from different perspectives, including those of administration, staff, and faculty of national, public, and private universities and both on- and off-campus positions, reported on the subjects of students, education and scholarship, and organizations and staff, led by coordinator Tsuyoshi Yamada of the Center for The Promotion of Excellence in Higher Education of Kyoto University, with all participants sharing their thoughts on these subjects.

(1) Thinking about the form of university education based on today’s circumstances and future megatrends, from the perspective of an educational nonprofit

Shigeru Yamamoto, Director of the nonprofit organization NEWVERY, spoke on topics including weekday campus visits and management of educational dormitories as trends and future initiatives in university education.

(2) Engendering the educational abilities of society in the university: Connecting learning with work

Hidenori Sugioka, Deputy Director of the Community Cooperation Center of Kyoto Prefectural University, spoke about issues in university education as seen in books published in recent years and elsewhere and then described a partnership with the Kyoto SME Alliance and practical internships as initiatives to connect learning with work.

(3) Contemporary perspectives on university administration and educational reforms

Terumasa Ikeda, Vice President of Otemon Gakuin University, spoke on what administration should aim for based on his own experiences, from the perspectives of a customer-centric approach and academic ability.

(4) Issues in staff growth and development and university education

Administration Division Manager Hideho Oshima of the Ritsumeikan University College of International Relations presented on what will be expected of staff in the future and learning in the workplace, based on the contemporary employment environment and university organization conditions.

Following these presentations, the venue became quite lively with debate among the symposium presenters and floor discussions, among other activities.

Working groups were held on the second day, with Ms. Oeda from the Academic Planning Center attending “Exchanging ‘Words’ in the Classroom: Communication through Dialogue and Student Independence” and Ms. Kitagawa of the Center for Teaching and Learning attending “University Reforms and FD: Critique and Advice.”

“Exchanging ‘Words’ in the Classroom: Communication through Dialogue and Student Independence” conveyed the idea that interaction through dialogue based on exchange of words is vital to independent learning. While dialogue may involve a number of combinations, this session was able to touch on some leading examples of courses consciously incorporating exchange based on dialogue in the forms of (1) dialogue with the self within each individual student, (2) dialogue between students, and (3) dialogue between students and faculty.

It is said that dialogue with another is necessary for people to learn something. The points that lead to discomfort or hesitation when encountering new knowledge or experiences differ among individuals. Hearing how much can be learned from these differences helped me to understand that a wealth of diversity among students and faculty is key and just how vital dialogue can be.

This working group also featured workshops in which participants actually experienced a course with a

focus on exchange through dialogue. In one of these, participants split into groups of four and completed poems together. The goals of this course were to deepen one's own thinking and secure social language through sharing thoughts and words with a wide range of people. Trying to learn these things through the process of creating a poem together was very interesting.

My regular academic advising duties also are based on dialogue. While I chose this working group because I was drawn by its keyword of "dialogue," it proved a good opportunity to rethink the meaning of dialogue that encourages students' independence and just what is meant by learning. (Oeda)

"University Reforms and FD: Critique and Advice" was focused on three presenters, one interviewer, and one coordinator. Following presentations by the three presenters, a debate was held with the interviewer and then a floor discussion took place. In part because three of the five were faculty members from the field of philosophy, it seemed to look at fundamental questions like "What is the starting point of FD?" and "What does it mean to be useful?"

For example, one often hears about the ability to cultivate practical basic professional abilities, but what is meant by "practical?" The view was offered that while active learning and internships have proven popular recently, isn't it important to learn the so-called classics as well?

I took part in this working group hoping to get some hints for addressing the numerous concerns that I have encountered as a faculty member responsible for FD for one year. I felt keenly that faculty at every university are concerned about and trying to solve similar issues, although they do vary somewhat. One faculty member's comment, "Just what is FD? We need to take on diligently, over the long term, uncomfortable and unstable conditions in which it is impossible to come up with a ready answer." I felt that I should keep this in mind in my future duties. (Kitagawa)

❖ FD Seminar Report

“The Impact of Reasonable Accommodation in Higher Education – from Benefits to Rights” Report

Lecturer: Ryoji Hoshika (Lecturer; The Center for Barrier-Free Education Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo)

Yuriko Iino (Project Researcher; The Center for Barrier-Free Education Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo)

Date & time: Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 14:00-15:00

Location: International Conference Room, Dialogue House 2F

“Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities” will become effective in April 2016. This law will introduce to Japan for the time the concept of “reasonable accommodation,” a system whereby persons with disabilities exercise and enjoy human rights on an equal basis with persons without disabilities. Reasonable accommodation, which is provided to persons with disabilities, takes various forms depending on the circumstances or needs of the individual and is not determined simply by the type or severity of the disability. In order to provide reasonable accommodation as a university, it is important to understand not only individual cases but also the way of thinking underlying them.

For this FD seminar, Dr. Ryoji Hoshika and Dr. Yuriko Iino of The Center for Barrier-Free Education Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo were invited to speak on the theme “The Impact of Reasonable Accommodation in Higher Education – from Benefits to Rights.” The two spoke about the impacts of Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and reasonable accommodation on higher education as well as the challenges involved.

In the first half of the seminar, Dr. Iino provided an explanation of the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and the kinds of actions that will become necessary on the part of universities. Among these, she particularly emphasized the importance of communication between those providing reasonable accommodation and those receiving such accommodation. In order for reasonable accommodation to be provided appropriately, it is necessary to adequately consider the needs and



circumstances of students; check them against the purposes of education, feasibility, etc.; and determine specific accommodation accordingly. To this end, communication based on mutual trust is essential.

In the second half, Dr. Hoshika spoke about the challenges to be expected when introducing the concept of reasonable accommodation to university education. One challenge is the possibility of reasonable accommodation for students being limited to a guarantee of minimum access and optimal accommodation not being provided due to cost. Another challenge is the possibility of reasonable accommodation not being provided appropriately when evaluating students' abilities due to a conservative understanding of “innate abilities,” which should be measured as an outcome of university education but are not self-evident. At the end, Dr. Hoshika touched upon the process of communication between universities and students regarding reasonable accommodation. This process is an important opportunity for universities to reexamine where the essence of its education lies and to once more perceive the possibilities of education, which has the potential to be diverse. For students, this process itself has an educational function. These points were very thought-provoking.

Currently, the creation of a system enabling the provision of reasonable accommodation across the university, such as the formulation of response guidelines, is underway. This seminar proved to be a meaningful opportunity to reconfirm basic ways of thinking when conducting preparations.

Hiroya Banzono

Center for Teaching and Learning

Note:

Video of the FD Seminar lecture is available on icuTV and ICU OCW.

<https://sites.google.com/a/icu.ac.jp/icutv/fd-seminar/fdseminar-20160126>

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