

Pay Forward: What I Would Like Our Alums to Know

Dear ICU Alums,

I am Hirotaka Takeuchi, the Chair of the Board of Trustees of International Christian University, writing a letter to you directly for the first time. I was appointed in June 2019, the first alum of our alma mater to serve as the Chair.

We alums all know that ICU's founding goes back to the prayers for peace by those who preceded us as well as their donations. Since becoming the Chair, however, I realized that there are a number of things that we do not know. In particular, I wanted to point out three things that struck me, which is why I am writing you this letter. It is quite lengthy, but please bear with me until the end.

For one thing, ICU has been devoting a large sum of financial resources to educate each and every one of us by continuing a small-size classroom education since its founding. In 1956, when students reached their fourth year for the first time, the cumulative deficit per student over the four-year period reached 700 thousand yen (see Column 1 for details), which in today's monetary value converts to a little less than 5 million yen. In other words, ICU was over-spending by a huge sum educating each student over four years relative to the tuition revenue it was receiving.

In the 1980s, this cumulative four-year deficit per student reached roughly 3 million yen in today's monetary value. Starting in the 1990s and up until now, this figure came down to roughly 2 million yen, which was made possible by increasing the tuition and the number of students. Since I graduated in 1969, we can interpret the deficit situation as follows: the loss (minus) of 3 million yen for ICU was a gain (plus) of the same amount for me, made possible by the gift of the donors preceding me.

Second, ICU was able to survive over 70 years despite recording a chronic loss each year. The origin of why this peculiarity has persisted can be traced back to the fund-raising activities in the U.S.A. and Japan right after the end of World War II in 1945, when both countries had remorse over the war and vowed never to make the same mistakes. To secure the necessary funding to carry out its unique education, ICU relied on donations and their investment profit to compensate for the losses. The total cumulative amount of these donations and investment profit reached over 100 billion yen (see Column 2 for details). I am assuming that most of you, like me, received financial assistance from your family in order to attend ICU. On top of that, I want you to know that our student life was supported by this 100 billion yen cumulative fund.

Third, ICU is facing the danger of becoming labeled as "a university only children from rich families can attend." The current tuition fee is 1.43 million yen a year, which stands out as the highest among other universities located in Tokyo, as you can see in Chart 1.

At the time of its founding, ICU's tuition was 30,000 yen, which in today's monetary value converts to roughly 150,000 yen. When I entered ICU in 1965, I paid 60,000 yen for tuition and 40,000 yen for facilities fee for a total of 100,000 yen, or 380,000 yen in today's monetary value. Having joined the soccer club, I remember playing soccer with some members from not-so-well-off families and getting acquainted

with ex-members who were students from countries and regions around the world, including Africa and Asia. Back then, ICU was not a university just for children from wealthy families. That's my recollection.

In order to keep the small-size classroom education, we cannot increase the number of students. Similarly, in order to keep the door open to not-so-well-off students, we cannot increase the tuition. How can we resolve this dilemma? I went back to the principles on which ICU was founded. In *ICU: An Adventure in Christian Higher Education in Japan*, it states clearly to the outside world and as a matter of policy that ICU will (a) not turn down the admission of students who will not be able to pay the tuition if they are qualified and talented, and (b) provide enough scholarships to student in need of financial aid. For your information, ICU was paying 25% of the tuition revenue as scholarships to students in financial need back then. I must confess that I didn't know that many students (including ex-members of the soccer team) had received scholarships.

I have a dream. Faced with reality, we may have no choice but to maintain the high tuition of 1.43 million yen at the current level. However, my dream is the following: to give an opportunity to receive our unique education to as many students as possible from not-so-well-off families, including those outside of Japan. Together with nurturing students who can contribute to world peace, this dream is in line with the purpose of ICU. To be specific, my dream is to increase the scholarship percentage to 25% like in the old days. Incidentally, this 25% is the same percentage that students in financial need at Harvard College are receiving in the form of a full scholarship (full tuition exemption). By living and working together with this 25% in financial need over four years, students who can afford to pay the high tuition embody what it is like to live in a world of diversity, which instills in their mindset and heart the importance of doing good for society and others.

If ICU were to become a university just for students from rich families, we will belie the hope of many donors from the U.S.A. and Japan who have made contributions going back to the days when ICU was founded. To realize my dream, I would like to tie the good will of these donors in the form of a relay torch so that current alums who benefitted from their contributions can “pay forward” to future alums. (As a September student, I like “pay forward” over its Japanese translation of ON OKURI 恩送り, which is why I used these words in English as the title of this letter that I sent out in Japanese.) In short, I would like to establish a “Pay Forward Fund (tentative)” with the goal of “Reviving the Scholarship Rate to 25% (tentative).” You will hear more about how you will be able to support this project from the university going forward.

I have written this letter to share the above dream with my fellow alums. I ask for your understanding and hope to gain your empathy (defined as “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes”) as well.

With best regards,



Hirotaka Takeuchi

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Column 1: Calculating the shortfall of 700 thousand yen

In FY1956, total expenditure amounted to 103 million yen, while revenue from student tuitions was only 27 million yen, so the cumulative deficit per student over the four-year period at ICU reached 700 thousand yen.

Column 2: Donations and investment profit that supplement the deficit arising from educational activities since foundation

For a while after foundation, donations from the Japan ICU Foundation in the U.S. supplemented the deficit. In the 1970s, ICU sold almost half its land to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, which became the grounds for Nogawa Park. , for over 30 billion yen. This land which had initially been purchased by donations from Christians and non-Christians in Japan was first used as a farm to secure food, and later as a golf course. The land sale, overseas and domestic donations, and the returns from these funds, which increased over time, were used to fill the shortage arising to implement the unique instruction at ICU. The cumulative total amounted to approximately 100 billion yen in current monetary value since foundation, without which the University would not have been able to survive. Many of your parents must have provided for your education in some way. In addition to that, donations from many supported each and every one of you on campus.

Chart 1: Comparison of Tuitions at Major Universities in Tokyo**(in ¥10,000)**

University	Entrance fee	Tuition	Facility fee	Other	Total	Total (excluding entrance fee)
ICU	30.0	107.7	35.4		173.1	143.1
Aoyama Gakuin	20.0	83.3	20.9	16.1	140.3	120.3
Keio	20.0	88.0	20.0	6.8	134.8	114.8
Rikkyo	20.0	112.1		0.6	132.7	112.7
Meiji	20.0	88.1		23.3	131.4	111.4
Sophia	20.0	78.0		29.3	127.3	107.3
Chuo	24.0	82.3	21.9	3.0	131.2	107.2
Hosei	24.0	83.1		22.8	129.9	105.9
Gakushuin	20.0	68.6	28.0	7.2	123.8	103.8
Senshu	20.0	75.0	23.0	4.4	122.4	102.4
Waseda	20.0	99.9		2.0	121.9	101.9
Nihon	26.0	81.0	17.0		124.0	98.0
Hitotsubashi	28.2	64.3			92.5	64.3
Tokyo	28.2	53.6			81.8	53.6

Note) From university websites: for faculties of economics in AY2021 or AY2022