

About the Outline of the “Study on Wide-ranging Organizational Reforms in Universities: from the Perspective of Educational Organization and Professional Development: Final Report”

1. Objectives and outline of the research

(1) Objectives of the research

The objectives of this research are to approach the problem of the “governance of universities,” in which interest has grown, from the two viewpoints of (i) organizational reform at the institutional level and (ii) professional development of staff, and elucidate the true facts of the situation.

(2) Outline of the research

Regarding the target of this research project, we investigate the separation of the educational unit and faculty unit (research unit) (hereinafter referred to as “student/faculty separation”), as creation a fundamental change in University system of Japan in which both units have been integrated since the new HE system started after WW2. It is likely to be unavoidable for building educational systems centered on academic degree programs going forward, as the central target of the research.

In the interview survey, we took care to interview multiple leading members in universities that had worked on student/faculty separation, and endeavored to ensure a diversity of perspectives.

Furthermore, in the questionnaire survey we made an endeavor to ascertain the actual situation in Japan regarding the management of universities more widely, rather than confining ourselves only to the issue of student/faculty separation.

When handling the target of student/faculty separation, we took a multifaceted approach, including cases studies based on the interview survey, a comparative analysis based on multiple examples, and the elucidation of the actual situation in Japan using the questionnaire survey. [Research period: fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015, lead researcher: Keiji Kawashima (Kyushu University professor, Senior Visiting Fellow in the National Institute for Educational Policy Research)]

2. Outline of the research outcomes

We compiled this final report consisted of the following three-part structure. In Part I we mainly described the facts regarding student/faculty separation in the universities that cooperated with the interview. In Part II, we reported the survey results of a questionnaire answered by the presidents of the universities (excluding graduate universities or universities that have only established correspondence education courses). In Part III we included articles on a debate that deepens the discussion on the organizational reform of universities from a variety of viewpoints in this section. The matters that were revealed through the points (i) Organization reform at the institutional level and (ii) Professional development of staff, respectively, are as follows (we have partially altered the expressions because these are excerpts from each chapter).

(1) Organization reform at the institutional level

Student/faculty separation positioned in the unique context of each university:

What we made clear in Part I was that the specific institutional design and intention depends on the issues each university is facing. It can be inferred from the reports of each university that the focal points and interpretations of the objectives of student/faculty separation differ as follows in accordance with the unique context of each university. For example, they stated that examples of the factors and objectives that were the background to reform were eliminating the rigidity of the organization, flexible establishment of organizations to train young researchers, handling the

qualitative changes to education that are required due to the diversification of the students, restructuring the organization as a spin-off product for converting into a comprehensive university, realization of rational personnel deployment, etc. Among the universities that implemented the reform comparatively early, some cases can be seen in which the focal point was placed on the revitalization of research or education, but in cases in recent years it can be seen that there are quite a few examples of implementation from a perspective related to university administration. Even with the same student/faculty separation, expectations differ in accordance with the environment and situation inside and outside the university.

Seemingly corroborating this, in the analysis of the questionnaire survey in Part II as well we clarified that the objectives of student/faculty separation depends on the type of educational institution. The organizational reform of student/faculty separation was implemented more often in national universities than public universities or private universities. Specifically, in national universities 39.1% of respondents agreed to “We are implementing it throughout the university”, 17.4% of them agreed to “We are implementing it in some departments (faculties, graduate schools, etc.)”, and 4.3% of them agreed to “We are planning to implement it going forward”. A total of these three replies reaches 60.8% (42 universities) of respondents. The same figure in public universities is 11.5% (eight universities), and in private universities is 8.4% (31 universities) (Figure 1).

Regarding the objectives of the reform of student/faculty separation, the most common reply among national, public, and private universities overall was “it is easy to create a new education program,” and many respondents also replied “bold organizational reform is necessary to accelerate reform” and “education in interdisciplinary and combined fields will be enhanced” (Figure 2). However, limiting our focus to only national universities, there were quite a few cases in which the university carried out the student/faculty separation for the reason that “it is easy to implement personnel cutbacks.” On the other hand, the reason “we can secure faculties in charge of general education” tended to be given less often compared to the universities overall (Data not shown).

In Part III, we pointed out from the discussion based on the interview examples that in the student/faculty separation carried out in the second half of the 2000s examples that reached implementation from the perspective of “the logic of education” were often seen, but regarding examples implemented in the 2010s the aspects of “rationalization” and “streamlining” of personnel deployment can also be seen (Chapter 16). Based on the cases of the interview surveys, it is thought that from the second half of the 2000s “education emphasized” student/faculty separation appeared, in other words, cases in which student/faculty separation was carried out from the perspective of giving greater priority to the provision of education than the perspective of promoting research activities at its foundation, but in recent years in response to changes in the environment of universities, the degree of importance of student/faculty separation has been increasing in terms of the streamlining of personnel deployment as well.

We are implementing it throughout the university
We are implementing it in some departments
We are planning to implement it going forward
We are currently considering it
We considered it but we have not implemented it
We have not considered it

(2) Professionals leading reforms of university

Leaders who are well-versed in the inner workings of the organization, share their awareness of the issues and hold many dialogues with the faculties and staffs:

From the case studies in Part I, we clarified that the leadership of the president was important in particular because the reform such as student/faculty separation entails major changes.

Although we refer to the “leadership” of the president, we could find out the presidents who is not authoritarian and led to the realization of reform by holding many dialogues and using tenacious persuasion. We could also see that in these cases the president continuously took a consistent attitude, and never wavered from the policy.

Furthermore, in the case studies in Part I, regarding the human resources that support this kind of president, we clarified that faculty serving the institution on a long term play important roles in advancing the reforms of the president, such as those who graduated from the university and those who had worked at the university from the beginning of their career, and faculties with a good knowledge of the situation of their university and likewise with experiences of serving as a dean. On the other hand, there were cases in which the universities invited appropriate human resources in from outside the university. Even examples in which external human resources who shared the direction and content of the reform led the reform were seen.

In the statistical compilation of the questionnaire survey in Part II as well, facts consistent with the above findings are clear.

Many of the presidents that replied to the survey had experienced the positions of professor, dean, board member of trustee, and vice-president at their university before becoming the president. (The situations of national universities were different from ones of the public and private universities regarding the point that in the national universities the percentage of presidents who had experienced being a professor or vice-president at their university was extremely high, and the percentage of presidents who had experienced management positions at other universities was low.) Of these experiences, dean and vice-president, and management positions at other universities were often seen as “the most important experience” in the process of being appointed president. This suggest the existence of a process in which people who prove themselves in management positions become president later in life. Note that the years of continuous employment of the respondents in their university averages about 19 years in all universities, but tends to be longer in national universities. (In national universities in most cases the presidents have experiences with long-term service of 20 years or more in the institution.)

In the Part III discussion based on the interviews, we can see that the presidents in charge of the implementation of student/faculty separation reform are people possessing work experience at their university who were internally promoted, and that being well-versed in the inner workings of the organization had in some respects an important meaning when implementing reform. Furthermore, we were able to discover that it is necessary for the members (in particular the members of top executive team) to provide a certain degree of support base for the implementation of reform, and that the sharing of awareness of the issues between the president and the executives, the importance of the leadership of the human resources supporting the president, and the importance of dialogue with organization members in the process of showing strong leadership are points which are characteristic of the examples in which student/faculty separation was achieved.