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A Message from the Executive Director of the International Center

Looking back on the turbulence caused by COVID-19 last year, I find myself filled with complex emotions. With many events either cancelled, postponed, or carried out online, this most “inactive” year shook us most deeply. Some students had to return home just after having settled in their host countries to study abroad. Others had to give up even leaving for the study abroad opportunities they had been truly looking forward to. Still others suffered from quarantine measures preventing them from straightforward entrance to their study destinations. Worried, faculty members and staff watched students going through the crisis and busied themselves preparing to face change after change. Our disappointment, irritation, good will, and hope were all intermingled. It might seem like an “inactive” year, but beneath the surface, there are many stories of important, though perhaps little known, activities still waiting to be told.

A ray of hope is that access to online classes became easy and normal, thereby creating new platforms for online study-abroad through Collaborative Online International Learning (popularly known as COIL). TMU is seizing this opportunity to probe into this new mode of international educational exchange. At the same time, people are noticing the importance of in-person experiences all the more, such as breathing the local air, feeling the foreign land under one’s feet, and experiencing live—not virtual—, face-to-face communication with its inhabitants. Hoping to regain such days as soon as possible, we are determined to move, together with you, steadily forward.



Voice from an International Student

Mr. April Pyone Maung Maung from Myanmar

Why did you decide to study abroad?

In my culture, parents support their children financially until they get married. Some parents still assist their children even after marriage. I am not against this culture. However, I personally feel that it is a burden for my badly-off family. Therefore, independence is my first reason for studying abroad. The second reason is higher education. As I am from a developing country, studying abroad is the only way to advance my education.

What is your main reason for choosing TMU as a place to conduct research?

The main reason is that my professor is an IEEE fellow and TMU provides a worry-free environment for conducting research. I am supported by the Tokyo Human Resources Fund for City Diplomacy Scholarship. Furthermore, Tokyo offers numerous bonuses such as rich culture, healthy food, kind people, and clean environments.

How is your daily life in Tokyo so far, in the context of COVID-19?

COVID-19 affects me more mentally than physically. Going to the lab and doing research do not change. However, the university has become so quiet, and sometimes I feel like the only person around. From an everyday life perspective, things have not changed for me as an individual, for example, the way I eat or do things. Yet, holistically, there are many major changes. One of the best things for a graduate student is to attend international conferences. Due to COVID-19, I am unable to travel to any countries for conferences. On the bright side, since most outdoor activities are cancelled, I have more free time for myself so that I can think and do the things I want to do on my own time.



Voice from a TMU Student

Ms. Chihiro Yamamoto

Why did you decide to study abroad?

I decided to enter the exchange program because I wanted to go outside my comfort zone, put myself in a new place, and experience a culture completely different from home. Also, I have always dreamed of studying in another country, and so this was a great opportunity.

Why did you choose the University of Leicester?

The two main reasons why I chose the University of Leicester were firstly that I was interested in British culture and secondly that I wanted to study my major, biology. The fact that the Biological Sciences course had a high research level and a wide variety of modules to choose from was attractive, too. I found the large population of international students appealing since my goal throughout the program was to interact with many people with diverse backgrounds.

What did you learn through studying abroad?

I learned so many things through my study abroad experience. During my time in the UK, I encountered many unexpected situations, from train delays to the outbreak of a worldwide pandemic. Challenging situations sometimes made me feel insecure, but they became opportunities to ask others for help and figure out solutions. Eventually, I gained confidence in my ability to deal with sudden difficulties. Now, I believe that all experiences, even the struggles, are valuable. Furthermore, I was very lucky to meet many people from all over the world. I am happy to have friends that I still talk to, and I would love to keep in touch with them.



Introduction to Our Dormitory, Global House Chofu

TMU has two dormitories, both located near the TMU campuses for international students, who are always welcome. Ms. Yamanouchi, who lives in one of the dormitories, Global House Chofu, together with the international students, will introduce and overview it as below.

Attractive Dormitory

The dormitory is located in a suburb of Tokyo, about 30 minutes from the city center by train. Around Chofu station, 15 minutes from the dormitory by foot, we have some big supermarkets, movie theaters, and nice restaurants. You would not have any trouble living here. In addition to those urban aspects, we have natural elements around the dorm. For example, the Tama River, one of the largest rivers in Tokyo, runs in front of it, and many of our residents enjoy various kinds of activities out there. The dormitory houses approximately 100 students. All residents have their own bedrooms, and bathrooms and kitchens are shared. Many students spend time in the lounges, which include kitchens, TVs, and comfortable couches. An advantage of living in this dorm is the opportunity to communicate with a variety of people with different backgrounds. At the same time, private bedrooms offer privacy. People living here may have different backgrounds, but we are like one big family. Once you arrive, you will become a part of that family, and this will become your second home.



Role of Resident Assistants



In order to provide support to incoming students, approximately 20 Japanese students called Resident Assistants (RAs) live together with them in the dorm. We are here to help you have a great time in Japan. Our job covers a wide variety of courtesies, from assisting with administrative matters such as opening a bank account to fun details like organizing your birthday party. Since RAs live together with students, you can feel free to ask them questions about anything you wish. You may be worried about coming to Japan, but you do not have to feel nervous. We are here to support you.

Message for future international students

Living in this dorm is a perfect opportunity for you to make new friends and get to know Japanese culture. We will support you and make sure you have a great time and make wonderful memories in Japan. We are all looking forward to seeing you soon!

Participation in the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

TMU became a member of the UNAI on August 24, 2020. UNAI is a global program from the UN Department of Public Information's Outreach Division. It is intended to bring about a closer relationship between the UN and the world's higher academic institutions/partner organizations. All the universities participating in the initiative are expected to undertake at least one new activity each year, addressing the following 10 basic principles that span various fields such as human rights, literacy, sustainability, conflict resolution, and the like.

1. A commitment to the principles inherent in the United Nations Charter as values that education seeks to promote and help fulfil;
2. A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech;
3. A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity;
4. A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education;
5. A commitment to building capacity in higher education systems across the world;
6. A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education;
7. A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education;
8. A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education;
9. A commitment to promoting sustainability through education;
10. A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the "unlearning" of intolerance, through education.



TMU has already been tackling a wide range of studies in fields such as climate issues, poverty among children and youth, promoting diversity, and —through TMU premium college— providing open access courses. Continuing such existing endeavors, we are furthermore committed to expanding our activities closely related to Principles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 of the above.

The 2020 Annual Meeting

The Tokyo Human Resources Fund for City Diplomacy Scholarship Program



Event Outline

Date & Time : Friday, November 6, 2020 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Venue : Online (Zoom)

Attendees : 135 (Current students: 74, Alumni: 19, Tokyo Metropolitan University & Tokyo Metropolitan Government representatives: 42)

Details & Outcomes

The 2020 Annual Meeting of the Tokyo Human Resources Fund for the City Diplomacy Scholarship Program was held on Zoom on November 6, 2020. This year marked the fifth Annual Meeting where international scholarship students (current/alumni) under the Asian Human Resources Fund and the Tokyo Human Resources Fund for City Diplomacy, their academic supervisors, TMU, and Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) representatives come together. Due to COVID-19, this year's meeting was organized online for the first time. It began with TMU President Ueno's opening remarks, TMG Special Advisor to the Tokyo Governor on International Affairs Mr. Ikkatai's speech, and speeches by alumni. These were followed by presentations from current students and alumni. They shared updates on their research, student life, and research outcomes. After the speeches, a special panel discussion was held; two supervisors, two alumni, and two current students discussed their positive experiences at TMU, careers after graduation, and the like. Through this Annual Meeting, attendees intended to reaffirm the aims and objectives of the funding program and foster much stronger ties among international students, TMU, and TMG.

A Look at Numerical Facts (Data)

- Ranked 21st among Japanese universities (Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021)
- 9,126 students(6,852 undergraduate and 2,264 graduate)
- 651 faculty staff and 507 administrative staff
- 638 international students from 30 countries
- International Partner Universities/Institutions (Institutional-level Agreements): 99
International Partner Universities/Institutions (Faculty-level Agreements):109

Academic Composition (7 faculties and 7 graduate schools)

Faculty

- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Urban Environmental Sciences
- Faculty of Systems Design
- Faculty of Health Sciences

Graduate School

- Graduate School of Humanities
- Graduate School of Law and Politics
- Graduate School of Management
- Graduate School of Science
- Graduate School of Urban Environmental Sciences
- Graduate School of Systems Design
- Graduate School of Human Health sciences

