

Press Release

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한국대학교육협의회
Korean Council for University Education

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KCUE holds the Korea-Japan University Presidents' Forum

- The presidents of 24 universities in Korea and 20 universities in Japan, along with representatives from the industries of both countries, attended.
- KCUE, in collaboration with KF, explores ways to strengthen educational cooperation between Korea and Japan.

- The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) and the Korea Foundation (KF) (President Kim Ghee-whan) announced that they would hold the **'Korea-Japan University Presidents' Forum'** under the main theme of **'The Steps of Korean and Japanese Universities Towards a New Era'** on the 9th (Thursday) at 9:30 AM at the Westin Chosun Hotel.
- The forum, jointly organized by KCUE and KF, was held on May 8th and 9th, 2024, with the Japan Committee of Universities for International Exchange (JACUIE*) participating as the Japanese partner organization. It was a significant event, with over 90 university presidents, vice presidents, directors of international exchange offices, and industry leaders from both Korea and Japan coming together.
** Japan Committee of Universities for International Exchange (Chairperson: Nagahiro Minato, President of Kyoto University)*
- This forum, **the first presidential forum organized by the four-year university associations of Korea and Japan, was attended by a Korean delegation of 45 members (from 24 universities) and a Japanese delegation of 37 members (from 20 universities).** It provided a valuable opportunity to discuss and exchange views on ways to enhance cooperation in higher education and expand exchanges between the two countries for the future generation.
- In particular, the forum featured a **special session (Session 2) organized by the Federation of Korean Industries and the Japan Business Federation**, the pillars of the industrial sectors in both countries. During this session, the industry presented the **importance of talent development for higher education through industry-academia collaboration and joint research (R&D), along with practical case studies.** The university presidents also took part in a valuable discussion on these topics.

The constructive relationship between universities in Korea and Japan should continue to develop in order to enhance exchanges for future generations

- For the Korea-Japan University Presidents' Forum, the presidents of the Korea-Japan University Council, government representatives, and industry representatives delivered welcoming and congratulatory remarks.
- Park Sang-gue, Chairman of KCUE, expressed in his opening speech, "I hope this valuable opportunity, where university presidents from Korea and Japan gather together, will serve as a catalyst for promoting exchanges among the younger generation of the future."
- Lee Jong-guk, executive Vice-President of the Korea Foundation (KF), said, "As 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan, the Korea Japan University Presidents' Forum is expected to provide a valuable opportunity to deeply discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries at the university level."
- Dr. MINATO Nagahiro, Chairperson of JACUIE and a representative from Japan, expressed, "I believe today's discussions are very meaningful in advancing a common understanding for practical actions toward the challenges faced by universities in both countries and strengthening cooperation."
- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Lee Ju-ho delivered a congratulatory message, saying, "I hope that, like Europe's Erasmus program, this forum will become a platform for academia and innovation that attracts universities and students from around the world, based on the mutual exchange between Korean and Japanese universities."
- Minister MIBAE Taisuke of the Embassy of Japan in Korea stated, "The exchange between students and researchers of both countries should be further expanded, and for this, the role of universities is crucial."
- Kim Chang-beom, Vice Chairman & CEO of the Federation of Korean Industries, stated, "As global competition for innovation is fiercer than ever, securing key talents and technologies through cross-border collaboration between businesses and universities is the most critical factor in ensuring the future competitiveness of industries."
- Lastly, Chang Je-kuk, former Chairman of KCUE and President of Dongseo University, expressed his hope that the discourse on the Korea-Japan version of the Erasmus program, which he had previously proposed, would continue, emphasizing that the future of both countries depends on the next generation. He also reiterated the importance of close dialogue among the university presidents of Korea and Japan.

Discussion on the Role of Universities in Talent Development and National Soft Power in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

- The keynote address of the forum featured in-depth discussions between scholars from both countries on the topic of 「Korea-Japan Talent Development in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution」, focusing on key issues in higher education in Korea and Japan.
- The keynote speaker from Korea, Dr. Kim Heon Young, President of Kangwon National University, emphasized that the core of future higher education in an era of uncertainty lies in establishing a regional-centered education system. He highlighted the importance of innovation driven by cooperation between local governments and universities for mutual growth, citing examples such as Korea's RISE and Glocal University 30 projects.
- The keynote speaker from Japan, Dr. HOUKIN Kiyohiro, President of Hokkaido University, stated that the current graduate education system is unable to cultivate highly skilled individuals required in a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) society. He emphasized the urgent need for bold reforms in graduate programs through industry-academia collaboration and pointed out that attracting international talent is essential due to the declining birthrate.

※ *VUCA: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity*

- In the following Session 1, Professor Yasumoto Nasu, President of Okayama University, served as the chair, and the session featured presentations and discussions on the topic of 「The Role of Universities as National Soft Power」.
- In Session 1, Ichiro Tanioka, President of Osaka Commerce University in Japan, stated, "The role of universities, which once emphasized elite courses, has changed significantly. With the arrival of the era of universal education, there is a need for educational methods and university systems that align with this shift."
- The Korean speaker, Sung-taek Jung, President of Chonnam National University, summarized the role of universities in the past by country and era, and suggested that universities overcome the current crisis and contribute to global social development through soft power based on the values of democracy, human rights, and peace.
- Following that, a discussion was held by Byun Chang-hoon (President of Daegu Haany University), Hiroshi Samejima (President of Miyazaki University), Jang-ho Lee (President of Kunsan National University), and Hiroshi Yoneyama (President of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University). The participants in the discussion stated that the role of universities, which changes according to the times, is to serve as a channel of communication. They expressed that, in the face of an uncertain present,

universities must actively play the role of soft power in order to embrace a new era for humanity.

**Industry-academia collaboration and joint research
are the cornerstone for nurturing future talent**

- Session 2 was a special session organized by the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) of Korea and Japan Business Federation (KEIDANREN) of Japan, under the theme 「Industry-Academia Collaboration-Based Joint Research and Talent Development」. It featured presentations and discussions by industry leaders, focusing on examples of industry-academia collaboration between companies and universities.
- The Korean speaker, Lee Jin-sook, Chairperson of the National Industry-Academia-Research Cooperation Council, stated, "Korea is expanding various university-industry collaboration platform projects to create synergy between universities and businesses (industry-academia). To support this, both the central government and local governments are providing large-scale budgets to promote and activate innovation in industry-academia cooperation."
- The Japanese speaker, Yoshimura Takashi, Secretary-General of the 21st Century Public Policy Institute of KEIDANREN, mentioned, "Industry-academia collaboration in Japan is on the rise, both in terms of quantity and budget, and I am confident that the industry can bring about innovative changes through collaboration with the diverse and rich knowledge universities possess."
- In the discussion chaired by President Hong Won-hwa (Kyungpook National University), Oh Jung-hoon (CEO of HYUNDAI NGV), Koike Asako (Director of Hitachi), Park Chan-seon (CEO of Txinno Bioscience), and Tani Akito (CEO of JX Metals) shared various examples of industry-academia collaboration between Korea and Japan. They collectively emphasized the roles of corporations, universities, and governments in talent development, industry-academia cooperation, and the activation of joint R&D efforts.

Efforts for future generations exchange between Korea and Japan must continue

- In Session 3, Chang Je-kuk, President of Dongseo University chaired a practical discussion among university presidents on 「ways to strengthen and activate exchanges between future generations of Korean and Japanese university students」.
 - The Korean speaker, President Lee Ki-jeong of Hanyang University, emphasized the need for government support measures through a clear process, based on data analyzing the current state of exchanges between university students, the future leaders of Korea and Japan. He presented the Erasmus model, a funding support program based on inter-university agreements in Europe, as an example.
 - The Japanese speaker, President Hiroki Otani of Shimane University, presented on ways to increase faculty and student exchanges, focusing on the theme of discovering cultural heritage between Japan and Korea. He cited the exchange program conducted in 2023 between Shimane University in Japan and Mokpo National University in Korea as an example.
 - The subsequent discussion featured the participation of Hosang Kwak (President of Kumoh National Institute of Technology), Atsuko Kato (President of Tsuru University), Yong-Sang Lee (Vice President of Industry-Academia Cooperation at Woosong University), and Eiko Kato-Otani (President of OOsaka Women's University). The university presidents from both countries participating in the discussion emphasized that the Korea-Japan exchange model should evolve from being individual-centered to university-centered. They agreed that student exchange programs should be further expanded, entry barriers should be lowered, and a broader range of academic disciplines should be included. Furthermore, they all voiced their support for the creation of a new initiative that moves beyond the traditional framework of mobility-based exchanges, enabling mutual recognition of credits or joint degrees through various platforms.
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- Park Sang-gue, Chairman of KCUE, stated that it is meaningful to have the first opportunity for university presidents from both countries to come together, discuss, and build a network for promoting **future-oriented Korea-Japan relations and expanding exchanges for the next generation**. He added that he expects this forum to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and become a new platform for global talent development and educational collaboration between the two countries.