

NEWS

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

東京大学公共政策大学院

LETTER

GraSPP
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

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Inaugural Message from the Dean

April 2018



Akio Takahara
Dean, Graduate School of Public Policy

Coming up now for almost 30 years from the end of the Cold War, it feels as if world history is once more entering a new phase. The signs include moves to halt and reverse the shifts toward globalization and regional integration, and great powers choosing to ignore international law and impose changes through the exercise of force. In Japan, we are being warned of disappearing regions, characterized by aging demographics and the concentration of population in Tokyo, while also confronting a need to respond to a worsening security environment. Meanwhile, all of this is being accompanied by rapid progress in communications technology and artificial intelligence that, along with making life more convenient, is also providing greater control over information. We face numerous challenges that we have never experienced before.

Since it was established in April 2004, GraSPP has strived to train policy professionals for work in diverse fields of public policy by delivering an academic education that balances law, political science, and economics together with practical lessons from teaching staff with past experience of working at international institutions or government agencies. I also believe that our role is continuing to expand in scope.

The aspect of GraSPP that predominates over all others is our active pursuit of internationalization. Our Master of Public Policy, International Program (MPP/IP) that allows students to study for a master's degree exclusively in English has also attracted a rising number of Japanese students since it was first offered in AY2010. Japanese and overseas student numbers are now roughly equal, with approximately 45% of teaching being in English. Our students have extensive opportunities for overseas study, with exchange programs in place with a total of 13 leading international universities, Columbia University, Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po), and London School of Economics (LSE) among them. At eight of these universities, these arrangements include a double degree program whereby students can gain degrees from both the University of Tokyo and the exchange university. Numerous other opportunities for gaining international experience are also available. One option that I would have liked to take advantage of myself were I still a student is the CAMPUS Asia program, which offers double degrees or joint courses with the School of International Studies at Peking University and the Graduate School of International Studies at Seoul National University.

Through these various programs, GraSPP currently has students from roughly 30 different countries. The majority of these are from Asia and come with experience of working in such places as central banks, ministries of finance or foreign affairs, or other government agencies, in journalism, in the legal profession, or in financial institutions. We provide overseas students with internship opportunities at English-speaking workplaces. With more than 1200 students from around 50 different countries having graduated from GraSPP to date, we intend to boost networking among our alumni further in the future.

We introduced a doctoral program in AY2016. With the knowledge and skills needed for the formulation, assessment, and implementation of public policy growing in sophistication and complexity, we are approaching a time when holding a doctorate will be a prerequisite for certain roles, particularly at international agencies and in international negotiations. Our aim is to foster the people who will take a leading role in public policy around the world in the areas of international finance and development and in international security, combining academic rigor and practical skills along with the ability to undertake advanced research in their area of expertise.

Another feature of GraSPP is that we have sought to coordinate leading-edge academic research with real-world activities, having acquired a variety of external funding. Research projects are currently ongoing in fields that include science, technology, and innovation; ocean policy; human resources policy; health policy; energy and the environment; and capital markets, with the outcomes of this work being widely deployed back into society. Moreover, as part of practical academic education that ties back to the real world, we have also been taking a leading role to run interdisciplinary programs that range across all areas of study. With labor shortages becoming a problem in Japan, we also introduced an executive program (one targeted at those in the workforce) for healthcare technology assessment in AY2017 that is aimed at establishing a systematic approach to cost-benefit analysis.

The completion in 2017 of our new International Academic Research Building has provided a much-improved research and teaching environment. I urge our students to make the most of the opportunities you have been granted to forge yourselves into leading public policy professionals. I would also like to thank everyone from across the board for the support and cooperation they have shown us.

Student Lounge, Study Room, and Discussion Spaces Completed!

The new student lounge, study room, and five discussion spaces have been completed on level 4 of the International Academic Research Building. The student lounge has a bright color scheme and a comfortable feel. All on the same floor, the spaces for self-study are roomy and open, with twice as many seats available as before. The atmosphere has also been made brighter, with sunlight able to shine in through large windows at either end. The discussion spaces are made up of five rooms, each of which is distinguished by a different floor color. It may be that being able to choose the room that best suits the mood of the day will lift motivation and promote vigorous debate. You are all urged to make the most of these new facilities.



GraSPP Olympics 2018

Akito Goto MPP/IP Year 2

Held for the first time last year, this year's GraSPP Olympics, an event for new entrants put on by the GraSPP Student Council, was held on April 4th. About 80 first-year students who had started at GraSPP between September last year and April this year gathered in the morning at the Gotenshita Memorial Arena on the Hongo Campus. Just like last year, the three events were tug of war, taimaire (a type of ball game), and long rope jumping. The participants looked on as if astonished to find themselves, now students at a graduate school, participating in events from an elementary school sports day. The Japanese students had first to overcome a language barrier to explain these games to those from overseas.

The first event, tug of war, tested teamwork. The hastily put together teams competed in rounds that were nominally set to last for 30 seconds. Once underway, though, it took only a few seconds to settle victory one way or the other.

The second event, taimaire, called for strategy. The rules were changed from last year, with a player chosen from each team to stand under a basketball goal holding a basket while the remainder of the team tried to throw their balls into the basket from the centerline some meters away. Each round lasted for five minutes. Although success was simply a matter of timing the throw of each ball, the enthusiasm of the participants for toting up points saw the player holding the basket being subject to a sudden hail of powerfully thrown balls, like artillery shells raining down over a battlefield. While balls thrown by children of elementary school age are one thing, this event saw the player holding the basket being bombarded in face and body by balls thrown by adults of twenty or more as they went all out to get them to land in the basket. The final event of long rope jumping tested the ability to get everyone working together. Getting a bunch of people who had only just laid eyes on each other to all jump up and down together was a near-impossible undertaking. While some teams succeeded in racking up more than 20 consecutive jumps in their five-minute round of competition, the previous year's record remained in place.

With two students getting themselves injured amid all the excitement of the games, this year's Olympics leaves challenges for next year's event to grapple with, not least being how to prevent accidents. Along with all the happenings, the camaraderie built up between the Japanese and overseas students as they formed themselves into teams and raised a sweat together was a testament to how there are no borders in sport.

No doubt the students were able to further deepen this camaraderie during the policy challenge that took place later that afternoon.





Ms. Fujita, the second person from the right, at the APEC Voices of Future 2017 (youth conference).

— **How has life been since starting at the University of Tokyo as a graduate school student?**

ery enjoyable and fulfilling. Although I joined the student union during my first year, GraSPP has much more interaction between students and more external teachers. I was able to meet more people and I suddenly found there were a lot more things I wanted to do. I played volleyball through the athletics club as an undergraduate and spent four years immersed in my studies and that sport, so it feels like I'm only now getting started at university (laughs).

Last year, I took full advantage of the programs offered to me by GraSPP. The first of these was an educational tour visiting different parts of the country put on by the Japan Study Trip program in which I accompanied 30 students from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Through good fortune, I was able to participate despite having yet to start at GraSPP at the time of the trip, and I found it an eye-opening experience. Being more used to talking with people of my own age group, listening to what people from a wide variety of different backgrounds had to say made a big impact on me. Later on, in November, I also attended an APEC youth conference that was held in Vietnam. This was a meeting of youth (students) from different countries held two days before the main APEC conference. With the preparatory work having been done, I found the work on collating views contributed by delegates from different countries into a proposal document at the event itself to be very stimulating. Being able to watch the addresses from the various world leaders attending APEC was also a valuable experience.

Of all the things I was involved in last year, however, one that left a particularly deep impression on me was Aomori, where I went as part of the field-study-based collaborative public policy program that was launched by the University of Tokyo last year. After conducting about four on-site surveys in Towada, I have become an Aomori obsessive.

— **Why did you choose Aomori and Towada as places to conduct a survey?**

I attended presentations by the participating local government agencies as part of the process of deciding on a location. I was won over by the one given on Towada by a person from the Aomori prefectural government which I found to be particularly powerful. The



Kasumi Fujita
(International Public Policy Program, Year 2)

Towada representative got around a lot and was well known in the area, introducing me to lots of people in Towada. I also appreciated the warm welcome I received from the townspeople. Another reason for my being so taken with the place was that doing fieldwork in Towada led to my getting to know Hatanaka-san, who works on promoting the town by running seminars on Towada Barayaki (pan-broiled beef belly and onion), a popular local cuisine. Watching the video about its winning the 2014 B-1 Grand Prix (a competition for inexpensive local cuisine) that also showed assistance work in areas affected by the earthquake really brought home for me what it means to be involved in regional reconstruction. Last year also saw the staging of a festival of local cuisine at Shenyang in China during October that was attended by 10 or so organizations from Japan, it being the 45th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China. As the Barayaki Seminar delegation to the Shenyang festival included local junior high school students, I went along with the job of looking after eight young people. It was my first ever visit to China and I had a wonderful time. Having met so many people over the last year who I would like to remain in contact with, including Hatanaka-san and the people from the prefectural government, this is something I expect to cherish for years to come.



With a student from Tuvalu studying in Japan. She spent time in Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Fiji as a child.

On Stepping Down as Dean

Toshiaki Iizuka



Following two years in the job, I stepped down from my post as Dean of GraSPP at the end of March 2018. It is thanks to the assistance of so many of you during this period that I was able to successfully complete my term as dean. Thank you very much.

First established as a new faculty in 2004, the past two years have been a turning point for GraSPP. The first major change was the establishment of a doctoral program in April 2016. Set up in response to the growing sophistication and internationalization of practical public policy work, the two main fields dealt with in the program are international finance and development and international security. In contrast to traditional doctoral programs, which have a strong research emphasis, the focus at GraSPP is on preparing graduates to participate in the practical realms of public policy. Some of our master's graduates were among those applying to enter the doctoral program. Along with continuing to build diversity in our faculty, with the commencement of the doctoral program coinciding with the appointment of two overseas teaching staff, we have also taken steps to make ourselves more

international, including by holding faculty meetings in English.

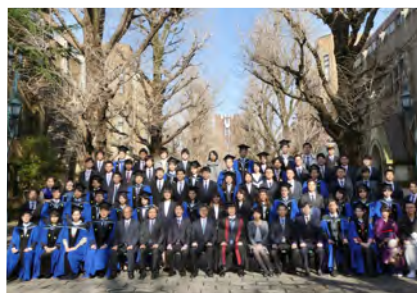
The second major change was the completion in August 2017 of our long-awaited new building, something that we have been looking forward to since the faculty was first established. Teachers' room, administrative office, classroom, and student facilities that were previously scattered about the Hongo Campus have now largely been consolidated in the new building, so I am delighted to say that students and staff can now feel that they have a place to call their own. Furthermore, a new "Student Floor" especially for GraSPP students was opened in April 2018 on level 4 of the Akamon General Research Building, complete with a study room, lounge, and discussion rooms. This, too, is something that students have been wanting for many years, so I am immensely pleased to see it finally come about. I hope that these new facilities will serve as a strong encouragement for interaction among the diverse student body we have at GraSPP.

Along with these changes, we have also put a lot of effort into bringing past and present students into contact. We hold the GraSPP Alumni & Student Day to provide a venue for these two groups to get together under the same roof, with the attendance of 170 people at the October 2017 event including 40 alumni returning from overseas. Along with reunions between old friends and teachers, this is also a chance to network and make new acquaintances. As the event is held in conjunction with the University of Tokyo's annual Homecoming Day, I urge all alumni to visit their old school and inspect the new research building and student floor. To encourage interaction between students from Japan and overseas, we have expanded orientation and held the GraSPP Policy Challenge, a competition in which students of different nationalities work together to produce policy proposals.

Fourteen years after it was first established, GraSPP is now entering a new phase. As there is still more to be done if we are to become a world-leading graduate school of public policy, I urge all of you to continue in your enthusiastic support.

TOPICS

A Diploma Presentation Ceremony was held at the SMBC Academia Hall International Academic Research Building on March 22, 2017, with presentations being made to 75 graduates. The graduates were individually presented with their diplomas by Dean Toshiaki Iizuka in front of an audience of their families and members of the GraSPP faculty. The ceremony also



included the presentation of a Best Performance Award to one graduate and Outstanding Performance Awards to three others.

Editor's Postscript

GraSPP has undergone a new beginning, with the long-awaited completion of the International Academic Research Building and the appointment of Akio Takahara as our new dean. This being a time of considerable change, this newsletter, too, has a new editor as of this issue. In my new role, I hope to build on the long history of the newsletter and continue to publicize the attractions of GraSPP far and wide. **(Editor)**

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