

LETTER

GraSPP
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

Contents

- 1: Spring, a Time of New Beginnings: GraSPP Spring Diploma Presentation Ceremony AY2020
- 2-3: GPPN Virtual Conference 2021 Report
- 4: 9th Health Technology Assessment (HTA) International Symposium Covid-19 Pandemic and the Role of HTA / TOPICS

Spring, a Time of New Beginnings: GraSPP Spring Diploma Presentation Ceremony AY2020



With thorough COVID-19 countermeasures in place, the GraSPP spring diploma presentation ceremony AY2020 was held on March 19 at SMBC Academia Hall and Lecture Hall B in the International Academic Research Building, and students were presented with diplomas by GraSPP professors.

The ceremony was also streamed online for students and family members who were unable to attend in person. The Best Performance Award was presented to one student and the Outstanding Performance Award was presented to four students.

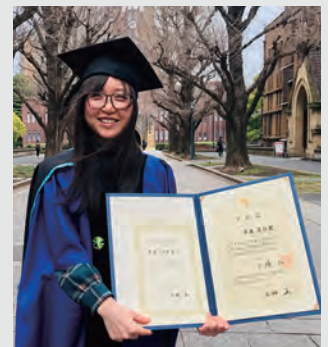
Message from graduates

Sayaka Hiratoko (Professional Degree Program, Public Management)

In spring 2019, I enrolled in GraSPP in the 7th year of my career. It was a major challenge for me but, having now graduated, I am proud to have achieved even more than I had anticipated.

A unique aspect of GraSPP is the wide-ranging backgrounds of the faculty and students, and my interactions with them helped not only to broaden my perspective and understand a variety of views, but also instill in me a more diverse mindset. Taking online classes during the pandemic was another new experience and learning opportunity for me.

After graduating, I returned to Kumamoto and my job in the Prefectural Government. I will do my best to utilize everything I have learned at GraSPP.



Khaliun Dovchinsuren (Doctoral Program, International Public Policy)



I received a great deal of support from many people during my studies, for which I am deeply grateful. Although I enjoyed a relatively high level of freedom, it wasn't necessarily always smooth sailing, and there were many days when I would get lost in my research, worry about what I would do and where I would work after graduation, and deal with the worries of studying abroad in an unfamiliar environment.

However, at GraSPP, students are blessed with a comprehensive support system covering various aspects of student life, with professors with a wide range of expertise, kind and supportive staff, and other students dealing with the same challenges. I was also one of the beneficiaries of this system. I am certain that current and prospective students of GraSPP will be able to use their experience on the program as a springboard to propel them to even greater heights.

GPPN Virtual Confer

Professor Roberto Orsi



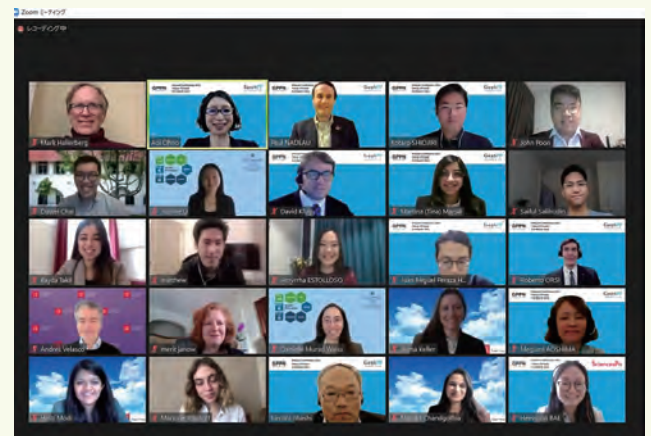
On 4-6 March 2021 GraSPP successfully hosted the annual GPPN Conference, the main event of the alliance between seven of the leading schools of public policy worldwide. The Conference rotates among the seven GPPN Schools, and GraSPP was designed as the organiser for 2021.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Conference could take place as an online event only. The main topic was defined as “The Crisis of Globalisation as We Know It,” during a long period of preparations which started in summer 2020. It reflects on how the globalisation process, which started after the end of the Cold War, has encountered increasingly stronger headwinds as a consequence of the 2008-2009 financial crash, the rise of populism, and the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. The Conference was structured around the competition of public policy projects by groups of students, to which other events were attached, namely the Deans’ Meeting (a closed-door meeting to discuss matters concerning GPPN and its future initiatives), the Deans’ Roundtable, and two Special Keynote speeches. The latter were delivered by Ms. Yumi Araki, journalist and multiplatform storyteller, and by Mr. Bilahari Kausikan, former Ambassador of Singapore and Chair of the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore. Both delivered outstanding speeches about their views on globalisation and its immediate developments, engaging in an extensive and fruitful exchange with the audience. The Deans’ Roundtable, moderated by Professor Hideaki Shiroyama, was instead centred on the topic of digitalisation, its impact on public policy, and also on the way in which public policy schools deal with digitalisation of governance, as well as the ways and contents of their didactical activities. Both events were open to the public and registered over hundred attendees each.

The organisation of the Conference presented a number of logistical challenges, mainly due to the Schools being located in very different time zones. The coordination of the Deans’ agendas, and making sure that each School could field enough student groups to present their projects, as well

the creation of the electronic infrastructure (website, Zoom meetings) as a reference point for the event, were all brilliantly solved in the preparation stages. Therefore, despite all these challenges, the Conference was very successful, and was genuinely praised as such by all participants. This success would have not been possible without the restless work of GraSPP staff Ms. Aoi Ohno and Ms. Megumi Aoshima, the TA student Jeremy Jee, and by the extraordinary contribution by PhD candidates Paul Nadeau and Kotaro Shiojiri, who acted as MCs. A very special mention also goes to our Dean Professor Hiroshi Ohashi, who chaired various sessions and did an outstanding job in representing our School on the world stage. Finally, our gratitude also goes to all GraSPP students who worked on their GPC projects over the A1A2 term. The team NICE, presenting on a project to reduce political polarisation in the US, was well received by the Deans, and eventually won the Education Award as the best project on educational activities. Congratulations!

If the Covid-19 pandemic will ease by the end of 2021, we all hope to be able to attend the next GPPN conference at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin.



Conference 2021 Report

Bagas Adhika Putra



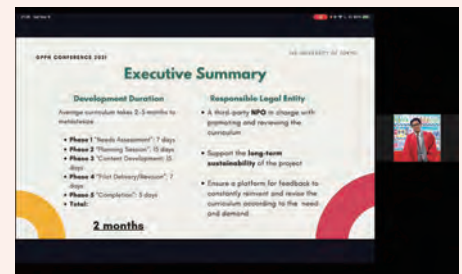
As a team leader, I would like to take the time to personally thank David Klug, Huang Ting-Yi, and Martina Marsili for their unwavering tenacity and insurmountable kindness throughout the Conference with a theme of “The Crisis of Globalization as We Know It.” As a team, we won the Best Educator’s Award at the conference.

We dearly call our project as NICE: an abbreviation of Novel Integrated Cognitive Curriculum. NICE curriculum was developed as a response of our exasperation in an increasingly-polarized social media sphere. The curriculum is designed to involve a non-partisan educational approach by integrating psychological, scientifically-tested methods such as empathy-building and critical thinking-learning.

What amazes me the most was the fact that this project looked unlikely to succeed in the beginning. I am very fortunate that I have been in Japan since my admission to GraSPP. However the truth was Martina was in Italy for the first three months, and needed to wake up at 6 AM on many occasions before she was able to enter Japan; David is still in the United States, who repeatedly had to Zoom us at the most undesirable time such as 11 PM or 4 AM; while Ting-Yi is in Taiwan, adjusting the time difference between Japan and Taiwan. Some “behind-the-scene storie” can provide a better picture of our

journey. Time differences truly were troublesome. Our first meetings can be succinctly described as “pajama party on Zoom. Throughout our discussion sessions, we have had multiple conversations stating that the project is a “Mission Impossible”. I may have lost count towards how many times we said: “let’s just quit” or “can we opt out of this course, please?” after receiving a number of scathing reviews about our initial proposal. The reality is, this was not a course for the faint-hearted ones. As someone who has undergone the final round of the competition phase, I can understand why we faced a rigorous selection process by the advisors and faculty members. It’s a policy-making competition after all. Added to that, our opponents were five other top graduate schools of public policy from all over the world.

Lastly but most importantly, we are very grateful for the steadfastness and generosity demonstrated by our advisors: Professor Roberto Orsi and Professor Jun Arima throughout the process. Dear Professors, thank you for making this all possible as well as arranging the conference with other prestigious schools.



Jeremy Jee



It’s been a great pleasure to be able to work and support the conference this year. As a past participant, I really wanted to further enhance and improve the experience for students attending the conference.

First of all was to enhance the quality of projects that were submitted, and thus this year we included more emphasis on the real-world feasibility of projects as well as to focus more on the implementation details. This made solutions more realistic, grounded and achievable. The inclusion of the video aspect also helped students think about how they should present and structure their presentations, and also how different mediums affect to get their point across.

We also wanted the conference to have students do more than just present, so we increased audience engagement and participation through the implementation of an online Q&A system for students, having students vote and give feedback on the first round of presentation, and having the audience choose award for the finalists. It was important to give students agency and make them feel as a part of the conference, rather than just being presenters.

The keynote talks were also intended to give students a chance to engage with professionals, and look at things from a different lens. Mr. Bilahari Kausikan is well-known for his sharp rhetoric

and keen analysis of current problems. It was a great experience for students to hear from someone like him, and also watch professors question and engage as well. Ms Yumi Araki brought in a different angle, looking at how social media and different mediums affect the way that we explain social and policy problems to the everyday individual.

One of the key aspects of the conference is also being able to hone, refine, polish and present your idea to the audience. Thus we wanted the students to continue learning from the experience and refine their skills. We felt it was important for students to receive feedback in order to understand what they did right, and what could be improved more on. The feedback gave general scores for each grading rubric, as well as comments from both the judges and the audience. It was important that the learning process did not abruptly halt and end the moment students presented, but that they could go on to continue improving and honing their own skills.

All in all, I am proud and honoured to have been a part of the GPPN Annual Conference 2021 and I hope that students in future iterations will enjoy their time as much as we did this year.



9th Health Technology Assessment (HTA) International Symposium Covid-19 Pandemic and the Role of HTA

Junko Okuhara (Health Policy and Technology Assessment Research Unit)

This year's symposium was held online with Dr. Ulf Persson (Senior Advisor, The Swedish Institute for Health Economics), Prof. Pierre-Yves Geoffard (Professor, Paris School of Economics), Dr. Raoh-Fang Pwu, (Director, National Hepatitis C Program Office, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan) and Dr. Yasuhiro Suzuki (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Advisor, Japan) attending as guest lecturers.

Following Project Professor Isao Kamae's commentary on the overall background and issues, the four guest lecturers each provided a case report from their respective countries.

Dr. Persson pointed out Sweden did not see an excessively high death rate, despite looser restrictions, and that quality-adjusted life year (QALY) analysis called into question the importance of lockdown measures. Prof. Geoffard explained that the French Government's initial Covid-19 measures were slow and the strict lockdowns caused confusion in society. Furthermore, he believed that the role of HTA was insufficient. Conversely, Dr. Pwu reported that the Taiwanese government was able to leverage its experience from the severe acute

respiratory syndrome (SARS) pandemic to set up an emergency structure from early in 2020 and successfully contain the Covid-19 outbreak using border control measures, IT, and thorough communication and outreach efforts. Meanwhile, Dr. Suzuki noted that, while Japan was able to keep the number of cases low compared to Europe and the United States with loose restrictions based on requesting the public to exercise self-restraint, several issues still need to be addressed in future, including HTA.

The subsequent panel discussion was moderated by Visiting Professor Akio Onishi, with panelists discussing the role of HTA in policymaking.

HPTA runs the HTA Expert Training Program aimed mainly at professionals working in medical-related fields. Admissions for AY2021 are now open.

For more details and materials from the symposium, as well as information about the HTA Expert Training Program, please visit the following page:

<http://www.pp.u-tokyo.ac.jp/HPTA/index.html> (Japanese only).



TOPICS

The application guidelines for the 2022 professional degree program have been released at the following URL. (Recruitment period: July 15, 2021 10:00 to July 21, 17:00 * Japan time)

<http://www.pp.u-tokyo.ac.jp/admissions/application-guide-and-form/>

Briefing session for the entrance examination will be held from 15:30 to 17:00 on May 20, 2021 (Thursday). Please check the URL below for details.

<http://www.pp.u-tokyo.ac.jp/admissions/briefing-sessions/>

Editor's Postscript

We recently held an information session about GraSPP with the support of several alumni. GraSPP alumni shared advice on entrance exams, student life, and job-hunting based on their personal experiences. Hearing their perspective of GraSPP was very interesting and rewarding for us as well. As the person in charge of public outreach for GraSPP, I hope to promote our program across Japan and around the world, so that we can keep developing excellent future policymakers. (Editor)

vol.

62

NEWS
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