

The First Taiwan-Japan University Presidents' Forum

During last year' s 8th National Conference on Education, the President of Taiwan, Mr. Ma Ying-jeou, mentioned a new educational initiative being promoted by the Ministry of Education. The initiative aims to increase numbers of international students (from 13% to 2.6% of overall students), enhance the scale of academia-industry cooperation, and ultimately, raise the level of competitiveness of Taiwanese universities. Subsequently, in August this year, the Director General of the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations, Dr. Wen-tong Lin, led a Taiwanese delegation to the 2011 Conference on Higher Education in Taiwan and Japan, held in Osaka. During the conference, a suggestion was made: to organize a presidents' forum that would further promote interaction and exchange between universities in Taiwan and Japan. And thus, the First Taiwan-Japan University Presidents' Forum was born.

The Presidents' Forum component of the event is currently being held at TKU' s Tamsui Campus (Dec 19), while other Forum-related activities will extend until Dec 21. The event' s main organizer is the ROC Ministry of Education; joint organizers include the Association of Private Universities and Colleges and the Foundation for International Cooperation in Higher Education of Taiwan (FICHET); while the host is Tamkang University.

The event will be attended by a total of 120 scholars from 74 leading institutes in Taiwan and Japan, including the President of Doshisha University and representative member of the All Japan University Consortium Committee, Dr. Eiji HATTA; the Vice President of JAFSA (Japan Network for International Education), Dr. George R. Harada; the Chancellor of Josai University, Dr. Noriko Mitzuta; the President of Josai University, Dr. Yasunori Morimoto; the President of Osaka University of

Commerce, Dr. Ichiro Tanioka; the President of Soai University, Dr. Satoru Kaneko; the President of J.F. Oberlin University, Dr. Toyoshi Satow; the President of Reitaku University, Dr. Osamu Nakayami; the President of Asia University, Dr. Haruo Ogawa; the President of Seinan Gakuin University, Dr. G.W. Barkley; and the President of Tokushima Bunri University, Dr. Masato Murasaki, with a total of 30 plus Japanese delegates and 33 Taiwanese university presidents.

The Forum commenced with opening speeches from the Political Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education, Dr. Tsong Ming-Lin, the President of the Association of Private Universities and Colleges, Dr. Haydn Chen, and the President of Tamkang University, Dr. Flora Chia-I Chang. The opening speeches were followed by a keynote speech from the Director General of the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations, Dr. Wen-tong Lin, which focused on the theme of the Forum, 'New Trends and Opportunities in Higher Education'. Subsequently, 12 university presidents from leading Taiwanese and Japanese universities delivered speeches on three broad topics: 'University Development and Operation', 'International Cooperation and International Student Recruitment', and 'University Development and Academia-Industry Cooperation'.

During her opening speech, the President of TKU, Dr. Flora Chia-I Chang, noted that "Tamkang University has inaugurated a Graduate Institute of Asian Studies, a Center for Japanese Research, and a Japanese Culture Classroom. It has 24 sister universities in Japan; while each semester, an average of around 60 Tamkang students go to Japan for student exchange and 40 Japanese exchange students come to study at Tamkang. Our comprehensive facilities in the area of Japan-related research reflect the strong emphasis we place on our relationship with Japan. We are therefore honored to be hosting the First Taiwan-Japan University Presidents' Forum and believe that, through the Forum, universities in both Japan and Taiwan stand to gain from long-term mutual partnership and cooperation".

