

The International Competition to



Global Initiative: International Students

Overview

Ryo Oshiba

Board Member and Executive Vice President for International Affairs
(position held at time of interview)



Provide Courses in English and a Solid Japanese Language Program

Globalization is progressing in every field today, and universities around the world are engaged in an increasingly fierce competition to attract the world's best international students. In response, Hitotsubashi University is promoting three initiatives to make it easier for international students to study at our university.

First, we are enhancing and expanding our courses taught in English. At the same time, we require international students admitted as full-time undergraduates to study Japanese.

Our master's programs introduced courses taught in English early on. In our undergraduate programs, we are promoting the Hitotsubashi University Global Education Program (HGP) with the aim of increasing the number of courses taught in English and making it possible at least for one-year exchange students without Japanese proficiency to study at Hitotsubashi. Thanks to this, it has become easier for us to form exchange agreements with universities overseas and also for international students to attend Hitotsubashi.

As a complement to the enhancement and expansion of courses taught in English, we are also improving our Japanese language education program through Hitotsubashi's Center for Global Education. Our program has a very good reputation because we offer Japanese-language classes to our one-year exchange students as well as all our undergraduates and graduate students.

In terms of enhancing and expanding classes taught in English, the Global Leaders Program (GLP) at the Faculty of Commerce and Management and the Faculty of Economics is making a substantial contribution alongside the HGP. GLP hires non-Japanese faculty members and provides specialized courses in English. This, of course, furthers our aim to develop global human resources, but it also has the positive impact of further lowering the barriers for exchange students not proficient in Japanese to study at our university.

Attract the World's Best Students

Offer Internships in Japan and a Cutting-Edge Education That Harnesses Hitotsubashi's Research

Our second initiative is to offer education in the social sciences in a way that only Hitotsubashi can—by leveraging our research. Simply broadening the range of international students is not enough: to attract the best international students it is critical that Hitotsubashi University offer students something that they can only obtain at Hitotsubashi. This point is particularly important, I believe, in attracting full-time international students to the undergraduate program and students to the graduate program. Stated plainly, our ability to emerge victorious in the competition to attract the best students from around the world depends on the content of what we offer. Hitotsubashi provides students the opportunity to study cutting-edge social sciences based on our research results in such fields as commerce and management as well as economics—disciplines in which we are known for our world-class research. Moreover, we are in the middle of discussions to bring the Hitotsubashi Institute for Advanced Studies to full-fledged operation within this academic year. In these ways, we are working to ensure that Hitotsubashi University develops the reputation of being the only place in the world where certain academic endeavors can be done.

Our third initiative to attract the best international students is to deepen our cooperative ties with other universities. Under a CAMPUS Asia (Collective Action for the Mobility Program of University Students Asia) grant, our Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy has already started coordinating curricula and offering double-degree programs with Peking University and Seoul National University. In the future, moreover, there is the potential for not just bilateral but also multilateral exchange agreements to be developed among universities.

In closing, I would like to return once again to the main topic of attracting exchange students. Hitotsubashi often receives requests from overseas universities that Hitotsubashi improve its internship program for exchange students. The foreign universities want English-only exchange students to be able also to participate in internships in Japan. Hitotsubashi University is looking at its internship program and how it can serve both Japanese and non-Japanese students.

Attracting the finest international students from around the world amid today's international competition among universities is an urgent issue. At the same time, Hitotsubashi University will also cooperate with overseas universities to develop global human resources—whether they be Japanese or non-Japanese. We are joining hands with all members of the Hitotsubashi community to address these challenges. *(Article based on interview)*

Hitotsubashi University Global Education Program (HGP)

A Springboard for Surmounting Language Barriers

Hiroshi Ota | Professor, Center for Global Education
Director, Hitotsubashi University Global Education Program



Courses Taught in English, with a Focus on Social Sciences, Increase Partner Universities and Boost International Exchange Student Numbers

Launched in the 2010 academic year, Hitotsubashi University Global Education Program (HGP) is open to all our students and adopts a “2+1” approach. Being targeted mainly at international exchange students from our partner universities who come to study at Hitotsubashi University for one or two semesters, the first two major elements of the program consist of (1) social science courses taught in English and (2) Japanese language courses for beginners. The “plus one” element is aimed at Japanese students and international students who need to brush up their English language capabilities, and consists of courses that teach academic English writing and presentation skills.

Before HGP began, all international students studying in Hitotsubashi University’s undergraduate programs, including exchange students, had to acquire intermediate-level or higher Japanese language skills before coming to Japan. However, our requirement of Japanese proficiency presented a barrier that made it difficult not only to develop new partner universities abroad but also to attract outstanding exchange students from our existing partners. This predicament prompted us to launch HGP in order to create a learning environment where students without any Japanese language training could take classes taught in English in a range of subjects, mainly in the social science field.

Since the 1995 academic year, many national universities in Japan had started English-taught programs based on similar concepts. This meant that Hitotsubashi University came late to the field, but we used our strengths as a latecomer to introduce new initiatives. Rather than enrolling international exchange students in HGP separately, we maintained our existing system of enrolling them in our regular undergraduate programs or graduate programs. When establishing English-taught programs, many universities enroll short-term and exchange international students in such programs rather than regular programs. This gives those international students limited opportunities to mingle with Japanese students and faculty, so that it tends to isolate them in a separate enclave. Such situations defeat the purpose of coming to study in Japan. Thus, as a latecomer, we took the bold step of opening up HGP to all our students, and continuing our system of enrolling international exchange students in regular undergraduate and graduate programs where they have a “home” in the university, just like our degree-seeking students. We believe this was the right decision, since the overall number of students (including Japanese students) registering for HGP courses has risen, we now have more partner universities abroad, and international exchange student numbers are going up.

Providing English-taught Courses as a Platform to Create a Global Educational Environment Where Japanese and International Students Learn Together

A decrease in the number of Japanese language programs has been an undeniable trend at universities worldwide in recent years. However, this does not mean that interest in Japan itself has declined, just that new economies such as China have emerged. If academic subjects related to Japan are offered in English, international students will still be attracted from around the world. In fact, by providing the HGP platform, Hitotsubashi University has increased the number of international exchange students coming to study social science subjects relating to Japan. Moreover, among them, some international students further their studies by taking English-taught courses from HGP’s more than 100 choices, without studying courses conducted in Japanese.

The range of courses taught in English is expanding to better meet such needs. While requesting the four faculties to offer a broad selection of English-taught courses from introductory to advanced levels, we are diversifying the teaching staff of HGP courses offered by the Center for Global Education. For example, in order to provide courses featuring real-world insights, we have employed adjunct lecturers with extensive experience at the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and other financial institutions, as well as Hitotsubashi University graduates who have worked at trading and manufacturing companies. We also offer many courses taught by non-Japanese staff from countries including the United States and Australia. Thus, Hitotsubashi University provides a forum for academic staff and students from diverse backgrounds to come together and learn in Japan. In the meantime, no specific standard is set for the level of English skills required to enroll in HGP courses. Accordingly, both Japanese students and degree-seeking international students are encouraged to enroll. Needless to say, Japanese students can utilize HGP courses as an effective way of preparing for study abroad.

In a sense, HGP aims to break down the traditional barriers within a university. Distinctions between Japanese and non-Japanese, domestic and international, and English and Japanese have become meaningless, creating a truly global environment. Four years after its launch, HGP has finally gained broad recognition both within and outside the university. Various new initiatives are being examined for the future, but HGP still retains its original purpose of acting as a springboard to enhance the internationalization of education within the university. Once Hitotsubashi has become a university where Japanese language skills do not present barriers, I believe the mission of HGP will shift toward greater specialization in courses concerned with Japanese affairs and Japan’s place in Asia. *(Article based on interview)*

Expanding the Range of Courses Offered in English
Faculty of Commerce and Management

Developing Global Leaders

Christina Ahmadjian | Professor
Graduate School of Commerce and Management



The Faculty of Commerce and Management launched the Shibusawa Scholar Program in April 2014 with 13 outstanding students, chosen for their academic ability, and strong sense of mission and passion to become global leaders. With the beginning of the Shibusawa Scholar Program, the Faculty of Commerce and Management has increased considerably its line-up of specialized courses in Management, Marketing, Finance, and Accounting in English. This number will further increase in the near future.

At present, most of the students enrolled in the courses taught in English are Shibusawa Scholars, exchange students, and Faculty of Commerce and Management students who have attended schools outside of Japan or have other overseas experience. It seems that many students are hesitating to enroll in classes that they see as too challenging, but that is expected to change as word gets out that the new courses taught in English are not only challenging but also fun, interesting, and well within the ability of students who have gone through the required PACE English

courses in their first year. Classes taught in English are increasingly a place where Japanese and international students can learn together, and an important emphasis is placed on group projects conducted by diverse teams.

Let me outline the Shibusawa Scholar Program in a little more detail. Courses offered under the program are taught entirely in English by world-class researchers and adopt an interactive approach that focuses on discussion and application. Courses are offered at various levels, including a set of “Interactive Courses in Business Basics” which cover key concepts from the basic business disciplines, and intermediate and advanced courses that cover more specialized areas for more advanced students. The approximately 15 students selected for the Shibusawa Scholar Program each year are expected to take at least one third of their credits in specialized courses taught in English. We hope that more and more students will enjoy Hitotsubashi University’s flourishing global learning environment. *(Article based on interview)*

Expanding the Range of Courses Offered in English
Faculty of Economics

Learn to Think and Discuss from a Global Perspective by Taking Faculty Courses in English

Hiroyuki Okamuro | Professor
Graduate School of Economics



The Global Leaders Program (GLP) at the Faculty of Economics, launched in 2012, provides opportunities to take a number of faculty courses in English. Thirty-seven such courses are already being offered and we plan to steadily increase our line-up. Our students can thus explore many topics in economics in both Japanese and English.

GLP aims to cultivate professionals able to act from a global perspective. The program has two major features: a systematic Global Leaders Curriculum and our Global Leaders Class (GLC). The former is open to all undergraduate students and includes English skills courses, faculty courses taught in English, short-term international field studies and longer-term studies abroad. Fifteen students are selected for the GLC at the end of their first year and are given precedence when enrolling in short-term international field studies as well as comprehensive support for their longer-term studies abroad. GLC participants who obtain 60 percent or more of their required 68 credits in

faculty courses receive a “Global Leaders Program Certificate” upon graduation.

Beyond simply developing English communication skills, GLP equips students with a sound knowledge of economics, analytical skills, and high-level decision-making and consensus-building capabilities based on real-world experience. Although the program is basically geared toward Japanese students, we also welcome international students who meet our selection criteria and are non-native speakers of English. Indeed, our inaugural Global Leaders Class has among its members a student from Thailand.

Since our faculty courses taught in English are open to all students, they would be valuable to those who want to study economics in English with a view to future study abroad, as well as to the exchange students who have studied basic economics in their own countries and wish to pursue more advanced studies at Hitotsubashi University. *(Article based on interview)*

Japanese Language Education

Setting the Standard for Social Science Studies in Japanese

Kei Ishiguro | Professor (Head of Japanese Language Education)
Center for Global Education



Six Levels of Japanese Language Training, from Everyday Conversation to Advanced Academic Skills

At present, the Japanese language skills of international students at Hitotsubashi University are polarized. We have around 700 international students, and about 80 percent of them have Japanese language skills comparable to Japanese students from a purely academic perspective. Most of them are international students studying for degrees offered by our faculties and graduate schools with Japanese language skills that would enable them to work in a Japanese company. At the other end of the scale are those studying hard to develop everyday conversational skills, and most of these are exchange students. Making effective use of the resources at its disposal, the Center for Global Education offers six levels of Japanese courses to extend the language skills of both these groups.

The six levels are Lower Basic, Upper Basic, Lower Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, Lower Advanced and Upper Advanced. For example, at the Basic level international students with little or no knowledge of Japanese learn comprehensive reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The Lower Basic level focuses on “survival Japanese,” providing the minimum language skills required for everyday life, while the Upper Basic level aims to enable students to lead their day-to-day lives in Japan without undue difficulty.

The Intermediate level further extends the four skills learned at the Basic level. In addition to comprehensive language courses, the Intermediate level features a wide range of electives. For example, Chinese students who are skilled in reading characters but need to work on speaking can enroll in Japanese Speaking, whereas students from Europe and America whose studies in their home countries focused on speaking can choose Japanese Reading or Kanji & Vocabulary. In this way, we offer courses to match each individual’s strengths and weaknesses and previous learning experience.

Advanced courses consist entirely of electives, enabling students to develop advanced academic Japanese language skills in areas such as reading and understanding specialized materials in various fields of social science, writing papers and reports, or making presentations.

Apart from Upper Advanced, the other five levels each correspond to the five levels of the Japanese Lan-

guage Proficiency Test (JLPT), which are termed N5 to N1. Students who successfully complete our Lower Basic courses thus have skills equivalent to JLPT level N5, while those who complete our Lower Advanced courses have skills equivalent to JLPT level N1. Our Upper Advanced level consists of original “ultra-advanced” courses offering academic skills.

Suggestions from Teaching Staff in Various Fields Guarantee the Quality of Japanese Language Education

In the 2012 academic year an international students program was inaugurated as part of the Hitotsubashi Graduate School of Commerce and Management Master of Business Administration (HMBA). This program offers classes in Japanese that enable international students who have passed the selection process to undertake specialized studies, including corporate case studies.

The program’s teaching staff divide their roles into areas including finance and marketing, and respond to the needs of international students with an understanding of the fundamentals and specialized terminology of all such fields. Naturally, specialized topics can only be taught by staff belonging to each particular field. Supported by specialist teaching staff from graduate school departments, program staff facilitate students’ learning by teaching the Japanese skills necessary to engage with their fields of study, providing background knowledge on Japan, and advising on introductory texts that students should read.

We are currently compiling a database of basic texts required to study specialized fields selected by specialized teaching staff and developing teaching materials based on these texts, which cover not only business studies but also economics, law, sociology, and international relations. Students in the natural sciences can often complete their studies in English, but Japanese language skills are still required to complete a degree in many social science fields. Since we have lowered internal barriers and created an environment conducive to communication, if we continue to develop teaching materials while incorporating appropriate suggestions from specialized teaching staff in each field, setting up a “Hitotsubashi University Social Science Standard” is a realistic goal. Such campus-wide support guarantees the quality of Japanese language education throughout the university. *(Article based on interview)*

Generating Synergy by Building Stronger Links with the World's Top Universities

Atsushi Yamada | Former Assistant Vice President for International Affairs



No. 2 QS Ranking in Japan and a More International Campus Environment

In the 2013 academic year the total number of undergraduate and graduate international students at Hitotsubashi University exceeded 700. Given that our total enrollments were 6,500, this represents about 11 percent of all students—an impressive figure, resulting in our being ranked number two in Japan in terms of the proportion of international students in the QS World University Rankings published by the British company Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd.

In the past most of our international students came from neighboring countries, but we now have exchange agreements with 98 universities and other educational institutions in 33 countries and three regions, and accept students from Europe, America and Australia as well as from Asian countries including Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. Walk around the campus and you will soon see Muslim students in headscarves—that's a sign of how international the university has become.

There are many reasons behind this change, but one factor has been the scholarships for student exchange program funded by our Josuikai Alumni Association. Welcoming 60 to 70 exchange students each year has diversified our international student body, and we are very grateful for the tremendous support offered by the scholarship program.

Mixing with Future Global Leaders at a World-Class University

As well as imbuing the campus with a more international flavor, we have focused on sending our students out to the world's top universities. However, we do not simply rely on the brand power of partner schools.

A year of study abroad requires both time and money. While students receive financial support from Josuikai, their year abroad has to be meaningful, especially since it may require students to postpone job search activities. We want our students, who will be the global leaders of the future, to spend time in an environment with similar future global leaders, and to come back having gained something from that experience. We also want them to come back with a desire to go overseas again. Utilizing our network of world-class universities is an important part of achieving

these aims.

The global networks developed by Josuikai also provide enormous support to Hitotsubashi University students who study abroad. When students go to our overseas partner schools they are contacted by Hitotsubashi graduates who are working in those countries and invited out for a meal. These alumni talk about their experiences and the significance of working overseas, giving students a glimpse of their own futures. This provides students with a taste of excitement far beyond what they might feel at routine recruitment seminars and corporate presentations.

High Standard of Research Skills Generates Crucial Grassroots Relationships

We are working to increase the number of student exchange agreements, and always have several sets of negotiations under way. In 2013 we concluded an agreement with National Taiwan University. Last year we wrapped up negotiations with Moscow State University and the University of Michigan.

Our grassroots networks are a powerful driving force behind such negotiations. The high level of research skills exhibited by individual teaching staff at Hitotsubashi University generates ties with outstanding researchers at overseas universities. Teaching staff go back and forth between institutions as visiting scholars, conduct symposiums, and hold joint seminars. Over time such grassroots relationships based on individual trust develop into relationships of trust between universities, and this leads to our concluding exchange agreements much more quickly than we could through official channels.

Since this process drives expansion in the number of exchange agreements, we have never really set any quantitative goals, and will continue to steadily forge new agreements without a specific target figure in mind. Moreover, we do not insist on one-for-one exchanges. Our first priority is to welcome plenty of high-caliber international students, because we believe that they provide a strong stimulus to the Hitotsubashi University students who attend lectures and seminars alongside them, and we expect this to generate enormous synergy throughout the university. *(Article based on interview)*

Internships

A Solid Platform for Internships Is in Place. Now the Key Is More Promotion.

Hiroki Hayashi | General Manager
Career Support Office



From Undergraduates to Master's Students, Interest in Internships Is Growing

The Career Support Office is deeply involved in career education courses, which include an internship program. A course called "Internship" is available to second- and third-year undergraduates, and carries credits. In the 2014 academic year, 26 students enrolled for the course at 18 partner companies. Two of these were international students.

The course is also available to graduate students in the first year of a Master's program as part of career support options, but these do not carry credits. Despite this, international students are especially enthusiastic participants, and in 2014 academic year all three of the first-year Master's students who undertook the course at three partner companies accepting graduate students were from overseas. Most Japanese students have a strong sense of having made it to graduate school, and they devote the summer of their first Master's year to research. By contrast, international students in their first year of a Master's program, having made it to Japan, tend to harbor a strong desire to work in Japan in the future. Thus they are eager to participate in the course even though it does not carry credits.

As well as continuing to offer internships for regular international undergraduate and graduate students, in future we intend to strengthen our acceptance of exchange students. At present we don't have a clear idea of exactly what kind of internships exchange students expect, nor have we gathered any information on internships for exchange students. However, if a need exists, I think there is plenty of scope to use Hitotsubashi University networks to create a new program for exchange students.

Unique Networks Enhance Programs for Exchange Students

An obvious example of a network we should be utilizing is our Josuikai Alumni Association. We hold our highly popular career seminars as part of the endowed lecture program of Josuikai, where undergraduate and graduate students can speak directly with business leaders who are active on the front lines of the

commercial world. Essentially these take the form of bi-weekly seminars, but sometimes instructors arrange for students to visit corporate head offices or factories in Tokyo. Using such networks we could create opportunities for exchange students to have experience of Japanese companies.

As Japanese companies have expanded their global operations, some corporations have devised special internship programs aimed at Asian students. One company sought graduate students from Hitotsubashi to take part in a very comprehensive program conducted in August 2014, and the participants were highly satisfied with their experience. If we continue to build up a track record through such initiatives, we will develop vital resources for offering hands-on internships to our exchange students.

We also operate the Hitotsubashi University Career Partnership Project, a recruitment support program based on a corporate membership system. The project seeks members from among the 300 companies the university currently has contact with, and runs recruitment support programs exclusive to Hitotsubashi University. As of February 25, 2015, 328 companies had made use of the programs.

Such networks provide us with a solid platform for creating new programs aimed at exchange students.

Ascertaining the Needs of Exchange Students While Cooperating With Companies to Develop Experiential Programs

We need to cooperate with companies in developing new programs. Our regular curriculum already includes career education to shape students' views of various jobs. However, extra-curricular career education offering experience of diverse jobs and Japanese companies is a challenge for the future. I think that exchange students in particular have high hopes that internships will prioritize actual experience, rather than simply being a precursor to employment. We plan to carefully canvass the views of exchange students to check if they support our assumptions, while also using our various networks with companies and public agencies to further develop our internship program. *(Article based on interview)*

Forging Ties with Other Asian Universities to Create a New Approach to the Social Sciences from Asian Perspectives for the Global World

Yoshiko Ashiwa | Professor
Institute for the Study of Global Issues, Graduate School of Social Sciences



One issue that we face in our efforts to open up Hitotsubashi University to the world is reinforcing our links with other universities throughout Asia. Although various initiatives are under way—for example, some graduate schools offer programs that welcome international students from Asia, some conduct research projects on Asia, and some teaching staff conduct their own research and teaching in Asia—as a university we need to develop and enhance solid ties at the institutional level.

Why are we focusing on Asia? This region is central to the most active global economy, and is certain to become even more important in the near future in the world. From the perspective of international politics, Asia maintained relatively stable relations in the decades following World War II, but in recent years China's growing economic power, which has stimulated the economy of the area, has also given rise to strategic issues such as territorial disputes and military expansion. These issues have raised tensions in the region, suggesting the possibility of a realignment in Asian international relations that could extend to such countries as the United States and Russia.

However, there are problems with considering Asia solely from the utilitarian perspectives of economic development and hegemonic concern of politics, since such approaches could not enhance our mutual understanding of the societies where people live, and the desires and problems of the people who actually live in the region. Moreover, it has to be said that equating interest in Asia with more research on the region by specialists in the discipline will lead only to a quite narrow perspective.

The first thing I want students to understand is that Asia extends into the global world. The region's geographic space includes not only East Asia and Southeast Asia, but also South Asia and the Eurasian continent, and even stretches into Europe and the Middle East. The Pacific Ocean links Asia to the Pacific Rim regions of Australia, South America, and North America. Considering Asian immigration and interactions of economic activity, Africa is also clearly within the scope of Asia. Overlaying these areas are land and sea routes that have acted for millennia as conduits for historical and cultural influences, religion and trade, and political and economic interaction. This global world has been a space for the circulation of people, goods, money, ideologies, information, and technologies. Now the Asian space is once again reshaping itself and the modern global world. Conventional views of world history that have centered on Europe and America are not able to grasp all that is happening in non-western environments. Therefore the study of what is happening in Asia and the world from Asian perspectives provides opportunities for mutual and diverse reconsideration of such views from multiple perspectives, taking into account interactions and relationships. The aim of this process is to respect diversity while recognizing and fostering common values among the peoples in global society. The sharing of prosperity and abundance is precisely the issue facing the global world. I believe that interest in Asia can cultivate one starting point for addressing these issues.

Thinking about Asia as such a global space from an Asian perspective carries enormous potential for opening up new paths in the social sciences. Modern social science began and developed in Europe and America, which experienced drastic social changes in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, from economics to philosophy world maps have centered on the West, as even the history of Asian countries has had to be "found" by Euro-centric academics. In recent years, however, large numbers of Asian scholars who have acquired influential positions in their home countries after returning from studies in Europe and America are beginning to seek a vision of their own. This generation has driven economic growth in China and Asia as a whole. In the academic world, it was common to regard Asia as a testing ground or data-gathering site to demonstrate the general applicability or a particular version of theories developed in the West. Asia is now at the vortex of myriad issues erupting as the region faces even greater social change than occurred in Western Europe in the 19th century, and people are eager to create their own thought, philosophies, values, and, furthermore, their own approaches to the social sciences. As institutes of higher learning and advanced research, universities are at the center of such efforts, and they must strive diligently to take the debate beyond exclusive regionalism and narrow-minded nationalism.

The 18th ISA World Congress of Sociology held in Yokohama in 2014

was the first in the series to take place in East Asia, and it was refreshing to see a growing trend in joint research projects whereby scholars from Europe and America have actively joined collaborative research projects being conducted by Asian academics. I am involved in an exciting project that is exploring new frames of reference and methods for research on religion, and this project makes me feel that a new era in scholarship has arrived. Led by young Chinese scholars who gained doctorates in the West, the project has created a global network of academics conducting research on contemporary China and world Buddhism, has held symposiums in Shanghai and Paris, and is going to publish research results in English, French, and Chinese. Similar sorts of new waves are emerging in the fields of economic and political research.

Europe's Erasmus Mundus program to enhance the quality of higher education through mobility of students and academic cooperation is building links with major universities in Asia, and the program's managers regard Asian universities as essential for the training of human resources in Europe. In Asia, several similar systems have been launched by universities in such countries as Korea, Malaysia and China. They are also extending their networks to South America and Africa. The key world centers for education and research are multiplying, and universities in Asia are now important hubs of learning in the global world.

What do students from the world want to study when they come to Hitotsubashi University? Many are interested in how Japan has shaped its characteristically stable and orderly society, systems, and culture, and the issues and methods behind this process, including such topics as Japan's early incorporation of Western European systems and technologies and its success in modernizing, while taking its own approach to management and innovation, welfare and public services, regional revitalization, antipollution measures, disaster recovery, and energy issues. Rather than simply adopting Western theories, Japan has absorbed their lessons and created its own frameworks. Students want to explore Japanese social science research on these efforts and the contrasts they present. In other words, Hitotsubashi can provide to students and researchers from abroad the innovative skills and ideas of the social sciences that the university has contributed during its 140 year history to the prosperity and solidarity of Japanese society.

What can the students and researchers of Hitotsubashi learn from Asia? Firstly, they can grasp the spirit of the times as Asian countries move forward together and share in the boundless energy of the region. They can also obtain multi-faceted insights for the near future and develop their own identity, gaining a sense of where they stand in a global world. For example, if our students can improve their English skills in the Philippines or Singapore, they will understand the importance of English as a tool of communication with other people who also have their own native languages other than English. Also while they are learning English there, the exposure to contemporary Asian society and culture will develop their ability to experience the reality and enhance their views of the world from new perspectives. Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia has a unique system for the all of its undergraduate students whereby they spend a year in villages and regional centers to do social work with people there. If our students took part in this program they could learn about efforts at grassroots social change that are based on local conditions, to stimulate their thinking about alternative development and realise the rich potential of Japan's own regions and communities. The Institute for the Study of Global Issues at Hitotsubashi would also like to set up programs whereby our faculties and graduate schools incorporate programs that encourage our students to team up with students from other Asian universities to do research on cities and regions in each other's countries based on common themes. Insightful researchers would surely encounter challenging issues for the future of creating a new Asian approach to social science. We can expect to have figures like Weber and Marx emerge from contemporary Asia.

Hitotsubashi University is one of just a few universities in the world specializing in social science research. By building stronger educational and research ties with other universities in Asia, I believe we can become an original, advanced center of learning and research with a view to independent social science research and social construction for the near future. I am confident that this will also encourage Hitotsubashi University to develop in more original and dynamic ways as a university open to the world. (Article based on interview)