

60 Leading a Graduate School Program at Nagoya University with a focus on students becoming leaders with a global perspective
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This presentation introduces a new approach for training global leaders as part of an educational program at Nagoya University, sponsored by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). It has been widely acknowledged in the broader literature that leadership styles and expectations of leaders may differ based on society and geographical location. A common fundamental requirement of a leader is the ability to lead a group so that all members can work together efficiently and harmoniously. This ability sometimes requires the leader to stand out so that the group can function as one unit.

In Japan, a predominantly homogenous country, the idea of a leader that stands out is met with some challenge. This attitude is illustrated by a Japanese proverb, "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down", i.e. it is advisable not to be different from others. When one is different or unique from the majority, and figuratively has their head sticking out while all others have their heads at the same level, the one with their head sticking out tends to get it hammered so that this person would no longer be different from the rest. Saffell (2015) explains this cultural difference by contrasting it to an American proverb, "The squeaky wheel

gets the grease” and also states that there is an emphasis on uniformity and cooperation in Japanese society, while Western culture encourages individuals to speak up. Otherwise, they may be ignored.

There are many common qualities such as commitment and honesty that make valuable leaders worldwide, yet depending on the culture and region there are differences in the importance of certain leadership qualities. For example, Fukushima (2001) points out that in Japanese society where uniformity and cooperation are valued, it becomes difficult to judge Japanese leaders in the same way as we judge leaders in other countries. Onken (2019) states that the leadership style most effective for the Japanese is the participative leadership approach. Under participative leadership, employees are involved in the decision-making process and all members are invited to work strategically to help improve the operation of the organization.

For Japan to survive and succeed in a global society, Japanese leaders need to be comfortable interacting with an international community and different leadership needs. It would be ideal for the Japanese, especially the younger generation, to expand their worldview. Such experience can be gained through overseas internships and study abroad. Studying abroad gives an opportunity for Japan’s voice to be heard overseas and to share a different leadership approach. Opportunities for students to engage with peers from overseas results in mutual awareness and global understanding, as acknowledged by Goto (2019). However, integration of supervised study and internships overseas as part of a degree program in order to maximise such exposure to such experience is not common. In addition, academic exchanges overseas often do not emphasize leadership as a major component.

To address some of these issues, MEXT developed a program called the Program for Leading Graduate Schools. The purpose of the program was to make far-reaching reforms to graduate education in Japan with an aim to foster leaders who will play an active global role in industry, academia and government. Nagoya University is one of 33 universities that were selected. One of the programs the university launched in 2014 is a 5-year combined master and PhD program called “The Graduate Program for Real-World Data Circulation Leaders (RWDC)”. Students are selected from four graduate schools: the Graduate Schools of Engineering, Information Science, Medicine and Economics. The RWDC program is a new academic field, and encompasses engineering, information science, medicine and economics to integrate acquisition, analysis, and implementation of data. This program provides practical corporate and overseas experiences, enabling them to elucidate, connect and generate circulations. The students learn to acquire, analyse and implement real-world data in actual applications. For this purpose, the program consists of three components: coursework, real-world work and thesis work. In addition, there are four special features of the program: diverse workplace immersion experiences, international learning opportunities, cross-disciplinary global connections, and a cutting-edge study environment. Each feature is explained in this presentation with comments from current students, including students who have become active entrepreneurs in global society. The presentation focuses on how we developed the graduate program to meet our goals and some of the challenges, lessons and rewards both the faculty members and future leaders have experienced.

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