

The Tokyo City University Australia Program (TAP)
Yuichi Inouye, Ph.D.
Advisor for International Affairs at Tokyo City University

1. TAP: TCU Australia Program

Tokyo City University, or TCU, was founded in 1929 in Tokyo and has a history as one of the most prestigious private colleges of engineering in Japan. TCU expanded to become a comprehensive university since 2009, with 2 graduate schools and 6 faculties across 3 campuses in Tokyo and Yokohama areas. TCU employs 460 academic staff and has 7000 undergraduate students and 600 students in the graduate school.

2. Globalization

One of the most serious issues facing contemporary Japan is the declining birth rate and resulting demographic problems. We have fewer young people, and even fewer young people in Japan are heading overseas. The government has to encourage young people, such as university students, in order to deal with various problems in the future as global citizens. Japanese universities must improve the quality of education in order for their students to be global citizens. “Globalization” or “internationalization” is the key word among the universities in Japan today.

Not only TCU but all universities in Japan are establishing programs to give students the ability to work in the international arena in the future. Many universities in Japan have developed their own international programs and have concluded many exchange agreements with universities overseas. Most universities have many partner universities abroad, to which they send several students every year, and the more partners they have the more students they can send. TCU is also eager for more of its students to have international experiences.

3. Program Structure

On the other hand TCU has its own original program to enrich the talents and abilities of the students in order to be active in international society. The difference is that TCU will send 200 students every year to only one university, Edith Cowan University, ECU, in Perth, Western Australia. This

is the TCU Australia Program or TAP.

TAP sent a total of 200 students to ECU in 2016: 120 students, Cycle A, for the first semester at ECU from February and 80, Cycle B, for the second semester from August. The first cohort entered TCU last year in 2015, and in 2017, next year, TCU will send 240 students to ECU, 120 each in both Cycle A and B.

TAP is a two-year program. In the first year the TAP students take preparatory language courses to improve their English at TCU. They also learn about living in multicultural Perth through monthly lectures as part of their pre-departure orientation. In the second year they study abroad at ECU.

4. TAP at ECU

The TAP students study for 18 weeks at ECU. For the first 9 weeks they study English at ECU's affiliated language school, where they are mixed with international students from around the world. After the end of the English language course they have a one week break where they can visit local's area in Western Australia from Perth and or travel to other parts of Australia, Sydney, Melbourne and etc.

In the second part of the program they study 4 liberal arts units, which are customized for the TAP students to improve their English skills through lectures and tutorials. All credit gained at ECU can be transferred back to TCU, therefore the TAP students are able to graduate from their TCU degree in four years as normal.

As the purpose of TAP is to "learn in English, think in English and debate in English," the TAP students are required to undertake extracurricular activities in English. TCU encouraged them to organize a "Japan Festival" to introduce Japanese culture to their friends, students and staff at ECU, as well as residents in the local community. This April Cycle A students hosted the first "Japan Festival" at ECU, which was a great success, and Cycle B students will hold their "Japan Festival" October 21 today. The purpose of TAP is not only to improve their English, but also to promote intercultural

understanding.

5. TAP English

The Japanese school calendar starts in April when we select the TAP students. Their English skills, however, are not enough to meet the language requirement by ECU when they start their study at ECU. Therefore it is essential for the TAP students to improve their English skills first before they go to Perth.

TCU provides the TAP students with daily English lessons with native speakers of English, for at least 2 hours every day for 100 days before they leave for Perth. The TAP students' work on their speaking, hearing and writing skills in English during these daily lessons. Some unique characteristics of the program are that students are required to have one-on-one tutorials every two weeks and that their classes are divided by their English level with a maximum of 30 students in one class.

The most effective study methods were, aside from the preparatory English classes at TCU as well as at ECU, communication at ECU with classmates, buddies, roommates and LEP, a language exchange program between Japanese and English with students of ECU's Japanese language course. In particular we can see remarkable improvement in speaking and writing skills that require output. We are sure that TAP is quite effective for young students to improve their English skills.

6. New Units

Through our cooperation we could create a new unit for the TAP students to study at ECU, which is what we call an Integrated Unit, as it is taught by professors of both of our universities. For Cycle A this year an Integrated Unit "Urban Movement and Analysis" was provided.

Under the TAP framework TCU would like to propose a new unit by TCU academic staff, which is not included in the ECU curriculum. TCU is especially interested in supporting the Japanese studies program at ECU. We call it an Initiative Units and ECU would implement it as a General Japanese Studies Unit. TAP students would not join this unit, but ECU

students who might be interested in Japanese studies may enjoy the General Japanese Studies Unit, which can be beneficial for ECU students under TAP.

7. Exchange

One of the most positive results of the first TAP cohort was that ECU selected three TAP students in cycle A, who stayed at ECU during semester 1, to extend their studies at ECU to semester 2 with an ECU scholarship. These students will stay at ECU a year in total.

The buddy system developed by ECU worked so well. TCU will be receiving ECU students led by ECU academic staff who taught this year's Integrated Unit "Urban Movement and Analysis." At the end of this October, they will be dispatched under the New Colombo Plan. TCU is very glad to hear that during next three years ECU has been accepted to send selected ECU buddy students to TCU under New Colombo Plan.

TCU recruited its own buddy students in each campus to receive foreign students coming TCU from China, Korea and ASEAN countries. TCU also has requested De La Salle University in Manila to establish a buddy system to look after TCU students while they stay there for English language programs.

8. Concentration

Under the TAP program, TCU will send a total of 200 students every year to only ECU. The concentration on ECU may lead the relationship between both universities to become deeper and broader. Therefore TCU has been able to work very closely with ECU, whereas it may be difficult for TCU, if TCU has many partners abroad, to give dedicated attention to ECU only as one partner among many. This is one reason why TAP is a unique program in Japanese universities.

9. Cooperation

TCU hopes to develop other international programs towards globalization at TCU such as international internships, the Sakura Science program sponsored by the Japanese Government to invite students from Asian countries to TCU, a program similar to TAP for graduate students etc. TCU

hopes the globalizing effect will be expanded by the TAP students after they come back from Perth to non-TAP students at TCU as well.

At the top level of the university, too, TCU had the honour of sending our university President Chitoshi Miki to ECU in July last year. Chairman Isao Adachi, Gotoh Educational Cooperation, with President Miki were received by ECU dignitaries in April and observed the “Japan Festival” by Cycle A students at ECU. Also in April ECU sent the Honourable Dr. Hendy Cowan, Chancellor of ECU, to Tokyo for the TCU entrance ceremony to encourage new students to join TAP and to welcome them to ECU in Perth.

10. Appreciation & future

TAP is a tailor-made program made possible by the cooperation of both universities. TCU would like to express its sincere appreciation to ECU for its generous cooperation with all aspects of the program. Along with these experiences TCU hopes to create programs other than TAP to give other students, about 800 students, half of one year level, the opportunity to study overseas for at least more than 3 months during their degree course at TCU

Thank you very much.