

2018  
President Vision

April 2018  
President Yoshihisa Baba

## 2018 President Vision

In February, the results of the mid-term evaluation of the “Top Global University Project” was announced, and the university received the best possible grade “S” (S/A/B/C/D grading system). In the mid-term evaluation, the university was evaluated as “currently in an outstanding effort situation, will be able to achieve the goals of the program,” in addition to “sincere efforts for education and improvements to raise secure learning outcomes and information sharing, leading to excellent outcomes of the university management by the faculty and staff is the ultimate point of emphasis in the high evaluation.” It is our greatest joy to receive recognition for all the efforts that the faculty and staff has been working as one toward globalization. I would express my appreciation for all the support. You can also say that this year will mark as the 2nd departure for the year 2023, the final year for this project. In this year, English Medium Programs, courses that students can graduate only with the English language, will officially start the acceptance for September entrance. In addition, this year marking the 5<sup>th</sup> year since the university was selected for “Acceleration Program for University Education Rebuilding,” we will continue to make effort toward the program focusing on “active learning.”

In April, through the “Top Global University Project,” the Graduate School of International Peace Studies was newly established. In addition, the Distance Learning Division also newly opened the Faculty of Letters. The university organization is now 8 Faculties, 5 graduate schools, 2 professional graduate schools, and 4 faculties of distance learning. A new curriculum begin from April for 6 faculties excluding the Faculty of Science and Engineering and Faculty of Nursing. With the upgraded system by establishing an assessment policy, the university will not only make effort in enhancing educational programs but to also establish a system that can visualize and evaluate in order to foster creative global citizens and to achieve the goals of the Grand Design.

Last year in 2017, the newly built male and female international dormitories welcomed the incoming students and the Grand Design 3<sup>rd</sup> stage began. In this one year, there were many eye openers of student achievements. In the student section for the “Yunus & Youth Social Business Design Contest 2017,” Faculty of Business Administration Associate Professor Yasuda’s seminar had won and was able to participate in the “Global Social Business Summit 2017” held in Paris, France. At the “All-Japan Collegiate Debate Championship 2017”, Soka University won 1<sup>st</sup> place. Furthermore, women representatives of 24 countries and regions, regarding to the G20 countries, Soka University’s female student represented Japan for the third consecutive year at the “G(irls) 20 Summit 2017” held in Munich, Germany. Moreover, 8 students were selected for the “Tobitate! (Leap for Tomorrow) Study Abroad Initiative,” a public-private effort for the future of Japan lead by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The number of selected students ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of all private universities. Other than these, students have demonstrated their daily achievements in many fields such as participating in international conferences, contests, certification examinations, career paths, and contributions in the community.

In the research field, Soka University’s initiative of “Research and development of appropriate technology and forming a new regional industrial foundation aiming towards constructing a sustainable recycling-oriented society in developing countries.” was selected for the “Private University Research Branding Project,” lead by MEXT. Also, for one of projects of the “JICA Partnership Program,” aiming towards the solution of the

environmental issues in the island countries of the Pacific Ocean and Federated States of Micronesia, Hachioji City and Soka University signed an agreement to become partners for this program.

Not just the students, faculty and staff were able to demonstrate their efforts, by the daily support from all around Japan and also from other countries as well. We would like to express our deepest gratitude.

Finally, Soka University Grand Design will enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage and approaching the year 2020, which we have set for the final goal. The initiatives aiming to foster “creative individuals” and “creative global citizens” are entering its final stages.

This academic year also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Founder, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, announcing the “Proposal for the Normalization of Sino-Japanese Relations.” To commemorate this, symposiums will be held in September at Soka University and October in China. By reaffirming the proposal, we hope this opportunity will further deepen the relationship between China and Japan even more.

Two big projects will be newly considered this year. One is the commemorative project for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding and the second is to plan the next mid and long-term project after the year 2021. Through the support of many, the preparations for these projects will begin.

The year 2018 being a start for the last 3 years of the Soka University Grand Design, it is also a start for planning toward the next years after the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With the determinations to make this year a fulfilled and productive year than before, advancing forward as university that fosters creative global citizens, here we announce the 2018 President Vision.

Until now, the President of Soka University has announced visions and goals of each fiscal year with the name of “Educational Vision”. In recent years, the Educational Vision has been announcing its visions and also regarding initiatives of the Grand Design, such as education, research, student support, international exchanges, and lifelong education. The content, not only about education, it has been covering a wide range of topics. Therefore, starting from this fiscal year, the name of the announcement of the efforts will change from “Educational Vision” to “President Vision.”

#### 1. The opening of the Graduate School of International Peace Studies and Correspondence Education Division Faculty of Letters

This April, the “Graduate School of International Peace Studies” and “Distance Learning Division Faculty of Letters” were newly established. The School of International Peace Studies will promote a high level research for the establishment of a peaceful and sustainable global society and practice an educational program based on these research outcomes. The graduate course will feature on “International Peace Studies,” including the fields of “International Relations” and “Peace Studies.” This course will be in English and aim to foster individuals that will contribute to the global society.

In addition, to answer to the increasing needs of correspondence education in the society, the newly established “Faculty of Letters” of the Distance Learning Division consists the following 4 majors: 1. Cross-Cultural Communications (Japanese), 2. Philosophy and History, 3. Expressive Culture, and 4. Sociology. The faculty aims to foster creative individuals seeking “human kind” through the research areas of language, literature, philosophy, history and sociology.

## 2. Educational strategy

### 1) The visualization of learning outcomes based on the Assessment Policy

Based on the Assessment Policy established last year, the measurement and visualization of learning outcomes will be promoted in all faculties/departments and common subjects.

Also, by considering the results, a cycle for educational reform will be constructed through curriculum evaluation.

### 2) Promotion to make a self-growth record for the Acceleration Program for University Education Rebuilding: AP

Through the AP project, the university's "active learning" is advancing. The project was initiated in all faculties from this year, enhanced with the assessment subjects where the students reflect annually on their learning and take advantage of those reflections toward the next year. This year, the visualization of learning outcomes will be further promoted and with the base of the preceding faculties for the assessment subjects, creating students' self-growth record of the "compilation of learning" of the 4 years will be discussed.

### 3) Strengthening the collaboration with other universities in Japan

Last year, Soka University signed an agreement on cooperation with two universities, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and Hiroshima University. From this year, the credit transfer system with Tokyo University of Foreign Studies will start. In addition, professor and student exchange between Soka University and Hiroshima University will be enhanced.

### 4) High School/University Articulation Reforms

In response to the High School/University Articulation Reform, which the Central Council for Education of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology promotes, the new AO entrance examination "PASCAL exam" was introduced last year. By this examination, the university was able to accept students with aptitude toward active learning. Furthermore, aiming toward the introduction of a new standardized entrance examination in 2020, Soka University will be considering to introduce a new entrance examination to comprehensively evaluate the applicants' three component factors of the academic ability.

In addition, a new system "Advanced Placement" will begin from this year. This system will allow high school students to enroll in a university class which will eventually be recognized as their credit after entering the university. This "Advanced Placement" will be officially begin with the cooperation agreement with Kyorin University and aiming to sign agreements with 5 local high schools.

## 3. Research and teaching activities of faculty members

### 1) Promotion of the Private University Research Branding Project

Soka University will consistently promote the research of faculty members in accordance with the schedule plan of the funding project "Private University Research Branding Project," aiming to further specialize and strengthen the function of a university. Making effort to widely open the information out to the public, Soka University will aim to establish this project as one of the research brands of the university.

### 2) Strengthening and maintenance of the research support management system

The university-wide research promoting system, such as research development promotion grants and next-generation joint research projects, will be verified and improved as necessary. Furthermore, aiming to strengthen the support system, panel presentations and discussions will be held for the promotion of interdisciplinary research.

3) Implementation of a support system for competitive research funds

Aiming toward the increase of the numbers selected and grant amount for competitive research funds, such as the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, enhancement on the consulting service, browsing of application documents and on-campus application explanatory sessions will be made. In addition, explanatory session for international researchers of Soka University will be held.

For the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, planned application toward large-scale research projects and support for young researchers will be further enhanced.

4) The start of discussions toward efforts of securing research time and promotion of fair research activities

To prevent unauthorized use and/or wrong doings of research activities for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, a verification of the current responsibility system and ethical education will be conducted and further strengthened and build an effective system.

Also, aiming to secure research time for researchers, their amount of lectures and office work time will be balanced and efforts will be made to reform the campus system to maximize the research time.

5) The start of faculty performance assessment

Through programs initiated by the Comprehensive Faculty Performance Assessment Committee, the university will implement the faculty performance assessment which will be deliberated with faculty's research, education, office work and social contributions having examples of other universities as a reference. In addition, highly evaluated faculty will be recognized. The assessment system aims to make all faculty/departments throughout the university to actively participate in research activities.

4. Enhancement of student support

1) Future scholarship opportunities

From 2014, 80 individuals were able to receive the "Soka University Scholarship." From the fiscal 2018, the number will increase to 120 recipients. Also, "Soka University Makiguchi Foundation for Education, Scholarship" will increase from 60 to 370 recipients (including Faculty of Nursing). Furthermore, including the "Soka University Scholarship for Siblings Concurrently Enrolled" that was implemented 2 years ago, the number of recipients of university provided scholarships will be the largest.

This year, the university will comprehensively look into further improvements of the scholarships.

2) Further development of student dormitories

With the opening of the Takiyama International Dormitory (capacity for 400 male students) and Manyo International Dormitory (capacity for 144 female students), the resident assistant (RA) system was also introduced. In the dormitories, international students and Japanese students are able to experience cross-cultural exchanges through

living together and able to enrich their dormitory living. This fiscal year, the preparations to increase international dormitories for female students is underway and aims to further foster creative global citizens.

At other dormitories, faculty and staff will assume duties of dormitory advisors and make effort to enhance the support toward study and living.

### 3) Support for job placement for students seeking employment in their hometowns

With the cooperation of the Soka University Alumni Association (Soyukai), face to face meetings between students seeking employment in their hometown with the alumni will be continued and have this an opportunity to offer information of companies in rural areas.

Along with this, the university aims to sign agreements with many prefectures for the support of hometown job hunting. Soka University assigned agreements as of January 2018, with 7 prefectures and/or cities.

Partial support of transportation expenses to students for company's selection examination, government official examinations, and teacher employment examination in their hometown will be continued and support students who decides to return to their hometown after graduating.

### 4) Strengthening career support for international students

With the advancement of the "Top Global University" initiative, having the number of international students increase year after year, a career course (Basic Career Design and Career Vision I) opened for international students from last year. This fiscal year, a course that will provide Japanese business language and business manner will be added to support international students. For the international students in the English Medium Programs, they will be able to take a newly made career course taught in English. Furthermore, internships (Japanese and English) will be available to strengthen the career support for international students.

## 5. International strategy

As stated before, Soka University received the best possible grade "S" for the mid-term evaluation held last year for the "Top Global University Project," which the university was selected in 2014. Soka University was highly recognized for its sincere efforts toward the advancement of initiatives such as the establishment of the Graduate School of International Peace Studies, the uniqueness of having exchanges with African countries, English tracks for most faculties, support system for study abroad and international dormitories. Furthermore, Soka University is being expected for advancement of this project with further creative philosophy and initiatives.

Toward achieving the goals for the next mid-term evaluation in 2019, the university will continue to focus on the 4 initiatives; "Global Mobility: the globalization the campus through students' study abroad and accepting international students," "Global Learning: the globalization of faculty education programs to foster creative global citizens," "Global Administration: the globalization of the university management structure and decision procedures," and "Global Core: the establishment of a global hub for humanistic education."

### 1) Global Mobility

The number of overseas exchange partners has increased up to 195 universities in 58 countries and regions. Also, with the collaboration of the World Language Center (WLC) and

Global Core Center (GCC), the overseas language study programs in English will be developed to a large-scale study program for the spring and summer. This will allow students to acquire credits and accelerate the number of students experiencing study abroad.

In addition, the improvements of scholarships for outgoing and incoming international students have been made. Last year, about 210 students going abroad and about 460 international students learning at Soka University received scholarships, supporting their learning environment. From the past experiences, the financial supply standard will be reconsidered to improve the support.

Regarding the International Student Support Center, partial housing service will be realized with the cooperation of the Soka University Service Center and support toward daily life and career will be enhanced. In addition, September entrance for international students will start from this year. For preparations for this, the school regulations were revised and a new portal system that corresponds to this new change launched from this April.

## 2) Global Learning

This fiscal year, including the newly opened Graduate School of International Peace Studies, four new English track courses opened from the start, totaling to 11 courses. PR promotion will be planned to secure a certain number of enrolments for the 11 courses, such as welcoming international students from English speaking countries. From this fiscal year, the GPA grading system will be introduced in the Graduate programs. The GPA system for the undergraduate programs will be reconsidered in fiscal 2019, to be in accordance with the global quality assurance. Furthermore, starting from this fiscal year, the “Global Citizen Education” subject course was established, aiming to foster globally capable individuals through the study of “Peace, Human Rights, Environment, and Development.”

## 3) Global Administration

In March 2018, the general meeting of “The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL)” was held here at Soka University, as the host university, with the main theme of “Higher Education for Diversity and Global Citizenship.” The exchanges with the Southeast Asian countries are deepening with the opening of a new university office in the Philippines. The plan for this office is to be a hub for exchanges and also for the language study programs held in the Philippines in spring and summer.

## 4) Global Core

Finally, the Graduate School of International Peace Studies has opened and 13 students from 8 countries and regions has enrolled. This school is expected to take role to be the core of proposing researches for peace and sustainability to the international society toward becoming a global hub for humanistic education.

## 6. Initiatives by the Distance Learning Division

In the 2018 Fiscal year, the Distance Learning Division opened the long-awaited “Faculty of Letters Department of Human Studies” in the correspondence education course and has expanded to 4 faculties and 5 departments.

Furthermore, for the educational environment, scholarships to alleviate financial burdens for students who attend the schooling program will start.

Media classes through DVDs and submission/revision of reports will be available online. In addition, support learning materials “Gakkou” will be available as a digital booklet through the student portal site. Preparations for increasing the number for on-demand classes for after fiscal 2019 will be made.



