



Image of Soka University on the 50th anniversary of its founding and Soka University Grand Design

April.1st.2010

SOKA

UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

Soka University was established in 1971. The time was an age in which the presence of a university itself was filled with a sense of loss, experiencing the inflammation and debacles of the student movement. In a speech, founder Dr. Daisaku Ikeda once talked about the meaning of the establishment of Soka University, supplying an overview of the history of university transitions.

“Universities that were the source of creating culture are in danger of serious corruption. ... In this era that is ending, a new university is needed for the opening of a new era” (July, 1973). He also once said, *“The name of this institution--Soka University--means a university for the creation of value. This in turn means that the basic aim of our university must be to create the kind of value needed by society for it to become a more healthful and wholesome place. This is the kind of value that must be offered-or returned-to society”* (April, 1973).

In order to create this value, our University has set three points as our founding principles: Education, Culture, and Peace. This year, in 2010, pointing out that today’ s society is in an era that might be termed an interregnum of values, the Founder has announced a proposal “Toward a New Era of Value Creation.”

In this proposal, he pointed out that the spreading of the nihilistic mind that lacks a healthy sense of values – such as a civilization that identifies economic capacity (the ability to maximize profit and wealth) as the sole criterion of human worth, or that has bloated desires, or in which science and technology are going out of control – generates a loss of traction and a sense of stagnation in the society. In fact, the unequal society born from globalization and market fundamentalism is one of the causes of poverty and terrorism around the world. Furthermore, it is causing more complex global problems such as the rivalry between advanced and developing countries, making approaches toward environmental problems difficult. The world needs people who can end this interregnum of values, create and offer “values of the good,” and courageously face these problems. It is our continued mission, since the establishment of the University, to foster “creative individuals” who create values through our humanistic education.

In 2020, on the 50th anniversary of Soka University, we would like to proudly announce that Soka University is realizing our mission. This is also the image of what Founder Ikeda once said after the establishment of the University: *“If humanity can rouse and sate a new enthusiasm for learning and the pursuit of truth, if we can turn our wide-open eyes to the future, I am certain that the kind of philosophy needed to enable human survival will be elucidated and established. Such a philosophy will not only contribute to the survival of humanity – the first sine qua non of education – but will also underpin a new civilization that will truly celebrate humanity. Soka University will have fulfilled its purpose if it can contribute in a meaningful way to the attainment of this enormous goal”* (April, 1973).

Recognizing the mission of our University, we will be making the future image of Soka University clear through the “Soka University Grand Design Initiative.”

The future image of Soka University on the 50th anniversary should be an image that directly answers the question, what kind of university is Soka University? Looking at our traditions and the results until now, we have decided the following three points to be the framework of the Soka University Grand Design Initiative:

- to foster creative individuals who will contribute to society based on the University' s three founding principles
- to create academic and research programs for the development of students
- to develop a broad and robust framework to support such programs

We have tried to be as specific as possible about the goals when writing the Grand Design Initiative, for example, creating goals with numbers that can be easily understood. In the future, we plan to announce mid-term plans or yearly action plans based on this Grand Design Initiative. The “Education Vision” which we have been announcing yearly will be the action plan. In order to promote this University-wide project, participation of all faculty, staff, and students is needed – all who have gathered under the founding principles. We want to put effort into this project with the spirit of young founders and make new history.

Soka University Grand Design Initiative

In August 2007, making plans toward our 50th anniversary, we established the “Soka University Grand Design Initiative Decision-Making Committee” and the “Soka University Grand Design Initiative Promoting Center.” In these groups, decision-making about the Grand Design Initiative started with the next four points:

【Viewpoints on the Soka University Grand Design Initiative】

1. To ensure a competitive advantage (with values such as strength and character) in the medium and long terms and recognize this both inside and outside the University
2. To report inside and outside the University about basic social responsibilities such as quality assurance and contributions to society as well as about high quality education and research achievements
3. To aim to integrate the ideals throughout the University by announcing the vision to each organization and office (aiming to build a self-contained organization)
4. To become an organization that realizes goals we have set rather than dealing with problems afterwards

In the decision-making about the Grand Design, we have carefully considered Soka University' s branding strategy. With cooperation from many groups, we have created the Soka University Grand Design Initiative Concept Book and officially started making efforts in our branding.

As part of this branding, we have made guidelines on how to use the Soka University logo design. Furthermore, we have decided on a concept and statement, a message for the public to be part of the University' s branding and a key principle of the Grand Design Initiative (see the box below). Through these branding strategy processes, Soka University has built an efficient model structure.

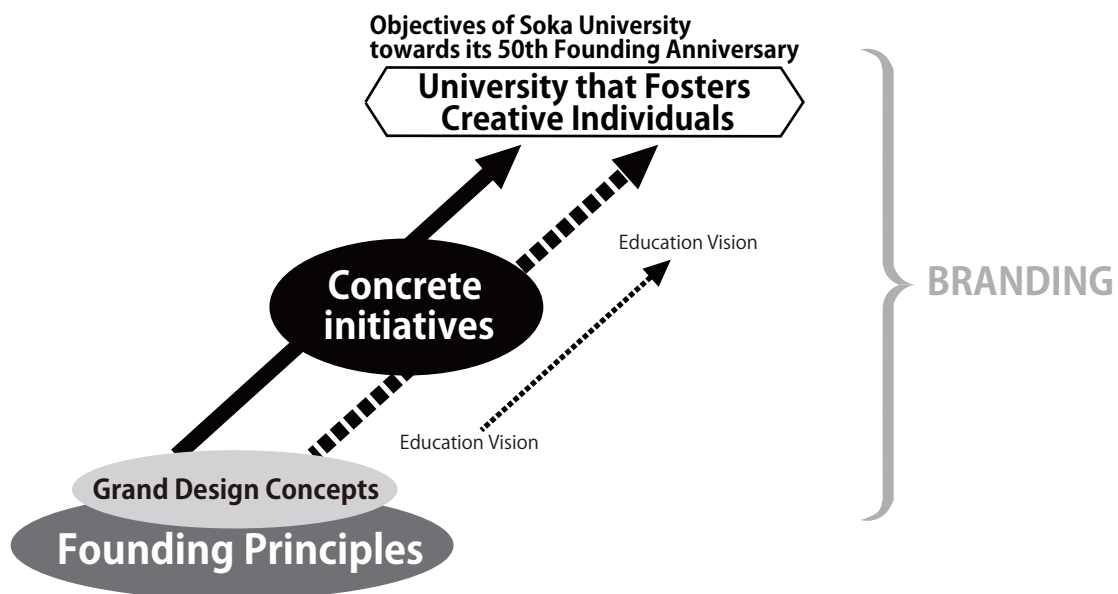
【Soka University Grand Design Initiative Concept and Statement】

- Grand Design Concept

[With our responsibility to be a highest seat of learning and to realize the goal of fostering “Creative Individuals” that Founder Dr. Daisaku Ikeda proposed, and to mark the value of Soka University in society and history through specific efforts that will be valued as the “Uniqueness of Soka University” and “Soka University’ s competitiveness”]

- Statement

Discover your potential



Here we will explain the statement and about fostering “Creative Individuals,” starting from the Grand Design Initiative Concept. To be able to correspond with the global society, we have decided to use the statement in English for the overseas public; for domestic use, we will be using both English and Japanese. “Your potential” means the possibilities that one individual has inside themselves.

Every year since 1998, Soka University has announced our “Soka University Education Vision,” which states our goals of each academic year. This Education Vision, which we have announced yearly for ten years, will be replaced as the “Action Plan” stated in the Grand Design Initiative. By putting effort into both in the long-term project Grand Design Initiative and the Education Vision, a synergetic effect is expected. Also by connecting the two, we aim to develop a consecutive and effective project within the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.

The Image of Soka University on the 50th founding anniversary

Japan is a society with a declining birthrate. In order to make Soka University one of the schools to which students apply in a competitive environment, we have discussed strategies and promotion. To make detailed strategies, we formed seven subcommittees (Education Strategy, Research Strategy, Student Support Strategy, Globalization Strategy, Promotion Strategy, Administration Strategy, and Campus and Finance Plans) where we held detailed discussions for about a year starting in February 2008. At the committee meetings, the most urgent topics were preferentially discussed.

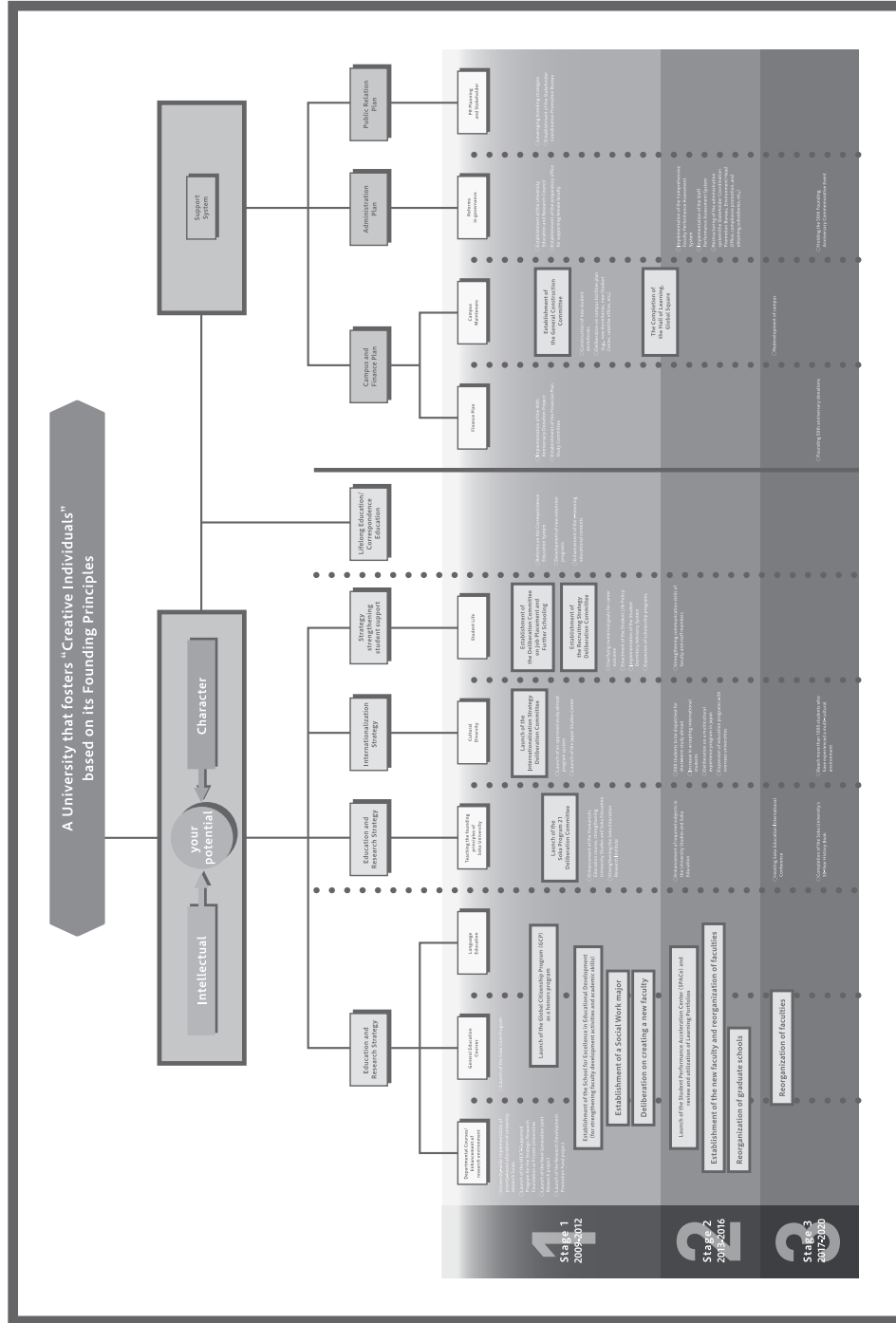
Using the opinions and suggestions from the subcommittees, we launched the “Soka University Grand Design Initiative General Strategy Meeting” in February 2009, in order to ensure consistency in the accomplishment of the initiatives. At this meeting, necessary goals, guidelines, and priority issues about the Grand Design were discussed.

The “Correspondence Education Restructuring Promotion Committee” was established in 2007 and has been holding meetings about the future image of correspondence education and lifelong education.

We have decided that the initiatives until the year 2020 will be Educational and Research Strategy, International Strategy, Strategy on Strengthening Student Support, and Lifelong and Correspondence Education. Supporting these initiatives are Campus and Finance Plans, Administration Strategy, and Promotional Strategy. (Figure 2)

【Soka University Grand Design Initiative Concept and Statement】

The Vision of Soka University towards its 50th anniversary and Soka University Grand Design Initiative



Points of the Soka University Grand Design

- ◎ A Creative individual is when one discovers their potential and mission, trains their “intellectual capability” and “strength of character”
- ◎ Soka University declares when one student discovers its potential “individual potential”
- ◎ Soka University’ education is improving ones “intellectual ability” and “strength of character” , discovering “individual potential” to blossom those opportunities.
- ◎ “Intellectual capability” represents skills to analyze, integrate, and create based on reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- ◎ “Strength of character” means having the capacity to put belief into practice and to collaborate with others.
- ◎ Announcing the action plan every year, the Grand Design is set based on the deliberations of subcommittees, dividing into 3 stages towards the founding 50th anniversary.

Through a series of intense two-year deliberations, the General Strategy Committee approved the objectives of Soka University towards its 50th founding anniversary as follows:

Soka University's aspirations towards its 50th anniversary can be stated in one phrase: A University that fosters creative individuals based on its founding principles.

The Founding Principles of Soka University

- 1. Be the highest seat of learning for humanistic education**
- 2. Be the cradle of a new culture**
- 3. Be a fortress for the peace for humankind**

The cornerstone of Soka University is laid on its founding principles. The continuing mission of Soka University is to foster Creative Individuals who contribute to society based on the University's founding principles.

The fundamental competencies of creative individuals are Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character. By developing Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character, individual potential and mission will be discovered. Soka University here declares that the power that each individual student possesses is Individual Potential. The education offered at Soka University must enhance students' Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character to discover and fulfill their Individual Potentials. Creative Individuals are the ones who develop Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character and tirelessly continue to challenge themselves. The University dedicates itself to fostering such capable individuals.

“Intellectual Capability” and “Strength of Character” to become a “Creative

We reconfirmed the Founder's earlier speeches and asked ourselves what “Intellectual Capability” and “Strength of Character” mean to Soka University and how we will define them.

Regarding “Intellectual Capability,” the Founder stated that it is important to establish first a firm intellectual basis. In addition, he also stressed the importance of acquiring basic academic skills. At Soka University, we cultivate students' fundamental academic skills, which consist of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition to these skills, we aim to encourage the practical use of skills to analyze, integrate, and create. Soka University defines “Intellectual Capability” as the ability to use these practical skills.

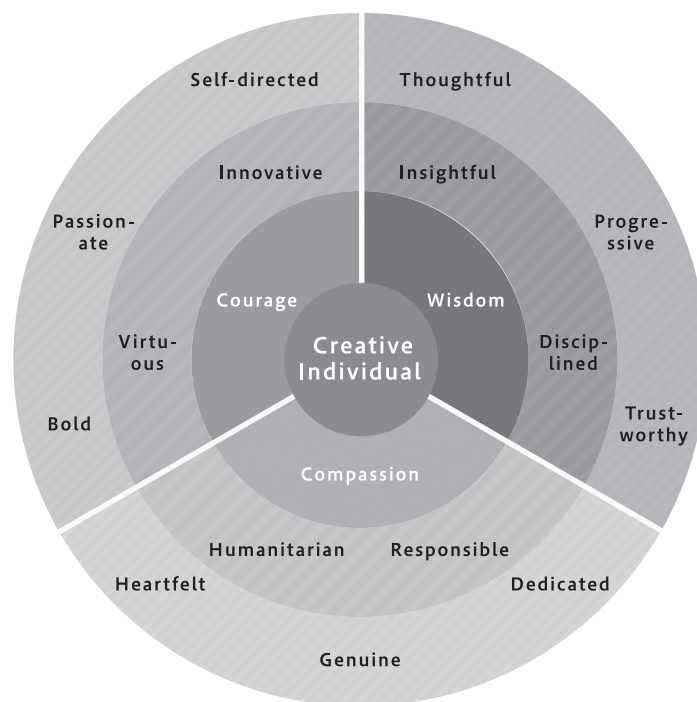
As for “Strength of Character” Founder Ikeda stated that building faith and a sense of responsibility is the core essence. For what purpose do you study? While keeping this question in mind, both a sense of purpose and the study to achieve that purpose must have a strong connection. Through interaction between faculty and students, based on listening ability and communicating with others, a sense of responsibility of mission will be inspired. Toward the achievement of our own mission, the University is required to reflect on our own actions.

With our faith and sense of responsibility, each of us should always face up to humankind and to society. This is also reflected in Soka University's school code: “For the development of culture and to contribute to human welfare.”

In conclusion, “Strength of Character” is defined as having the “skills to put belief into practice” for those individuals who tirelessly create new values in any circumstances, and “to collaborate with others” for those who exert their wisdom while tackling issues that face humanity, based on their own rich personalities.

In order to finalize the Grand Design Initiative, we had much cooperation from our faculty, staff, and students as well as from graduates, student guardians, and many others who agreed to be interviewed. Through these interviews, we reached the conclusion that the key term that connects the present and future of Soka University is “Creative Individual.” We aggregated the image of a “Creative Individual” from the interviews and from the lecture of Founder Ikeda given in 1996 at Teachers College, Columbia University (Figure 3). To foster a “Creative Individual” that has different elements, as you can see, is to develop “Intellectual Capability” and “Strength of Character.” This is the main goal of the Soka University Grand Design Initiative.

【Figure 3 Elements that make a “Creative Individual”】



Concrete Goals and Initiatives to Improve Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character

Then, how can we enhance students’ Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character? In order to do this, the University has divided the 12-year period stretching from 2009 to 2020, Soka University’ s 50th founding anniversary, into three stages, and the goals in each stage are set based on the deliberations of subcommittees.

Intellectual Capability

Intellectual Capability, as defined by Soka University, represents the skills to analyze, integrate, and create based on the fundamental academic strengths – reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Soka University is further enhancing the contents of undergraduate education and continues to advance reforms on general education courses and Faculty Development (FD) activities in order to establish an educational system in which each and every student can acquire basic learning skills.

The indispensable components of creativity are “knowledge” and “wisdom.” In order for students to acquire “knowledge” and cultivate “wisdom,” it is necessary to strengthen each students’ learning skills and increase their self-study hours. Soka University will set concrete numerical targets to enhance students’ Intellectual Capability and accomplish the initiatives. In addition to setting numerical targets, Soka University will take the following three concrete initiatives to enhance students’ Intellectual Capability:

1. Development of Educational System and Programs by the newly launched School for Excellence in Education Development (SEED)
2. Enhancement of Learning Support System at SPACe
3. Reorganization of Faculties

① Development of Educational System and Programs in the newly launched School for Excellence in Education Development (SEED)

Since Academic year (AY) 2009, Soka University has systematized and enhanced the contents of general education courses by introducing the Soka Core Program. The University has also put effort into enabling students to acquire basic learning skills through a university-wide application of the General Basic Seminar in the first-year education program. The University further takes initiatives in implementing reforms centered on education such as the launch of a new honors program, Global Citizenship Program (GCP) in AY 2010.

Soka University also launched the School for Excellence in Education Development (SEED) in AY 2010 to advance measures centered on strengthening the skills needed to read, write, listen, and speak. SEED aims to develop a program, provide courses, initiate assessment, and improve and enhance the quality of undergraduate education. Full-time faculty members will be assigned to SEED, and it will play a central role of advancing measures to develop students’ Intellectual Capability.

FD activities at Soka University have been initiated by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). In AY 2008, FD committees were set up on a university-wide scale and at each faculty level to further encourage active FD activities. These initiatives will be strengthened to ensure the quality of learning among students in coordination with SEED. SEED will administer the existing entities such as the General Education Courses Management Center, World Language Center (WLC), and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

②Enhancement of Learning Support System at SPACe

Learning support services offered by SEED will be centralized at SPACe, in line with the opening of the Hall of Learning, Global Square in 2013. This SPACe will help develop students' writing skills, which will lead to the development of skills to "analyze, integrate, and create," and will also offer support to develop students' language proficiency skills and basic learning skills. In addition, Student Portfolios will be introduced in all facilities from AY 2010. Faculty members are expected to utilize these portfolios when giving academic advice to students, meanwhile enhancing learning support service with the establishment of SPACe.

③Reorganization of Faculties

After the revision of Standards for the Establishment of Universities, many universities have experienced tireless transition and reorganization of faculties and departments, while Soka University has established no new faculties since the establishment of the Faculty of Engineering in 1991. At a department level, however, Soka University has established the Department of Environmental Symbiosis and the Department of Human Studies. In addition to gaining approval of the International Program in the Faculty of Economics as a Good Practice (GP) program, our initiatives for globalization such as the Global Program in the Faculty of Business Administration and the Double-Degree Course in the Faculty of Letters, are becoming distinctive features of Soka University. Reorganization does not necessarily mean improvement, but these initiatives have breathed new life into the campus and have led to the development of a variety of capable individuals. A few further advancements on reorganization will be needed for the University to disseminate the objective of Soka University towards the 50th anniversary inside and outside of the University.

In the first stage, a Social Work Major will be created in the Faculty of Letters. Many students are now interested in the field of social welfare, and the University desires to establish an environment where students enrolling in 2011 and later can obtain a qualification in social welfare.

Furthermore, a new faculty will be established in line with the opening of the Hall of Learning, Global Square. Soka University will also work to direct the reorganization of educational institutions by considering the educational resources of Soka University and the needs of society.

Strength of Character

Soka University defined Strength of Character as having the "skills to put belief into practice" by those individuals who tirelessly create new values in any circumstances, and "to collaborate with others" by those who exert their wisdom while tackling issues that face humanity based on their own rich personalities. Based on this understanding, Soka University will take the following three initiatives to improve students' Strength of Character:

- ①Establishment of Soka Program 21
- ②Enhancement of communication skills
- ③Promotion of international strategies

① Establishment of Soka Program 21

The fostering of students with belief/faith and sense of mission who continuously put effort to achieve their goals and students with mutual understanding and communication skills is the key for "Strength of Character." Soka University will establish a course category "Soka Program 21," centered on Soka University's founding principles and humanism within undergraduate education. Soka Education Research Institute will take the lead in this establishment, but as this is considered to be a university issue, the University has established the Soka Program 21 Exploratory Committee. With a basic framework of research into the Founder's philosophy and practices, this program will be built with a vision of widely expanding in the fields of peace, culture, and education, and making efforts toward advanced global issues. As Soka University is the sole institution of higher education in Japan in which students can learn the philosophy of the Founder, this program will play a central role in providing distinctive education and serving as the foundation to develop students' Strength of Character.

② Enhancement of communication skills

In order to improve students' Strength of Character, SEED will be the driving force behind enhancing students' communication and leadership skills by actively employing educational methods such as project-based seminars, debating, and collaborative learning. Starting in AY 2010, Student Portfolios will be introduced in every faculty. These portfolios will be used to find ways to achieve goals, to obtain the skills necessary for managing students' progress, and for peer education. Furthermore, the process of communicating with other students nearby will help in skill improvement.

Soka University has the tradition of cultivating each student's humanity through encouraging students in taking initiative in their daily lives at the dormitories, in club activities, and through management of various university events. However, even in busy student life there should be no isolation from the rest of society. Therefore, the University will build a human network with other universities through active exchanges. Soka University will aim to further cultivate students' Strength of Character by inspiring them domestically using a human network built inside and outside of the University. Cultivating the ability to sympathize with others is the first step in learning the skill to cooperate with others.

③ Promotion of international strategies

By expanding the opportunities of cross-cultural exchange in a planned manner, Soka University will establish a system in which students can learn a variety of values and perspectives about the world and enable as many as students as possible to study abroad both short- and long-term. In addition, the increase in acceptances of international students will expand the opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges. To accomplish this, the University will take further initiatives to accommodate international students. One of the numeric goals planned for the international strategy will be to have about 1,000 students experience study abroad in each school year. This number is a little over 50% of the students at each grade level. International strategies like the above are considered by the International Strategy Exploratory Committee.

Enhancement of support environment and system

The Grand Design Initiative is divided into 4 main strategies (education, research, international, and student support). The content of each is specified in order to further cultivate Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character, which form the basis of the "Creative Individual." Soka University supports the promotion of these strategies through the establishment of a firm financial management base and enhancement of facilities and governance.

To build a firm financial management base, Soka University will establish the Financial Plan Study Committee. The University has started the 40th Founding Anniversary Donation, but in order to reach the expectations of the supporters, Soka University will further improve the financial base. Regarding University governance, a University Education and Research Council will be established in AY 2010 as an organization that will replace the University Faculty Council. In addition, with the establishment of the Presidential Office Meeting, communication inside the University will be made smooth by aggregating and coordinating opinions.

Aimed to be completed in 2013, the construction of the Hall of Learning, Global Square (referred to as Global Square) will start soon for the enhancement of the educational environment. As the construction begins, the enhancement of a satisfying and comfortable campus environment that will suit the image of Soka University on its 50th founding anniversary will be discussed.

Through the whole Grand Design Initiative, Soka University will build and expand the University brand by making the future image clear and developing promotional strategies. In addition to the statement for the public, the University will invent items that will be remembered by the stakeholders and will improve the University logo design to give it a more united tone.

The educational goal of Soka University is to have each student become a "Creative Individual" by discovering their potential through the efforts of the whole University in enhancing the cultivation of Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character. Many of the plans in the Grand Design Initiative are in the curriculum, but to foster "Creative Individuals," improvements in school life outside of the learning curricula will also be needed, such as internal dialogue and self-questioning through reading.

In order to realize the future image of Soka University on its 50th founding anniversary, it is important that all students, faculty, and staff consider and discuss what they can contribute within their positions. With the great tradition of the unification of all students, faculty, and staff, Soka University will aim to be a university that will foster "Creative Individuals."

"From sharing the ideals toward the practice of sympathy," one step toward the new era for Soka University has been made.

Summary

In closing, the objectives of Soka University towards its 50th founding anniversary and Soka University Grand Design Initiative are summarized as below:

1. Soka University will become the university to foster Creative Individuals based on its founding principles towards its 50th founding anniversary
2. Soka University declares that the power that each and every student possesses is Individual Potential.
3. The education at Soka University enhances students' Intellectual Capability and Strength of Character, and enables them to discover and fulfill their Individual Potentials.
4. Intellectual Capability represents skills to analyze, integrate, and create based on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
5. Strength of Character represents skills to continue to put belief into practice and to collaborate with others.
6. Soka University divides the time towards the 50th founding anniversary into three periods, and announces its Action Plan every year based on the contents decided in the subcommittees under the Grand Design Initiative.
7. Soka University will leverage its brand image by effectively disseminating its objectives towards the 50th founding anniversary and the Grand Design Initiative
8. All faculty, staff, and students will make tireless efforts to embody the vision towards its 50th founding anniversary not only on the university-wide scale, but at the level of faculty/department, office, and individual.

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