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**CULCON Undergraduate Educational Exchange Working Group
US Panel Report**

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As you remember, six years ago CULCON set as its first priority a binational effort to significantly increase the number of American students studying in Japan and appropriate programs for them. On both sides, there has been a level of activity that is unprecedented. Our Japanese colleagues have much to tell about their progress and we look forward to hearing about it. On the US side, our efforts have initiated three interrelated but independent projects: the Curriculum Abroad Project, the Faculty and Curriculum Development Project and the Bridging Project Clearinghouse.

The CULCON Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Educational Exchange agreed in December, 1993 that a clearinghouse mechanism should be established. Its functions would include such activities as providing detailed information on study abroad programs and curriculum, and providing recruitment, counseling and other facilitative services. I am delighted to report that the Commission has, just yesterday, approved funding of a project we are calling the Bridging Project Clearinghouse, which has been designed to fulfill this mandate.

The Bridging Project Clearinghouse will be created within the Association for Teachers of Japanese, the professional society in the United States for college teachers of Japanese. The ATJ will hire a director to oversee all aspects of the clearinghouse. In addition to setting up a site on the World Wide Web for information dissemination on program and scholarship opportunities, the director will engage in active recruitment of students.

The goal of the Bridging Project Clearinghouse is to significantly increase the number of American undergraduates studying in Japan. No target figure has ever been set; however, an appropriate objective would be to minimally double the number of American students currently studying in Japan by the year 2000.

The Association of Teachers of Japanese is uniquely positioned to help realize the goal of the Bridging Project through its members. These are the college and university teachers and professors of Japanese, which has direct access to the most logical target of a recruitment effort, namely, the 40,000 students currently studying Japanese in their classrooms.

We offer ATJ our congratulations and encouragement in this extremely important activity. And I look forward to reporting on their progress at the next CULCON.

One way that it will be important for us and the director of the clearinghouse to work with our Japanese colleagues at the Ministry of Education will be to encourage participation of students from various consortia of US schools. This will greatly facilitate the flow of students to programs in Japan. We have had preliminary discussions on this topic with our Japanese counterparts. I would like to thank them for their interest and encourage further exchange of ideas and concrete recommendations from both sides.

Finally, the Bridging Project Clearinghouse will support, both formally and informally, a network of faculty, administrators and students who have studied in Japan to encourage other students to pursue study in Japan. Traditionally, a network of such "local champions" has been the most effective means of recruiting students to pursue a specific study abroad destination. And this brings me to the second project on the US side to expand the number of US undergraduates in Japan, namely the Faculty and Curriculum Development Project.

The goal of the Faculty and Curriculum Development Project at US institutions is to develop a corps of faculty members who are sensitized to Japan-related issues and can incorporate material about Japan into regular curricula, especially where full-fledged Japan studies and Japanese language programs are not available. Such faculty members, when capable of incorporating materials on Japan into their teaching and interested in doing so, will also serve to motivate students to study in Japan.

A proposal from the Association of American Colleges & Universities was funded last fall by the Commission and the US Department of Education for support for a project to help teams of faculty from eight colleges and universities undertake a year of directed study of Japan and develop courses and course units that will ensure more widespread attention to Japan in the undergraduate curriculum.

The project will have teams of three members from each participating school undertake a semester of group and independent study under the oversight of the project director, followed by a summer study tour of Japan and a final semester of curriculum development. The work will culminate in a final meeting at the AAC&U annual conference in January, 1999. The project will lead to the addition of permanent new undergraduate courses and substantial curriculum units on Japan and, more importantly, the presence on campus of "champions" to encourage students to study about and in Japan. Depending on the success of this model effort, the AAC&U will expand it to a multi-year effort with a broad array of funders.

The third project to increase the number of US undergraduates studying in Japan is what we call the Curriculum Abroad Project. This is the US side's support for the Japanese effort to develop and implement model curricula in selected Japanese national universities for semester or year-long terms. The programs are taught in English with a strong Japanese language and culture component.

The Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) is providing the major funding for US participation in the Curriculum Abroad Project.

In response to the CULCON initiative, the Japanese Ministry of Education began its own process by creating English-language curricula for American students at three national universities -- Kyushu University, Tskuba University and Tokyo University. The programs are a direct result of the CULCON joint working group agreements from December, 1993 and are offering full scholarships to American students. Similar programs are being developed at up to twenty other national universities. This is a striking development from a 1993 base of zero programs. It has become an important goal of the Curriculum Abroad Project to ensure that needs of both the national universities and the American students are met in these newly-designed programs.

I would like to say a brief word of appreciation to all of our Japanese counterparts who have made this project such an unprecedented success. In particular, the Ministry of Education through the Japanese Association of National Universities and the Association of International Education, Japan have pumped huge resources into this project, both human and financial. We will look forward to hearing more about these inspiring study abroad programs from Prof. Notoji.

The US input for this project is almost completed. One very successful aspect of the project has been an opportunity for representatives from the various programs at Japanese national universities to meet with US faculty and administrators. A meeting held in Fukuoka last May, the first meeting of this kind, was an excellent chance to cross-fertilize ideas on programming, curriculum and administration. I would like to strongly encourage both sides to find a way to continue the dialog in this form

The Curriculum Abroad Project is a separate but integrated function of the Bridging Project Clearinghouse. Information about programs developed through the project will be available to US students through the clearinghouse. In addition, the project will coordinate with the faculty and curriculum development component at US universities to ensure the highest level possible of continuity and help create ties between interested universities in the US and Japan.

CULCON has and will play an ongoing role in assuring that standards of quality are maintained in all of the projects mentioned above. A binational working group under CULCON auspices has been establish and charged with setting policy and monitoring the progress and quality of various aspects of the project. The committee will also oversee future negotiations between leading higher education associations in Japan and the United States to create an umbrella agreement related to US study abroad in Japan.

I believe our effort in undergraduate educational exchange remains one of the single most important ways that CULCON has and can continue to make a difference in the relations between our two countries. It is an investment in our future -- an opportunity to educate the next generation of scholars, policy-makers and business

persons to make better choices. I applaud the accomplishments the date and look to all of us to redouble or efforts to continue the good work we have begun.