

CULCON XXI: Joint Statement

November 20–21, 2003, Sendai

The US–Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), comprised of representatives from the Japanese and US governments and from business, academe and other sectors of public life, convened for CULCON XXI at the Sendai International Center in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan on November 20–21, 2003. The CULCON panelists appreciated the opportunity to meet in a new regional venue, thus facilitating participation in its activities by local citizens and Tohoku University students and faculty.

The panelists expressed their deep appreciation to the governments of Miyagi Prefecture and the city of Sendai for their cooperation and support in hosting CULCON XXI.

CULCON XXI was co-chaired by Dr. Sumiko Iwao, Professor, Musashi Institute of Technology, and Dr. Amy V. Heinrich, Director, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

Initiated by an agreement between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Ikeda in 1961, CULCON has served to focus official and public attention in both the United States and Japan on the vital cultural and educational underpinnings of the bilateral relationship.

The conference received congratulatory messages from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President George W. Bush. Both emphasized the increasing importance of CULCON activities to the bilateral relationship.

In conjunction with the plenary session, CULCON members held a symposium on November 19, 2003, entitled “Role of Citizens in Dialogue among Civilizations” at the Sendai International Center, co-organized by the Miyagi Prefectural Government. CULCON panel members served both as keynote presenters and discussants. Governor Shiro Asano of Miyagi Prefecture also served as a discussant, and many local citizens participated in the symposium.

Educational Exchange

The Panels applauded the continued work of the Japanese universities, the US–Japan

Bridging Foundation and the Bridging Project Clearinghouse in increasing the number of US undergraduates studying in Japan. They also applauded the work of the Fulbright Memorial Fund in encouraging American primary and secondary teachers to learn more about Japan and incorporate material about Japan into their teaching.

Library Cooperation and Access to Information

Both Panels noted with approval the progress made among professionals in both countries with regard to the above issues.

The panelists continued to encourage the realization of global Document Delivery Service/Inter-Library Loan (DDS/ILL) and other forms of library cooperation. They emphasized the importance of cooperation and concrete results among the library communities.

The US side expressed deep appreciation to those organizations that have contributed to this effort: the National Diet Library; the Association of National University Libraries, Special Committee on International Scholarly Communication; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Research Promotion Bureau; Japanese Coordinating Committee for University Libraries; the National Institute of Informatics; and The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.

US-Japan Comparative Research on Mathematics and Science Education

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the US Department of Education reported on progress in an initiative to conduct comparative research on mathematics and science education. The Panels agreed on the importance of such research for its implications for the improvement of mathematics and science education in both Japan and the United States and other countries. A report of further findings will be presented at CULCON XXII.

Digital Culture

CULCON XIX (1999) had called for the establishment of a new working group to explore the feasibility of harnessing the power of the Internet and new Web-based multimedia

technologies to its effort to improve educational and cultural relations between the two countries.

The resulting Digital Culture Working Group reported on progress it has made to establish an Internet-based resource on US-Japan relations, with an emphasis on educational and cultural relations over the past fifty years. Members of the Working Group demonstrated this Web-based resource, Cross Currents. The panelists applauded the work of the Digital Culture Working Group and the project teams.

The panelists commented that the process itself of the development of Cross Currents was a binational collaboration worthy of note. The panelists also emphasized the potential for use of this resource worldwide.

The Panels agreed that CULCON should encourage educators and educational institutions in both countries to utilize Cross Currents in the classroom and to use it as a model for developing similar educational resources.

The Panels noted that the Digital Culture Working Group achieved its goals in establishing Cross Currents and agreed to disband it. The University of Hawaii and a Japanese counterpart organization will take over the further development of the project.

The Panels agreed that a CULCON Oversight Committee will be formed to oversee policy decisions and further development of Cross Currents and, most important, to maintain the binational dimension of the project. The Panels agreed that:

- the Chair of each Panel shall nominate two persons from among their panel members to serve on the Oversight Committee; and
- the Oversight Committee will report on progress of the Cross Currents project at CULCON XXII.

Developing Global Leaders

For the past half century, the close relationship between Japan and the United States has been built and supported by leaders of both countries who have studied and understood each other's politics, economy, society and culture.

Various exchange programs, such as the Fulbright Exchange Scholarship, the Fulbright Memorial Fund, the JET Program, the Bridging Scholarship Program, the Mike Mansfield Fellowship Program, and the Abe Fellowship Program among others, have played an important role in the development of such leaders. Such exchange programs have greatly advanced Japan-US relations at all levels over the past 50 years.

It is now necessary to cultivate the next generation of leaders capable of taking the lead in various fields, including culture and education, in both countries in order to maintain and develop the bilateral relationship. In addition, it is time to develop such leaders not only in the context of the bilateral relationship, but also from a broader, global perspective.

Taking account of current international relations, the next generation of leaders should be equipped with qualities that will allow them to contribute to the globalized world. One such quality is cultural fluency.

The panelists called for “Development of a Future Generation of Leaders of the Japan-US Relationship in the Age of Globalization” as the next theme of CULCON. They proposed to study and recommend effective and specific measures toward its realization.

By studying individuals with multiple cultural experiences, a new CULCON Working Group could identify “best practices” across a wide range of exchange experiences. It could identify the circumstances that had the most salutary effect on an exchange student or professional. It could learn what fostered their cultural fluency in other countries. It could also learn from various forms of intercultural encounters other than direct exchanges.

Based on the results, the new Working Group might design concrete projects to enhance the skills of individuals in their work in various aspects of US-Japan relations in the global context. Target groups might include members of grassroots organizations and NGOs.

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The Panels agreed that CULCON XXII will be held in the United States in Spring, 2006.