

## **CULCON XXII: Joint Statement**

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 XXII in Big Sky, Montana on July 24–26, 2006. The CULCON panelists appreciated the opportunity to meet in the home state of the late Ambassador to Japan Mike Mansfield.

The panelists expressed their gratitude to the state of Montana and Montana State University for their cooperation and support in hosting CULCON XXII.

CULCON XXII was co-chaired by Professor Sumiko Iwao and Dr. Richard J. Samuels.

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 agreed that the Japan–US partnership is historically the strongest it has ever been, but both emphasized the importance of further strengthening and deepening mutual understanding and exchange between our countries.

## 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.

At CULCON XX and XXI, the resulting Digital Culture Working Group reported on progress it had made to establish an Internet-based resource on US–Japan relations, with an emphasis on educational and cultural relations over the past fifty years. Subsequently, a Digital Culture Oversight Committee was established to maintain the quality and the binational nature of the project.

The Digital Culture Oversight Committee presented the most recent developments of the Cross Currents Web site. The panelists agreed that the Web site is a valuable and unique resource.

The panelists agreed that CULCON should make best efforts to disseminate to educators in both countries and strongly encourage 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 panelists agreed to accept the recommendation of the Oversight Committee that it be disbanded as of January 1, 2007, at which time the development phase of the project will be completed. They urged that appropriate arrangements for disseminating, maintaining and updating Cross Currents be made.

The panelists formally expressed their appreciation to the members of the Oversight Committee and project teams for their valuable work and contributions.

#### Global Leaders Working Group

The Global Leaders Working Group presented a report on its activities since the last plenary session. In its report, it made the following recommendations:

1. Establish best practices for various elements of exchange programs and international activities with the goal of developing a global perspective.
2. Call for longitudinal studies that track the impact of exchange programs.
3. Examine US and Japan leaders and identify elements in their training and education that helped them develop their capacity for global leadership.
4. Help exchange programs gain a broad perspective and establish economies of scale through collaboration and cooperation.

The motion was made to approve the recommendation of the Global Leaders Working Group, namely, that the Working Group be disbanded and in its place a new task force of two members of each panel to be appointed within the next three months to seek ways to implement Recommendations One through Four of the Working Group Report. The members of the task force should not be limited to members of the parent Working Group or to CULCON panelists. The motion was seconded and carried.

The panelists made clear their intention in passing the motion that while the task force would concern itself with seeking ways of implementing concrete actions arising from the recommendations, they would view the recommendations critically and assess them for importance and feasibility, concentrating on the action or actions that are judged most feasible. Also, they understood that the task force would focus on the bilateral relationship, enriching its resources as a way of enriching a global

community of educational and cultural relations.

### The Future of CULCON

The panelists engaged in frank and detailed discussion of the future of CULCON. Serious consideration was given to disbanding. The general consensus was that CULCON serves a valuable function but needs to be strengthened.

Three discussion groups produced statements that identified the need for a mission statement, structural improvements in CULCON operations and a list of potential action items that CULCON might address. The panelists agreed to establish a Working Group comprised of two members from each panel to draft a mission statement for CULCON that reflects the contemporary context in which US–Japan relations operate. This mission statement would include objectives, goals, structure and stakeholders. The mission statement should be completed and approved in six months.

In the context of the mission statement, the Working Group will make recommendations on the action items proposed by the discussion groups. These will be discussed by the two panels, and the panels will approve the next projects within twelve months after CULCON XXII.

In the course of the discussion, the panelists identified a series of improvements that would help CULCON achieve its full potential. These included, among others:

- Evaluating past achievements and the ongoing impact of CULCON with a view toward the future;
  - Raising the visibility of CULCON;
  - Preparing a paper on the state of US–Japan educational and cultural relations on an annual basis;
  - More frequent interaction between two sides; and
- Reviewing the membership of the CULCON panels to ensure full participation.