

Responses to the 2009 “Talk with Students”

Students,

This past August, one of the Osaka University vice presidents and several faculty members of the Student Life Committee held “town hall” style meetings with students in order to listen to the opinions and hopes students have for campus life. These talks¹ were held in an amicable atmosphere with a good exchange of opinions and hopes.

Osaka University conducts these talks in order to gain insight into campus life as seen from the student viewpoint, and, in particular, to deal with potential problems in a timely manner.

When viewing the university's responses below to the various requests, please understand that there are situations that the university cannot deal with at this time.

The university looks forward to further “Talks with Students” in the coming years and to the healthy participation of many Osaka University students in these talks.

1. Inter-campus shuttle bus

Student: There is no bus departing the School of Foreign Studies stop after 7: 30 p.m. when the 6th class ends. This is inconvenient.

Student: If there were later buses, students could participate in club activities and circles on other campuses.

University: The shuttle bus service is for facilitating transfer between campuses. Please use public transportation when commuting to and from school. In addition, it is difficult to increase the number of buses due to budgetary considerations. Please use public transportation for participating in club or circle activities. (Student Affairs Division)

Student: If the bus timetable is altered, please advise us as soon as possible.

University: Information about changes in the timetable is provided through the university web site after a change is finalized. (Student Affairs Division)

Student: The bus stop in front of the School of Foreign Studies needs a roof of some sort.

University: Providing protection from the weather needs to be examined from the viewpoint of the university as a whole, taking campus design and budget into consideration. (Student Affairs Division)

Student: When going from the Minoh campus to Suita campus, one must get off at the School of Human Sciences stop and get on at the Convention Center stop. This is confusing for students going to the Suita campus for the first time. A guideboard should

¹ On August 4th, Minoh campus, August 5th, Suita campus, and August 7th, Toyonaka campus

be installed at the stops.

Student: A guideboard for restaurants and libraries that students frequently use should be put up at the School of Foreign Studies bus stop.

University: Schools involved need to examine guideboard issues because such boards affect the design of the whole campus. (Student Affairs Division)

2. Student Center

Student: We would like an office that provides consultation when students are planning to start activities.

Student: We want a contact point where we can voice our requests such as “We want showers or coin lockers on campus.”

University: Each area and facility has its own administration. So please consult with the Student Center first. In the case of matters managed by the Student Center, the center provides consultation. For other matters, the center will refer the matter to a responsible division. (Student Support Division)

3. Extracurricular activities

Student: I would like to request that club orientation also be held at the beginning of the 2nd semester, and not just the 1st semester.

University: Club orientation is organized by the Sports Union and Culture Union. We will ask them to examine this proposal. (Student Support Division)

4. Financial aid

Student: I have no financial aid from my parents, but I was not recognized as earning my own living because I was an undergraduate student when applying for tuition exemption.

University: The Osaka University tuition fee exemption standards don't recognize undergraduate students as earning their own living in principle. (Financial Aid 1st Division)

Student: I hope that the financial aid based on only academic record will increase. Please provide more academic-record-based financial aid.

University: We have the Osaka University General Education Curriculum Scholarship for second-year students who have achieved an excellent record. Discussion about scholarship for all grades has not yet started because of lack of funds. (Financial Aid 1st Division)

5. Cafeterias

Student: Are there any plans to make it possible for people to eat lunch more comfortably on the Toyonaka campus?

University: On the Toyonaka campus, the space for eating lunch has been improved as shown in the expanded cafeteria under the library and the renovated first floor of the Comprehensive Research Building for Art Courses. Additionally, we have been making efforts to meet a variety of needs by opening shops selling box lunches at lunchtime. To coincide with the establishment of Student Commons at the Nature and Science Building in the Institute for Higher Education Research and Practice in November, a cafeteria will be opened on the first floor of the Nature and Science Building to provide a space for eating lunch. We will continue to make efforts to improve the environment for eating in as the situation demands. (Student Support Division)

6. Education

Student: The number of classes is less on certain days of the week. It would be nice if the number of classes each day were basically the same on all weekdays.

University: We try to equalize the number of classes when making the time schedule for common education; however, the schedule is determined by coordinating course curricula for the schedule in each school and faculty. Therefore, it's basically impossible to achieve complete equalization. (Institute for Higher Education Research and Practice)

Student: A language class and a professional class in common education are conducted at the same time, so students can't take both. Can I take a class specified for another school?

University: If you repeat the course, you can take the class specified for another school. Under the regular semester curriculum, a compulsory language class and a compulsory professional class are coordinated so as not to be provided at the same time. (Institute for Higher Education Research and Practice)

Student: There were only volleyball courts for men in the compulsory physical education class I took. The height of net was too high for me.

University: The reasons why the net height was set for men was that there were not enough female students for playing games between all-female teams. Also, safety was a consideration. If the net is low, the speed of serves and spikes by men increases making things dangerous.

We will ask instructors to give classes taking female students into consideration if games have to be played between mixed teams. (Institute for Higher Education

Research and Practice)

7. Facilities

Student: Steps on the courtyard on the Minoh campus are slippery when it rains. And the handrails are too cold in winter and too hot in summer to hold.

Student: Things are getting really overgrown in the Namiko Park on the Toyonaka campus. Please prune the trees and bushes.

Student: There are no landmarks for Osaka University.

University: Creating a barrier-free environment near the courtyard stairs on the Minoh campus, restoring Namiko Park, and preparing landmark spaces are recognized as top priorities in the Osaka University Campus Master Plan. We will review our development projects. (Department of Facilities)

Student: All lights along the so-called Ryunenzaka on the Toyonaka campus are not working. It's pitch-dark and dangerous at night.

University: Repairs of the lights in question have been completed. (Student Support Division)

8. Bicycles

Student: Are bicycles still banned on the Handaizaka?

University: We are trying to reduce the danger from traffic on Handaizaka using gatekeepers and signs because there was a serious accident there. However, pedestrian safety is insufficient so we need to continue the ban on bicycles. (Department of Facilities)

Student: Can't we stop people living in that area from riding their bicycles on Handaizaka?

University: We cannot force persons who are not university related to follow Handai rules concerning bicycles. However, we do try to elicit their cooperation regarding this issue. (Department of Facilities)

9. Libraries

Student: Would it be possible to open the library around the clock?

University: We're making efforts to extend open hours. Beginning in this academic year, during the period when there are classes, the Main Library and Science and Engineering Library have extended their hours till 10:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 p.m. on weekends. We understand that there is a request to further extend their hours and even extend them to 24 hours when there are classes. However, in order to provide

a safe and comfortable environment, we need to secure budget for improving facilities and for continuous operation and to consider to what extent the libraries will be utilized if we make these changes. The libraries think that being opened 24 hours a day is necessary. There are many challenges to realizing this, but we're working on it. (Planning Division, University Libraries)

10. KOAN (Knowledge of Osaka-university Academic Nucleus)

Student: The reason students don't view KOAN is that there is not much important information there although there is lots of trivial stuff. How about classifying information by importance?

Student: I rarely look at KOAN because there is not much information. For example, information about reexamination of some subjects is posted only on bulletin boards on campus and information on other subjects is posted only on KOAN bulletin board. The way of providing information is confusing and not unified.

University: This same request was made in the KOAN questionnaire conducted in July this year. We will see how we can improve the system and operation. (Information and Communications Technology Services)

Student: It would be nice if, on the KOAN, the number of credits for common subjects and special subjects could be listed separately; otherwise, it's easy to make mistakes in counting credits.

University: We will see whether it's possible to display the number of credits of common education subjects and special education subjects separately for "inquiry into academic record" and "inquiry into acquired credits". (Information and Communications Technology Services)

11. Physical examinations

Student: Students enrolled in day courses of the School of Foreign Studies are supposed to get their physicals on the Toyonaka or Suita campus. It would be nice if students could get them on the Minoh campus.

University: Checkups are not conducted on the Minoh campus because there are no facilities such as those for measuring blood pressure or checking vision on that campus and budgetary concerns prevent us from using off-campus staff or facilities. During the checkup period, checkups are conducted in the morning and afternoon on both Toyonaka and Suita campuses. Please get your physical exam on either of these campuses by making use of the inter-campus shuttle bus service. (Health Care Center)

12. Talk with students

Student: I learned about this talk through KOAN. Most students don't know about it. Such an event should be given publicity by means of posters.

Student: This talk should have been promoted more aggressively.

University: We did post the information on the Handai web site and KOAN and put up posters on bulletin boards in school. However, we'd like to give it more publicity by redesigning the posters and by making use of OPUS. (Student Support Division)

13. Finding employment

Student: Information about support for finding employment has not been given enough publicity.

University: The university has established a new bulletin board exclusively for helping with employment. In addition, students have been able to log in to the Employment Support System on the Handai web site and KOAN since October. Access to records of places of employment for Osaka University students for the last three years as well as information about services useful for job hunting are available. We hope students will make better use of these services. (Career Support Division)

Student: I would like to talk with alumni or have a day to when we can meet them.

University: We've been asking alumni to come to employment guidance sessions held on campus. Also, alumni lists are available at the Career Support Division. Please use these lists to contact alumni for information. (Career Support Division)