

Report on The seminar of Hiroshima University Program for Leading Graduate Schools

February 27, 2016

To: Program Director of the Phoenix Leader Education Program

Course: Radioactivity Environmental Protection Course

Name: Momo Takada

This is to report on the above mentioned seminar.

1. Name of seminar attended:

Hiroshima University Program for Leading Graduate Schools Seminar

2. Attendance period: February 22, 2016 (1 day, 5 points)

3. Report on “Hiroshima University Program for Leading Graduate Schools Seminar”

Title of this seminar was “Bridging Science, Society and Politics”. There were two impressive points that stood out to me during the seminar. I learned about a unique example of how to become a global leader and there was a specific discussion on the relationship between science and politics.

The first half of the lecture was about the general topic: Global Leader. It looked at the following: What is a global leader? And, what is required for global leaders? Initially, we confirmed that global leaders are required as the global situation changes ever more rapidly. This is particularly important with the rapid changes in relation to society, politics (domestic and international), and science that focus on the history of universities and research institutes from the 19th century onward. In addition, we also discussed the changes in the purposes of science; science for knowledge, and knowledge for progress in the 20th century. This includes not only science for knowledge (of course, that is the basic requirement for science), but also science for peace, development, and science in a 21st century society. Global issues in the 21st century (e.g. climate change, energy issues, disasters and terrorism) need science, technology, and innovation.

Following this, Arimoto sensei then talked about how the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant accident affected science, politics, and the relationship between the two. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of scientists were also highlighted. Finally, Prof. Arimoto ended the talk by looking at what is required of a global leader. On a personal level what I gained from this talk was that a global leader needs an

immediate acceptance of and response to diversity, uncertainty, and a range of differing philosophies.

The latter half of the lecture was a freewheeling discussion, and it was not based on a “general” topic like “global leader” as in the first half, but more specific topics based on his personal experiences. There were several stimulating questions with the most interesting and challenging question coming from Prof. Kamiya. The question asked about how the voices of scientists do not seem to have much of an influence on the decision making process of the Japanese government. While on the other hand, voices from American scientists seem to have a much stronger influence on government policy and its decision making process. The response from Prof. Arimoto suggests two main factors: 1) due to a difference in history (only following WWII in the case of Japan, but in the US this type of consultation has a far longer history); and 2) the number of scientists involved in the national bodies (the Japanese members are significantly less than those in the US). Furthermore, in Japan, the scientists act as advocates, while in the US they play the role of honest brokers. Initially I assumed that scientists do not have a strong influence on the government in Japan. I drew this conclusion based on news reports, university lectures and personal conversations with experts from a variety of fields (this is in the years subsequent to the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant accident). I recognized that scientists who were advising the government (like Prof. Kamiya) expressed similar feelings.

An important message that I learned was that in order for us to become global leaders, we should first become either a scientist who advises the government, or a government official. I have had many lectures these past four years about the “general” concept of a “global leader” – International experience, interdisciplinary academic knowledge, multilingual, etc...). I was also taught the importance of a global leader in contemporary society, and how we can best acquire the necessary capabilities to be an effective global leader. However, despite this, no one has explicitly explained how to become a global leader. Of course I recognize that there are many types of global leaders, and many ways to become a global leader. What is vital is that I discover how to become the type of global leader that best suits me, my skill set and my personality. However, I now have one concrete example. With that in mind I feel I can say that this seminar was a good opportunity for me. I also learnt about the necessary (inevitable, unavoidable) relationship between global leaders and politics. Previously in our program we have had many different seminars that highlight the relationship between science and society. We have spent a lot of time learning how to communicate with local residents as a scientist, that is to say “risk communication”. However beyond just the local populace, people

from all walks of life and the global community at large can, and need to connect with science via politics. In short, thanks to this seminar I understood clearly that beyond science, a connection to and understanding of politics is essential for a global leader.