

Welcoming Address by Dr. Etsuko Yaguchi, Secretary General of UMAP IS and President of Toyo University (November 24, 2020)

Dr. Sumate Yamnoon, Chair of UMAP and UMAP Ambassador,

Delegates from UMAP member countries,

Colleagues and friends,

Good morning and good evening to those who have participated from the other side of the planet!

I am delighted to e-meet you, UMAP Board members for the first time since I have succeeded this position from Dr. Makio Takemura.

On behalf of Toyo University and UMAP IS, I would like to express our gratitude for participating in this 2nd UMAP Board Meeting 2020, while I regret that I could not welcome all of you here in Tokyo face-to-face due to the continuous effect of COVID-19.

Special appreciation goes to Dr. Sumate Yamnoon, Chair of UMAP, and the National Secretariat of Thailand for contributing the preparation process of this Board Meeting. Also, I would like to thank China for attending the Financial Audit Meeting yesterday.

The COVID-19 continues to go on a rampage even though the outbreak has been suppressed and student mobility has been recovering in several countries and territories. I learned from staff member of UMAP IS that four UMAP students have successfully completed their spring semester study abroad in Korea and Taiwan this year in spite of the rampancy of the virus. I congratulate them. However, students in most of countries and territories still face shutdown of borders and cancellation of exchange programs and are obliged to give up their study abroad. I believe it is extremely important for us to continue to provide them with student mobility opportunities.

As the tenure of us for International Secretariat is approaching to the end, I would

like to summarize what we have accomplished during 5 years. At first thanks to your cooperation, we have been successfully expanding our network. Canada, Chile, and the United States of America have joined UMAP as full member countries in the east side of the Pacific. And in Asia, Australia, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kyrgyz, Laos have participated in this community while Macau and Mongolia have come back to us as our members. The number of Pledged Institutions, those universities/institutions that have signed the Pledge of Agreement has more than doubled reaching to 368 (as of Oct. 31st, 2020) from 176 in 2015 in accordance with the increase of member countries/territories.

Secondly, the UMAP Student Connection Online (USCO) System has been in operation since October 2018 and more than 200 institutions have registered their information onto the USCO system.

Thirdly, one of the UMAP flagship programs, Discovery Camp, was initiated in 2016 by courtesy of The Philippines National Secretariat and member universities. Since then, different countries/territories hosted the event every year, even though Malaysian turn in 2020 has been postponed to 2022 because of COVID-19. We have also launched new program, UMAP-COIL, a joint project of UMAP, supported by the Government of Japan, and Kansai University, which aims to invite the best and the brightest students from UMAP member countries.

Despite the fact that we are currently unable to engage physical student mobility, UMAP has launched UMAP Exchange Online in which 18 universities from 8 countries have participated in the Fall semester of 2020. In this cross-registration program, 76 academic courses are available for UMAP students from those countries with mutually tuition waiver arrangements. Another online collaboration model was initiated by UMAP. In October, UKM, De La Salle and Toyo started an online joint teaching project where 108 students from three universities work together for creating advocacy posters concerning cross-border mobility. The detailed report will be introduced in this Board Meeting. In addition, Toyo University would like to propose a Virtual Model United Nations which is a student-centered international conference focusing on SDGs in the end of March. This Model UN program will be announced to UMAP countries to invite students from UMAP member institutions.

The aforementioned may not be enough for future success of this organization. We would like to pass the role of International Secretariat to our successor and wish their progress in further expansion and development.

Finally, let me thank you for your invaluable support and cooperation during our tenure and I wish good health for all our members and hope to meet all of you face to face somewhere sometime.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Etsuko Yaguchi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Etsuko Yaguchi,
President, Toyo University