SUMMARY

Application of American Popular Culture Conventions to Japanese University Education

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The primary role of the university is to produce graduates who can contribute to society. If future graduates are to thrive amid rapid social change driven by ongoing globalization and ever-increasing use of information technologies, it is important that universities provide students with opportunities to learn in practical ways about the role of their chosen field in society.

This report examines how American popular culture conventions can provide educational opportunities outside of the classroom. Taking as examples Anime Expo and Comic Convention International, two events featuring Japanese manga and anime which the author has attended, various participation forms and their effects are considered.

Even the most basic form, general admission, offers direct, in-depth access to information reported in Japan. By deciding on a specific theme, such as methods of manga publication in the USA, a general attendee can select relevant panels, interview exhibitors at company stands, and conduct surveys among American fans. For those majoring in anime or manga art there are programs on selling their work, while for graduate research students there are academic presentations. Students can also have their portfolio professionally evaluated in a program that matches aspiring creators with companies. In addition to these existing programs, it is also possible for Japanese universities to facilitate bilateral exchanges by hosting events such as manga art workshops. Thus, such conventions enable students not only to acquire in-depth knowledge and experience in their chosen field, but also to develop an international outlook, planning ability, and the capacity to translate plans into action.

It is hoped that this report will be helpful to those interested in making effective educational use of overseas conventions, not only in popular culture but also in other fields.