

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN JAPAN:  
SUCCESS OR FAILURE?  
A Case Study of Texas A & M University-Koriyama**

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**INTRODUCTION: U.S. HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN JAPAN**

The history of U.S. branch campuses in Japan has not been a long one. Ever since Temple University opened its first Japanese branch campus in 1982, many private and public organizations began to establish the branch campuses of higher U.S. educational institutions in Japan.

Japanese and U.S. governments first agreed on the cooperative effort to establish branches of American colleges and universities in Japan in 1986 (*Japan Times*, 1986, May 14). The plan was first proposed in October 1985 when a delegation of Liberal-Democratic Party politicians which was headed by then party Vice President Susumu Nikaido visited the United States to try to defuse U.S.-Japan trade frictions. In May 1986, Japanese and American legislators agreed to establish the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion, a 30-member joint committee to promote the idea. Nikaido then became Honorary Chairman and Representative Yoshiro Hayashi as Chairman of the Japan Committee. The bipartisan U.S. committee was also headed by Democratic Representative Richard Gephardt as Chairman and former Governor James Hunt of North Carolina as Chief Counsel (*Journal of Japanese Trade & Industry*, 1987).[1]

The establishment of the committee was designed to reduce the huge Japan-U.S. trade imbalance through a variety of services, including the establishment of the global trade expansion center, high technology research parks, and branch campuses of U.S. colleges and universities (*Asahi Evening News*, 1986). Establishing the branch campuses was also motivated by the shared agreement that with better understanding of both cultures and languages, business between Japan and the U.S. would be easier to facilitate. Branch campuses of U.S. higher educational institutions then were viewed to provide the youth of Japan and the U.S. with opportunities to learn about different cultures for future collaborative relationships.

With the assistance from the U.S. Foundation for International Economic Policy, the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion began to make contacts with American colleges and universities that were interested in developing educational programs in Japan. The Committee also assisted U.S. institutions to have open discussions with Japanese institutions and municipalities to establish the branch campuses (*Mainich Daily News*, 1987, March 1). By March 1987, some 24 cities and towns have put together proposals to invite American colleges and universities. A large group of American representatives then began to visit Japan. In 1988, there were 120 U.S. colleges, universities, and school consortiums expressing interest in Japanese branch campuses (*Japan Times*, 1987, March 1). By March 1989, the number grew to 151 (Hiatt, 1989; Dougherty, 1989). As of August, 1992, more than 30 branch campuses of higher U.S. educational institutions have established their operation in Japan (see Table 1).

Table 1  
American University Branch Campuses in Japan

Home Campuses	Campus Locations		Organization	Student Enrollment	
	U.S.	Japan		The U.S.	Japan
Texas A&M University	College Station, TX	Koriyama, <sup>1</sup> Fukushima <sup>2</sup>	Gakko-Hojin <sup>3</sup>	41,000	230
Minnesota State University System	Minnesota <sup>4</sup>	Yuwa, Akita	Gakko-Hojin	61,000 <sup>5</sup>	250
University of Southern Illinois	Carbondale, IL	Nakajo, Niigata	Gakko-Hojin	24,000	650
Sullivan County Community College	Loch Sheldrake, NY	Ishui, Toyama	Incorporated	1,900	
Michigan State University		Hikone, Shiga	Incorporated	44,400	
University of West Florida	Pensacola, FL	Kobe, Hyogo	Incorporated	7,800	235
Mt. Hood Community College	Gresham, OR	Kurashiki, Okayama	Incorporated	12,000	150
Pennsylvania State University	Westchester, PA	Fukuoka, Fukuoka	Incorporated	9,000	150
University of Nevada, Reno	Reno, NV	Hamaamatsu, Tokyo	Incorporated	11,000	240
Arizona State University	Tempe, AZ	Hachioji, Tokyo	Incorporated	45,000	40
California State University, Northridge	Northridge, CA	Tokyo	Incorporated	31,200	
Green Rivers Community College		Kanuma, Tochigi	Incorporated	7,400	55
Heidelberg College	Tiffin, OH	Yokohama, Kanagawa	Incorporated	1,400	360
Oklahoma State University	Stillwater, OK	Kameoka, Kyoto	Incorporated	42,000	150
Roosevelt University		Urayashu, Chiba	Incorporated	4,300	
Phillips University	Enid, OK	Osaka, Osaka	Incorporated	1,000	1,600
Edmonds Community College	West Lynnwood, WA	Kobe, Hyogo	Incorporated	8,000	720
Boston University		Kobe, Hyogo	Incorporated	24,000	
Lakeland College		Toshima, Tokyo	Incorporated	2,000	
Temple University	Philadelphia, PA	Shinjuku, Tokyo	Incorporated	34,000	4,000
McKendree College	Lebanon, IL	Shinjuku, Tokyo	Incorporated	1,200	40
Milligan College	Milligan College, TN	Nakano, Tokyo	Incorporated	700	15
Concordia College	na	Shibuya, Tokyo	Incorporated	na	70
Los Angeles City College	Los Angeles, CA	Shibuya, Tokyo	Incorporated	19,000	115
Hawaii Pacific University <sup>6</sup>	na	Sapporo, Hokkaido	Incorporated	na	
Teachers College, Columbia University		Minato, Tokyo	Incorporated	na	
University of Rio Grande	Rio Grande, OH	Tokyo-Sendai	Incorporated	2,000	1,250
Seattle Community College	Seattle, WA	Kobe, Hyogo	Incorporated	na	
City University of New York	Bronx, NY	Chiyoda, Hiroshima	Incorporated	na	70
USIU	San Diego, CA	Kishiwada, Osaka	Incorporated	na	190
Seattle Pacific University <sup>7</sup>	Seattle, WA	Chiyoda, Tokyo	Incorporated	3,800 <sup>7</sup>	250
Eureka College					

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2. Prefecture in which the city and branch campus are located.
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4. There are seven separate campuses of the Minnesota State University System in the state of Minnesota.
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## MUNICIPALITIES AND BRANCH CAMPUSES

Many American universities began to work with municipalities to establish their Japanese branch campuses. Some of these ventures have involved private funds and others have relied on public funds to cover the costs. Consequently many municipalities have decided to use public funds to offer incentives, such as free land and building costs, so that a university would be encouraged to establish a branch campus in their town or city. For example, thus far, the U.S.A.-Japan Committee has helped several universities to open their first branch campuses in Japan. In July 1987, the Committee assisted both the City of Nakajo in Niigata Prefecture and the Mid American State University Associations (MASUA) with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale as the lead institution to sign a contract in setting up a Japan-based educational program within its jurisdiction. The Committee also assisted Yuma Town in Akita Prefecture and the Minnesota State University System to sign an agreement to open its Japanese branch campus in 1989. Similarly, in 1988, Texas A&M University and the City of Koriyama has signed the letter of intent to establish the branch campus in Koriyama.

The reason that municipalities and their citizens would choose to invite foreign educational institutions is a result of various social and economic factors. While the Japanese government has discussed the advantages of decentralizing the huge Tokyo megalopolis, there has been little geographic mobility of population away from the major population centers (Fukurai, 1991). As Tokyo grew in size, the smaller cities and towns have suffered what some perceive as a brain drain and a graying of countryside. These small towns and cities have tried to stimulate their economies by trying to attract companies by offering them the cheap land and labor. Educational facilities have also been seen as a means to attract young people and industry to their municipalities and regions. Many of them had already attempted to establish new Japanese universities or have asked already established Japanese universities to open their branch schools in their areas. Even though land costs were lower in cities outside of Tokyo, the costs for Japanese universities still remained prohibitive to meet the requirements established by the Ministry of Education.

Many municipalities have thus decided to approach U.S. colleges and universities (Chambers and Cummings, 1990). Since the general cost of setting up the programs for branch campuses was considerable lower, they were not required to meet the stringent Japanese college accreditation standards. While some local governments and politicians saw a U.S. branch campus as a valuable boost for business and prestige, others were opposed to the projects, especially when large amounts of public funds were to be allocated to provide educational facilities. Opposition came in many forms, including negative publicities by the local press and citizens' groups and institutions openly opposing the "contamination" by foreign institutions. In the case of the latter, such an issue was seen as a way to build support against a rival, who was very often the incumbent in an upcoming election; in the case of the former, there was the concern that tax monies would be spent on projects that would not benefit the tax payers and was thus in conflict with the law or the spirit of the law. For example, the City of Omachi in Nagano Prefecture stepped away from signing a full agreement with the University of Mississippi because the municipal government opposed the planned use of over 2 billion yen for such a project (Kataoka, 1991). There have been similar cases in which city officials have decided to give up on such an expensive endeavor. On the other hand, the opposition has not always spelled defeat for branch campus projects and their supporters. Many U.S. institutions soon became aware of their civic and political issues. Many associated problems were generated in their own institutions and home states in

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the U.S. The emergence of those problems gave important opportunities for the U.S. institutions to reassess a clear objective for their educational endeavors in Japan.

The remainder of the paper will focus on the experience of Texas A&M University and identify socioeconomic and political problems that the institution has faced in establishing its first branch campus in Japan. Specifically, the paper will address the following substantive questions: (1) the role of the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion in assisting the city and the university to establish the branch campus; (2) problems of local politics in influencing both the quality of the program and the recruitment of potential students for the branch campus; (3) substantive efforts by both city officials and the home university to overcome political and economic obstacles; and (4) future prospects for the success of Japanese students in Japan and the United States.

## TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY—KORIYAMA

### The Texas A&M University System

In order to gain deeper understandings of the importance of the Japanese branch campus of Texas A&M University (TAMU), the brief introduction to its main campus in Texas is important.

Texas A&M University, located in College Station, was first established in 1876 and is the oldest educational institution in Texas. The TAMU System consists of a variety of research institutes and universities, including: (1) Texas A&M University in College Station as its main campus, (2) TAMU at Galveston, (3) Prairie View A&M University, (4) Laredo State University, (5) Tarleton State University, (6) Texas Agricultural Experimental Station, (7) Texas Agricultural Extension Service, (8) Texas Engineering Experiment Station, (9) Texas Engineering Extension Service, (10) Texas Forest Service, (11) Texas Transportation Institute, and (12) Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.

Texas A&M University in College Station is the land grant, the sea grant, and the space grant institution, holds more than 2,800 faculties including two Nobel Prize Laureates and one Pulitzer winner, offers approximately 100 doctorate programs, and is currently ranked in the top ten categories in a number of important accomplishments, including the total research expenditure, the recruitment of national merit scholars, the total student enrollment, the amount of both corporate supports and alumni contributions, and the total endowment over \$2 billion (*Texas A&M University-Graduate Catalog*, 1992). The main campus is also equipped with a variety of facilities for community service. The campus has over 5,000 acres of land, holds a community airport, a 18-hole golf course, and an electric power plant serving the campus and cities of College Station and Bryan. Texas A&M University is also well respected and known for the strength of its alumni networks. Their support was seen during the recent visit to Koriyama by the member of the TAMU Regents, executives from a number of large business organizations, including Texas Instrument-Japan and Nippon Motorola, and government officials from the U.S. Embassy, including Ambassador Michael Armacost (*Fukushima Minyu*, 1991).

### Texas A&M University—Koriyama (TAMU-K)

Koriyama is a city located in Fukushima Prefecture, north of Tokyo and approximately one hour away from the metropolis by a bullet train. Koriyama and TAMU had more than 3 years to carry out similar initiatives. With the assistance of

the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion, a delegation of two university officials from Texas A&M University visited Koriyama in February 1988 to sign a letter of intent to establish the Japanese branch campus.

In 1989, the city assembly had agreed to allocate 2.5 billion yen (2 million dollars) for the establishment of the Texas A&M University branch campus in Koriyama. In June, a ten-week intensive English program was offered in Koriyama which attracted 60 students and was run by English language instructors (ELI) of Texas A&M University in College Station. The purpose of the pilot program was to offer the first ever language programs to the citizens of Koriyama and make them familiarize with the quality of educational programs for which Texas A&M University has been known in the U.S. In November, 1989, the signing ceremony for the agreement to establish Texas A&M University was held in Tokyo. In May 1990, the opening ceremony was held in Koriyama with enthusiastic 69 first year students.

In Koriyama the university offered curricula in liberal arts, science/engineering, and business, leading to further study at the College Station campus. Students from Japan take intensive English instruction provided by the English Language Institute (ELI) for several months prior to initialing academic study for degree credit. The program in the Japanese branch campus was designed to offer the core curriculum courses of approximately 40 to 60 credit hours. As soon as students are able to complete both English language programs and core curriculum courses, they were to transfer to the main campus in College Station, Texas to complete the remaining two years of specialized programs of their chosen majors. The design of the program and the implementation of the American educational programs were carefully prepared with the consultation of the experienced international advisors at the main campus that held approximately 2,600 foreign students from more than 100 different countries.

The Koriyama campus has a new facility that is planned to revert to other uses when the campus is permanently located in Katahira Town, the outskirts of Koriyama City. The current temporary campus is comprised of four prefabricated structures built over 3 acres of land. Where there were differences in physical appearance of the building from that of the main campus, various policies and regulations of TAMU-K with respect to admissions and curriculum remained similar to the ones at the main campus in College Station.

### *1. Undergraduate Admission*

The admission requirements of students to Texas A&M through the Koriyama campus were the same as those of international students who applied to the main campus, with one exception. Students admitted through Koriyama were not required to submit TOEFL scores (Test of English as Foreign Language), but were tested and placed into the ELI program through the in-house language proficiency examinations. Applications, which included evidence of high school graduation, were submitted to the international admissions officer on the main campus who applied the admission requirements with the exception of the TOEFL scores and later notified the student and the administration at TAMU-K of the admission decision.

### *2. Undergraduate and ELI curriculum*

Students admitted to TAMU-K were given the English Language Placement Exam (adapted from the Michigan Test). The examination was used to place students into one of the following three different courses: (1) the ELI program; (2) a combination of ELI and academic programs, or (3) the academic program. The ELI program consisted of six

different steps, ranging from 100 to 600 levels with special emphasis on reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. A student enrolled solely in the ELI program received 25 contact hours per week of intensive English instructions. When a student was judged to have attained an appropriate level of English proficiency, the student then was enrolled in a combination of ELI and academic courses or entirely in the academic program. When a student reached 400 levels, the student was allowed to enroll in one core curriculum course. When a student reached 500 levels, the student was then allowed to enroll in two core curriculum courses. Finally when a student reached 600-integrated skills programs, the student was allowed to enroll in three academic courses.

The academic program consisted of credit courses from the core curriculum of general education programs that were required for all degrees at TAMU. It was expected that students at TAMU-K would complete 40-60 hours of credit and then relocate to the main campus to complete their undergraduate program. The courses offered in the academic curriculum at Koriyama were the same as those offered on the main campus which have been approved through appropriate academic curriculum channels.

Sixty-nine students enrolled in the first class in 1990. Sixty-seven of those remained in the program at the start of the second year. The second year class (1991) enrolled eighty-three. All students initially were placed in the ELI program. A few students enrolled in physical education credit classes in the spring of 1991, and more students enrolled in mathematics credit classes by the summer of 1991. In the 1991 fall semester, there were 106 enrollments in academic credit courses excluding physical education.

In the summer of 1992, a first group of 25 students who have completed 45 credit hours at the Koriyama campus were allowed to relocate to the main campus in College Station.

### *3. ELI and Academic Instructions*

The academic credit program was taught by faculty recruited from the main campus except for several teachers who were on leave from other institutions. The faculty became familiar with the goals and requirements of the courses, the course content and student evaluation methods. The quality of an educational program was directly related to the quality of its faculty. As of August, 1992, all 14 of the ELI faculty had master's degrees in fields related to their assignment. Two had a doctorate. Of the 9 faculty teaching in the academic program, 5 held the doctorate and 4 the master's degree (2 of which were in physical education).

### *4. Contractual Relationships*

Initially, the Organizing Committee, a group of private sector leaders and city officials, provided funds for cost of living supplements and furnished housing for faculty. The Organizing Committee was replaced by the Koriyama Kokusai Gakuen, the Gakko Hojin. Two agreements were signed in November 1989 by Texas A&M University: (1) an "Agreement for Operation of Texas A&M University-Koriyama" with the Organizing Committee for the Entitling, and (2) a "Memorandum of Agreement Concerning Certain Fundamental Subjects with Respect to the Proposed Establishment of Texas A&M University, Koriyama" with the City of Koriyama. The contracts for educational services and programs were consistent with the purpose, policies, and procedures of the home institution and complied with the good spirit of the law in both Japan and the U.S. The University assumed responsibility for the qualification of the faculty and the quality of all courses offered under contract. The

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Organizing Committee and the City of Koriyama assumed responsibility for providing facilities and other infrastructures required for the educational and academic instruction in Koriyama.

#### *5. Accreditation Processes by the American Accreditation Agency*

Texas A&M University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award degrees at the bachelors', masters', doctoral and professional levels. The Koriyama campus also required the accreditation by the same organization because it is the branch campus of the main institution in College Station. In the beginning of October, 1991, four delegate members of the Commission on Colleges of the SACS visited Koriyama to examine the condition of eligibility. They have examined the following substantive conditions of the Japanese branch campus: (1) principles and philosophy of accreditation, (2) institutional purposes, (3) institutional effectiveness, (4) educational programs, including undergraduate admissions, ELI and academic curriculum, (5) qualifications of ELI and academic faculty, (6) educational support services and development services, and (7) administrative processes. The committee found that the quality of education at the Japanese campus was high. For example, the library of TAMU-K held more than 16,000 worth of English books and magazines, the largest library of its kind in northern Japan (see Table 2). A large holding of books in liberal arts and social sciences was found in the Japanese campus so that both Japanese and American students would have greater access to the materials to learn and experience differences in their cultures and develop the appreciation of respective educational systems in both Japan and the U.S.

The committee, after the careful review of the branch campus, concluded that TAMU-K programs offered the high-level academic qualifications of the ELI and academic faculties, which exceeded the requirement of the criteria. The committee also provided the favorable review of the academic and ELI programs at the branch campus as required of the institutions which were accredited by the SACS (Commission on Colleges, 1991).

#### **POLITICAL PRESSURES AND THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL SOLUTIONS**

The U.S.A.-Japan Committee assisted the City of Koriyama and Texas A&M University for the signing of the basic agreement to establish the branch campus in Koriyama. While the TAMU-K project may not be seen as merely a weaker brother or sister to other projects undertaken by the U.S.A.-Japan Committee, such as Minnesota State University in Yuwa or Southern-Illinois University in Nakajo, the process of building educational programs in Koriyama did not go as smoothly as everyone originally expected.

While the quality of education at Texas A&M University-Koriyama remained high, the political climate and conflicts in the Koriyama City Assembly continued to create obstacles for maintaining the high morals of staffs and faculties. Local politics also generated problems for the student recruitment in the region.

Specifically, political and socioeconomic problems that the university and the Committee had faced in Koriyama and Fukushima Prefecture are identified as the following: (1) political factions within the Koriyama City Assembly and their continued harrasment on the operation of TAMU-K, (2) the city's failure to obtain a permission to construct the permanent campus for the university, and (3) Koriyama Mayor's strained relations with Governor and officers in the prefectural government



which resulted in his failure to mobilize both economic and political resources to normalize the financial operation of TAMU-K.

### 1. Political Factions and Conflicts Within the Koriyama City Assembly

The major obstacle for the success of the TAMU-K program has been the struggle between two political factions in the Koriyama City Assembly. For decades, the city assembly in Koriyama has been known for its political conflicts and battles between two factional groups. When the city council voted to extend the invitation to Texas A&M University in 1988, the majority group in the assembly meeting was headed by the current mayor. The election in 1991, however, changed the balance of power in the assembly and mayor's and the opposition groups came to equally split 44 Koriyama City Assembly members.

In 1988, allies of a political opponent of the current mayor gathered a total of more than 8,000 signatures on a petition and separate legal complaint and argued the inappropriate appropriation of the city's \$20 million (2.5 billion yen) share of the price tag to build the Texas A&M University campus. The dispute has been mostly political but received extensive media coverage both regionally and nationally.

The suit was filed with the Fukuoka District Court by the opposition group on October 6, 1989. In the suit, the opposition group argued that Mayor made the illegal appropriation of the public fund to finance the educational endeavor. One year later, on October 16, 1990, the District Court turned down the suit. The judge stated that the disbursement of public funds was in agreement with the public interest based on rational discretions reached by the majority vote of the City Assembly, thus, by the local government. Since the municipal government took the first initiative to invite the campus with the majority of approval in the City Assembly, the judge declared that the provision of financial assistance and subsidies to the university was legal. The opposition made an appeal to the Superior Court in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture in 1991. The suit was again turned down in 1992 (*Fukushima Minyu*, 1992).

With the legal matters being brought to a close, the opposition group devised an innovative plan to obtain the majority vote in the city assembly. In September, 1991, several members of mayor's faction fell ill and were unable to attend the meetings and soon, the opposition group capitalized on the opportunity to appoint a member of mayor's faction to be a chairman. The chairman of the city assembly has no voting right because of his/her role of neutrality in the assembly meeting, thus winning the majority vote in the city assembly. Then the opposition group immediately empowered their majority votes in the city assembly to create the educational investigation committee to continue their involvement in the operation of TAMU-K.

During the 1991 session, the Koriyama city assembly planned to appropriate 500 million yen to help finance the TAMU-K operation. This initial fund would be used toward developing the permanent campus facilities. Mayor's group, however, failed to win the majority vote in the assembly to approve the financial plan. The actual planning for which both the city's planning committee and TAMU officials have initially agreed had to put on hold. Mayor's failure to win the majority and political turmoil in the city assembly led even strong supporters of the project to feel doubt on the future of the project and made them more hesitant to move too quickly on the project. Such hesitancy led to further delays which ultimately affected the campus project in such areas as the appearance of the temporary campus and the recruitment of students.

The university also faced tremendous difficulties to recruit students from the local high schools. For instance, while the City of Koriyama itself produces approximately 5,000 high school graduates annually, the negative publicity on the project and

continuing political controversies in the city assembly have resulted in the fewer number of applications from Koriyama high school graduates. For the past two years, the majority of students came from metropolitan regions including Tokyo, Saitama, Gunma, and Kanagawa.

The school initially projected the student enrollment of 250 (*Fukushima Minpo*, 1988). However, the school has failed to attract even half of the number of students previously projected. The low enrollment was also caused by poor public relations and unattractive prefabricated building that served as the temporary campus. While the appearance of the school facilities may not reflect the quality of education at TAMU-K, when the project is fraught with controversy, appearances are scrutinized even more. The political conflicts between the mayor and the city assembly opposition group in Koriyama are summarized in a schematic diagram in Figure 1.

## 2. The Construction of the Permanent Campus

Despite its 1989 agreement with Texas A&M University to build the permanent campus to accommodate both Japanese and American students, the City of Koriyama has yet to obtain the governmental permission to begin the construction of permanent facilities. Instead, in the beginning of 1990, the City of Koriyama built the temporary campus facility to accommodate the incoming students and faculties from Texas A&M University.

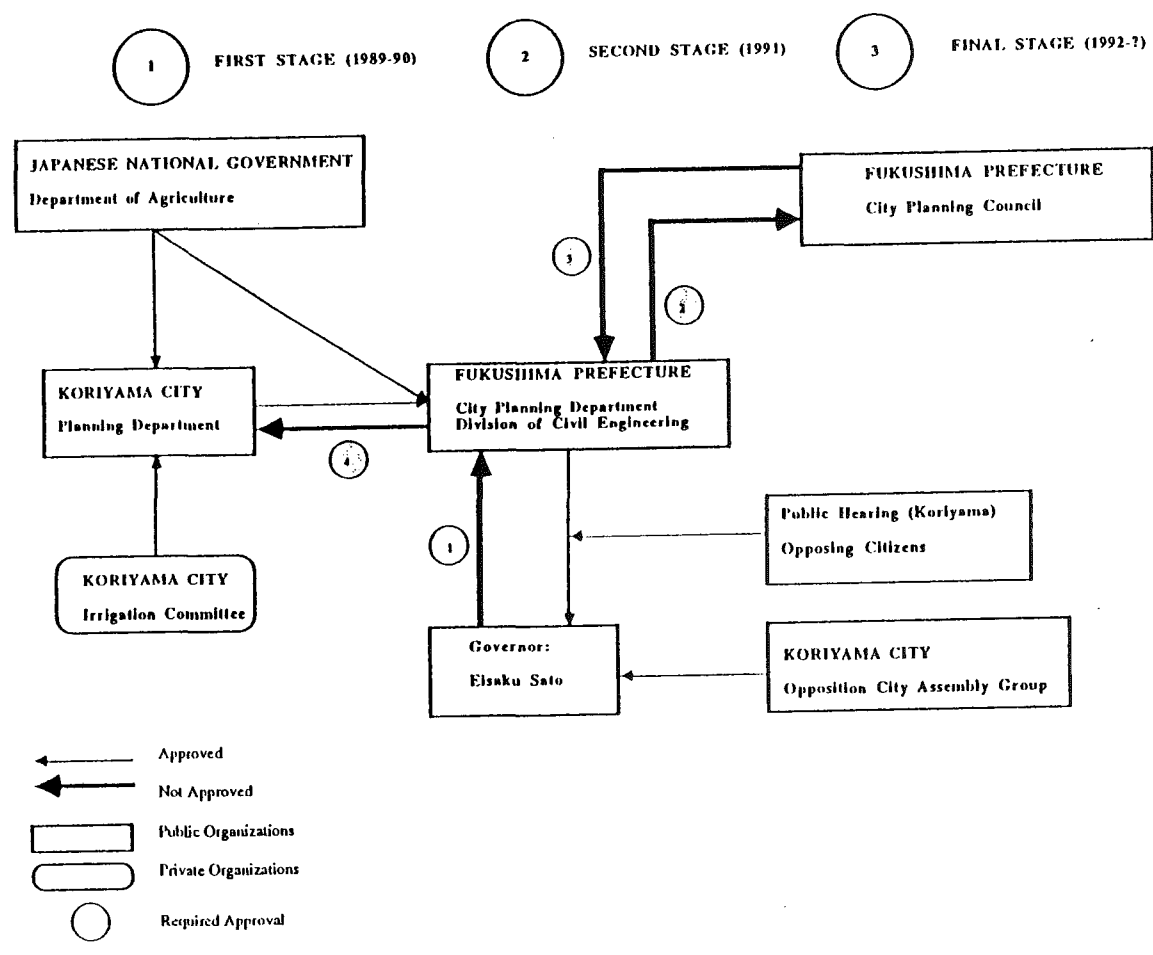
While the initial plan for the permanent campus site had been completed and approved by the city, the municipal government has failed to obtain the development permission from the prefectural office to begin the construction of the permanent campus in Koriyama. While the Prefectural Office of the City Planning Department has already approved the plan in 1990, Governor of Fukushima was yet to give the final approval to the City of Koriyama.

Initially the municipal government hoped to rely on the prefectural government for the support to appropriate the public funds, buy the land, and build the facilities. Fukushima prefectural offices, however, were not as supportive during the planning period of the projects as Niigata and Akita had been, nor were they as willing to treat the project as a special one in the prefecture. Research suggests that Governor's reluctance to give the final approval was more than just a case of government officials following the letter of the law, but his inaction was closely related to the intricacies of local politics in Koriyama (Kataoka, 1990).[2]

The step-by-step procedure for obtaining prefectural permissions to construct the permanent campus of TAMU-K is summarized in Figure 2. The construction of the permanent campus depended on the following three factors: (1) approval from the Koriyama City Assembly, (2) permissions from Japanese national government, and (3) a signature of Fukushima governor. The first two steps have already been completed. However, the signature from Governor Eisaku Sato is yet to be on the proposal. The main reason for his reluctance to approve the plan has stemmed from his closer association with the opposition group in the city assembly of Koriyama. Governor himself lives in Koriyama and was elected for the governor four years ago with the strong local supports in the city assembly. While the future of the campus facilities rests on the governor, he openly stated that he would not sign the paper as long as there were no prospects for political compromises and personal reconciliations between the two party factions in the Koriyama city assembly.



**FIGURE 2**  
The process of Obtaining Prefectural Permissions  
to Construct the Permanent Campus of Texas A&M University - Koriyama



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3. Strained Relations with Governor and the Prefectural Offices

While Koriyama is the second largest city in the prefecture, the city is the most economically prosperous in the region with the 1991 annual city budget exceeding more than \$900 million. Because of its economic dominance in the region, close political relations have been established between Koriyama city officials and those in prefectural offices. In fact, many officers in Fukushima prefectural government were elected representatives from Koriyama. For example, Governor Eisaku Sato became the first elected governor from Koriyama in 1988.

While the regional political scenes have been dominated by the elected officials from Koriyama, there is another factor that needs to be understood in examining the politics between public offices in Japan. The factional politics, for example, became one of the very important means for the elected officials to mobilize various economic and political resources in the government (von Wolferen, 1989).

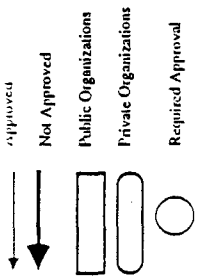
The Fukushima Prefectural government was dominated by the Liberal Democratic Party members. Mayor of Koriyama was a member of the Social Democratic Party and was thus associated with the opposition party regardless of whether his policies were sound or not. This association with the opposition was further strengthened by the strong personal and political relationship between Koriyama's Vice-Mayor and the candidate who ran against the prefectural governor in an 1989 election. The timing of the election coincided with the period in which TAMU and Koriyama held discussions on the educational excrement to establish a branch campus in the city. Current Mayor emphasized the importance of international education in his campaign and initiated the contact with the U.S.A.-Japan Committee to invite Texas A&M University to Koriyama. Thus, since 1988, the TAMU-K became the political issue and the center of fierce political battles between the two dominant factions in Koriyama's city assembly (Kahoku-Shinpo, 1989). Consequently political struggles has delayed the construction of the permanent facilities and contributed to the poor recruitment of students from local regions. Further, constant political debates on the TAMU-K program and continued harassment by the city assembly members also affected the morals of both students and faculty members at TAMU-K.

DISCUSSIONS

Texas A&M University-Koriyama represents only one of more than 30 U.S. university branch campuses now operating in Japan. While the future of TAMU-K remains uncertain, its success and acceptance by the citizens and politicians in the region will still depend on the extent to which factional groups in the city assembly can reach political consensus and agreeable compromises in the future. The process for the discussion also requires the cooperative assistance from the prefectural offices and, perhaps, the national government. For example, the Japanese Ministry of Education can improve the status and credibility of TAMU-K and/or other American university branch campuses by granting them the accreditation status of equivalency to colleges and universities in Japan. The prefectural office can also help the branch campuses by offering the much needed administrative assistance.

The success of TAMU-K and other branch campuses of higher American educational institution is seen as the important step for the reform of Japanese educational systems. For example, the branch campuses have served a number of important and significant functions in both Japan and the U.S.

First, establishing American branch institutions has presented an important challenge to Japan's traditional, meritocratic educational system. This is particularly



true for the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbusho), which has resisted to offer the accreditation of the equivalent college status to existing branch campuses. In order to gain the strong support for the branch campuses, the accreditation of the college and university status from the Japanese government became a very important step for establishing academic credibility in Japan. To obtain college accreditation in Japan requires that a college or university must own its own land and buildings. That requirement is an expensive proposition for the majority of branch campuses because the cost of land in Japan remained extremely high (Alston et al., 1990). Rather than worrying about protecting existing Japanese universities, it would seem that there was plenty of demand for new ones and Monbusho's position might also appear illogical.

Japanese population projection, for example, suggests that while the population of the potential college students may decrease, the proportion of high school graduates advancing to higher education will increase. As a result, there will be no change in the overabundance of potential college students for a limited number of existing colleges and universities in Japan (Japanese Census Bureau, 1990). For example, the number of openings for college freshmen were 650,000 in 1990. However, for the same year, approximately 1.2 million high school graduates competed for these spaces (Kataoka, 1991). The situation is particularly grim for male students, with an increasing number of female students applying to, and gaining entrance, into 4 year universities. Since the level of female labor force participation has dramatically increased, there will be even a greater demand for female workers to attain higher education (Krooth and Fukurai, 1990; Mizushima-Regur, 1990). This also adds to the overabundance of already existing populations of potential college students in Japan. That is, there are too few universities to the number of prospective college students.

Despite the greater demand for new schools, Japanese colleges and universities have continued to rely on entrance examinations as the sole determining factor in weeding out applicants. While the traditional method of screening processes had promoted the meritocratic selection based on academic ability and advanced the quality of schools and the qualifications of teachers, research shows that the reliance on entrance exams may risk overlooking talented individuals for higher academic trainings (Gittelsohn, 1989; Chambers and Cummings, 1990; *Economist*, 1990; Krooth and Fukurai, 1990). The traditional meritocratic educational system, thus, may no longer serve to produce the kind of graduates with independent thinking and creative minds to compete in the international market (Donnelly, 1988). While the branch campuses of U.S. colleges and universities remain unaccredited by the Japanese Ministry of Education, the increasing numbers of students and parents began to view the Japanese branch campus of American universities as an important alternative avenue for higher education.

Second, the branch campuses began to offer the important opportunity for research programs for both Japanese and American universities and private firms. For instance, local businesses and universities were able to create cooperative research programs to conduct sophisticated basic and applied research in science and technology. In 1988, for example, the regents and high ranking officials from Texas A&M University (TAMU) visited Koriyama City and showed strong interests to set up a joint research facility in the education and research zone where the permanent Texas A&M University-Koriyama campus was to be located. Meanwhile in 1992, Texas A&M University and Tsukuba University have finally agreed to set up a joint program to exchange today's most advanced technological research. Similarly, with the help of the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion, the program agreement was signed between Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Nihon University in 1987 to create a

new laboratory in Chiba Prefecture to conduct world-class basic research in the full range of disciplines from artificial intelligence to sophisticated computer technologies.

Third, branch campuses began to cater a large proportion of Japanese students who showed strong desires to further their education in America. For example, in 1990 alone, more than 100,000 Japanese students have gone to the U.S. to explore their academic potentials (Krooth and Fukurai, 1990). Similarly, studying at Japanese branch campuses has offered important opportunities to experience different cultures and foreign educational systems while staying in Japan. American students from respective home campuses were also able to share the similar international experience by studying in their Japanese branch campuses. Because of a large number of foreign students who come to Japan, the branch campuses were seen to provide the important learning experience for Japanese, American, and other international students.

Fourth, it created financial opportunities and generated additional financial revenue for many American colleges and universities that experienced financial difficulties and a declining enrollment at home. At the same time, Japanese investors were interested in expanding the financial opportunities overseas. For example, in 1980's, many colleges and universities in the U.S. had either closed down or purchased by foreign universities or overseas private investors (*Japan Times*, 1987). For example, in 1989, Salem College in West Virginia agreed to merger with Teikyo University of Japan (Leatherman, 1989). The same year Regis College in Colorado also sold its Loretto Heights campus in Denver to Teikyo University (DeLoughry, 1989). The Teikyo University Foundation from Japan was incorporated in Florida as a nonprofit organization. Presently, the same foundation is developing educational similar programs in England, East Germany, and Netherlands. Western Oregon State College in Oregon was also purchased by Japanese investors who planned to create new programs to accommodate a large number of Japanese students who were interested in studying in the U.S. (Monaghan, 1989). Warner Pacific College, a small church-related liberal arts college in Portland, Oregon, was also purchased by a Japanese organization. The financial arrangement allowed the college to refinance major short-term debts and strengthen its economic stability (Chambers and Cummings, 1990: 46-47).

Some of financially-troubled small colleges and universities in the U.S., thus, have shown strong interests in establishing Japanese branch campuses for greater economic rewards and opportunities. For instance, in 1989, Phillips University opened its branch campus in Osaka, the second largest city in Japan. Although the university has only 1,000 enrolled students in its Oklahoma campus, the Japanese branch campus attracted more than 1,600 students. Similarly, the University of Rio Grande opened its branch campus in 1989. Its Ohio campus held only 2,000 students in 1990, whereas approximately 1,250 students were studying in their Tokyo and Sendai campuses.[3] The opening of Japanese branch campuses, thus, was seen as a profitable sign to expand the business operation and economic opportunities overseas.

Lastly, the increase in the number of students at Texas A&M University-Koriyama and other branch campuses of higher U.S. educational institutions indicated that the traditional meritocratic educational system may have begun to change. For instance, it was generally assumed that the graduates from prestigious national universities in Japan would have relatively an easier time in landing jobs of higher rewards. The meritocratic educational system, however, ensured that difficulties lay in getting into such universities. Thus, while it may be possible for TAMU-K and other U.S. branch campuses to attract students, many parents and students still remained skeptical about their opportunities for employment upon their graduation from branch campuses of American colleges and universities.

According to a survey of 1,445 Japanese students, students at American branch campuses were concerned about finding a job in a Japanese company, a fear which was founded in the companies' attitude towards employing those who studies abroad (Kataoka, 1991). However, the perception of Japanese graduates with foreign degrees was changing and beginning to disappear. For example, Chikara Higashi, the former president of Temple University Japan (TUJ), which opened in 1982 as one of the oldest branch campus projects in Japan, noted in 1987, that indeed there was such an attitude which initially caused university officials such as himself a great concern. He added, however, that these attitudes were beginning to change, and the employment prospects of TUJ graduates have greatly improved. For example, in 1986, of 120 TUJ two-year graduates (short programs), 70 found jobs. TUJ's job placement staff member said that while they did not have a complete follow-up on the other 50 students, a majority of them went on to finish their studies, either at Temple University in Philadelphia or at other colleges and universities in the U.S. (Kataoka, 1991).[4]

A career forum sponsored by various organizations to recruit Japanese students with diplomas from American universities was also routinely held in the United States. For example, the the forum sponsored by Nikkei Shimbun and Disco, a subsidiary of Nikkei Shimbun, provided personnel counseling services to companies. In addition to the U.S. career forums, there has been one held in London. In both the U.S. and England, the companies came to recruit either Japanese who have studied abroad and speak English or non-Japanese with Japanese language skills. Since Japan is going through the period of internationalization, multi-national corporations needed to recruit bilingual and bicultural employees with abilities to communicate on all levels with their counterparts throughout the world. As a result, Nikkei Shimbun and Disco have enjoyed the success of such job recruitment forums and indicated that interest in such job applicants would continue to grow in the future.

For the success of graduates from American institutions in finding employment, the corporate interest in such career forums was a positive sign of the increased number of employment opportunities for Japanese graduates of foreign universities. U.S. institutions could offer a training ground for Japanese students to fully develop their English ability as well as those desirable traits of a sense of purpose and adaptability.[5]

At Texas A&M University-Koriyama, a number of representatives from both multinational Japanese and American cooperations have made visits to begin recruiting their prospective employees. In 1992, TAMU-K has planned to hold a career forum on campus by the request of both Texas Instrument-Japan and Motorola-Japan to provide the employment information to students in Koriyama. The seminar would also be held jointly with other multinational corporations, including IBM and Sony.

While the future of TAMU-K still remains uncertain, the surrounding environment and international communities are closely watching the political climate and struggles of the Japanese branch campuses of American colleges and universities. For example, when President George Bush visited Kyoto in January 1992, he spoke to a large number of Japanese and American students studying at TAMU-K and other branch campuses and gave the strong support to the success of the American university system in Japan. Congressman Richard Gephardt and former Governor of North Carolina, James Hunt also sent the letter of support in November 1991, urging the governor of Fukushima Prefecture to provide the much-needed prefectural assistance to Texas A&M University-Koriyama.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined the sources of socioeconomic and geo-political hardship that the branch campuses of U.S. colleges and universities faced in Japan. The paper



then specifically focused on the experience of Texas A&M University-Koriyama. The analysis of TAMU-K identified a number of important structural problems and political difficulties that the university officials need to overcome in order to make their educational experiment successful in Japan. The example of TAMU-K and the political struggles illustrated that if the university officials choose to embark on a program in Japan, their priorities should be clear and their goals attainable.

At the practical level, the prefectural office of Fukushima, the Japanese Ministry of Education, and all other authorities including both municipal and prefectural governments must cooperate with U.S. colleges and universities to make such important educational endeavors meaningful and successful. Texas A&M University-Koriyama clearly needs the administrative assistance from both prefectural and national governments in order to eliminate local political problems and build the permanent campus for Japanese students to provide the quality programs for which Texas A&M University is known in America. It is important to maintain the successful program of American higher educational institutions in Japan because the planned operation of U.S. college campuses can also benefit the nation's educational reform efforts. In no way should they regard these universities as unwanted competition and invaders.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to thank Jerry Gaston, Executive Associate Provost and John Norris, Director of the Koriyama Support Office at Texas A&M University, College Station; Shin Maru, Kosaku Ohba, Akira Takahashi, Shinji Kobayashi, Mitsuko Hoshi, and Hiroko Suzuki at the Koriyama Kokusai Gakuen, the Gakko Hojin in Koriyama; Hiroshi Kawakami, International Lobby, the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion; and Rick Nader at Tohoku University for their support and encouragement. Appreciation is also extended to James Foster at the U.S. Embassy for his continued support and assistance to the Texas A&M University-Koriyama project.

#### NOTES

1. Susumu Nikaido studied at the University of Southern California between 1931 and 1941 (*Journal of Japanese Trade & Industry*, 1987, March/April).
2. During the past few years, the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion has been actively involved with the establishment of U.S. branch campuses in Japan. The committee has worked together with Japanese municipalities. Typically these municipalities have offered U.S. higher educational institutions the land and facilities needed to establish branch campuses in their cities and towns. With the assistance of the U.S. affiliate, the U.S. Foundation for International Economic Policy, the U.S.A.-Japan Committee for Promoting Trade Expansion has contacted and has been contacted by colleges and universities in the U.S. which were interested in developing programs in Japan. The committee has then worked together with both institutions and municipalities to assist during discussions, negotiations, and planning. There are other forms of U.S.-Japan joint educational projects, some of which follow the branch campus model (the total number is put at anywhere from 20 to 50 programs), but the majority are specialized. Free standing ESL programs or short business programs are examples of the latter.
3. The Sendai campus of the University of Rio Grande was forced to close the operation in 1991 because of the declining student enrollment. The cessation of the operation has created 150 disenfranchised Japanese students.
4. As Japan's economy has boomed and profits have gone up so have the costs of land and labor. Add to this picture, the decrease in the population and corporate Japan's present labor shortage looks to be a problem that requires several comprehensive solutions. One solution has been to set up shop overseas. As of January, 1990, the total number of local subsidiaries owned by Japanese companies is 10,198, out of these 2,995 (26%) are located in the U.S. Just during the two year period of 1988 and 1989, 640 subsidiaries of Japanese companies were established in the U.S.; 223 in Thailand, and 147 in the U.K. On the home front, 49% of the Japanese companies listed on the Japanese stock exchange markets are involved in some form of overseas business. To deal with this ever increasing interaction with foreign companies and individuals, Japanese personnel managers are looking for individuals a bit different from those of the past. According to a survey of personnel managers the qualities they most often look for in prospective employees are (1) English ability, (2) a sense of purpose, and (3) adaptability. Within such a social and

economic environment it is not too difficult to understand why there is an increased interest in Japanese college graduates with overseas educational experiences.

5. Although there appears to be little change in the entrance examination process at this time, the Monbusho has recently shown that it can make policy changes when it rewrote one of its regulations concerning those students who go outside of the Japanese educational system to study. In April, 1989, the ministry decided that it would allow up to 30 credits from non-Japanese high schools to be transferred to a student's high school record in Japan. Although Japanese educational regulations do not allow the U.S. branch campuses to be granted the university status in Japan, the recent change in governmental regulations does show an opening up of educational policy. It would also be argued that even without the Monbusho's approval that there is a place for foreign institutes of higher education. The lack of space in Japanese universities is one reason for this. There are also a desire for studies done in Japan. Not only were the credits non-transferable, there are also the belief that a student was risking academic advancement, i.e., getting into the best university, by just stepping out of the Japanese system. Despite the ability to transfer credits there will be students and families which will decide that it is better to stay on track in Japan. However, as the previous future indicate, more and more students are choosing to study abroad both during high school and while as a university student, and that some parents are willing to pay the bills (Mizushima-Regur, 1990).

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