

The feature event of the annual meeting, a panel discussion of the issues facing higher education in both Japan and America, provided the audience with an excellent overview of the current situation. The panel discussion included six educators from very different institutions: Dr. Matsuzawa and Dr. Li from Kobe College; KCC/JEE board members Drs. Head, Jorenby, Mason and Wollons; recently returned DGP, Dr. Chen. These KCC/JEE representatives serve at a variety of institutions: public, private, large, small, national and community.

The panel featured a number of enlightening discussions and packed educational commentaries. Dr. Matsuzawa spoke first. She outlined the demographics of higher education in Japan, showing where the great spurts of growth are in a nation with a low birth rate. Among the surprises were that less than half of high school students go on the college, and that very few college students are over age twenty-five. This pattern is different from American higher education, where enrollment is broader but more irregular, and where students are less prone to take a degree. Next, Dr. Li discussed the changes in the Japanese enrollment system and the problems inherent in trying to move away from overly difficult entrance exams, which discourage students from pursuing a higher education. His description of the lack of broad education in entering students and the need for remediation resounded with the American educators, while surprising some of the audience.

From America we heard of economic pressures enabling the resurgence of the community college, and the problems created by the demand for "measurable" learning. The world wide web was shown to be not only for research, but for forging class connections and aiding with new forms of interactive distance learning. Many institutions are building service learning components which engage students with communities around them and throughout the world, a positive emphasis but one which needs preparation so the engagement is informed.

These are but a few highlights from an eye-opening afternoon