

# Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips

For Academic and Student Affairs



How to develop your student services

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## Preface

This booklet was originally written in Japanese and compiled by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education (CSHE) at Nagoya University. This English edition aims at showing the status of Japanese practices on higher education to researchers, practitioners and trainers in the world, which would facilitate further discussion.

### *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips*

The *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips* is a series of booklets compiled by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education (CSHE) at Nagoya University. The series aim at improving the quality of teaching and learning at the university. Quality of education would be stepped up with tiny improvements of everyday practice by stakeholders, such as students, faculty members, academic and student affairs staff members, university executives, etc. Therefore, each booklet offers each stakeholder suggestions for daily practice categorized by purposes. Moreover, the quality would be much enriched when efforts towards it by different stakeholders are integrated. Accordingly, all the booklets use the same framework of purposes, that is, the seven suggestions for better teaching and learning at university. We named the person who gives the suggestions as Professor Tips, a fictitious character who was first featured in the book, *Learn with the Professor Tips: How to Develop Your Course Design*, authored by members of the CSHE.

### For academic and students affairs

#### - How to develop your student services

The present volume, *How to develop your student services: for academic and student affairs*, is written from the perspective of the university staff who are responsible for academic and student affairs, and contains suggestions and specific ideas on how to achieve better education. For this volume, the CSHE collaborated with the Student Affairs and Planning Division at Nagoya University to examine ways in which members of academic and student affairs can develop their daily practice.

Non-teaching staff members have an important role to play in achieving the university's aim of quality improvement in university education. When the learning and development of students at university is considered, it is not limited only to learning in the classrooms. Club activities, local initiatives and

studying abroad etc, are all valuable experiences contributing to the growth of students. When graduates are asked about the sources of their own development, the range of items mentioned greatly exceeds that of just classes. Academic and student affairs staff members who are involved with the many varied activities of students, such as classes, extracurricular activities and day to day student life, have the opportunity to witness students' development across a variety of aspects and are thus surely well positioned to effectively support students. In addition, these academic and student affairs staff members are adults familiar to the students, who also provide students with an example of working members of society in this campus environment. If the academic and student affairs staff members keep this in mind as they interact with students, it can assist students with their steps towards joining the adult world, as well as having a beneficial effect on their studies.

This booklet offers a collection of good practical examples for academic affairs staff members, obtained through investigations both within and outside the university, which have been organized and presented in a concise manner, based on the framework of the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips*. The aim of this booklet is to offer a framework through which good practices and knowledge can be widely shared. Thus, the practices and ideas cited in this booklet are not aimed at the evaluation of each staff member, but at gradually improving the practices used daily by the academic and student affairs staff members. Unfortunately, some of the ideas mentioned in this booklet cannot be immediately implemented, due to the fact that resources or circumstances have not yet been prepared. Hopefully, the listing of them may lead to some debate as to how implementation should best be undertaken.

The idea behind the creation of this version of the booklet came from the *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* which was developed by a collaborative research group of the two leading professional associations in this area. While referring to this existing paper, the concept for this academic and student affairs staff member edition was developed, with the aim of creating a document that would be even more suited to practical usage at Japanese universities. During the development stage, ideas were gathered from many of Nagoya University's academic and student affairs staff members of different ages and career histories, and together these ideas were rigorously examined.

We hope that this booklet will prove effective for good practice in academic and student affairs, as well as for reflection on their practice by other stakeholders.

## How to use the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips*

You can use this booklet as follows:

1. The seven suggestions are written in simple and easy-to-remember sentences. You can use them as a framework to organize and systemize what you usually keep in mind and try to do.
2. The 49 ideas presented in this booklet may include ideas that you have never tried. If you are interested in any of them, why not try them out at your workplace? In particular, the ideas mentioned towards the top of each list are the ones most staff chose as the easiest to implement.
3. There are some other versions published in volumes of this series. Please also take a look at the separate volumes for faculty members, students, executives, and IT-enhanced teaching. These separate volumes all contain tips on what faculty members, students and university executives can each do to achieve the same goal.
4. This booklet contains just a small selection of ideas. You may have better ideas than those contained in this booklet. Please let us know at the Center for the Studies of Higher Education about what you think is important, or what you find effective in your day to day work. Your ideas will be helpful for future revisions of this booklet.

## Suggestion 1

### Increase opportunities for students to interact with staff

Students tend to feel a stronger sense of belonging to their classes and to university, and a greater responsibility toward their studies, when they are seen as individuals rather than as members of a group. Try to think of ways to help students meld into university life, not just by initiating contact with the students, but also by creating opportunities for the students to meet many other members of the university.

- When students come to your office, greet them and find out about their issues.
- Try to learn as many of your students' names as possible and call them by name.
- Create an environment which students will feel comfortable visiting, by making office entrance spacious etc.
- Find out what students are looking for in their everyday campus life.
- Participate in university events such as lectures etc in a proactive manner.
- Join in with sporting events and recreational activities where students and university staff gather together.
- Participate in the university festival as a campus member, and interact with students on a different level from your usual position.

## Suggestion 2

### Encourage cooperative learning among students

It is said that learning outcomes and motivation levels are improved through cooperative learning with classmates. Create an environment in which it is easy for students to participate in cooperative study activities, both in and out of classes. In addition to communicating the importance of cooperative learning to students, take opportunities to further your own studies, and contribute to the creation of a community of learning.

- Understand ways and places where students are able to learn as a group and give pertinent advice in this regard.
- Understand what kinds of facilities are available within the university to assist students in their studies.
- Understand the distribution of teaching assistants and tutors and promote the effective usage of this resource by students.
- Introduce initiatives such as a system of peer support, for students seeking advice from senior students.
- If you notice a student is no longer attending classes, casually ask other students about him or her.
- Support local study groups made up of students.
- Always cooperate with staff within the university, as well as maintaining communication links with staff from outside the university.

### Suggestion 3

## Encourage students' active learning

In undergraduate education, it is important for students to acquire an active attitude to learning. Study initiatives occurring outside the classroom, such as fieldwork and internships, are also valuable active learning opportunities for students. Through increased active learning opportunities, a wide variety of lateral developments can be expected in students, such as self-reliance, a sense of purpose and ethical views.

- Proactively inform students about internships and various research societies.
- Review the educational targets and curriculum of the university and its departments, with faculty members.
- Utilize questions previously received from individual students in information handbooks and guidance sessions etc.
- Review guidance content and methodology and provide guidance that responds to needs in a pertinent timeframe.
- Secure space in familiar surroundings where students can undertake independent learning.
- Use interactions with students at your office etc, to teach them the manners and common courtesies of the adult world.
- Learn the basics of student development processes during university years.



## Suggestion 4

### Encourage students to review their study progress

For students, confirming the extent of their progression toward the goals of the course provides them with important information regarding their subsequent progress. At the same time, it provides the university with a good opportunity to check course progress and the effectiveness of the educational environment. Build up a variety of methods to check on students' progress, and create a structure through which results can be communicated to the students.

- Encourage students to confirm for themselves information about courses and unit acquisition.
- Provide faculty members with documents that give precise information regarding students' previous study histories.
- Set up a suggestion box for students, and get a grasp of requested improvements.
- Compare results from class evaluation questionnaires and student surveys with those of previous results to gain an understanding of any changes.
- Review learning related survey results with faculty members and implement decisions.
- Use bulletin boards etc to publicize improvements being made to assist students' studies.
- Acquire basic knowledge of surveys and analysis methods.

## Suggestion 5

### Emphasize time on task

While the importance of study outside of class seems to be widely acknowledged, many students find it difficult to arrange time for study. Effective use of time is an extremely important factor that affects students' achievements. Universities must ensure that students can acquire effective time management skills in their studies as quickly as possible.

- Offer information arranged into essential points.
- Ensure students understand the importance of checking and storing materials distributed by the university.
- Display job descriptions on counters etc, to make it easy for students to recognize who can help them with their issues.
- Make information that is usually posted on bulletin boards, such as messages regarding public research societies or lecture cancellations etc, available for students to view via the Internet or through mobile phones.
- Promote the facilities within the university that can be used for out of class studies.
- Show an interest in the work of other staff, and endeavor to proactively share information.
- Draw up a collection of examples regarding procedural methods and share them with other staff.

## Suggestion 6

### Communicate high expectations for students

People react sensitively to the expectations of those around them. When students realize much is expected of them, their motivation to learn increases, which results in improved learning effectiveness. Use a variety of settings within university life to communicate academic expectations to students. Also demand attitudes and behaviors from students that are appropriate for members of a community of wisdom.

- Offer words of encouragement to students regarding their efforts in study motivation and extra-curricular activities.
- Publicize the achievements of students, both within and outside the university, such as prizes received and activities undertaken.
- Support exemplary social initiatives of students.
- Proactively highlight to students the activities of past graduates.
- Encourage entry into essay competitions etc.
- Expect students to behave in a manner appropriate for members of a university.
- Request that students extend common courtesies to collaborators from outside the university.

## Suggestion 7

### Respect student diversity

Accepting students with various learning styles and characteristics invigorates a university. It is expected that university staff will respect such diversity. Consider a variety of viewpoints when dealing with individual students. Also, communicate to students the importance of sharing the campus with a diverse range of students.

- When dealing with individual students, keep in mind their situation and experiences.
- Introduce students to facilities and specialists appropriate to the type of problem that they approach you with.
- Introduce students who are interested in cross-cultural exchanges with foreign students to relevant programs and groups.
- Devise procedures and communication methods etc, to deal with the needs of mature age students.
- Use a variety of events to get to know the characteristics and diversities of current students.
- Understand the various factors that stand in the way of an enjoyable student existence, and build a supportive environment.
- Acknowledge the varied careers and work styles of other staff members, and let students know that diversity is respected at university.

## Notes

The original Japanese edition had notes as shown below;

1. Your feedback regarding impressions of this booklet, suggestions for improvements, or important ideas not included in this booklet, is always welcome.

E-mail    [info@cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp](mailto:info@cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp)

2. A website (in Japanese) is available for those who are interested in ideas that could not be included in this booklet and the contents of the other booklets.

URL        <http://www.cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp/seven/>

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