

Gender Equality Office

Newsletter



by RA

Kobe University Gender Equality Office 1-1 Rokkodai-cho, Nada-ku, Kobe 657-8501 TEL : 078-803-5471/5017 FAX : 078-803-5285

Greetings from the Director

Ronni Alexander

The 2020 academic year began with the spread of the coronavirus and the declaration of a state of emergency. How are you doing? I am afraid that due to the introduction of distance learning, on-line meetings, telework, concern about your own safety and that of those around you, and changes to which you are not accustomed, you are suffering from both physical and mental fatigue.

This tiny virus has made a huge impact on the whole world, and caused extreme hardship, especially for those who are in socially vulnerable positions. Looking at this situation from the perspective of gender, we can find many serious problems both in Japan and in the rest of the world. The increase in domestic violence and child abuse during isolation and lockdown is one example. The closing of schools and telework have increased care work such as food preparation, shopping, housework, eldercare, and caring for infected relatives and friends. The bulk of the burden of these tasks has fallen on women, even if they are living with male partners. Balancing work and everyday life has become even more difficult for single parent households, single mothers in particular. Numerous people have lost their jobs and many businesses have collapsed. For the university, students have lost their part-time jobs, leaving some unable to pay their tuition. International students have not only lost their jobs, but many are unable to return to their countries or, in cases where they were outside of Japan, to return.

These problems affect all members of the Kobe University community. Ideally, at times of crisis like this universities should take the lead for society, but most people, myself included, have their hands full with just their own situation. What is the reason for this?

The Kobe University Gender Equality Office has worked for many years to increase the hiring and retention rates for faculty women. The "Initiative for the Implementation of the Diversity Research Environment (Advanced Type)" grant that we received in 2018 has enabled us to further enrich the environment for women researchers to excel through giving them opportunities to go abroad. We have also been meeting with deans and executive vice-presidents in order to deepen their understanding of the situation of women researchers and enlist their support in giving women more chances.

One of the reasons that Kobe University has not been able to be a leader for the people of Kobe in dealing with the novel coronavirus pandemic is, I believe, because the university has yet to embrace diversity. If, under ordinary circumstances, faculty and staff of different genders, affiliations and identities were working together and consulting one another regularly, then when something like the current crisis occurs, it would be possible to immediately determine the needs of different people and work toward meeting those needs. For Kobe University, the successful promotion of diversity will not only result in growth for the university as a whole, but it will mean that each member of the university community will be able to put her/his abilities to good use. This cannot be achieved by men, or women, alone. It can only happen when there are a variety of people, all of whom are respected for who they are. Living with the coronavirus is giving us an opportunity to create a truly diverse campus. I hope to work together with all of you to enrich our campus and make all of us safer.



Teach us, Dr. Woolley !

教えて! Dr.ウーリー

~ Kobe University Women Faculty Retention Rate ~



Little Uri

Hi, Dr. Woolley. I was watching TV the other day, and they said that Japan has one of the largest gender disparities in the world and ranked only 121st out of 153 countries. Is it really that low?

Japan GGI Score

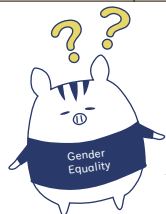
4 Dimensions	2020 Score (Rank)	2019 Score (Rank)
Economic Participation & Opportunity	0.598 (115th)	0.595 (117th)
Political Empowerment	0.049 (144th)	0.081 (125th)
Educational Attainment	0.983 (91st)	0.994 (65th)
Health and Survival	0.979 (40th)	0.979 (41st)

I guess you are referring to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI) indicator, right?

Unfortunately, it's true. As you can see in the chart, Japan has a very large gender gap in the economy and politics. The government has set numerical targets for increasing the number of women in management positions and women researchers, but in reality, there has been little progress.

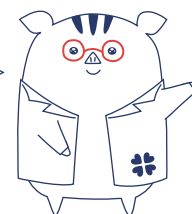


Dr. Woolley



Hmmm. I understand there is a huge gender gap in the economic and political spheres and the government is trying to improve it, but why do we need to promote women's participation in those areas in the first place?

People have different opinions. Some think it is strange that although women make up half of the population, many cannot work in the same positions or receive the same pay as men. There is also the opinion that including women's experiences and perspectives will lead to innovation and increase the productivity of organizations, and from another point of view, it will create a safer and more secure society. Just recently, women leaders who responded quickly and appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic gathered a lot of global attention.



《Current positions and retention rates for women faculty》

10.6%

Professors 65

15.4%

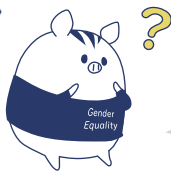
Assoc. Professors 67

22.9%

Lecturers 30

24.4%

Asst. Professors 91



I see. it's important we have more women's participation and their voice in the economic and political fields. By the way, how is gender equality in universities?

Our women faculty retention rate is below average. We are **59th out of 86** national universities.



しょんぼり...

Kobe University Gender Equality Office is working on a variety of activities to increase the percentage of women faculty, so please support us.

