

Toward an Inclusive College Campus: A U.S.–Japan Symposium

Project Summary

Improving the lives of citizens with disabilities is a priority in both Japan and the U.S. In this spirit, a new collaboration between the two nations will focus on exploring disability, self-advocacy, and self-determination in higher education in both countries.

Project partners

- Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston
- Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
- Center for Independent Living STEP Edogawa (in Tokyo)

Themes

- Self-advocacy and self-determination in disability communities
- U.S–Japan differences in disability advocacy and awareness

Event

Symposium in Tokyo, October 15, 2019, featuring cross-cultural panels and video-based digital stories

End goal

To promote cross-cultural awareness, dialogue, and exchange on disability issues as Japan prepares for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics



Contact us:

Dr. Heike Boeltzig-Brown

Project Director

heike.boeltzig-brown@umb.edu

Miwa Tanabe

Project Coordinator

miwa.tanabe@umb.edu

Hiroya Banzono

Project Consultant

zono.b.hry@gmail.com

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Institute for Community Inclusion
at UMass Boston



Association on
Higher Education
And Disability®

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Both the United States and Japan recognize the importance of higher education for persons with disabilities as a stepping-stone to jobs and career. In 2013, Japan introduced anti-discrimination legislation that came into effect on April 1, 2016. The purpose of this law is to ensure that all levels of public education are disability-inclusive and to mandate reasonable accommodations. In the U.S., the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008) have made disability inclusion a national priority.

This legislative context creates an opportunity for shared learning between the U.S. and Japan, especially as regards self-determination (SD) and self-advocacy (SA). In the U.S., college campuses are becoming more inclusive as a result of accommodations made on the basis of requests from students with disabilities. These requests show the impact of the ADA, which mandates reasonable accommodations. Now that the disability anti-discrimination law is in effect in Japan, richer exploration and discussion can be expected about advocacy for people with disabilities in both nations.

Recognizing this, the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), and the Tokyo-based Center for Independent Living STEP Edogawa are partnering on a project that will explore disability, SA, and SD in higher education in both countries.

Drawing from the lessons learned through the implementation of the ADA and approaches to SA skill-building developed in the U.S., the project will implement a **one-day symposium on October 15, 2019 in Tokyo. The symposium will feature two U.S.-Japan panel discussions** representing the perspectives and experiences of American and Japanese college students with disabilities and professionals who support them.

Prior to the symposium, project staff will work with **11 Japanese students to create individual digital stories (in video format) about students' college experiences, the barriers they have faced, and how they have addressed them.** Excerpts from these stories will be combined into a short film that will be featured at the symposium, providing context for the student panel discussion that will follow the screening. The movie and the individual digital stories, along with resources from the panels, will also be broadly disseminated via a project website and social media.

Together, these efforts will promote cross-cultural awareness, dialogue, and exchange on disability issues, which is important and timely given the recent legislative context in Japan, as well as the opportunities created by the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.



For more information, contact:

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Project Director

heike.boeltzig-brown@umb.edu

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