

Message for new and current students in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences (related to economics and business management)

April 3, 2020

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I would like to say a few words at the beginning of the new academic year.  
I hope this year will be another fruitful one for all of you.

As all of you are aware, the problems caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) are becoming increasingly serious. For example, at a meeting of experts held on April 1, it was recognized that "In our country, although 'overshooting' (explosive surge in patients) has not yet been observed as in other countries, several infection clusters have been reported, mainly in urban areas, and the number of infections has been increasing rapidly". Based on this recognition, the expert panel divided our country into three regions. Among them, the most serious "infection spread warning area" was asked to avoid the so-called the "Three Cs" (closed spaces, close proximity to others, close conversation) and to avoid attending meetings and events that gathered more than 10 people. The next most severe "areas where infection was confirmed", are advised to avoid the "Three Cs" and to refrain from participating in indoor gatherings and events with more than 50 people. Our Graduate School is located in Saitama, close to Tokyo, and Tokyo Station College is located in Kanda, and many of the University members live in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Kanda, where Tokyo Station College is located, has already been classified as an "infection spread warning area", and it is not surprising that our school in Saitama can be changed from an "area where infection is confirmed" to an "infection spread warning area" at any time.

The environment surrounding our Graduate School is certainly severe. Realistically, we do not expect the situation to improve for the time being. In the meantime, the mission of the graduate school is to carry out education and research, and whatever happens, it must do so. Our graduate school and staff are committed to supporting you as you take the first step toward a future so that no one is left behind despite COVID-19.

As part of this effort, we will conduct classes starting from April 27, primarily through online teaching methods. We have had a number of discussions regarding whether and how to

introduce online classes. Not only will you not be able to experience the fascinating on-campus life any time soon, but you will also be asked to shoulder an extra burden in preparing equipment and internet connection networking that you need for the online classes, and may possibly feel additional mental and physical stress from unfamiliar mode of classes. A considerable amount of effort is also required on the side of the Graduate School to prepare and conduct online classes.

The problem is not only these additional burdens. When we ask the fundamental question of what education is, I assure you that we are focused on the idea that teachers and students should think together, discuss together, and find creative solutions together. In light of this, there are many limitations in online classes, compared to face-to-face teaching. Of course, we at the Graduate School will do our best to overcome that limitation as much as possible, but online classes are still a second best option. In spite of this, we have decided it will be best to conduct online classes because we are determined that this is the only way we can provide the necessary education to all members of the university while protecting their health.

So, I'd like to ask all of you to do the following.

First of all, please prepare your computer and internet environment at home before the class starts. (If possible, one with a camera or microphone. If you do not have a PC, a tablet is an alternative.) In the case of signing up for a new Internet connection, it may take several weeks from the time of application to being connected and be to use, please make arrangements as soon as possible, particularly for those who plan to move accommodation. If you are likely to have difficulty with online classes due to any disabilities, or if you are unable to set-up the above equipment and network environment, please contact the administration section in our Graduate School, which is listed in the information booklet.

Next, please try to access our 'WebClass' system periodically, and to keep up to date. From now on, we are going to share basic information and conduct online classes through the Graduate School's website, e-mail and the WebClass system.

Everyone, it is very challenging time, but let's make this situation a "Sai O ga Uma (Every cloud has a silver lining)" and build a bright and enjoyable university life. Your health is most important. Please take care of yourself, your family, friends, and all around you.

I'm looking forward to seeing you.