

CAMPUS Asia Career Panel

Words of Encouragement to CAMPUS Asia Students

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Good afternoon, my name is Natsuko Sakata and I am the Deputy-Secretary General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, and welcome to everyone joining us from all across China, Japan and Korea for today's panel.

I am sure that everyone is joining today to gain some insight into how to navigate your careers. Everyone has dreams and aspirations that you will realize after graduating from university. Yet, at this moment in life, that certainty does not seem so certain, and many difficulties in life can sometimes seem overwhelming. This has always been the case for anyone at your age, and I can only assume that such anxiety is much more severe now with this global pandemic, adding even more uncertainty into your lives.

However, as participants of the CAMPUS Asia program, I am confident that you have acquired unique perspectives and skills that only you can bring to the table. In a short while, your seniors will explain how they have utilized such assets to achieve their illustrious careers up to now. But before that, let me raise three broader points about why I believe your participation in the CAMPUS Asia program will give you a unique edge when it comes to navigating your career.

First, you have developed an ability to embrace diversity and knit together. As participants of this program, you have deeply engaged yourselves in multiple classes alongside colleagues who have come from various backgrounds. Even in this highly globalized world, the experience of collaborating in such diverse groups for hours on end is a unique experience that will work towards your advantage.

Because of this, you know very well that unity is not uniformity. Overcoming differences is never a process of leading everyone to think the same or act the same. Rather, it is to embrace those differences, and you have learned how to do that through this program. You know how to work as a team, even if you do not see eye-to-eye on every issue.

When unanimity is difficult, you know how to find the common denominator, staying respectfully firm in your own convictions without invalidating others. You know how to ensure that differing views do not derail your relationships with other people. This is a truly important skill that not many people can claim to have.

Second, your cultivated network enriches your career and life.

There is a reason why people continue to say things such as "no person is an island" or "it's who you know that counts". The ties you have with your colleagues provide new perspectives, sustain motivation, lead to new career opportunities, and act as support groups and mentors. In this world of cross-border movement and transactions, it is increasingly important to have such network beyond the country from which you come.

The classmates with whom you studied with late into the night may become the person who introduces you to a new career opportunity in Beijing, Tokyo or Seoul 10 years from now. Everyone has their own personal network, but having such a globalized network at such a young age as yours is truly a unique advantage that you have over other people at your age.

Third, you embody Asia, the most dynamic center of vigor, vision and wisdom. Fully embrace the fact that you have studied in the engine of the world. China, Japan, Korea and other Asian nations continue to rapidly catch up to or even surpass those that hitherto led the world in economic power, technology, innovation, and various other categories. Many have studied in Europe or the United States.

Many others have also studied in maybe one or two countries amongst China, Japan and Korea. Actually, you are a rare minority that can claim to have lived and breathed in the culture and language of all three, a most dynamic part of the globe. Take full advantage of those experiences and skills you have gained in these countries. Continue to collaborate with your colleagues, even after graduation. If two heads are better than one, then three heads are much better than two. When the powers of these specific three countries are combined in you, you become an unstoppable force.

Before concluding, let me add a few more words. The Ministries of Education of the three countries have agreed to work with us, the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, to encourage high-level dual-degree programs, joint research and implementation of scholar and student exchange programs. This includes the CAMPUS Asia Alumni Network. It is our responsibility and hope that you all continue to succeed with your endeavors after graduation. You all represent the future of this region. It will be up to you to ensure we continue to prosper.

Good luck!!