

The Role of the Founding Ideals of a University in Higher Education

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Abstract : The “founding spirit” of a Japanese university is similar to the mission statement of a Western university, but the difference between the two is that the former more closely reflects the founder’s inner world because it usually originates from the strong personal beliefs that the founder held when establishing the university. To find how much this ideology actually valued in today’s higher education, this paper surveys 2091 job openings for foreign language full-time faculty positions, posted by Japanese private universities from 2012 to 2016. The results suggest that women’s universities and universities with religious affiliations have a tendency to request that successful candidates observe their founding spirit, or at least demonstrate some understanding of the ideology after being hired. On the other hand, co-ed universities and universities with no religious affiliations do not show such a distinct tendency. A chi-square test revealed that this difference between the two groups was statistically significant ($p < .01$). Furthermore, the paper argues that it is not always appropriate for universities to evaluate themselves based on a single evaluation scale such as university rankings, and that both faculty and staff members need to be more aware of the founding spirit to improve the quality of the education the university provides.

Keywords : founding spirit, higher education, university administrative management, university evaluation

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