May 9, 2014

TRIP TO TEIKYO UNIVERSITY IN TOKYO, JAPAN.

McKinney Voss, a Student Consultant on Teaching (SCOT) at BYU and Kasey Nelson, Student Coordinator of the Students Consulting on Teaching (SCOT) program traveled to Tokyo, Japan March 9 – 14, 2014. We were invited by Gary Tsuchimochi, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Teikyo University. This document includes a history of events leading up to our trip to Japan, a description of our activities while in Tokyo, notes from the presentations we attended, a summary of what we learned and an explanation of our goals to improve the BYU SCOT program as a result of this trip. This activity was an important event in the international growth of SCOT; we hope this document will help us share the important insights we gained and encourage continued collaboration with Teikyo University in the future.

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Written by

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History

The BYU SCOT program was started in the fall semester of 1992 by Lynn Sorenson. Eighteen years later, in 2010 Lynn Sorenson and representatives from Utah Valley University gave a presentation on the SCOT program at an international education conference (Voss 2014). When Gary Tsuchimochi, a professor at Teikyo University heard this presentation, he became interested in the concept of Students Consulting on Teaching and brought these ideas back to his university in Tokyo.

In 2011, Gary visited the Center for Teaching and Learning at BYU. While there, he learned about Susan Eliason’s experience in Japan, and suggested she come visit their Center for Teaching and Learning at Teikyo. During a second visit to BYU in 2012, Gary suggested the idea again and they made arrangements for Susan to travel to Japan in October 2013.

While there, Susan gave presentations at various locations throughout Japan. These included several presentations about the SCOT program. This idea of students assisting in faculty development was well-received by her audiences. During the trip, Gary Tsuchimochi suggested to Susan that some of the SCOTs from BYU come to Teikyo in the spring to give a presentation on the SCOT program and work with the SCOTs at Teikyo University.

We, Kasey Nelson and McKinney Voss, were selected to participate. During our time in Japan, we gave a presentation on the SCOT program at “The Commemorative International Symposium” held, “Under the Agreement for Academic Exchanges and Cooperation Between The Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence; Utah Valley University and The Center for Teaching and Learning, Teikyo University.” This event was held in downtown Tokyo at a Teikyo University Conference Center. Later, we spoke to six of the senior SCOTs and the CTL faculty from Teikyo University at a workshop held at the Teikyo University Seminar House in
Hakone. We both enjoyed our experience in Japan. We learned a lot from the presentations we heard and we are eager to implement these new ideas into our SCOT program. We were also excited to share some of our thoughts and experiences from the SCOT program here at BYU. We hope that our ideas helped the SCOTs in Japan and we anticipate more collaboration and communication in the future.

**International Symposium in Tokyo**

The Commemorative International Symposium held on March 11, 2014 was proof of the international growth of the SCOT program. In attendance at this symposium were professors and SCOTs from several universities in the Tokyo area. They are all on the forefront of the change that is taking place in university education in Japan. Currently universities are structured around a very “teacher-centered” paradigm where instructors teach, and students listen and take notes. There is not much collaboration between students and professors and learning-centered activities are not common in the classroom. However, people like Gary, these SCOTs and those in attendance at this symposium are trying to make a change in the methods used in university instruction.

This symposium consisted of presentations by Anton Tolman from The Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence at Utah Valley University; Dustin Tolman, SCOT Coordinator at UVU; Kasey Nelson and McKinney Voss, SCOT Coordinator and SCOT at Brigham Young University; Yoko Naganuma and Saori Ishii the SCOT Coordinator and Assistant SCOT Coordinator at Teikyo University; and Mr. Tetsuo Goda, the director for the scientific research aid division in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan. The symposium ended with a panel discussion including all of the presenters.
Anton Tolman’s presentation was titled, “Moving to Student Engagement in the US: Learning for the Future.” His presentation focused around the importance of student engagement in the classroom, and the role of faculty development and SCOT in student engagement. He emphasized the importance of innovation and improvement in teaching saying, “our purpose is to produce student learning by whatever means works the best.” He referred to Teikyo University’s motto, “One’s Way” and indicated that teachers can help students prepare for the future by constantly improving and developing their teaching.

After Anton’s presentation, Dustin Tolman spoke about the SCOT program at UVU. He described their history, their vision and goals and shared some statistics on the growth of their program and the services they provide each semester. He shared several videos and quotes of professors describing their experience with the SCOT program. One professor stated that teaching is not a “one and done” process, but that SCOT helps him to continually improve. Dustin took time to explain the SCOT services offered by UVU and their hiring and training process. He finished his presentation by explaining how the SCOTs interact with professors and the impact that the SCOT program has on student learning. We appreciated hearing from Dustin about the SCOT program at UVU and gained some insight on how we might improve our BYU SCOT program.

We chose to use our time to share about our experiences as SCOTs to help our audience understand what the program is like in action. We chose to use three Japanese phrases, “Kaizen,” “Kyoutsuu no kiban o kizuku,” and “shinrai kankei or kizuku” which mean “continuous improvement,” “establishing a common foundation,” and “building a relationship of trust,” respectively. We explained how each of these concepts is an important quality of the structure of the SCOT program, and for our relationship with professors with whom we work.
Following our presentations, Yoko Naganuma, the SCOT Coordinator and Saori Ishii, Assistant SCOT coordinator at Teikyo University spoke. They first outlined the certification of SCOTs. At Teikyo, there are two types of SCOTs: SCOT seniors, who are certified SCOTS and have the responsibility of class consulting; and SCOT trainees who are working towards becoming certified. Their program structure is based off of four main items. First, the SCOT syllabus which serves as a “guidepost” to the SCOTs as they work on their assignments. Secondly, they use a SCOT manual, to communicate SCOT activities to the SCOTS who will come after. Third, mock interviews in which the SCOTs practice the role of both SCOT and professor. Finally trainee instruction or “study sessions” to help “Junior SCOTs” progress towards their “Senior SCOT” certification. I particularly appreciated their attitude and sense of responsibility towards their job. They mentioned that they felt it was important that they be aware of their responsibility and position as representatives of students. They also acknowledged that the learning was not the sole responsibility of professors, and that students should take an active role in learning as well.

Next, we were privileged to hear from Mr. Tetsuo Goda. He focused on the impact the quality of University education has on their society. Not only does Japan need people with college degrees, they need college graduates with the abilities to: innovate and create markets and social value; apply Japanese social values globally; and communicate beyond generations and positions. He expressed the difference of the expectations in a university setting to those in the workforce. To bridge this gap, in addition to the knowledge associated with their degree, students also need skills in teamwork, written and spoken language, foreign language ability and an awareness of the general value of their education. He stated that half of these changes that were happening in the university were a result of the SCOTs. He then illustrated the impact of
these changes saying that the “University can change our society, so SCOT can change the University and society.” It was inspiring to hear the support and enthusiasm concerning the SCOT program from an important leader in Japanese education. This experience opened our eyes to the importance of SCOT and its potential to positively impact our society as well.

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion including Gary Tsuchimochi from Teikyo University, Mr. Tetsuo Goda, the director for the scientific research aid division in the Ministry of Education; Anton Tolman and Dustin Tolman from Utah Valley University, Kasey Nelson and McKinney Voss representing Brigham Young University and Yoko Naganuma and Saori Ishii from Teikyo University. The audience asked us to share how to encourage enthusiasm with professors and some challenges we faced in the program. Anton Tolman expressed the importance of advertising the SCOT program to new faculty, and faculty who were working on getting tenure. He also suggested finding a few faculty members that are looked up to by other professors and inviting them to set an example by using the SCOT program. Another curious question that was brought up was, “has SCOT had an effect on student satisfaction, applicants to the university, and rate of dropouts?” Although neither we nor UVU had data to answer this question, we thought it was an interesting one to ask. The audience was also interested in whether SCOT was started by students or by faculty and how we as students got involved. A suggestion that was raised was having faculty suggest SCOT services, which seemed to us like a good way to get faculty feedback and opinions on our work.

**Workshop in Hakone**

After the international symposium, from Wednesday the 12th of March to Thursday the 13th 2014, we had the opportunity to travel to the Teikyo seminar house in Hakone to receive
even more training along with the new Senior SCOTs. We presented again ourselves and also got
to listen to new presentations from the UVU and Teikyo representatives. We found that this less
formal atmosphere fostered greater opportunities for discussion than we had experienced at the
symposium.

Anton’s presentation in Hakone had a great deal of ideas and information that could be
very valuable to our SCOT program at BYU. His presentation was entitled, “Useful Taxonomies
for Improving Student Learning and Organizational Development.” He noted that classroom
learning outcomes should focus on providing a framework for learning of practical skills as well
as helping students to make connections within and between classes. He restructured Bloom’s
classic taxonomy in order to show the overall goal of promoting critical thinking, and expressed
the differences between instructor-centered and learner-centered teaching. Anton also provided
tips for shifting the university culture to allow faculty to embrace SCOT services. Overall he had
a fascinating presentation.

We, presenting on behalf of BYU’s SCOT program, were the next in the schedule to
present. We used our same basic presentation that we had given at the symposium, but tailored to
the needs of this less formal audience. We described the four steps for communicating better
with professors that we focused on in our SCOT meetings this past year. These steps are to ask
questions, listen, restate, and ask follow-up questions. We experienced some resistance to these
ideas due to cultural differences, but this fostered good discussion about the best ways to
approach professors who might not be as willing to change.

The next to present was Dustin Tolman on Thursday morning. He invited the Teikyo
SCOTs to come prepared with questions that he could answer throughout the presentation, and
focused on how UVU specifically runs its program. His presentation opened up the possibility of
future collaboration between the UVU and BYU SCOT programs, such as joint meetings or sharing new SCOT service ideas; we particularly took notice of the syllabus review as a potential future service to include in the BYU SCOT program array.

Lastly, the Teikyo SCOTs gave a presentation that they had impressively prepared in English in consideration of their audience. They noted that the student consultant always acts as a facilitator of communication between the teacher and the student. They described the unique Teikyo University Junior-Senior SCOT process and how the SCOTs are trained. Their training firstly focused on providing adequate context for the SCOT program and describing how it fit into the goals of the university as a whole, and secondly on communication training which included role plays and active listening exercises. Another good idea they brought up was to use a forum to introduce professors to the SCOT program. They emphasized that since the SCOT is a representative of the student, he or she has a great responsibility to act professionally at all times. On the whole their presentation contained a great deal of information and good ideas that we could potentially use in our own SCOT program.

After their presentation, we all played an ice-breaking game they had had prepared for us to get to know one another better and increase likelihood of future collaboration at the individual SCOT level between our universities. We divided ourselves into teams with both American and Japanese SCOTs on each team and played a unique game of charades! The objects being acted out included both traditionally American and traditionally Japanese items so as to make it fair, and overall it was a very fun activity that certainly increased familiarity and friendship among each respective party! Afterwards, we brainstormed ways that Teikyo and Utah SCOTs could collaborate in the future. Some possibilities discussed included using video conferences, e-mail, and Google documents as ways to allow SCOTs to communicate and share ideas.
Conclusion

Overall, our time spent in Japan was an incredibly enlightening experience. To some extent, we both went into this trip with a very distinct perspective and clear expectation of what we thought a SCOT program should be: exactly what BYU’s SCOT program is. However, we were also prepared with open minds and were extremely impressed by the different ideas presented through the collaboration of so many universities.

Specifically from the Teikyo SCOTs, we greatly admired the idea they emphasized of a higher purpose and responsibility they see as inherent in being a student consultant. A big focus for them was teaching prospective SCOTs how SCOT services fit into improving the university as a whole and how they unite with the aims of the university, which we see as a valuable motivating factor for prospective SCOTs. They realize that as SCOTs, they represent their fellow students; they are constantly seeking to improve in order to live up to this privilege.

From UVU’s presentations, we liked the ideas of nurturing a specific SCOT culture, making the program better known amongst students and faculty alike. We also appreciated the specific methods shared by both UVU and Teikyo representatives about how to facilitate a paradigm shift in campus education.

The many things we learned have inspired us to action, and there are several ideas that we are starting to implement here at BYU. First of all, it was interesting to learn about the different approaches that both UVU and Teikyo have in SCOT training. As a result, we are reviewing our SCOT training plan to determine ways that we can better train our SCOTs to be effective consultants. Furthermore, we learned that both Teikyo and UVU also have SCOT services that BYU does not currently offer, such as a syllabus review option. We can use such services either as new formal SCOT services, or as ideas we suggest in our meetings to further
help our faculty. Finally, we are addressing the question brought up in the panel discussion, “has SCOT had an effect on student satisfaction, applicants to the university, and rate of dropouts?” UVU is gathering data from students, professors and SCOTs on these topics. We too plan to conduct similar surveys here at BYU this summer to measure the larger impact that the SCOT program may be having at our university.

During our time in Japan, we were exposed to many different ideas and learned many new things related to the expansion of SCOT. We still appreciate BYU’s unique take on the SCOT program and we think it is the best approach for this university. However, we also believe that as we incorporate the ideas of other SCOT programs, we can grow and develop SCOT here into something even more helpful to instructors and students across the board.